

CONSERVING THE CIVILIZATIONAL HERITAGES OF KABINI RIVER BASIN THROUGH NEW MUSEUM MOVEMENT STRATEGIES

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By

Dr B Francis Kulirani
Tagore Research Scholar

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sngrahalaya
Southern Regional Centre
Mysore

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(SD)
B Francis Kulirani

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Chapter- I Introduction

Background to the study, River basin studies-significance, Indian context:

River drainage basins all over the Globe provide sustenance to multitude of life forms and the rivers cradled many human groups and great civilizations of Mesopotamia (Euphrates-Tigris), Egypt (Nile), Ancient China (Huang He) and Indus Valley (Indus). In India the network of extra-peninsular rivers- Indus, Ganges (draining the Indo-Gangetic plain) and Brahmaputra along with the major peninsular rivers- Narmada, Tapi (flowing to Arabian sea) and Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri with their tributaries (emptying in the Arabian Sea) sustain the world's second largest population and richest bio-diversity. Rivers have attained an attribute of legal 'personhood' granted to the Whanganui River in New Zealand (Wagner and Jacka 2018). In India we have a tradition of bestowing an attribute of holy persona to the great rivers ('Maa Ganga', 'Goddess Kaveri'). In actual terms 'the river system of India consists of 14 major rivers, 42 medium rivers, 55 minor rivers and thousands of rivulets which have, since time immemorial, nourished the landscape' (Bhatnagar & Idrisi 2020).



Map-I

River Basin studies, a brief review

An area of land that collect and drain all the precipitation and the surface run-offs through the streams, channels, lakes, rivulets and rivers form watersheds of a river basin

(nationalgeographic.org). The major rivers like Cauvery with many tributaries form sub basins of their own. River basin studies generally is the domain of hydrologists, engineers, Agri scientists and economists driven by technology and development objectives. The dynamic and complex environmental, economic, socio-cultural interrelationships of river basins with the geographic conditions and human impact can be better understood through multi-disciplinary studies. Holistic approach of anthropology in the study rivers and their cultural landscapes provides an alternative. Cooper and Chakraborty (2018) observed that three approaches prevailed in the study of river basins; ‘as systems in perpetual flex (Schumms 1977), riverscape as a path-scape of interactions (Haslam 2008) and anthropocentric approach to water (Strang 2004)’. Wagner and Jacka (2018) propose ‘the notion that rivers have social lives and therefore merit thorough ethnographic investigation and description’.

Civilizational heritage studies of major river basins of Indus (Dikshit K N 1988 Indus Publications, Robinson 2015), Ganga-Jamuna (Kumar, Dilip 2017 IIT 2013), Brahmaputra (Roy etc 2020,) Narmada (A K Joshy *et al* 2003, Bhat S K 2006), Krishna (MITRA 2014, Dancey 2014, Gophane, 2013; Jain et al 2007), Godavari (Jain et al 2007) and Cauvery (Britto and Som, 2001; Arni and Oriole 2009) have all received wider academic attention and documentation of heritages. A consolidation of the multidisciplinary approach in dealing with the study of ‘*River Valley Cultures of India*’, was achieved by the publication an edited volume on the topic by Chakravarty and Badam (2005). Whereas studies on some the important tributaries of these major rivers and as well as minor rivers though smaller in size of their basins but endowed with unique cultural and ecological landscape have received only scanty attention. Some of the pioneering studies in this direction have been carried out by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi in their ‘Rivers and Water Issues’ series (*Evaluating Tehari Dam* 1987, *Ecological Inventory of Yamuna River in NCT Delhi* 2015, *Reviving Hindon River- A Basin Approach* 2017, *Understanding Rivers* 2018, *Guide to Preparing River Basin Management Plans for Medium and Minor Rivers* 2020, *Quite Flows the Betwa River Understanding Basin Characteristics* 2021, *A Monograph on Gond Water Heritage* 2021) have been carried out, much work remains to be accomplished.

Studies of rivers in India as seen above have largely focused on rivers as the object, however studies of rivers as the subject to shed light on the ways in which human lives in the river basins are interwoven with the lives of the rivers and the land forms through which they flow and the other species sustained by them are seldom treated as an integrated whole.

Why Kabini Basin

This researcher has been involved in field investigation in the Wayanad (Kerala), Nilgiri (Tamil Nadu), H D Kote (Karnataka) region for more than four decades from student days in 1975 till my last official assignment in the capacity of 'Course Director' at Department of Tribal and Rural Studies, Kannur University, Mananthavady Campus, Kerala in 2017. The first field study was for the dissertation work to investigate the 'Impact of tribal development in on Tribes of Wayanad' by comparing the tribal way of life in an interior village of Pulpally with that of the tribes in the re-settled in the Chekadi, Ambalavayal for the partial fulfilment of PG in the Pune University (now Savitribai Phule University 1977-76). I was fascinated by the unique heritages of the communities of the region comprising of Wayanad, Nilgiri and Coorg. Fortunately, after the successful completion of the PG, I started my career in the capacity of Senior Technical Assistant, Southern Regional Centre of Anthropological Survey of India at Mysore. The first project assigned to me (1978-80) was '*Study of inter-tribal and tribal non-tribal interaction in Pulpally, Wayanad*'. The awareness of Wayanad as a geographical extension of Deccan Plateau and the ethnic and cultural linkages of Paniya, Mullukuruma, Adiya, Kattunaikan, Kuruchiyar, and other tribes of Wayanad with their counter parts beyond Wayanad and the prevalence of an indigenous system of interaction became evident to me (Kulirani 1982). A subsequent ethnographic study of the Paniyan community (1981-82) further opened my perspective to the adaptation of indigenous communities to this unique eco-cultural zone. The study of Pulpally village in the Kabini Basin for my Doctoral work on topic 'Emergence of Small Town in Tribal Wayanad- a Study of Pulpally' (1996) gave credence to the significance of Kabini river in the life and culture communities in the Basin. Further while on collection of ethnographic artefacts from the indigenous communities in the adjoining regions Coorg (Jeenukuruba, Yerava), Nilgiri (Mullukuruman) and Wayanad (Mullukuruman, Kurichiyar, Kattunaikan, Adiyar) for the Zonal Anthropological Museum of SRC, Mysore gave ample evidence of the ethnic and cultural linkages of Kabini Basin. The national project on 'People of India' series from 1985 to 1993 gave the opportunity for comparing ethnographies of communities in the border areas of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala adding the evidences of shared heritages and linkages. The supervisory role for monitoring National and Regional projects of the Survey subsequently provided opportunities to interact with researchers in this specific geographic area (Nilgiri Biosphere project, Coorg Village study etc) further contributed to enrich. The stint at the Mananthavady Campus of Kannur University, Wayanad for about four years from 2015 gave an opportunity to interact with people in the Kabini Basin which made me more determined to investigate the theme on 'Cultural Heritages of Kabini Basin'.

Methodology

Kabini River Basin is a remote setting in the Southern Region. This is a river valley where indigenous cultures and ancient Jain traditions, wars against colonial conquest, plantation agriculture and modern damming technology all converge. The Kabini River Basin tells a complex story. This river basin witnessed the marches by Mysore and Srirangapatnam principalities to North Kerala, colonial conquest of the British and the heroic resistance of the Pazhassy Raja. Changes through years have not obscured the evidence of the layers of time. Places of historic interest, ancient and recent can be detected. The project is expected to contribute to further the institutional objectives of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sngrahalaya, Bhopal and its Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru.

The complexity of Kabini River Basin cultural resources along with the diversity of historical landscape of the project area creates the need for a variety of research methodology to be employed.

- Survey of the written reports,
- ethnographic fieldwork
- combined with photographic/video documentation,
- digital mapping with GPS to record cultural site locations.

The tribal regions comprising of Wayanad, Mysore and Nilgiris are well researched areas by anthropologists, ecologists and biologists. The perspectives thus far emerged treat this geographic part of peninsular India as a 'trijunction' considering the fact that it is a meeting point of three Dravidian languages Malayalam, Kannada and Tamil respectively. Administratively too the attribute of trijunction to this particular geographic area is appropriate.

However, a closer look of the geology, geomorphology and drainage system of the area gives a different perspective as discussed in the next chapter.

Trijunction vs Kabini Basin and why Kabini Basin:

River Kabini also known Kaplia is the main tributary of Kaveri. Kabini originates from the eastern slopes of Western Ghats in the Wayanad plateau of Kerala and has two main branches; the Mananthavady and the Panamaram Rivers. Kabini emerges from their confluence at Koodalkadavu in Kerala.

The upper reaches of Panamaram River and a third branch of Kabini the Nugu River are in the western slopes of Nilgiri in the Gudalur Taluk, Tamil Nadu. A fourth branch of the Kabini is the Kalindi originating in the foothills of Brahmagiri ranges. The length of the river is 240 kms till it joins Kaveri at Tirumakudalu Narasipura, in Karnataka; while 58 kms of the upstream flows through Kerala. The Kabini river-basin forms a tri-junction area of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala states that formed a contiguous eco-geographical region.

Two of the biodiversity hot spots of the 'Western Ghats World Heritage Sites' namely Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary and Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary form a contiguous stretch of important wildlife sanctuaries connecting with Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagarhole Wildlife Sanctuary, Padiry Reserve Forest, Mudumalai and Bandipur National Parks drained by Kabini River. Apart from the rich biodiversity, the anthropological significance of this river-basin is that it is the traditional home land of many tribes. Wayanad District of Kerala has the highest concentration of very unique tribes with varying social and cultural traditions; 1) Paniyan, 2) Adiyar, 3) Mullukurumar, 4) Urali/Vetta/Betta Kurumar, 5) Kattunayakan/Ten Kurumban/Jenu Kurumban, 6) Kurichiyar, 7) Wayanad Kadar, 8) Kunduvadiyar, 9) Thachanadan Moopan, 10) Wayanadan Pathiyar and 11) Wayanadan Pulayan (from 8 to 11 are listed as Other Eligible Communities for reservations under ST). In the Gudalur Taluk of Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu resides 1) Paniyan, 2) Kattunayakan, 3) Urali/Vetta Kurumar, 4) Mullukurumar.

In Karnataka state Kabini flows through two districts of Mysuru and Chamarajanagar; the tribes who are directly or indirectly connected with Kabini are 1) Betta Kurumba, 2) Jenu Kurumba, 3) Yerava and 4) Sholiga. Among the above listed tribes, there are few groups who are common to the three states. They are Vetta/Betta/Urali Kurumar, Kattunaikan / Jenu Kurumba and Adiyar who are known as Yerava in Karnataka. There are many other communities who share the habitat with the tribes. Some of them were much localised. In Wayanad and Gudalur Nilgiri there are two communities who are not represented anywhere else Wayanadan Chetty and Moundadan/Moundadan Chetty. There is yet another group, Edanadan Chetty or Gounder who are specific to Wayanad. Another significant community is the Jains, who are distributed in Mysore and Wayanad.

Innumerable sacred centres and sacred groves of each of the above communities are distributed on both banks of the river which have not been properly documented till date. The cultural adaptations and cultural heritages that are shared by the communities in all three cultural

regions also need to be studied in additions to the folklores associated with Kabini River and the associated ecosystems. The world famous *khedda* – elephant trapping operations managed entirely by the tribes that was carried in the Kabini basin has still its rudimentary elements in the occasional trapping of rouge elephants in the river-basin.

The state formation after Independence and reorganisation in 1956 trifurcated the river-basin into three administrative jurisdictions. In the year 1974 a dam was built across Kabini at Beechinahalli near Sargur in Karnataka which has created a man-made barrier resulting in cultural divergence of the traditional inhabitants. Large scale immigration of non-tribal population has occurred in all the regions of the basin and the ecosystem and livelihood of tribes, their dialects and cultural practices are experiencing tremendous strain. Ecotourism has also penetrated the Kabini river-basin in recent times with the IT boom happening in Bengaluru and also the proximity to the tourism hub of Ooty-Mysuru.

Objectives

1. To establish the ethnic linkages of the Kabini river basin tribes
2. To high light the identity of the little-known communities in the area
3. To document the historical and sacred centres in the Kabini basin

Methodology

The complexity of Kabini River Basin cultural resources along with the diversity of historical landscape of the project area and the fact that the vast majority of the region's historic values have not been documented created the need for a variety of research methodology to be employed. A variety of research tools were also required to meet needs of each component of the project: the written reports, ethnographic fieldwork combined with photographic/video documentation, digital mapping with GPS to record cultural site locations.

The project was planned to be executed in three phases*:

Phase-I: Background Research

Phase-I began with an effort to identify and document the range of heritage resources up and down the Kabini River Basin and lay out historical context and significant values by which they can be understood. The existing historical data was planned to be accessed from the State Archives and Libraries of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Phase-II: Field work combined with oral interviews and photography*

Extensive ethnographic fieldwork was planned to be undertaken especially among the indigenous groups to establish their ethnic linkages across the state boundaries on both banks of Kabini. The emphasis will be to explore and document the evidences of shared Kabini River Basin cultural, social, economic, religious and political institutions and traditions. Effort was made to carry out this documentation in participatory mode with the communities in the basin. In-house facilities of the IGRMS were proposed to be used depended upon for photo documentation and to create and craft a documentary and on camera interviews. It was proposed to make an attempt for the creation of a digital archive of important components of the project if provisions can be made to use inexpensive mapping tools and compatible GPS units. This will help to create site specific database in a digital map.

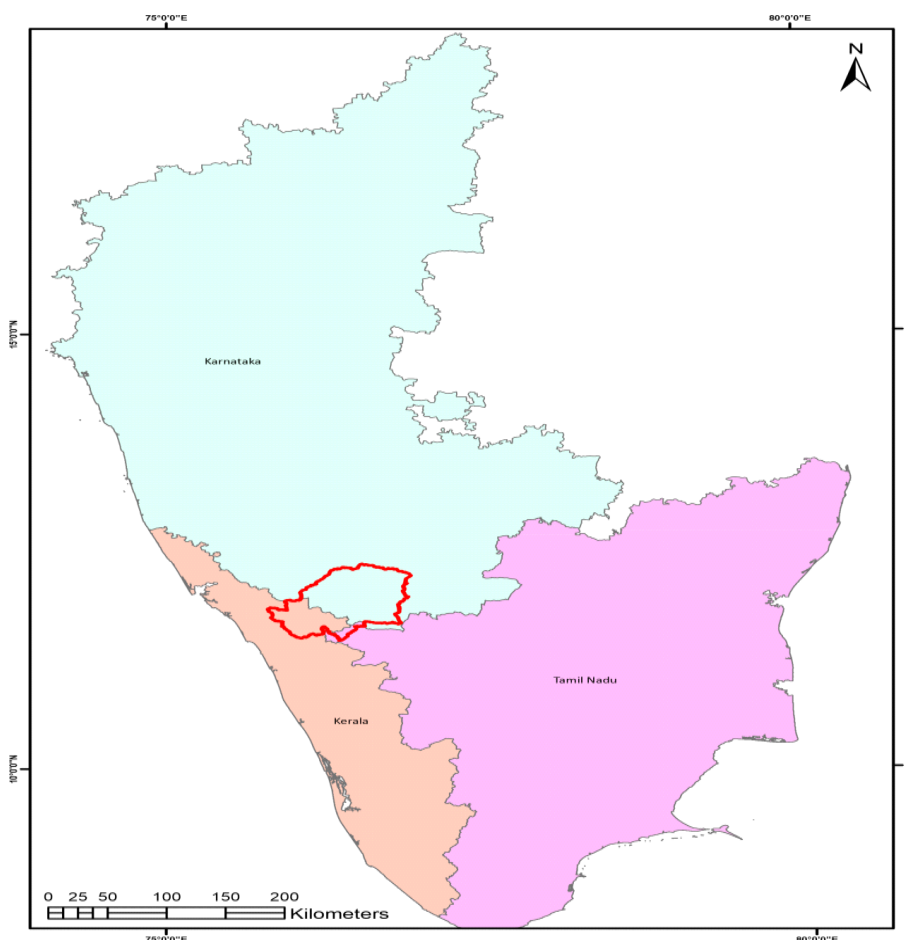
Phase-III: Deliverables

1. A written report providing an overview of cultural resources and landscapes, historic themes and site types.
2. A photo archive or one-hour long documentary on the diverse aspects of the Kabini River Basin depending upon the technical/ financial support extended by IGRMS*
3. Organise a 'Kabini Sangamam' at IGRMS, Southern Regional Centre to stage the diverse intangible folk traditions of Kabini Basin as a part of IGRMS activities*.
4. Prepare a blue print for the creation of a dedicated gallery on Kabini Basin at SRC, Mysore supported with digital interactive kiosks*
5. Identify endangered community specific tangible cultural heritage sites and launch efforts for onsite conservation by IGRMS.

** The project suffered two setbacks: First an accident to researcher resulting in a broken-leg leading to convalescence for four months (June-October 2019) and the outbreak of Covid Pandemic (February 2020 and counting) and prolonged lock downs leading to inter-state travel restrictions. The double whammy situation was unprecedented and had resulted in fund crunch and delays beyond the control of the researcher. However, I have made a sincere effort to cope with challenges and produce this consolidated report. Efforts will be made to improve upon the material in collaboration with IGRMS at an opportune time and undertake publication.*

Chapter-II Geological, geographical and biodiversity features of Kabini Basin

The region comprising of Wayanad (Kerala), Mysore (Karnataka) and Nilgiris (Tamil Nadu) (Figure-I) drained by Kabini River has unique geological and geomorphological features making of Kabini Basin a special space. The defining feature of this specific geographic region is that it is an extension of the Mysore part of the Deccan Plateau into the Wayanad District of Kerala and to the Gudalur taluk of Nilgiri District in Tamil Nadu (Map-II).



Map-II

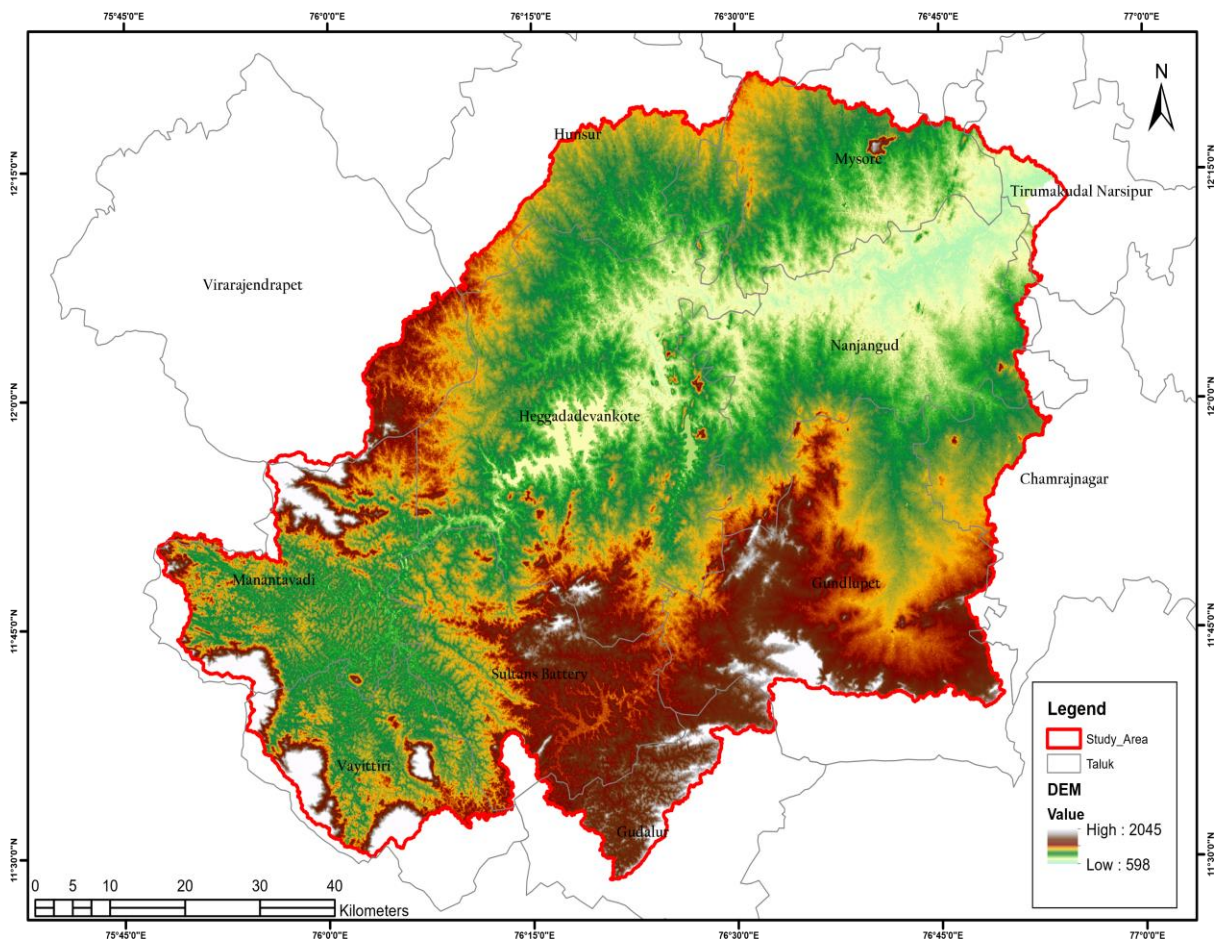
This southern tip of the plateau is drained by the Kabini River also known as Kapila (after Kapila Maharshi-sage) which is east flowing. The Western Ghats forms western boundary and the Nilgiri Massif forms the eastern boundary. The river lies between north latitude 11°30'-12°15' and east longitude 75°45'-77°0'.



Map-III

River Kabini is a seventh order stream (Vandana 2013) and qualifies the status of a river forming one of the five the main tributaries of Cauvery/Kaveri. Kabini has a length of 240kms and a basin area of approximately 7040sq kms (Kerala-1920 sq. kms, Karnataka-4613 sq. kms and Tamil Nadu-507sqkms). Kabini originates from the eastern slopes of Western Ghats in the Periya ghats of Wayanad plateau in Kerala, in the western slopes of Nilgiri-Kunda ranges mainly the Gudalur taluk of Tamil Nadu and at Lakkidi ('the Chirapunjee of Kerala') region in

the eastern slopes of the Thamarassery ghats of Kerala. Average elevation of Wayanad plateau ranges from 900-1200 m above MSL more than 60% of the area lies within 700-800 meters (Vandana 2013), with the mountain ranges in the northeast sloping towards the Mysore plateau. The important peaks are the Vellarimala (2245 m), Banasuramala (2061mts), Elamberimala (1839 m), Brahmagirimala (1608 m), Kunelippandimala (1607 m) and Tariotmala (1553 m) . Encircled by the peaks in three sides, north-west (Periya ghats and Coorg hills), west (Vayithiri/Thamarassery Ghats), southeast (Mepadi/Nilgiri ranges) Wayanad has a picturesque and undulating landscape.

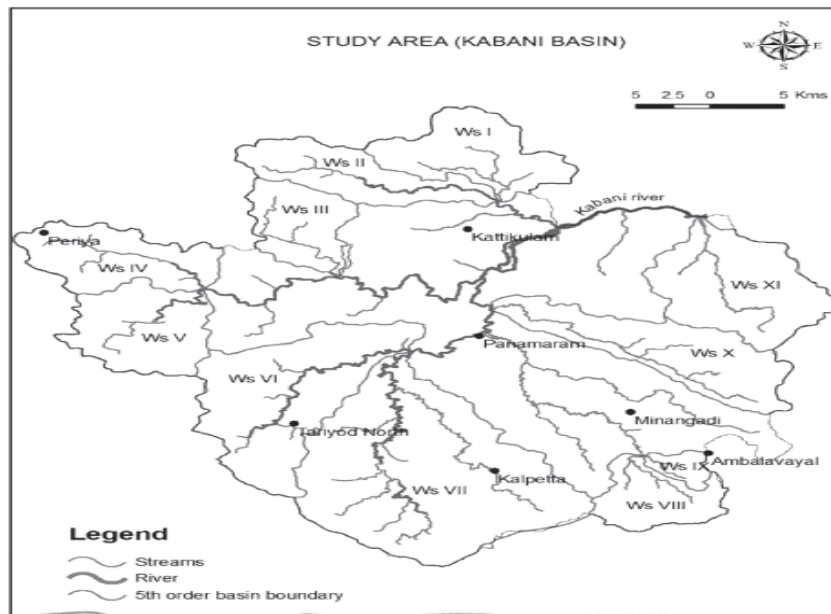


Map-IV Digital Elevation Map of Kabini Basin

Geomorphology

There are multiple drainage systems and small rivulets that originate at the height of 2061 m (in the Banasura peak) flowing into the valley lying at 215 m, that have combined into a drainage system qualified as *puzha*- term for river in Malayalam. Wayanad region of the Kabini Basin on average receives 2594.9mm (2020 IMD data) of annual rainfall. The drainage system of

Wayanad is deeply incised and dissect the plateau with broad and wash material of colluvium and alluvium which has been associated with the formation of wetland -*vayal & vayalnadu* land of paddy fields in turn Wayanad, the name of the district that reflects the character of the landscape. In the Kerala part of Kabini River there are eleven watersheds that jointly form the Kabini system in the upper riparian area where the river originates in the Wayanad region of Kerala. The Wayanad plateau experienced successive uplift in various geological time scale. The land drained by Kabini has undergone prolonged fluvial erosion due to high rainfall, experienced uplift, there by topographic rejuvenation which resulted in valley configuration and gradation in slope formation as per hypsometric study (Vandana 2013).



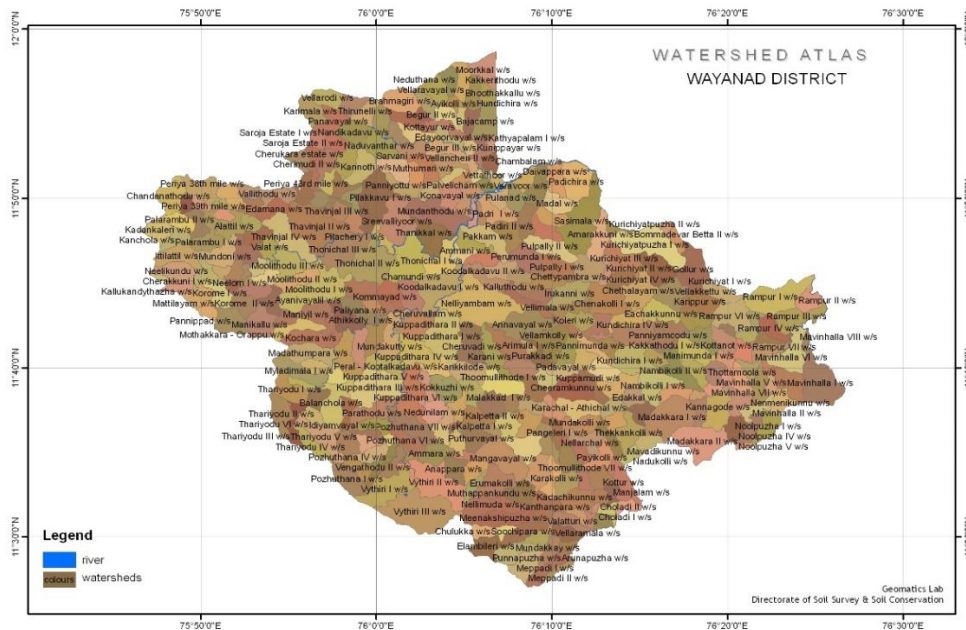
Map-V Wayanad water shed (courtesy Vandana 2013)

On a closer look at Map-V above it is clearly evident that there are rivers of 6th order and above that contribute to the formation of Kabini Basin in Wayanad. Starting in the northern banks of the river as it emerges out of Wayanad along Kerala-Karnataka boarder the Bavali puzha joins Kabini. River Bavali is considered very sacred. It originates in the southern slopes of Brahmagiri and Narimala (Tiger peak) where it is called Kalindi, draining the very sacred location of Thirunelli Mahavishnu temple complex comprising of Panchatheertham sacred pond, Papanasini stream (pilgrims take ritual dip in the sacred water for cleansing from sins and perform *pithrukarma kriya*; the place considered as the *Dakshina*-southern Kashi as it is believed that Srirama, Laxman, Parasuraman and many ancient Sages have performed *pithrukarma* here) and the Gundikashiva temple (cave temple dedicated to Lord Shiva believed

to have self-revealed at the spot). The *prathishta* of Lord Vishnu is believed to have been performed by Lord Brahma, thus Thirunelli temple complex has the divine presence of the trinity. Down the course Kalindi is joined by a stream draining the adjoining Thrissilery village famous for the Thrissilery Mahadeva (Shiva) temple and the Shrine of Jaladurga, installation attributed to Parasuraman. The streams together flow towards Bavali and further south joins Kabini to the west of Bairakuppa.

Further to the west in the northern bank lies the Mananthavady network of streams and rivulets. The Thalappuzha (head river) originating in Thavinjal and Muneeswaran kundu area flows southeast and joins streams originating from Periya ghats, Thondernadu, and Makkimala forming the Niravilpuzha which upon reaching Puthussery. The Korome rivulet (containing Meenmutty waterfall, Makkiyad) joins the Periya river from southwest completing the Mananthavady river system. From the stretch between Puthussery to Mananthavady through Koilery till Paympally the river drains watersheds in Edavaka and Padinjarethara watersheds and reaches the spot of Koodalkadavu implying joining point as it meets Panamarm River.

The third branch of Kabini in Wayanad is Panamaram puzha and Karamanthodu originating in the Banasura hills is the farthest. In Karamanthodu the Banasura sagar earthen dam was built in the year 1979. The Lakkidi and Pozhuthana rivulets joins Karamanthodu downstream at Kottathara. Lakkidi is the gateway to Wayanad from Kozhikode in the Vayitiri taluk. The area receives highest rainfall in the State. The hills to the east and to the south of Vayithiri draws on the drainage from Thusharagiri, Chempara peaks through the Venniyodu and Cherupuzha rivulets from Meppadi and Kalpetta areas. The Karapuzha is the farthest branch of Panamarampuzha in which Karapuzha dam is located near Ambalavayal. The drainage from Muttil, Kaniyambatta and Varadoor joins Panamaram river downstream near Mathoor watershed to the east of Panamaram town. Further downstream Narasipuzha joins Panamaram river near Neervaram. Main stem of Panamaram at Koodalkadavu near Dasanakara joins with Mananthavady puzha and there emerge Kabini in Wayanad. Kabini gains volume and strength upon this union and it is reflected in the channel as it cuts the flat landmass into a riverine island known as Kuruvadweep (3.8 sq km) extending from Pakkam to Chekady on the southern bank and Kattikulam and Bavali on the northern bank. Further downstream the last rivulet to join Kabini in Kerala having origin in Wayanad is Kannaram puzha draining the Mullankolly and Pulpally areas forming a natural boundary with Kerala and Karnataka (Begur range).



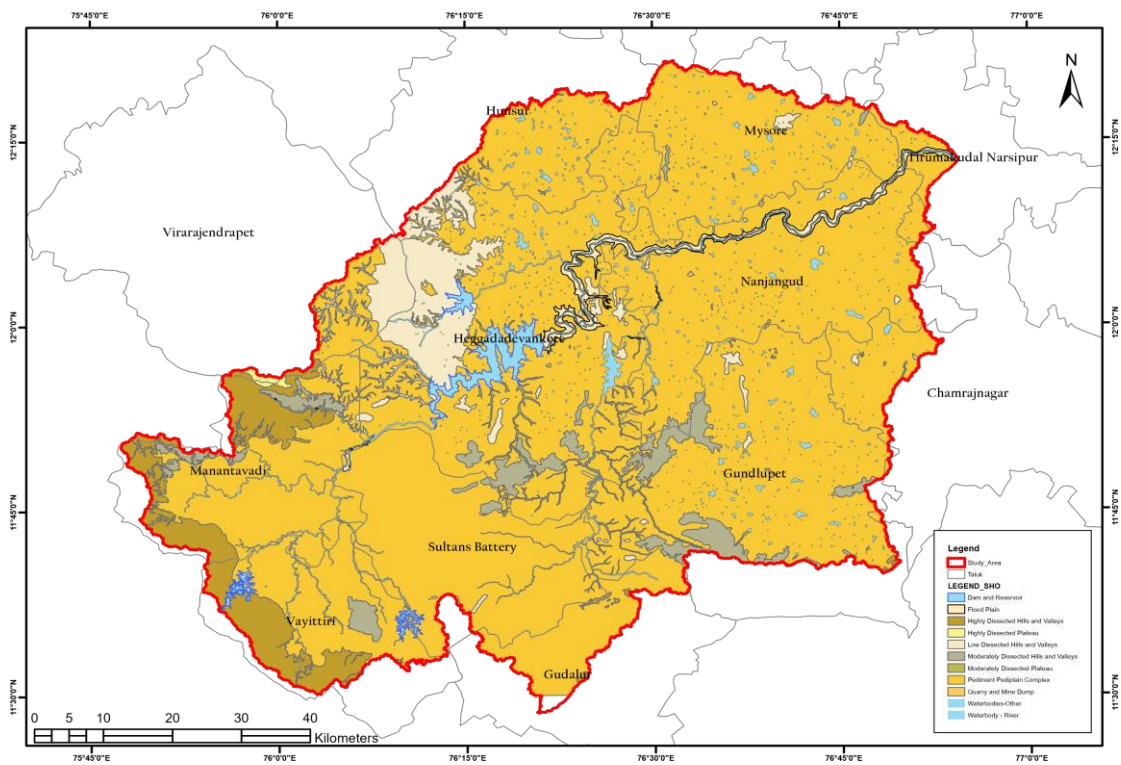
Map-VI

The drainage that originates from Pandalur, Cherambadi, Pattavayil, Erumad, Devarshola areas in the northwestern slopes of Nilgiri-Wayanad in Gudalur taluk of Tamil Nadu forming part of the Kabini Basin, flow into Kerala-Wayanad part of through Noolpuzha, Ponkuzhi and Muthanga and drains western region of Bandipur sanctuary in Karnataka state and forms the Nugu river (a tributary of Kabini that joins Kabini in the southern bank near Sargur), draining the Gundelpet Taluk of Chamarajanagar, Heggada Devana Kote of Mysore District.

Kabini emerges from their confluence at Koodalkadavu in Kerala and enters Karnataka at Bavali and flows between Kakanakote forest on the north banks and Begur range in the south. From an elevation of 760 MSL in Mananthavady Kabini flows the remaining course through Heggada Devana Kote (HD Kote) taluk 694 MSL then to Nanjangud taluk 657 MSL of Mysore district before joining Cauvery. Kabini is dammed at Beechanahalli, near Sargur in HD Kote. Built in 1974 Kabini dam has a catchment area of 2141.90 sq kms. It has bisected the Nagarhole and Bandipur National parks which was a single stretch of forest from Coorg in the west through Kakankote, Begur, Bandipur, Mudumalai to Nilgiri in the east. This stretch of forest is now reduced to parches.

There are four tributaries joining Kabini in its journey through Karnataka in the Mysore district towards Cauvery, two from north bank and two in the southern bank. The area of Nagarhole Wild Life sanctuary drained by the Nagar Hole (*hole* in Kannada implies river) and the

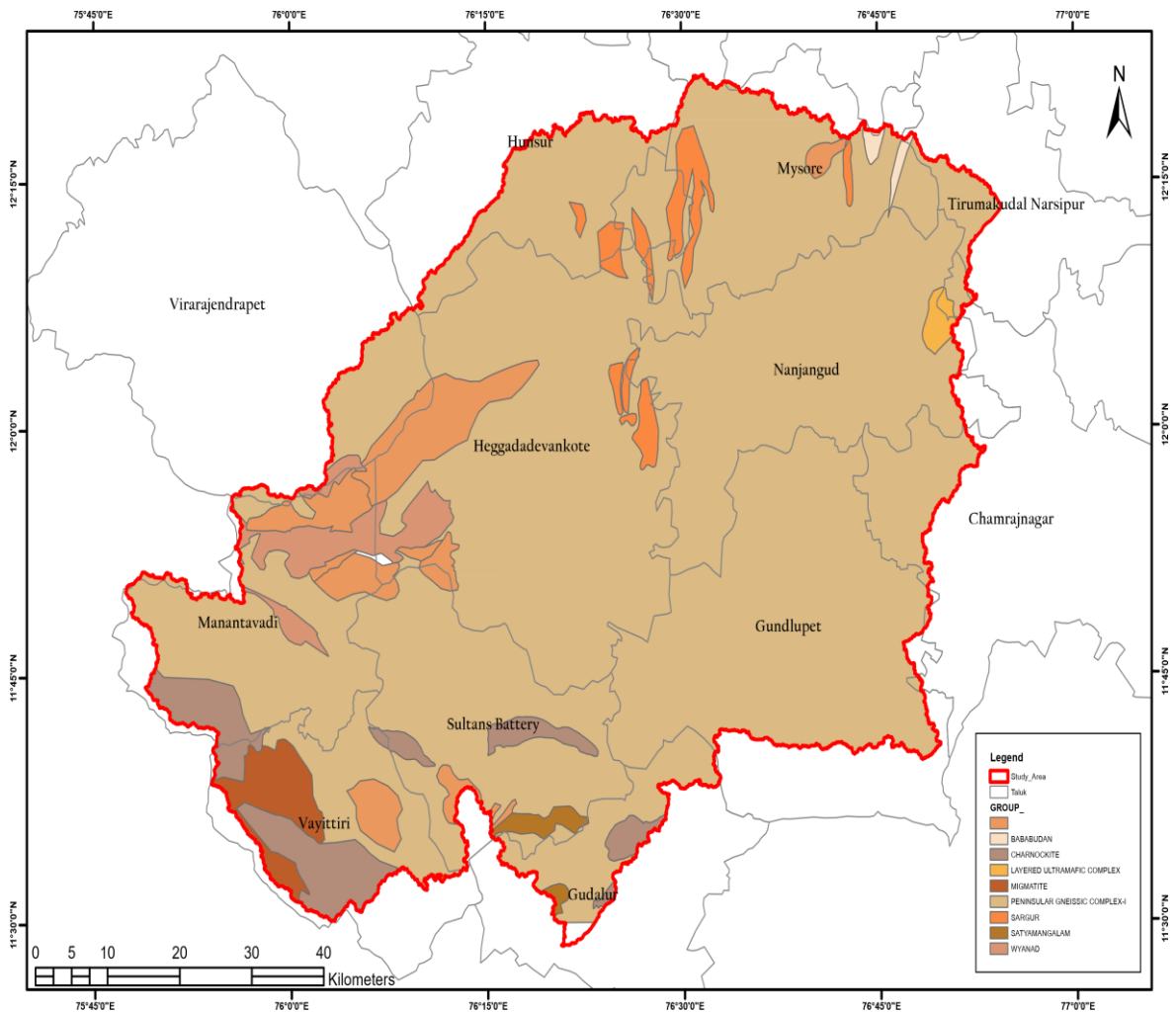
Mettikuppe forest drained by Kalhalla, Sarati and Koigehole together form Taraka from west join Kabini at Matakere. There is a reservoir built across Taraka for irrigation near Penjahalli in the year 2006. Further to northwest originating at Sullepura forest the Sidapura Hebba Halla and from rivulets from Hosuru form the west join Taraka to the east of H D Kote town before Taraka joins Kabini. There is a small reservoir in Habba Halla too built in the year 1968 near Shanti pura to the north of H D Kote town. The Nugu river mentioned above, originating in the Niligiri Wayanad flowing through Bandipur and Gudelpet into H D Kote forms a *sangama* with Kabini to the west of Madanahalli in the south bank. Nugu reservoir built in 1958 located in Beerwal village for irrigation is the earliest reservoir in H D Kote taluk. The Gundal river originating in the Gudelpet taluk of Chamarajanagar district is a seasonal rivulet draining the foothills of Gopalswamy sacred hill, joins Kabini in the south bank to the east of Nanjgud Srikanteshwara Swamy temple town complex and bathing ghats. Kabini further flows through Suttur the seat of the Pontiffs Sri Suttur Math also located on the south bank of the river, a busy pilgrim center for the Veerashiva faith having a thousand years of history. Soon Kabini mouth opens to the River Cauvery at Tirumakudalu Narasipur sangamam one of the holiest bathing ghats formed by Kabini-Cauvery sangamam and temple complexes spread on both banks of the sangamam.



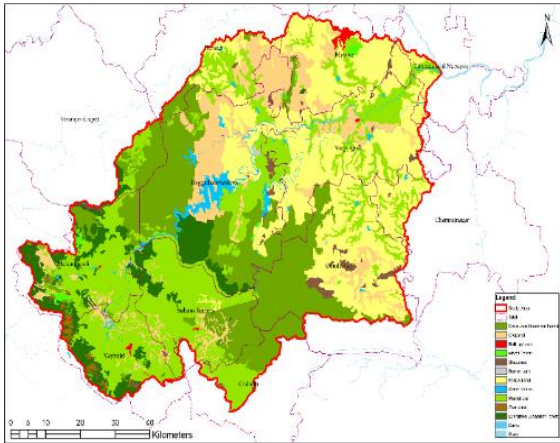
Map-VII Geomorphology of Kabini Basin

Geology

The river basin contains crystalline rocks, peninsular gneisses, migmatites, hornblende schist, older granites, chamockites, interbedded sequence of pelitic schists, dolerite, amphibolites and lamprophyre dykes. Peninsular gneisses cover major part of the basin. The younger granites (close pet granite) are exposed in the western and eastern parts of the basin with almost N-S trend. Weathering is noticed up to a depth of about 35m in the basin. A number of NNW-SSE and N-S trending dolerite dykes occur at the south-eastern part of the basin. Red loamy and sandy soil loam represent major soil types of the area. The thickness of the soil cover generally varies 1 to 3 m. Alluvium soils are found on gently sloping and flat valley bottom.

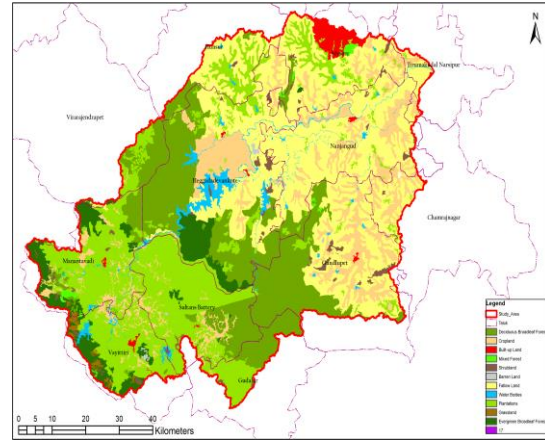


Map-VIII Geology of Kabini Basin



Map-X

Land use & Land Cover 1985



Map-XI

Land use & Land Cover 2005

A comparison of the Land use and land cover data by area for various categories in Kabini Basin for 1985 and 2005 reveals that deciduous broad leaf Forest area has declined, cropland area has increased, area under built-up land is growing steadily, mixed forest is growing, shrubland is also decreasing, barren land area is decreasing, fallow land area is increasing, area of waterbody has decreased, plantation area has increased in the Wayanad region, grass land area has slightly enlarged, ever green forest area grew at the cost of deciduous.

Biodiversity

Situated in the heart of Western Ghats World Heritage Site, Kabini Basin is one of India's finest biodiversity repositories. The perennial river and the catchment of the dam is the life line for wildlife of the Nagarhole and Bandipur National Parks NP in Karnataka which is contiguous to Mudumalai NP in Tamil Nadu and buffered by Wayanad Wild Life Sanctuary attracts wild life enthusiasts from all over the globe. There is an array of mammals the main attraction being the big cats and the elephants. The Gaurs are the next biggest herbivores, followed most numerous spotted deer, huge sambar deer, the barking deer and the tiny mouse deer. Sloth bear, wild dogs, pangolins, porcupines, otters, mongoose are found in plenty. Common Macaque, Lion tailed macaque and Langurs in abundance. Malabar giant squirrel is yet another attraction. Apart from the above there are many species of reptiles and lizards.

At the head of the food chain is the Tiger, enjoying exclusive domain in the In yester years the fame of the Indian Tigers attracted the World's royalty to seek trophies and oldest

photograph of hunting dates back to 1891 of the Grand Duke of Russia (<https://news.mongabay.com/2013/10/photo-essay-notes-from-indias-kabini-river/>)



The loss of pristine tiger habitat in the Kabini Basin has led to increase in human and conflicts as evidenced by the latest report of judicial order to shoot man-eater tiger in Mudumalai-Bandipur NP. (<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/sunday-story-when-the-hunter-becomes-the-hunted/article36922207.ece>)



Hunter being hunted now

Dealing with royalty the great Indian elephant is second to none. The World-famous Mysore Dassara is incomplete without the mighty tusker herd over taking the Mysore Palace grounds and the erstwhile regal streets. They make an early visit from their abode in Kakankote elephant camp to the Mysore Palace grounds.

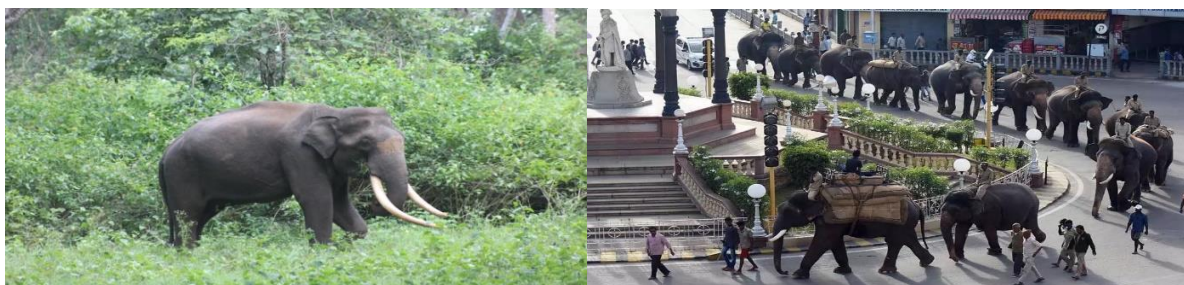




Photo courtesy Deccan Herald

The spotting of Black Panther in the Nagar Hole area had become sensation in the wildlife conservation story made famous by wild life photographer Mithun in Instagram.



@Instagram, Mithun

The avian inhabitants Kabini forests are plenty too both permanent residents to seasonal visitors. The aquatic life in the waters of Kabini sustains human, animal and bird species. The thick flora sustains the varied wild life.

Agro-biodiversity of Kabini Basin is very unique too, starting with the sustenance farming (millets, paddy, roots and tubers, bananas) by the indigenous inhabitants to the plantation crops (coffee and tea) introduced by Colonial planters and other cash crops (cardamom, ginger, pepper, araca tapioca etc) by the large migrants in the Kerala and Nilgiri Wayanad. Before the construction of the dam in H D Kote the Karnataka part of the basin was dependent on cultivation of rainfed food crops, now the area is under intensive canal and borewell irrigation wetland crops of paddy, sugarcane, coconuts, ginger, banana etc.

Apart from the rich biodiversity, the anthropological significance of this river-basin is that it is the traditional home land of many tribes. Wayanad District of Kerala has the highest concentration of very unique tribes with varying social and cultural traditions; 1) Paniyan, 2) Adiyar, 3) Mullukurumar, 4) Urali/Vetta/Betta Kurumar, 5) Kattunaickan, 6) Kurichiyar, 7) Wayanad Kadar, 8) Kunduvadiyar, 9) Thachanadan Moopan, 10) Wayanadan Pathiyan and 11) Wayanadan Pulayan (from 8 to 11 are listed as Other Eligible Communities for reservations under ST). In the Gudalur Taluk of Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu resides 1) Paniyan, 2) Kattunaickan, 3) Urali/Vetta Kurumar, 4) Mullukurumar. In Karnataka state Kabini flows through two districts of Mysuru and Chamarajanagara; the tribes who are directly or indirectly connected with Kabini are 1) Betta Kurumba, 2) Jeenu Kurumba, 3) Yerava and 4) Sholigar. Among the above listed tribes, there are few groups who are common to the three states. They are Vetta/Betta/Urali Kurumar, Kattunaickan/ Jeenukurumba and Adiyar who are known as Yerava in Karnataka. There are many other communities who share the habitat with the tribes. Some of them were much localised. In Wayanad and Gudalur Nilgiri there are two communities who are not represented anywhere else Wayanadan Chetty and Mandadan Chetty. There is yet another group, Edanadan Chetty or Gounder who are specific to Wayanad. Another significant community is the Jains who are distributed in Mysore and Wayanad.

Innumerable sacred centres and sacred groves of each of the above communities are distributed on both banks of the river which have not been properly documented till date. The cultural adaptations and cultural heritages that are shared by the communities in all three cultural regions also need to be studied in additions to the folklores associated with Kabini River and the associated ecosystems. The world famous *khedda* – elephant trapping operations managed entirely by the tribes that was carried in the Kabini basin has still its rudimentary elements in the occasional trapping of rouge elephants in the river-basin.

The state formation after Independence and reorganisation in 1956 trifurcated the river-basin into three administrative jurisdictions. In the year 1974 a dam was built across Kabini at Beechinahalli near Sargur in Karnataka which has created a manmade barrier resulting in cultural divergence of the traditional inhabitants. Large scale immigration of non-tribal population has occurred in all the regions of the basin and the ecosystem and livelihood of tribes, their dialects and cultural practices are experiencing tremendous strain. Ecotourism has also penetrated the Kabini river-basin in recent times with the IT boom happening in Bengaluru and also the proximity to the tourism hub of Ooty-Mysuru.

Lakes and tanks

The famous Pookode Lake, the only one of its kind in the Wayanad District is situated in the Kunnathidavaka Village, halfway between Lakkidi and Vythiri on a loop road. The Panamaram Rivulet, one of the main tributaries of the Kabini River takes its origin from the Pookode Lake. This Perennial Lake has an extent of 5.23 hectares. Besides this lake, there are two well-known Tanks in the District, one at Paingattiri in Nalloorad Village of Mananthavady Taluk and the other an irrigation tank at the Agricultural Research Station at Ambalavayal in Sulthanbathery Taluk.

The Mysore Royalty had promoted tank irrigation in Mysore region of Kabini Basin. Plans are being prepared to revitalise the lakes and tanks of the basin and also tap the Kabini water for the drinking water needs of the city of Mysuru <https://starofmysore.com/mp-proposes-full-utilisation-of-180-mld-of-kabini-drinking-water-project/>

Chapter-III Archaeological and historical aspects

Edakkal caves and prehistory of Kabini Basin

The upper reaches of Kabini in the Wayanad region of Kerala contains the earliest known archaeological site in the Basin. Edakkal Caves are located at Ambukuthimala at an altitude of 4600 feet above sea level. According to legends associated with Ramayana, of which Wayanad has many sacred locations that have very strong living traditions, Ambukuthimala is named after an arrow from the bow of Luv and Kush hit this place. The hill appears from a distance in the form of resting (lying) posture of a woman.



The place Edakkal located ($11^{\circ} 37' N$ $76^{\circ} 15' E$) in the western slope of the Ambukuthimala, earns its name from the peculiar way in which 'a stone in between' cleft, covers the roof of the cave. Three huge boulders constitute the structure of the rock shelter with cleft in the middle, creating three chambers. These caves are natural caves may have formed after earth quakes or through natural processes. The Caves were rediscovered by F. Fawcett, a British Officer in 1894. According to Fawcett, these caves were used by Neolithic people.





Visitors to the cave complex at 4600 ft MSL, are now provided with fabricated steel stairs having a steep climb. Earlier approach was tedious and only the adventure minded could climb up the hill side. The cave is on two levels and the lower chamber measure about 18 feet by 12 feet with a height of 10 ft (Sajit & Janardhanan, 2009). The next level of the cave is about 96 feet long and 22 feet wide and 18 feet high (Census Report of Kerala, 2011). As the visitor descend into the cave through the steel fabricated steps, the left wall of the shelter has petroglyph engravings and figures of human, animals, peacocks, plants and flowers. The panels on the righthand side have depictions of shamanistic ritual scenes. Many of the human figures have raised hair, some have masked faces and all these figures are eye-catching and have archaeological significance. Apart from these pictorial carvings, ancient inscriptions including a Tamil Brahmi script have been identified from the caves.



Inscriptions in the Edakkal shelter: No.4 is in Tamil-Brahmi characters and the earliest transliterated by Hultzch “the writing of the glorious Vishnu Varma, the propagator of the-Kudumbiyil family

Much has been speculated about the Edakkal engravings, the methodology, meaning and date, from the time it was first reported. The people who created the engravings did not execute it as a work of art as we perceive it today. It was a reflection of their beliefs and practices. Its true meaning will never be known other than the interpretations we make. Conjecturing and infusing meaning into these enigmatic creations is always a challenging and satisfying pursuit for research.

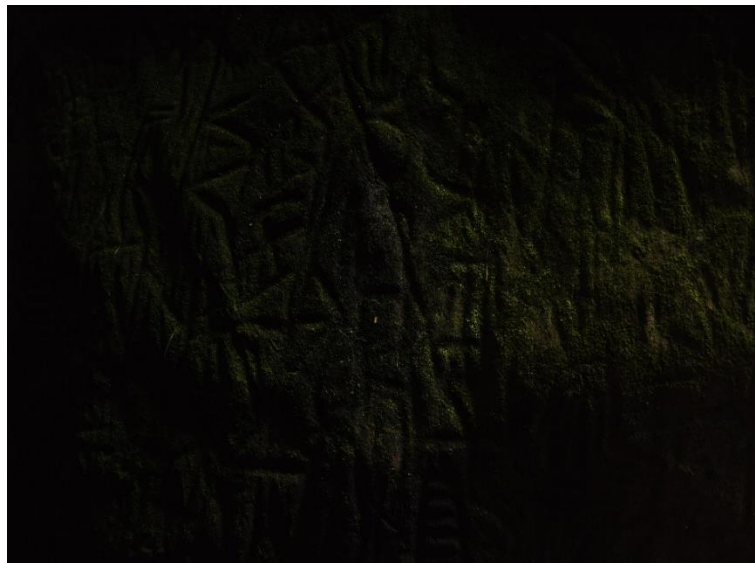
The location of the Edakkal shelter is awe-inspiring and bestows a mystic feel even today. Nearly 4 ft of debris from the cave was cleared from the rock shelter soon after its initial discovery by Fawcett. He does not report any stone artifact of prehistoric nature from it. The debris of nearly 2 ft was also removed from this shelter in 2010–11 and during the process no prehistoric stone artifact was found either. This clearly shows that the rock shelter was never inhabited in the true sense but possibly was a place of worship and veneration, like a temple, of the aboriginals who once inhabited the region (Fawcett 1901:104).

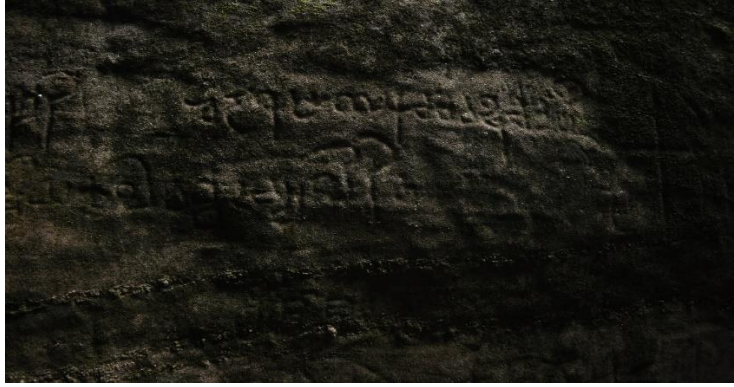
Fawcett over a century ago had observed that Kurumbas had a reverence for the Edakkal engravings, but no one visited it. He notes its association with the Chettis and a deity they worshipped before conducting a tiger hunt and with minor goddesses called Mudiampilli and an imp called Kuttichattan (Fawcett 1901:104–06). All this in a way speaks of the reverence the locals had towards the figures carved in the shelter, though none claimed authorship.

It is quite possible that the authors of the engravings at Edakkal were the ancestors of the Kurumba tribe, who were quite creative in their religious beliefs. They had an affinity for erecting religious edifices on hills. E. Thurston mentions the Kurumba tribe worshipping rough stones set in caves called *kurumbar koil*. During illness and when instructed by their ancestral spirits, tribal Kurumba made offerings to Bettadachiamma or the ‘mother of the hill’. Apart from this, they also believed in evil and good spirits and practised exorcism and animal sacrifices (Thurston 1909, Vol.4: 164). Kurumbas practised ancestor worship and erected megalithic monuments (Ray 2008: 162). It is quite apparent that some of the megalithic monuments scattered around Edakkal owe their origin to this ethnic group.

The main representations on both wall surfaces are anthropomorphic figures. On the left wall as we enter, two large figures occupy the central portion of the rock surface and surrounding it are smaller ones and animal figures. On the right wall too, the main figure is anthropomorphic followed by smaller figures of animals. There are both male and female forms represented. The female forms have angular representations with slender waists, and queer head-dresses like the male figures, possibly to designate a divine character. The faces of all these anthropomorphic images are not explicit in physiognomic detail and seem to be adorned with some mask-like

element to impart a mystic iconic feel and character. Both the arms of the anthropomorphic figures are generally shown raised up and fingers are not clearly demarcated and have leafy appendages. The feet of many of the images are not clearly demarcated. Was this depiction in tune with the underlying belief that spirits have no feet? Nearly all the anthropomorphic figures are individualistic and no two are exactly similar. They are more variably executed possibly to denote different personas. Some commonality, however, is observed in the coiffure and costumes of these figures and also at times in the delineation or positioning of the hands. Some female figures with the queer headgear apparently have some divine standing and may represent the hill divinities or goddesses Bettadachiamma which Thurston says were worshipped by Kurumbas to ward off ill-health, evil or Masiti (also a female divinity worshipped by Ten Kurumbar) (Thurston 1909, Vol.4: 164).







In an early authoritative account by Kesari Balakrishnapilla 'Keralam eight thousand years ago or the Edakkal caves' (1938) opines that 'on the basis book titled Anthropology of Asia' Prof Giufrida Ruggeri the author thinks that the people instrumental for the engravings at Edakkal belonged to Australo-vedar (*Proto Australoid*) race who lived in India before the Aryans. Balakrishnapilla further finds affinity of the authors of Edakkal engravings and Kerala tribes- the Malavedar, Mullukurumar, Paniyan and Cheruman with that of the Central Indian tribes- the Munda, Gond and Ho. The ancestors of Mullukurumar tribe who continue to live in the

vicinity of Edakkal (*thereby in Kabini Basin*) are according to him the authors of engravings in the Edakkal Cave complex (<https://books.sayahna.org/ml/pdf/kesari-edakkal.pdf>).

Archaeological studies carried out in the recent period also trace back the history to megalithic period (University of Calicut Study material, 2011). The study of Archaeology Department hints that some of the engravings in the cave are similar to those found from Indus Valley Civilisation (The Hindu, 2009).

According to Rajan Gurukkal (1995), the engravings collectively reflect scenes of rituals of the tribes. The engravings also include some inscriptions. In the reports of E.O. Tillner the oldest inscriptions were in Sanskrit dated to 5th Century A.D., and the new writings were done in Malayalam (O K Johny, 2008). Tillner also doubts that it was used as a place of worship by tribal people. The antiquity of the tribes of the Kabini Basin has strong affinity to the megalithic ancestry. The perspectives thus far emerged treat this geographic part of peninsular India as a 'trijunction' considering the fact that it is a meeting point three Dravidian languages Malayalam, Kannada and Tamil respectively. Administratively too the attribute of trijunction to this particular geographic area is appropriate.

Apart from Edakkal there are three other pre-historic sites; one in the neighbourhood at Thovarimala (Johny 1984) five kms from Edakkal and one in the foothills of Edakkal itself at Nenmmeni Panchayath at a distance of 2 kms and at Kappikunnu in Pulpally village. Wayanad has many other prehistoric sites and the excavated artifacts/relics are now conserved at Wayanad Heritage Museum at Ambalavayal. They consist of stone axe, hero stone (Baveli and Chanamangalom), legged potteries from megalithic period. The proximity of the Kerala- and Nilgiri-Wayanad makes a case for the continuity of the archaeological features in upper Kabini Basin.







Chathurbahu (Vishnu) from Bavali

Coming to prehistory of Karnataka part of Kabini Basin there is scanty evidences so far and there was difficulty in accessing the sources under prevailing covid condition, this area will be strengthened on a later date.

History of Kabini Basin- Punnatta and Kalinga Kingdoms

Historically Kabini Basin has an exclusive identity of its own. An attempt is made here to segregate the same.

The heritages of the indigenous people Wayanad (Kerala & Nilgiri) was also a focal point of interaction in Wayanad's cultural and geographic linkages with the adjoining Mysore region from long past. The earliest known dynasty in the Kabini Basin is that of the Punnatas. The following brief account by 'Centre for Excellence in Classical Kannada' (<https://shastriyakannada.org/Land,%20History%20and%20peopleEng.html>) speaks volumes on their significance in the cultural history of the basin- "*Punnata (punnATa) (ಪುನ್ನಾಟ ರಾಜವಂಶ)* was a minor kingdom in South Karnataka dating back to the 5th century A.D.

However, there are many empirical evidences that take back the antiquity of this kingdom to pre-Christian era. Ptolemy (127 A.D.) the well-known Greek geographer writes about 'Pounnata' and declares that it was famous for emeralds. Pliny (23 A.D.-78 A.D. too mentions the emerald stone of 'Pounnata'. The fact that emeralds are still found in Coiambattore region which was possibly a part of Punnata desha as also the discovery of Roman coins in the vicinity

lend credibility to this statement. Some Egyptian documents contain the word 'punt' which archaeologists aver is a reference to Punnata. An inscription found in Chandravalli states categorically the Mayurasharma the Kadamba king defeated Punnatas in the 4th century A.D... Recently Dr S.Settar the eminent historian and archaeologist has made many interesting observations about this dynasty and tries to create a very vital link between the Dravidian culture and Punnata dynasty, He has unearthed many references to this dynasty in the Tamil Sangam literature. He has delineated these facts in his celebrated book, '**Shangam Tamilagam mattu Kannada Nadu Nudi**' (2007)

Punnata was a kingdom of fast changing boundaries what with its itinerant battles with Kadambas and Gangas. However it was based in the fertile region irrigated by the rivers Kaveri and Kapini. Keerthipura or Kitthipura was the capital of this kingdom. (Presently it is a small village called Kittur (kittUr) in the Heggadadevanakote aluk of Mysore district. During it's hey days this kingdom included many parts of Coorg, Hassan, Coiambattore and Bangalore districts.

Scholars do not concur on the etymology of the word 'Punnata'. The word 'punal' means a river in Tamil. (In Kannada it has become 'honalu') Consequently 'Punnata could be the land (nADu) constantly irrigated by a rivers -Cauvery and Kabini?. Periyapurana the Tamil classic says: 'The land which is constantly watered by a river is 'Punnata'. (ಪೊನಲ್ ಎನ್ನಾಳುಂ ಪೊಯ್ಯಾದು ಅಳಿಕ್ಕುಂ ಪುನ್ನಾಡು).

Most of the information that we have about 'Punnadu' are based on inscriptions. They were not necessarily erected by the kings of that dynasty. Later Punnata kings ruled between the fifth and the seventh centuries. Three copper inscriptions that are available so far were found in Mamballi and Komaralingam. Based on this, some of the kings that ruled in this dynasty were Tamra Kashyapa, Rajaditya, Vishnudasa, Pruthvipathi, Skandavarma, Nagadatta, Bhujangadiraja, Skandavarma-2 and Ravidatta. An inscription installed by Durvineetha the Ganga monarch mentions a wedding that took place between Jyeshtha and Durvineetha. Most of these inscriptions write about a peaceful pastoral life rather than one beset with warfare. Dr Settar writes elaborately about the script of these inscriptions and relates it to the antiquity of Kannada and Karnataka.

Punnata kingdom was once an important centre of Jainism. A Jaina community which had its moorings here was known as 'Kitturu Sabgha'. They came to Punnata region in the 3rd century B.C. as advised by Bhadrabahu Bhattaraka the celebrated sage. They migrated to Gujarat and its neighbouring regions later on. There they acquired the name 'Punnata Sangha'.

Thus 'Punnata Dynasty' has some historical antecedents that deserve further probing." The people Wayanad continue to refer to the people hailing from across the north bank of river Kabini as 'Punnatan'.

Another dynasty almost contemporary but survived for longer than the Punnata and yielded considerable political and economic power over Kabini-Cauvery Basin is that of the Gangas of Talakkadu. The account of this dynasty from the above source is also very significant in the contest- "*Western Ganga dynasty or The Gangas of Talakadu (ತಲಕಾಡು ಗಂಗರು) constitute one of the most enduring and celebrated royal dynasties of Karnataka. They provide vital clues about the relations that existed between the Tamilian culture and Karnataka. This paved the way for a better understanding of the Dravidian antecedents of the culture of Karnataka. This dynasty came in to being as early as the fourth century. (350 A.D.) The speculation that the dynasty was found under the guidance of the Jaina saint Simhanandi Acharya is not firmly established. The early Gangas belonged to the vaidic religion. The dynasty was found by Kongunivarma and its capital was kuvalALapura which is now known as Kolar. However the capital was shifted to Talavnapura which is Talakadu in the modern parlance. This shift took place during the regime of the king Avineetha. (469-529 A.D.) This region was thickly infested with jungles and that probably is the reason for the elephant which happens to be the royal emblem of Gangas. Not much is known about the early kings of this dynasty. A sizable part of the inscriptions were declared as suspects (kUTa shAsana) by J.F.Fleet and that has added to the uncertainty. Many historians have opined that Talakadu was the capital of Gangas right from its inception to the end.*

Documentary evidences about Ganga dynasty are more reliable after the ascension to the throne of Avineetha. Among these kings Durvineetha, Bhuvikrama, Sripurusha, Saigotta Shivamara, Marasimha-2 and Rachamalla-2 were more renowned. They played crucial roles in expanding the kingdom and preserving the territories. There were constants strifes with Cholas, Pallavas, Rashtrakootas and Chalukyas. Small kingdoms such as Punnatas were usually in good terms with Gangas. Durveneetha had to wage wars with Pallavas and Kadambas and secured creditable victories. His kingdom extended from Coimbatore in Tamilnadu up to Bellary in the north. He was patron of literature and arts and was a poet by his own merit. He is the author of a work called 'Shabdavatara' and he has a written a commentary for Bharavi's 'Kiratarjuneeya'. He is credited with translating Gunadhya's 'Vaddakathaa'. Bhuvikrama is known for his confrontations with Pallavas. Sripurusha ranks among the more important Ganga kings. He was known for his military prowess. He defeated

Nandivarma Pallavavarma on the one hand and sent back the Rashtrakuta as far as Kampili in Bellary district. He could implement many administrative reforms and he is the author of 'Gajashastra'. After Sripurusha, Gangas had to concede their absolute powers to Rashtrakutas and become their feudatories. Saigotta Shivamara had a chequered career and he was a pawn in the political feuds among the kings of the Rashtrakuta clans and spent a considerable part of his life in detention. He has authored 'Gajashtaka' and 'Sethubandha'. He was the first Ganga king to adopt Jainism. Marasimha-2 was an able supporter of Rashtrakuta kings and won many battles for them. Gradually Gangas lost their hold on the political situation. The Chalukya and Chola kings became dominant and that marked the end of Ganga dynasty. [Chavundaraya](#) who served three different Ganga kings was a well known warrior and a patron of art and literature. He is associated with the Gommateshvara idol at Shravanabelagola and his patronage to Ranna the famous Kannada poet.

Ganga Kingdom comprised of Kolara, Mysore, Bangalore, Tumkur and Mandya districts of present-day Karnataka. This region was known as Gangavadi. However, at different points in its reign it had control over Shivamogga, Hassan, Chikkamagalur, Coorg, Bellary and Dharawar districts. Occasionally they occupied Coimbatore and Selam districts of Tamilnadu. Talakdu was their capital and Manne (maNNe=mAnyapura) and Mankunda (mAnakunDa) were their regional capitals. They practiced the Vaidic religion to begin with and later they adopted the Jaina religion. They were essentially secular and encouraged all religions. They encouraged agriculture by building canals and supported trade by adopting proper policies of taxation. Many of them had literary accomplishments and all of them were patrons of art and culture.

The 'Architecture and sculpture of Gangas' do not have many distinctive features even though many temples and Basadis were built during their regime. The temples at Manne (maNNe), Narasamangala, Kolara (kOLARA), Kittuuru, Nandi and the Chavundaraya Basadi at Shravana Belagola are the more important ones among them. The inscriptions of Gangas constitute copper inscriptions, stone inscriptions and memorial stones. The debate about the spuriousness or otherwise of the copper inscriptions makes decisions difficult. Generally the copper inscriptions are in Sanskrit and the stone inscriptions are in Kannada. It is possible to trace the evolution of Kannada script with their help because cover a long interval of time. The subject matter of the memorial stones is varied. '[Athakuru Inscription](#)' is erected to honor the fidelity of a dog. Gangas have not contributed much to the numismatics of Karnataka either. M.H.Krishna opines that five different coins bearing the elephant emblem with out any script belongs to this dynasty.

There are certain branches of Ganga dynasty other than the Gangas of Talakadu. Gangas of Kadaravalli (kAdaravaLLi), Mandali Gangas of Shivamogga, Gangas of Asandi near Kadur, and the Tamilu Gangas of Kolar are the important ones among them.

Period of Rajas and Feudal Lords

In the prehistoric period the whole of Wayanad was home land of the indigenous communities as evidenced by the lithic engravings of Edakkal cave attributed to Mesolithic Age (Johny 2006:39). The earliest effort to compile the history of Wayanad is by C Gopalan Nair (1911,) who sourced the information from 1810 records of Zilla Court of North Malabar. Wayanad came to be ruled by the Kudumbiyil dynasty whose period is attributed to 3rd B C- 5th A D by Johny (ibid). The origins of the 'Kudumbi', 'Kudumban', 'Kurumbar', 'Kurumar' is attributed to this erstwhile *vedar* (hunters) leading to the formation of Vedar Kingdom in Wayanad. The Vedar Kings of Arippan and Vedan were the last in the line, the descendants of Vedan became the 'Vettu'/'Urali' Kurumbas and Mullukurumar are 'Arippan's descendants (Cf Nair). The inferences drawn by Gopalan Nair (1911) Balakrishnapilla (1938) agree that the Edakkal inscriptions point to a period in later part 4th century when a large part of Wayanad and Nilgiri area was ruled by Vishnuvarman of Kudumby dynasty. An act of aggression by the last Vedar King to imprison a Thulu King from Kambly on pilgrimage to Thirunelly led to the end of Vedar rule. The Kambly King was rescued by the combined forces of Kshatriya rulers of Kottayam and Kurumbrand (belonging to Malabar region) in the Middle Ages (10th Century according to Bhaskarpilla ibid) and by the early part of 13th century Kottayam Rajas gained control over whole of Wayanad territory (Johny 2006:71). Wayanad was under feudal rule of Padinjare Kovilakam, one of the three branches of Kottayam with Mananthavady as the headquarters. During the perioda of Ravi Varma and Pazhassi Raja, (the last ruler of this branch) Wayanad and Malabar (1773-1805) was a scene of wars for supremacy involving the invasions Hider and Tipu Sulthan followed by the British annexation (1800) period. The strategic importance of Mananthavady and Sulthan Bathery areas began to grow significantly. The effort of the British to gain supremacy in Malabar began with the establishment of their military fort at Tellichey 1776-1784. Mysore under Hider Ali was spreading his influence to Malabar and southward and was keen to resist the British. The British 'were fully alive to the fact that Hyder Ali's invasion of Malabar'...and with a view to March troops from Tellichery to Madras 'despatched Ensign Parker to survey the line of the country of Kottayam Raja's territory (Wayanad) to Srirangapatanam through Sautgurr (Sargur) to Vellour (Vellore-Madras) as early as 1764 from the accounts of Logan (1989{1951}:403). This effort could be

seen as the first attempt in modern times to open up Kabini Basin and Wayanad and linking up the area with wider regional network of communication. Securing Manantoddy was the primary focus of the British in Malabar after defeating Tipu Sultthan in December 1799 jointly with Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, the then ruler of Wayanad; and later quelling the challenge to protect the suzerainty of Wayanad posed by Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja himself in November 1805 who resisted the colonial rule. Pazhassi's armed resistance against the British after the fall of his headquarters in Kottayam was reorganised and regrouped at Wayanad aided by the fierce indigenous warrior groups of the Kurichiyans and Mullukuruman, who considered the fight against the British as a war to protect their own homeland. Even after the death of Pazhassi on 30th November 1805, at Mavilomthodu Pulpally, (where a *Smrithi Madapam* has been erected to commemorate Pazhassy Raja), the resistance against the foreign rule was kept alive by the Kurichiyans, which is famously known as Kurichyan rebellion led by Thalakkal Chandu and Mananthavady was the scene of many crucial battles (also see Baburaj: 2017, OK Johny: 2007). The indigenous warriors lost the battle to defend their homeland and British established absolute dominance in Wayanad and Mananthavady became the centre of colonial administration to expand their ventures in Wayanad.



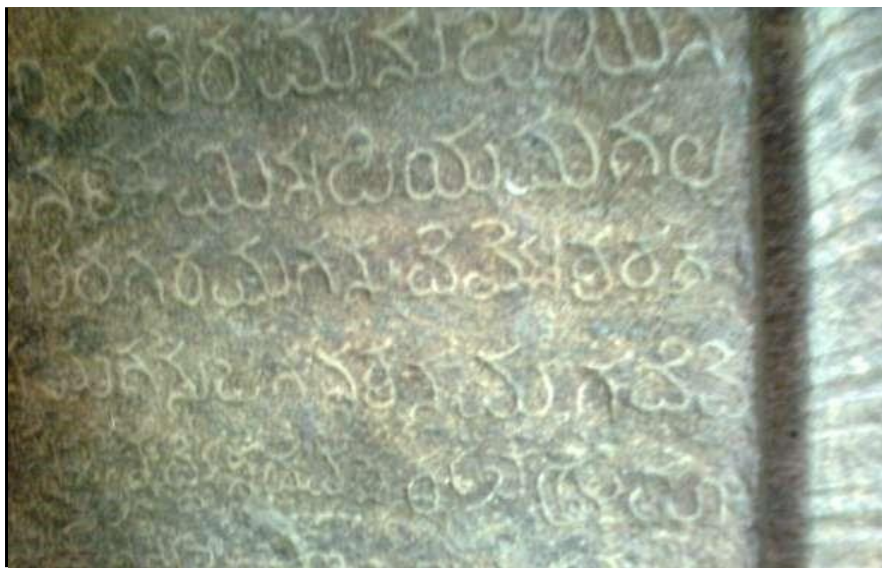
Pazhassi statue at Mavilanthodu, Pulpally

Period of Jainism

The proximity of the Western Ganga dynasty (3rd to 10th Century https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ganga_dynasty) ruled initially from Kollar and then from Talakadu (Coorg) and the influence of Jainism in Wayanad need to be seen together. “*Saigotta Shivamara had a chequered career and he was a pawn in the political feuds among*

the kings of the Rashtrakuta clans and spent a considerable part of his life in detention. He has authored 'Gajasthaka' and 'Sethubandha'. He was the first Ganga king to adopt Jainism''.

During 9th to 14th Century Jainism had flourished due to the patronage by Hoysala kings of Mysore. However, the emergence and spread of Shiva-Vaishnava sect had compelled many Jains to flee to the safety of Wayanad. Epigraphic evidence of this influence was obtained from Ananthaswami Jain temple shasanas of Varadoor written in Kannada script which refers to Mananthavady as 'Hosangadi' (new market). The indigenous tribes referred to the locality as 'Manthody'. The British referred to the place as 'Manantody' and 'Wayanad Bazar'.



Old Kannada inscription at Jain temple, Panamaram

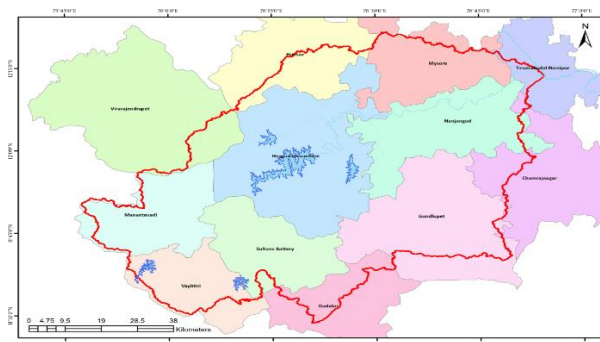
Colonial period

Logan's account (1888 [1951, 1989] cccxxvi) of 'Manantoddy' in the then Vemom desam of *Ellurnad* (Elamkur) *amsam* describes it as the headquarters of the Deputy Collector and the Tahasildar of Wayanad. 'It contains, in addition to public offices, a hospital, a travellers' bungalow, a chattram in Buffalo Street (and another at Bavalli) and middle school, and is a centre of some trade. A weekly market is held here on Sundays'. Logan also indicates that 'there was formerly a cantonment at this place on low flat hill, consisting of a small redoubt, an artillery shed, a range of officers' quarters, place of arms, hospital, etc'.

The above early account of urban activity reflects the strategic advantages that might have been considered for choosing the place to locate the cantonment to start with. the period indicates that foundation of a nodule of administration, an outpost of authority signalled the

Mananthavady centred activities. Further it also overlooked the movement of goods and people across the Mananthavady at Pandikadavu, river crossing across Mananthavady River. The process of Colonial administrative consolidation of Wayanad lasted over period of more than hundred years after revolts by Pazhassy followed indigenous Kurichiyar and Kurumar. This involved primarily the streamlining of revenue divisions and revenue settlement of Wayanad (Wynad) Taluk under Malabar District in March 1877 (Logan VolIII1989 cccxxi) into North and South Wayanad Subdivisions.

The unique historicity of Kabini Basin from the evidences presented above places the basin at par with any other river valley with civilizational heritages. The frequent reference to this region to a 'trijunction' (Misra 2017:289) or confluence of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu is over simplification and diminishes the glorious role the river Kabini has played in sustaining human diversity and ecological diversity. Only after the enactment of the State Reorganisation Act of 1956 on linguistic principle the language boundaries have come into play. Prior to the enactment the Kabini Basin had its own Kingdoms and political administrative mechanisms (Vedar, Punnata, Western Ganga, Hoysala, Kottayam, Kurumbanad, Mysore/Srirangapatnam, Madras Presidency and finally Kerala/Karnataka/Tamil Nadu States). The State Reorganisation resulted in the trifurcation of the rather than its unification. The communities who shared common heritages were set on a path of divergence having come under the administrative control of dominant regional languages. The Kabini Basin's Geomorphology makes it more affiliated to the Deccan plateau rather than to Nilgiri massif. The ethnic and social composition of Kabini Basin was independent and did not form part of the Nilgiri complex. Even the geographic area that is drained by the Kabini Basin forming parts of Nilgiri District comprising of Panthalur and Gudalur tahasils forms an extension of Deccan plateau and Wayanad, known as Nilgiri Wayanad.



Kabini Basin Heritage Area

Chapter-IV Ethnology of Kabini Basin

The characteristic aspect that makes any river basin unique is the human heritages and their varied adaptations. Kabini Basin has a complex story as revealed by the ethnological canvas. The flourish of many indigenous communities in a river basin with an area of seven thousand forty square kilometres is to be examined in the historical perspective that was discussed in the previous chapter. Territorially the Wayanad (Kerala & T N combined) part of the basin had distinct boundaries to the south by Thamarassery and Chembara ghats; southwest formed by the Periya and Brahamagiri ghats; and the eastern side by the Nilgiri which formed the upper reaches of the basin. The territory to the north of the basin from Wayanad is bounded by forest much denser in the past and continues to be the abode of indigenous groups. Beyond the forested region the area formed the territory in Karnataka is the flat land occupied by peasants and herders.

Divided river basin and the fractured indigenous identities

Eleven communities with ST status are indigenous of the Kabini basin who are now disbursed in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu for all of whom the basin is their abode from ancient times. All eleven communities are present in Wayanad part of Kabini Basin in Kerala (while the total count of Scheduled Tribes in Kerala is 37 communities), while five of the eleven are exclusive to Kerala. In Karnataka part of the basin five of the 11 are share the habitat while one community (Soliga) is exclusive. In Nilgiri-Wayanad of Gudalur, Nilgiri district of Kabini basin four ST communities have their habitation as well. The table below illustrates the State wise distribution of ST communities of the Kabini Basin.

List of ST (Indigenous) communities of the Kabini Basin	Kabini Basin states		
	Kerala	Karnataka	Tamil Nadu
Adiyan (who call themselves <i>Ravuler</i>)/Panjiri Yerava*	√	√	-
Betta/Kadu/Urali/Vetta Kurumar*,	√	√	√
Jenu Kurumban/ Ten Kurumban/Kattunayakan*	√	√	√
Kunduvadiyar**	√	-	-
Kurichiyan/Kurichchan	√	-	-

Mullukurumar/Kurumba*	√	-	√
Paniyan/Paniyerava*	√	√	√
Soliga	-	√	-
Thachanadan Moopan,	√	-	-
Wayanadan Pathiyan**	√	-	-
Wayanadan Kadar**	√	-	-

*Same community known differently two or more states

**ST status for educational benefits only (OEC ST)

Table-1 Distribution of ST communities in Kabini Basin

The clubbing of the communities having differing apparently differing names in full or part has been made after considerable appraisal of the authors field assessment and available ethnographic material on the communities concerned.

A brief account of each of community listed above is presented below:

Adiyan (Ravuler)/Panjiri Yerava

Adiyan of Kabini Basin Wayanad has a population of 11,221 (2008 Tribal Survey) and in the adjoining Virajpet taluk of Kodagu district, Karnataka, Panjiri Yerava are enumerated with Yerava having three other subgroups- Pania, Badava/Badaga and Kaji/Kake Yerava (*more on the Yerava sub groups later*) Yerava. The Adiyan and Panjiri Yerava have a tradition-imposed ban on living to the south bank of Mananthavady/Kabini river. So, we find them settled mostly in the north of Wayanad (Mananthavady taluk) and Virajpet in south Coorg. The community on their own state that they are *Ravuler* – meaning people. The etymologies of the terms *adiyan* -salve, and *yeravaru*- borrower, implies bondage or bonded. The community has a sad history of being under praedial slavery both in Wayanad and Kodagu. The system that put the Ravuler in state of perpetual in the Kabini Basin was the then prevailing customary practice advancement cash received by them during the temple major festivals of the basin at Thirunelly, Valliyurkavu, Pulpally etc. It is indeed only a matter of conjecture the community was involved in slash and burn system of agriculture in the Kabini basin in the past and the competition for land by powerful migrant groups made them landless agrarian serfs.

The association of the term *panjiri* has not been fully established. Census of India monograph 1981 gives the following account “*In old Kannada and Tamil Panje means a man in distress, a poor man and one who .is afraid of others. Panjiri may be a derivative of this word to convey the above meaning. Panji also means a pig These people do not have any special association*

with this animal and there is no taboo regarding consumption of pork. Though they too offer worship to Panjurli Bhoota, which is quite popular in Dakshin Kannad district, there is nothing unique about it. However, one of the informants tried to explain that the head of the Panjurli Bhoota is depicted as having raised hair in a disorderly fashion. In the past, the Panjiri Yeravas too were known for such a hair style and they might have looked like the very incarnation of Panjurli may be of interest to note that Lewis Rice (1908) too has made a similar observation about the hair style of Yeravas. It is somewhat hard to find a satisfactory explanation or meaning for the term Panjiri and the leaders of the community could not venture forth any meaningful answers in this regard.”. The Adiya Panjiri Yerava trace their origin to mythical ancestors Mel Arachai and Keel Arathi, the mythical couple supposed to be the progenitors of their tribe are the principal deities exclusively worshipped by the Panjiri Yeravas. The neighbourhood of Tirnelly in Wayanad of Kerala is regarded as their abode and that place is referred to as Pada maru thile muthadi in their mythical accounts. At Kudure Kode, a place about 6 km distant from the famous Narayana temple at Tirunelly, there is a dilapidated temple at the rear portion of which there are a few round stones and tridents struck upright in the ground. The Adiyans and Panjiri Yeravas believe that these stones and the other objects at this place represent their progenitors as also kari kala (the earthen pot) and belli-muram (the winnowing basket) associated with them. For Adiyans and Panjiri Yeravas Kudure Kode is a sacred place for pilgrimage and aspire to pay a visit at least once.

The most defining commonality of Adiyans and Panjiri Yerava is in their social organisation consisting of clan subdivision which they call Mantom or Mandu. The names of the mantom signifies place names and often the house names of the landowners to whom their ancestors were tied/attached in the past.

The Yerava subgroups are endogamous and reason why they came to be called by the common term is because of the fact that they engaged in the similar occupation of agrarian serfdom that involved tied labour. The 1981 census provided the population figures of three subdivisions, Panjiri Yeravas (4487), Pani Yeravas (9730) and Badaga Yeravas (104).

Betta/Kadu/Urali/Vetta Kurumar:

The community has a claim to be the true autochthones of Kabini Basin and their distribution is pan-Kabini Basin from the upper reaches of Wayanad, Kerala; and Gudalur, T N to H D Kote and Virajpeta in Karnataka. One the reasons for their fractured identity across the basin is that the area has been penetrated by forces beyond the borders of the basin and the increased

interaction with the incoming communities and their own positioning visa viz the incoming population.

Gopalan Nair's (1911; 13-15) account on Wayanad throws light on the early legendary history of the Kurumbar. Siting writing of Dr Oppert in the "Madras Journal of Literature Science" that the Kurumbers had carved out a kingdom for themselves during the reign of the Kudumbyil dynasty and the legendary Vedar Kings, 'Arippan' and 'Vedan' who were last in the line rulers of the Vedar Kings of Wayanad. Vettu (Betta/Urali) are said to be descendants of Vedan's race whose territory was to the south of Panamaram river and had his fort in Vedan Kota near Pulpally.

The prefixes to the term 'Kurumar' signify different aspects of their life and times. Their origin story is associated with the sacred 'Niridhi Botta', *botta* or *betta* mean hill, and the legend implies their ancestors were the descendants of three siblings from Niridhi hills to the north of Kabini river Basin. 'Betta' term is also associated with the style of tying of the women's upper cloth in a knot over their right shoulders as '*betta kettu*'. The term 'Vetta' is associated with their expertise in timber clearance work-*vett* meaning cutting. The prefix 'Kadu' signifies forest and conveying children of forest. This nomenclature was widely used in Karnataka by the non-tribes and the community considers the usage 'forest dwellers' derogatory. Urali prefix in Kerala is associated with the traditional life style when they practiced shifting cultivation and move from one 'uru' (place) to another periodically. The practice is known as kumbri yevasaya in their own dialect.

In Gudalur taluk of Nilgiri District in Tamil Nadu the Betta Kurumar are a subdivision of the mega-Kurumba complex (Alu Kurumba, Jenu Kurumba, Mullu Kurumba and the term used is Betta Kurumba. The Betta Kurumar dialect has a greater influence of Kannada and this dialect is spoken by the community in all areas of Kabini basin.

They live in clusters of settlements called '*mothkire*' consisting of varying number of hutments of households and each mothkire is headed by a chief called *Megalan*. At the centre of each mothikire traditionally they built an *ambala* or *chittala* which had varied functions of place for community worship, meeting of elders, youth dormitory and resting place for guests. Entry for women were allowed only up to the outer varandha of the low roofed structure having a centre pillar. The oldest mothikires of the Betta Kurumar in all of Kabini Basin still retain this special pattern.

The community-name preferred by them is Betta Kurumar, other prefixes are attributed to them by non-tribes. Internally the community has '*makk*' or clan divisions and clan exogamy is the norm. A recent publication by KIRTADS, Kozhikode, Kerala (2020) on their oral literature has

compilation of their clan names. It is noticed that the clan are territorial which may be a pointer to the practice of territoriality that had prevailed among them in the past. Whereas the KSTRI, Mysore, Karnataka study report on Betta Kuruba (2020) clearly recommends the usage of the term Betta instead of Kadu prefix.

The most significant attribute or skill of the Betta Kurumar is that they are the 'artisan tribe of Kabini Basin'. Traditionally the men practiced black-smithy, carpentry and timber cutting, basketry and mat weaving (men and women) and women made hand-made pottery. Shifting cultivation and cattle rearing was in vogue too. The attribute of artisan tribe of Kabini basin makes them true holders of a wide range of traditional knowledge systems.

Jenu Kuruba/Jenu Kurumban/Ten Kurumban/, Kattunayakan, Nayakan

This community of former food gatherer and hunters is yet another pan-Kabini Basin tribe, part of the Kuruba cluster in Karnataka and Kurumba cluster in Nilgiri, Tamil Nadu. In Kerala Wayanad and in the contiguous Wayanad part of Niligiri district in TN they have three synonyms, Kattunayakan, Ten Kurumban and Jenu Kurumban. Anthropological accounts have added to the confusion because the ethnographic studies so far on the group is carried out Iyer LKA (1931) in Mysore, Haimendorf (1952) in Wayanad, Misra (1969) in Karnataka, Bird David (1989, 1999, 2014) in Nilgiri and Wayanad etc. Bird David (2014) analysed the ethnonym issue faced by the community and came to the conclusion that 'the saga of this ethnonym (Nayaka / Kattunayaka), which has gone on for nearly two centuries, will continue. So, there is need for pan-Kabini basin ethnographic coverage of them. Misra (2017: 354-361) has summarized the confusion that prevailed with regard to names listed for this community when he writes 'For instance Bird-David continues to call the group she has worked with as Naika. Quoting Haimendorf, she observes that the name Naicken perhaps was given by Malayalam speaking neighbours (referred above). Local government and other agencies use the names Jenu Kurumba and Kattunaiken. In Kannada speaking region, they identify themselves as Jenu Kuruba, that is the name I continue to use in my writings but others like Demmer refer to them as Jenu Kurumba (2014; 363-388). The confusion regarding the names of the Scheduled Tribes is owing to a variety of factors.' He continues identify some of them; popular usage and the mother tongue of the community vs the tribe under consideration, the non-usage honorific title in Dravidian language to refer to community considered of low status in regional hierarchy, the issue of how people identify themselves, often the Scheduled Tribe community in a region is called by different names by the members of different communities, confusion as exists in literature compounded by attempts of the authors to identify one group

with other and in finding a common origin of these groups. The identity of Jenu Kuruba has become quite distinct now owing to the fact that they are listed under the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).

The impoverished plight of the Jenu Kuruba in the Kabini basin has been reported by Misra (1982) 'on the basis of the analysis of the ecology of the area in which the Jenu Kuruba now live that once they must have been living around the side of the river Kabini which flows through the forest. The river not only supplies the water they required but also enabled them to procure fish. One can also say that at that time the forest must have been rich in its fauna and flora which must have given them a balanced nutritious diet. Now the situation for Jenu Kuruba has considerably changed. They have been pushed away from the river banks by more experienced peasants, because the lands on the banks of the river are fertile and irrigated by the river water.... after having been pushed away from rich river side, they have not been left alone in the forest. The forests have been protected and restrictions have been imposed on the activities and movements of the Jenu Kuruba inside the forests. The Jenu Kuruba have been made to realise that they have no rights in the forests they have lived in for centuries. They have been made realise that they have no rights in the forests they have lived for centuries. They have been made refugees in their own habitat. As if this was not enough, the forest and resources which were to be protected and for which all restrictions were imposed on the Jenu Kuruba, have been exploited on large scale with the result that there is little left for foraging in the forest. All these have put the Jenu Kuruba in most precarious condition. On the one side they stand exposed and on the other they have very little to meet their basic needs. Today one finds them mostly working as casual wage earners with forest contractors, forest department and peasants. The work is not uniformly available. As the Jenu Kuruba are known for their skill in extracting honey, chopping wood and trekking *and tracking* (add by me) in the forest they are preferred both by the department and private forest contractors. But the wages paid to them are exceedingly low and they are exploited in all senses of the term- in spite of their skill and demand for their work they remain poorest of the poor'. The situation of their counterparts elsewhere in the Kabini Basin has been similar. However the Mysore Dassara and festivities involving the procession of Goddess Chamundeshwari on Vijayadashami day and whenever the wild elephants have to be trapped with help of Koonkie elephants while in conflict with humans in habitation areas of Kabini basin at Nagarhole, Bandipur and Wayanad sanctuary areas the mahout skills of the Jenu Kuruba come into the limelight.

The population of Kattunayakan/ Ten Kurumba in Wayanad, Kerala was 17051 in 2008 (KILA survey) and 33777 (KSTRI, Mysuru)

Kunduvadiyan

Is the smallest ethnic group having a population of only ---- in Kabini Basin residing in Kunduvady hamlets in Pakkam and Chekady (in the Pathri reserve forest range in Mullankolly Village) as well as in Erulam and Meenangady in Wayanad district. This author came across the community in the 1978-78 while doing fieldwork in Pulpally village (then Mullankolly was part of Pulpally) for his doctoral dissertation. Their hamlets are generally on the banks of watersheds, adjacent to paddy fields and engage in dry land plantation of coffee, ginger and tubers and roots. Previously hunting with bows arrows and fishing was also a subsistent activity.

The Kunduvadiyan are matrilineal and practiced avunculocal residence pattern. Each hamlet cluster was controlled by a *Karnavor* or elder and a five-member council of elders representing the territories of their distribution deliberated on community matters.

The annual Kolu festival on the seventh day after Vishu (1st Metam 15th April) is celebrated as Kunduvady utsavam at a sacred grove deep inside the Pathiri reserve is participated by Kunduvadiyan of whole Wayanad and the neighbouring Mullukuruman, Adiyar, and Kattunayakan of Chekadi area. Animal sacrifices are made to their ancestral deities.

The ST privileges that were once granted to the community were withdrawn during 1977-78, a factual report and recommendations were submitted by KIRTADS in 1980 to include them in ST and as per the records of Lok Sabha the then Kozhikode MP had raised the issue in Parliament < <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/317601/> >, currently granted Other Eligible Community for ST benefits in educational reservation. The plight of this small community Kabini basin goes unattended in the corridors of vote bank politics.

Kurichiyar/Kurichchan

Kurichiyar are exclusive to Kerala's Wayanad district of Kabini Basin. Historic and Ethnographic accounts on the Kurichiyar (Logan: 1887, Thurston:1901, Gopalan Nair:1911), Luiz: 1962, Mathur:1977, Panoor 1971, Aiyappan and Mahadevan :1990, Suseeladevi and Saraswathi: 1985) stated that they were a breakaway group of Nayers- Kari Nayers who pioneered the exploration and colonisation of western parts of Wayanad estimated to be before 9th century (Aiyappan and Mahadevan 1990: 3). Their settlements were exclusive clusters of houses located along the *vayalorams* (shores of wetland paddy fields, along the streams and Mananthavady branch of Kabini river basin) surrounded by swidden land or forest. Each settlement -comprising of collection of thatched houses and sacred buildings around a central

courtyard, known as *mittom* formed a joint family organised on matrilineal principles. Each such unit was headed by a *karnavan / pittan* eldest male member of the matrilineal clan and his wife *ammayi*, who performed the role of functional owners *odaykaran* and *odayakarathi* respectively. The Kurichiyan avoided social interaction with other groups guided by very conservative notions of purity and pollution. The Kurichiyan practiced wet land paddy cultivation, combined with shifting cultivation of paddy varieties, millets, pulses along with spices. Kurichiyan excelled in hunting wild games using bow & arrow and spears and fishing in the streams and river. They maintained large herds of cattle for milk, ploughing, threshing and manure. On the whole the Kurichiyan had a large resource base under their command which was managed with collective labour of the matrilineal clan members. The earlier ethnographies indicate that they led a very healthy and happy life. They were politically organised under the command of a territorial chief called *Nattu puppan* (cf Aiyappan & Mahadevan 1990) assisted by sub territorial chiefs known as *Kunnu puppan*. During the feudal period their habitation area was brought under the control of the Padinjare Kovilakam (Western Branch) of Purannattu Swarupam, the royal clan of the kingdom of Kottayam in North Malabar, who introduced land tenancy and revenue system and temple trusteeship of large tracts of Kurichiyan land. The Kurichiyan owed allegiance/loyalty and rendered valiant military service to the last ruler of Kottayam, the Kerala Varma Pazhassy Raja in his resistance of Mysore invasion by Hyder Ali followed by Tipu Sultan during the period of 1774 to 1793 when Wayanad was a theatre of war and the Kurichiyan guerrilla warriors being a strong fighting force of Pazhassy Raja.

With the starting of colonial period after the fall of Srirangapatnam the British abandoned their long-term collaborator against Mysore-the Pazhassi Raja and ceded whole of Malabar to Madras Presidency. This period in history marks dark ages for Kurichiyan. They valiantly fought the colonisers along with Pazhassy Raja till his martyrdom in 1805. They reorganised and rose in rebellion in the year 1812 under Kurichiyan leaders, Edachana Kunkan and Thalackal Chandu to shake off the oppressive colonial tax regime extracted in cash. The oppressive land revenues, confiscation of land and restrictions imposed on forest utilization impoverished the Kurichiyan considerably. British opened up Wayanad for plantation agriculture which attracted large scale migration to Wayanad from plains. The simple minded and truthful Kurichiyan had trouble in negotiating the onslaught of land-hungry and scheming migrants, petty traders and moneylenders. Their encounters with the colonial administrative mechanisms of governance and law enforcement agencies to seek justice also turned bitter.

They shunned schools and hospitals on fears of pollution. The principles of social exclusiveness to their *mittom*, control mechanism, self-reliance and limited social interaction with outsiders helped to cling on to their shrinking resource base. However, the inference we get from this period on Kurichiyan is that they emerged from the colonial period with their matrilineal system intact, strengthened political leadership, common ownership of property, sharing of resources and responsibilities, caring for all the members and respect for elders and conserving their time tested agricultural and health practices.

Kurichiyan community elders are store houses of indigenous knowledge and specific traditional knowledge since time immemorial. They share this knowledge exclusively inside the community and ensure that the person who is receiving the knowledge in the next generation is genuinely interested and have capacity to carry this by observing all customary laws. Kurichiyan are observing many customary laws in collection of medicinal plants and preparation herbal medicine. They were traditional medicinal medical practitioners using medicinal plants in the forests. The medical practitioners or the herbalists among the Kurichiyan consist of generalists and specialists. Generalists give medicine to most of the diseases and specialists handle the patients of selected diseases only. The herbalists keep the identity of the herbal recipe concealed from others, as they fear that if they divulge, the medicines became ineffective. So, in many cases the knowledge of herbal recipes disappears along with the death of the herbalists unless the mentor *Muni* in dream gives consent for divulging the knowledge. They always keep the medicinal value of the plants as secrets without revealing to others. The popularity of the herbal medicine practiced by Kurichiyan has travelled beyond the boundaries of Kabini Basin into the neighbouring States too.

The Kurichiyan play a very important role in protecting the biodiversity of Wayanad. They preserve all traditional unique rice varieties suitable to different climatic conditions and having medicinal qualities. Their knowledge on various land types and its capacity to resist flood and draught also ensure the food security of tribal communities.

The mastery of the Kurichiyan in the field of conservation and preservation of biodiversity associated with paddy cultivation in Kabini Basin has received international acclaim through the efforts of Cheruvayal Raman and his steadfast commitment to cause of conservation Wayanad's biodiversity in general and paddy bio-diversity in particular. < <https://krishijagran.com/success-story/cheruvayal-raman-the-guardian-of-indigenous-paddy-seeds/> > < <https://thannal.com/150-year-old-natural-home-of-a-natural-farmer/> >



Cheruvayal Raman

In the post-independence period Kurichiyan have entered a phase of development. They have emerged as the second largest tribal group of Kerala with a total population of 35909 and 8362 families, constituting 8.43 percent of the total tribal population of the state in the year 2008 based on the survey undertaken by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) and Scheduled Tribes Development Department of Kerala. Over period of hundred years their population recorded 481% growth (7465 in 1911 Census). Their family size is 4.29 (higher than state average) and sex ratio of 1000:981 (less than state average). 70.36 per cent of the present population of the Kurichiya resides in Wayanad district; with a population of 25266 and 18129 were male and 17780 were female. Literacy rate of the Kurichiyan of Wayanad district is 84.76(male: 89.99 and female:79.36). The figure shows that the literacy rate is far better than the total scheduled tribes literacy rate of the district, which is enumerated as 71.36. The baseline survey of 2008 is found only 2.63 percent landless families among the Kurichiya. Only 13 incident of child mortality is identified in the last five years. It constitutes only 2.66 per cent of total death in occurred in the last five year Whereas the same among total tribal population is seen 3.15 percent.

Developments in the field of education, interaction and modernisation has changed outlook of the Kurichiyan considerably. Important areas where visible changes have occurred are :

Notion of purity and pollution- the Kurichiyan's traditional concepts of being polluted while in contact with members of other communities (except Nambuthiri and Nayar) had held them back from sending their children to school, availing hospital facilities, seeking employment etc. However, the elders continue to observe the custom of a purificatory bath before entering the house.

Habitat and Social organisation- The matrilineal joint family system and collective ownership of property among Kurichiyan have visible signs of transition. The organic unity of the *mittom* is only ceremonial and sentimental. Functionally the member family units have become

independent nuclear families. Our discussion with community elders revealed that in most of the *mittoms*' properties have been divided among the men of the matrilineages. One third of the total wetland or a minimum of two to three acres of wet land and the yield is set aside for the common socio-religious ceremonies and welfare measures of the group old and dependents. There is an increasing trend of patrilineal inheritance of property which became a movement among the Kurichiyan youth in the 1980s (Suseeladevi 1985), has gained strength especially among the professionally educated and employed category. Similarly, there is no compulsion to stay in the mittom joint family unit as members are permitted to construct independent houses erected in the land allocated to them. Common property continues to be owned and controlled by the Karnavar. The clan organisation 'kulam' traced through the female ancestress and the associated institutions gods and goddesses is not weakened.

Land is the main economic resource of the Kurichiyan. The Kurichiyan pioneered the wet land paddy cultivation and they continue the pursuit of this activity with great zeal. Mechanisation of production is a visible change. The dry land is mostly under cash crops (coffee, pepper, coconuts, ginger, banana and vegetables). Organisation of production is on family efforts and reciprocal labour by men and women. The wetland set aside for common purpose is under collective ownership and cultivated using the collective labour force of the mittom and the labour mobilisation and yield management is by the Karnavaor and his wife ammayi. Hunting activity has become ceremonial. While implementing the provisions of the Kerala Land Reform Act 1970 many Kurichiyan joint families who had leased their lands to migrant cultivators to meet financial exigencies happened to lose the land as the lessee claimed ownership under provisions of the act.

The role of territorial chiefs 'nattu puppan' and council of chiefs have become ceremonial and meetings rare as matters are dealt at the level of each mittom. The successor of a pittan is his sister's son but his managerial skills and acceptability also matters. The emergence of a line of politically aligned leadership affiliated to multiple political parties with state and national level roles has given Kurichiyan community a preeminent position.

Their own traditional pantheon of gods and goddesses dominate the religious practices and belief system. Worship and propitiation of high god Malakari, clan goddesses, spirits of ancestors 'nizhal' and god of hunt and goddess of farming constitute the pantheon. Propitiation of the divine and mediation is by their own shaman and they do not hire services of Brahmin priest. However, influence of Sanskrit Hinduism is seen only in very elite section of Kurichiyan.

Mullukurumar/ Mullukurumba

In the Kabini basin the Mullukurumar/Mullukurumba are distributed in Kerala Wayanad and in the western slopes of Nilgiri (T N) Wayanad. While discussing the identity of Betta Kuruba above we have discussed Gopalan Nair's account (1911; 13-15) on Wayanad that throws light on the early legendary history of the Kurumbar. Siting writing of Dr Oppert in the "Madras Journal of Literature Science" that the Kurumbers had carved out a kingdom for themselves during the reign of the Kudumbyil dynasty and the legendry Vedar Kings, 'Arippan' and 'Vedan' who were last in the line rulers of the Vedar Kings of Wayanad. Vettu (Betta/Urali) are said to be descendants of Vedan's race whose territory was to the south of Panamaram river and had his fort in Vedan Kota near Pulpally. While the Mulla Kurumar are said to belong to Arrippan's race with territorial authority over tracts to the north of Panamaram river (Kabini tributary).

Bird, N (1987: 188) has examined the confusion regarding ethnohistory of the Kurumba tribes of Nilgiri from the earliest available accounts and to the later times and concluded that 'it is possible to conclude that the observers, as actors, had created a myth of the Kuruma tribe, which reflected upon their- the commentators' – sociological disposition.' Mullukurumar and Mullukurumba identity for the tribe in Kerala and Tamil Nadu the list of Scheduled Tribes also has some prevailing confusions because of the fact that in Nilgiri (Tamil Nadu) the Kurumba were considered as a single community, without recognizing the different the different endogamous living in the Nilgiri having Kurumba, Kurumban or Kurumbar suffixes to their independent names. The ethnographic accounts by Rajalakhmi Misra (1971) on 'the Mullukurumba of Kappala' and the accounts on the Mullukurumar by KITADS, Kerala clearly establishes that they members of the same tribe. Closer investigation needs to be undertaken to clearly distinguish the Nilgiri Kurumba cluster from the Kabini Basin tribes of Wayanad plateau in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The Mullukurumar in Wayanad live in exclusive hamlets of their own called *veedu* prefixed to hamlet names Thirumahathu veedu, Cheruvally veedu, Kornguvayal veedu and so on. The preferred site for locating the veedu in most of the cases is a *vayaloram* (on the banks of paddy field which formed a watershed, ensuring perennial source of drinking water for people and cattle). Each veedu operated in specific territories called *kunnu* (hill) the land, forest and water resources were under the control of chief called '*Kunnu moopan*'. The Mullukurumar of whole Wayanad had an elaborate political organisation. The head of the entire tribe was called *Appadu Thalachil* and he belonged to Purakadi. He was assisted by all the Kunnumoopans, Porunnor (elder of a veedu) and Porathon (heir to the office of the chief). The whole tribe is divided into

four *kulam* (clans)- *Vadekke kulam*, *Villiappa kulam*, *Kathiya kulam* and *Venketa kulam*. The *kulam* is traced through mother, while inheritance is patrilineal and residence patrilocal. Their population in Wayanad (Kerala) was 20983 (2008 KILA).

The community like in the case of Kurichiyan traditionally engaged slash and burn which has been discontinued due to forest regulations and reduced landholding. Agriculture is the main stay, both in *vayalkrishi* (paddy) *thottakrishi* (plantation- coffee, tea, pepper) and horticulture. Land less among them are wage earners. They have made considerable progress in the field of education

Ancestor worship and propitiation of their clan deities are central to their religion. The annual Uchal festival on 30th Makaram (12 February) at Thirumhathu veedu, Pakkam Pulpally in Wayanad is an event of great religious significance to the Mullukurumar. It is also customarily participated by the Vetta/Betta Kurumba of the neighbourhood. Before the stringent wildlife protection regulation came into force community fishing and hunting was part of the religious and ceremonial events associated with it. The festival commences on the evening 30th of Makaram when the Mullukurumar Thirumuhathu veedu of Pakkam and adjoining hamlets perform the first haircut ceremony for all children of the hamlet born after the previous festival and engage in ceremonial *chalikette* (erection of barricades and conducting the water to flow through channels in which elongated fish trap baskets are placed) in the nearby Kabini river and the streams joining it at Pakkam and Neervarom. The whole of night was spent in fishing and the next morning the young men returned to the hamlets after bath with their catch in fish baskets. A portion of the fish caught is offered to the deities and rest is shared among all households and those participated. The first of Kumbham (13th Feb) was marked decorating their temple and embarking on a ceremonial hunting and on the afternoon, they embarked on hunting expedition in the territory were they traditionally operated and the community feasted on the game. The hunting has become ceremonial as result of prevailing regulations. Elders trained the boys in the use of bow and arrow.

The men spent the whole night in *vattakli* dancing and pipe music. On the third day the Urali Kuruma / Bettakurumar families of Pakkam join the festivities as honorary guests of the Mullukurumar. They are served festive meals and after a divination of their tutelary deities- Pakkam daivam and Poothady daivam by the Mullukurumar shamanistic priest towards evening the Uralis take over the music and dance performance to the left of the temple yard and towards the culmination by late evening the Mullukurumar also join the music and dance to right side of the temple yard. Before the ceremonies end the Uralikuruma chief of the visiting guests offer a tribute of two arrows and a knife to the the Mullakuruma chief of Thirumahath

veedu and return the Mullukuruma chief offers *panam* (coins) symbolising their generations old fraternity and mutual association. A final propitiation of the deities by the diviner marks the end of the festivities. It may be noted here that before the market economy had set in it was the Urali Kurumar who met all the artisanry needs of the Mullukurumar households and there existed a *jajmani* relationship between the two groups.

In the history of pre-colonial Wayanad the Mullukurumar community had a monopolistic control over the production, processing and trade of paddy that was produced in its vast fields. Most of the paddy fields under their control lay in the Mananthavady watershed and in the Noolpuzha water draining Panadalur areas of Kabini basin. The paddy produced was husked manually using wooden motor and pestle by the women folk and transported on the back of pack bullocks through the forest tracts of the Periya ghats to Thalassery and towards Mysore in the old trade routes. The essentials required by them purchased and were bought and brought back. In due course this trade was monopolised by the Muslim traders of Malabar. Mullukurumar continued with the production, processing and husking activity. In this the elders recall they entered into labour relations (under tied/bonded labour systems that prevailed in Wayanad then) with Adiya and had the technical support of the Uralikurumar, in the supply of agricultural implements, baskets and mats, motor and pestles etc.

Kabini basin continues to cradle such rare indigenous inter-tribal interactions and festivities.





Uchal festivities at Pakkam 2018



Pakkamkota sacred complex of indigenous communities of Kabini Basin



The forest path to the sacred complex

The Pakkamkota temple under the control of the Mullukurumar of Cheriyaamala veedu is a sacred centre for the Betta Kurumar, Adiya/ Panjiri Yearva and is intertwined with their myths of origins. `

Paniyan/Paniyerava

The Paniyan is the most numerous tribes in Kabini Basin having distribution in all three States of the Basin. In Wayanad itself they numbered 69116 (2008- KILA). In the Virajpet taluk of Coorg district they called Paniyerava and had population of 9730 (1981). In the Gudalur and Pandalur taluks of Nilgiri Paniyan are distributed and their number is 9824 (2011). A full-length ethnographic study of the Paniyan of Wayanad was done by the author in 1981 (*Ethnography*

Structure and Process-the Paniyan of Wayanad- unpublished AnSI, SRC, Mysore). The Census of India Monograph on the Yerava of Coorg has dealt at length with Pani Yerva as section of Yerava tribe. In all the areas of distribution their origin myth is associated with Ippimala a mythical hill which some associate with Iruppumala in Coorg and the Wayanad section associate with Banasura hill. The mythical ancestors associated with their origin story at Ippimala are referred as Ippimala Muthappe and Ippimala Muthasi in Wayanad while in Kodagu area the Paniyerva Anjilathu Appe Muthi and Papalathu Amme Muthi. The belief shared by Paniyan all over is that their mythical ancestors were ensnared by the 'Thambra' (ruler) assisted by Betta Kurumba.

Elsewhere the author has published (1996) the following account on the 'Paniyar of Wayanad, who refer to themselves as the *'Ippimala makkal'* (children of 'ippi hill'- Banasura peak of Wayanad) is the largest single tribe in Kerala. Their number becomes all the more significant when their distributions in two other contiguous areas of Wayanad, in the Gudalur taluk of Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu and in the Virajpet taluk of Coorg district of Karnataka are also considered. In the earliest known literary evidence on South India namely the 'Tholkappiyam' (2nd Century AD), the 'Kurinji' or the mountainous region was described as the abode of indigenous people with avocations of food gathering and hunting. Historians (Menon 1972 and Kurup 1988) and anthropologists (Aiyappan 1992) agree that the Kurumba tribes (most likely the Mullukurumba group among the Kurumba cluster) had a principality in the eastern Wayanad, attributed to that of Vedar king. This is a pointer to the fact that the early inhabitants of Wayanad had an autonomous existence. Communities like that of the Paniyan who lived here were subjugated and enslaved by the farming communities who immigrated into this plateau region from the south, the Malabar area and from the north, the Mysore region in the early centuries of Christian era. This immigration of communities with better farming skills resulted in the subjugation of the indigenous people like the 'Ippimala makkal' giving rise to the emergence of new ethnonym Paniyar - signifying workers. Yet another instance of the same processes is that of the 'Adiyar' (slave or serf) community living in the same habitat, who prefers to be known as 'Ravuler' (in their own dialect it means 'our people'). In the medieval period the Vedar king of Wayanad was defeated by the combined force of the Malabar Kshatriya Rajas of Kottayam and Kurubarnad principalities that paved way for a long period of feudalistic rule of Wayanad by the Nayar gentry of Malabar. Wayanad witnessed yet another onslaught of peasant immigration, this time from far south the Travancore region, by the Christians and Izhavas, from the early part of 20th Century. The forest land resources that were freely utilized by the tribal communities became tenurial agricultural holdings of the

immigrants. The Nair feudal chiefs preferred the immigrant tenets, as they were willing to make cash payment for lease of land. The State Reorganisation in 1956 and the subsequent land reforms together with the democratic processes, abolition of bonded labour and emphasis on welfare of the Scheduled Tribes mark yet another phase in the changing livelihood patterns of the tribes of Wayanad in general and the Paniyar in particular. During the above-described historical phases of Wayanad the Paniyar had to resort to different livelihood strategies; 1) an early phase of food gathering, 2) a period of bonded labour- major part of the payment only in kind supplemented with food gathering, 3) liberated daily wage earner- payments in cash, and 4) dependant on welfare measures of the state being side-lined in the competitive labour market and a sense desperation setting in. The paper examined closely the features of the livelihood strategies that evolved in - each of the above phases and discussed with greater attention the emerging scenario'.

The agrarian system that prevailed in the Kabini basin areas of both Wayanads and the contiguous Kodagu was labour intensive paddy cultivation and plantation agriculture in the pre- and post- colonial period. The subjugation and enslavement of the Paniyan and Adiyar of the Kabini basin under various systems of Agri serfdom had some unique features. Aiyappan (1960: p.42) "Some of the food-gathering' tribes such as the Paniyar of Wynad were enslaved and came to have a precarious, symbiotic existence under the peasant communities of the plains. Large annual fairs where agriculturists of Wynad used to engage their indentured labourers—mostly of the Paniya tribe were a regular feature of the economy of that area".

An account of the Pani Yerva of Kodagu given by the Census Monograph is relevant to quote here 'Kodagu is quite close to Wynad and shares much of its geographical features. It would not be far-fetched if it were to be conjectured that the conditions in Kodagu during the early British period were more or less similar to those that prevailed in Malabar. it is a historical fact that Tippu Sultan, by his frequent incursions, had virtually ruined Kodagu. In those days of incessant warfare, the services of every able bodied Kodava were required for waging wars and naturally there would have been a need for a set of make men who would stay back near the fields and continue to bring forth the much-needed food crops. Even after the fall of Tippu Sultan and restoration of the kingdom to the Haleri Raja in 1792 there could in all probability have been a shortage of men to work on the fields. These conditions might have impelled the Kodava landlords to recruit labourers from the not so far off Wynad area, perhaps in addition to the class of agrestic serfs like Kembatti Holeyas who had already settled down among them and had been accorded some functional status in the society. The Pani Yeravas must have thus been brought into Kodagu in small batches over a period of time to settle down more or less

permanently in Kodagu itself—may be as agrestic serfs under new masters. In Kodagu too there have been a few stray cases of buying and selling of slaves in the past. In 1817 for instance, any young Yerava was valued at 7 pagodas and in 1834, a Paniya Yerava couple was valued at 6 Kanterai pagodas.

Traditional agrarian relations had offered some safety net to the Paniyan and others in similar plight when Wayanad and Kabini basin was the exclusive abode of indigenous communities, because it had certain features of *jajmani* relations between peasant farmers and the dependent serfs. Landlessness and shelter-lessness is the most serious issue faced by the Paniyan and Paniyerava (for that matter the Adiya and Panjiri Yerava too) in the whole of Kabini Basin. In the transition from feudal janmi system, plantation system and landlordism under varying institutions of labour transaction and finally abandonment by them when new labour laws were enacted, the Paniyan and Pani Yerava ended up in the labour market of the Kabini basin.

Sholiga

The Sholiga/Sholigaru/Soligaru/Soliga are exclusive to Biligiri Rangana Hills in the Chamarajanagar and Mandya Districts of Karnataka. Their traditional area of habitation is beyond the Kabini Basin but has extended to Heggada Devana Kote in Mysore too, so they have an association with Kabini Basin as well.

The heritages of Soliga and their ethnography is well documented (Morab 1977, Sudarshan 1998, Somasundaram 1998, Madegowda 2009). They practised shifting cultivation and engaged in sustainable collection of no-timber forest produce. Their population was reported to be 16487 (2001). Their hamlets are called *podu*. The Soliga have gained national and international attention in their resolve to live in forest and protect the flora and fauna as evidence by their victorious legal battle <https://scroll.in/article/896580/how-a-tribe-in-karnataka-fought-and-won-a-legal-battle-to-stay-in-a-tiger-reserve> .
<https://ejatlas.org/conflict/struggle-for-community-rights-in-the-protected-areas-of-biligiri-ranganatha-temple-brt-india>

Soliga have proven that empowering them with forest rights is as good as ensuring the conservation the majestic Indian tiger!

Thachanadan Moopan

Thachanadan Moopan is again another isolated small community of 1649 people (KILA 2008) in Kabini basin included under Scheduled List in Wayanad Kerala. They live in small hamlets in the basin of Panamaram river to the south-west of the district in the Vyithiri, Ambalavayal,

Muttill, Vyithi, Rippon, Meppadi, Kolagappara, and Puttayad areas. The language of the community is in the list of endangered tribal languages (dialect) of Kerala, which is found to be combination of Malayalam, Tulu and Telugu and the proficiency to use the language is decline among the younger generation. Wage labour is the source of livelihood, land holding is very meagre. Their cultural performances 'kolkali' and 'vattakali' (beating stump while moving in circle), have similarities with that of the Mullukurumar. A short Ethnographic note is available on them in the People of India Kerala series (Singh 2002) and monograph is now available (Shreejisha 2015) focusing on the supernatural belief system of the community. More in-depth study is required.

Wayanad Pathiyan

The Pathiyan of Wayanad distinguish themselves from Pathiyan elsewhere in southern Kerala (who are listed under Scheduled Caste) with a prefix of locality name. They claim an ancient tradition as old as the Kurichiyans. The community engage in farming and cattle rearing and are distributed in Vayithiri taluk.

Wayanadan Kadar:

The name of community known as Kadar, are also known as Wayanad Kadar. They too use the prefix to distinguish themselves from the Kadar of Cochin. Their population was 2949 in 2011. The community's transition from forest-dwellers- depended on hunting, gathering, shifting cultivation with skills basket making and mat weaving to a farming group have happened over a period of Wayanad's colonisation. The land holders among them mostly grow local food crops and the small holders and landless engage in agriculture labour. They are entitled to avail Scheduled Tribe reservation benefits for educational purpose only (OEC-ST).

The Peasants of Kabini Basin

Kabini Basin is the homeland of unique peasant communities as well. There are four observable historical phases in the agrarian transition of Kabini Basin till the present starting with: 1) an early phase of food gathering, hunting and shifting cultivation that lasted till the medieval period 2) The starting of the *janmism* (feudal governance) and land tenancy under which agrarian bonded labour prevailed - major part of the payment only in kind supplemented with food gathering and hunting, 3) Colonial period of land revenue system and plantation agriculture, and 4) state formation, migration and emergence of intensive farming by small and medium farmers and free market economy.

In the upper Kabini basin areas in the Wayanad before the conquest by the Malabar Rajas there were native peasant groups who coexisted with the tribes. These peasant groups were mainly comprised of Wayanadan Chetty, Mandadan/Moundadan Chetty and Edanadan Chetty. Generally, in Kerala the migrants from east coast are referred as *chetty*. The Chetty groups in Wayanad too have a migration history from the east. More than a century old Gopalan Nair's (1911) account on Wayanad have given brief accounts of their distribution and life style.

The Wayanadan Chetty trace their origin to a group of three hundred families of Vellalachetty from Dharmapuram in Coimbatore who migrated through Sathyamanagalm to Ganapathivattom (now Sulthan Bathery) to Wayanad during the reign of Kottayam Rajas. They were induced to stay in the country and offered land to settle down. The Wayanadan Chetty stay in separate homesteads. The traditional houses were with thick mud walls and roofs thatched with wild grass or straw. Over a period of time, they came to dominate the agricultural production in Wayanad, especially during the pre-colonial time and had exclusive hold in few territories like Kidanganad, Chethalayam, Muppainad, Nenmmeni, Pulapally etc and are part of the wider Hindu society, language and culture. They developed the wetland paddy cultivation in the marshy lands and cleared jungles for plantation and lemongrass for oil extraction as well as maintained large herds of cattle. They have community organisation called the Wayanad Chetty Service Society with about forty-eight local units in the year 1972 (Mathew 2008). The Wayanad Chetty are much acclaimed in their efforts for agrobiodiversity conservation of about nine traditional varieties of paddy in Wayanad (ibid). In Pulpally village they have an exclusive temple dedicated to Seethadevi and in the annual temple feast of Lava-Kusha temple at Pulpally the Eriyapally Chetty belonging to Wayanadan Chetty group has the ceremonial role of *onnamkarayama* (first organiser). When Wayanad had thick jungle areas and had tiger attacks on the life stock was frequent the Wayanad Chetty combined forces with Mullukurumar hunters and conducted *narivetta* (tiger hunt) involving use of nets from tree barks and iron-tipped spears about twenty feet long. Over the end of feudalism, colonial period and on the wake of migration of other peasants from Travancore the Wayanadan Chetty have declined considerably due to the onset of market economy.

The Moundadan/ Mandadan Chetty. Their homeland is 'Greater Wayanad'. Predominantly, about 500 families, distributed in the Gudalur (Padanthurai, Cherumuli, Srimaduram, Nallakottai, Guadalur, and Mudumalai villages and about 100 families in Pulpally village in Sulthan Bathery taluk. The traditional occupation of Moundadan Chetties was agriculture in dry land *podu*-shifting cultivation and wet land paddy. They had huge herds of cattle too. Their hamlets are close to the paddy fields and built with bamboo pillars and roof structures with

wooden branches and thatched with hay. They have strong community organisation with various levels of functionaries including that of chief called *keechetty*. Their own account of their debasement in Gudalur area is given in the following blog: “Up to 1974, their right of ownership for land was denied and it was considered that these lands owned by Chetty people belonged to Kovilagam of Thirumalpad in Nilambur (after the partition of greater Wayanad between Nilambur and Kottayam principalities). In the year 1969 dispossession of Jenmam lands by land owners and enactment of Ryotwary Act (Act No. 24/69) was promulgated. After strutting the Ryotwary Act, *patta* was assigned to land holding basing of the documental evidences for possession of the land particularly for the wet portion of the holding denying the area of occupation around the settlements and the shifting cultivations of dry crops like ragi and millet for home use since they could not maintain valid documental evidences for such holdings. Thus, even though they had dry lands in possession, *patta* for this type of land was not assigned to them. Now it is said that such of the land have become the holding of the company estate owners who had established the tea estates during British (who) subsequent sold to the big companies of India after independence.

< <http://moundadanchetty.blogspot.com/2011/07/history-and-life-style-of-moundadan.html> >

The history and present condition of the community in Padanthurai and Mudumalai needs special attention as theirs is a case how a community can become an isolate and victim of environmental activism even this 21st century. The declaration of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve encompassed their villages in Beena and Mudumalai.

The blogger Jyothy Karat gives the following touching account of them where she writes ‘Unlike the Adivasis who also live in MTR, the Moundadan Chetties have traditionally been farmers. In the 18th century, the region including the Nilgiris was part of the Kingdom ruled by the Mysore Maharaja. Eventually, 46000 acres of land came under the ownership of the Nilambur Kovilakam who were, at the time, accountants to the Mysore Maharaja. By 1885 the Nilambur Kovilakam had leased these blue mountains to the East India Company who looted its resources until the British made an exit from the country in 1947. All throughout history, the Moundadan Chetties had led a very peaceful, but docile existence. They paid their taxes, obeyed the rules and had kept their heads down. During the British rule, they were permitted to keep guns for their own safety. If there had been an animal attack, a British Shikari would hunt the animal down. The Chetties were also permitted to kill a wild animal found within the boundaries of their farm. All forest dwellers were allowed to cut ‘Kattumaram’ (a fast-growing native tree) and bamboo for construction purposes and were also allowed to graze their cattle in the forest lands. After the implementation of Forest (Conservation) Act in 1980, almost all

of the privileges the Chetties enjoyed had disappeared. Their gun licenses were not renewed and when the licensee passed away, their family were asked to hand over the guns. Any attack on wildlife was illegal, wood cutting was not allowed, and a chain gate was installed at the entrance to the Park'. < <https://www.jyothykarat.com/blog?tag=Stories> > .



A Moundadan Chetty hamlet in Mudumalai courtesy @ joythykarat

The ancestors of Moundadan Chetty came to Pulpally during the period of Pazhasi Raja for *kazhakam* (temple servant) duties in the Pulpally Seetha Devi temple from Srimaduram in Gudalur. They continued to maintain marital linkages with their counterparts. Few families continue to associate with the temple duties and others engaged in traditional farming activities. Their economic condition Kerala-Wayanad is rather stable as they hold clear title of their land and have respectable status due to the association with temple of Seetha Devi and hold the title of *munnamkarayama* (third organiser) in the official ceremonies, though the ritual roles have diminished after the engagement of priestly castes to perform rituals.

The third Chetty peasant group of Kabini Basin is that of the Edanadan Chetty. They are distributed in Thirunelly and Mullankolly (Chekady hamlet) villages on the banks of Kabini river and owners of considerable areas of plantations in dryland and wet land paddy fields. They are also custodians of the agro-biodiversity in the northern Wayanad area. They have an emigrational history from a place called 'Edanad' in Kodagu, Karnataka but actual place is not known. Their dialect is a proof their Canares origins as well as the farming practices. They had strong traditional pnachayath organisation consisting of four territorial chiefs- Thirunelly, Chekady, Pakkam and Edamala. The eldest male member Edamala Chetty family was referred by the title and performed the propitiation of the forest God Bommadan od Manmadan during

the Khedda operations in Pulpally area by the Kottayam Rajas in pre-colonial times. The Eadamala Chetty also held the ceremonial title of *randamkarayama* in the temple functions. Thus, the evidences suggest the peasant Chetty groups had a dominant role in the greater-Wayanad's socio-economic organisation.

Jains

Another peasant group who contributed to the agrarian development of the Kabini Basin is that of the Jains. One of the main contributions of Jainism is that the introduction of eco-friendly cultivation in Wayanad. Jains were against the digging and ploughing of the land. So as to keep their belief they did not plough or dig the land. In the field of irrigation Jains have contributed a lot. Some of the dams and ponds built by Jains still exist in: Cheeral, Kazhampukunnu, Nambiarkunnu, Chulliyode, Kolliyadi, Thaloor, Sultan Bathery, Meenangadi, Panamaram, Anjukunnu and Nadavayal. These ponds and dams were built in the medieval period. The Jains of that time used to store water in these ponds, dams and irrigated the crops. Doddappan Pond, near Sultan Bathery is one of those kinds. These ponds and dams, adjoined to the Jain temples were not only for the exclusive use of the temples but also for the use of men and animals.

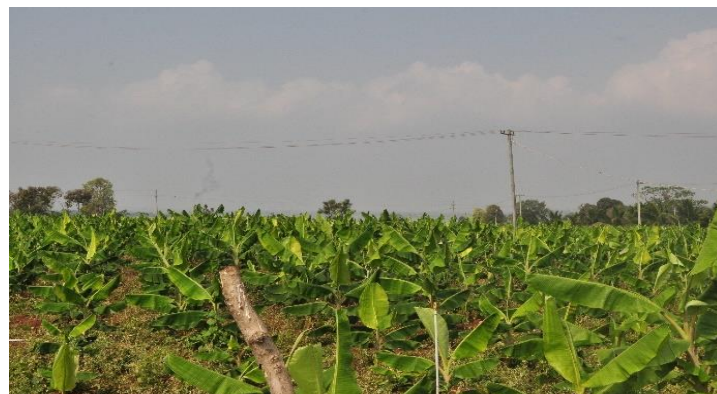
Jains were experts in paddy cultivation and they introduced it in Wayanad. Like that the introduction of pepper and Robesta Coffee were the contributions of Jains. The Jains of medieval Wayanad used the Kabini river, which flows from its source in Wayanad into the Mysore region, for sustaining trade networks. One can almost imagine them sailing up the river, boat laden with goods and money, to clustered settlements around their temples, nestled in Wayanad's lush forests.

In fact, the area surrounding this temple was once called Hanneradu Bīdi, Kannada for "twelve streets", referring to the local Jain settlement. Wayanad — as bayal nāḍu in Kannada, both this and the Malayalam name translate to “land of paddy fields” — appears in several Hoysala inscriptions as well, as a contested region.

Peasants of Mysore -Kabini Basin:

As Kabini flows into the erstwhile Mysore region through the tribal bastion of H D Kote to the table lands that have clustered settlements of Mysore peasantry seen dotted over the dunes and dales. Before the construction of dam across Kabini at Beechanahalli in the year 1974 the peasantry moved across both banks freely and the agrarian practices depended heavily on seasonal rains. Even after the erection of four dams in the H D Kote taluk (Taraka, Hebballa,

Nugu and Beechanahalli) this dependence of the peasants in the taluk has not changed much because of the fact that the benefits of the water storage and irrigation are enjoyed by the peasants in Nanjangud, T Narasipura taluks of Mysore district and those in Gudelpet taluk of Chamarajnaragara district. However, there is shift noticed in cropping pattern from food crops (millets and pulses) horticulture (coconuts, banana, cotton, ginger mulberry and sericulture etc.) with a greater emphasis on ground water irrigation.



Kabini Basin rural land scape

The peasants of the Mysore region are well described by Srinivas (1955,1957), Epstien (1979) and others. They are organised under caste lines the predominant groups are Vokkaligar, Lingayath, Jains, Madivala, Kurubar (shepherds); service castes of Kumbara; Madivala. Holeya and Madiga; Nayaka, Bedar and Bajendri, Jenu Kurumba, Bettakuruba and the Yerava.

Penetration of market economy

The predominantly subsistent economy of the hinterland of Wayanad focused on production of varieties of rice, millets, grams and oil seeds. The encouragement for plantation agriculture by the Madras government through land tax waver for coffee plantation and the suitable climatic conditions attracted British planters. By 1830 coffee plantations came up in the surroundings of Mananthavady (*Vikasanareha*1996:14). It gained industrial proportion by 1835 with the commencement of Pew Estate by the Parry and Company near Mananthavady (Mathew 2011:72). The *Mananthavady Vikasanreha* (1996) document cite that it was Mr Puge, a British origin planter was the pioneer to initiate coffee plantation in Mananthavady. Logan (*op.cit.*, ccxxxix)' stated that since 1840, the cultivation of coffee had occupied the attention of European planters and proved for a long time highly remunerative, till the industry began to languish due to leaf-disease and other causes (wood borer), then the attention shifted to tea and cinchona. By the end of 19th century there is a clear shift to tea plantation in areas like Meppadi and Vythiri in South Wayanad region and in Periya in North Wayanad close to Mananthavady. The present tea plantations of Pancharakolli, Pilakavu, Jessy, Kalliyott, Kallumottam kunnu and Chirakkara divisions of Mananthavady Municipality were initiated by British entrepreneurs, which reflect the colonial influence in the growth and development of Mananthavady.

In addition, the western slopes of Wayanad in areas like Periya and Kuttiyadi, through which crossed the passes to Wayanad soon turned to cardamom and coconut plantations. Logan (*op.cit*) also mentioned about the opening of two stations for registering of traffic with Mysore in December 1880 at Baveli and Sulthanbathery, the two posts were strategic locations in the ancient trade route between Deccan and Malabar. The significance of Mananthavady as a nodal location for trade increased considerably as a procurement centre for commodities bound for Mysore and port town of Thalassery and for goods that arrived through Baveli and for local items traditionally procured locally and traded across.

There is a marked change that occurred in the demographic composition in places in and around Mananthavady and all over greater Wayanad during this period and the population groups like

Muslim from Kurumbranadu, Tamil Brahmins from Palakkad, various service castes and plantation labourers from the plains of Malabar moved into this area.

Another interesting feature of Mananthavady in these formative periods had been presence of ethnic groups from Deccan region. The Patan and Muslim traders who came during the Mysore invasion of Malabar along with the settlement of a group Yadavas, buffalo herders from Bellary (North Karnataka) who too initially came along with the Tipu's troop movement but chose to settle permanently in an exclusive street, the '*Yeruma theruv*' (Buffalo street) in Mananthavady later extending services to the British contingent, have become part of the social formation of Mananthavady. The trading activity was mainly centred in the *Thazhangady* area located on the banks of Mananthavady River crossing to the south of the present busy bazaar area. The rudiments of urbanisation Mananthavady, Kalpetta and Sulthan Bathery towns started. Urban nodal points like the cantonment area where a line of five shops were established by the roadside which popularly came to be called *anchupeedika* junction.

The improved connectivity to Wayanad and the demand for workers in the plantation enterprises started by the British triggered migration to Wayanad by peasantry from adjoining areas of British India including plains of Malabar. A combination of factors that prevailed in the Travancore-Cochin region during the early part of twentieth century to post-independence period and the formation of Kerala State in 1956 stretching over about seventy years contributed to what can be termed as the period of *Wayanad-kudyettam* (Kulirani 1996). The availability of uncultivated cheap land in Wayanad Taluk of Malabar District along with push factors in Travancore like possibility of alienating land under possession, decreasing size of land holding per household, economic depressions of 1929, food shortages and the campaign to grow more food after the Second World War and above all the entrepreneurial spirit of Christian and Ezhava peasants from Travancore region all contributed to *Wayanad-kudyettam* (Mathew 2011:81, 95-104). The first settlement of migrants from Travncore were also established in 1930 at Payyampalli near Mananthavady which continued up to 1970s.

Three main passes: Kuttiyadi (Kuttiyadi-Pakramthalam-Nirayilpuzha), Peria (Kottiyoor - Nedumboyil- Peria-)-Palchuram (Kottiyoor-Ambayathode –Boys town) in the Western Ghats linking Wayanad with ports of north-Malabar, Thalassery and Kannur converged at Mananthavady and further leading to Coorg and Mysore. Peria pass was open for cart traffic, while the other two were wide enough to permit pack-bullocks and horses. Later in 1918, first bus connectivity from Mananthavady to Thalassery was commenced.

In the field of school education, the Church Missionary Society had established a Board school sometime in 1870s was later handed over to the Government after 1947. In the case of modern health care, the first facility was started by the British in late 1880s which further led to the establishment of a hospital in Mananthavady.

After the Kerala State formation in November 1956 Wayanad Taluk of Malabar District of Madras Presidency was added to Kerala. In the reorganisation of territorial boundaries in the year 1957 the Wayanad Taluk was further sub-divided into two North Wayanad and South Wayanad Taluks. North Wayanad comprised of eleven revenue villages and Mananthavady in the Vemom village with the entire administrative infrastructure of British Malabar formed the taluk headquarters of North Wayanad under Cananore (Kannur) District and Vayithiri for South Wayanad under Calicut (Kozhikode) District. The North Wayanad had an area of 746.3sq.kms comprising of Mananthavady and Periya Firka.

The construction of the road bridge across Mananthavady River at *Chengada Kadavu* in the year 1961 improved traffic towards Calicut from Mananthavady. The hinterlands of Mananthavady with wet land paddy fields in the areas like Payyampally, Thavinjal, Cherukattur, Kallodi, Porur, Kellur, Kattikulam emerged as major areas of migrant settlements from places like Pala, Kanjirapally, Thodupzha and Moovattupuzha in Travancore-Cochin. The settlement pattern of the migrant settlers of the period reflected conformity with the prevailing local traditional pattern of *vayaloram* or houses built on the slopes of hills overlooking the marshy dales that had potential to be converted into wet land paddy field signifying the emphasis of the settlers in paddy cultivation. The density of population in the North Wayanad Taluk in 1961 was 120 per sq km. The above-mentioned localities of migrant peasants' settlement areas developed to sub-urban nodules with trading activities in daily use provision stores, teashops, procurement depots for cash crops etc in this period. The idea of tri-junction needs a critical examination.

Chapter- V **Civilizational heritages**

The Kabini Basin identity and uniqueness gets even more significant when further layers of this heritages are unravelled. The treatment of Kabini Basin as part of a trijunction and Nilgiri Cultural complex is a misconceived perception as the communities of the Kabini Basin formed much closer interactive, inter-dependent and transactional contexts among themselves and lesser with communities on the Nilgiri hills as such. The heritages of indigenous inhabitants and their civilizational heritages in Kabini Basin formed over a historical period of during their interaction with the Jain, Hindu, Veerashiva, Islamic and Christian sections who have all amalgamated into a unique complex socio-cultural whole.

Jainism in Kabini Basin

The presence of Jainism in Mysore part of Kabini Basin in Karnataka has recorded history from where under pressure from Shaiva and Vishnava sects they migrated to Wayanad. According to the ancient history of Wayanad Jains are the first group who migrated to Wayanad. The Kannada speaking people in Wayanad are known as Jains, they belong to the Digambara sect and they are called *Goundan / Gowdas*. Hoysala kings were the rulers of Karnataka in the 12th century and Wayanad was a part of Karnataka. At that time Wayanad was known as *Bailnad*. The rulers of Hoysala Dynasty were Jains till Vishnuvardha. Around the medieval period Saiva religion became a strong hold in Karnataka and the frequent attacks from Salva religion to Jain lead to the migration of Jains to Kerala and especially to Wayanad.

Their first settlements were in Panamaram on the banks of Kabini river. From there the Jain groups spread to the different parts of Wayanad. These Jains were basically farmers. Digging and ploughing were against their belief. So as to keep their belief they introduced eco-farming in Wayanad. Jainism was in its peak in Wayanad during the days of Hoysala Dynasty. Hoysala kings promoted Jainism and they sent many missionaries to the different parts to spread Jainism. There are many proofs, which justify the existence of Jainism in Wayanad. The history tells us that the Bathery Jain temple was built 800 years ago.

Earlier this temple was known as Kidangad Basti and the older name of Sulthan Bathery was *Hennaredu Bedhi* (twelve streets). These two names are Kannada names and it shows the influence of the Karnataka Jains. Some other similar place names are: Bennagode (Venniyode), Palagonthu (Palukunnu), Muthangadi (Puthangadi), and Hosengadi (Mananthavady). All these Kannada names are the fool-proof evidence to justify the existence of Jains in Wayanad.

There is an interpretation that inscriptions in Edakkal Caves (the oldest historical monument in Wayanad) are closely related to Jainism. The Swastik mark, the mark of the seventh Tirthankara, Suparswa Natha, has been engraved on the wall. The Chandrabimbamark, the mark of the eighth Tirthankara, Chandra Natha, also can be seen on the wall of the cave. The other inscriptions on the wall are the Hoysala kings. The former Hoysalas were Jains.

In the thirteenth century Jainism was in its peak in Wayanad. By the end of eighteenth century the religion became too weak because of the increasing influence of the Hindu religion and the invasion of Saiva - Vaishnava religions. In this period many Jain temples were destroyed and some of them were taken over by Hindus. The relics of these ruined temples can be seen in Bathery, Puthangadi and Poothadi.



Puthangadi Jain temple ruins, Panamaram

At present Wayanad is considered to be one of the important Jain centres. According to the latest survey the total Jain population in Wayanad is 1581. Among them 797 are male and 784 are female. In Wayanad the main Jain centres are: Mananthavady, Panamaram, Anjukunnu, Varadoor, Kalpetta and Kaniyambatta.

The Jain Community in Wayanad

The Jain Community in Wayanad has been divided into nine units. In one unit there are nine committee members. Among them seven members are the Directors of the committee and the remaining two members are Chairman and Convener. The nine units are:

a) Anjukunnu Unit : The Anjukunnu Unit consists of thirty-seven families and the total number of members is 147. Among them seventy-four are married. There are seventy-one male and seventy-six female in the unit. Most of the Jains in this area are farmers. Apart from farmers there are teachers and employees.

b) Kalpetta Unit: In Kalpetta unit there are sixty-three families and it has the strength of 249 members 137 are married. The number of males is 131 and female are 118. The noted writer, cultural critic and former Union Minister Mr. M. P. Veerendrakumar, belongs to this unit.

c) Kaniyambatta Unit : The Kaniyambatta unit consists of fifty-two families and the number of members are 236. Among them 126 are married. There are 128 male and 108 female in the unit. The members of Kaniyambatta unit are basically farmers. Some of them doing business and most of the youth are doing their higher studies in different branches.

d) Karinkutty Unit : The total number of families in Karinkutty unit are twenty-nine. The total number of members is 116. Among them fifty-six are male and sixty are female. Sixty-six members are married.

e) Muttile Unit : There are forty-three families in Muttile unit and it has the strength of 157 members. There are seventy-seven male and eighty female members. Among them eighty members are married.

f) Neervaram Unit : Neervaram unit consists of fifty-eight families and the total number of members is 211. There are 101 male and the remaining 110 are female. The number of married is 102.

g) Poothadl Unit: There are forty-nine families and 163 members in this unit. Among them seventy-two are male and ninety-two are married.

h) Puthlyidam Unit : Puthiyidam Unit consists of thirty-two families and 126 members. There are sixty-seven male and fifty female members. Among them seventy are married.

i) Vennlyode Unit : Venniyode unit comprises fortythree families and 176 members. Among these members seventy-five are married. There are ninety-four male and eighty-two female.

All these nine units function with a view to uplift the standard of living of the Jains in the community. Most of the Jains are rich enough and have achieved a social status in the society. As far as some other Jains are concerned even now, they are in the lower shelves. These Jain units try to occupy a better position and sphere for them.

Jain Temples in Wayanad

1. Sulthan Bathery Jain temple : This is an ancient Jain temple situated at Sultan Bathery town. It is supposed to have been built around twelfth century A.D. The temple was taken over, by Tippu sultan and used as the Battery for his army. It is now under the possession of Archaeology Department who repaired the temple in 1996. Though this temple surroundings had a large Jain population in ancient times, there are no Jains in this area now. On the pillars and on the walls of the temple are engraved with the images of Tirthankaras. One of the specialities of this temple is that no piece of wood is used for the construction of the temple even the roof of the temple is made of stones. The Wayanad Jain community conducts a Navakhalasha Panchamritha Abhisheka Pooja at this temple on the occasion of Mahaveer Jayanthi every year.

2. Sri Adblswara Swami Temple, Manantbavady: This is temple situated about 1 k.m. from Mananthavady. It is supposed to be centuries old. In 1960 the hereditary custodian Late Shri D. Padmaja Tharakan handed over the temple to a trust, which was formed with Late Shri Palukkunnu Chandrayya Gowder as President. The temple was renovated in 1958 and Pancha Kalyana was conducted.

3. Anandapuram Shri Adblshwara Swami Temple, Puthlyadam : This temple is situated about eight k.ms from Mananthavady town. It was constructed in 1957 and Pancha Kalyana Prathista Mahotsava was conducted in June of the same year.

4. Shri. Ananthanatha Swamy Temple, Ananthakrlshnapuram : This is one of the main Jain temples of Wayanad. It was situated in a place called Kalpavathy or old Kalpetta. It was

originally managed by the Uralan Shri. Payappa Tharakan after whom the management was taken over by Shri P. C. Mandappa Gowder in 1926, who formed a trust to manage the temple in 1931. This temple, which was dilapidated, was shifted and newly constructed at the place called Ananthakrishna puram and Pancha Kalyana Mahotsava conducted in 1933 under the Leadership of Late Shri M. K. Subbiah Gowder and then by Late Shri M. K. Ananthayya Gowder. Presently the temple is situated on the Kalpetta - Mananthavady road about five k.ms from Kalpetta town.

5. Shri. Ananthanatha Swamy Kshethram, Varadoor : This Jain temple was originally situated at Arapatha near Echome. It was shifted to Kottavayal, and from there again to its present near Varadoor in. 1964. the temple was constructed under the leadership of late Shri V. K. Vardhman Gowder. Panchakalyana Mahotsva was conducted in 1977 when the present idol was installed. A copper inscription has been found in this temple. And this inscription reads that, "Lalithappan son of a Kamataka king, came to Wayanad 300 years ago and donated valuable things to all the Jain temples." The temple is run by a trust, formed in 1953 by late V. P. Ananthayya Gowder.

6. Shri Chandranatha Swamy Temple, Puthanangadi : This is one of the ancient Jain temples of Wayanad. A number of old and dilapidated ruins of other Jain temples are found around this temple. This temple is situated on the Panamaram - Nadayal road about five kilometers from Panamaram town. This place was originally known as Mannikapuram and was supposed to be a centre of trade in gems and pearls. In course of time this name was changed to Muthangadi and now as Puthanangadi. In 1950 a trust was formed to develop this temple under the leadership of late Shri Ramachandra Gowder of Neervaram who renovated the temple. Later a new idol was installed and Panchakalyan was conducted in 1958 leadership of late Shri M. V. Jinachandra Gowder.



7. Shri Parsva Natha Swamy Kshethram, Anjukunnu : This is a newly constructed temple in 1996. The Panchakalyana Prathishta Mahotsva was conducted in the same year. It is situated about three kilometers from the Kalpetta - Mananthavady main road at a place called Anjukunnu.

8. Shri Parsva Natha Swami Kshethram, Palukunnu : This is another oldest Jain temple in Wayanad. The temple is situated at Palukunnu, which is about six kilometers away from Anjukunnu on Mananthavady - Kalpetta main road. It was renovated in 1950 by Kalathingal Krishna Gowder. About three decades back Parsva Natha Swami Kshetra trust was formed. The current President is Shri P. M. Vardhamanan.

9. Shri Shanthl Natha Swamy Devaswom, Vennlyode : This is a very old Jain temple of Wayanad. The temple was run and managed by the hereditary 'Uralans'.

The Contributions of Jain Community to Wayanad: One of the main contributions of Jainism is that the introduction of eco-friendly cultivation in Wayanad. Jains were against the digging and ploughing of the land. So as to keep their belief they did not plough or dig the land. In the field of irrigation Jains have contributed a lot. Some of the dams and ponds built by Jains still exist in: Cheeral, Kazhampukunnu, Nambiarkunnu, Chulliyode, Kolliyadi, Thaloor, Sultan Bathery, Meenangadi, Panamaram, Anjukunnu and Nadavayal. These ponds and dams were built in the medieval period. The Jains of that time used to store water in these ponds, dams and irrigated the crops. Doddappan Pond, near Sultan Bathery is one of those kinds. These ponds and dams, adjoined to the Jain temples were not only for the exclusive use of the temples but also for the use of men and animals.

Jains were experts in paddy cultivation and they introduced it in Wayanad. Like that the introduction of pepper and Robesta Coffee were the contributions of Jains. Another important contribution of Jains is in field of architecture. Most of the ancient Jain temples are in the Vijayanagara style. The temples have Mukhmandapa, Garbhagriha, Ardhamandapa and Mahamandapa. Sultan Bathery Jain temple is built in the same style. One of the specialities of this temple is that for the construction of the temple no piece of wood has been used, even the roof of the temple is made of stones. The engravings in the Puthanangadi Jain temple deserve a special mention here. Along with the Jain statues, the images of Matsya, Kunna and Varaha images too can be seen on the walls of this temple.

Jains are the first group who started social life in Wayanad. Centuries ago they migrated and started living together. The older name of Sulthan Bathery was 'Hennaredu Bedhi', which means 'twelve streets'. This is a Kannada name and the migrated Jains were from Karnataka. History and the name 'Hennerdu Bedhi' tell us that there were twelve well organized streets and it was the main centre of Jains. Thus, Jains paved the way for the social life in Wayanad.

Mysore Jains

There are two Digambar Jain temples dedicated to Tirthankar Adinath and Parshwanath at Muguru. Their history dates back to 11th-12th century A.D.[3]Mysore

https://www.jainsamaj.org/content.php?url=Jaina_Monuments_In_Southern_Karnataka

Beemanakolli Jain temple ruins, Antharsanthe, in H D Kote:

The presence of an ancient Jain temple in Beemankolli village is locally known as Cholara-Gudi or Kallina Gudi is itself a indication of ancient in the vernacular usage.





The priest of the local Veerabhadra calls this Padmavathi temple. Moolamurthis from this temple were sent to Kenchanahalli nearby. After water level of the reservoir was regulated, the temple escaped drowning, but worship could not be revived because Kenchanahalli refused to return the Gods, sending Beemanakolli to oblivion. The flooring of the main cell is completely gone and only rubble remains. The carved pillars remain in place and the dwarapalakas guard an empty garbhagriha. Animal figures on the pillars include a Camel , a horse , elephant and hamsas. Other pillars show avatars of Vishnu .

The small porch on the right of the central hall has Jina murthis carved on the pillars . The name Padmavathi and these murthis point to it having been a Jaina shrine once, yet , the interiors declare it to be a vaishnava shrine .



The neighbouring shrine , in a slightly better condition , whitewashed , with no stone carvings but with nice stucco yakshis along the top , houses a small marble Jina murthy on a wooden table in the sanctum . Here too, there is no sign of regular worship.

The local people say that some Jains do visit this second shrine once in a blue moon , but the first one is given over for Nature to reclaim .

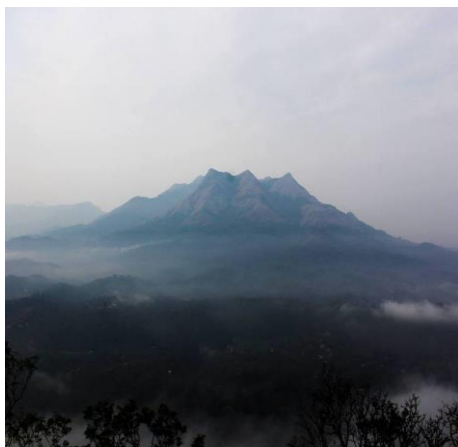
Hindu Sacred geography of Kabini Basin

Kabini Basin is a sacred land for indigenous tribes, peasants and general Hindu population. Some of the peaks of Western Ghats in the greater-Wayanad region of the upper Kabini Basin are sacred and associated belief systems and myths of origin.

Ambukuthi Mala: Elsewhere in report we have discussed the Edakkal Cave containing the petroglyphs which located on this hill, is associated with the legend that an arrow shot by Lord Ram had created the fissure on the hill and the result was the formation of the cave.



Manikkunnu Mala: Also spelt ‘Manukkunnumala’, a hilly forest tract located in Vythiri Taluk, spreading into Meppady, Muttill Panchayats, and Kalpetta Municipality. Semi-evergreen, evergreen and grasslands characterizes the type of forest here. The altitude of Manukkunnumala is 1384 meters. The total area comprises of 1226.24 hectares. Manukkunnumala mountain is located in Thrikkaipetta. It is a hill that controls and influences the eco systems of Wayanad. This hill is one of the most ecologically fragile regions of Wayanad catering to the lives of large variety of species and it is like the backbone of Wayanad. The local belief is that Maha Rishi Manu (the spiritual son of Brahma) had done penance here. At the top of the hill, there is a self-manifested (swayambhu) idol of Lord Vishnu which is over 1,500-year-old. Every year, a large number of people irrespective of caste, creed, colour or gender come to see Lord Vishnu, on the day of Painkuni Uthram, a festival on the Meenam month of Malayalam Calender.



Manikkunnumala



Lord Vishnu image

Banasuramala (2601 m) and Brahmagiri (1608 m) are sacred peaks. The famous Thirunelly temple is located on the western slopes of Brahmagiri.

Thirunelly Temple

Thirunelly temple, known as Dakshin Kasi (Kasi of South) and *Sahyamala kshethram* (Temple in the Western Ghats) is situated at Thirunelli division of Mananthavady Municipality. It is located 32km away from Mananthavady town at the North side of Wayanad district on the hills of Brahmagiri. Thirunelli temple is one of the famous pilgrim centres in Wayanad and Lord Maha Vishnu is the deity of this ancient temple of Kerala. The temple is surrounded by forest and hills. Adiyar and Uralikuruman are the major indigenous communities who live in this area. The stream called *papanasini* runs one kilometre northwest of the temple. Pilgrims take bath in this stream with the belief that it has the power to absolve one's sin.



Thirunelly Temple

Over the years Thirunelli gained status of a pilgrimage centre and many people from inside and outside the State undertake pilgrimage to this temple, which resulted in opening up of associated tourist homes, hotels, lodge etc., in and around Thirunelli, making this a hub of pilgrimage tourism.

Valliyoor kavu



Thazhe kavu (Lower temple)

The Valliyoor kavu is located three kilometres to the north-west of Mananthavady town in the Chettapalam ward. The temple has its origins in the scared grove traditions associated with the beliefs of the indigenous communities of Wayanad. The deity is locally worshiped as *Valliyooramma* is now dedicated to Goddess Bhagavathy, who is believed to have been self-manifested. Here goddess is worshipped in three of her principal forms - *Vana Durga*, *Bhadrakali* and *Jala Durga*.

The annual *arattu* festival held in the month of March lasts for 14 days equally attracts both tribes and native peasant communities from all over Wayanad. Valliyooramma traditions were central to the agro-economic and intercommunity interactions of the people of Wayanad. The festival continues to attract huge crowd for the entire 14 days and the tribal chieftains continues to have their important roles as traditionally prescribed. The ceremonial processions of deity from Cheramkode Bhagavathy temple at Kallody near Mananthavady will come to Valliyoor kavu temple. The devotees take *adiyaras*, a procession carrying tender coconuts for *abhishekam* (ablution) marks the *arattu* of Valliyooramma. The conclusion of the festival is marked with *oppana varavu* returns of Cheramkode Bhagavathy to Kallody temple. A major highlight of the festival is the ceremonial dances performed by the indigenous communities Paniyn, Adiyar and Mullakuruman with the accompaniment of their traditional wind and percussion instruments as part of their veneration of the deity, Valliyooramma.



Different stages of *kodiyaattam* (temple flag hoisting) during the Valliyookavu festivity



Vallyoorkavu Festival scene 2019

History tells that this festival has got century's old tradition and Kottayam Raja, the ruler of the place in later half of 18th century promoted this festival. This festival has various myths in its origin including tribal versions. Some of the tribal groups have their own version in the festival. In the past Valliyoorkavu festival was also an occasion for trapping the tribal agrarian workers in slavery and bondage system until its abolition through enactment.

Ganapati Temple, Sulthan Bathery

The place name of present day Sulthan Bathery has under gone changes over historical times. During Jain dominance it was known as *Hannaeradu beethi*, during the time of local Rajas Ganapathivattom and after in by Srirangapatnam- Suthan's Battery to *Sulthanbathery* . The place name Ganapathivattom was attributed to the place because of the famous Ganpathi temple which is believed have been built in 12th century and destroyed in 1766 during invasion of Tippu Sulthan. The temple was renovated in the year 1975 and the idol of Lord Ganapathi was re-consecrated.

Ramayana parikarama in Wayanad

Kabini Basin, especially greater-Wayanad and the indigenous communities have their own tradition the great epic Ramayana. In fact, Wayanad soil has been made sacred by the footfall of Lord Ram, Sita, and her twin sons Lava and Kusa; the Sage Valmiki who sheltered Sita and her twins have been abandoned by Lord Ram, as per the belief system of the tribes and Chetty groups especially in Pulpally Village (Kulirani 1996). The local traditions of Ramayana have

many localities and place names that are sacred because of their association with the Ramayana events that as per the belief systems occurred in this part Kabini Basin. In the whole of North Kerala Wayanad is the only place having temples consecrated to Lord Ram, Sita, Lava and Kusa, kaksman, Valmiki, Hanuman. Given below is a brief description of the temples and places:

Ponkuzhy:



Ponkuzhy temple complex with dedicated shrines for Lord Ram, Laxman, Sita and Hanuman, with a nearby *kuzy* pond associated with belief that was filled with tears of Sita devi. Sita is believed to have been rescued from here and sheltered by Sage Valmiki and taken to his Valmiki *ashram* (now a shrine with thatched roof structure in Mullankolly village (formerly part of Pulpally) <https://rajithaunni.blogspot.com/2019/03/ponkuzhi-sreerama-templewayanad.html>

Pulplally:





Munipara, sage's rock, Ashramakolly



Sita Devi and Lava-Kusa Temple Pulpally



Jada attu kavu, Pulpally

(Shrine to commemorate Sita devi being consumed by mother earth)

Eriyapally in Pulally, where Sita devi sought help of the Wayanadan Chetty farmer to seek cow milk for the twins is another associated place.

Pulpally village in the north-east part of Wayanad bordering Karnataka's H D Kote Taluk separated by Kannarampuzha rivulet is the traditional abode of Paniya, Adiya, Kattunaickan, Mullukuruman, Urali/Vetta Kurumar, Kunduvadiyar tribes as well as Waynadan, Edanadan and Mandadan Chetty. From the year 1950 the village experienced migration of peasant communities from plains of Kerala. The local traditions associating the indigenous communities with epic Ramayanam have survived and strengthened in spite of outside influences.

Hindu Traditions in Kabini Basin- Karnataka



Kabini the ancient Mastigudi Temple remains submerged by Kabini dam

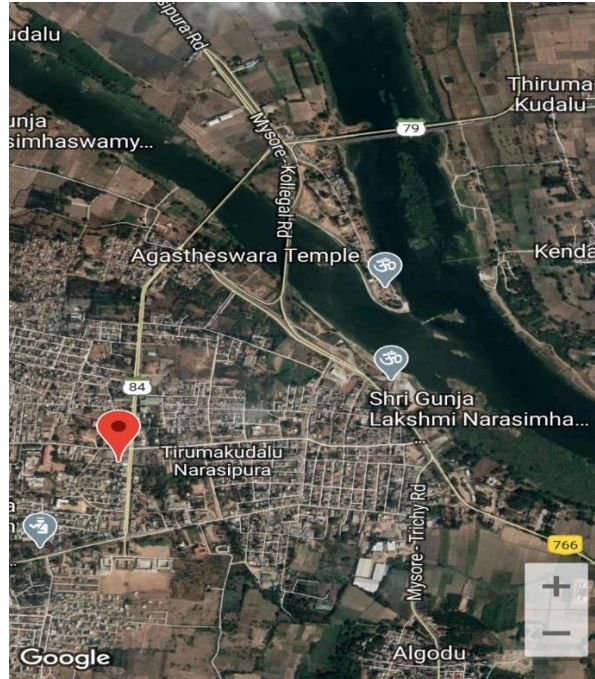
The sacred complex at Tirumakudalu Narasipura

Tirumakudalu Narasipura is the sacred location of Triveni Sangama being the confluence of Kabini, Kaveri and Spatika Sarovar (also known as Guptagamini, a mythical spring or lake). The holiness of Tirumakudalu Narasipura is comparable to Prayag in North India and is one of the prominent Dakshin Kashi visualised by Rishi Agasthya. The Sangama is sacred complex of five temples 1) Agasthyeshwara, 2) Bhikshewara, 3) Moolasthaneshwara, 4) Anandeswara and 5) Gunja Narasimha Swamy as well as of five sacred panchalingas (Hanuman Lingam, Someswara Lingam, Markendeshwara Lingam, Gargeshwara Lingam, Agasthyeshwara Lingam). Small sand dune in the middle of the confluence is the most favoured location for pithru tharpan poojas and people avail the coracle boats to reach the location.





Gunja Narasimha Swamy temple on the right bank of Kabini at T Narasupura



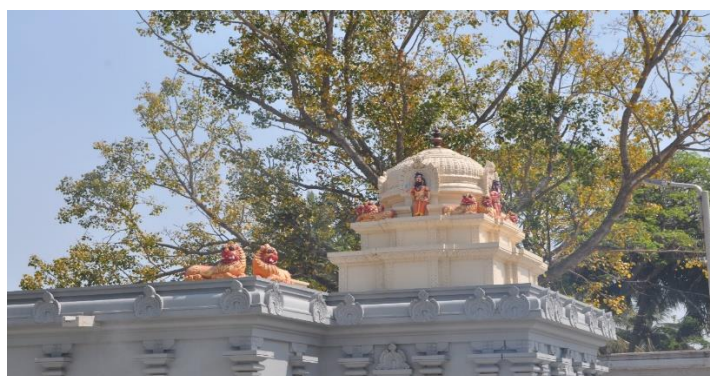
Satellite imagery of T N Pura *sangamam*

Najangud Sri Sreekanteshwara Temple Complex

Sreekanteshwara temple at Nanjangud dedicated to Shiva is Kabini River Basin's holiest and Karnataka's ancient and biggest temple complex. Shiva is worshipped in various manifestations here, Nanjunda, Visha Kanta, Srikanta, Bhavaroga Vaidya. Other temples in the vicinity are that of Parashurama, Gauthama, Ganapathi, Dattareya along with the Mutts of Raghavendra Swamy and Virasiva Mutts. Chola, Hoysala, Vijayanagara, Wadiyar dynasties and Sulthans of Srirangapatnam extended their patronages in expanding the temple complex.







Parasurama temple

Veerasaivism in Kabini Basin- Suttur Math

Located on the right banks of Kabini river between Nanjangud and Tirumalkudal Narasipur is one of Lingayath religions Holly Maths, Jagadguru Sri Veerasimhasana Mahamasthana Math at Suttur Srikshetra. It was established by Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeswara Shivayogiji

the seer who was doing penance on a rock in Kabini/Kapila at Suttur was instrumental in bringing long-lasting peace between King Rajaraja Chola and King Rachamalla IV of Gangas of Talakad. As a token of their appreciation and upon their request the seer agreed to establish a Math on the banks of Kabini at Suttur. The Math has grown into a ‘ongoing movement to uphold the cause of social and economic justice, based on spiritual values and ideals. The contemporary activities of the Math have grown in global scale.



Male Madheshwra worship in Kabini Basin

Veerashivaism is a predominant religious sect in Karnataka part of Kabini Basin and Male Madeshwara is a spiritual hero of the sect. The deity is propitiated for Hindu peasants for prosperity of crop and cattle.





Scenes from Male Madeshwara temple Hegde Devana Kote

Other Religions

Christianity reached Kabini Basin of Wayanad during the Colonial period and Islam with the invasion of Srirangapatnam (need a little more detailed treatment, to be carried out in publication stage)

Chapter-VI **Kabini Basin Heritage Conservational Strategies and
role for IGRMS, urgency**

The approved project proposal envisaged the conduct a series of workshops and launching of following Heritage Conservation Strategies. However, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020-21 period disturbed all the planned strategies. Hence it is proposed that the following programs as envisaged may be carried out under the aegis of the IGRMS (SRC), the author will be happy to associate with the thematic, organizational and logistical aspects the events.

Three programs were envisaged with an objective of heritage conservation of the Kabini Basin in tune with the Indra Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sngrahalaya's general policy frame works namely - *To take steps to salvage and preserve the fast vanishing aspect of the Indian Culture; and To act as a center of research and training in museology of the appropriate kind and generate in the course of time a new museum movement in the different regions of India to present and preserve variety of cultural life.*

Proposal-I

The first programme proposed was with objective of salvage and preservation by bringing the trifurcated / bifurcated indigenous communities of the Kabini Basin on a common platform to facilitate their self-rediscovery of shared heritages and reconnect through a never ever held event titled ***Kabini Basin Adivasi Sangamam.***

Title: 'Kabini Sangamam' at IGRMS, Southern Regional Centre to demonstrate and document the diverse intangible folk traditions of Kabini Basin as a part of programmes of IGRMS, SRC activities 2019-2020

Objective: The primary objective of the sanctioned project is to establish the ethnic linkages of the Kabini River Basin tribes. Traditional habitats of mainly five tribal communities who were autochthonous to the Kabini River Basin had their habitats trifurcated or bifurcated into the states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu under the States Reorganisation Act 1956. (There are other such instances elsewhere in the region too, but the focus is limited to Kabini River Basin.) The dominant nomenclatures of the communities who fall in this category are: 1) Betta Kurumar, 2) Jenu Kuruba, 3) Adiya, and 4) Paniya and 5)

Mullakurumar. The ethnographic accounts of the above communities of the region provide pointers to the fact that though there are ethnonym or nomenclatural variations for each of the above community in the three/two States, they have shared identities. This fact has been established in the Chapter IV- 'Ethnology of Kabini Basin' It should also be noted that there has never been an attempt by any State or Central agencies to bring the members of the above communities now residing in the three/two States on a common platform and to help them rediscover, reconnect and strengthen their shared heritages.

A. Communities whose traditional habitat in Kabini River Basin are trifurcated

1. The Betta Kurumar habitations are spread in the upper reaches of Kabini in the Wayanad District of Kerala where they are listed as Vetta Kuruman, locally referred to also as Uraly Kuruman; in the Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu they are included under Kuruman (ST) and in Kodagu and Mysore Districts of Karnataka they are listed as Kadu Kuruba but referred as Betta Kuruba in the Coorg District and H D Kote Taluk of Mysore District. Kuruman/Kuruba/Kurumba is the community's generic name. The four suffixes- *kadu*, *betta*, *vetta*, and *uraly*-that have come into usage are reflective of the regional linguistic influences that resulted from the trifurcation of their habitat under the State Reorganisation Act. In all the three zones they have been traditionally practitioners of crafts and shifting cultivation. The Betta Kurumar of Karnataka have come to despise the *kadu* prefix as they consider it derogatory and an attempt to project them as 'wild' or '*junglee*'.
2. The Jenu Kuruba too shares the same habitat in this tri-junction area and has been the example of a classical food gatherer and hunter. In the Wayanad District of Kerala majority of them are listed as Kattunaickan, while in Tamil Nadu they are Kattunayakan and in Karnataka they are Jenu Kuruba. Karnataka has the largest concentration of Jenu Kuruba/Kattunaickan. In all the three zones they are engaged in the collection honey and MNFP from forests. Honey is *jenu* in Kannada and *thaen* in Malayalam and Tamil, hence in Kerala and Tamil Nadu they are also known as *Thaen Kurumar*. Jenu Kurumar have rich repository of traditional knowledge associated with the bio-diversity of Kabini basin forests and their skills were utilized in the '*khedda*' (elephant trapping) operations by the erstwhile Mysore Rajas. The habitats of Jenu Kurumar are on both banks of Kabini Basin and fall within the forests of Nagarhole, Kakan (Heggdadevana) Kote, Wayanad and

Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuaries and they face serious livelihood issues under non implementation of Forest Rights Act (2006).

3. The third indigenous group of Kabini who also are the most populous among them is the Paniyan tribe. They inhabit in all the three regions of the basin, but their major concentration is in Wayanad, Kerala. They are listed as Paniyan in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. There is a section of Yerava in Coorg district of Karnataka who are known as Paniya Yerva whose affiliation to Paniyan is well established. However, the Paniya would prefer to refer themselves as '*Ippimale makkal*', implying 'children of ippil hill'. The community has suffered under agrarian serfs' bondage systems in all areas till the abolition of bonded labour system. The agrarian and plantation sector of the Kabini Basin is heavily dependent on the labour (*pani* implies labour) supplied by the Paniyan men and women. Fishing and gathering supplemented their food needs. Their access to land resources is very meagre and is heavily dependent on welfare and development programmes.

B. Communities whose traditional habitat in Kabini River Basin got bifurcated

The nature of bifurcation of indigenous communities in this group has happened in two ways, one having distribution in Kerala and Tamil Nadu second instance of distribution in Karnataka and Kerala.

1. The least populous among the five indigenous groups of Kabini Basin dealt here is the Adiya tribe, whose counter parts in Karnataka are known as Panjiri Yerava. The word *adiyan* in Malayalam means 'slave', while *yerava* or *yeravaru* in Kodava language means borrower having implication also as beggar. In the case Kerala section, the term 'adiyan' came to be associated with socio-economic condition of agrarian bondage similar to the one suffered by the Paniyan. For their counter parts in the Kodagu socio-cultural milieu the suffix of 'yerava' implied even more deplorable social state. Regarding etymology of the word 'panjiri', no clear interpretation is available, but there is indication of the association of the word with a place name called Iripu in the Karnataka and Kerala border. The preferred community name by the members of the community in both sides of the Kabini River is 'Ravular' while the 'Adiyan' nomenclature is derogatory from the community's perspective. Linguists identify 'Ravula' as a Dravidian dialect.

2. Mullakurumar of Wayanad, Kerala and Mullu Kurumba of Nilgiri District, Tamil Nadu share a common identity. The Mullu Kurumba of Tamil Nadu avail ST status under Kurumba (Nilgiri) generic name. Even though both sections are aware of their shared heritages they are not been successful to forge common identity as Mullu Kuruma/Kurumba across the State boundaries. The community practiced hunting, fishing, slash and burn and wet land paddy cultivation in the past. Now they are into plantation agriculture and paddy cultivation. They have availed the ST welfare programmes and have achieved a better standard of living compared to other groups.

The cases of the five communities briefly presented above justify the proposal to organise a ‘Kabini Sangamam’ under the auspicious of IGRMS, at Southern Regional Centre or at any other convenient location in the study area at Mananthavady, Wayanad or Gudalur, Nilgiri. Such a ‘sangamam’ or meet can have two components: 1) to stage the diverse intangible folk traditions of each of the above five tribes of Kabini Basin and 2) hold a workshop to discuss community specific issues of identity, issues of language endangerment or lose (dialect), traditional knowledge conservation and transmission participated by community elders/elites and ethnographers, linguists and ecologists specialized in each community to prepare an action plan and strategies for a new museum movement being perused by IGRMS.

The ‘Sangamam’ or meet can be carried out in the first instance with full participation of the IGRMS Audio-visual team from Bhopal in the tentative format below:

- 1) Sangamam of Betta Kuruba at IGRMS, SRC comprising of 30-40 performers of three regions, 9-12 elders and community elites, 2 ethnographers, One linguist (Prof Gnanasundaram), TRI/ST Development Department and Forest Department representatives from Karnataka, Kerala and TN. Five-day programme during a season convenient to the community involving performances of traditional music, dances and games associated with social, religious and festive occasions of each region and followed by a workshop/interactive section to prepare a plan of action for salvage and revival. Representatives NGOs of repute working among the group in Kabini Basin like VGKK, Vivekananda Youth Movement, ACCORD, Keystone Foundation could be roped in too.
- 2) Sangamam of Jenu Kuruba at IGRMS, SRC or at Heggdadevana Kote comprising of 30-40 performers, 9-12 elders and community elites, 2 ethnographers (Including Prof P K Misra), One linguist (Prof Gnanasundaram), TRI/ST Development Department and

Forest Department representatives from Karnataka, Kerala and TN. The structure can be similar to the one above involving performances of traditional music, dances and games associated with social, religious and festive occasions of each region followed by a workshop/interactive session to formulate community-based action plan. Participation of NGOs to be solicited too.

- 3) Sangamam of Paniyan at Department Tribal and Rural Studies, Kannur University, Mananthavady Campus, Wayanad comprising of 50-60 performers of three regions, 12-15 elders and community elites (including Ms Leela Santhosh, community representative with documentation skills), 3 ethnographers, One linguist (Prof. R R Thampuran), TRI/ST Development Department representatives from Karnataka, Kerala and TN. Five day programme, during a season convenient to the community involving performances of traditional music, dances and games associated with social, religious and festive occasions of each region and followed by a workshop/interactive section to prepare a plan of action for salvage and revival. Representatives NGOs of repute working among the group in Kabini Basin like ACCORD, Keystone Foundation, WSSS Mananthavady could be roped in too
- 4) Sangamam of Adiyar/Ravular at Department Tribal and Rural Studies, Kannur University, Mananthavady Campus, Wayanad comprising of 20-30 performers of two regions, 10-12 elders and community elites (Including Ms C K Janu, who was a Indian representative to UN meet on International Day of Indigenous People in 1994), 2 ethnographers, One linguist (Prof. R R Thampuran), TRI/ST Development Department representatives from Karnataka and Kerala. Three days involving performances of traditional music, dances and games associated with social, religious and festive occasions of each region followed by workshop/interaction. Outstation participants from Karnataka to arrive on previous day evening.
- 5) Sangamam of Mullakurumar / Mulla Kurumba at Sulthan Bathery (tentatively at St Joseph Auditorium, Sulthan Bathery) Wayanad comprising of 20-30 performers of two regions, 10-12 elders and community elites, 2 ethnographers (Including Dr C R Sathyanarayanan), One linguist (Prof. R R Thampuran), TRI/ST Development Department representatives from Kerala. Three day programme involving performances of traditional music, dances and games associated with social, religious and festive occasions of each region followed by workshop/interaction to prepare salvage strategies.

Need for urgent Field Based audio-visual documentation

Apart from the documentation during the Kabini Adivasi Sangamam for the five indigenous communities identified, above there is an urgent need for field based documentation of other six indigenous communities identified in Kabini Basin. They are: 1) Kurichiyar- the biodiversity conservators of Kabini Basin, 2) Kunduvadiyan, 3) Thachanadan Moopan, 4) Wayanad Kadar, 5) Wayanad Pathiyar who are unique to the basin and cultural isolates; 6) Soliga- who are common Cauvery and Kabini. The audio-visual documentation team from IGRMS Bhopal can cover the Valliyurkavu temple festival, the largest tribal festival of Wayanad held from 23 to 28 March and help this Tagore Research Scholar to prepare a documentary on Kabini River Basin during this trip.

Proposal-II

Proposal for erecting Betta Kuruba tribal habitat at IGRMS, Bhopal as part of the Tagore Research Scholar Programme- 'Conserving the Civilizational Heritages of Kabini River Basin'

The Betta Kuruba Scheduled Tribe community share the habitat of Kabini River Basin spread over the three States of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu along with about ten other indigenous groups. In the upper reaches of Kabini in the Wayanad District of Kerala they are listed as Vetta Kuruman locally referred to also as Uraly Kuruman; in the Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu included under Kuruman and in Kodagu and Mysore Districts of Karnataka they are listed as Kadu Kuruba but referred as Betta Kuruba in the Coorg District H D Kote Taluk of Mysore District. Kuruman/Kuruba/Kurumba is the community's generic name. The four suffixes- kadu, betta, vetta, and uraly-that have come into usage are reflective of the regional linguistic influences resulted from the trifurcation of their habitat under the State Reorganisation and their dispersal in the three Southern States. Vetta Kuruman population in Kerala is 6482 (2013), Kadu Kuruba in Karnataka number 11953 (2011), Kuruman in Tamil Nadu 30965 (2011) The Tamil Nadu population figure is inclusive of all Kuruman generic categories. Betta Kuruman section of Kuruman in Nilgiri District is about 3000 in number as communicated by community sources.

The population size of the Betta Kuruba proper as estimated by the sources within the community (Chikbomma, H D Kote) across the three States is approximately 15000 (Karnataka six thousand, Kerala six thousand and Tamil Nadu three thousand). The Betta Kuruba section Kadu Kuruba caldron considers that kadu suffix is demeaning and often used by non-tribal to

put them in bad light. Their efforts to forge a common platform and re-discover their common roots across Kabini Basin remain a long-cherished desire.

Ethnographic accounts of the community (Thurston: 1909, Gopalan Nair : 1911, Nanjundayya Iyer--, Logan 1951, Luiz :.. Menon: , Singh.. and others) indicate that they are a single tribe tracing their descent to the Vedar rulers who controlled the upper Kabini Basin before they were defeated by Kottayam and Kurmbanad Rajas. Their present habitat fall within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve; comprising of Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) National Park, Bandipur National Park, Mudumalai Wild Life Sanctuary & National Park and Wayanad Wild Life Sanctuary; together forming a contiguous area. Members of the community are under serious livelihood stress because of restrictions imposed on extend of land holding and extraction and utilization of forest products.

Artisans of Kabini Basin:

Betta Kuruba lived in exclusive hamlets. Low roofed thatched houses are built around a large sized community shed/hall that stood in the central courtyard which in the past also had the role of youth dormitory. They are the artisans of Kabini Basin organised on territoriality. During the period when the area was less penetrated by plantation agriculture and market forces, their multiple artisan skills in black smithy, pottery, carpentry, basketry and mat weaving were availed by the tribes and non-tribes in the region (Misra and Rajlakshmi: 1972). They sustained mainly on shifting cultivation of ragi, jola, chama, dry land varieties of paddy in the hill slopes and many varieties of grams. The shifting cultivation fields- kubrivayasaya had to be watched against raids by wild elephants and other wild grazers from watch towers on trees. In addition, their belief systems evolved while living in the nature. Having sustained themselves successfully for long in the forest dominated ecology there is a rich repository of tangible and intangible heritages.

The urgency for erecting Betta Kuruba habitat at IGRMS, Bhopal

The transition of Betta Kuruba from shifting cultivator-artisan community to peasantry and wage earning is almost erasing their collective knowledge system that was associated with a way of life that sustained many generations of them in one of the richest ecosystems (Kulirani:1981). Even their dialect is under serious endangerment and the regional language of the respective State of residence is fast replacing their dialect through medium of instruction and the need for communication in the regional language of residence. Market penetration and availability of factory made agricultural implements, steel and aluminium pots and •pans,

plastic and fiber made baskets and mats have either greatly reduced or resulted in no demand for Betta Kuruba artisan skills from their traditional patrons and clients. Their traditional hadi (clustered house) system and house making skills and practices and the construction of youth dormitory (called differently as ambala in Karnataka region and chittala in Kerala and Tamil Nadu) have all become a rarity. As a result, the number of knowledge holders in the respective skills is in the verge of endangerment and there is urgency for intervention by the IGRMS to conserve and document the traditional knowledge systems of Betta Kuruba of Kabini River Basin.

Items recommended for preservation at IGRMS Tribal Habitat

1. Betta Kuruba hadi (hamlet) comprising of
 - 1.1. Central structure- Ambala or Youth dormitory
 - 1.2. Potter's house along with associated tools and finished products
 - 1.3. Blacksmith's house along with associated technology, tools used and manufactured implements
 - 1.4. Basket maker's/mat weaver's house along with range of associated tools and finished products used in shifting cultivation
 - 1.5. Carpenter/wood cutter's house along with adjoining cattle shed
(yetihinu kotige)
 - 1.6. A watch tower (anaekavalu) or tree hut
 - 1.7. A well
2. A set of traditional Musical instruments
3. Traditional Dress and ornaments men and women
4. Traditional Toys and child rearing equipment's like cradle
5. Herbarium consisting of medicinal plants used by Betta Kuruba (optional)

Tentative list of participants/collaborators/ key informants

1. Sri. Cikbomma, H D Kote, Karnataka-9164549954
2. Sri. Vittal Nanchi, Nagar Hole, Karnataka- 9108878584
3. Sri. Kala Iykula, Coorg, Karnataka-998019251
4. Sri. B.S. Suresh, Bospura, Karnataka- 9488146553, 8098574877
5. Sri. B. K.Suresh, Sergil, Pattavayil, Wayanad-9496685674
6. Sri. Krishnadas, Kattikulam, Wayanad- 6282313482, 9605948480
7. Cikbomma, Tappekadu, Nilgiri, Tamil Nadu-9443292496

Phases of implementation

Phase-I

Meeting with key informants, collaborators and additional participants like traditional leaders/elders (as required) to explain the concept and for obtaining informed consent

Phase-2

Two-day workshop involving ethnographers and key informants to prepare a detailed list of ground plan, quantum of material requirement, artefacts, material culture items etc

Phase-3

A field reconnoiter to field followed by field collection and documentation

Phase-4

Conservation and packing and onward transportation to Bhopal

Phase-5

Erecting the Betta Kuruba hadi at IGRMS, Bhopal

Proposal- III

‘KABINI HERITAGE VILLAGE’- KABINI BASIN FIELD MUSEUM AT CHEKADI

Background:

The sanctioned project under Tagore Research Scholarship on ‘Conserving the civilizational heritages of Kabini River Basin’ proposed that effort will be initiated to identify endangered community specific tangible cultural heritages and launch onsite conservation as part of activities of Southern Regional Centre, IGRMS. During the field work carried out both in Kerala part of Kabini Basin in Wayanad and in Heggada Devan Kote part of the basin in Karnataka during various intervals, this researcher has identified a very appropriate site to launch this effort.

Chekadi village-a microcosm of Kabini Basin:

Chekadi is one of the earliest villages in Wayanad district; it was known as Serthottu before and later named as Chekadi. The beautiful prime region is surrounded by forest on 3 sides (east, west and south) and river Kabini on the north side. The village is located close to Bavali in the Karnataka-Kerala border. Chekadi is the first human habitation in Wayanad that gradually qualified to be a hamlet and later a village; people started living here several centuries ago. The majority of the populations are the indigenous tribes who form the Adivasis section. The tribes in this village claim that their village is the cradle of the ancient culture of Wayanad. The tribes comprise of the following groups:

1. Adiya

2. Paniya
3. Mullukurumar
4. Vetta Kuruman (Betta Kuruba/ Urali Kuruman)
5. Kattunayaka/ Jenu Kuruba
6. Kundu Vadiyar.

The non-tribal agrarian group is the Edanadan Chetty who practiced both wet land paddy cultivation and plantation agriculture. They have very ancient traditions and speak a dialect of Kannada. The above tribes and the Edanadan Chetty are very much inter-connected to their ancient cultural heritages and were following *jajmani* relations. The tangible and intangible aspects of the village life is fast changing as the village got connected by road to outside world after the commissioning of a bridge across Kabini river in 2018. Any attempt to preserve the traditional cultural heritages of the village will contribute to conserving the pristine element of rural Kabini Basin heritages. There are many institutions and organizations who are interested to study and research about the rural villages Kabini Basin who are still continuing with traditional agrarian way life. It will act as an incentive to this traditional village to conserve this way life for posterity.

The need for a cultural heritage village in Kabini Basin:

The indigenous tribes who live in the Chekadi region still preserve and practice traditional biodiversity conservation practices and maintain ecosystem. They live in houses made of thatched roof, mud, bamboo and brick houses set in swampy valley of the plateau. Their farming culture practices help to preserve the fertility of the soil, climate and eco system. Farmers don't construct walls or borders for farm land, they promote social farming. Their lifestyle is connected to nature directly. Their rituals and worships include animals and trees, they preserve nature in every way. They continue traditional practices of art and crafts.

The viability of a cultural heritage village:

The tribes who live in this village have repository plants, trees and ecosystem. This knowledge is also fast fading; they had medicines for most of the diseases. The farming culture which they practice is more productive and less harming to the nature. Modern cultivation styles started affecting the soil and environment. These styles can be adopted for better productivity in an eco-friendly manner. Art and craft of these tribes are very different. They have rich legacy in

dance and music, they follow a different style in performing the arts. The music instruments and sounds are unknown to the outside world.

Their form of art is connected to the seasons and nature. They dance and sing during the harvesting season. Tribal women make ornaments from wooden and bamboo pieces, they use mud ornaments also.

The need for field conservation museum by IGRMS:

Modern industrial world is still lacking technologies to preserve our nature and land. Rural pocket like Chekadi is a rarity protected from natural calamities. The tribes who live in forest ecosystems have very vast knowledge about nature but have no incentive or encouragement to continue this traditional life style. Living knowledge of tribes will demonstrate the sustainable aspects their farming methods, the way they preserve seeds for next season, pest control, irrigation, weed control, conservation of water bodies and river system. Sustainable fishing culture of tribes is another aspect.

A living agrarian field museum developed with the support of IGRMS will provide opportunity to learn and research about the sustainable farming and to preserve nature and might be a model for fellow researchers. The tribes and rural communities will feel proud of their lifestyle and knowledge and that it will be an asset to the society.

Benefits of Kabini cultural heritage village

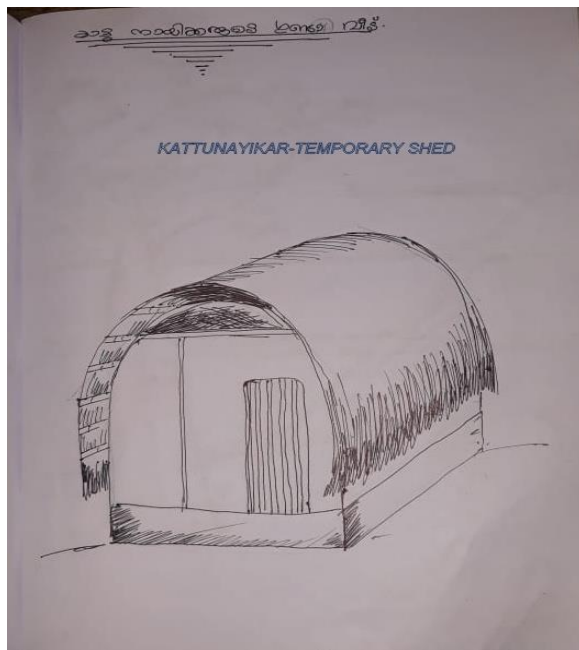
1. The Kabini Basin's traditional farming village* can be preserved and it will be very useful for modern society.
2. A demo village of traditional method for preserving water bodies
3. Traditional farming instruments used for farming and other activities in Kabini Basin can be preserved and promoted.
4. Traditional cuisine of Kabini Basin to be preserved and promoted
5. Traditional dressing and ornaments can be preserved
6. Kabini basin art and crafts can preserved and promoted
7. Traditional seed preservation techniques for next agricultural season without using chemicals can be learnt from the ancient tribes

8. The traditional knowledge holders among the “Moopans” can be honoured and guide researchers to the ancient modes of living.

* A local farmers’ association by name ‘Chekai Nava’ has expressed willingness to collaborate in this venture if NML/IGRMS (MOC) may have feasibility study.

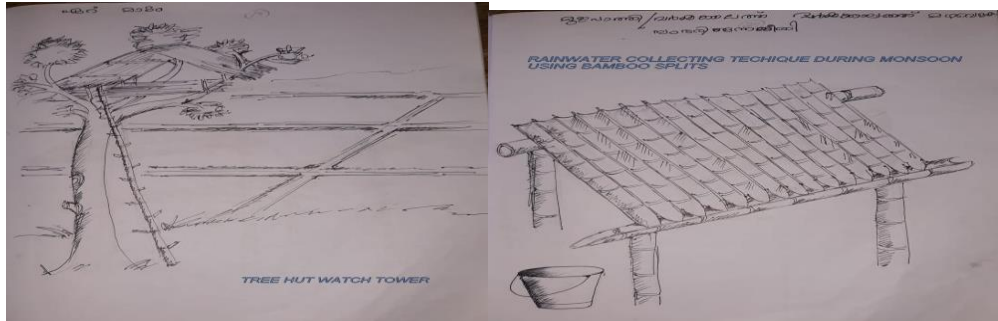
Annexure-I

House types of Chekadi-4 Nos



Annexure-II

Farm related structures



Annexure-III

Material culture related



Annexure-IV

Water conservation



SUMMING UP

Ethnographic description of human/river interaction in the context of Kabini River Basin attempted in this account has given descriptions of the physical aspects of the river, prehistory and history. The indigenous people of the basin flourished at certain periods in history, migrations of peasants and political conquests resulted increased land use and subjugation of the weak and the meek. Th resource richness of the Kabini Basin has helped in the growth and development of a multilayered civilization specific and unique to this small pocket. However, the partitioning of the Kabini Basin according to the areas of influence of regional linguistic domains have resulted in the decline of the Kabini Basin cultural identity. There is an urgent need for the intervention by Ministry of Culture and pioneering national institutions under its control like the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sngrahalaya to engage in conservation and salvage operations in lines with the proposal described above.

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