

A PROFILE OF 'PALIYAN TRIBE' OF TAMIL NADU

By

MIRUNANJALI .R



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR WOMEN (DEEMED UNIVERSITY) COIMBATORE-641 043
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION EDUCATION**

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Certified as **bonafide** reasearch work



Signature of the
Head of the
Department



Signature of the
Dean of the
Faculty



Signature of
the Guide

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"PALIYAN TRIBE" OF TAMIL NADU

Introduction

I. INTRODUCTION

India has been rightly described as a 'melting pot' of races and tribes. Tribal in India form the very segment of the weaker sections of the society with their traditional skills and resources. They have been living in remote and exclusive areas, in the fastness of forests, on hill slopes and plateaux and generally in areas with poor natural resources endowments, isolated regions. This natural isolation has deprived them of the fruits of scientific and technological advances on the one hand and it has lead to their distinctive life styles, cultures and languages on the other hand. In fact, they are the most vulnerable section of the population and they are exploited by the ageold social and cultural handicaps coupled with environmental factors (Chandra, 1989).

According to Murdock "Tribe is a social group in which there are many clans, nomadic bands, villages or other sub-groups which usually have a definite geographical area, a separate language, a singular and distinct culture and either a common political organization or at least a feeling of common determination against the strangers (Bhusan and Sachdeva, 1994).

Nearly all the tribal of India have been in continuous contact with their neighbours, who live by farming and a

large number of specialized manual industries and yet they retained their customs and ethnic identity. This is because they usually marry within their own communities and their cultural practices are kept alive by the clan elders or chiefs. Barring a very small fraction, there is little difference between their economic status and that of the neighbouring rural folks. Yet as the tribes have more or less retained their separate social identity and on the whole can be regarded as comparatively isolated and economically backward, they have been placed under the category of Scheduled Tribes. The first and foremost characteristics of the tribal economy is its close relationship with the natural resources and habitat which is usually the forest, the tribes that inhabit islands also depend on natural sea-products like fish. The tribal obtain their day-to-day requirements from the area they inhabit with the help of the most simple implements and without any technological aids. Nothing seems to escape from them edible roots, fruits, flower and honey, insects, fish, pigeons and other birds, monkeys, hares, pigs etc., (Seshadri, 1993)

The chief characteristics of tribes are they have a common territory, sense of unity, common language, endogamous group, the members are related by blood, each tribe has its own political organizations, there is chief of the tribes who exercises authority over all the members of

the tribe, religion plays an important role in the tribal organization, the members of the tribe worship a common ancestor, the tribe has a common name (Bhushan and Sachdeva, 1994).

The 1991 Census estimates that there are 64.88 million Scheduled Tribes (67.16 million) in the country - i.e. 8.08 per cent of the total population. In Madhya Pradesh 23 per cent of its total population belonging to the tribal category. Of the North-Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, Mizoram leads the list with 94.75 per cent of the states population belonging to the tribal category followed by Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh in that order (Shashi, 1995).

The total population of the Scheduled Tribe in India is 67.16 million i.e 8.08 per cent. Of this females number 33.40 million which represents 8.20 per cent of the countries total female population. While the ratio of male tribal population is 7.82 per cent of the total population. This denotes that the pattern of sex ratio favours tribal females as compared to the general population. Sex ratio for the whole of India is 929 females per thousand males and for tribal population it is 972 to thousand males (Report of National Commission for Women, 1995)

From the point of view of development, the tribal communities may be classified into three categories. The first category comprises of tribes who are living outside the sphere of influence of modern civilization, isolated in hills and dense forests and living by food-gathering and hunting, such tribes are mostly found in some pockets of Andamanese e.g. the Jarawa and Sentineles. Since they do not like to meet outsiders, contact with them have been few and as a consequence, knowledge about them is scanty. The second category consists of highly advanced tribes, socially, politically and economically. The tribes of North Eastern India come under this category. In between these two extreme categories come the major chunk of the tribal population of India. They inhabit the vast tribal belt stretching across Central India - from Orissa in the east to Gujarat in the west - exhibiting various degrees of development. There exists wide and distinct differences among the tribal. Thus the tribal setting is so complex in its nature that it is really a challenging task for the policy makers, planners and administrators to tackle the problems of tribal development (Bhattacharya and Lakshmiah, 1992).

The most heartening feature of the present tribal situation in India is that a great segment of the tribal population has awakened to the need of finding a solution to

their problems and are responding. But they rightly demand that the 'Progress' and 'Advancement' should not disturb the essential harmony of their life. They like to be assisted largely through their own institutions. A tribal's home and family is the precious and fundamental basis on which the future edifice of his welfare is to be built.

We stand at the threshold of a new era. The tribal people have made an entry into next era with other members of the Indian society, but they are not prepared to allow anybody to shatter the harmony of their life. They deserve a better appreciation of their life, mores and problems from planners, administrators and general masses (Hasnain, 1989).

Paliyans population in Tamil Nadu has been referred separately as Palliyan, Palleyan and Palliyar. According to 1981 census, the population of the Palliyan was 1818, that of the Palliyar was 1615 and the Palleyan was 19 in this state. They speak Tamil and use the Tamil script for both inter-group and intra-group communications.

Palani makkal and Malai Paliyar are divided into two groups, Vana Paliyar and Deyva Paliyar. The term 'Malai Paliyar' means that they live on hills (Malai). They are one of the food gathering communities of Tamil Nadu. It is believed that the Palliyar originally belonged to the Palani Hills. The term Palliyar or Paliyar has been derived from

the word Palaniyan, which in Tamil language means a man from Palani (Singh, 1994).

The Paliyans are described in the Gazette of the Madurai District as a "very backward caste, who reside in small scattered parties amid the jungles of upper Palani and Varushnad valley. They speak Tamil with a peculiar intonation (Thurston, 1975).

Indian tribal today, like others of their kind are in transition, inevitably exposed, as they are to the influences of modernity and social forces, Paliyans are not exceptions of the same.

To gain insight into the changing trends, the investigator has made an attempt to find out the profile of Paliyan Tribe.

The specific objectives of this study is to know:

1. the socio-economic background of the Paliyans.
2. the changing trends in their life style.

Review of Literature

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature pertaining to this study is reviewed under the following headings.

1. Profile of Tribals.
2. Tribal Development Policy and Changing Trends.
3. Research Highlights.

1. Profile of Tribals

Mankind is proceeding towards greater and greater homogeneity - racially, culturally and linguistically. This march encompasses a variety of dimensions and some agonizing implications. Oldest cultures are either dying or being exterminated. In such a broad category come a great segment of humanity known by a bewildering variety of names such as primitive, tribal, indigenous, aboriginal, native and so on. Some major characteristics of these groups have been simple pre-machine economy, unsophisticated rituals and social customs, lack of a script for their speech which itself is not developed, small local community organisation and homogeneity (Hasnain, 1988).

The tribal society is a simple society where we find homogeneity and absence of hierarchy. It has been argued that the tribals are not separate group, rather they represent a layer of hindu culture. The proper description of these people is that they are the imperfectly integrated

classes of hindu society. Owing to their homogeneity and simplicity the observance of their festival is not complex (Singh, 1989).

While monogamy is the predominant form of marriage, there are a large number of tribes practicing sororal polygyny and nonsororal polygyny. The rule of residence is mainly patrilocal. Divorce and widow remarriage are permitted in tribal communities and also remarriage of widows. The dominant form of tribal family is nuclear followed by vertically extended and mixed extended type (Singh, 1994).

Tribal social structures are more egalitarian and open and less stratified than social structures of larger and more advanced communities of India. The status and position engaged by tribal women in society is therefore in certain tribes is much better than their counterparts in other communities. Tribal society has a tradition of both men and women working in agriculture or in other vocations. Thus tribal women have access to income and therefore economically independent, there are also no restriction on women going out for work independent of men and not necessarily along with them. Usually tribal women go out to work in large groups. In social matters and family life also women are far more emancipated. They have a much greater say

in the decision making in family and community matters and are not subjected to the same degree of social control by male members of the family as women in other countries

In matters of inheritance of father's/husband's property and in access to land there is a certain built-in-discrimination against women in certain tribal communities (Government of India, 1988).

The eldest male member is the head of the family and represents all other members of his household. After marriage the girl is of course physically transferred from the familiar intimacy of her parental house to a new place of her husband. As a new member she is supposed to perform the household tasks and get involved in economic activities (Parthasarathy, 1988).

Majumdar (1967) explained that dormitories, bisexual as well as mono-sexual are found practically in all parts of the country where the tribal people have their habitation. They are found in Assam, the Konyak Nagas designate the boy's dormitory as Ban and the girl's dormitory as Yo. In south India the existence of dormitories has been reported from amongst the Muthuvenas, the mannams and Paliyans (Hasnain, 1989).

Like other primitive tribes, the Paliyans are short of stature and dolichocephalic and the archaic type of nose persists in some individuals. Average height 150.9 cm, nasal index 83 (Max.100). Dark in colour, short curly hair (Thurston, 1975).

The economic organization of Indian tribes is not different from the primitive economic organisations of other parts of the world. Basically their economy is geared to the satisfaction of basic subsistence needs and hence they fall into the broad category of production-consumption economies.

The occupations in which the Scheduled Tribe populations are generally engaged are:

- i) Forestry and gathering
- ii) Shifting cultivation
- iii) Settled Agriculture
- iv) Agricultural Labour
- v) Animal husbandry
- vi) House hold Industry and
- vii) Miscellaneous occupation.

There are few communities among the Scheduled Tribes who are engaged fully in forestry and food gathering. In some parts of the country, considerable number of Scheduled Tribes workers earn their livelihood as agricultural labourers.

The dependence of gathering and hunting people on nature is so pronounced that they appear to be a part of the nature exhibiting excellent mode of cultural adaptability. Most of such tribes are found in Southern India and prominent among them are the Kadar inhabiting the forests of Cochin, Malapatram Paliyar, Paniyan, Irula and Kurumba of Tamil Nadu and the Chenchu dwelling in the Annamalai mountain ranges of Andhra Pradesh (Hasnain, 1988).

There is a wide variation in the dietary patterns of the aboriginal tribes of India living under contrasting conditions in different isolated regions. A large number of tribal depend on their own pattern of agriculture, producing rice, or other cereals including varieties of millets, green leafy vegetables. Some live on cultivated tubers mainly tapioca, some collect forest products such as wild roots, fruits, honey and others consume sour mild products which are rejected by most of the tribes. The forest and coastal dwellers hunt land and marine animals and birds to supplement their staples.

Variation in food consumption pattern may be due to the terrain, climate differences, soil conditions and the types of food grown, but self selection of food is the most predominant factor.

The dietary habits and other related modes of life are often suited to their best advantage and provides adequate nutrition under existing conditions and they may enjoy excellent health. However in other tribes the practices are not conducive to good health and as a result they have poor physique and often appear to lack vigor (Tandon, 1994).

For minor ailments, the tribals use herbal medicines. Among most of the tribal communities there are medicineman who treat the ailments. Generally these specialists are the priests. In some cases, the treatments for ordinary diseases are known to the elderly persons and this knowledge is passed on from father to son. In addition to the curative herbal medicines, there are many medicinal plants which the tribals use for antifertility efficacy. There are also some plants which are used as antidiabetic agents either as a single drug or in combination with others (Sinha, 1994).

The tribals are capable of identifying and naming various kinds of ailments and diseases. Values, customs and belief systems of the tribals strongly influence their perception of the symptoms of diseases, their interpretation of these symptoms and their techniques for treatment. Treatment is generally based upon removal of causative factors through propitiation of gods, exorcism, counter magic, use of charms and amulets and is also centred around

sacrifices, prayers and ceremonies performed by men who are supposed to have magic power or divine power, the supernatural have significant place in the treatment of diseases of tribals (Ali, 1994).

Tribes have the institution of headman who may be elected as such and can be deposed when they become unable to carry out their duties or for some reason or other lose the authority or respect of the community which so far they have enjoyed.

In some tribes the office of the headman is hereditary and often connected with a certain family or clan. In more developed tribes the headman may even be assisted by other office bearers to whom specific duties are assigned and whose office are also hereditary.

Fuch (1974) pointed out that in few of the nomadic tribes there is no such institution as headman of a settlement. The heads of the single families simply come together and settle the affairs of the group whenever problems arise and decisions have to be taken. The head of a Palliyan settlement is known as takeyan. The community does not pay any contributions to him. His office is inherited by a nephew (Fuchs, 1974 and Singh, 1994).

The religion of any primitive people inevitably reflects the social structure of the community in which it develops. Same is the case with Indian tribes and here lies the basic contradiction.

Religion is an attitude towards super human powers. It is a belief in powers superior to man. It expresses itself in several forms like superstition, animism, totemism, magic, rituals and fetishism. Religion pervades practically in all the societies, though there may be different forms of religious beliefs and practices (Bhusan and Sachdeva, 1994).

Most of the tribes of India believe that life does not end with death and that it continues to be present in one form or the other. Propitiation and worship of the souls of the ancestors seems to be the result of such beliefs. The tribes of middle India believe that the souls of their ancestors come to their rescue in diseases to ward off other evil spirits.

It is also believed by many tribes that certain objects are 'possessed' by some spiritual powers and thus a sort of fetishism appears to be the guiding principle among such tribes. Worship of such objects contains an element of magic which is further extended to the beliefs and practices of religio-magical nature (Hasnain, 1989).

The tribal's religious worship is mainly communal or congregational at the occasion of festivals. Festival acts as mirrors which reflects the images of religion, material culture, human behaviour, value systems, morals, ethics, family organisation, marriage, economics, law and politics.

Every festival - Hindu or tribal - has its two aspects - sacred and secular. The two aspects are intimately interwoven yet analytically distinct. Religious attitudes and emotions are not necessarily different from any other secular attitudes and emotions. Eating, drinking, music, dancing and singing are the secular things but they become sacred when they are performed to communicate with or please gods (Singh, 1989).

The contemporary Paliyan religion is a mixture of their traditional faith and Hinduism. Sacred specialists who officiate over birth, marriage and death rites and remove evil spirits for their well being are from their own community (Singh, 1994).

2. Tribal Development Policy and Changing Trends

The ABORIGINAL problem is very old. It was created by the first immigration of foreigners who invaded the homeland of the tribes and tried to displace them. Due to their superior culture they often succeeded. But there was plenty of empty space to which the tribals could escape and where

they were left to lead their own life without interference. The first serious troubles started after the British occupation of Indian when the British administration began also to take control of the tribal areas. An unjust land settlement, moreover, gave non-tribals control over vast areas of tribal land. The result was a merciless exploitation of the tribals. When conditions became unbearable, the tribals staged uprisings against their exploiters which the British Government, in the name of peace and order, suppressed ruthlessly. Such uprisings took place in 1772 when the Mal Paharias rose, in 1831 with the mutiny of the Hos in singbhum, with the khond uprising in 1846, and the santal rebellion in 1855. The British Indian Government was forced also to send punitive expeditions to Assam and Nagaland, in 1744 to The Jaintia hills, between 1850 and 1890 repeatedly to the Lushai hills, in 1878 to the Naga hills and in 1912 to the Abos.

The underlying causes were almost always the same; the deep dissatisfaction created among the tribal people as a result of exploitation by their culturally more advanced neighbours. The British Government finally decided on a policy of segregating, the tribes into special areas where their lives and interests could be adequately protected. For this purpose an Act was passed in 1874 to specify tribal

areas to 'Scheduled Districts'. These areas were reconstituted under section 52A of the Government of India Act of 1919, and finally in 1935 more stringent provisions for a special treatment of the tribal areas were incorporated by converting them into 'Totally and Partially Excluded Areas'. In the subsequent years and up to 1947 numerous Acts and Regulations were promulgated and various important reforms introduced (Fuchs, 1974).

Soon after the Independence planned development was adopted as the national policy. The tribal communities like all other constituent groups were expected to partake in this endeavour in terms of equality. A programme of community development was launched in First five year plan and by the end of Second five year plan, the entire country was covered by the community development approach. This approach equally applies to tribal areas. As a result, few special multipurpose tribal development projects were supplemented along with the general development programmes in a few. The Tribal development block strategy was an improvement over the general community development approach but it also did not prove to be a very effective instrument for tribal development mainly because the administrative and execution aspects in tribal economy remained largely unattended.

In the Fourth five year plan Tribal Development Agency strategy was introduced as an additional programme focusing on specific target groups/areas. This TDA strategy was only a partial success as these agencies mostly confined themselves to some economic programmes like agricultural and arterial roads development.

A comprehensive view of the tribal problem was taken up on the eve of the Fifth five year plan by adopting a sub-plan strategy in tribal areas. The objectives were; 1) to bring about socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes and 2) ensuring protection of tribals against exploitation.

During the Sixth plan, Modified Area Development Approach was adopted to cover smaller areas of tribal concentration having 10,000 population. In this 50 per cent or more were to be tribal.

During the Seventh plan, the Tribal Sub-plan Strategy was extended to all the tribals in the country including the dispersed tribals for the beneficiary oriented programmes.

The Eighth five year plan emphasizes that programmes need to be devised in the light of tribal need and their order of priority should be to remove economics, educational and social disparities.

An integrated approach for tribal development is very necessary not only from the point of view of interdependence of various schemes but also to remove administrative bottlenecks. The voluntary agencies are also working coordinated with the developmental agencies wherever it is possible (Bhattacharya and Lakshmanaiah, 1992).

Changing Trends

The growing contact of the tribals with the surrounding nontribal population has made, and is still making the tribals borrow many cultural items, causing change of various forms. Many a times the religious missionaries and other reformers from certain non-tribal communities have also tried to cause changes. The persons representing various extension agencies working among the tribals on behalf of the government, voluntary agencies, and workers from non-tribals were responsive to the contemporary stage of tribal transition (Mann and Mann, 1988).

For centuries the tribals are living in close contact with the hindus and they felt inclined to emulate the hindu way of life and gradually borrowed a number traits of the hindu society and culture on selective basis which went a long way in synchronizing their way of life that is religion, festival, social structure, economy, education, values, ideals and the like.

Like the economic organisation gradations, the social organization too has a variety of peculiarities which, at times, fall wide apart. Family patterns, marriage systems, rites-de-passage, social groupings, inheritance, succession, kinship norms and usages and other social institutions show a great deal of divergence. Most of the traits of social organisation are tradition-based within the respective tribe. The influence of change has further added to the already existing complexity (Mann and Mann, 1988).

Culture contacts with the Hindus and spread of Christianity in the tribal areas are two major areas for the decay of the dormitory institution. Frequent and deeper contacts with the urban ways of living has resulted in the loss of love for, and confidence in, their own typical ways of living.

The shift among the tribal communities from the traditional to the new occupations. For instance, the number of communities practicing hunting and gathering has declined by nearly 24.09 per cent as forests have disappeared and wildlife has diminished. However, there is a rise in horticulture, terrace cultivation, settled cultivation, animal husbandry, sericulture and bee keeping. They have taken up new vocations to augment their income and raise their productivity. For example, business has gone up trade

and industry has also gone up. There is a sharp rise in the number of tribals employed in government and private services, self-employment etc., (Singh, 1994).

Contact with non-tribals has been instrumental in changing the religious beliefs of many a tribal group. Contacts with the hindus led to the gradual adoption of popular hindu deities, festivals and religious beliefs. The tribals adopted these without giving up their own deities and gods. As a result of culture contacts with the Hindus, the worship of kali and lakshmi is also common among many tribals.

The importance of the traditional leader at once goes down. The concept of sin and the fear of retribution become powerful instruments of social control. This is accompanied by changes in material culture, outlook on life, world view etc. There is a change in dress, increased devotion to education, acceptance of the new system of medicine as well as less of faith in magic and witchcraft. For political affiliation the converts turn to the priest for guidance (Hasnain, 1988).

An important scheme to educate the tribal child has been the setting up of ashram schools, residential institutions aiming at providing a system of education

related to tribal life. The supplementary curriculum may have to be craft-based and inculcate a sense of dignity of labour.

The impact of development processes, particularly education, has created a new stratum of entrepreneurs/business man, teachers, administrators, engineers/doctors and members of defence services. There has also been a rise in the political leadership at the village Panchayat, regional and national levels (Alamelu, 1990).

The tribes have availed of health and medical facilities. There is a decline in the death rate and a rise in the birth rate. Their attitude towards family planning is not as favourable. They depend on springs, streams and rivulets for drinking water. Dug-wells and piped water are new sources of drinking water. The rural employment programme has made a very significant impact. The tribal areas are connected more by roads than by rail. At present the tribes avail the facilities of electricity. Gobar gas and solar energy has not made any impact. The use of chemical fertilizers shows a marked increase. The tribal attitude towards savings is not favourable, and dependence on moneylenders and shopkeepers still continues (Singh, 1994).

3. Research highlights

Sherring (1974) conducted study on 'Hindu tribes and castes'. The study revealed that the Paliyans are "savages, who decline to adopt the most simple usages of ordinary man, having neither houses, clothes nor any kind of property, roaming the hills they satisfy hunger with such roots and fruits as they can find by search, and occasionally a little wild honey. They carefully shun the society of civilized man, and will never approach a stranger except upon the offer of a piece of tobacco or a strip of cloth, for both which commodities they show a great natural fondness. They are gentle in disposition, and show no inclination to rob their neighbours. The Paliyans, "he adds", are so like ordinary Tamils in physiognomy and physique, that it is difficult to believe that they belong to another and earlier type.

Verrier Elwin (1975) had conducted research among various tribes and had found out that "The tribal women were indeed in many ways the equal, if not the rival, of the man". This was despite the well known fact that there was a definite social inequality between the sexes.

A study conducted by Sen (1978) on the social organisation of the Kasis and Garos. The study revealed that in the matrilineal society the women inherit the family

property. Though they were the owners, the management of land was in the hands of men. Most of the tribal communities, it was men who took decision in all matters.

Burman (1988) conducted a study on "Challenges of Development and Tribal women of India". The findings are as follows (i) The participation rates of both male and female workers among the Scheduled Tribes were higher than those of other total population (ii) Collection and gathering of forest products constitutes important source of livelihood not only among the non agricultural tribes, but also among many agricultural tribes (iii). Marketing of goods and buying articles of daily necessity were done by both men and women.

Chaudhuri (1988) conducted a study on "Tribal Women and the Economy" had revealed that the tribals rarely follow one occupation exclusively. The economy of the most of the tribes being a mixed one. Among the important subsidiary occupations, handicrafts, gathering and labour work were followed by many. The tribes depending on the food gathering economy was relatively small when compared to the tribes depending on cultivation.

Alamelu (1990) conducted a study on "Problem of Tribes Education in India". The findings are as follows. In India nearly 7.57 per cent of the total population of tribals

having literacy rate of 16.35 per cent as against the country's total literacy rate. The rise in the enrolment of ST children had been proceeding steadily the literacy among the STs was only 0.77 per cent in 1931, but due to efforts of the Government and non-official agencies it rose to 8.54 per cent in 1961, 11.30 per cent in 1971 and 16.35 per cent in 1981 still more efforts were required to bring them in line with general population.

A study conducted by Mutharayappa (1993) "Health care practices among Tribals" in three different tribal groups in Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka State shows that most of the tribals do not have any major health problem. Among those who had some health problem, they had taken treatment at the private clinics. Majority of the deliveries had been attended to by untrained dais (or) relatives. Tribal women were aware of the maternal and child immunisation and over three fourth of the children aged less than 5 years had been immunised. Children living in colonies have benefited the special nutritional scheme.

Deivam (1994) had conducted a study on Practice of Child Labour of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste of Anna District had found out that majority of the children were engaged as plantation and agricultural labourers.

Komathi Chitra (1995) conducted a study on 'Status of Toda (Tribal) Women in the Nilgiris', had found that the impact of modernization, urbanization, growing interaction with other communities had brought about change in the tasks performed by Toda women. They were aware of the health status since they were aware of the health programmes and also Government hospitals were within their reach.

A study on 'Educational Status of Paliyans of lower Palani Hills' was carried out by Deivam (1992) revealed that the educational status was very poor among the tribals. As a result of the effort of Government efforts, voluntary agencies and christian missionaries the Paliyans had developed a favourable attitude towards their children education.

Methodology

III. METHODOLOGY

The procedure pertaining to the present study includes the following.

- A. Selection of the Area
- B. Selection of the Sample
- C. Selection of the Method
- D. Collection of the Data and
- E. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data.

A. Selection of the Area

The area selected for the study is Palani Hills which is situated in the Dindigul Anna District of Tamil Nadu. Its natural scenario along with its location at the top enriches the hill with many natural resources.

Paliyans are the tribal community who lived freely in these hills for untold centuries. The Palani hills was divided into upper and lower. The areas selected for the study belongs to lower Palani hills. Since the investigator belongs to the area easy accessibility and co-operation of the tribals facilitated the researcher to conduct the study (the area of the study is shown in the Fig. 1).

B. Selection of the Sample

The success of any study depends on the careful selection of the sample. The choice of the sample must be

decided based on factors such as nature of the study, size of the sample, degrees of precisions desired and availability of resources (Elhance, 1989)

Sample is that part of the universe which we select for the purpose and investigation (Gupta, 1990). According to Gupta (1992) purposive sampling is a technique in which a desired number of sample units is selected deliberately and purposely depending upon the objects of enquiry.

Accordingly 100 respondents 77 males and 23 females were selected. The unequal distribution is due to the availability of the members present at the time of interview.

C. Selection of the Method

According to Devadas (1991) an interview is the oral version of questionnaire or schedule in which the subject supplies the needed information through a face-to-face relationship.

Interview schedule is the device for obtaining answers to the questions in a form which is filled by the interviewers or enumerators in a face to face situation with the respondents (Gupta, 1982).

Accordingly an interview schedule was prepared to be administered on the sample selected for the study. A pilot

Results and Discussion

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented and discussed under the following headings:

- A. Socio-Economic Scenario of the Paliyans
- B. Social Organization of the Paliyans
- C. Economic Activities of the Paliyans and
- D. Changing Trends in their Life Style.

A. Socio-Economic Scenario of the Paliyans

1. Sex-Wise distribution of the respondents

Table I indicates the sex-wise distribution of the respondents.

TABLE I
SEX-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No.	Sex	Percentage of respondents (N:100)
1.	Male	77
2.	Female	23

From the above table, we can understand that 77 per cent males and 23 per cent females were selected for the present study.

2. Age-wise distribution

Table II reveals the age-wise distribution of the respondents.

TABLE II
AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION

S. No.	Age-wise distribution (in years)	Percentage of respondents	
		Male N:77	Female N:23
1.	21-30	62	65
2.	31-40	28	13
3.	41-50	7	13
4.	51 and above	3	9

It is clear from the above table that majority of the respondents, both male(62 per cent) and female (65 per cent) belonged to the age-group of 21-30 years. Only a meagre percentage of respondents belonged to the age-group of 51 and above.

3. Educational status

Table III shows the educational status of the respondents.

TABLE III
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

S. No.	Educational level	Percentage of respondents	
		Male N:77	Female N:23
1.	Illiterate	87	96
2.	Primary	8	4
3.	Higher	4	-
4.	Higher secondary	1	-

It is clear from the above table that majority of the selected respondents were illiterate. It may be due to their nomadic way of life. It is sad to note that very few alone were educated. In spite of the prevailing conditions, it is heartening to note that a few had utilized Government scholarships for improving their educational level.

4. Occupational pattern

Table IV gives the occupational pattern of the respondents.

TABLE IV
OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

S. No.	Occupational pattern	Percentage of respondents	
		Male N:77	Female N:23
1.	Agricultural labourers	92	100
2.	Government employees	8	-

An interesting finding of our study was the shift in occupation among the tribal community. Paliyans originally a community of food gatherers have now taken up agricultural and plantation labourers. Out of 77 male respondents 92 per cent were working as agricultural labourers. Only eight per cent were Government employees. Tribal women have a much larger participation in the work force than the women of non-tribal societies. All the women respondents selected for the study were agricultural labourers. It showed that tribal women had a role in economic activities also.

5. Income range of the families

Table V picturise the income earned by the selected paliyans.

TABLE V
INCOME RANGE OF FAMILIES

S. No.	Income/Annum	Percentage of respondents	
		Male (N:77)	Female (N:23)
1.	6001 - 8000	5	26
2.	8001 - 10,000	82	65
3.	10,001 and above	13	9

Money was an unknown factor in the past, whatever the tribes wanted they were able to get them through barter system i.e., they exchanged honey and other forest products to the urban contractors and got rice, and other things from the urban people.

They are now engaged as labourers in the fields. As a result 'money' has got its value and play an important role their life.

About 82 per cent of males, 65 per cent of females respondents were earning, Rs.8001-10001 per annum only 13 per cent male respondents and 9 per cent female respondents were earning more than Rs.10,000 per year.

6. Size of the family

Table VI shows the size of the family of the respondents.

TABLE VI
SIZE OF THE FAMILY

S. No.	Size of the family	Percentage of respondents	
		Male (N:77)	Female (N:23)
1.	1-3	51	69
2.	4-6	33	22
3.	6 and above	16	9

According to Devadas (1985) small family comprises of 1-3 members, medium family 4-6 members and large above 6 members.

It is observed from the above table that majority of the respondents belonged to the family size 1-3. Only few respondents belonged to the family size above 6 members.

7. Type of family

Table VII reveals the type of family adopted by the respondents.

TABLE VII
TYPE OF FAMILY

S.No.	Type of family	Percentage of respondents (N:100)
1.	Joint	14
2.	Nuclear	86

The dominant form of the tribal family was nuclear (86 per cent) followed by 14 per cent of joint family, where the father is the head of family our impact on the life of the Paliyans. In olden days, they liked to lead a group life but at present they prefer nuclear family. We can understand from this, that they were more self centered than ever before (Fig. 2).

8. Religion-wise distribution

The contemporary Paliyan religion was a mixture of their traditional faith and Hinduism.

B. Social Organization of the Paliyan Tribe

The Paliyans were nomads who roam about in small groups in the forested gorges due to their traditional occupation but now they were leading a settled life as labourers in the fields.

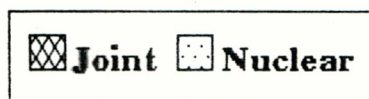
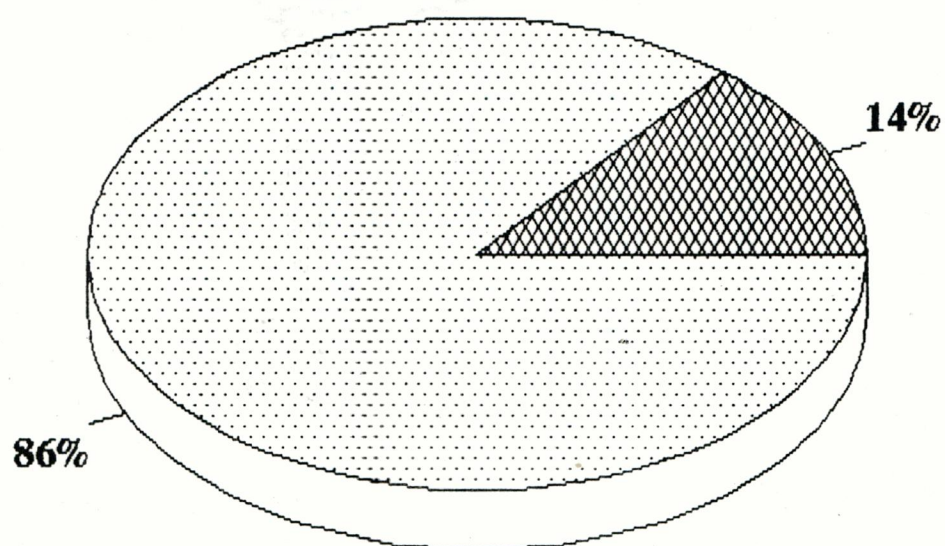


Fig. 2. TYPE OF FAMILY

The ancestors followed group living. At present most of the Paliyans prefer nuclear type of family, the nature of family was patrilineal, i.e., the father is the head of the family. Majority (72 per cent) of the respondents revealed that male member is the deciding authority in all aspects, 28 per cent revealed that both husband and wife had an important role in the decision making process.

In olden days the male equigeniture rule of inheritance where the eldest son was granted the right of succession. At present, both male and female have the right to inherit property. Weddings were conducted without ceremonies at the brides residence. Marriage between cross-cousins as well as between the maternal uncle and niece were permissible. In olden days mates were acquired through negotiation or by elopement and also they prefer red adult marriage. The common form of marriage is monogamy, but polygyny is also practiced. The symbol of marriage for the women are badges (Thaali) and toering smade in silver. The custom of bride price and dowry existed in the community their rule of residence was patrilocal. Either spouse could seek divorce, and the aggrieved person was compensated. Children of estranged couples live with their father. The remarriage of both widowed and divorced persons of either sex was permissible.



PALIYAN PLAYING THE TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT



PALIYANS PLACE OF WORSHIP



SHELTER AT PRESENT



PRIMITIVE SHELTERS



The women had roles in economic activities and they contributed to the family income and controlled family expenditure. Paliyans observed pre-delivery rituals and restrictions, post-delivery pollution and restrictions. Birth ceremonies were not practised. Like other caste hindus, they bury the dead, observe death pollution and perform ancestor worship.

Paliyans were much less civilized than the neighbouring tribe, but did not eat beef, though they were non-vegetarians, consequently carry no pollution. They sometimes build themselves grass huts, but often they live on platforms up trees, in caves or under rocks. Their clothes were of the scantiest and dirtiest and were sometimes eked out with grass or leaves.

Festivals play an important role in tribal life. They were the followers of Hinduism, like other hindus, Paliyans also celebrate festivals. The month of 'Vaikasi', on the day of 'Pournami' they worship their God 'Karuppasamy' and Goddess 'Palichi'. The main aim of the celebration was to thank the God and Goddess for safe guarding them from wild animals and natural calamities.

During the festival time, the neighbouring villages were also invited to participate in the celebration. During the celebration the natives were not allowed to go out of

the village. It was beleived that if any one goes out of the village during that time, it was an ill omen, the person may suffer personal loss.

New costumes were worn by the people during these occassions. They expressed their joy and happiness by dancing, singing, playing their musical instruments drums and horns and also conducted various competitions for the youth, expectly 'Kabadi'. Thus for the Paliyans festival is a time of recreation and refreshments.

C. Economic Activities of the Paliyans

The forest tribes, collectors of jungle produce, led a nomadic life and less attached to the soil were able to evade the domination of the superior people. For many generations the tribes were allowed to live their ancient independent undisturbed life as food collectors. They collect honey from combs clinging to rocks, in the hollow of some tree.

Hunting is mostly a side occupation, well prized but hardly an exclusive means of livelihood. The Paliyans at times occupy themselves in making baskets, bird-cages. The skins of animals, honey and the resins collected from the dammer tree were only the articles which they barter or sell to the neighbouring non-tribal inhabitants. Women and

children also play an important role in economic activities. They helped in digging roots, collecting firewood.

D. Changing Trends in their Life Style

'Change' is inevitable and unavoidable feature in every human life. Paliyans are also no exception to this. The influence of urban contact, social workers, Christian missionaries, efforts taken by Government play a significant role in bringing a notable change in the life pattern of the Paliyans.

9. Changes in the housing pattern

The early Paliyans lived in natural caves in rocks, but if these leak during the rain they erect a rough shed with the floor raised on poles off the ground and sloping grass roof. They were experts at making rapidly improvised shelters at the base of hollow trees by cutting away the wood on one side with a billhook. This protected during a heavy shower.

But at present they build houses using brick and cement. About 43 per cent respondents were living in thatched houses and 57 per cent living in concrete houses. The drastic change is due to the urban contact and they also wanted to lead a comfortable life and protect their life from heavy rain and hot sun and also from the wild animals.

10. Changes in the social organisation

The nomadic Paliyans usually lead a group life. When they changed their occupation the group family living got its own natural disappearance. At present majority of the respondents lead a nuclear family and thus giving importance to their own kith and kin. Only very few respondents led a joint family and maintained their patrilineal tradition.

A notable feature in the present study is the changes in the practice of marriage among Paliyan tribe. In the past polygyny predominated among the Paliyans. We could come across the incidence of the younger brother marrying the wife of his deceased elder brother, and the elder brother might even marry the widow of his younger brother and also they could marry the sister of the deceased wife.

At present Polygyny has rapidly declined and mostly they prefer to follow monogamy. It showed the civilized attitude of the Paliyans and this attitude was due to the impact of urbanization and Industrialization.

The marriage usually took place at girl's residence, sometimes in temples or community halls. The present performance and practice of marriage resembles the neighbouring non-tribal. The practice of giving bride price was completely eroded from the community. The practice of giving dowry was present only in the form of giving vessels

and clothes. The tying of 'Thaali' made out of gold was a new phenomenon and the influence of urban contact had a significant effect upon Paliyans life.

The marriageable age preferred by the Paliyans was 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. The investigator came across the incidence of love marriages within their tribal communities and also outside the tribal communities.

The girls were secluded as soon as she attains puberty. Even today they were practicing the same. She was provided with special diet during this period with the belief i.e., after marriage and during her pregnancy, she would not face any problems. They celebrate the puberty ceremony in a elaborate manner. The reason behind this is that the girl was ready for marriage.

In the past, Paliyans needed more hands to collect food in the forest, therefore they liked to had more children in the family. They did not practice any method to control the size of their family. The present study reveals a very interesting feature that out of 100 respondents 99 respondents practice family planning. We can conclude from this that the Paliyans care progressing and begin to understand the norm 'small family is Happy family'.

The disappearance of dormitories was unfortunate for many reasons. The current education and impact of urbanization were the reasons which replaced dormitory and filled the gap. Their recreational activities also hearing radios, watching Televisions, films, which is due to modernization and urbanization. Today the children also wear modern dresses like chudidars, skirts, pants.

11. Changes in the health practices

Table VIII shows the changes in the health practices of Paliyans.

TABLE VIII
CHANGES IN THE HEALTH PRACTICES

S. No.	Health Practices	Percentage of respondents*	
		Male N:77	Female N:23
1.	Allopathy	92	82
2.	Indigenous	78	78
3.	Both Allopathy and Indigenous	17	43
* Multiple Response.			

To the Paliyans, the fertile jungle tracts yielded plenty of nourishing food consisting of edible roots and tubers, fruits, vegetable and honey. Paliyans enjoyed a healthy diversified diet. They were healthy, self-sufficient and carefree.

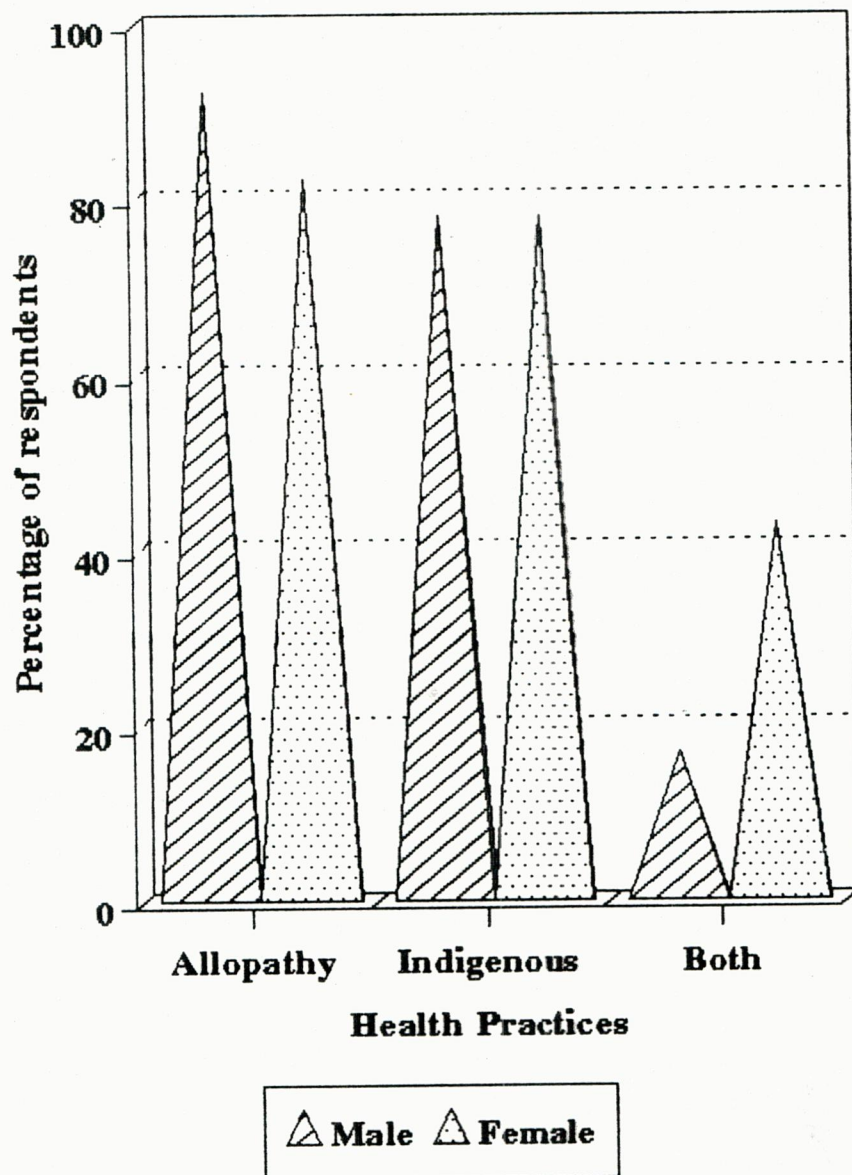


Fig. 3. CHANGES IN THE HEALTH PRACTICES

Paliyans were well known for their knowledge about herbs since they used it as a remedial measure during illness. Today they also go to hospitals, Primary Health Centres for treating their ailments. Immunization against certain diseases were also done by them. The influence of Government doctors and other agencies made this change (Fig. 3).

12. Changes in economic activity

Due to economic growth, industrialization, urbanization and education made the Paliyans shift to agriculture and plantation labourers from their traditional occupation. The Tribal Welfare and Development Programmes of the Government and the efforts of the Christian missionaries and voluntary agencies helped them to take different economic ventures. The Paliyans were provided with loans with subsidy to get cows, wooden bee-hives to collect honey and also marketing facilities for selling the produce. Training in gem cutting, knitting and basket making were given to young women. A unit was started by the christian missionary where young women were employed to knit woolen clothes which raise their income. Education helped them to get Government jobs.

13. Changes in the educational status

Table IX explains the educational status of the children of the selected respondents.

TABLE IX
SCHOOL ENROLMENT

S. No.	Attendance of school	Percentage of respondents	
		Male N:77	Female N:23
1.	Attending school	26	35
2.	Not attending school	74	65

It is clear from the above table that 26 per cent male respondents and 35 per cent female respondents were sending their children to schools. This is due to the influence of the urban contact, Christian missionaries and Government scholarships and other facilities given to them by the Government. This incidence in Paliyan's life was a notable change. The remaining 74 per cent male respondents and 65 per cent female respondents were not sending their children to school. These children were helping their parents at home and collecting honey and fire woods and also working as labourers in the field (Fig. 4).

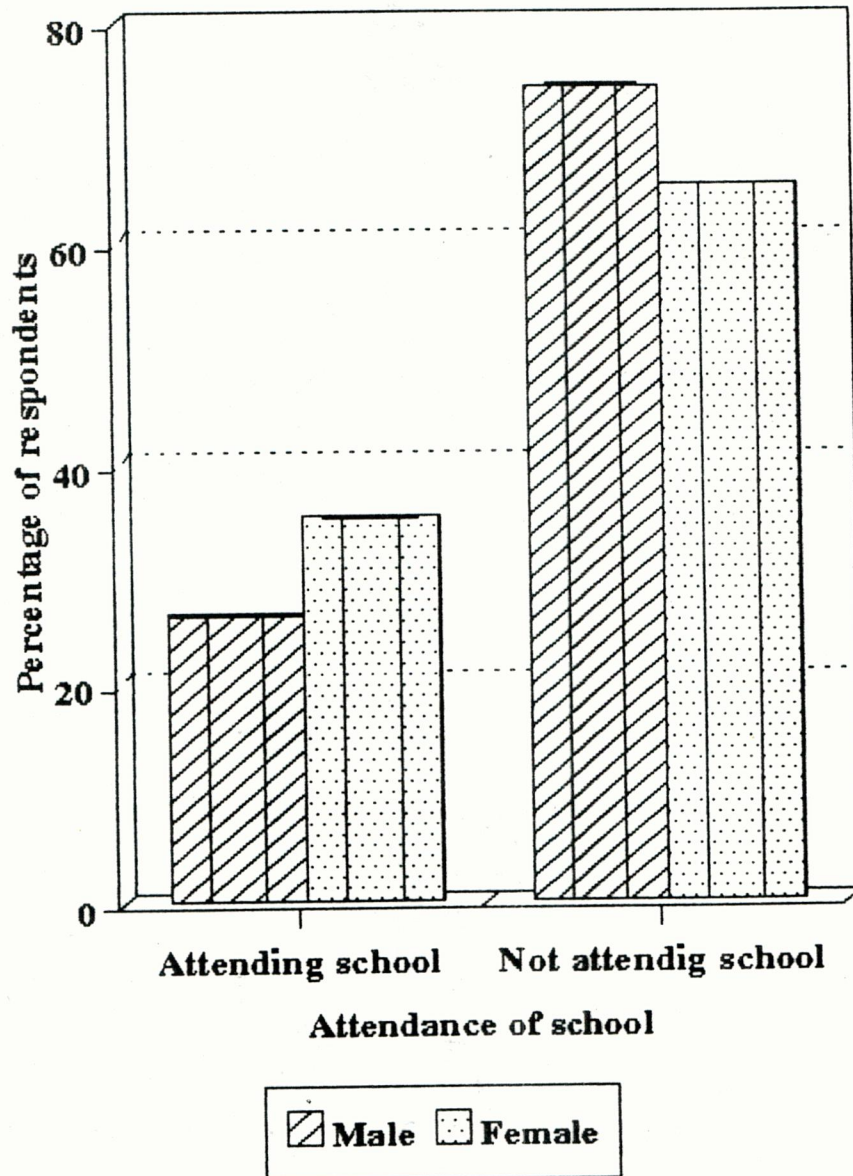


Fig. 4. SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Summary and Conclusion

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study on "Profile of Paliyan Tribes of Tamil Nadu" was carried out which is in the Dindigul Anna District of Tamil Nadu.

A Total number of 100 respondents 77 male and 23 female were selected by using purposive sampling method. The relevant information were collected by using the tool interview schedule.

The major findings of the study are summarised below

Majority 62 per cent male and 65 per cent female respondents belonged to the age group 21-30 years. Only few belonged to the age group of 51 and above.

Majority of the male respondents 87 per cent, female 96 per cent respondents were uneducated. Only 8 per cent male and four per cent female had attended primary schools. Four per cent male had studied up to High School and one per cent upto higher secondary level.

Ninety two per cent of male and 100 per cent of female respondents were agricultural labourers. Only 8 per cent male respondents were employed in Government organisations.

Majority 82 per cent males and 65 per cent females of the selected respondents had an income up to

Rs. 8001-10000/- annually. Five per cent male and 26 per cent female sample had an income up to Rs.6001-8000/- annually. Only 13 per cent male and 9 per cent female had an income of Rs.10001 and above. This shows the economic status of the Paliyans.

Majority of the respondents 51 per cent male and 69 per cent female belonged to the family size 1-3, only few respondents 16 per cent (male) belonged to the family size having above 6 members.

Majority 86 per cent of the respondents followed nuclear family. Only 14 per cent respondents followed joint family which was traditional. Paliyan religion is a mixture of their traditional faiths, beliefs and hinduism.

Being patrilineal, the father was the head of the family. Majority (72 per cent) of the respondents revealed that male member was the deciding authority in all aspects, 28 per cent revealed that both husband and wife have an important role in the decision making process.

The common form of marriage is monogamy but polygyny is also practised. The symbol of marriage for the women are badges 'Thaali' made in silver and toe-rings.

Weddings were conducted without ceremonies at the brides residence. Marriage between cross-cousins as well as

between the maternal uncle and niece were permissible. Mates were acquired through negotiation or by elopement and they prefer adult marriage. The custom of bride price and dowry existed in the community. The Divorce, remarriage of both widowed and divorced persons of either sex was permissible. Births are taken place in their place itself. Paliyans observed pre-delivery rituals and restrictions, post-delivery pollution. They bury the dead, observed death pollution and perform ancestor worship.

The build themselves grass huts, live on platforms up trees, in caves or under rocks. Their clothes were of the scantiest and dirtiest and were sometimes eked out with grass or leaves.

They celebrated festivals for their Goddess 'Palichi' or 'Palikali' and God 'Karuppanaswamy' during the full moon day of the month of 'Vaigasi'. They expressed their joy and happiness by dancing, playing drums, horns, and also conducting kabadi competitions for the youth.

The Paliyans were food-gatherers having a side occupation of hunting.

Changing trends in their life style

Forty three per cent respondents were living in thatched houses made of grass, leaves and 57 per cent living

in concrete houses. This is due to the urbanisation and the efforts taken by Government and christian missionaries.

Paliyans mostly prefer to follow monogamy. The marriage was also taking place at girls residence, temples and in community halls. This showed the civilized attitude and resemblance of the neighbouring non-tribal.

The marriageable age preferred by the Paliyans was 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. Love marriage and intercommunity marriages were prevalent among them.

A majority (99 per cent) of the respondents practiced family planning. The dormitories had disappeared. The current education and impact of urbanization were the reason which replace dormitory and fills the gap.

Ninety per cent of male and eighty two per cent of female respondents were treating their ailments in Government hospitals, and in Primary Health Centre. Seventy eight per cent male and 78 female respondents practiced their own remedial measures for their ailments. Only 17 per cent male and 43 per cent female respondents practiced both allopathy and indigenous this is due to the modernization and the efforts taken by Government, voluntary agencies and christian missionaries.

Twenty six per cent male respondents and 35 per cent female respondents send their children to school. This was due to the influence of urban contact, christian missionaries and Government welfare schemes.

Today their recreational and entertainment activities included hearing radio and watching Television film shows etc. This also wore modern dresses like churidhars skirts, Pants etc.

Due to the impact of Urbanisation, influence of industrialization, efforts taken by government, christian missionaries and voluntary agencies, the economic activity also had undergone change they have taken up self employment ventures like gem - cutting, knitting and other activities.

Suggestions

1. Adequate arrangements should have to be made for the supply of electricity and drinking water facilities for the tribal settlement which were interior.
2. Steps should be taken to bring the Paliyan tribals who are living in the interior areas of forests to the developed tribal villages.
3. Steps should be taken to motivate the tribal children to learn and to raise their educational status. The State Education Department and the Tribal Welfare Development, voluntary organisations and the various

tribal youth associations should make a joint venture in this regard.

4. Efforts should be taken to enrol them in higher education, higher studies and in professional courses.
5. Adequate steps should be taken to preserve and protect their cultural traits and their harmony of life with nature.

Conclusion

The growing contact of the tribals with the surrounding nontribal population had made, and is still making the tribals borrow many cultural items, causing change of various forms. Which is very clearly seen in the present study of the Paliyans. The tribals then recognize themselves and some of their ways to meet this challenges. In many instances this reflects in culture growth in evolutionary form. This makes the tribals prevail over the environment more in terms of adjustments. Such an adjustment had helped and is still helping, the tribals through definite systems of social control mechanism and the control over the local economic resources.

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Appendices

8. Other source of income

- a) Dairy
- b) Poultry
- c) Agriculture
- d) Handicrafts
- e) Apiculture

II. Details on Social Organisation

a) Family:

- 1. What type of family was practised by your ancestors?
- 2. What type of family you prefer to have?

Joint Nuclear Extended

- 3. What is the size of the family?
- 4. What type of size you prefer to have?

Small Large

- 5. Who is the head of the family?

- 6. Who will taken decisions in the family in all aspects?

Father Mother Elders Both

- 7. Division of Labour in the family?

MALES

- a. Hunting
- b. Cattle rearing
- c. Cut timber
- d. Quarry
- e. Work with metal

FEMALES

- a. Gather food
- b. Carry water
- c. Cooking
- d. Make clothing
- e. Child rearing

8. Who takes care of the infants?

Father Mother

9. What type of residence you have?

- a. Patrilocal residence
- b. Matrilocal residence
- c. Avunculocal residence
- d. Bilocal residence
- e. Neolocal residence

10. Do you like to follow primitive way of life?

Yes No

11. Mention your descent?

- a. Bilateral descent
- b. Patrilineal descent
- c. Matrilineal descent
- d. Ambilineal descent

12. Who will inherit the property?

Male Female Both

B. Marriage:

13. What type of marriage is practised among you?

14. Do you have the practice of giving

- a. Bride price
- b. Bride service
- c. Gift Exchange
- d. Dowry

15. Did you practice it earlier?

16. How are the marriages conducted?

17. Is incest taboo practiced among you?
Yes/No

18. What is the pattern of selection of mates?

19. Do you have the practice of

Divorce - Yes No

Remarriage - Yes No

20. What is the marriage age for Girls/Boys?

Boys Girls

21. Is love marriage practiced among you?

Yes No

22. What is the symbol of your marriage?

23. What type of treatment is given to divorced women?

24. During illness where do you prefer to go for treatment?

a. Allopathy

b. Indigenous Medicines

c. Both Allopathy and Indigenous.

25. Is there any special ceremony conducted at the time of puberty?

If yes, specify.

26. Do you practice any family planning method?

Yes No

Specify:

27. How long do you breast feed?

28. Do you have any food beliefs and food fallacies?

Yes No

Specify :

29. Do you have dormitories?

Yes No

Specify :

30. Is there the practice of female infanticide?

Yes No

31. What is your main food items?

a. Edible roots

b. Honey

c. Rice

d. Beef/Meat

32. How will you cook the food?

a. Boiling
c. Drying
e. Raw

b. Heating
d. Smoking

33. How do you spend your leisure time?

34. Do you have differnt types of dress for different occassions?

Yes No

Specify :

35. What is your traditional dress?

36. Do you sent your children to school?

Yes No

37. What is your traditional occupation?

38. What is your present occupation?

39. What type of economic activity you prefer to have other than your traditional occupation?

- a. Food gathering b. Hunting
c. Agriculture d. Labours

40. What type of houses you have?

Tiled/Thatched/Concrete

41. Does the women enjoy higher status or equal status in your community?

Yes No

42. What type of domestic animals you have?

43. Do you have any Religions Beliefs?

Yes No

If yes, give reasons:

44. Is there any seperate place of worship.

Yes No

Specify :

45. What is the principal Religious Ceremony?

46. What type of worship you perform?

47. Who is your Religious leader?

48. On what basis the political organisation is founded?

Kinship Bond/Age set systems

49. Who is the policy makers?
Head/Elders

50. Who is the Administrator of your Organisation?