

CENSUS OF INDIA
1971

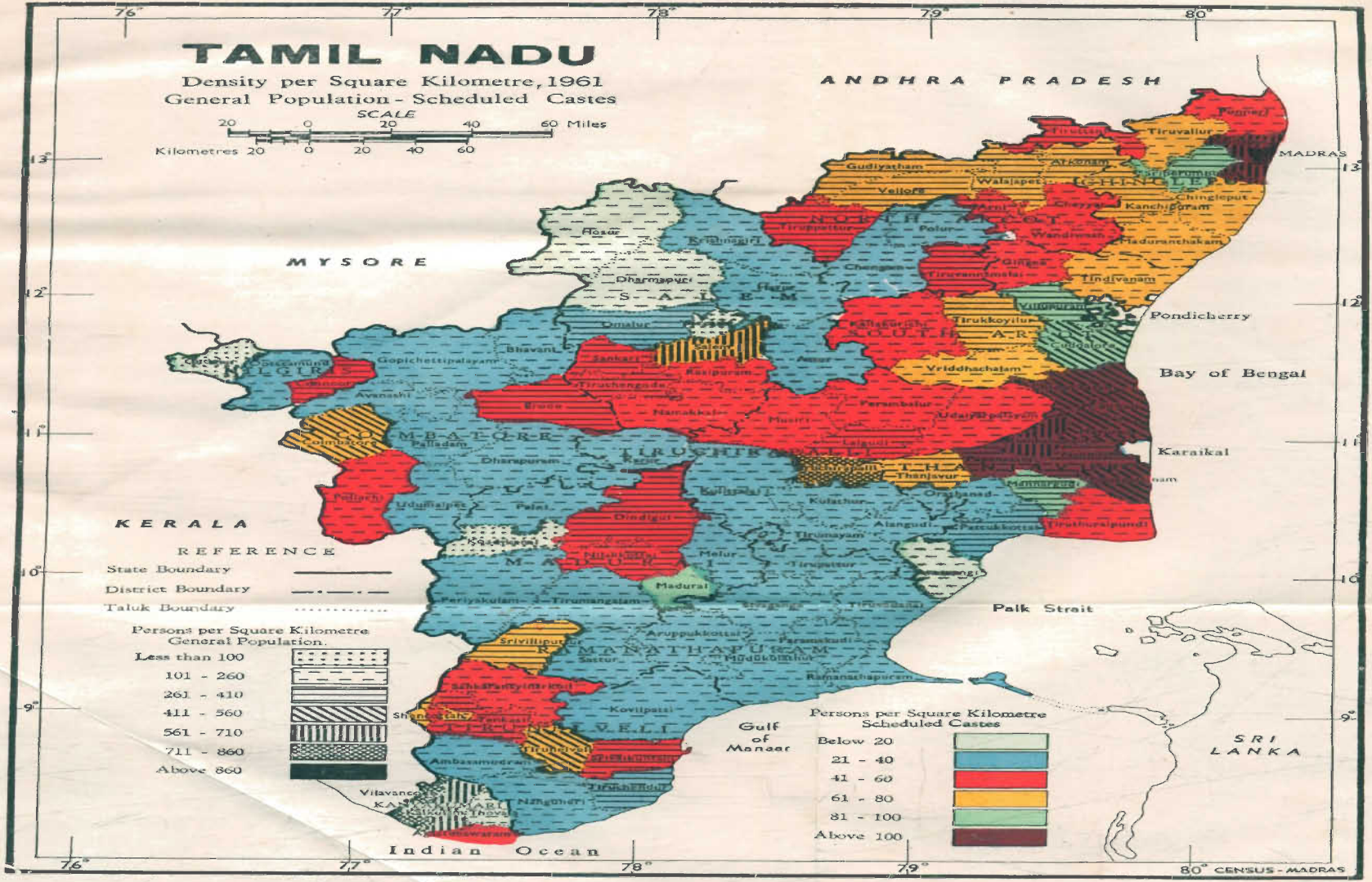
SERIES 19 - TAMIL NADU
PART VB - ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

SCHEDULED CASTES OF TAMIL NADU
(VOL I)

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF
CENSUS OPERATIONS, TAMIL NADU
MADRAS

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TAMIL NADU
Density per Square Kilometre, 1961
General Population - Scheduled Castes
SCALE
20 0 20 40 60 Miles
Kilometres 20 0 20 40 60
ANDHRA PRADESH
MYSORE
KERALA
MADRAS
Pondicherry
Bay of Bengal
Karaikal
Palk Strait
Gulf of Manaar
SRI LANKA
Indian Ocean
REFERENCE
State Boundary
District Boundary
Taluk Boundary
Persons per Square Kilometre General Population.
Less than 100
101 - 260
261 - 410
411 - 560
561 - 710
711 - 860
Above 860
Persons per Square Kilometre Scheduled Castes
Below 20
21 - 40
41 - 60
61 - 80
81 - 100
Above 100
76° 77° 78° 79° 80°
13° 12° 11° 10° 9°
CENSUS - MADRAS

FOREWORD

The Constitution lays down that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation".

To assist States in fulfilling their responsibility in this regard, the 1961 Census provided a series of special tabulations of the social and economic data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are notified by the President under the Constitution and the Parliament is empowered to include in or exclude from the lists, any caste or tribe. During the Census Operations, the enumerators frequently face the problem of identifying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the President's notification, though in some cases, the names of the sub-castes and sub-tribes and synonyms are given, there are many cases where such names have not been provided in the list. The Census enumerators, therefore, require guidance about the acceptance or rejection of claims that they come across during the operations of some communities to be treated as sub-castes or sub-tribes of the notified Scheduled castes or Scheduled tribes. For this purpose, the Census Organisation has thought it wise to undertake detailed ethnographic studies in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India. This is also in conformity with the past Census tradition of presenting authentic ethnographic account of Indian Communities.

For conducting the ethnographic studies, a number of ancillary operations are undertaken by the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, India, as well as the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations in the various States. These ancillary operations include: (i) compilation of available information on each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and preparation of bibliography in respect of them (ii) preparation and interpretation of maps showing distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes over time and space; and (iii) special studies on cultural, technological and economic changes taking place among the various tribal communities.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty, Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri A. M. Kurup and Shri N. G. Nag, Research Officers, is co-ordinating all these studies at the Central level. At the State level, the Superintendent of Census Operations and his staff are collaborating in conducting the field investigations and preparing the report. Sri T. B. Bharathi, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, supervised the study at the state level and Sarvashri C. T. Rajan and T. S. Rajaram, Investigators, carried out the field investigation on these communities and prepared the draft. I avail of this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all my collegues who have undertaken various studies on different aspects of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR,
REGISTRAR GENERAL, INDIA

PREFACE

As an adjunct of 1961 Census, preparation of ethnographic monographs on a number of selected Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status and ethnographic glossaries on all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been taken up by the Census Organisation.

In India the Census organisation has a long tradition of undertaking ethnographic studies. Besides, there are certain reasons why, for its own operational purposes, it is necessary for the Census Organisation to take up such studies. During Census Operations, the Census Organisation is required to make a complete enumeration of all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. The ethnographic studies are required to establish the identity of the various communities including their segments. The social boundaries of various communities are not always rigid, they are in a state of flux. Ethnographic studies are required to keep track of these changes as well, otherwise comparison of consecutive census figures would give altogether wrong picture in respect of them. There is another aspect of study in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in which the Census Organisation, as well as the welfare and planning agencies are interested—it is ethno-demography. In 1961 Census, separate tables were prepared in respect of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the following items :—

(i) industrial classification of persons at work & non-workers by sex,

(ii) age and marital status,

(iii) education,

(iv) religion,

(v) persons not at work classified by sex and type activity for Scheduled Castes,

(vi) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Tribes,

(vii) mother tongue and bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes.

The data available in these tables are to be analysed in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, so that the historical and cultural factors responsible for the demographic pattern can be identified and the impact of the emergent demographic pattern on the social structure can be determined.

The insight gained by the Census Organisation, through ethnographic studies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be useful for interpretation of the demographic pattern for the country as a whole. Recent studies show that in India, even now, it is difficult to correctly appreciate the various social and economic processes without reference to caste. On the other hand, in the interest of ultimate national goal, caste is not being recorded in census, except in case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The insight gained through ethno-demographic studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is, therefore, of invaluable help for Census.

At the same time, such study is very much useful for planning of development activities among the Castes and Tribes concerned. For instance, if the Census shows that great deal of diversification of occupation has taken place among the Parayans of Kerala, it is important for the planners to know whether the community consists of a number of disconnected segments or whether it means that a great deal of individual mobility is taking place, where the main focus of community is other than traditional occupation. Again, when among the Bauris of Orissa, it is found that a very high proportion of the population is engaged in agricultural labour and next to them a high proportion is found in cultivation and also that there is considerable diversification of occupation, the following questions of sociological and practical importance arise :—

(a) What is the historical relation between the agricultural labourers and the cultivators among the Bauris of Orissa? The Census data suggests one of the two possible developments, namely, (1) bulk of the Bauris were cultivators and by a process of degeneration of their economy have become agricultural labourers, (2) on the other hand, it is also possible that the bulk of them were agricultural labourers and through a process of improvement of their economic condition, many of them have become cultivators.

(b) The fact a considerable diversification of occupation has taken place, suggests that the economy has not remained in a stagnant condition. Here, it is to be examined whether the diversification is the result of upward mobility, or downward mobility, or even horizontal mobility, and what is the actual process by which the diversification has taken place.

(c) The social dimensions corresponding to the diversification in economic life have to be examined. It is also to be examined whether in spite of diversification of occupation, the ethos of a particular occupation, for instance agriculture, continues to be dominant. In that case, diversification might have created problems of adjustment in values and attitudes.

Instances can be multiplied, but it is not necessary. What have been stated above are enough to bring out the significance of ethno-demographic studies for planners.

The above dimensions of ethno-demographic studies have evolved through stages. In 1960, at the instance of Shri Mitra, Registrar General of India, a questionnaire for collection of ethnographic data was circulated among the Census Superintendents. In October 1961, the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit was set up in the office of the Registrar General of India, to coordinate the ethnographic studies and a few other ancillary studies, like village surveys, handicraft surveys, etc. In December, 1961, a Study Camp was organised in Delhi, where the personnel engaged in ethnographic studies, handicrafts studies and other social investigations in the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the study camp it was considered that the ethnographic notes would mainly aim at making an objective assessment of the state of development of the different Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the changes taking place in technology, economic organisation and total culture pattern of the country. It was further suggested that the primary focus of the study should not be on the exotic elements of the cultures of the different castes and tribes. It should be on the efforts of the communities concerned, to adjust to the modern conditions of life. In the light of the above decisions of the Study Camp, rapid ethnographic studies have been carried on by the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations as well as by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Units of the Office of the Registrar General of India, in different parts of the country. These rapid surveys have brought out a number of methodological and operational problems. In May and June, 1966, two Ethnographic Study Camps were held at Kurseong and Hyderabad, where personnel from the Office of the Registrar General of India as well as from the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the Study Camp held at Kurseong, the Secretary, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, and Director, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, also participated. In these Study Camps, an integrated frame for preparation of ethnographic notes was discussed and adopted. In addition to the studies in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe separately, a number of subsidiary studies were undertaken by the Handicrafts and social studies unit of the office of the Registrar General of India, for gaining insight into a number of problems of general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows :—

1. Shifting cultivation in Santhal Parganas of Bihar and Garo Hills of Assam.

2. Pattern of Rehabilitation of displaced tribals of Rourkela.
3. Socio Economic Survey of the Scheduled areas of Rajasthan.
4. Socio Economic developments among the hillmen of North-East India.
5. Social structure and cultural orientation of Christians converted from Scheduled Castes.
6. Traditional rights of scavenging as claimed by scavengers in urban areas.
7. Grouping of Castes and Tribes with reference to occupation and inter-group and intra-group comparative study on the basis of the data available in earlier Censuses.
8. Social mobility movements among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

On the basis of each of the subsidiary studies indicated above, a separate monograph is under preparation. It is also proposed to prepare separate monographs on a few Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status in each State. Besides, ethnographic glossaries are proposed to be prepared in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose about one lakh references have been indexed.

Shri H. L. Harit, Investigator, who is looking after the compilation of information from published sources in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other special ethnic groups of India deserves mention.

Shri A. Mitra, Registrar General of India for 1961 Census, whose farsighted initiative is responsible for social investigations in a large number of fields including ethnography, deserves thanks of all students of Indology. I have been benefited not only by his inspiration, but also by his valuable suggestions in connection with the ethnographic studies as well as other studies, conducted by the Handicrafts and Social Studies unit.

The tradition built by Shri Mitra has been continued by Shri A. Chandra Sekhar, the present Registrar General of India. Under his guidance, the scope of the Social Studies by the Census Organisation has been further expanded. In spite of his other preoccupations, he has gone through the final drafts of the ethnographic notes and given a number of valuable suggestions. I avail of this opportunity to express my gratefulness to him.

B. K. ROY BURMAN

INTRODUCTION

This volume contains a study of some important scheduled castes in Tamil Nadu. What a scheduled caste is and other relevant material to appreciate this study will be found in "Census of India, 1961, Volume IX, Madras—Part V-A (i) Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Report and Tables)".

In 1961 Census only 67 (sixty-seven) castes have been returned, out of which the following 35 only are numerically important. They are arranged in the descending order of numerical importance.

Numerically Important Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu

Rank of numerical importance	Names of Scheduled Caste arranged in descending order of the size of Population	1961 Census population	Percentage to total Scheduled Castes
1	2	3	4
1	Adi Dravida	1,763,000	29·06
2	Paraiyan, Parayan (Sambavar)	1,513,627	24·95
3	Pallan	950,266	15·66
4	Chakkiliyan	778,076	12·82
5	Kudumban	247,822	4·08
6	Samban	136,818	2·25
7	Arunthathiyar	99,947	1·65
8	Kuravan, Sidhanar	78,470	1·29
9	Valluvan	62,450	1·03
10	Madari	60,015	0·99
11	Thoti	41,129	0·68
12	Pagadai	19,299	0·32
13	Adi Andhra	18,269	0·30

1	2	3	4
14	Devendra Kulathan	15,963	0·26
15	Adi Karnataka	12,448	0·21
16	Pannadi	10,745	0·18
17	Tiruvalluvar	10,077	0·17
18	Puthirai Vannan	9,696	0·16
19	Koliyan	5,680	0·09
20	Vettiyan	3,541	0·06
21	Vannan	3,383	0·06
22	Madiga	3,198	0·05
23	Mala	2,060	0.03
24	Dom, Dombara, Paidi or Pano . .	1,977	0.03
25	Cheruman	1,884	0·03
26	Holeya	1,826	0·03
27	Kadaiyan	1,750	0.03
28	Paravan	1,550	0.03
29	Thandan	1,105	0.02
30	Pulayan or Cheramar	907	0.01
31	Panniandi	642	0.01
32	Ayyanavar	632	0.01
33	Vetan	630	0.01
34	Bharathar	513	0.01
35	Uraly	385	0.01
	Individual caste unclassifiable . .	205,430	3.39
	All other castes reporting negligible proportions	2,117	0.03
	All Scheduled Castes	6,067,327	100.00

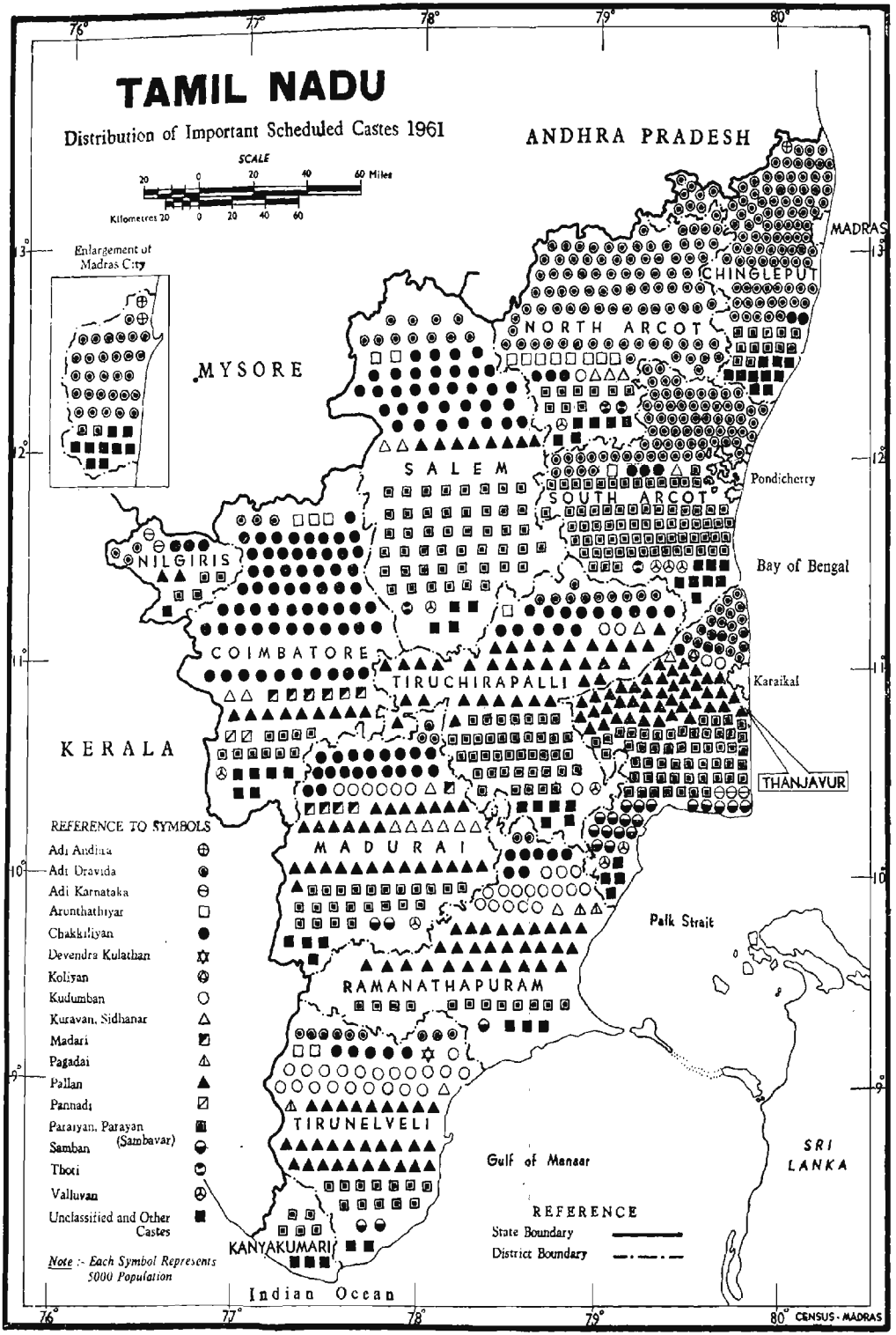
In 1961 Census, special tables have been prepared in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Tribe in the State. They cover information on religion, age, marital status, education, mother tongue, bilingualism and economic activity. In Madras State supplementary Tables have also been prepared together with a report giving a comparative study of the general characteristics of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. These have already been released as Census of India, 1961, Volume IX, Part V-A (i) and Part V-A (ii).

So far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, Todas are considered to be the most aboriginal tribe. A detailed report on them has been published as Census of India, Volume IX, Part V-C. Another detailed report about seven more Scheduled Tribes has been released as Census of India, 1961, Volume IX, Part V-B(1). A report on Twelve Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu is contained in the present two Volumes. *viz.*, Part I containing eight communities and Part II having four communities.

Dr. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty in the Office of the Registrar General, will be preparing more detailed and extensive reports on all the numerically important Scheduled Castes of all the States. Adi-Dravida, Parayan, Pallan, Chakkiliyan, Kudumban, Vannan/Mannan, Thandan/Uraly etc., are the major Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu on which detailed reports are proposed to be released by the Registrar General's Office, Delhi.

This volume is not, in a strict sense, an ethnographic study, nor may it interest the anthropologists. It is a study on such of those Scheduled Castes who are neither numerically very large nor insignificant from an essentially Indian point of view giving as much authentic information as possible about them. This study has been facilitated by the cooperation rendered by each of the community living in the sample village selected for the purpose. Sri T. B. Bharathi, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, was in complete charge of the survey, while Sarvashri C. T. Rajan and T. S. Rajaram, Investigators, carried out the field investigation on these communities and prepared the draft. Dr. Burman has also scrutinised the notes and made very useful suggestions. Most of the points indicated by him have been covered.

P. K. NAMBIAR


TAMIL NADU
Distribution of Important Scheduled Castes 1961
ANDHRA PRADESH
SCALE
20 0 20 40 60 Miles
Kilometres 20 0 20 40 60
Enlargement of Madras City
MADRAS
CHINGLEPUT
NORTH ARCOT
MYSORE
SALEM
SOUTH ARCOT
Pondicherry
NILGIRIS
Bay of Bengal
COIMBATORE
TIRUCHIRAPALLI
Karaikal
KERALA
THANJAVUR
MADURAI
Palk Strait
RAMANATHAPURAM
TIRUNELVELI
Gulf of Manaar
SRI LANKA
KANYAKUMARI
Indian Ocean
REFERENCE TO SYMBOLS
Adi Andhra
Adi Dravida
Adi Karnataka
Arunthathiyar
Chakkiliyan
Devendra Kulathan
Koliyan
Kudumban
Kuravan, Sidhanar
Madari
Pagadai
Pallan
Pannadi
Paraiyan, Parayan (Sambavar)
Samban
Thoti
Valluvan
Unclassified and Other Castes
Note :- Each Symbol Represents 5000 Population
REFERENCE
State Boundary
District Boundary
76° 77° 78° 79° 80°
13° 12° 11° 10° 9°
CENSUS - MADRAS

AYYANAVAR

Name, Identity, Origin and History :

Ayyanavar is a Scheduled Caste in the States of Madras and Kerala, as per the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes List Modification Order of 1956. Earlier to the reorganisation of States (as per the Order of 1950) it was a Scheduled Caste in the Travancore-Cochin State. In Madras State this community is scheduled only in the areas of Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli District. In Kanyakumari district, Ayyanavars are concentrated in the two taluks, namely Vilavancode and Kalkulam. In Kerala State, they are found in large numbers (3,937 according to 1961 Census). Barring Malabar they are found in the areas of Kottayam, Quilon, Trichur and Trivandrum districts of Kerala State. Ayyanavars were not enumerated in any of the Censuses, earlier to 1961. They refer to themselves as Ayyanavar Pulayar and other caste people refer to them as Ayyanavar or Pulayan. A study of this community was conducted in Kollencode village in Vilavancode Taluk of Kanyakumari district, based on which the present report has been written.

It is possible that the term Ayyanavar might have been the corrupt form of the Tamil word Eiyanars, a section of the Naga tribe who lived in South India before the settlement of the Dravadiyans in the region. The old Tamil works of 'Purananuru' and 'Pathitru Patthu' give historical credence to the existence of a group of persons by the name 'Eyinars' noted for their skill of hunting and archery. Dr. Caldwell had stated that the Parayans are the modern representatives of the 'Eyinars'. Since in olden days, Tamil country included the Chera Kingdom, the Eyinars might have lived in parts of Travancore. While the name of the Eyinars of the present Tamil districts slowly got changed to Paraiyans, it is probable the name Eyinars or Eyinavars remained without much of alteration in Kerala area. This is only a surmise but there is reason to believe the truth of it since the Ayyanavars are similar to the Parayans who belong to the race of Eyinars. Some more information on the etymological significance of the word Ayyanavar' is found in the Travancore Census Report of 1931 which is given below. "The word Aiyanavar appears to have been derived from Aiyan-Avar meaning the worshippers or followers

of Aiyan-Aiyananan (Siva, the five faced)." (Census of India, Travancore, 1931, XXVIII, 380.) The Ayyanavars in Kanyakumari District interviewed during the survey corroborate the account given above. They claim that since they are the worshippers of Shiva who is known as 'Aiyyan' in local parlance, they are known as Aiyyanavaras or Ayyanavars.

The 'Ayyanavars are mostly agricultural labourers. Locally they are sometimes known as Parayans. Other than Ayyanavars there are no other people in these areas who are known as Parayans. Occupationally they are supposed to be identical with the Tamil speaking Sambar, Cherumans and Pulayans of Kerala, belonging to the class of agrestic serfs.

The Ayyanavars of Kanyakumari district are not aware of any legend regarding their origin. However they could recollect that they hail from Arcot, near Vellore of North Arcot District of Tamil Nadu from where they migrated towards Travancore-Cochin, via, Aramboli, in the middle of 17th or the beginning of 18th century. The following account about them found in the Travancore Census Report of 1931, is interesting. "Tradition says that Ayyanavar were originally the inhabitants of Alakanadu corresponding to the Tamil districts of Arcot. This is corroborated by the Madras Census Report of 1901 which states that the 'Eiyanar' was a distinct sect of people who did not live in villages but in forts of their own at Ambur, Vellore and other places. After successive settlements in different parts of South India they are supposed to have migrated to South Travancore (via) Aramboly and lived for sometime near Pannivaikal. They are found mostly in Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Neyyattinakara and Nedumangad taluks. During the last three generations an overwhelming majority of these people embraced Christianity so much so that at the present census none has been returned as Hindu. The Christian population of this caste now stands at 6,414. *Makkathayam* is their system of inheritance." (Travancore Census Report, 1931, XXVIII, 380.)

II. Distribution and population trend:

As already reported Ayyanavars are found only in the States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In Kerala they account for as many as 3,937 persons (1961 Census). In Tamil Nadu their population is comparatively smaller being 632, consisting of 333 males and 299 females. They are found only in Kanyakumari District. From Shencottah taluk none has been returned in 1961 count. In Kanyakumari District they are found in large numbers in the taluk, Vilavancode. This is the northern most taluk of the district

adjoining Trivandrum. It stretches from the Arabian sea coast on the west to the western Ghats on the north-east. The lay of the country is hilly and undulatory and overgrown with plenty of coconuts and jack trees. The area is subject to the influence of the south-west monsoon which is active in the months of June to September. The average annual rainfall of the area is about 50". In the upland areas tapioca is cultivated in large areas. In areas adjoining the sea coast coconut is grown in vast stretches. In isolated patches between cocoanut groves paddy is grown. The survey was conducted in the village Kollencode, which is at the north western corner of the taluk adjoining the Kerala border. The sea coast is within a distance of one mile. It is ten miles from the taluk headquarters, Kuzhithurai. There are 32 households of Ayyanavars in this village.

As already stated, the 632 Ayyanavars returned in 1961 Census (333 males and 299 females) are all concentrated in the rural areas of the district. Since agricultural labour is their mainstay, they are found only in the rural areas. They account for 1.56% and 1.81% of the total scheduled caste population of the district and of rural areas of the district respectively. The sex ratio among them works out to 898 females per 1000 males. This is lower when compared to the sex ratio of the district as a whole which is 977 females per 1000 males. The ratio is also lower when compared to sex ratio found among the scheduled caste population of the district which is 1027 females per 1000 males. No specific reason can be given for the low sex ratio. The distribution of Ayyanavars in broad age-groups is as follows :

Age-groups	Persons	Males	Females	Percentage
1	2	3	4	5
0—14	268	146	122	42.4
15—44	256	126	130	40.5
45 & above . . .	108	61	47	17.1
TOTAL . .	632	333	299	100.0

An analysis of the distribution of the population by age group shows that in the age group of 0-14 there are only 122 females as against 146 males, which again indicates that the sex ratio is in favour of males. The concentration is high in the age group of

0-14 which has as many as 268 persons (146 males and 122 females) accounting for 42.4%. In the age grade 15-44 there are 256 persons (126 males and 130 females) who constitute 40.5% of the total population. The age group 45 & above contains only 108 persons (61 males and 47 females) accounting for 17.1%. As already stated Ayyanavars were not enumerated earlier to 1961 Census. The percentage of migrants among them is 12.8 which indicates that there is very little spatial mobility among them.

III. Family, Clan, Kinship etc.

Among Ayyanavars the basic unit of social structure is a family. The distribution of the 32 households covered in the survey according to the size and composition is as shown below : Of the 32 households with 2 members, 10 households have 2-3 members accommodating 24 members (14 males and 10 females), 10 families have, 4-6 members, and 9 families have 7-9 members. There is only one household having more than 10 members. It is seen that households with 2-3 members and 4-6 members are more and as such Ayyanavar families are optimum sized. The average composition of a household works out to 4.8. Though the type of family among Ayyanavar in olden days was joint, the above analysis indicates that simple families are now the normal pattern. Joint families split into simple ones due to many reasons such as, misunderstanding, property disputes, etc. The residence is always patrilocal, as the wife migrates to her husband's place. Descent & lineage are also reckoned through male line. As such Ayyanavar community is a patriarchal group. They follow Hindu Law of inheritance which is patrilineal in nature (i.e. *Makkathayam*) in which sons inherit father's properties. Females inherit in default of males. Now-a-days the tendency is for a father to bequeath the properties equally to his sons and daughters. The Ayyanavars are not divided into any sub-divisions or clans. The entire community is endogamous and functions as one unit. The preferential mates are maternal uncles' daughters or paternal aunt's daughters.

IV. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments etc.

In Kollencode, the Ayyanavars live in isolated houses in the midst of cocoanut groves. Their houses are spread in large area ; in a sprinkled pattern of settlement. The land on which hutments are put up belong to the landlords who are mostly the local Namboodris or Nairs. The superstructures only belong to them. In return for the permission given to put up the huts, the Ayyanavars have to keep a watch over the cocoanut groves of their landlords. The roofings are low and almost all hutments are

of small dimensions. They are rectangular in ground plan with front verandahs. The front verandah has a small buffer wall to a height of about 2' in the front. This is intended to prevent the rain water splashing inside the verandah. An analysis of the types of 32 Ayyanavar houses shows that 17 are mud walled and 14 are brick walled houses. One house has been constructed with wooden planks. The walls are mud plastered and in some of the houses charcoal powder has been mixed with mud for plastering. This gives a greyish appearance to the walls. Only one house has mangalore-tiled roofing. The roof material used in the case of thatched huts is cocoanut-palm leaves. The roofing is sloping on all the four sides of the rectangular house. The eaves of the roofing extend a little too much on all the four sides beyond the walls. This over spreading of the roofing is intended to protect the walls against erosion by rain. The houses do not contain any bath-room or a place for washing. These are done in the front yard. Generally a hut contains only one wooden door. However, a few houses were noticed even without a single door in the threshold. Mostly due to the poverty the Ayyanavars cannot afford to have even this facility. The cost of construction of a hut is between Rs. 250/- and 300/-. The settlement of Ayyanavar is a bit far removed from the dwellings of the other caste Hindus.

About the dress pattern, men are found wearing towels in their waist. Inside they wear loin clothes. They do not put on any upper garment. Two or three pieces of clothes serve the purpose for an individual throughout the year. These are seldom washed. Women wear a piece of 2 yards cloth in their waists which they call *Mundu*. This cloth may either be a *lungi* or an ordinary white cloth. Over the upper body they wear jackets which are buttoned up in the front. They do not wear any upper cloth over the jacket. A few Ayyanavar males while going out wear tailored shirts. Women have their blouses tailored. Children often go about naked. On special communal festivals such as *Onam and Pongal* they purchase and wear new clothes. Ayyanavars do not use any type of head gear or foot-wear. They can afford only a minimum of clothing in view of their economic backwardness.

Their men do not generally wear ornaments. One or two only are found wearing ear-ings known as 'Kadukkans'. The ornaments of womenfolk generally consist of ear-studs called 'kammal', nose-screws known as 'Mokkuthis' and a neck chain or a necklace called *addigai* all of very cheap variety. The ornaments are generally made of cheap beads, silver or gold in stray cases. Brass ear-studs and nose-screws are commonly used. They purchase these ornaments from Kuzhithurai, the taluk headquarters

of the place which is accessible by bus. One or two women were found with extended ear-lobes in which they put on *Pambadam, Thandatti* etc., the ear-ornaments so common among the Nadar and Nair women of the region. Married women are supposed to wear *Sangu Tali* (marriage badge) but in the majority of the cases this is invariably sold away after one or two years of marriage. In such cases, however, a turmeric tied in a string symbolises the marriage badge. In the matter of personal decoration men crop their hair and a few have moustaches also. Most women part their hair in the middle and tie it into a big knot at the occipital region. Some however have the tuft without parting of the hair in the front. Children often have unkempt hair.

The staple diet of the Ayyanavars is rice and tapioca locally known as 'marachini kizhangu'. In the morning they take rice gruel along with one or two pieces of tapioca. For the mid-day they repeat the same meal and for the night they take cooked rice in a solid form. They generally cook twice, in the morning and in the night. Except plantain they take very little of other vegetables. They are non-vegetarians. They eat plenty of fish which may be both fresh or dried. They also eat mutton, pork, fowls, field rats, bandicoot, mongoose and flesh of animals that have had natural death. However eating of beef is tabooed. They are very fond of chewing pansupari with tobacco. Occasionally they indulge freely in strong drinks. They are very fond of tea and if they have money they take it from any one of the numerous tea-shops found in and around the village. Their households possession consists of a few cheap aluminium and earthen cooking vessels. No furniture is used by any of the families.

V. Environmental sanitation, hygienic habits etc.

The huts and the surrounding areas are somewhat clean. While at work with unwashed clothes they present a very dirty appearance. The only disease commonly noticed among them is scabies which they have contracted due to their unhygienic habits. There is a compounder practising Ayurvedic medicine belonging to the Ayyanavar community who attends to their minor ailments. Serious cases are however taken to the nearby hospitals. Their attitude towards modern medicine is encouraging. For drinking water they depend on ground-wells. The nearby fields are used for answering call of nature.

VI. Language and literacy :

The ancestral as well as the mother tongue of the Ayyanavaras is Malayalam. They know Tamil also which is the regional language. They converse in Tamil with their neighbours and in Malayalam with their family members.

The Ayyanavars have a high level of literacy. According to 1961 Census their percentage of literacy is 46.5%. This is higher than the state literacy rate which is 31.4% and much higher than the state scheduled caste literacy rate which is 14.7%. However, their literacy rate is slightly lower than the literacy level of the general population of the district as a whole which is 48.6% and higher than that for the Scheduled castes population of the district which is 37.10%. The total number of literates among them is 294, consisting of 174 males and 120 females. The level of literacy among the males is 52.5% and that among the females is 40.1%.

Literacy level by age-groups for Ayyanavaras as collected during 1961 Census is given below :

Age-group (in years)	Education level		
	Literates without educational level	Primary or junior basic	Matriculation and above
1	2	3	4
5—9	49	2	..
10—14	46	43	..
15—19	20	16	5
20—29	37	17	4
30—44	25	2	1
45+	22	4	1
TOTAL . .	199	84	11

The literates found in the age-groups of 5—9 constitute 17.30%, 10–14—30.3%, 15–19—13.9%, 20–29—19%, 30–44—9.5% and 45 and above 9.2%. The literacy rate in the age-group 10-14 is the highest indicating increasing awareness of education among the younger generation.

In Kollencode where the survey was conducted the literacy rate is 53.9%. There are as many as 15 boys and girls who have studied matriculation and two persons are reported to have entered colleges. Seven persons of the community are in Government service working as teachers, clerk etc. Almost all parents send their children to school.

VII. Economy :

Agricultural labour is the mainstay to the majority of Ayyanavars and it is their traditional occupation also. As many as 81 males and 34 females are employed as agricultural labourers (1961 Census). They know all types of agricultural operations from earth work to harvesting. They can do transplantation of paddy and form bunds or ridges by using spades and pick-axes for planting tapioca. During dry months when the plants require watering they carry water from nearby ponds in 'kavadis'. The 'kavadi' consists of two palm leaf containers suspended to on the two ends of a bamboo strip which is carried on the shoulder. Besides agricultural labour, a few Ayyanavars are engaged in cultivating their own lands. The number of cultivators in this community according to 1961 Census is 17 (16 males and 1 female). A few persons have taken to other occupations also such as general labour, basket making, palm-tree tapping, earth work etc. Basket making and mat weaving appear to be the subsidiary occupations pursued by almost all Ayyanavars. Very poor women collect grass and sell it for a meagre sum.

All the Ayyanavars are found in the rural areas of Kanyakumari district. As per 1961 Census the workers among them constitute 38.8%. The percentage of female workers to total workers is 30.6. Children do not generally go to work. The percentage distribution of workers in the various industrial classification is as follows.

Sl. No.	Occupation	Percentage
1	Cultivation	6.9
2	Agricultural labour	46.9
3	Mining & Quarrying	5.7
4	Household industry	8.2
5	Manufacturing	0.4
6	Trade and Commerce	0.4
7	Transport and communication . . .	0.8
8	Other services	30.6

The above analysis also indicates that agricultural labour is the predominant means of living for them. In Kollencode the occupations in which the workers are engaged was analysed. It is seen that one is employed as a carpenter, 52 as agricultural labourers and one as a cultivator. A good number of them have entered professions such as clerk, peon, teacher, compounder etc.

Three of the Ayyanavars are however seem to be engaged in scavenging. Educated persons in this community take up better occupations like clerks, teachers etc. This indicates that there is a great deal of occupational mobility in the community.

Farm labourers as they are, they get wages ranging from Rs. 2 to 2.50 with one meal for a day's labour. During lean seasons it is reduced to Rs. 1.50. There is migration of labour during peak seasons. They do not however get work on all the days in a week. They could climb trees. So they engage themselves in climbing cocoanut trees for cutting the green leaves for the purpose of making thatches out of them. Unlike the Izhavans and Shanans, they do not use any waist belt to aid easy climbing of the trees. They use only a small hold to get a hold for the feet. In this line of occupation they are paid one rupee per every 100 leaves cut, in addition to one mid-day meal. Their womenfolk get employed in weaving thatches out of the cocoanut leaves. They also know to make baskets out of palmyrah leaves. These baskets which are of crude workmanship are used for carrying fish from fishing centres to the markets. The amount a woman earns in this occupation may be 25p. to 50p. a day but that is considered a good supplement to the earnings of their husbands.

The majority of the families on the whole earn less than Rs. 75/- p.m. and find it very difficult to make both ends meet. An analysis of the monthly income and expenditure patterns of the households surveyed in Kollencode is attempted below. In this village, it is seen that out of the 32 households surveyed, ten come under the group of less than Rs. 25/- 11 in the income group of Rs. 26-50, 5 in the income group of Rs. 51-75 and 6 in the income group of Rs. 101 and over. It has to be mentioned here that the only household engaged in scavenging comes in the top income group. As regards the expenditure pattern of the households food forms 65.6% of the total expenditure. The expenditure on smoking and chewing is pretty high, being 17·9%. In view of the fact that income is inadequate to meet the expenditure on basic necessities of life, loans are raised now and then. As many as 15 out of 32 households are in debts. The average debt per household comes to Rs. 171.67. The percentage of indebted households is higher in the income groups of Rs. 25/- less and Rs. 101 and above.

Ayyanavars do not have livestock. They are mostly farm labourers and are not allowed by the local land-lords to acquire permanent tenures. With the meagre income by way of wages their economy is at the rock bottom level.

VIII. Life Cycle :

Birth :

Conception is recognized by the stoppage of menstrual fluid. First pregnancy is a matter of pride for any Ayyanavar woman. When a woman becomes pregnant for the first time, a function called 'Ekkaikoda' is performed during the 7th month of pregnancy in which rich food is given to her. After this function she is taken to her parents' house for confinement. Delivery usually takes place in the house in a separate room. Delivery entails pollution for 16 days. On the 16th day a function known as 'Thodakku Thirthal' is observed during which the entire house is purified of the pollution For a few days after delivery the mother takes rice gruel and a medical preparation made out of pepper, cumin seed, jaggery etc. Maternity assistance is provided by a Nadar woman who is paid a fee of Rs. 5/- or some grains in kind.

The naming ceremony of the child usually takes place on the 28th day after birth. On this day the child is given an oil-bath, dressed with new clothes and taken to a nearest temple. The Brahmin priest names the child and receives in return a measure of paddy together with cocoanut, betel etc., The tonsuring ceremony of the baby is usually performed after one or two years.

Puberty :

Attainment of puberty is known as 'Pirayamadhal' and the ceremony relating to that is known as 'Sadangu'. The girl who attains puberty is kept in a specially erected hut for seven days during which pollution is observed. No male is allowed to see her during this period. In olden days on the 8th day the hut where the girl stayed was burnt but now-a-days it is not resorted to. On the 8th day she is given a bath and sprinkled with sacred water brought from a temple. The maternal uncle presents her with a saree and blouse. Close relatives are invited and 'Nalangu' is performed to caste off evil eyes on her. This ceremony is purely informal and mostly confined to the family members only.

Marriage :

Ayyanavar community is endogamous. The preferential mates are always maternal uncles' or paternal aunts' daughter. As such consanguineous marriages are frequent. In Kollencode out of 32 marriages 8 relate to marriage with maternal uncles' daughters and 20 with paternal aunts' daughters. Levirate and sorrorate customs are also found among them. Inter caste

marriage is now-a-days common among them. However they do not marry Pulayans whom they consider inferior to them. Pre-marital sex life is viewed with great concern in this community. Widow remarriage is normally allowed. The age of marriage both for boys and girls is after attainment of puberty by them. Normally the age for males is 24 years and females about 18 years. Late marriage in case of both sexes however is not uncommon. In 1961 Census, it is seen that none has been found married in the age group 0-14, which indicates that child marriage is not found in this community. The form of marriage is mostly monogamy but limited polygamy is also noticed in a few cases. The mode of acquiring a mate is mostly by negotiation. Selection of spouse is the responsibility of the parents of a boy or girl. The initiative for a marriage comes from the groom's side. The parents and the maternal uncle of the groom go to the bride's home to see the bride. Ayyanavars do not consult the horoscopes before broaching a negotiation. The custom of paying bride price and dowry is prevalent among them. The traditional rate of bride price is Rs. 51/-. The dowry amount paid ranges from Rs. 100/- to 1000/- depending on the economic status of the party concerned. If dowry is accepted the grooms' party gifts some jewels to the bride.

The marriage among Ayyanavars is always a simple function. It is celebrated for one day only in the bride's residence. Marriage is preceded by betrothal which takes place mostly on the marriage day itself. In this both the parties exchange betel and arecanuts and finalise the alliance. On the marriage day the groom dressed in wedding garments is taken in procession to the bride's residence where the marriage is to be celebrated. The bride is then presented with a Mundu (waist cloth) by the sister of the groom. Wearing the Mundu the bride comes to the marriage booth. The couple are asked to exchange garlands. The bridegroom then ties a 'Sangu Thali', given by a Brahmin or any person who officiates in the ceremonies, around the neck to the bride. 'Sanguthali' consists of a conch shaped gold coin attached to a yellow turmeric cotton thread. Usually an elderly member among them or a Pothi Brahmin or a prajary from a Nadar or Ezhava community presides over the function. Soon after thali tying the elders assembled in the pandal bless the couple. A few make presents in kind or cash to them. Girls sing songs on the occasion and the guests are entertained to a feast. Consummation ceremony takes place on the same night. On the 7th day after marriage the groom goes to the bride's place for feasting. Henceforth, the couple begin to live as husband and wife. Christian Ayyanavars celebrate the marriage only in a Church.

According to 1961 Census the percentage distribution of their population in the marital status categories is as follows:

Sl. No.	Marital status	Percentage among Males	Females
1	Never married	63.06	52.51
2	Married	30.93	36.45
3	Widowed	5.71	9.03
4	Divorced/Separated	0.30	2.01

The never married among the males is found to be a little high indicating thereby that the age of marriage for males is a little high. In Kollencode it was observed that the age of marriage for males was about 24 years and that of females about 18 years. As already reported none has been found married in the age group 0-14 which indicates that child marriage is not found among them. Divorce is allowed in this community for reasons like adultery, barrenness and other grave offences. Divorce is known as 'Idavadu Thirthal'. The elders of the locality decide this and when it is ordered the wife returns the Thali, the bride price of Rs. 51/- and a portion of the marriage expenses.

Death :

Ayyanavars always bury their dead. While burying the head is placed towards the west with face looking up. Before the corpse is taken to the burial ground, it is given a bath and applied with turmeric, sandal paste etc. The corpse is carried in a bier to the accompaniment of the blowing of conches. On the way to the burial ground, half way, the bier is placed in a particular spot and the eldest son of the deceased carrying an earthern pot full of water is asked to go round the bier thrice during which the village barber makes small holes in the pot. The pot is finally broken and the body is taken to the burial ground and buried in the pit already dug.

On the third day ghee and milk are poured near the place of burial. On the 16th day a function called 'Pulakuli' is performed for the well-being of the soul of the dead person. The entire house is cleaned and white washed. Rice is cooked and thrown to the crows. All the members take purification bath and they are entertained to a feast. This ceremony is supposed to end pollution completely.

IX. Religion :

According to 1961 Census all the Ayyanavars belong to Hinduism. As per the Travancore Census Report of 1931 "During the last generation overwhelming majority of these people

embraced Christianity so much so that at the present census none has been returned as Hindu. The Christian population now stands at 6,414 . . . . ." (Census of India, Travancore XXVIII, 1932, 38). In Kollencode village also the Christian Ayyanavars number more than the Hindu Ayyanavars. However a reverse trend is now noticed. In as much as the Christian converts are not classified as a Scheduled Caste, they return themselves as Hindus so as to derive the benefits allowed to the Hindu Ayyanavars. In several cases the husbands returned themelves as Hindus and the wives as Christians. This incidentally indicates that there is social relationship between the two religious groups of the community.

All the Hindu Ayyanavars belong to the Saivite sect. As their very name implies they are worshippers of Siva (the five faced God). But their indigenous deities belong to the lower pantheon of gods and goddesses. They worship deities such as Badrakali, Madan, Subramanyan, Ayyappan etc. For Badrakali and Madan they sacrifice goat or hen. The most important religious festivals observed by them are Onam, Pongal etc. During these festive occasions they dress themselves merrily and visit the temples. They do not have any religious functionary among them. They attach much importance to oaths. The most common form of making an oath is to extinguish burning camphor before a deity. They do not practice any ordeal.

X. Leisure and Recreation :

During off-seasons they have plenty of leisure which they spend idling without any organised recreational activities. The younger generation however go to cinemas once or twice a month. Cinema theatres at Kuzhithura, 10 miles away from the village cater to their needs. Housewives spend their leisure in gossipping.

XI. Relation among different segments of the Community :

As we have already seen Ayyanavars are not divided into clans or sub-divisions. The whole community functions as one unit. Whatever division is worth mentioning is that based on their religion. The two segments among them are Christian Ayyanavars and the Hindu Ayyanavars. There is perfect understanding and harmonious relationship between the two segments. As already reported the two segments are bound together by social relations such as marriage, interdining etc. In fact there are several families in Kollencode consisting of couples belonging to different religions, leading a harmonious conjugal life.

XII. Inter-Community Relationship :

In Kollencode Ayyanavars are found living with Nadars, Kammala Asari, Nair and Ezhavars. There is a Namboodri Brahmin house in the hamlet where the Ayyanavars dwell, but it is a bit far removed from their hutments. For drinking water they go to a far off place as they are not allowed to use the well found in the Namboodri Brahmin's house. In general, Ayyanavaras do not suffer from any social disability. Though they occupy the lowest position in Hindu Society, being superior only to the Pulayans with whom they neither inter-marry or inter-dine, the other caste Hindus do not consider them as untouchables. They live amicably with them and no caste incompetence is practised towards them. With the advent of the Temple Entry-Proclamation Act of the then Travancore-Cochin State in Kanyakumari region, as early as 1936, they are allowed in all the Hindu Temples.

XIII. Structure of social control :

The Ayyanavars do not have any organised caste organisation. There is no one among them officiating as head of a village or head of the entire community to effect discipline and social control. If any dispute arises, the elders of the locality, not necessarily belonging to the Ayyanavar community, meet to decide the case. Divorce cases are also decided by this body of elders.

Social Reforms :

The Temple Entry proclamation act of the ex-Travancore State, and the Untouchability Offences Act of the Government of India have gone a long way in improving the social status of the Ayyanavars. Added to these was the large scale conversion of them as Christians which wiped off the caste incompetence, if any, practised against them. As we have already seen they are also educationally well advanced. These factors have socially elevated Ayyanavars to a very great extent. But what has been achieved in the social sphere is lost in the economic front as they are still very poor.

The State Government with a view to improve the economic conditions of the backward classes is carrying out many measures through the Welfare Department. For example Ayyanavaras avail of the educational concession allowed to them as a scheduled caste. In fact a large number of Christian Ayyanavars returned to Hinduism so as to derive the benefits allowed to them by the Government. However no organised movement or association exists among Ayyanavars to achieve their goal in the social or economic spheres.

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Extract on "AYYANAVAR" from 'The Castes and Tribes' of H.E.H. THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS BY SYED SIRAJ UL HASSAN of Merton College, Oxford, Trinity College, Dublin, and Middle Temple, London. One of the Judges of H.E.H. The Nizam's High Court of Judicature ; Lately Director of Public Instruction, Volume-I Bombay,. The Times Press, 1920 *page* 430.

MALA AYYAWAR, OR NITYALU : They belong to the Vaishnava sect, and obstain from eating beef and pork.

Extract on "AYYANAVAR" from Census of India 1931 *Volume XXVIII Travancore, Part I—Report by RAO SAHIB, KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., (Edin.), Ph.D. (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum, Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press,* 1932 *page* 380.

AIYANAVAR : 522. The word "Aiyanavar" appears to have been derived from 'Aiyan-Avar, meaning the worshippers or followers or Aiyan or Aiyanan an (Siva, the five-faced). Tradition says that the Aiyanavar were originally the inhabitants of Alakanadu corresponding to the present Tamil district of Arcot. This is corroborated by the Madras Census Report of 1901 which states that the 'Eiyanar' was a distinct sect of people who did not live in villages but in forts of their own at Ambur, Vellore and other places. After successive settlements in different parts of South India they are supposed to have migrated to South Travancore via. Aramboly and lived for some time near Pannivaikal. They are now found mostly in Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Neyyattinkara and Nedumangad taluks. During the last three generations an overwhelming majority of these people embraced Christianity so much so that at the present census none has been returned as Hindu. The Christian population of the caste now stands at 6,414. Makkathayam is their system of inheritance.



In the environment she loves, an Ayyanavar woman displays herself in native style.



A male specimen of Ayyanavar.



To an old Ayyanavar lady, who is purblind, superannuation isn't sweet.



In the environment she loves, an Ayyanavar woman displays herself in native style.



A male specimen of Ayyanavar.



To an old Ayyanavar lady, who is purblind, superannuation isn't sweet.



A School-going girl of the community.



Amidst Coconut and areca groves the Ayyanavars dwells in isolated huts.



A potential worker and his spent father juxtapose.



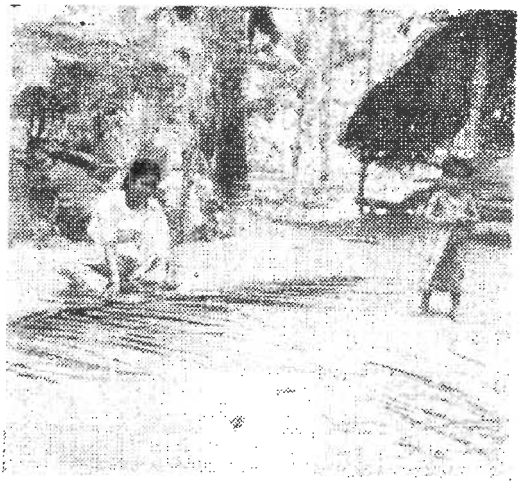
Babies may stray away Terror of motor vehicles is a far cry.



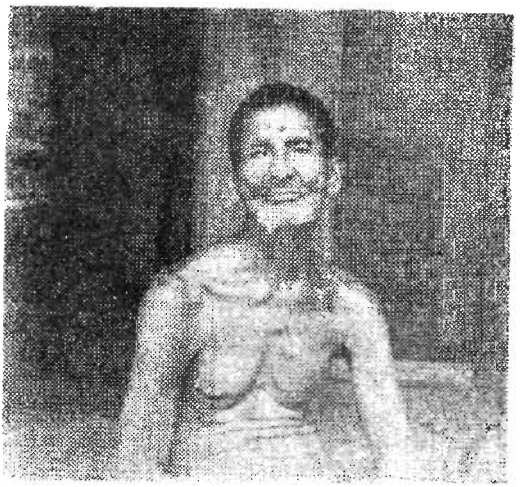
Experience and greenness keep company.



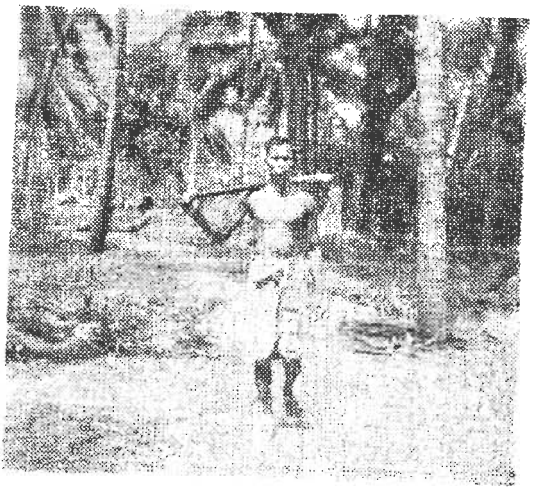
The smug satisfaction of marriage. A married woman of Ayyanavar Community.



They who plait their hair delight plaiting thatches too. Woman never idle at home.



An old man, unlucky to survive blind.



Farm labour is the occupation of Ayyanavar. This man with spade visits home for lunch.

BHARATHAR/PARAVAN

Name, identity origin and History:

The President's Order declares Bharathar and Paravan as Scheduled Castes for the areas of Kanyakumari District and Shencottah taluk in Tirunelveli district of Madras State. In Kerala State Bharathar is treated as Scheduled Caste in the areas of Kottayam, Quilon, Trichur and Trivandrum and Paravan is a Scheduled Caste in the areas mentioned above and in Kasargod Taluk of Malabar. Paravan has been scheduled in the South Canara district of Mysore State also.

The statutory position of Bharathars and Paravans in different States is as follows: According to the Constitution Scheduled Castes and Tribes Order 1950, Bharathar was treated as a scheduled caste in Kanyakumari District and Shencottah (Tirunelveli District) only, whereas Paravan was treated as a scheduled caste throughout Madras State. . Earlier to this, according to the Government of India (Scheduled Castes Order) 1936, Paravan was considered a depressed class throughout Madras State. In Kerala State they were considered as depressed class during 1931 Census in certain areas such as Allappey, Kottayam, Quilon and Trivandrum. Subsequently Paravan alone was declared a scheduled caste in certain areas of Kerala as per the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order 1936 and Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950. At present it is a scheduled caste throughout Kerala State barring the areas of Cannanore district excluding Kasargoda Taluk, Kozhikode and Palghat districts as per the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists Modification Order, 1956. (Census of India, 1961, I, V-B(i), 332-333). In Mysore State during the Censuses of 1921 and 1931 Paravan was considered a depressed class in Bellary, Mysore and South Kanara areas. In these areas it was subsequently declared as a Scheduled Caste as per the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950. Now as per the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists Modification Order 1956, it is treated as a Scheduled Caste, only in South Kanara district. (Census of India, 1, V-B(ii), 452-453).

In case of Paravan community, Chavalakkaran and Mukkuvan are shown as synonyms in the list of scheduled castes of Madras State which formed the basis of Census enumeration in 1961.

4=5 R&G. Innia/72

(Vide Census of India, 1961 Madras IX, Part- V-A(ii) 1964, 438), Whereas Mukkuvan is a separate fishing community, Chavalakkarans are found both among the Paravans and the Mukkuvans. Besides it appears that Bharathar and Paravan belong to one and the same primary group of fishermen with the only difference that the former are Hindus and majority of the latter are Christians. However Hindu Paravans are also found in coastal areas. A small study of the Bharathars and Paravans was made in the villages of Aramboli of Thovala Taluk and Manavalakurichi of Kalkulam taluk in Kanyakumari district, respectively, based on which the following report has been given.

The word Bharathar is supposed to have been derived from 'Bharath', that is, India. The Bharathars claim heritage from Bharath after whom India is considered to have been named. It is claimed by them that they were engaged in fishing and rowing boats during the region of Bharathan and hence they are Bharathars. However, they are locally known as Chavalakkarans, a name given to those fishermen who purchase fish from Meena Paravan (Sea-Fishermen) and market them in the nearby places. The Bharathars of Aramboli call themselves Padayachi, a title normally assumed by the Vanniar Community of agriculturists. It is possible that after having changed from their traditional occupation of fishing and fish selling to that of agriculture and agricultural labour, they might have assumed the title of Padayachi. They also claim that their relatives who are Vanniars have spread over in areas like Tirunelveli, Ambasamudram etc. The local people address them as Chavalakkarans.

According to the Travancore Census Report, 1931, "Bharather is a Tamil speaking community of fishermen found at Cape Comorin and the neighbouring coastal villages. They were also known as Paravans in earlier days. There is a tradition that the forefathers of these people came from the Tamil districts of South India whither they had gradually moved down from Ayodhia which was their original home. While living at Kumarimuttam they were baptised as Roman Catholics of Latin rite by the Rev. Vas and St. Francis Xavier. The converted Villavarayans of Cape Comorin trace their descent from Villavarayan, a great Parava King to whose position and power an inscription about 800 years old, in the temple at Cape Comorin bears testimony....." (Census of India, 1931, XXVIII, Travancore, Part I, 381).

The fishing people who call themselves as 'Paravan' or 'Parathavan' are found in the east and west coasts of the southern extreme of our peninsula. The Paravans on the west coast i.e., in Kanyakumari and Trivandrum districts are living together with

Mukkuvans another group of fishing community. There is no social relationship between the two groups and for all practical purposes they function as two different communities. In both these communities, as already reported a group of people who are known as Chavalakkarans are found. Chavalakkarans are those whose mainstay of life is to get fish from the sea-fishermen and market them in nearby places. There is social relationship only between the Paravans and Chavalakara Paravans. Similarly Mukkuvan and Chavalakkaran Mukkuvans have social relationships.

In the Madras Census Report of 1901, the following account about the Paravans is given "there are in reality three castes which answer to this name Paravan and which speak Tamil, Malayalam and Kanarese respectively. Probably all three are descended from the Tamil Paravars or Paratavars. The Tamil Paravans are fishermen on the sea coast. Their headquarters is Tuticorin and their headman is called Talavan. They are mostly native Christians. They claim to be Kshatriyas of the Pandyan line of Kings and will eat only in the houses of Brahmins. The Malayalam Paravans are shell collectors, lime burners, and gymnasts and their women act as midwives. Their titles are Kurup, Varakurup and Nurankurup (Nurutime)" (Census of India, 1901, Part I, 173). Thurston thinks that the west coast Paravans are the descendants of those who fled from Tirunelveli in order to avoid the oppression of the Muhammadans (Thurston, VI, 1909, 143).

According to the Census of India, 1911. Travancore, Report, Paravan has been described as "The caste that deals with shells ranging from those of pearl oyster to ordinary lime-shells. The Tamil-speaking Paravas follow the Makkathayam while Malayalam-speaking sections follow the marumakkathayam law of inheritance and other Malabar customs and manners". (Census of India, 1911, XXIII, 1912, 265).

Travancore Census Report of 1931 gives the following account about the Paravans. "Paravars found in the southern taluks are Tamilians, while those in the other taluks are Malayalis. In Thiruvella taluk they are known as Chakamars and they now wish to be designated Saktars. The Paravars are makkathayis except in Kalkulam and Vilavancode, where they follow a mixed system of inheritance. Burning lime shells is the traditional occupation of this caste. In some places they are engaged in making rattan articles, while in north Travancore the men's occupation is tree-climbing and the women's is washing clothes". (Census of India, Travancore 1931 XXVIII, 385).

Concerning the origin of Paravans Thurston has given the following legends : The author of the Historia Ecclesiastica (published in Tamil at Tranquebar in 1735) identifies them with the Parvaim of the Scriptures, and adds that, in the time of Solomon, they were famous among those who made voyages by sea; but it does not appear that there is any solid foundation for this hypothesis. It is the general belief among the Paravas that their original country was Ayodhya, or Oudh; and it appears that, previously to the war of Mahabharata, they inhabited the territory bordering on the river Yamuna or Jumna. At present they are chiefly found in the seaport towns of the Tinnevelly district in the south of India, and also in some of the provinces on the north-west coast of Ceylon. With regard to their origin, there is a variety as well as discordancy of opinions. Some of the Tantras represent them to be descended from a Brahmen by a sudra woman, while the Jatibedi Nul (a work of some celebrity among the Tamils) states them to be the offspring of a Kurava (or basket-maker) begott in clandestinely on a female of the Chetty (or merchant) tribe. But the Paravas have among themselves quite a different tradition concerning their origin, which is founded on mythological fable. They relate that their progenitors were of the race Varuna (god of the sea), and on the occasion, when Siva had called Kartikeya (God of arms) into existence, for destroying the overwhelming power of the Asuras (evil spirits), they sprank up with him from the sacred lake Sarawana, and were like him nursed by the constellation Kartika. At the close of the last kalpa, when the whole earth was covered with a deluge, they constructed a dhoni or boat, and by it escaped the general destruction; and, when dry land appeared, they settled on the spot where the dhoni rested; hence it is called Dhonipura, or the city of the boat. The Paravas were once a very powerful people, and no doubt derived much of their ascendancy over other tribes from their knowledge of navigation. They had a succession of kings among them, distinguished by the title of Adiyarasen, some of whom seem to have resided at Uttara Kosamangay, called at that time the city of Mangay, a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage in the neighbourhood of Ramnad. In the Purana entitled Valevisu Puranam we meet with the following fable. Parvatti, the consort of Siva, and her son Kartikeya, having offended the deity by revealing some neffable mystery, were condemned to quit their celestial mansions, and pass through an infinite number of mortal forms, before they could be re-admitted to the divine presence. On the entreaty of Parvati, however, they were allowed, a mitigation of the punishment, each to undergo but one transmigration. And, as about this time, Triambaka, King of the Paravas, and Varuna Valli his consort were making tapas (acts of devotion) to obtain issue, Parvati condescended to be incarnated as their daughter under the name of Tiryser Madente. Her son Kartikeya,

transforming himself into a fish, was roaming for some time in the note sea. It appears, however, that he felt the north, and made his way into the south sea, where, growing to an immense size, he attacked the vessels employed by the Paravas in their fisheries, and he threatened to destroy their trade. Whereupon the King Triambaka made a public declaration that whoever would catch the fish should have his dauther to wife. Siva, now assuming the character of a Parava, caught the fish, and became re-united to his consort. In that section of the Mahabharata entitled Adiparva it is said that the King of the Paravas, who resided on the banks of the Jumna, having found an infant girl in the belly of a fish, adopted her as his own daughter, giving her the name of Machchakindi, and that, when she grew up, she was employed, as was customary with the females of the Parava tribe, to ferry passengers over the river. On a certain day, the sage Parasara having chanced to meet her at the ferry, she became with child by him, and was subsequently delivered of a son, the famous Vyasa who composed the Puranas. Her great personal charms afterwards induced King Santanu of the lunar race to admit her to his royal bed, and by him she became the mother of Vichitravirya, the grandsire of the Pandavas and Kuravas, whose contentions for the throne of Hastinapura form the subject of the Mahabharata. Hence the Paravas boast of being allied to the lunar race, and call themselves accordingly, besides displaying at their wedding feasts the banners and emblems peculiar to it. In the drama of Alliarasany, who is supposed to have resided at Kundremalle on the north-west coast of Ceylon, the Paravas act a conspicuous part. We find them employed by the princess in fishing for pearls off the coast, and that under a severe penalty they were obliged to furnish her with ten kalams of pearls every season.

About their origin, the Paravans of Kanyakumari claim that they were warriors under the Chola Kings. They were stationed by them all along the coastal line to check the infiltration of foreigners into their kingdom. Later they were neglected by them. To eke out their living, they had to depend on fishing in sea which in course of time became their traditional occupation. There is historical credence to the claim that Paravans or Parathavars were the rulers of the southern peninsula. In Kalai Kalanjiyam an anthology of Tamil words the following account about them is found. "Petty rulers of the southern portion Tamilnad. They were defeated by Thalaiyalangauathu Nedunzezhian and later served as warriors under him. It is also learnt that they were defeated by Ilam Chet Chenni, a Chola King" (Kalaikalanjiyam, (Tamil), VI, 748). The Paravans call themselves as Paravan or Parathavan and their neighbours address them as such.

II. Distribution and population trend :

In Madras State Bharathars are found in the districts of Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari all along the coastal line. The Bharathars living in areas other than Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli district have not been scheduled. In Kanyakumari district where they have been scheduled they are found in Thovala and Agastheeswaram taluks. The Paravans who pursue the traditional occupation of burning the lime shells were surveyed at Manavalakurichi. As they are dependent the sea for the collection of shells, they live as close to the sea as possible. They are also found to live in Colachel, Mandagadu, Thengamputhur, Eatha Moli etc. which are all coastal villages in Kanyakumari district.

The population of Bharathars in Kanyakumari district is 513. Their strength in Thovala taluk is 229 and in Agastheeswaram taluk they number 284. They are found in Tirunelveli district also. But as already reported they have not been enumerated in the census as they have not been scheduled in that area. Even in Kanyakumari area many people of the caste have embraced Christianity and these converts have not been enumerated as belonging to scheduled caste. Their conversion to Christianity is a steady and continuous process. Marriages between Hindu Bharathars and Christian Paravans are frequent and when such a marriage is negotiated the Hindu invariably becomes a Christian after the marriage. Reconversion to Hinduism for the sake of marriage is a rare phenomenon. So the Hindu section of the Bharathar community is dwindling decade by decade.

The population of the Hindu section of Paravans enumerated in 1961 Census is distributed as follows :

Sl. No.	Taluk	Number
1	Vilavancode	260
2	Kalkulam	384
3	Thovala	488
4	Agastheeswaram	297
5	Urban areas in Kanyakumari District	43
6	Shencottah (Tirunelveli District)	78
	TOTAL	1,550

The Paravans found in the urban areas do not follow the traditional occupation of lime burning. They are found in petty trades and other odd occupations.

The population trend of the Bharathars/Paravans indicating their strength during the censuses from 1901 to 1961 and their variations during these periods are given in the following Table.

Details	POPULATION IN							VARIATIONS BETWEEN						
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1901-61	1931-61	1941-61
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Bharathar	..	..	..	136	..	..	513	..	..	..	..	..	377	..
Paravan														
Tirunelveli	45	41	1,279	12	..	..	78	4	1,238	1,267	..	33	66	..
Kanya-kumari	1,026	1,135	952	911	210	..	1,472	109	183	41	701	446	561	1,262
Nilgiris	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Madurai	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

The variations during the periods 1901-61 and 1931-61 indicate gradual increase and it is all the more marked during the period 1941-61 which may be due to migration and Reorganisation of States in 1956.

The distribution of the Bharathars in broad age groups is as follows:

Age groups (in years)	*Percentage*
0—14	47.9
15—44	40.2
45 & above	11.9

A high distribution in the age group 0-14 may be noted. It may indicate a high fertility ratio in the community. The distribution of Paravans in broad age groups is as follows:—

Age groups	*Percentage*
0—14	42.7
15—34	29.5
35—59	22.1
60 & above	5.7

The concentration is more in the age group 0-14 which indicates the high fertility rate among the Paravans similar to the Bharathars.

The sex ratio in Bharathar community is 1240 females per 1000 males. This appears to be very high. Since there is frequent conversion from Hinduism to Christianity the high sex ratio in the Hindu section may probably get adjusted if we look at the whole community including the Christian Bharathars.

In Aramboli the sex ratio of the Bharathar is 1030. The Paravans have a sex ratio of 914 females per 1000 males. This should be considered as low especially in Kanyakumari district where the sex ratio of the Scheduled caste population is as much as 1027 females per 1000 males and the ratio of the general population is 992 females per 1000 males.

Out of the 513 Bharathars, 454 (198 males and 256 females) are found in the rural areas and 59 (31 males and 28 females) in the urban areas. They live close to the shores, the source of their livelihood, and this accounts for their heavy concentration in rural areas. Out of 1550 Paravans returned in 1961 Census, as many as 1429 persons (732 males and 697 females) are found in rural areas and the persons found in urban areas number 121 (78 males and 43 females). As they are dependent upon the sea for collection of shells they live as close to the sea as possible.

III. Family, Clan, Kinship and other analogous divisions:

Among the Bharathars surveyed in the Vadakkur hamlet of Aramboli village, simple families are the general norm. A family consists of 4 to 5 members. Of the 32 households covered in the survey 15 have 4-6 members, 8 have 7-9 members, one has more than 10 members and 8 families have 2—4 members. The residence is patrilocal, as the wife migrates to the husband's place after marriage. Descent and lineage are also reckoned through male line. Succession of properties is always through male line. The Tamil speaking Sunnambu Paravans follow the patrilineal line of succession in inheriting property. Bharathars are not divided into any groups or divisions. The whole community acts as an endogamous unit for marriage alliances. Clan exogamy is also not found among them. Among the Sunnambu Paravans of Manavalakurichi no clan exogamy is prevalent and the whole community acts as one endogamous unit.

IV. Dwelling, dress, food, ornament and other material objects distinctive of the community:

In Aramboli village which is otherwise known as Aralvoimozhi in pure Tamil, there are about 35 families of Bharathars spread over in three hamlets namely Vadakkur, Nadur and Perumalpuram. Aramboli is situated at the mouth of the gap in the southern lap of the western ghats. To the north of the village stands the denuded hillock of Thadakamalai which actually is a continuation of the famous Pothigaimalai. To the south of this village is the Kottadimalai in Tekkimalai Reserve Forest. The lands adjoining the village are however plains getting irrigational benefits from jungle streams. Paddy is extensively grown in these parts. Rainfall is plenty during the South West Monsoon period. The average rain fall is about 40". As the village lies right across a mountain gap, during the monsoon period, virulent winds blow across it and the housing conditions in this village are adjusted to this natural phenomenon. Aramboli is a medium sized village and the people living in it besides the Bharathars are Vanniars, Konars, Asaris, Kammalans, Nadars and Vellalas.

The Bharathars' houses are not built on any layout. They form an irregular cluster. Some houses are separate but most of them touch each other so as to be contiguous. Most of the houses are mud-walled with thatched roofings. The material used for thatching is mostly palm-leaf. The roofings are generally low probably to avoid the winds. A few of the houses are brickwalled and for roofing they have a type of countrytiles which resemble the Mangalore tiles. These flat tiles are locally made by the potters. The roofings whether thatched or tiled are highly slanting so that during heavy rain, water could drain off quickly without causing any leak. As the village lies in a gap between two mountains, virulent winds blowing across the gap cause extensive damage to the roofiings and to prevent that heavy bamboos are thrown over the thatched roofing and tied with it. In case of tiled roofing lime mortar ridges are built over the tiles at intervals of about 2 feet. These parallel ridges run vertically from the top to the eaves and they prevent the tiles being flown off by the winds. Most of the houses have only one room with a varandah. The inner room is used both as kitchen and for keeping household articles. The outer verandahs are used for sleeping during non-rainy days. The plastering in the houses are renewed every year in the month of 'Thai' (January-February) and the houses white-washed. Even the ridges on the roofings are white washed and they present a peculiar appearance to a new comer from a distance.

The Paravans of Manavalakurichi live as a block adjoining caste Hindus. The Houses of Pillais, Asari and Vannan are found near their hamlet. Their dwellings are mostly tiled houses. A few thatched houses are also seen. The material used for thatching is woven cocoanut leaves. In case of tiled houses the tiles used are locally made square tiles, resembling the Mangalore tiles but crude. The walls of tiled houses are made of bricks. The thatched houses have mud walls. Almost all the houses have front pials and one or two inner rooms inside. Many of them are provided with windows and ventilators. The sheds used by them for burning lime are very close to the living quarters. These are put up in a piece of private land adjoining their locality in a coconaut grove. The Paravans tie their asses which they use for marketing their shells, in front of their houses. The pial is used for storing charcoal, husk of tamarind seeds etc.

The pattern of dress among Bharathars is ordinary and simple. Men wear short dhoties. They do not generally put on any cloth or towel over the upper body, but wear shirts on important occasions. The womenfolk wear sarees of eight-yards length and the style of wearing is similar to that found among

the Paravan women of Kanyakumari. In this style the saree pallav put on the right side is drown under the arm pit and brought round over the shoulder and tied in the front into a knot. They also wear a loose jacket which is buttoned in the front at the top. The ends of the blouse at the front are tied into a knot below the breast. They prefer clothes of dark colours. Elderly widows wear white sarees. Older women do not generally wear blouses. The dress of Bharathars is similar to the dress of poor class people in that locality and they do not have any special way of wearing them.

Among the Paravans of Manavalakurichi men wear short dhoties. One or two put on a towel over their shoulder. Very few only are seen with a shirt or banian. Saree is worn in a manner that the folding is adjusted at the back and the pallav taken round the shoulder is brought in the front and tied into a knot. Mostly women wear jackets. Young children roam about naked. Small girls wear skirts and jackets and the boys wear shorts and skirts.

Regarding ornaments Bharathar women wear a pair of 'Kammals' (ear studs) in the ear-lobes, one or two nose screws and a couple of glass bangles. A few old women have dialated ear-lobes, in which are worn ornaments called *Pambadam, Tandatti Muduchu, Asthuraban and Meladu.* These ornaments form a bunch in the ear-lobes. They are similar to the ones worn by Nadar women in Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Madurai districts.

In Manavalakurichi not much of ornaments are found on the person of Parava women. Some are particularly without any jewels worth mentioning. The type of jewels worn by them are 'Kammal' in the ears, cheap bangles in the wrists and a string of beads in the neck. Some old ladies are found to wear 'pambadam' and 'Thandatti' in dialated ear-lobes. Their men do not wear any jewels. One or two are however seen to wear small stone studded ear-rings. The Christian Paravan women of Kanyakumari are seen wearing the following ornaments: 'Muththumalai' (pearl chain), *Pambadam* in dialated ear-lobes, *Thandavadom* (anklet). *Grambu kuchchi, Thervali* (studs on the ears) etc. Parava men are seen wearing *Kadukkan* (ear studs) and male children have *Pattaranyam* (waist belt) etc. One noteworthy feature of the Christian Paravan women is that they do not wear nose-screws.

As for the personal decoration Bharathar women part the hair in the middle and tie it into a loose knot at the back. A few comb the hair backwards without parting it in the middle and tie

it into a knot. A few women have tattooed their bodies. The menfolk in olden days were wearing tufts. Now all of them have cropped hair. The hair style of Paravan women is similar to that found among the Bharathar women. In Kanyakumari women comb the hair straight and tie it into a big bundle on the right side of the occipital region. They call this 'valappu kondai'.

The staple diet of the Bharathars is rice. Cultivation of millet in these parts is not extensive and as such it is taken occasionally. They have meals three times a day. The morning and mid-day meal are in the shape of rice gruel. The night meal is in a solid form with a sauce prepared with fish or vegetable. Their consumption of vegetables is inadequate but to compensate that they take plenty of fish. They are essentially non-vegetarians and they have no objection to consume, mutton, chicken, duck, etc., However they are prohibited from eating beef and pork. They do not also eat the flesh of rat or bandicoot. They observe Fridays and Tuesdays as vegetarian days. They do not eat non-vegetarian food in the month of *Karthigai*. Elderly male members frequent the nearby tea-shops for taking tea. Others do not generally consume any beverages. It is said that they were formerely consuming a lot of alcoholic liquor, but this is now subsiding. Almost all elders chew pawn with tobacco and spend a sizeable portion of their income on chewing.

The staple diet of the Paravans is rice and tapioca. They take rice mostly in the shape of gruel to the accompaniment of fish. Even for tapioca they take fish as a side dish. As they invariably live in coastal areas fish is the cheapest non-vegetarian food available to them. They do not take much of other non-vegetarian food like mutton, chicken, etc. But they have no objection for taking these once in a way.

V. Language and Literature :

The mother tongue and the ancestral language of the Bharathars/Paravans is Tamil which is also the regional language.

Among the Bharathars according to the information collected during 1961 Census, the percentage of literacy is as high as 45.8%. This rate is higher than the rate prevalent among the Scheduled Caste population of the district which is 42.74% but less than that for the general population as a whole which is 56.5%. The percentage of literacy of the Bharathars in Aramboli village is 42%. The literacy rate among the females is 39% which is appreciable.

As per the information of 1961 Census, the literates among them are distributed as follows.

Sl. No.	Age group (in years)	Percentage
1	5—9	20.0
2	10—14	20.9
3	15—19	14.5
4	20—29	12.3
5	30—44	20.0
6	45+	12.3

The percentage rates in the age groups 5-9, 10-14 and 30-44 are higher than in other age groups.

The literates among the Paravans constitute 39%. This is low when compared to the level attained by the other communities in Kanyakumari district. The percentage of literates among them in the various age groups is as follows :

Sl. No.	Age group	Percentage of literates within the age group
1	5—9	53.0
2	10—14	65.2
3	15—19	53.8
4	20—29	41.9
5	30—44	39.7
6	45 & over	25.5

The literacy is found to be improving in younger age groups. According to 1961 Census there are 13 persons who have passed Matriculation and above in this community. In Manavalakurichi among Sunnambu Paravans two girls are studying in Pre-University Class and one girl is studying in Secondary School Leaving Certificate. Two boys who have studied upto S.S.L.C. and two qualified graduates were also covered in the survey.

shed. The capacity of a kiln is about 5 bags of shells. The kiln is bowl shaped with an open top and about 5' in diameter. The mixture containing 5 bags of shells, 2½ bags of wood charcoal, one bag of husk of tamarind seeds and one bag of 'punnai' shells is put inside the bowl and ignited from the bottom. The bottom of the bowl is connected by means of an air passage to a blower which is operated by rotating a big wheel connected to it by a rope. The blower is worked by rotating the wheel by a pair of persons for nearly ten hours. The fuel in the mixture put in the bowl burns slowly and the sheells get converted into lime. While two men rotate the wheel to work the blower one man gently stirs the shells within the bowl. After ten hours of burning, the contents of the bowl are allowed to cool down and then cleaned of the impurities. The sale price of burnt lime is about Rs. 3/- to 4/- per bag. These are taken to the nearby weekly market on the back of the asses kept by them. While carrying the burnt lime on the back of the asses, they require to be properly covered getting drenched by rain, as otherwise, the presence of water will start the process of slaking. It may be seen that the Paravans are continuously engaged in work on all the days either in collecting shells, burning them into lime or marketing them in the nearest shandy. When there is not sufficient demand for the lime, their women go for agricultural operations or for weaving coconut leaves used for thatching.

The income position of the Bharathars of Aramboli was investigated. It is seen that the bulk of the households come in the income group of less than Rs. 50/-. Only four households come in the income group of Rs. 51-75 and 3 in the income group of Rs. 76-100. The expenditure pattern of the households is like this. Food forms 63.9% of the total expenditure . The expenditure on smoking and chewing is considerable, being 18.4%. The position of the indebtedness among the Bharathars of Aramboli is not quite happy. Out of 32 households' 27 are in debts. The average debt per household comes to Rs. 409/-. The debts incurred are mostly for household expenditure. The income and expenditure pattern among the Sunnambu Paravans is more or less similar to that observed among the Bharathars.

VII. Life Cycle:

For first pregnancy during the 5th or 7th an informal ceremony known as 'Palagaram poduthal' is got up to a pregnant woman. Among Bharathars the first delivery generally takes place in the house of the parents of the mother. The delivery is attended to by a *Kudimagal* (a woman belonging to the barber caste) who is paid about Rs. 5/- for her work. The placenta is usually buried in the backyard of the house where the mother takes her bath during

the period of pollution. Birth pollution is observed for 22 days. A few report that it is observed only for 15 days. During the first three days no solid food is given to the mother. On the 15th or 22nd day, as the case may be, pollution is terminated by performing 'Punyahavachanam'. Water sanctified by a Brahmin is brought and sprinkled all over the house to remove the pollution completely. On this day, the entire house cleaned with cowdung-paste and all old earthen vessles are replaced with new ones. This is known as 'Pandasuthi'. On the 20th day, 'Marunthu poduthal' takes place whereat the mother is administered with a decoction prepared out of a few native herbs. The mother normally resumes her household duties only after 40 days of the confinement. During post-natal period fish is taken in large quantities by the mother. Normally the duration of suckling of babies is for two to three years. Contraception, voluntary abortion, cures for barrenness etc. are all unknown to them.

Among Paravans delivery usually takes place within the living house. They observe birth pollution for seven days. Some experienced elderly women in the village, not necessarily from the same community assists the delivering mother. On the 8th day, the mother and the child are given bath and admitted into the kitchen. They do not invite Brahmins to do 'Punyahavachanam' for the child birth. They do not have any separate function for naming the child. Tonsuring and ear-boring ceremonies are conducted after two or three years.

Puberty :

When a Bharathar girl attains puberty she is kept separately in a portion of the house. Puberty entails pollution for 16 days. A few report that it lasts for 22 days. On the 16th or 22nd day "Sadangu Kazhithal" takes place whereat pollution is terminated. During this ceremony a ceremonial bath is given to the girl and the maternal uncle presents her with a new saree, mirror, powder, snow, flowers etc., A Brahmin is invited and asked to sprinkle water on the girl and in the house. The womenfolk observe pollution for three to four days when they attain menstruation. During these days they do not generally enter the house but sit in the verandah by putting wooden pestle as a line separating them from the rest of the house. During the period of pollution, they are not allowed to touch the vessels used by other members of the household.

The Sunnambu Paravans call the puberty ceremony as 'Sadangu'. The girl who attained puberty is segregated and kept in a separate place for 15 days. On the 15th day a ceremonial bath.

is given to the girl after which she is admitted into the house. Close relatives are invited and given a feast. They in turn make some presents like clothes, sarees etc., to the girl.

Marriage :

The initiative for a marriage should always come from the groom's side. The groom's parents and maternal uncle go to the bride's place to see her. If both the parties agree to the alliance 'Vettrilai Pakku Kai Mattral' takes place in which betal leaves and arecanuts are exchanged. The date for betrothal known as *Nichayathamboolam* is also fixed immediately. On the betrothal day the groom's party visit the house of the bride and present her with a saree, betel, flowers etc., No bride price is given by them. Then an auspicious day and *Muhurtham* timings are fixed for the celebration of the marriage after consulting the astrologers. Generally eight or fifteen days after betrothal, the marriage takes place.

Marriage takes place either in the groom's or bride's place. But mostly it is celebrated in the groom's place. The bride's party arrives the previous day evening which is accommodated in a hut. The same day, a ritual called 'Sadangu Kazihppu, is undergone. In this the groom's party go to receive the bride who is presented with a saree. Formerly the Bharathars were paying a bride—price of Rs. 14/-. This has now stopped and no bride—price in the shape of money or kind is given. On the marriage day a pandal is erected in front of the house. The bride and the groom are seated side by side and the ceremony undergone. It is claimed by the Bharathar that in almost all marriages, Brahamins are engaged as Purohits. The ceremonies consist of 'Kappukattuthal', 'Homam' (sacred fire), 'kanni paadal' (group singing by young girls) etc. After marriage on the third day a ceremony is undergone. In this the bride will apply oil to the head of the groom and the groom in turn will apply oil to the bride. Then they go to a tank and bathe. On this day they are fed from a common leaf. After this the 'Kankanam' which they call as 'Kappu' is untied and given away to the barber with a cocoanut and plantains. The 'kappu' consists of a piece of turmeric and a piece of iron tied to a yellow thread. On the 7th day the nine pots, containing nine grains soaked in water by the groom and bride on the marriage day, are taken to a nearby tank and emptied in the water.

Among Sunnambu Paravans of Manavalakurichi, horoscopes of the groom and bride are consulted before an alliance is finalised. The *Asan* or an *Ezhavan* is consulted to find out the agreeability of the horoscopes. No bride—price is offered to fix up an alliance. However jewels are given to the bride by the groom

according to his status. In marriage ceremony usually an elderly member of the caste officiates as a purohit. Marriage is conducted according to Hindu rites and the essential part of the marriage is tying of the Tali round the neck of the girl. Tali used by them is of two different types. Some wear Sangu Tali and some wear horn shaped Brahman Tali.

According to 1961 Census the distribution of Bharathars according to various marital status categories is as follows :—

Marital status	Males	Females
Never married	65.9	59.2
Married	31.0	32.7
Widowed	2.02	7.07
Divorced or separated	0.87	0.35

A high proportion of the never married may be because of the high distribution of the population in the lower age groups. Bharathars allow divorce on ground of adultery and incompatibility. In case divorce is allowed, the offended party is directed to return the marriage expenses. If they have children they usually go with father. Divorced women and widows are permitted to remarry, but the ceremonies during such marriages are simple. Bharathars give their daughters in marriage only after the girls attain puberty. Polygamy is not prevalent among them. Consanguineous marriages are very frequent. Out of 35 marriages involved in Aramboli, 14 relate to maternal uncle's daughters and 17 paternal aunt's daughters. Marrying sister's daughter is generally avoided. There is no ban in marrying brother's widow. Bharathars are not divided into clans or septs for the purpose of marriage alliance.

The percentage distribution of Sunnambu Paravans in marital status categories is as follows :—

Details	Males	Females
	%	%
Never married	59.3	52 .3
Married	39.9	34.9
Widowed	2.3	11.8
Divorced or separated	0.5	1.0

It is seen from above that comparatively there is high proportion among the never married. Paravans allow divorce and remarriage of widows. They call divorce as *Idavadu Theerthal* Divorce is signified by returning the Tali tied by the husband. When remarriage takes place a fresh tali is tied. Consanguineous marriages are common among them. The preferential mates are maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughters. The whole community acts as an endogamous unit for marriage purposes.

The Bharathars cremate the dead bodies of elders and in case of children the bodies are buried. If the eldest son dies he is however cremated and not buried. Soon after a death takes place the relatives are sent for. The corpse is given an oil bath with cold water. Paddy is dehusked and a few grains of rice put into the mouth of the corpse. This ceremony is called 'Vaikarisi poduthal'. A *Kudimagan or Nasuvan* (a man from barber community) comes and blows the conch and leads the funeral procession. On the second day after cremation the bones are collected and immersed in a river close-by. This ceremony is called *Kadathu.* The last day obsequies called 'Kalleduppu' is performed on the 16th day. On this occasion, rice and pulses are cooked in the cremation ground and thrown to the crows. The relatives are invited for this and given a vegetarian feast. On the 17th day, the close relatives take oil bath and terminate the pollution completely. Then they participate in a grand non-vegetarian dinner. This marks the end of pollution. The Bharathars perform death anniversaries in memory of the departed soul.

The Sunnambu Paravans dispose of their dead either by cremation or burial. If they decide to bury the dead, they dig a pit north-south and place the head towards the south. On the 16th day they perform last day obsequies called *Karumanthiram.* The Sunnambu Paravans have their own burial ground and other caste Hindu members do not make use of it.

VIII. Religion

The Bharathars enumerated as belonging to Scheduled Caste are Hindus. The number of those who embraced Christianity is not known. The Hindus among them worship the deities such as *Alimariavanaswami, Nachiaramman, Sudalai. Dalavamadaswami, Boothathar, Agasthiar,* etc. Their celebration of festivals for these deities is of two kinds called *Padukkai* and *Kodai.* The *Kodai* which is done by the entire community is done on a lavish scale and animal sacrifices are offered during this occasion. *Padukkai* on the other hand is done on a small scale by individual households. During this occasion Pongal is cooked and offered to

the deity with cocoanuts, plantains etc. The important festivals celebrated by the Bharathars are Deepavali, Thai Pongal, Karthigai, Nayanar Nombu etc. Of these Thai Pongal and Nayanar Nombu are important. During these festival days they dress themselves with new clothes and indulge in group dancing. Sometimes ballads are sung and dramas enacted. The Bharathars do not have anybody in their caste as priest. In Aramboli the priest functioning for the Bharathars belongs to the caste of Vellala. Among Bharathars a few men have married Christian Paravan girls. In their cases the husbands continue to the Hindus and the relationship between the husband and wife is reported to be cordial. In Aramboli three such marriages were noticed.

All the Sunnambu Paravans enumerated in 1961 Census are Hindus. In Manavalakurichi there is a Mariamman temple at the very entrance to their locality. The deity there is known as *Ujjainikaliamman*. The temple is reported to have been built 180 years ago. Other caste Hindus also offer their worship to the deity in this temple. They also visit a nearby temple dedicated to Sudalaimadaswami and offer their worship.

IX. Intercommunity relationship :

The Bharathars are a pacific lot and their relationship with the other castes is cordial. The Caste Hindus who live by their side are Asaris, Pillai, Dhobies, barbers, etc. It is claimed by Bharathars that Brahmins are invited to officiate at the marriages. The barbers and washermen serving the caste Hindus also serve them. They are allowed to take water from the public wells and to enter all the temples found in the area. The relationship between the Bharathars and the Paravans is also cordial.

The Paravans of Manavalakurichi are not treated as untouchables locally. They do not appear to be suffering from any social disabilities. They live in caste-Hindu localities. The village servicing castes like barbers and washermen have no compulsion in serving them. They do not, however, invite the Brahmins to officiate in their marriage ceremonies. Some elderly person with in the community acts as the priest.

X. Structure of social control, prestige and leadership :

Among Bharathars the enforcement of social discipline is entrusted to a head called *Muthal Kudiyan* who enjoys a few small privileges. He controls the community at the regional level. For the Bharathars at Vadakkur of Aramboli the *Muthal Kudiyan* is stationed at Terur village. The office of Muthal Kudiyan is

hereditary. *Kanakkan* and *Kudimagan* are elected to assist the head of the caste panchayat in his duties. In Vadakkur there is one *Kanakkan* who is the representative of the *Muthal Kudiyan* stationed at Therur. If the castemen have no confidence in him, he is replaced by another representative through election. *Kanakkan,* as the local leader, is in charge of the welfare of the community in his hamlet. He is in charge of the temple funds and other fees collected for occasions like marriage. For a marriage a fee of Rs. 5 is normally collected. The Bharathars generally respect the caste-head in the matter of enforcement of social discipline. If any dispute or quarrel arises, the elders of the community sit together, presided over by the *Muthal Kudiyan,* and dispose of the complaints. Persons found guilty of social delinquency are even fined. Amount collected as fine are spent on religious festivals. Adultery and extra-marital sex relationship are viewed seriously by the caste panchayat.

The Sunnambu Paravans of Manavalakurichi, however, do not have any caste panchayat. If there is any dispute to be settled among them on social side the elders get together and decide it.

XI. Social Reform and Welfare :

The Bharathars and Paravans avail of the concessions extended to them by Government in matters of education, employment etc. They are bent on educating their girls also and in Manavalakurichi two Paravan girls are reported to have entered the College for higher education. They are aware that scholarships are extended to them for the education of their children by the Government through the agency of District Welfare Office in the region. Though in the social sphere Bharathars and Paravans are no longer backward, in the sphere of economy they can be called backward communities.

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MIGRATION

A study of the traditional origin of the Dravidian Peoples of Travancore, by L. A. Krishna Iyer.

Migration is of two kinds, migration from one section of a country to another or movement from rural districts to urban centres.[1] I propose to confine myself to a treatment of the larger aspect of migration from one section of a country to another.

Migration, when reduced to its simplest form, is caused by an expulsion and an attraction, the former resulting from a dearth of food or from over-population, which practically comes to the same thing. Sooner or later, a time comes, when the increase in the population of a country exceeds its normal food supply.[2] With migrating races, we associate enterprise, hopefulness and courage. It indicates a willingness to part with friends and relations, to break with traditions and customs, and make adjustments to new conditions. The history of past migrations of peoples from the Chola and Pandyan kindgoms to Travancore does not disclose any evidence to prove that over-population or dearth of food supply was the cause of migration.

It has been suggested that many migrations have been undertaken for some political and feligious reasons.[3] This is true of the Vellalas of Ajanad who came to the Travancore hills owing to political turmoils in Madura.

Immigration has become a world movement with improved means of transportation. It represents a shift in population from old thickly populated countries with few opportunities to new sparsely settled countries with many opportunities. Being a comparatively modern mean of distribution of population, immigration does not fall within the ambit of this enquiry.

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1. Duncan, *Race and population Problems.*
2. Haddon, *The Wandering of Peoples, p.* 1.
3. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problems*, p. 300.

Tradition is the product of conceptual thought. The products of the thinking of past generations are stored up, transmitted and retained. Additions are made to the store and improvements are made in the method of storing. Tradition is thus cumulative.[1] Tradition stands as the natural background of history. It is an axiom that all tradition is based on fact. The primitive history of every race or tribe is found to consist entirely of traditions. The scientific historian is bound to shift them carefully and scrupulously to arrive whatever domicum of truth they may contain. Progress in tradition may be stimulated by contact of man with man and race with race. The greater the contact, the more quickly and easily is the existing mass of tradition disseminated throughout any society. The influence of contact of race with race has given rise to a large number of traditions in South India. It is now my endeavour to trace the course of past migrations of some of the Dravidian castes from the Chola and Pandyan kingdoms to Travancore through traditions now current among them.

XVI THE PARAVAR (BHARATAR) : The Paravar were once a powerful people and gained ascendancy over others by their knowledge of navigation. The Tamil Paravars are fishermen with headquarters at Tuticorin. The Malayala Paravars are shell collectors, lime-burners, and gymnasts, and their women act as midwives. They are found along the coastal regions of South Travancore and inland elsewhere.

The original home of the Paravar is said to be Ayodhya. It appears that, prior to the Mahabharata war, they inhabited the territory bordering on the Yamuna or Jumna. It has been suggested that the West Coast Paravars are the descendants of those who fled from Tinnevelly. Inscriptions found in Cape Comorin testify to the high social status of the Paravar. An inscription about 800 years old in the temple at Cape Comorin testifies to the high power and position of their chief, Villavaroyan. They formerly lived at Kumarimuttam and were converted by Rev. Viz and St. Francis Xavier.

It is commonly agreed that the Polynesian race came from the west, probably from India. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that the people of Polynesian types still live in India and Indonesia. Hornell's monographs on Indian boat designs contain a photograph of a man of the Paravar caste of Tuticorin, the fishermen of South India, which shows boat designs. Such centres may well have included Galle, Colombo, and Korkai, where the embouchure of large rivers makes fishing remunerative.[2] The Travancore

[1]. *Ibid.*, p. 414.

[2]. Perry, op. cit. p. 105.

Paravars are at one with the Tamil speaking Paravars. While most of them became converts to Christianity, they have tried to preserve their separate existence.

Varnavar include Pathiyan, Mannan, Ettali, Purathon, Velan, Neriyan, and Paravan, and the difference is occupational. In Mavelikara, Quilon, Kunnathunad, they are called Mannans; Pathiyans, in Thiruvalla; Purathons and Ettali, in Vazhur; Meenatam, Cheruvalli, and Neriyam, in Changanaseri and Haripad. They are called Paravar in Vaikom, Vadayar and Kottayam.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from 'The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society, New Series, Index to Vol. XXV (1934-35), *Daly Memorial Hall, Bangalore City.*

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3. THE PARAVARS (Bharatars): The Paravars were once a very powerful people and gained ascendency over others by their knowledge of navigation. The Tamil Paravars are fishermen with headquarter at Tuticorin. The Malayala Paravars are shell-collectors, lime-burners and gymnasts, and their women act as midwives. They are found along the coastal regions of South Travancore and inland elsewhere.

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The Varnava Mitram dated 15th January 1106 says that Varnavar includes Pathiyan, Mannan, Ettali, Purathon, Velan, Neriyan and Paravan, and that the difference is occupational. In Mavelikara, Quilon and Kuttanad, they are called Mannans, Pathiyans in Thiruvella, Purathons and Ettali in Vazhur, Meenatam and Cheruvalli, Neriyam, in Changanacherri and Haripad. They are called Paravar in Kottayam, Vycome and Vadayar.

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[1]. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problems*, p. 414.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India' by EDGAR THURSTON, C.I.E., Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondent Etranger, Societed Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Correspondente, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, Assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum, Volume VI—P to S Government Press, Madras, 1909, *pages* 140 *to* 155.

PARAVAN : Concerning the origin of the Parava fishing community of the south-east coast, the following legends are current*. The author of the Historia Ecclesiastica (published in Tamil at Tranqueba in 1735) identifies them with the Parvaim of the Scriptures, and adds that, in the time of Solomon, they were famous among those who made voyages by sea; but it does not appear that there is any solid foundation for this hypothesis. It is the general belief among the Paravas that their original country was ayodhya, or Oudh; and it appears that, previously to the war of Mahabharata, they inhabited the territory bordering on the river Yamuna or Jumna. At present they are chiefly found in the seaport towns of the Tinnevelly district in the south of India, and also in some of the provinces on the north-west coast of Ceylon. With regard to their origin, there is a variety as well as discordancy of opinions. Some of the Tantras represent them to be descended from a Brahman by a Sudra woman, while the Jatibedi Nul (a work of some celebrity among the Tamils) states them to be the offspring of a Kurva (or basket-maker) begotten clandestinely on a female of the Chetty (or merchant) tribe. But the Paravas have among themselves quite a different tradition concerning their origin, which is founded on mythological fable. They relate that their progenitores were of the race Varuna (god of the sea), and on the occasion, when Siva had called Kartikeya (god of arms) into existence, for destroying the overwhelming power of the Asuras (evil spirits), they sprang up with him from the sacred lack Sarawana, and were like him nursed by the constellation Kartika. At the close of the last kalpa, when the whole earth was covered with a deluge, they constructed a dhoni or boat, and by it escaped the general destruction; and when dry land appeared, they settled on the spot where the dhoni rested; hence it is called Dhonipura) or the city of the boat. The Parvas were once a very powerful people, and no doubt derived much of their ascendancy over other tribes from their knowledge of navigation. They had a succession of kings among them, distinguished by the title of Adiyarasen, some of whom seem to have resided at Uttar Kosamangay, called at that time the city of Mangay, a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage in the neighbourhood of Ramnad. In the Purana entitled Valevisu Puranam we meet with

*Origin and History of the Paravas. Simon Casie Chitty, Journ. Roy. As.c So,. IV, 1837.

the following fable. Parvati, the consort Siva, and her son Kartikeya, having offended the diety by revealing some ineffable mystery, were condemned to quit their celestial mansions, and pass through an infinite number of mortal forms, before they could be readmitted to the divine presence. On the entreaty of Parvati, however, they were allowed, as a mitigation of the punishment, each to undergo but one transmigration. And, as about this time, Triambaka, King of the Paravas, and Varnua Valli his consort were making tapas (acts of devotion) to obtain issue, Parvati condenscended to be incarnated as their daughter under the name of Tiryser Madente. Her son Kartikeya transforming himself into a fish, was roaming for some time in the north sea. It appears, however, that he left the north, and made his way into the south sea, where growing to an immense size, he attacked the vessels employed by the Paravas in their fisheries, and threatened to destroy their trade. Whereupon the King Triambaka made a public declaration that whoever would catch the fish should have his daughter to wife. Siva, now assuming the character of a Parava, caught the fish, and became re-united to his consort. In that section of the Mahabharata entitled Adiparva it is said that the King of the Paravas, who resided on the banks of the Jumna, having found an infant girl in the belly of a fish, adopted as his own daughter, giving her the name of Machchakindi, and that, when she grew up, she was employed, as was customary with the females of the Parava tribe, to ferry passengers over the river. On a certain day, the sage Parasara having chanced to meet her at the ferry, she became with child by him, and was subsequently delivered of a son, the famous Vyasa who composed the Purana. Her great personal charms afterwards induced King Santanu of a lunar race to admit her to his royal bed, and by him she became the mother of Vichitravirya, the grandsire of the Pandavas and Kauravas, whose contentions for the throne of Hastinapura form the subject of the Mahabharata. Hence the Paravas boast of being allied to the lunar race, and call themselves accordingly, besides displaying at their wedding feastes the banners and emblems peculiar to it. In the drama of Alliarasany, who is supposed to have resided at Kudremalle on the north-west coast of Cylone, the Paravas act a conspicuous part. We find them employed by the princes in fishing for pearls off the coast, and that under a severe penalty they were obliged to furnish her with ten kalams of pearls every season.

It is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, that "there are in reality three castes which answer to the name Parvan, and which speak Tamil, Malayalam, and Canarese respectively. Probably all three are descended from the Tamil Paravans or Paratavans. The Tamil Paravans are fishermen on the sea coast. Their headquarters is Tuticorin, and their headman is called Talavan. They are mostly

Native Christians. They claim to be Kshatriyas of the Pandyan line of kings, and will eat only in the houses of Brahmans. The Malayalam Paravans are shell collectors, lime burners and gymnasts, and their women act as midwives. Their titles are Kurup, Varakurup, and Nurankurup (nuru, lime). The Canarese Paravas are umbrella-makers and devil-dancers". It has been suggested that the west coast Paravas are the descendants of those who fled from Tinnevelly, in order to avoid the oppression of the Muhammadans.

In the Census Report, 1871, the Paravas are summed up as being a fishing caste on the Madura and Tinnevelly coast, who "were found by the Portuguese, on their arrival in India, to be groaning under the Muhammadan yoke, and were assisted by the Portuguese on condition of their becoming christians. This general conversion, for political ends, explains why the fishing population of the present day along the southeast coast is to a considerable extent Roman Catholic". It is noted by Mr. S. P. Rice* that the fishermen "who live in the extreme south are devout Catholics, and have preserved the Portuguese names by which their fathers were baptized into the Church, so that, incongruous as it sounds, Jose Fernandez and Maria Santiago are but humble folk, catching fish in a primitive way, with no more clothing on than a small loin cloth and a picture of the Virgin".

Concerning the Parvas, Baldaeus@ writes as follows. "The kindom of Trevancore borders upon that of Coulang; All along the Sea-shore inhabit the Paruas, who being for the most part Christians, you see the Shore all along as far as Comoryn, and even beyond it to Tuticorin, full of little Churches, some of Wood, others of Stone. These People owe their Conversion to Franciscus Xaverius, he being the first who planted the Principles of Christianity among them. they being so much taken with the reasonableness of the Ten Commandments, that they receiv'd Baptism in great numbers, tho an accidentel Quarrel between a Parua and a Mahometan prov'd a strong Mitive to their Conversion....

The Paruas being sorely oppress'd by the Mahometans, one John de Crus, a Native of Malabar, but who had been in Portugal, and honourably treated by John, the then king of Portugal, advised them to seek for Aid at Cochin against the Moors, and to receive Baptism. Accordingly some of the chief Men among them (call'd Patangatays in their Language) were sent upon that Errand to Cochin, where being kindly receiv'd they (in honour of him who had given His Ad-

*Occasional Essays on Native South Indian Life, 1901.

@A description of East India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, 1703.

vice) took upon them the Sirname of Crus, a name still retain'd by most Persons of Note among the Paruas. In short, being deliver'd from the Moorish Yoke, and the Pearlfishery (which formerly belong'd to them) restor'd to the right Owners, above 20,000 of them receiv'd Baptism".

"The commencement of the Roman Catholic Mission in Tinnevelly." Bishop Caldwell writes,* "dates from 1532, when certain Paravas, representatives of the Paravas or fishing caste, visited Cochin for the purpose of supplicating the aid of the Portuguese against their Muhammadan oppressors, and were baptized there by Michael Vaz, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Goa. The same ecclesiastic, with other priests, accompanied the fleet which said for the purpose of chastising the Muhammadans, and, as soon as that object was accomplished, set about baptizing the Paravas all along the coast, in accordance with the agreement into which their representatives had entered. The entire Parava caste adopted the religion of their Portuguese deliverers and most of them received baptism. Some, however, did not receive baptism for some cause till Xavier's time, ten years afterwards. Xavier, on his arrival in the south, could not speak Tamil, and spent some months in committing to memory Tamil Translations of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, and Decalogue. He then proceeded to visit all the villages of the coast, bell in hand, to collect the inhabitants, and gave them Christian instruction. The Paravas thus christianised called generally at that time the Comorin Christians inhabited thirty villages, and numbered, according to the most credible account, twenty thousand souls. These villages extended all the way along the coast at irregular intervals from Cape Comorin to the island promontory of Rameswaram, if not beyond. It does not appear that any village in the interior joined in the movement". "It appear, "Mr. Casie Chitty states, "that the Portuguese treated the Paravas with great Kindness, permitted intermarriages, and even allowed them to assume their surnames, so that we find among them many Da Limas, Da Cruzs, Da Andrados, Da Canhas, etc. They gave the chief of the Paravas the title of Dom, and allowed him the exclusive right of wearing a gold chain with a cross as a badge of nobility. (The name of a recent hereditary chief or Jati Talaivan or Talaivamore of the Paravas was Gabriel de Cruz Lazarus Motha Vas). As soon as the Dutch took possession of Tutocoryn (Tuticorin) and other adjacent towns where the Paravas are found, they employed Dr. Baldaeus and a few other ministers of their persuasion to suppress the Roman Catholic faith, and to persuade the Paravas to adopt their own in its stead ; but in this they met with a total failure, and were once very nearly bringing on a general revolt. Notwithstanding the intolerance of the Dutch with regard

*History of Tinnevelly.

to the Romish Church, the Paravas still remember them with gratitude, as they afforded them the means of extensive livelihood by establishing in their principal town (Tutocoryn) a public manufactory of cloth, and thus maintaining a considerable working capital".

Concerning the history of the Paravas, and their connection with the pearl-fisheries on the Indian side of the Gulf of Manaar, much information is given by Mr. J. Hornell*, from whose account the following extracts are taken. "When the Poruguese rounded Cape Comorin, they found the pearl fisheries of the Gulf of Manaar in the hands of the Paravas, whom tradition shows to have had control of this industry from time immemorial. Of the origin of these people we know extremely little. We know, however, that in the old days, from 600 B. C., and for 1,500 years or more thereafter, the country now comprehended in the districts of Madura and Tinnevelly formed the great Tamil kingdom of Pandya. And, in the old Tamil work called the Kalveddu, the position of the pearlfishing caste to this monarchy is incidentally mentioned in the following extract: 'Vidanarayanen Cheddi and the Paravu men who fished pearls by paying tribute to Alliyarasani, daughter of Pandya, king of Madura, who went on a voyage, experienced bad weather in the sea, and were driven to the shores of Lanka, where they founded Karainerkai and Kutiraimalai. Vidanarayanen Cheddi had the treasures of his ship stored there by the Paravas, and established pearl fisheries at Kadalihilapam and Kallachilpam, and introduced the trees which change iron into gold'. In the Maduraik-kanchi the Paravas are described as being most powerful in the country round Korkai. 'Well fed on fish and armed with bows, their hordes terrified their enemies by their dashing valour'. The Maduraik-kanchi describes Korkai as the chief town in the country of Parathavar and the seat of the pearl fishery, with a population consisting chiefly of pearl divers and chank cutters**. When the Pandyan kingdom was powerful, the Parvas had grants of certain rights from the monarcy, paying tribute from the produce of the fisheries, and receiving protection and immunity from taxation in return. The conditions under which the Parvas lived at the opening of the sixteenth century are graphically set forth in a report, dated 19th December, 1969, written by Van Reede and Laurens Pyh, respectively Commandant of the coast of Malbar and Canara and senior merchant and Chief of the sea-ports of Madura. Under the protection of those Rajas there lived a people, which had come to these parts from other countries*—they are

*Report on the Indian Pearl Fisheries in the Gulf of Manaar, 1905.

Shell of the gastropod mollusc, **Turbinella rapa.

†"This", Mr. Hornell writes, "is most improbable. They are more probable the descendants of Naga fishermen settled in the district prior to the immigration of Tamil invaders".

called Paravas—they lived a seafaring life, gaining their bread by fishing and by diving for pearls; they had purchased from the petty Rajas small streaws of the shore, along which they settled and built villages, and they divided themselves as their numbers progressively increased. In these purchased lands they lived under the rule of their own headmen, paying to the Rajas only an annual present, free from all other taxes which bore upon the natives so heavily, looked upon as strangers, exempt from tribute or subjection to the Rajas, having a chief of their own election, whose descendants are still called kings of the Paravas, and who drew a revenue from the whole people which in process of time has spread itself from Quilon to Bengal. Their importance and power have not been reduced by this dispersion, for they are seen at every pearl fishery on which occasions the Paravas assemble together surpassing in distinction, dignity and outward honours all other persons there. The pearl fishery was the principal resource and expedient from which the Paravas obtained a livelihood, but as from their residence so near the sea they had no manner of disposing of their pearls, they made an agreement with the Rajas that a market day should be proclaimed throughout their dominions, when merchants might securely come from all parts of India, and at which the divers and sutlers necessary to furnish provisions for the multitude might also meet; and, as this assemblage would consist of two different races namely, and travellers, two kinds of guards and tribunals were to be established to prevent all disputes and quarrels arising during this open market, every man being subject to his own judge, and his case being decided by him; all payments were then also divided among the headmen of the Paravas, who were the owners of that fishery, and who hence became rich and powerful; they had weapons and soldiers of their own, with which they were able to defend themselves against the violence of the Rajas or their subjects. The Moors who had spread themselves over India, and principally along the coasts of Madura, were strengthened by the natives professing Muhammadanism, and by the Arabs, Saracens, and the privateers of the Sammoryn,† and they began also to take to pearl-diving as an occupation, but being led away by ill-feeling and hope of gain, they often attempted to outreach the Paravas, some of whom even they gained to their party and to their religion, by which means they obtained so much importance, that the Rajas joined themselves to the Moors, anticipating great advantages from the trade which they carried on, and from their power at sea; and thus the Paravas were oppressed, although they frequently rose against their adversaries, but they always got

†The Zamorin of Calicut.

the worst of it, until at least in a pearl fishery at Tutucoryn, having purposely raised a dispute, they fell upon the Moors, and killed some thousands of them, burnt their vessels, and remained masters of the country, though much in fear that the Moors, joined by the pirates of Calicut, would rise against them in revenge. The Portuguese arrived about this time with one ship at Tutucorin; the Paravas requested them for assistance, and obtained a promise of it, on conditions that they should become Christians; this they generally agreed to, and, having sent Commissioners with some of the Portuguese to Goa, they were received under the protection of that nation, and their Commissioners returned with priests, and a naval force conveying troops, on which all the Paravas of the seven ports were baptized, accepted as subjects of the King of Portugal, and they dwindled thus from having their own chiefs and their own laws into subordination to priests and Portuguese, who however settled the rights and privileges of the Paravas so firmly that the Rajas no longer dared interfere with them, or attempt to impede or abridge their prerogative; on the contrary they were compelled to admit of separate laws for the Paravas from those which bound their own subjects. The Portuguese kept for themselves the command at sea, the pearl fisheries, the sovereignty over the Paravas, their villages and harbours, whilst the Naick of Madura, who was a subject of the King of the Carnatic, made himself master at this time of the lands about Madura, and in a short time afterwards of all the lower countries from Cape Comoryn to Tanjore, expelling and rooting out all the princes and land proprietors, who were living and reigning there; but, on obtaining the sovereignty of all these countries, he wished to subject the Paravas to his authority, in which attempt he was opposed by the Portuguese, who often, not being powerful enough effectually to resist, left the land with the priests and Paravas, and went to the islands of Manaar and Jaffnapatam, from whence they sent coasting vessels along the Madura shores, and caused so much disquiet that the revenue was ruined, trade circumscribed, and almost annihilated, for which reasons the Naick himself was obliged to solicit the Portuguese to come back again. The Political Government of India, perceiving the great benefit of the pearl fishery, appointed in the name of the King of Portugal military chiefs and captains to superintend it, leaving the churches and their administration to the priests. Those captains obtained from the fisheries each time a profit of 6,000 rix-dollars for the king leaving the remainder of the income from them for the Paravas; but, seeing they could not retain their superiority in that manner over the people, which was becoming rich, luxurious, drunken, with prosperity, and with the help of the priests, who protected them, threatening the captains, which often occasioned

great disorders, the latter determined to build a fort for the king at Tutucoryn, which was the chief place of all the villages; but the priests who feared by this to lose much of their consequence as well as of their revenue, insisted that, if such a measure was proceeded with, they would all be ruined, on which account they urged on the people to commit irregularities, and made the Paravas fear that the step was a preliminary one to the making all of them slaves; and they therefore raised such hinderances to the work that it never could be completed.

"The Paravas, "Mr. Hornell continues, "although the original holders of the fishery rights, had begun, prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, to feel the competition of the restless Muhammadan settlers on the coast, who, coming, as many must have done, from the coast of the Persian Gulf, knew already all there was to know of pearl-fishing. The descendants of these Arabs and their proselytes, known as Moors to the Portuguese, are the Moormen or Lubbais of to-day. Their chief settlement was Kayal, a town situated near the mouth of the river Tambrapurni, and which in Marco Polo's time (1290-91) was a great and noble city. It shared with Tuticorin for fully 500 years the honour of being one of the two great pearl markets of the coast—the one being the Moor, the other the Parava, head-quarters..... Menezes, writing in 1622, states that for many years the fisheries had become extinct because of the great poverty into which the Paravas had fallen. Tuticorin, and the sovereignty of the pearl banks and of the Paravas, passed to the Dutch in 1658.

In the report of the pearl fishery, 1708, the following entires occur in the list of free stones according to ancient customs :—

96½ to the Naick of Madura—4 Xtian, 92½ Moorish;

10 to Head Moorman of Cailpatnam—5 Xtian, 5 Moorish.

60 to Theuver—60 moorish.

185 to the Pattangatyns of this coast—all Xtian stones.

"The 185 stones', Mr. Hornell writes, "given to the Pattangatyns or head men of the Paravas was in the nature of remuneration to these men for assistance in inspecting the banks, in guarding any oyster banks discovered, in recruiting divers, and in superintending operations during the course of the fishery.....In 1889, the Madras Government recorded its appreciation of the assistance rendered by the Jati Talaivan, and directed that his privilege of being allowed the take of two boats be continued. Subsequently, in 1891, the Government, while confirming the general principle of privilege remuneration to the Jati Talaivan, adopted the more satisfactory regulation of placing the extent of

remuneration upon the basis of a sliding scale, allowing him but one boat when the Government boats numbered 30 or less, two for 31 to 60 boats, three for 61 to 90 boats employed, and so on in this ratio. The value of the Jati Talaivan's two privilege boats in the 1890 fishery was Rs. 1,424 in that of 1900 only Rs. 172". The Jati Talaivan is said to have been denominated by the Dutch the prince of the seven heavens. It is noted in the pearl fishery report, 1900, that "the Paravas are a constant source of trouble, both on the banks and in the Kottoo (shed), where they were constantly being caught concealing oysters, which of course were always confiscated. Only one Arab was caught doing this, and his companions abused him for disgracing them".

According to Mr. Casie Chitty, the Paravas are divided into thirteen classes, viz. :—

Headmen,
Dealers in cloth
Divers for corals
Sailors
Divers for pearl-oysters
Divers for chanks
Packers of cloth
Fishers who catch tortoises (turtles)
Fishers who catch porpoises
Fishers who catch sharks and other fish
Palanquin bearers
Peons, who wait about the person of the Chief Fishers, who catch crabs.

It is noted by Canon A. Margoschis that the Parava females are famous for the excessive dilatation of the lobes of the ears, and for wearing therein the heaviest and most expensive gold ear jewels made of sovereigns. Ordinary jewels are said to cost Rs. 200 but heavy jewels are worth Rs. 1,000 and even more. The longer the ears, the more jewels can be used, and this appears to be the rationale of elongated ears.

In a recent account of a Parava wedding in high life, I read* that "the bride and bridegroom proceeded to the church at the head of an imposing procession, with music and banners. The service, which was fully choral, was conducted by a priest from their own community, after which the newly wedded couple went in procession to the residence of the Jati Talavamore, being escorted

*Madras Mail, 1907.

by their distinguished host in person. The Jati Talavamore, who wore a picturesque, if somewhat antiquated, robe, rode in a gorgeously upholstered palanquin, with banners, trophies, elephants, and other emblems of his high office. The bride, who was resplendent with diamonds, was becomingly attired in a purple Benares sari with gold floral designs, and wore a supurb kincob bodice".

In a note on the Paravans of Travancore, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "they are found in most taluks of the State. The title sometimes used by them is Kuruppu. The Paravans of Chengannur and Tiruvella call themselves Chakka, a word supposed by the castemen to be derived from slaghya or praiseworthy, but perhaps more correctly from Chakku, the basket carried by them in their hands. The Paravans are divided into numerous sections. In the south, the Tamil-speaking division follows the makkathayam, while all the Malayalam-speaking sections follow the marumakathayam law of inheritance. There is also a difference in the dress and ornaments of the two sections, the former adopting the fashion of the east coast, and the latter that of the West. The Travancore Paravas are really one with the Tamil-speaking Paravas of the east coast. While most of them become converts to Christianity, in Travancore they have tried to preserve their separate existence, as they had already spread into the interior of the country before the proselytism of St. Xavier had made its enduring mark on the seacoast villages. There is a curious legend about the settlement of the Chakkas in Central Travancore. Formerly, it would appear, they were Sudras, but for some social offence committed by them, they were outcasted by the Edappalli chieftain. They were once great devotees of Sri Krishna, the lord of Tiruvaranmulai in the Tiruvella taluk. The Paravas say further that they are descended from a high-caste woman married to an Izhava. The word Parava is accordingly derived from para, which in Sanskrit means foreign. The Paravas engage in various occupations, of which the most important in Central Travancore are climbing palm trees, catching fish, and washing clothes for Christians, Muhammadans, and depressed classes of Hindus. In South Travancore they make wicker baskets, rattan chairs, and sofas. Women, in all parts of the State, are lime and shell burners. They worship at the Aranmula temple, and pay special worship to Bhadrakali. Their priest is known as Parakuruppu, who, having to perform four different functions, is also entitled Nalonnukaran. It is his duty to preside at marriage and other rites, to be caste barber, to carry the news of death to the relations, and to perform the priestly functions at funerals. The Paravas perform both the tali-kettu and sambandham ceremonies".

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India, 1891 Report on the Census of Coorg by H.A. STUART, of the Indian Civil Service, Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Etc., Provincial Superintendent of Census Operations for Madras and Coorg, Calcutta : Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1893 page 38.

CHAPTER X

CASTES, TRIBES AND RACES

The classification of some of the castes is of doubtful accuracy. The *Kapalas*, for example, were formerly by watchmen and palace guards of the Coorg Rajas, but Mr. Richter says they are scarcely to be distinguished from the pales or paleyas, and that they originally came from Malabar[2]. The *Binepattas* again seem to have originally been mendicants[3], they were classed as agriculturists on information furnished by the Commissioner of Coorg. *Kavudi* was originally classed as a barber caste (*Malayalam Kavutiyan*), but the Commissioner informed me they were agriculturists. He has possibly confused in with *Kavadi, Kavadi* or *Kavadi,* which I have classed as shepherds. *Vadari* is perhaps a mistake for *Vaddar* (*Odde*), but agriculture was returned as the ocupation. *Agnani,* "unenlightened," is a fairly comon name for non-Christian pariahs, but as it was impossible to say whether they were Holeyas or Paraiyans, I was obliged to retain the name in the tables though it is not that of a distinct caste. Some of these Agnanis, it will be seen, have returned Christianity as their religion. *Anekula* and *Bakuda* are, I believe, merely sub-divisions of Holeyas, but the former is also a sub-division of Vakkaliga and the latter of Pale. *Kaladi* is, no doubt the same as the *Kalati* of the Madras tables. *Mayila, Mera* and *Parava* are sub-divisions of Holeya.....

2. Richter, op cit, p. 8.
3. Richter, p. 16.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India, Madras Census Report, 1901 *Part-I Report, page* 173, *by W. FRANCIS.*

PARAVAN (5,242) : Though all the Paravans are shown in the Malayalam section of Table XIII, there are in reality three castes which answer to this name and which speak Tamil, Malayalam and Canarese respectively. Probably all three are descended from the Tamil Paravans or paratavans. The Tamil Paravans are fishermen on the sea coast. Their head-quarters is Tuticorin and their headman is called Talavan. They are mostly Native Christians. They claim to be Kshatriyas of the Pandya line of kings, and they will eat only in the houses of Brahmans. The Malayalam Paravans are shell collectors, lime burners, and gymnasts, and their women act as midwives. Their titles are Kurup, Varakurup and Nurankurup. The Canarese Paravas are umbrella makers and devil-dancers. (C.R. 1871 p. 161 ; *Madura Man.,* Part II, pp. 73-74 ; *South Canara Man.,* Vol. I, p. 179).

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India 1911, *Cochin Vol. XVIII Part—I Report by C.A. MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam* 1912 *page* 78.

PARAVAN (23) : A polluting caste akin to Kaniyans and Panans. Their occupation is shell collecting, lime burning, etc.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India, 1921, *Volume XXIII, Travançore, Part-I Report by N. SUBRAMANYA AIYER, M. A., Dewan Peishcar, Census Commissioner, Trivandrum : Printed at the 'Ananda Press'* 1912 *page* 265.

PARAVA (9,313) : The caste that deals with shells, ranging from those of the pearl oyster to ordinary lime-shells. The Tamil-speaking Paravas follow the *makkathayam*, while the Malayallam-speaking sections follow the *marumakkathayam* law of the inheritance and other Malabar customs and manners.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India, 1921, Volume XIX, Cochin, Part I—Report Part II—Imperial Tables by P. GOVINDA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam : Printed at the Cochin Government Press, 1922 page 66.

PARAVAN (67) :— Chunam manufacturer.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India 1921, *Volume XXV, Travancore. Part I—Report Part II—Imperial Tables by MURARI S. KRISHNAMURTHI AYYAR, M.B. & C. M., Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum: Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press* 1922 *page* 113.

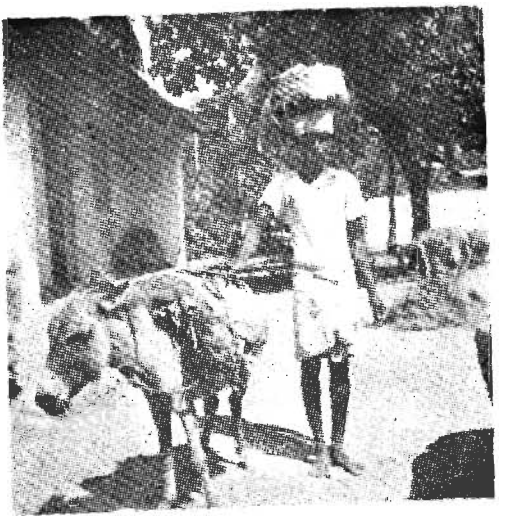
PARAVA : The caste that deals with shells, ranging from those of the pearl oyster to ordinary lime shells.

Extract on "PARAVAN" from Census of India, 1931 Volume XXVIII Travancore, Part I—Report by RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., B.Sc. (Edin.), Ph.D. (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum : Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, 1932 page 385.

547. PARAVAN : Paravars found in the southern taluks are Tamilians, while those in the other taluks are Malayalis. In Thiruvella taluk they are known as Chakamars, and they now wish to be designated Saktars. The Paravars are *makkathavis* except in Kalkulam and Vilavancode where they follow a mixed system of inheritance. Burning lime shells is the traditional occupation of this caste. In some places they are engaged in making rattan articles, while in North Travancore the men's occupation is tree-climbing and the women's is washing clothes. The population of this caste has increased from 11079 in 1921 to 13,602 in 1931.

Extract on "BHARATHAR" from Census of India, 1931 *Volume XXVIII Travancore, Part I—Report by RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., B.Sc. (Edin.), Ph.D. (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press,* 1932 *page* 381.

526. BHARATHAR : Bharathar is a Tamil-speaking community of fishermen found at Cape Comorin and the neighbouring coastal villages. They were also known as Paravans in earlier days. There is a tradition that the forefathers of these people came from the Tamil district of South India whether they had gradually moved down from Ayodhia which was their original home. While living at Kumarimuttam they were baptized as Roman Catholics of Latin rite by the Rev. Vas and St. Francis Xavier. The converted Villavarayans of Cape Comorin trace their descent from Villavarayan, a great Parava king to whose position and power an inscription, about 800 years old, in the temple at Cape Comorin bears testimony. Bharathars are *makkathayis.* Their number is 8,944 of whom only 275 have been returned as Hindu and the remaining 8,669 are Christians.



Off to the market to sell lime.



A sample of chunnambu Paravan women.



A quartet of womenfolk of Paravan community.



Chunnambu Paravans are lim-kiln workers.

A Bharathan male





An aged Bharathan widow.



An half-nude lean Bharathan is seen just after returning home from work. Wearing upper garment is a rare occasion.



Mother and son of Bharathan community.



Setting out from home for fishing.



An old lady of Bharathan community.

The Bharathan fisherfolk dwell in thatch houses.





A Bharathan woman vending fish.



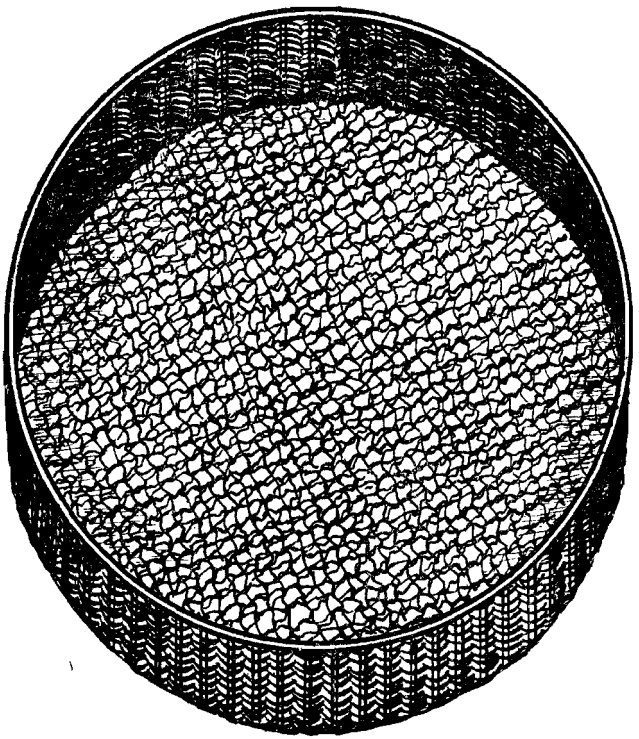
A typical dwelling of Bharathans.



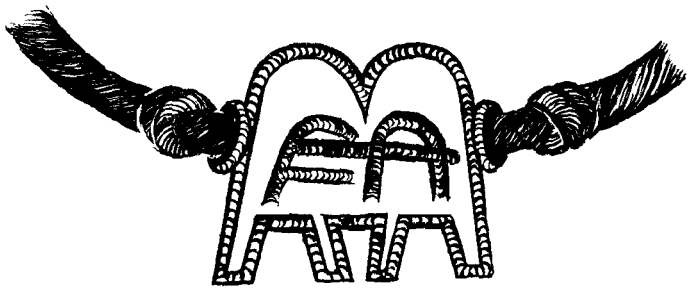
A fine specimen of a Bharathan fisherman.



The workshed of a Chunnambu-Paravan.



"Arippu" (Sieve made of palmyra fibre), being used by Bharathans.



Bharathan's Sangu Tali

CHERUMAN/PULAYAN OR CHERAMAR

I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

Cheruman has been treated as a Scheduled Caste in the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Mysore States. In Kerala it has been treated as a Scheduled Caste in Malabar area which formed part of Madras State before the States' re-organization in 1956. In Tamil Nadu, it has been treated as a Scheduled Caste in all areas except Kanyakumari and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli District which formed before 1956, a part of Trivandrum State. In Mysore, it is treated as a Scheduled Caste in Kollegal Taluk in South Kanara District which formed part of Madras State before 1956. Pulayan or Cheramar has been notified as a Scheduled Caste in the Districts of Kottayam, Quilon, Trichur and Trivandrum in Kerala, and in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli (only in Shencottah Taluk) Districts of Madras State. Pulayan, however, is listed as a Scheduled Tribe in Malabar area of Kerala State and throughout Tamil Nadu State excluding Kanyakumari and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli District, South Canara and Mysore (only in Kollegal Taluk). Besides, another caste known as Hill Pulaya is specified as a Scheduled Tribe in the districts of Kottayam, Quilon, Trichur and Trivandrum of Kerala state and in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli (only in Shencottah Taluk) of Tamil Nadu.

In Tamil Nadu Cheruman has been treated as a Scheduled Caste except in Kanyakumari district and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli District (*vide* the Government of India Scheduled Castes Order 1936, Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists' Modification Order 1956). In 1921 and 1931 Censuses, it was treated only as Depressed Class in the above areas. (Census of India, 1961, IX, Part V-B (ii), 21) Pulayan was declared as a Scheduled Tribe throughout Madras State according to Scheduled Caste and Tribes Lists Modification Order, 1956. Earlier to this, it was treated as a Scheduled Caste throughout Madras State according to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes Order 1950) and Government of India Scheduled Castes Order, 1936. Pulayan was enumerated only in 1931 Census when it was treated as a Depressed Class in Madras State. In Kanyakumari and Shencottah areas which were merged with Madras State consequent on Reorganisation of States in 1956, Pulayan or Cheramar was specified as a Scheduled Caste in those areas according to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

10—5 R.G. India/72

Pulayanarkotta in Trivandrum, Kokkothamangalam and Ulamalakkal in Nedumangad, Chathannur in Quilon and Aikaranad in Kunnathunad. How this community came to be called Pulaya is not known". (Census of India, 1131, Travancore, XXVIII, 1932, 381).

Sri L. K. Ananthakrishna Ayyar had stated about them as follows :—

"It would appear that once upon a time they had dominion over several parts of the country. A person called Aikkara Yajamanar whose ancestors were Pulaya Kings is still held in considerable respect by the Pulayans of North Travancore and acknowledged as their chieftain and lord while the Aikkaranad in the Kunnethnad taluk still remains to lend color to the tale. In Trivandrum on the banks of the Velli lake is a hill called Pulayanarkota where it is believed that a Pulaya King once ruled. In other places they are also said to have held sway. As a Paraya found at Melkota the image of Selvapillai, as a Savara was originally in possession of Jaganath so also is the worship of Padmanabha at Trivandrum intimately connected with a Pulayan. Once a Pulaya Woman who was living with her husband in the Ananthankadu (jungle) suddenly heard the cry of a baby. She rushed to the spot and saw to her surprise a child lying on the ground protected by a snake. She took pity on it and nursed it like her own child. The appearance of the snake intimated to her the divine origin of the infant. This proved to be true for the child was an incarnation of Vishnu. As soon as the Raja of Travancore heard of the wonderful event, he built a shrine on the spot where the baby had been found and dedicated it to Padmanabha. The Pulayas round Trivandrum assert to this day that, in former times, a Pulaya King ruled and had his castle not far from the present capital of Travancore. The following story is also current among them. The Pulayas got from the God Siva, a boon, with spade and axe to clear forests, own lands and cultivate them. When other people took possession of them, they were advised to work under them". (L.K.A. Iyer, The Cochin Tribes and Castes, I, 1909, 88-89).

The Pulayans and the Cherumans interviewed are unaware of any of the legends given above. However the Pulayans/Cheramars interviewed at Edaicode village claim that they are called Cheramar because they came from Cheranad. The Pulayans refer to themselves as Pulayans and other caste people refer to them by the same name. Cherumans also refer to themselves as Cherumans and are addressed as such by others.

II. Distribution and population trend

The population trend among the Pulayans and Cherumaans for the years 1901-61 in Madras State and its variations during the various Censuses have been given below :—

Details	POPULATION IN						VARIATION BETWEEN						
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1961	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1901-61	1931-61	1941-61
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Cheruman	269	606	788	1010	..	1884	+377	+182	+222	..	+1615	+874	..
Pulayan or Cheramar	1442	2874	425	39	208	907	+1432	—2449	—386	+169	—535	+868	+699

In case of Cherumans there is progressive increase in their strength from 1901 onwards which indicates that there was continuous migration of this caste from Kerala to Madras State. But the population of Pulayans show a downward trend during the period 1911-1931. This depletion in strength may perhaps be due to conversion of a large number of them to Christianity. However their strength between the periods 1941 and 1961 shows an increase of 699. This may perhaps be due to the formation of Kanyakumari area as a separate district and its merger with Madras State in 1956 as a result of the Reorganisation of States in that year. Even now the areas where Pulayans dwell in Kanyakumari area adjoin Kerala State.

In Madras State as stated earlier Pulayans are found in the areas of Shencottah Taluk (Tirunelveli District) and in Kanyakumari District. Their strength is 907 (1961 Census). They are found mostly in the Kalkulam and Vilavancode Taluks in the above District. However in the Central District of Kerala they are found in large numbers. Their strength according to 1961 Census is 4,19,815 consisting of 208,789 males and 211,026 females. The strength of the Pulayan/Cheramar taluk-wise in Kanyakumari District and in Shencottah is as shown below :—

Taluk	Total	Males	Females
1. Shencottah	16	5	11
Kanyakumari District—			
2. Agasteeswaram.	34	7	27
3. Kalkulam	20	12	8
4 Thovala	13	5	8
5. Vilavancode	824	414	410
TOTAL .	907	443	464

The concentration of Pulayans is more in Vilavancode taluk which adjoins Trivandrum district of Kerala State.

The population of Cheruman in Madras State, according to 1961 count is 1884 consisting of 980 males and 904 females. The bulk of their population is found in the districts of Nilgiris, Coimbatore and Tirunelveli and it could be seen that these districts border Kerala State. The Cherumans here are mostly migrants from Kerala either in the present generation or in earlier generations. In Kerala, where they are found mostly in Malabar area, their strength is as many as 203,321 (99,610 males and 103,711 females).

The percentage of migrants among Cherumans here is as much as 38.2 as against 22.1 for all the Scheduled Castes in the State. As per 1961 Census their distribution in the districts of Madras State is as follows :—

Sl. No.	Districts	Total Population
1	Madras	1
2	Chingleput	31
3	North Arcot	132
4	Salem	1
5	Coimbatore	550
6	Nilgiris	799
7	Ramanathapuram	43
8	Tirunelveli	277
		1,884

In addition, 96 persons have been returned as Kanakkan which is a subsect of Cheruman. So the total population of Cherumans in Madras State could be taken to be 1980 persons.

As per the sex ratios among the Pulayans and Cherumans of Madras State, they are 1047 females per 1000 males and 922 females per 1000 males respectively. In case of the former (*i.e.* among the Pulayans) females are found to be more than the males. In case of Cherumans the sex ratio is in favour of males. It is also less than the sex ratio of the general population and that of other Scheduled castes belonging to the State which are 992 and 993 respectively.

The distribution of Pulayans and Cherumans broad age-group-wise is as shown below:

Age Groups	PULAYANS				CHERUMANS			
	Total	Males	Females	%	Total	Males	Females	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0—14 4	418	202	216	46.08	696	316	380	36.9
15—44	380	187	193	41.90	935	497	438	49.6
45+.	109	54	55	12.02	253	167	86	13.5

The distribution does not indicate any abnormality in any age-group.

The distribution of the Pulayans and the Cherumans in the rural and urban areas is as shown below :—

Details	Total	Rural	Urban
1. Pulayan or Cherumar . . .	907	881	26
2. Cheruman	1884	798	1,086

In the case of Pulayans only 26 persons reside in the urban area and all the rest in rural areas. Since they are mostly employed as agricultural labourers they are found in considerable numbers in rural areas. But in the case of Cheruman only 42.4% live in the rural areas. Their concentration in the urban areas can be explained by the fact that such areas provide opportunities for getting labour.

III. Physical Characteristics

Quoting Sri L.K.A. Iyer, Thurston has given the following particulars regarding the physical characteristics of the Pulayans and the Cherumans.

"The Cherumans and Pulayans are like the Koragas of South Canara, short of stature and dark skinned. The most important measurements of the Cherumans whom I investigated at Calicut were as follows".

Sex	Stature Cm. Average	Nasal Index Average	Cephalic index Average
Males	157.5	78.1	73.9
Females	147.5	77	74.8

(Thurston II, 1909, 91)

As described above, the Pulayans interviewed are generally short in stature and black in complexion. From the cephalic index data given above, it is clear that the head type of Cheruman or Pulayan is dolicocephalic.

IV. Family, clan, kinship and other analogus divisions

Of the 21 Pulayan households surveyed in Edaicode the size of the households is as shown below in the Table.

Caste	Total No. of House-holds	Single member	2—3 members	4—6 members	7—9 members	10 & above
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pulayan	21	..	6	10	5	..

There are as many as 10 households consisting of 4-6 members which fact indicates that optimum sized simple families constitute the basic social structure among them. Among the Cherumans also simple families are the general norm and all the families interviewed at Gudalur in Nilgiris are composed of 4 to 6 members each. In the case of Pulayans, descent and lineage are reckoned through male line. The residence is patrilocal as the wife soon after marriage moves to her husband's place. Though the Pulayans do not have much property to inherit succession of property generally goes by male line. Among the Cherumans of Gudalur also descent and lineage are reckoned through male line. Residence is patrilocal and they follow Makkathayam law of succession. Male members inherit the property in a family.

There are several sub-divisions among the Cherumans. The main divisions among them are Kanakka Cherumans, Pulaya Cherumans, Eralans, Koodans and Rolans. The Cherumans of Gudalur belong to the Kanakkan sub-division. According to the Census Report of 1891 "The total number of sub-divisions returned is 39 of which the most important are Kanakkan, Pulacheruman, Kudan and Rolan. Kanakkan and Pula Cheruman are found in all the southern taluks, Kudan almost wholly in Walluvanad, Rolan in Ernad and Walluvanad and Eralan in Palghat and Walluvanad. I understand that there are no true sub-divisions among the Cherumans of North Malabar. (Census of India, 1891, M. A. Stuart, XIII, 249). The Pulayans at Edaicode are divided into two or three sub-divisions. Each division consists of a number of exogamous clans and hence the marriage of a man within his own clan is tabooed. The various clans are named after animals, trees and other inanimate objects. The children

inherit the clan of their mother. Some of the clan names found in Edaicode are as follows :—

1. Panni . . . . . Pig
2. Manickam . . . . . a precious stone
3. Panai . . . . . Palmyrah tree
4. Velai . . . . . bund
5. Venkarai . . . . . Pertaining to land
6. Veli . . . . . land
7. Thatchal etc. . . . . .

In the Madras District Gazetteer 'Malabar and Anjengo' following account on the various sub-divisions among the Cherumans or Pulayans is found: "They are said to be divided into 39 divisions, the more important of which are the Kanakka Cherumans or Kanakkans, the Pula Cherumans or Pulayans, the Era Cherumans or Eralans, the Roli Cherumans or Rolans and the Kudans. Whether these sub-divisions should be treated as separate castes or not it is hardly possible to determine, some of them atleast are endogamous groups and some are still further sub-divided. The Era Cherumans and Kanakkans who are found only in the southern taluks of the district appear to be divided into exogamous groups called Kuttans many of which seem to be named after the masters whom they serve : in some marriage is forbidden between relations on the mothers' side". (Madras District Gazetteer, Malabar and Anjengo, By C. A. INNES, I.C.S., Madras-I, 1908, 133).

The Kanakka Cherumans of Gudalur however are not divided into exogamous septs for the purpose of marriage alliance. Among them a bride is always taken from an unrelated family. The cross cousin marriage which is a universal practice in Kerala and Madras is absent. This practice to a great extent obviates the necessity for division of the community into exogamous septs.

V. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments and other material objects

The Cherumans in Gudalur area are found to live in isolated places, away from the dwellings of other caste people. Their houses are situated in all sorts of places, near paddy fields, road-margins, bus-stops etc. They pitch their houses on Government porambоke (waste) lands, if any such land is available or in a corner of a cultivating field with the permission of the owner. A few are regularly attached with the land-owning cultivators. They desire to live close to the work spot in which they work. Their

houses are mostly temporary ones which can be pulled out when they migrate from one place to another in search of work. Their huts are small and rectangular in shape. They erect four poles and construct a thatched roof over it. The sides are screened with gunny bags or with old tarpauline. A few of them have attempted to put up mud walls instead of the screens. The thatch may consist mostly of paddy straw which they could get locally from the paddy cultivators. A few of them who own one or two cattle have constructed houses in such a way as to have two apartments. While one portion of the hut is used for living, the other apartment is used for tethering the cattle. The flooring is mud plastered and looks mostly dirty and damp. In Gudalur area the Cherumans are not found to live in concentration in any one place. They live in groups of two to three houses. They may even live in lonely houses in farms and paddy fields. Those who work in plantation estates live in the low roofed houses provided by the estate owners.

The huts of the Pulayans in Edaicode village are situated by the side of a road. Facing the road they are constructed in a row without space in between two huts. The land on which they have now built the houses is a waste land belonging to the Government and they are under threat of eviction. The Harijan Welfare Department has however acquired a piece of land closely for providing them with house sites. All their houses are thatched ones. Five, out of the 16 houses here are built with unburnt bricks. The remaining 11 are mud walled. The material used for thatching is cocoanut leaves. Almost all the houses have front open pials. The inner room is used mostly for keeping their grains and other valuable articles like vessels, implements etc. Cooking is done inside the room. The flooring of the houses is mud plastered and smeared with cow-dung paste. There is one well found in their hamlet which forms the main source of drinking water to them and to a few Nadar families in the area.

The habitations of Cherumans and Pulayans have been described by Thurston as follows: "The home of the Cheruman is called a Chala or hut which has a thatched roof of grass and palm-leaves resembling on immense beehive. A big underground cell, with a ceiling of planks forms the granary of the occupants of these huts. The Chief house furniture consists of a pestle and mortar and two or three earthenware pots....." The habitations of the Pulayans of Cochin are thus described by Thurston quoting Mr. Ananthakrishna Iyer. "Their huts are generally called Madams which are put up on the banks of fields, in the middle of rice flats or on trees along their borders, so as to enable them

to watch the crops after the toils of the day. They are discouraged from erecting better huts under the idea that, if settled more comfortably they would be less inclined to move as cultivation required. The Madams are very poor huts, supported on four small posts and thatched with leaves. There is only one room and the floor though slightly raised is very damp during the rainy months. These temporary buildings are removed after the harvest and put up in places where cultivation has to be carried on. All the members of the family sleep together in the same hut. Small temporary huts are sometimes erected which are little better than inverted baskets. These are placed in the rice field while the crop is on the ground and near the stocks while it is being thrashed....." (Thurston, II, 1909, 61-62).

The dress of the Cherumans of Gudalur is typically characteristic of the poor working class people of Malabar. Their men wear a 'lungi' type of cloth round their waist. A few wear torn shorts while some put on a towel over their shoulder. Their women wear white 'mundoos' in the waist. They cover their body with a blouse which is buttoned up in the front. They do not generally put on any upper cloth over the blouse. Young girls wear 'pavadai' (long skirts) and jackets while boys wear shorts and shirts.

The Pulayans of Edaicode could be found mostly in loin clothes or a piece of dhoti wound round their waist. Their trunk is left bare. A few put on over the shoulder a towel which they tie as a headgear when at work. Their women folk tie a mundu round their waiste and put on a jumpor' or blouse over thier body. They do not put on any upper cloth over it. A few of them are found to wear lungis which they call as 'kaili' or 'saramundu'. They prefer coloured cloth because it would not easily exhibit dirt. The children are mostly naked.

The Cherumans do not have any type of ornaments peculiar to them. They wear ornaments made of base metal. Their menfolk do not generally wear any ornaments. Their women wear a few glass or brass bangles in the wrists, small stone studded nose screws, ear-rings and cheap chains or strings of glass beads in their neck. One young woman was found wearing a 'jimiki' (or ornament suspended from the ear lobe) in the ears. No one was found wearing any gold ornament. Most of the Pulayan woman at Edaicode are without any jewels or ornaments worth mentioning. They put on a few glass bangles in their wrists and a cheap chain of some base metal in the neck. They mostly leave their ear-lobes bare. A few only wear some cheap stone studded ear ornaments. Many of them wear cheap nose screws. All the

married women are supposed to wear Thali but many dispense with it. Cheruman and Pulayans pay scant attention to personal decoration. The men are found with cropped hair which they mostly keep unkempt. A few Pulayan are having tufts.

The staple diet of the Cherumans is rice. In places where rice is not available they readily eat millets. In the morning before they go out for work they take rice gruel. For the midday and for the night they eat cooked rice in a solid form along with a sauce. Tea is not prepared in the house either in the morning or in the evening but the bread-winners have the privilege or buying a cup of tea occasionally from the nearest tea-shop. For preparing the sauce they use plenty of pepper and chillies and also a good deal of spices. They are non-vegetarians and the dishes they relish are mutton, fish, crabs and chicken. Costly non-vegetarian dishes are enjoyed only occasionally on any function or festival. The cheapest non-vegetarian food which they resort to often is to catch crabs and eat them. For Cherumans eating of beef is tabooed. They do not also eat rodents. Beef eating Parayans are considered lower in status to them. They have however no objection to eat the flesh of pigs if that is offered to them. Chewing habit is widely prevalent among them.

For the Pulayans of Edaicode also the staple food is rice. They however take large quantities of tapioca which is abundantly grown in Kanyakumari areas. Whenever there is dearth of money, they go in for more tapioca which is cheaper. They cook rice in the shape of thick gruel and take it. They take plenty of fish along with tapioca. When Pulayan men and women go to work in the fields they always insist on getting mid-day meal which may be either in the shape of rice kanji (gruel) or tapioca. Almost all of them are non-vegetarians. They eat mutton, pork and even beef. Like Cheruman of Gudalur they are inveterate betel chewers.

VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic habits etc.

The Pulayans look generally dirty. It is doubtful whether they take bath even once a week. The clothes they wear do not appear to be washed regularly. Even when they wash they do not use soap and the clothes look grey. Their environments are not kept clean. The inside of the houses are nevertheless better. The Pulayans of Edaicode take water for drinking from a well sunk near their place of habitation. They do not appear to be suffering from any epidemic or chronic disease. Their attitude towards modern medicine is encouraging. They avail of the maternity facilities provided at Edaicode village lying 2 miles away from their place of habitation.

VII. Language and literacy

The ancestral language and the mother tongue of the Cherumans is Malayalam. They also know Tamil the regional language of the area where they live and they converse freely in it with their Tamil brothers. The percentage of literacy among them is 20.6. Omitting the agegroups of 0-5, the effective percentage of literacy among them would come to 23.8%. The literacy rates in the districts of Coimbatore, Nilgiris and Tirunelveli are 3.7, 29.4 and 50.6 respectively. The percentage of literacy in Coimbatore district is as low as 3.7 and perhaps the Chreumans there have no educational facilities in their area. The effective percentage of literacy among the people who have returned themselves as Kanakkans is 9.1. The literacy rate of the Cherumans (20.6%) is more than the State's Scheduled Caste literacy rate of 17.20 but less than that for the general population of the State which is 36.39%. The literacy rates of the Cherumans age-group-wise are as follows :—

Sl. No.	Age group	Percentage of literates
1	5—9	14.2
2	10—14	33.9
3	15—19	28.8
4	20—29	24.7
5	30—44	23.8
6	45 and over	20.2

It has to be noted that their levels of literacy in the lower age-groups are lower than the levels obtaining for most of the Scheduled Castes. This indicates that except in Tirunelveli district, the Cherumans in other districts are not coming forward to avail of the educational concessions given by the Government for the benefit of their children. The reason may be either their habit— as are situated far away from the educational institutions or they sent their children to do agricultural labour as soon as they advance in age instead of sending them to schools.

The mother tongue of the Pulayans in Edaicode is also Malayalam. They are bilingualists as they know Tamil also and converse freely in that language. Their literacy rate comes to 33.5%. All the Pulayans found in Shencottah are illiterates. Pulayans literacy rate of 33.5% in Kanyakumari District is less than the rate for the Scheduled Castes of the district which is 42.74% and that for the general population which is 56.51. They have among them 8 males and 8 females who have passed matriculation and above. The percentage of literates among the various age-groups is as follows :

Age group	Percentage
5—9	58.3
10—14	70.3
15—19	35.9
20—29	33.3
30—44	26.1
45 & above	14.7

The percentage in the age-group 10-14 is very high indicating the awareness on the part of the parents to educate the present younger generation. In a population of 107 in Edaicode 30 are literates. The Pulayans express no difficulty in sending their children to schools where they stay, they get free midday meals.

VIII. Economic Life

The Cherumans or Pulayans/Cheramars are traditionally agricultural serfs. Though they were held as slaves by the landlords in olden days, bonded labour system is no longer in vogue now. However agricultural labour continues to be their main source of livelihood and they are always attached to their landlords but not as slaves. Besides agriculture the Cherumans of Madras State are engaged in other variegated unskilled occupations. They are generally hard working and adapt themselves to work in different occupations. The workers among them form 55.8% which is slightly higher than the level obtaining for the Scheduled Castes of the State. The female workers among them form 33.8% which is less than that obtaining for Scheduled Caste population of the State which is 41.5%. The percentage dis-

tribution of the workers in the various industrial categories is as follows:

Sl. No.	Occupation	Rate of participation (%)
1.	Cultivation	1.2
2.	Agricultural labour	20.2
3.	Mining, quarrying and plantation labour	33.9
4.	Household Industry	0.9
5.	Manufacturing	7.5
6.	Construction	0.5
7.	Trade & Commerce	2.5
8.	Transport, Storage and Communication	0.9
9.	Other sources.	32.4

The number of Cherumars participating in specific occupations is as shown below:

Sl. No.	Occupation	Total	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Plantation labour	305	189	176
2	Unskilled General Labour.	313	184	129
3	Agricultural labour.	212	140	72
4	Forest workers	52	52	..
5	Wood cutters	34	34	..

In Coimbatore and Nilgiris districts many of them are employed as plantation labourers. In Tirunelveli and North Arcot some of them are employed as forest workers and as wood-cutters and sawyers. Very few among them are engaged in cultivation. This is because they do not own lands. One or two persons in Gudalur are employed as sweepers in the Panchayat. They generally do not condescend to work as scavengers and sweepers in towns.

The Pulayans/Cherumans are also agricultural serfs. From 1961 Census it is seen that the bulk of them are employed as agricultural labourers. Out of the population of 907 in Kanyakumari district, 388 are workers. Of these, 15 are engaged in cultivation. Very few only among them own lands and that too tiny extents. 189 among them are engaged as agricultural labourers and another 117 as general labourers without any specific classification. A few among them know weaving and they are engaged in producing coarse handloom cloths.

There are 62 workers among the Pulayans interviewed at Edaicode. Out of the 62, 61 are agricultural labourers. One is engaged in weaving handloom cloth. Those who go for agricultural labour go mostly for doing earth work in the field in which tapioca is raised. They are good at forming ridges and bunds. They use for this purpose spades with long handles. Whenever they go out for work they carry the spades with them lest they may not be entertained by any one. The spades are fitted with long handles and as such they need not bend much while employing them when working. As wages they get Rs. 1.50 plus a mid-day meal. They are mostly under employed getting work not even for half the number of days in a year. The womenfolk collect the green grass from the fields and sell them in the villages as feed for cattle. A head load of green grass may be sold for about 30 to 40 paise. The traditional landlord versus labourer relationship has undergone considerable changes now. Though the traditional loyalty of the Pulayan labourers towards their landlords remains more or less the same, the bonded system of labour has been completely replaced by casual labour. In olden days the Pulaya families were attached to higher castes like Nairs. They were to do all the agricultural operations for which they got remuneration in kind or cash. They were also entitled for certain presents during certain occasions. They used to stay in the compound owned by the landlord. On his turn the landlord was entitled for certain conventional duties on certain occasions. Now the Pulayans get their due wages for their work though a few of them are attached to their landlords in the sense that they have their huts constructed in the Thopes belonging to their masters.

The income pattern of the Pulayan household shows that 10 out of the 21 households come in the income group of Rs. 25 or less, 9 in the income group of Rs. 26.50 and only 2 in the income group of Rs. 51-75. Their expenditure pattern is like this: The expenditure on food forms 66.7%. On dress they spend 10.3%, and on smoking and chewing, nearly 6%. All the 21 households in Edaicode are indebted. The average indebtedness per household comes to Rs. 101.19. They generally borrow from the Nairs and other land-owners as advance and they repay it working in their fields for wages later. The main cause of their debts is the expenditure on food incurred by them when they are under employed.

IX. Life Cycle

The Cherumans observe pollution in case of birth of a child which takes place within the house. In urban areas they go to the hospital for deliveries. In other places elderly female members extend maternity assistance. Delivery entails pollution for 28 days. The name giving ceremony takes place on the 28th day. On that day the child is named by the eldest member of the family and 'Araingnan' thread is tied round the wrist of the child. When the child completes two or three years it is taken to a temple where earboring and tonsuring ceremonies are held. The Cherumans of Gudalur go to the Kodingallur Bhagavathi temple for the above ceremonies.

The pulayans of Edaicode observe birth pollution for 10 days. They do not perform any elaborate ceremonies when the mother and the child are taken home. Some elderly women in the community help the delivering mother and for this she is given a fee of Re. 1. Thurston quoting Iyer gives the following account on the birth of a child among the Pulayans of Cochin:

"When a young woman is about to give birth to a child, she is lodged in a small hut near her dwelling and is attended by her, mother and the baby are bathed. The woman is purified by a bath on the seventh day. The woman who has acted as midwife draws seven lines on the ground at intervals of two feet from one another and spread over them aloe leaves torn to shreds. Then with burning sticks in the hand, the mother with the baby goes seven times over the leaves backwards and forwards and is purified. For these seven days the father should not eat anything made of rice. He lives on toddy, fruits and other things. The mother remains with her baby in the hut for sixteen days when

she is purified by a bath so as to be free from pollution after which she goes to the main hut. . . . Among the Cherumans of Palghat the pollution lasts for 10 days". (Thurston, II, 1909, 74). According to the Census Report of 1891, among the Cheruman or Pulayan the birth pollution is as described below: "After child birth the females are regarded as impure for 28 days and in extreme north for 42 days". While the Cherumans of Gudalur observe Birth pollution for 28 days, the Pulayans/Cheramars of Kanyakumari observe it for 10 days like the Pulayans of Palghat.

Among the Cherumans of Gudalur when a girl attains puberty she is kept separately for 14 days and given a bath. On the 14th day she is taken back to the house. On this occasion the maternal uncle makes some presents in the shape of clothes and jewels. The puberty ceremony is celebrated on a very simple scale. The Cherumans observe pollution for three or four days during the monthly menstruation period.

In case of Pulayans of Edaicode when a girl attains puberty she is asked to sit in corner of the pial in the house. A separate pollution hut is not constructed for the purpose. After a bath she is given an egg and gingelly oil. Pollution is observed for 17 days. She is given a bath on the 5th, 9th and 11th days. On the 17th day pollution is completely terminated in an informal ceremony. On this day the close relatives are invited and a feast is given. The maternal uncle presents some clothes to the girl.

The marriage ceremonies among the Cherumans are also simple. The initiative for marriage should come from the groom's side. The boy's parents and their relatives visit the girl's house many times before consent is obtained. During all these occasions they have to carry enough rice and provisions for getting themselves fed by the girl's parents. When consent is obtained a day is fixed for betrothal. Their marriages are celebrated in the bride's house. Thalikkattu-Kalyanam is common among Kanakka Cherumans. Marriage by negotiation is common among them. The traditional bride price among the Kanakka Cherumans is between Rs. 250 to 325. In addition to this the groom has to present a Mundu and a jacket to the bride. A feast is given to all the assembled guests on the second day in the groom's house. Generally no feast is given in the bride's house on the marriage day. The normal age of marriage of a male is between 25 to 27 years and that of a female between 16 to 18 years. Cherumans allow divorces for reasons like adultery and incompatibility of temperament etc. Widow marriages are freely resorted to, unless the widow is very old. In case a divorce is granted, the husband

gets back the bride price paid by him. The children, if any, remain with the father. The distribution of the Cheruman population in Madras State in marital status categories is as follows:

Sl. No.	Marital Status	Percentage of Males	Females
1.	Never married	44.9	45.0
2.	Married	52.0	47.6
3.	Widowed	2.0	6·0
4.	Divorced or separated	1.0	1.4

Late marriages are not uncommon among them.

The marital status of the Cherumans age-groups according to 1961 Census is given below:

Age-group (in years)	Total		Never Married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated		Unspecified Status	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
0—14 .	316	380	315	376	1	4	..	..	..	..	..	..
15—44 .	497	438	115	31	363	377	12	18	7	12	..	..
45+ .	167	86	10	..	146	49	8	36	3	1	..	..
TOTAL .	980	904	440	407	510	430	20	54	10	13	..	..

The marriage ceremony among the Pulayans of Kanyakumari is more or less similar to that found among the Cherumans. In fixing an alliance the maternal uncle of the boy plays an important role. Boys get married when they are at least 25 years and the age of marriage for girls is 18. Monogamy is the normal type of marriage and the mode of selection of a mate is mostly by negotiation. The preferred alliances are maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter and as such consanguineous marriages are common among them. For marriage purposes the whole community acts as an endogamous unit.

Among the Pulayans actual marriage takes place in the bride's house. Marriage is celebrated on an auspicious day which is mostly a Thursday. The tabooed months in a year for marriage are 'Thai' (January-February) and 'Adi' (July and August). The groom's party would arrive on the previous day with a 'Mundu' and a blouse piece. On the marriage day some elderly member in the community acts as the priest or the Guru from Neyyar is invited to officiate. The guests invited sit in a pandal specially erected in front of the house. The groom presents the Mundu to the girl. Afterwards he also ties a Thali round her neck. The shape of the "Thali" worn by them is round and rectangular in shape which they call as 'Sangu Thali'. The guests are entertained to a vegetarian feast and in the evening the couple leave for the groom's place. The expenditure for a marriage never exceeds Rs. 100/-. Bride price is paid by the Pulayans and the rate is reported to be Rs. 14/-. A some sort of bridegroom price has been referred to by Sri L.K.A. Iyer which is not in vogue now.

The Pulayans freely allow divorce on grounds of adultery, Barrenness and incompatibility. Widow remarriages and inter-caste marriages are common among them. In Edaicdoe village, out of the 17 marriages involved among the males, only one has resulted in divorce and three broke up due to death of the wives. In choosing a girl for marriage the Pulayans are not generally guided by considerations of consanguinity. Out of 22 marriages among the persons interviewed, in 17 cases girls were taken from unrelated families, three cases related to marrying maternal uncle's daughters and two to paternal aunt's daughters. Since a man

inherits the clan of his mother, marriage with sister's daughter is prohibited. One case of Polygamy was noticed in Edaicode. Polyandry is not found among them. The distribution of the Pulayans in marital status categories is as follows:

Sl. No.	Marital Status	Percentage of	
		Males	Females
1	Never married	62.3	53.7
2	Married	34.1	35.8
3	Widowed	2.7	7.9
4	Divorced or separated	0.9	2.6

Their marital status age-group-wise according to 1961 Census is as given below:

Age-group	Total		Never Married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated		Unspecified status	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
0—14	202	216	202	212	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..
15—44	187	193	74	37	106	139	5	8	2	9	..	..
45 +	54	55	..	..	45	23	7	29	2	3	..	..
Total	443	464	276	249	151	166	12	37	4	12	..	..

Child marriage is absent among them and late marriage in both sexes is not uncommon. In case of inter-caste marriages the husband and wife pursue their respective religions without any reservations and lead a harmonious life.

The Cherumans generally bury their dead. Only on rare occasions some elderly dead persons get the honour of disposal by cremation. While burying, the head is placed facing towards the south. Before the dead body is carried to the burial ground the corpse is bathed and applied oil, sandal paste etc. Close relatives put on a new cloth over the body and throw rice on it. They observe pollution for 16 days. On all these days they pray for the dead soul. On the 16th day, the last day obsequies are performed. All relatives are fed and with that the period of pollution ends. The Pulayans bury their dead. The pit is dug in the direction of east-west and the dead body is placed in it, head facing west. Death pollution is observed for 16 days. They do not revisit the burial ground. On the 16th day Pula is performed. This is a simple function in which close relatives are invited and given a feast and an offering done to the soul of the dead.

X. Religion :

Mostly Cherumans belong to Hinduism. They worship the lower pantheon of Hindu Gods like Badrakali, Baghavathi etc. In Gudalur they offer worship to Kodungallur Bhagavathi. They also worship the souls of the dead ancestors as family dieties and make offering to them once in a year. They observe festivals such as Onam, Vishu, Utcharal, Deepavali etc. and the pattern of celebration is similar to that found among the other castemen of the region. According to 1961 Census all the Cherumans in Madras State have returned themselves as Hindus. It is not known whether Cheruman Christians exist in Madras State.

The Pulayans of Edaicode report that they worship Murugar and Iyappan but in reality they are demon worshippers. Though they have no temple in Edaicode they go to nearby places and offer their worship to Baghavathi Amman, Badrakali Amman etc. Commenting on the religion of the Pulayans of South Travancore, Iyer says that "they worship Mallan, Kareonkali, Mantiramurthi, Badhrakali and Anchu Thampuran. They have no temples. They instal their dieties in a shed called the *kkathu.* Each of them is represented by a stone..... The southern Pulayas worship demons and evil spirits of deceased ancestors. . . . Madan and Panchavs are the most popular deities." (Tribes and Castes of Travancore, L.A.K. Iyer, 11, 161-67).

All the Pulayans enumerated in 1961 Census are Hindus. But a sizable member among the 907 persons have been found to come within the Christian fold. Strictly speaking conversion to Christianity is going on for a long time. But of late, a reverse trend is noticed among the converted Christian Cherumans. In-former days many of the Pulayans preferred to join the Christian faith but now it is seen that many of them are trying to return to Hindufold because of the availability of larger concessions towards their uplift. In this respect they are helped by one Sri-Vivekananda Swami of the Ayinthaya Saiva Sangam, Radhakrishna-puram of Neyyar in Kalkulam Taluk who issues a certificate per-mitting their readmissions to Hindu religion. The inter-relation-ship of the converts and non-converts is cordial. In fact in Edaicode there are many families wherein the husband and the wife belong to two different religions and each pursued his or her own religous life without the interference of the other. The marriage ceremonies etc. in such families take place both on Christian and Hindu pattern. The only distinction between the Christian and Hindu Cherumans is in the name assumed by them. The Christian folk prefer to call themselves as Cherumans while their Hindu counterparts prefer to be addressed as Pulayans.

XI. LEISURE AND RECREATION :

The Pulayan/Cheruman are extremely poor to have any kind of recreation. They are mostly under employed and the wages for their seasonal labour are also very meagre. They spend their leisure time which is available in abundance in idling and gossip-ping. The housewives spend their time in maintaining the families and fondling the children.

XII. INTER COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP :

In Malabar untouchability is practised towards Cherumans and they occupy a very low position in the caste hierarchy. Here in Madras State however they consider themselves a little superior to the Parayans and the Chakkilians. They do not interdine with them. This superiority is assumed by them because they do not eat beef. As such we can place the Cherumans above the Chakki-liyan, and Parayan in the social scale.

Dealing with the social position of Cherumans in the caste hierarchy J. H. Hutton says "Thus if a Cheruman or Pulayan be touched by a Paraiyan he is defiled and must wash his head and pray". As regards the position of Cherumans towards the higher caste J. H. Hutton says, "according to Barbosa a Nayar woman touched by a Pulayan is outcast for life and thinks only of leaving

her home for fear of polluting her family..... In south India many castes are regarded as polluting by proximity and are not allowed to approach within certain distances of Hindu temples, so much is this the case that common expressions of spatial measurements are or were Tiyapad or Cherumapad etc. indicating a distance equivalent to that within which a Tiyan or Cheruman as the case may be of course may not approach a man of high caste....., a Pulayan (cultivator and untouchable) must remain 3 or 4 paces farther. Cheruman must keep, 32 feet from Iravan". (Caste in India, J. H. Hutton, 1951, 78-80) Following is the account relating to the social status of Cherumans found in the Madras District Gazetteer" "Malabar and Anjengo". "They pollute and high castes at a distance of 64' and it is proper for them when addressing superiors to call themselves slaves (adiyan) and to refer to their rice as chaff etc." (Madras District Gazetteer, 'Malabar and Anjenga', 1908, 133).

In Edaicode the Pulayans consider themselves superior to Sambava Parayans. The only caste which they consider on par with their status is the Aiyyanava Pulayan. They inter-dine with them and take girls from that community. However, they have not given their girls in marriage to any Aiyyanavar Pulayan. There is one drinking water well in the hamlet where they dwell. In addition to the Pulayans, a few Nadar households take water from it. They have no separate burial ground, but use the one generally allotted to other low castemen in the area. The inter-community relationship between the Pulayans and other castes like Nadar, Pillai, Ezhavars etc. in the region appear to be cordial. As per the Temple Entry proclamation Act issued by the then Highness of Travancore they are allowed to enter all the Hindu temples in the area. As already reported the relationship between the Christian Pulayans and their Hindu brotheren is also cordial.

XIII. STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL CONTROL, PRESTIGE AND LEADERSHIP :

Both among the Cherumans of Gudalur and pulayans of Edaicode there is no caste organisation to effect any social control over their caste men. The Cherumans are dispersed and scattered in their area and no one among them has assumed the leadership of the community. If there is any dispute or a matter to be discussed among them, all the male elders of the locality with a leader, not necessarily belonging to their community, sit together and dispose of the matter. Cases like divorces, petty quarrels etc. are disposed of by such an assembly of elderly persons. In Edaicode also a similar assembly of persons settle and decide matters of social discipline.

XIV. SOCIAL REFORM AND WELFARE :

In the Travancore Census Report of 1931, there is a reference to the existence of an organisation among the Pulayans which was formed by them with the object of self-protection and self improvement. It runs as follows: "The first centre of their activity was Neyyanttinkara Taluk. As in the case of Ilavas they too had to contend against great opposition from the orthodox Hindus, but there were several prominent men among the higher castes who sympathised with their aspirations and helped them in all possible ways. The Government also evinced interest in their attempts at self improvement and encouraged them by the grant of land at concessional rates and by giving them representation in the Sri Mulan popular assembly. The Sahdhu Jana Paripalana Sangham was formed for the improvement of the condition of the Pulayans in Neyyanttinkara taluk. This was followed by the organisation of Central Travancore Pulaya Samajam about 20 years ago and the Cherumar Mahajana Sangham which includes within its fold both Hindu and Christian Pulayas. This Sangham has been persistently agitating to have the caste name 'Pulayan' changed into 'Cherumar'. Under its auspices more than 700 karayogams (village associations) have been formed and over 120 cooperative societies established in different parts of the country. This Sangham has had the warm support of the Christian missionaries" (Census of India, 1931, Travancore, 1952, XXVIII, 438-439).

Though no such village association is found in Edaicode the Pulayans here are in touch with the association functioning at Neyyar. The 'Guru' from that 'sangam' is invited by them to officiate in their marriage ceremonies. His role in the marriage is significant as he blesses the 'Thali' before the groom ties it around the neck of the bride. As a result of their contact with the Association at Neyyar they are now trying to bring about some sweeping social reforms in their community. One such attempt is to drop their caste title 'Pulayan' in preference to the term 'Cheruman'.

The Cherumans of Gudalur and the Pulayans of Edaicode are in very backward condition. They are mostly underemployed field labourers. Literacy rate among them is also not very encouraging. Their emancipation lies mostly in improving their economic and social spheres of life through a series of welfare measures.

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Extract on "Cheruman" from 'CASTE IN INDIA' Its Nature, Function, and Origins By J. H. HUTTON, G.I.E. M.A., D. Sc. Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge. Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press, pages 78 *to* 80.

Thus contact with a woman during her monthly period, a woman with the tabooed period after child-birth, a man who had lit a funeral pyre and is therefore tainted by death-pollution till purified, or persons in a similar state of ceremonial impurity or taboo, cause pollution and make it incumbent on a Hindu of cast to bathe and wash his clothes before eating or before undertaking any act requiring ceremonial purity. Similar purification is strictly speaking necessary as a result of contact with certain low castes whose traditional occupation, whether actually followed or not, or whose mode of life places them outside the pale of Hindu society. Such castes are those commonly spoken of as outcastes or untouchables. Thus Chamars (they work in cowhide), Dhobis (they wash dirty, particularly menstruously defiled, clothes), Doms (they remove corpses), sweeper castes, and many others who are impure because they eat beef or the flesh of the domestic pig, all pollute a Brahmas by contact. Castes lower than a Brahman are generally speaking less easily defiled, but the principle is the same, and contact with castes or outcastes of this category used to entail early steps to remove the pollution. Thus if a Cheruman, or Pulayan, be touched by a Paraiyan, he is defiled and must wash his head and pray[19]. According to Barbosa a Nayar woman touched by a Pulayan is outcaste for life and thinks only of leaving her home for fear of polluting her family.

As a result of the increase of travelling in public vehicles on the railway or bus routes, pollution of this kind has become so common and its frequent removal so inconvenient that it is no longer treated very seriously by the majority of high caste Hindus. Indeed, some of the lowest castes in Hindu society are more particular than many high ones, a Kuricchan of Malabar plasters his house with cowdung if it is polluted by the entry of a Brahman.[20] This is an extreme case, but Blunt has worked out[21] for the United Provinces a table of which castes regard which as untouchable, which is analogous to the lists already referred to of the varying incidence of taboo in *kachcha* and on *pakka* food. In southern India this principle of untouchability has been carried a good deal further in the observance of what is known as 'distance pollution'.

[19] Buchanan, op. cit. (1870). H. P. 151 (ch. XIII)

[20] Aiyangar, op. cit. p. 91

[21] Caste System, p. 102

The following of a degrading occupation, or membership of a caste traditionally associated with a degrading occupation, is a cause of pollution by contact, so that Mahabrahmans (i.e. 'Great Brahmans'), though Brahmans, are not accorded the respect due to Brahmans, but are regarded as polluting, because they officiate at the cremation of corpses, no less than the Dom who removes the dead bodies. But while in the north of India prejudice or pride may prevent a Rajput who does not lay hand to a plough from dining with a Rajput who does, mere proximity would not pollute him. In southern India, on the other hand, many castes are regarded as polluting by proximity, and are not, allowed to approach within certain distances of Hindu temples; so much is this the case that common expressions of spatial measurement are, or were, *Tiyapad*, *Cherumapad*, etc. indicating a distance equivalent to that within which a Tiya or a Cheruman, as the case may be of course, may not approach a man of high caste. At the same time this spatial measurement must be anything but exact, as not only is the polluting distance less for a Nayar, for instance, than for a brahman, but different standards are mentioned by different authorities. Jonathan Duncan, in his *remarks on the coast of Malabar*,[22] says that a Nayar may approach a Nambudri Brahman, but must not touch him a Tiyah (toddy-drawer) must remain 36 paces off; a Malayan (i.e. Pannan, exorcist basket-maker) must remain 'three or four' paces farther; a Pulayan (cultivator and untouchable) must keep 96 paces from a Brahman. A Tiyan must not come within 12 paces of a Nayar; a Malayan (Panan) must keep 3 or 4 paces farther off, and a Pulayan must still keep his 96 from a Nayar as well as a Brahman. A Panan may appproch but not touch a Tiyan, but a Pulyan must not even approach a Panan. If he wishes to address a man of higher caste, he must stand a far off and 'cry aloud'. If a Pulayan touch a Brahman, the Brahman must at once bathe, read 'much of the divine books', and change his Brahmanical thread. A Nayar, on the other hand, or any other caste polluted by a Pulayan's touch, need only bathe to purify himself. In any case, of course, a Nayar, being a Sudra, has no sacred thread. Francis Day,[23] writing in 1863, says that an Iavan must keep 36 paces from a Brahman and 12 from a Nayar, while a kaniyan (astrologer caste) pollutes a Nambudri Brahman at 24 ft. and a Nayar by touch. Mateer,[24] in 1861, gives 36 paces as the distance within which a Shanan must not approach a Brahman, and 96 as the distance for a Pulayan; from a Nayar a Shanan must keep a distance of 12 paces and a Pulayan 66 paces.

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[22] Asiatick Researches. V (1807), p. 5.

[23] Land of the Permauls. pp. 322, 323

[24] Land of Charity, pp. 32, 46

Wilson,[25] writing some 70 years after Duncan, says that a Nayar must not come within 3 ft. of a Nambudri Brahman, an Ilavan or Shanan (equivalent to, or identical with, Tiyan) within 24 paces, and a Pulayan or other untouchable within 36 paces, while C. A. Innes, in the *Malabar Gazetteer* of 1908, says that artisans must keep about 24 ft. from a Brahman, while a Nayadi (a member of a more or less nomad, outcaste and quasi aboriginal tribe) must keep 74 ft. away. There may naturally, of course, have been some changes during the hundred years covered by these reports. Aiyappan,[26] in 1937, gives a scale of distance pollution for several castes: a Nayar must keep 7 ft. from a Nambudri Brahman, an Iravan (Iravan, Izhuvan, Tiyan) must keep 32, a Cheruman 64 and a Nayadi from 74 to 124. The respective distances between these lower castes are calculated by a simple process of substraction: the Iravan must keep 25 ft. from the Nayar and the Cheruman 32 ft. from the Iravan. The Nayadi when travelling has to avoid not only people of other castes, but dwellings, tanks, temples, and even certain streams when people are bathing in them. 'If a Nayadi touches the water in which men of higher castes are bathing, the water losses its purificatory qualities so long as the Nayadi is in contact with it within the sight of the bathers'. At Vilayur there is a *tintal para* or pollution rock, which marks the limit within which Nayadis may not approach the village. It is three furlongs from there to the nearest Hindu house. An Ernadan must not come within 400 yards of a village or 100 yards of a man of high caste.[27] If a man is polluted by a Nayadi, he must bathe in seven streams and seven tanks and let blood from his little finger. Ulladans and Paraiyans are mutually polluted by each other's approach.

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[25] Op. cit. II. p. 74

[26] Anthropology of the Nayadis, pp. 18 sqq.

[27] The Ernadan are a small jungle tribe of Malabar which is reported to have a remarkable custom by which a man marriage his eldest daughter as his second wife (Thurston, Castes and Tribes, II, p. 217).

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This question of indirect pollution has been treated at some length, since it shows so very clearly how intimate is the association between caste and taboo. There are of course a number of other taboos, similar in nature, which are more or less intimately associated with caste. Menstruation of course renders a woman polluting, but the degree of pollution varies with the caste. The case of the Kudumi woman in Travancore has been mentioned, and she must take care to prevent contamination being carried by her breath, or even by her shadow. Childbirth is no less polluting,[41] but whereas the period of pollution for a Brahman in southern India is ten days, it is eleven or twelve for a Kshatriya or an Ambalavasi, fifteen for a Nayar, twenty-eight for a Kurichan, twenty-eight for a Cheruman in the south but forty-two in the North of Malabar and four months for a Kadar (a hill tribe living by food-collecting in the jungle and showing signs of an admixture of Negrito blood). On the other hand, the social position of a caste is not necessarily an indication of the length of its birth-taboo, as Nayadi and Paniyan observe ten days only. In some of the more primitive castes the labour has to take place in a separate hut, or in a segregated part of the dwelling-house, as in the case of the Vettuvan who dig a hole in one corner and segregate the expectant mother there alone with some water until the cry of the child is heard. In the case of birth pollution all the members of the household are involved for periods which, generally speaking, increase as the social status of the caste descends. In Malabar there is an extension of this pollution to the *tarwad*, that is to say, to all the branches of a joint family who recognise their descent in the female line from a common ancestor, and the extension applies to death pollution as well as to birth pollution.[42]

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[41] Inne op. cit. p. 170.

[42] *Ibid.* p. 103

Extract on "Cheruman" from 'CASTE IN INDIA' Its Nature, Function, and Origins By J. H. HUTTON, G.I.E. M.A., D.Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press. Page 277.

CHERUMAN : A caste of agrestic serfs in part of south Kanara and in Southern Malabar corresponding to, or identical with, Pulayan (q.v.) in northern Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore.

Extract on "Cheruman" from 'CASTE IN INDIA' Its Nature, Function, and Origins By J. H. HUTTON, G.I.E. M.A., D.Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge. Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press. Page 289 *Year* 1951 (*Second addition*).

PULAYAN : A caste of agrestic serfs in the north of Malabar district, in Cochin, and in Travancore, corresponding to the Tamil Paraiyan (q.v.)

Extract on 'CHERUMAN' from 'Note on a Cheruman Skull' Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, Vol. II, No. 1 Anthropology, 1897, by Edgar Thurston, pages 33 to 37.

The Cherumans are a large caste, of low stature, very dark-skinned, and platyrrhinian (with wide nasal skeleton), inhabiting Malabar, where they were formerly agrestic slaves, and now work for the most part as field labourers.

The skull, which forms the subject of the present note, is that of an old man without the lower jaw.

Alveolar process of superior maxilla absorbed Superciliary ridges feebly developed. Serrations of coronal suture between frontal and parietal bones not developed for about 3.6 cm. on each side of the median line; lateral serrations fine. Serrations of sagittal and lambdoid stutures coarse. Parietal eminences very prominent, the skull narrowing gradually from a breadth of 13.1 cm. across these eminences to a maximum breadth of 10.6 cm. across the lateral surfaces of the frontal bone. A small worman bone, 1.5 cm. long and 1 cm. maximum breadth, in the position of the anterior fontanelle at the junction of the coronal and sagittal sutures. A large wormian bone, 2 cm. long and 3 cm. maximum breadth, in the position of the posterior fontanelle at the junction of the sagittal and lambdoid sutures. Axes of orbits nearly horizontal.

Profile of nasal bones concave. Nasal spine large. Antero-posterior arch elevated in parietal region. Horizontal arch prominent in parietal region. Transverse arch somewhat pointed in parietal region.

Max : length from glabella	17.5	cm.
Max : transverse breadth	13.1	cm.
Cephalic index	74.9	
Min : frontal breadth	9.1	cm.
Horizontal circumference	50	cm.

Ant-posterior curve (nasion to basion) :—

Frontals Tape 12.3 cm. Callipers	10.5	cm.
Parietals Tape 14.7 cm. Callipers	12.2	cm.
Occipitals Tape 14 cm. Callipers	10.5	cm.

Basic-nasal length	9.4 cm.
Basic-alveolar length	8.2 cm.
Bizygomatic breadth	12.3 cm.
Nasio-alveolar length	5.1 cm.
Nasal height	4.6 cm.
Nasal breadth	2.4 cm.
Nasal index	54.3 cm.
Orbital breadth	3.9 cm.
Orbital height	2.8 cm.

5 Including Wormian bones

The following averages of the head-measurements of twenty-five living Cheruman men are recorded for comparison, so far as is possible, with those of the single skull :—

	Living subject cm.	Skull cm.
Cephalic length	18·3	17·5
Cephalic breadth	13.5	13.1
Cephalic index	73.9	74.9
Bigoniac	9.9	..
Bizygomatic	12.6	12.3
Maxillo-zygomatic index	79.6	..
Nasal height	4.4	4.6
Nasal breadth	3.4	2.4
Nasal index	78.1	54.3

A character, with which I am very familiar, when measuring all sorts and conditions of Natives of Southern India, and is well marked in the Cheruman skull and skulls of Pariahs, 'Hindus', 'Telugus' and a Brahman in my possession, is the absence of convexity of the segment formed by the posterior portion of the united parietal bones. The result of this absence of convexity is that the back of the head, instead of forming a curve gradually increasing from the top of the head towards the occipital region, as in the European skull figured in plate xi 1, forms a flattened area of considerable length almost at right angles to the base of

the skull as in the 'Hindu' skull represented in place xi. 2. And to the existence of this character is due, in large measure, the short length of head in Irulas, Kongas and Koramans, which is referred to hereafter (p. 50).

Some time ago, when passing through the Museum library, I found a student busily engaged in copying extracts from one of my publications, and sympathetically asked him with what object he was so doing. The uncomplimentary, but innocent, reply came forth : "Unfortunately for us it is one of our text-books". The same fate is presumably destined for the present bulletin, which will, I fear, have to be studied by candidates for the M.A. degree of the Madras University in history, which includes ethnology with special reference to the Indian Peninsula. It is, therefore, not out of place to record (*vide* Tables vi and vii) as a lesson in comparative craniometry, the more important measurements of a series of skulls, the property of the Madras Medical College, which constitute a loan-collection in the anthropological section of the Museum, where they are available for study. The number of the skulls is confessedly small for the purpose of generalisation, but analysis of the measurements, combined with examination of the skulls, will nevertheless not be labour lost. As a guide to the main points which should be observed, the following summary may be of use:—

(a) The greater maximum length and horizontal circumference of the skulls of the Europeans and Jew, as compared with the others.

(b) The brachycephalic character, and consequent high cephalic index of the Mongolian, Andamanese, Cinghalese and Burmese skulls.

(c) The prevailing narrow frontal region of the skulls of the four South Indian classes, Muhammadans, Hindus, Brahman and Cheruman.

(d) The difference between the nasal skeletons of the platyrrhine (broad-nosed) Negro, with high nasal index, and the leptorrhine (narrow-nosed) European.

(e) The marked prognatism of the skulls of Negroes.

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF MEASUREMENTS OF SKULLS

	Maximum length from glabella	Maximum transverse breadth	Cephalic index	Minimum frontal breadth	Horizontal circumference	Nasal height	Nasal breadth	Nasal index
European	19	14.2	74.7	9.9	55	4.7	2.5	53.2
European	18.6	14.6	78.5	9.7	53.5	5.6	2.1	37.5
Jew	19.3	14.9	74.1	10.8	56.3	5.8	2.6	44.8
Muhammadan	18.2	13	71.4	9.2	51.6	5.2	2.6	50
Muhammadan	17.2	13.6	79.1	9.2	49.5	4.8	2.4	50
Muhammadan	17.6	13.5	76.7	8.7	50.2	4.3	2.1	48.8
Tamil Hindu	17.5	12.6	72	9.1	49.7	4.4	2.5	56.8
Tamil Hindu	17.5	13.5	77.1	9.3	51	4.7	2	42.6
Tamil Hindu	17.5	13.1	74.9	9.1	49.8	5.4	2.5	46.3
Tamil Hindu	17.3	12.9	74.6	9.1	50	4.8	2.5	52.1
Tamil Hindu	18	13.4	74.4	10	51.5	4.5	2.6	57.8
Tamil Hindu	18.4	13.9	75.5	9.5	52.8	4.8	2.1	43.8
Tamil Hindu	17.4	13	74.7	9.6	50	5	2.5	50
Brahman	18	13.4	74.4	9.1	51.8	4.9	2.5	51
Cheruman	17.7	13.3	75.1	9.1	49.7	4.5	2.5	55.6
Negro	17.5	13.1	74.9	9.1	50	4.6	2.4	52.2
Negro	17.1	12.9	75.4	9	49.6	4.5	2.4	53.3
Mongolian	17.8	12.9	72.5	9.9	51	4.6	2.8	60.9
Mongolian	17.6	14.3	81.2	9.5	52.1	4.8	2.6	54·2
Andamanese	17.8	14.5	81.5	9.2	52.8	5.2	2.6	50
Cinghalese	16.1	13.4	83.2	8.5	48	4	2.2	55
Burmese	17.4	14.8	85.1	9.9	53	5.2	2.5	48.1
	16.4	14.2	86.6	9.8	51.3	5.4	2.5	46.3

TABLE VII

AVERAGE OF MEASUREMENTS OF SKULLS

	Maximum length from glabella	Maximum transverse breadth	Cephalic index	Minimum frontal breadth	Horizontal circumference	Nasal height	Nasal breadth	Nasal index
2 Europeans	18.8	14.4	76.6	9.8	51.3	5.2	2.3	45.4
1 Jew	19.3	14.9	74.1	10.8	56.3	5.8	2.6	44.8
4 Muhammadans . . .	17.6	13.2	74.8	9.1	50.3	4.7	2.4	51.4
7 Hindus	17.7	13.3	75	9.4	50.1	4.9	2.4	49.1
1 Brahman	17.7	13.3	75	9.1	49.7	4.5	2.5	55.6
1 Cheruman	17.5	13.1	74.9	9.1	50	4.6	2.4	54.3
2 Negroes	17.5	12.9	74	9.5	50.3	4.6	2.6	57.2
2 Mongolians	17.7	14.4	81.4	9.4	52.5	5	2.6	52.1
1 Andamanese . . .	16.1	13.4	83.2	8.5	48	4	2.2	55
1 Cinghalese	17.4	14.8	85.1	9.9	53	5.2	2.5	48.1
1 Burmese	16.4	14.2	86.6	9.8	51.3	5.4	2.5	46.3

Extract on 'CHERUMAN' from Castes And Tribes of Southern India, By EDGAR THURSTON, C. I. E., Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondant Etranger, Societe d'Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia. Assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum—Volume II—C to J Government Press, Madras, 1909 *from pages* 45 *to* 91.

CHERUMAN

The Cherumans or Cherumukkal have been defined as a Malayalam caste of agricultural serfs, and as members of an inferior caste in Malabar, who are, as a rule, toilers attached to the soil. In the Madras Census Report, 1891, it is stated that "this caste is called Cheruman in South Malabar and Pulayan in North Malabar. Even in South Malabar where they are called Cheruman, a large sub-division numbering over 30,000 is called Pula Cheruman. The most important of the sub-divisions returned are Nanakkan, Pula Cheruman, Eralan, Kudan and Rolan. Kanakkan and Pula Cheruman are found in all the southern taluks, Kudan almost wholly in Walluvanad, and Eralan in Palghat and Walluvanad". In the Census Report, 1901, Alan (slave), and Paramban are given as sub-castes of Cheruman.

According to one version, the name Cheruman or Cheramakkal signifies sons of the soil; and, according to another, Cheriamakkal means little children, as Parasurama directed that they should be cared for, and treated as such. The word Pulayan is said to be derived from pula, meaning pollution.

Of the Cherumans, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "They are said to be divided into 39 divisions, the more important of which are the Kanakka cherumans, the Pula Cherumans or Pulayas, the Era Cherumans or Eralans, the Roli Cherumans or Rolans, and the Kudans. Whether these subdivisions should be treated as separate castes or not, it is hardly possible to determine; some of them at least are endogamous groups, and some are still further sub-divided. Thus the Pulayas of Chirakkal are said to be divided into one endogamous and eleven exogamous groups, called Mavadan, Elamanam, Tacchakudiyan, Kundaton, Cheruvulan, Mulattan, Talan, Vannatam, Eramalodiyan, Mullaviriyan, Egudan and Kundon. Some at least of these group names obviously denote differences of occupation. The

Kundotti, or woman of the last group, acts as midwife; and in consequence the group is considered to convey pollution by touch to members of the other groups, and they will neither eat nor marry with those belonging to it. Death or birth pollution is removed by a member of the Mavadan class called Maruttan, who sprinkles cowdung mixed with water on the feet, and milk on the head of the person to be purified. At weddings, the Maruttan receives 32 fanams, the prescribed price of a bride, from the bridegroom, and gives it to the bride's people. The Era Cherumans and Kanakkans, who are found only in the southern taluks of the district, appear to be divided into exogamous groups called Kuttams, many of which seem to be named after the house-name of the masters whom they serve. The Cherumans are almost solegly employed as agricultural labourers and coolies; but they also make mats and baskets."

It is noted* by Mr. L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer that "from traditions current among the Pulayas, it would appear that, once upon a time, they had dominion over several parts of the country. A person called Aikkara Yajaman, whose ancestors were Pulaya kings, is still held in considerable respect by the Pulayas of North Travancare, and acknowledged as their chieftan and lord, while the Aikkaranad in the Kunnethnad taluk still remains to lend colour to the tale. In Trivandrum, on the banks of the Veli lake, is a hill called Pulayanar Kotta, where it is believed that a Pulaya king once ruled. In other places, they are also said to have held away. As a Paraya found at Melkota the image of Selvapillai, as a Savara was originally in possession of the sacred stone which became the idol in the temple of Jaganath, so also is the worship of Padmanabha at Trivandrum intimately connected with a Pulayan. Once a Pulaya woman, who was living with her husband in the Ananthan kadu (jungle), suddenly heard the cry of a baby. She rushed to the spot, and saw to her surprise a child lying on the ground, protected by a snake. She took pity on it, and nursed it like her own child. The appearance of the snake intimated to her the divine origin of the infant. This proved to be true, for the child was an incarnation of Vishnu. As soon as the Raja of Travancore heard of the wonderful event, he built a shrine on the spot where the baby had been found, and dedicated it to Padmanabha. The Pulayas round Trivandrum assert to this day that, in former times, a Pulaya king ruled, and had his castle not far from the present capital of Travancore. The following story is also current among them. The Pulayas got from the god Siva a boon, with spade and axe, to clear forests, own lands, and cultivate them. When other people took possession of them, they were advised to work under them."

*Monograph, Eth. Survey of Cochin, No. 6, 1906.

According to Mr. Logan*, the Cherumans are of two sections, one of which, the Iraya, are of slightly higher social standing than the Pulayan. "As the names denote, the former are permitted to come as far as the caves (ira) of their employers' houses, while the latter name denotes that they convey pollution to all whom they meet or approach". The name Cheruman is supposed to be derived from Cheru, small, the Cheruman being short of stature or from cheras a dam or low-lying rice field. Mr. Logan, however, was of opinion that there is ample evidence that "the Malabar coast at one time constituted the kingdom or Empire of Chera, and the nad or country of Cheranad lying on the coast and inland south-east of Calicut remains to the present day to give a local habitation to the ancient name. Moreover, the name of the great Emperor of Malabar, who is known to every child on the coast as Cheraman Perumal, was undoubtedly the title and not the name of the Emperor, and meant the chief (literally, big man) of the Chera people".

Of the history of slavery in Malabar an admirable account is given by Mr. Logan, from which the following extracts are taken. "In 1792, the year in which British rule commenced, a proclamation was issued against dealing in slaves. In 1819, the principal Collector wrote a report on the condition of the Cherumar, and received orders that the practice of selling slaves for arrears of revenue be immediately discontinued. In 1821, the Court of Directors expressed considerable dissatisfaction at the lack of precise information which had been vouchsafed to them, and said 'We are told that part of the cultivators are held as slaves, that they are attached to the soil, and marketable property'. In 1836, the Government ordered the remission in the Collector's accounts of Rs. 927.13.0, which was the annual revenue from slaves on the Government lands in Malabar, and the Government was at the same time 'pleased to accede to the recommendation in favour of emancipating the salves on the Government lands in Malabar'. In 1841, Mr. E. B. Thomas, the Judge at Calicut, wrote in strong terms a letter to the Sadar Adalat, in which he pointed out that women in some talukas (divisions) fetched higher prices, in order to breed slaves; that the average cost of a young male under ten years was about Rs. 3-8-0, of a female somewhat less; that an infant ten months old was sold in a court auction for Rs. 1-10-6 independent of the price of its mother; and that, in a recent suit, the right to twenty-seven slaves was the 'sole matter of litigation, and was disposed of on its merits'. In a further letter, Mr. Thomas pointed out that the slaves had increased in numbers from 144,000 at the Census, 1835, to 159,000 at the Census, 1842. It was apparently these letters which decided the Board of Directors to send out

*Manual of Malabar.

orders to legislate. And the Government of India passed Act V of 1843, of which the provisions were widely published through Malabar. The Collector explained to the Cherumar that it was in their interest, as well as their duty, to remain with their masters, if kindly treated. He proclaimed that 'the Government will not order a slave who is in the employ of an individual to forsake him and go to the service of another claimant; nor will the Government interefere with the slave's inclination as to where be wishes to work'. And again, 'Any person claiming a slave as Janmam, kanam or panayam, the right of such claim or claims will not be investigated into at any one of the public offices or courts'. In 1852, and again in 1855, the fact that traffic in slaves still continued was brought to the notice of Government, but on full consideration no further measures for the emancipation of the Cherumar were deemed to be necessary. The Cherumar even yet have not realised what public opinion in England would probably have forced down their throats fifty years ago, and there is reason to think that they are still, even now, with their full consent bought and sold and hired out, although, of course, the transaction must be kept secret for fear of the penalties of the Penal Code, which came into force in 1862, and was the real final blow at slavery in India. The slaves, however, as a caste will never understand what real freedom means, until measures are adopted to give them indefeasible rights in the small orchards occupied by them as house-sites". It is noted by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer that "though slavery has been abolished many years ago, the name valliyal (a person receiving valli, i.e. paddy given to a slave) still survives".

By the Penal Code it is enacted that—

Whoever imports, exports, removes, buys sells, or disposes of any person as a slave, or accepts, receives, or detains against his will any person as a slave, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to a fine.

Whoever habitually imports, exports, removes, buys sells, traffics or deals in slaves, shall be punished with transportation for life, or with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, and shall be liable to a fine.

Whoever unlawfully compels any person to labour against the will of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with a fine, or with both.

"Very low indeed," Mr. S. Appadorai Iyer writes,* "is the social position of these miserable beings. When a Cherumar meets

*Calcutta Review, 1900.

a person of superior caste, he must stand at a distance of thirty feet. If he comes within this prohibited distance, his approach is said to cause pollution, which is removed only by bathing in water. A Cherumar cannot approach a Brahman village or temple, or tank. If he does so, purification becomes necessary. Even while using the public road, if he sees his lord and master, he has to leave the ordinary way and walk, it may be in the mud, to avoid his displeasure by accidentally polluting him. To avoid polluting the passer-by, he repeats the unpleasant sound 'O, oh, O—'. (In some places, e.g., Palghat, one may often see a Cheruman with a dirty piece of cloth spread on the roadside, and yelling in a shrill voice 'Ambrane Ambarane, give me some piece, and throw them on the cloth'). His position is intolerable in the Native States of Cochin and Travancore, where Brahman influence is in the ascendant; while in the Palghat taluk the Cherumars cannot, even to this day, enter the bazaar". A melancholy picture has been drawn of the Cherumans tramping along the marshes in mud, often wet up to their waists, to avoid polluting their superiors. In 1904, a Cheruman came within polluting distance of a Nayar, and was struck with a stick. The Cheruman went off and fetched another, whereupon the Nayar ran away. He was, however, pursued by the Cherumans. In defending himself with a spade, the Nayar struck the foremost Cheruman on the head, and killed him*. In another case, a Cheruman, who was the servant of a Mappilla, was fetching grass for his master, when he inadvertently approached some Tiyans, and thereby polluted them. The indignant Tiyans gave not only the Cheruman, but his master also, a sound beating by way of avenging the insult offered to them.

The status of the Pulayas of the Cochin State is thus described by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer. "They abstain from eating food prepared by the Velakkathalavans (barbers), Mannans (washermen), Panans, Vettuvans, Parayans, Nayadis, Ulladans, Malayans, and Kadars. The Pulayas in the southern parts of the State have to stand at a distance of 90 feet from Brahmans and 64 feet from Nayars, and this distance gradually diminishes towards the lower castes. They are polluted by Pula Cherumas, Parayas, Nayadis, and Ulladans. (The Pula Cherumas are said to eat beef, and sell the hides of cattle). The Kanakka Cherumas of the Chittur taluk pollute Era Cherumas and Konga Cherumas by touch, and by approach within a distance of seven or eight feet, and are themselves polluted by Pula Cherumas, Parayas, and Vettuvans, who have to stand at the same distance. Pulayas and Vettuvans bathe when they approach one another, for their status is a point of dispute as to which is superior to the other. When defiled by the touch of a

*Madras Police Report, 1904.

Nayadi, a Cheruman has to bathe in seven tanks, and let a few drops of blood flow from one of his fingers. A Brahman who enters the compound of a Pulayan has to change his holy thread, and take panchagavyan (the five products of the cow) so as to be purified from pollution. The Valluva Pulayan of the Trichur taluk fasts for three days, if he happens to touch a cow that has been delivered of a calf. He lives on toddy and tender cocoanuts. He has also to fast three days after the delivery of his wife." In ordinary conversation in Malabar, such expressions as tiya-pad or Cheruma-pad (that is, the distance at which a Tiyan or Cheruman has to keep) are said to be commonly used*.

By Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar the Cherumans are described† as "a very inferior race, who are regarded merely as agricultural instruments in the hands of the landlords their masters, who supply them with houses on their estates. Their daily maintenance is supplied to them by their masters themselves. Every morning the master's agent summons them to his house, and takes them away to work in the fields, in ploughing, drawing water from wells, and in short doing the whole of the cultivation. In the evening a certain quantity of paddy (unhusked rice) is distributed to them as wages. Both theory and practice, in the great majority of cases, are that they are fed at the master's cost the whole year round, whether they work in the fields or not. But it is very seldom that they can have a holiday, regard being had to the nature of agriculture in Malabar. It is the Cheruma that should plough the land, sow the seed, transplant the seedlings, regulate the flow of water in the fields, uproot the weeds, and see that the crops are not destroyed by animals, or stolen. When the crops ripen, he has to keep watch at night. The sentry house consists of a small oval-shaped portable roof, constructed of palmyra and cocoanut leaves, supported by four posts, across which are tied bamboos, which form the watchman's bed. Wives sometimes accompany their husbands in their watches. When the harvest season approaches, the Cheruman's hands are full. He has to cut the crops, carry them to the barn (kalam), separate the corn from the stalk, and winnow, it. The second crop operations immediately follow, and the Cheruman has to go through all these processes again. It is in the summer season that his work is light, when he is set to prepare vegetable gardens, or some odd job is found for him by his master. The old, infirm, and the children look after their master's cattle. Receiving his daily pittance of paddy, the Cheruman enters his hut, and reserves a portion of it for the purchase of salt, chillies, toddy, tobacco, and dried fish. The other portion is reserves for food. The Cheruman

*Gazetteer of the Malabar district.

†Malabar and its Folk, 1900.

spends the greater part of his wages on toddy. It is a very common sight in Malabar to see a group of Cherumans, including women and children, sitting in front of a toddy shop, the Cheruman transferring the unfinished portion of the toddy to his wife, and the latter to the children. A Cheruman, however, rarely gets intoxicated, or commits crime. No recess is allowed to the Cherumans, except on national holidays and celebrated temple festivals observed in honour of the goddess Bhagavati or Kali, when they are quite free to indulge in drink. On these days, their hire is given in advance. With this they get intoxicated, and go to the poora-paramba or temple premises, where the festival is celebrated, in batches of four, each one tying his hands to another's neck, and reciting every two seconds the peculiar sound:

LALLE LALLE LALLE HO.
LALLE LALLE LALLE HO.

"On the European plantations in the Wynad the Cherumans are in great request, and many are to be seen travelling nowadays without fear in railway carriages on their way to the plantations. A few also work in the gold mines of Mysore".

Like other servile classes, the Cherumans possess special privileges on special occasions. For example, at the chal (furrow) ceremony in Malabar "the master of the house, the cultivating agent, and Cherumans assemble in the barn, a portion of the yard in front of the building is painted with rice-water, and a lighted bell-lamp is placed near at hand with some paddy and rice, and several cups made of the leaves of the Kanniram (*Strychnos nux-vomica*)—as many cups as there are varieties of seed in the barn. Then, placing implicit faith in his gods, and deceased ancestors, the master of the house opens the barn door, followed by the Cheruman with a new painted basket containing the leaf cups. The master then takes a handful of seed from a seedbasket, and fills one of the cups, and the cultivating agent, head Cheruman, and others who are interested in a good harvest, fill the cups till the seeds are exhausted. The basket, with the cups is next taken to the decorated portion of the yard. A new ploughshare is fastened to a new plough, and a pair of cattle are brought on to the scene. Plough, cattle, and basket are all painted with rice-water. A procession proceeds to the fields, on reaching which the head Cheruman lays down the basket, and makes a mound of earth with the spade. To this a little manure is added, and the master throws a handful of seed into it. The cattle are then yoked, and one turn is ploughed by the head Cheruman. Inside this at least seven furrows are made, and the plough is dropped to the right. An offering is made to Ganapathi (the elephant god), and the master throws some seed into a furrow. Next the head Cheruman calls out 'May the gods

on high and the deceased ancestors bless the seed, which has been thrown broadcast, and the cattle which are let loose; the mother, and children of the house, the master, and the slaves, may they also vouchsafe to us a good crop, good sunshine, and good harvest'. A cocoanut is then out on the ploughshare, and from the cut portions several deductions are made. If the hinder part is larger than the front one, the harvest will be moderate. If the cut passes through the eyes of the nut, of if no water is left in the cut portions, certain misfortune is foreboded. The out fragments are then taken with a little water inside them, and a leaf of the tulsi plant (*Ocimum sanctum*) dropped in. If the leaf turns to the right, a prosperous harvest is assured; whereas, if it turns to the left, certain calamity will follow. This ceremonial concluded, there is much shouting, and the names of all the gods may be heard called out in a confused prayer. The party then breaks up, and the unused seeds are divided among the workmen"*. At the ceremony in Malabar, when the transplantation of rice is completed, during which a goat is sacrificed to Muni, the protector of cattle and field labourers, the officiating priest is generally the cultivation agent of the family, who is a Nayar, or sometimes a Cheruman.

In connection with the harvest ceremonial in Cochin, Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer writes as follows. "There are some curious customs connected with the harvest, prevailing among the Pulayas of the southern parts of the State. Before reaping, the Pulaya headman asks his master whether he may begin to reap. With his permission, he faces the East, and puts the sickle to the stalks. The first bundle he reserves for the gods of his master, and the second for those of his castemen. Before thrashing, the same headman takes a few bundles of corn from the sheaf intended for their gods, and sprinkles toddy on them. Another Pulayan does the same for the various reapers, and says, as he does so 'Come, thrashing corn, increase'. This is called filling the thrashing floor, and each man thrashes his own sheaves. When the thrashing is over, the headman puts his master's sheaf in the centre of the floor, and his own at a short distance outside, in order that the two sets of gods may look kindly on them. The headman is privileged to measure the corn sitting with his two assistants, saying 'Come, paddy, increase', as he counts. He also calls out 'Good paddy, one', 'bad paddy, two', and so on until he counts ten. The eleventh is the share for the reaper. He takes a handful, and places it in a basket, half of which falls to him, his assistants and the watchman, while the other half is given away in charity to the poor men that come to the thrashing place. In the northern parts of the State, before reaping, offerings of goats, fowls, and coconuts, are made to Mallan and Muni. The

*Karunakara Menon, Madras Mus. Bull., V. 2, 1906.

Cheruma headman faces east, and applies his sickle to the stalks, reserving the first stalk for the deities above mentioned. The corn is thrashed and measured by one of them, and, as he does so, he says 'Labham' (profit) for one, 'Chetam' (loss) for two, and counts up to ten. The eleventh goes to the share of the reapers. Thus they get one para for every ten paras of corn. The poor people that attend are also given a handful of the grain. After reaping, the members of the castes named in the table below receive a small portion of the corn for their services rendered to the farmers in the course of the months during which cultivation has been carried on:—

Caste	Purpose for which paddy is given	Remuneration
Carpenters .	For making and repairing ploughs etc.	A big bundle of corn
Blacksmiths .	For making sickles, knives and other tools.	Do.
Parayan . .	For lifting and placing the loads of stalks on the heads of the Cherumans, who carry them to the farmyard.	Do.
Washerman or Mannan.	For keeping off birds, insects, etc. from the fields by magic.	Do.
Vilkurup . .	For treating Cherumas during their illness, and for shampooing them.	Do.
Kaniyan or astrologer.	For giving information of the auspicious times for ploughing, sowing, transplanting and reaping, and also of the time for giving rice, vegetables, oil, etc., to the Cherumas during the Onam festival.	Do.

"The Pulayans receive, in return for watching, a small portion of the field near the watchman's rest-hut, which is left unreaped for him. It fetches him a para of paddy.

"The Cherumas who are engaged in reaping get two bundles of corn each for every field. For measuring the corn from the farmyard, a Cheruman gets an edangazry of paddy in addition to his daily wage. Three paras of paddy are set apart for the local village deity. During the month of Karkadakam, the masters give every Cheruman a fowl, some oil, garlic, mustard, anise seeds, pepper, and turmeric. They prepare a decoction of seeds, and boil the flesh of the fowl in it, which they take for three days, during which they are allowed to take rest. Three days' wages are also given in advance".

In Travancore, a festival named Macam is held, of which the following account has been published.* "The Macam (tenth constellation Regulus, which follows Thiru Onam in August), is regarded by Hindus as a day of great festivity. One must enjoy it even at the cost of one's children, so runs an adage. The day is considered to be so lucky that a girl born under the star Regulus is verily born with a silver spoon in her mouth. It was on Macam, some say, that the Devas, to free themselves from the curse they were put under by a certain sage, had to churn the sea of milk to procure ambrosia. Be the cause which led to the celebration what it may, the Hindus of the present day have ever been enthusiastic in its observance; only some of the rude customs connected with it have died out in the course of time, or were put a stop to by Government. Shan fights were, and are still, in some places a feature of the day. Such a sham fight used to be carried on at Pallam until, about a hundred years ago, it was stopped through the intervention of Colonel Munro, the British Resident in Travancore. The place is still called Patanilam (battle field), and the tank, on opposite sides of which the contending parties assembled, Chorakulam (pool of blood). The steel swords and spears, of curious and various shapes, and shields large enough to cover a man, are even now preserved in the local temple. Many lives were lost in these fights, It is not generally known, even to people in these parts, that a sham fight takes place on Macam and the previous day every year at a place called Wezhapra, between the Changanacherry and Ambalapuzha taluks. Three banyan trees mark the place. People, especially Pulayas and Parishs, to the number of many thousands, collect round the outside trees with steel swords, spears, and slings in their hand. A small bund (embankment) separates the two parties. They have to perform certain religious rites near the tree which stands in the middle, and in doing so, make some movements with their swords and spears to the accompaniment of music. If those standing on one side of the bund cross it, a regular fight is the result. In order to avoid such things, without at the same time interfering with their liberty to worship at the spot, the Government this year made all the necessary arrangements. The Police were sent for the purpose. Everything went off smoothly but for one untoward event. The people had been told not to come armed with steel weapons, but with wooden ones. They had to put them down, and were then allowed to go and worship".

Of conversion to Muhammadanism at the present time, a good example is afforded by the Cherumans. "This caste", the Census Superintendent, 1881, writes, "numbered 99,009 in Malabar at the Census of 1871, and, in 1881, is returned as only 64,735. There

*Madras Mail, 1908.

are 40,000 fewer Cherumans than there would have been but for some disturbing influence, and this is very well known to be conversion to Muhammadanism. The honour of Islam once conferred on the Cheruman, he moves at one spring several places higher than that which he originally occupied". "Conversion to Muhammadanism," Mr. Logan writes, "has had a marked effect in freeing the slave caste in Malabar from their former burthens. By conversion a Cheruman obtains a distinct rise in the social scale, and if he is in consequence bullied or beaten, the influence of the whole Muhammadan community comes to his aid". It has been noted* that Cheruman converts to Islam take part in the Moplah (Mappilla) outbreaks, which from time to time disturb the peace of Malabar.

The home of the Cheruman is called a chala or hut, which has a thatched roof of grass and palmleaves resembling an immense bee-hive. A big underground cell, with a ceiling of planks, forms the granary of the occupants of these huts. The chief house furniture consists of a pestle and mortar, and two or three earthenware pots.

The habitations of the Pulayas of Cochin are thus described by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer. "Their huts are generally called madams, which are put up on the banks of fields, in the middle of rice flats, or on trees along their borders, so as to enable them to watch the crops after the toils of the day. They are discouraged from erecting better huts, under the idea that, if settled more comfortably, they would be less inclined to move as cultivation required. The madams are very poor huts, supported on four small posts, and thatched with leaves. The sides are protected with the same kind of leaves. There is only one room, and the floor, though slightly raised, is very damp during the rainy months. These temporary buildings are removed after the harvest, and put up in places where cultivation has to be carried on. All the members of the family sleep together in the same hut. Small temporary huts are sometimes erected, which are little better than inverted baskets. These are placed in the rice field while the crop is on the ground, and near the stacks while it is being thrashed. In the northern parts of the State, the Pulaya huts are made of mud walls, and provided with wooden doors. The roofs are of bamboo framework thatched with palmyrah palm leaves. The floor is raised, and the huts are provided with pyals (raised platforms) on three sides. They have also small compounds (grounds) around them. There is only one room inside, which is the sleeping apartment of the newly married youngstars. The others, I am told, sleep on the verandahs. The

*S. Appadorai Iyer.

utensils consist of a few earthen pots for cooking and keeping water, and a few earthen dishes for taking food. In addition to these, I found a wooden mortar, a few pestles, two pans, two winnowing pans, a fish basket for each woman, a few coconut shells for keeping salt and other things, a few baskets of their own making, in one of which a few dirty clothes were placed, some mats of their own making, a bamboo vessel for measuring corn, and a vessel for containing toddy".

"During the rainy season, the Cherumas in the field wear a few green leaves, especially those of the plantain tree, tied round their waists, and a small cone-shaped cap, made of plantain leaf, is worn on the head. This practice, among the females, has fallen into disuse in Malabar, though it is to some extent still found in the Native States. The Cherumi is provided with the long piece of thick cloth, which she wraps round her waist, and which does not even reach the knees. She does not cover the chest"* The Cheruma females have been described as wearing, when at work in the open, a big oval-shaped handleless umbrella covered with palm leaves, which they place on their back, and which covers the whole of their person in the stooping attitude. The men use, during the rainy season, a short-handled palm-leaf umbrella.

The women are profusely decorated with cheap jewelry of which the following are examples :

1. Lobes of both ears widely dilated by rolled leaden ornaments. Brass, and two glass bead necklets, string necklet with flat brass ornaments, the size of a Venetian sequin, with device as in old Travancore gold coins, with two brass cylinders pendent behind, and tassels of red cotton. Three brass rings on right little finger; two on left ring finger, one brass and two steel bangles on left wrist.

2. Several bead necklets, and a single necklet of many rows of beads. Brass necklet like preceeding, with steel prong and scoop, for removing wax from the ears and picking teeth, tied to one of the necklets. Attached to, and pendent from one necklet, three palm leaf rolls with symbols and Malayalam inscription to act as a charm in driving-away devils. Three ornamental brass bangles on right forearm, two on left. Iron bangle on left wrist. Thin brass ring in helix of each ear. Seventy thin brass rings (alandoti) with heavy brass ornament(adikaya) in dilated lobe of each ear.

*Calcutta Review, 1900.

3. In addition to glass bead necklets, a necklet with heavy heart-shaped brass pendents. String round neck to ward off fever.

4. String necklet with five brass cylinders pendent; five brass bangles on right wrist; six brass and two iron bangles on left wrist.

   Right hand, one copper and five brass rings on middle finger; one iron and three brass rings on little finger.

   Left hand, one copper and five brass rings on middle finger; three brass and two copper rings on ring finger; one brass ring on little finger.

5. Trouser button in helix of left ear.

6. Brass bead necklet with pendent brass ornament with legend "Best superior umbrella made in Japan, made for Fazalbhoy Peeroo Mahomed, Bombay".

A Cheruman, at Calicut, had his hair long and unkempt, as he played the drum at the temple. Another had the hair arranged in four matted plaits, for the cure of disease in performance of a vow. A man who wore a copper cylinder on his loin string, containing a brass strip with mantrams (consecrated formulae) engraved on it, sold it to me for a rupee with the assurance that it would protect me from devils.

Concerning the marriage ceremony of the Cherumans in Malabar, Mr. Appadorai Iyer writes that "the bridegroom's sister is the chief performer. It is she who pays the bride's price, and carries her off. The consent of the parents is required, and is signified by an interchange of visits between the parents of the bride and bridegroom. During these visit, rice-water (conji) is sipped. Before tasting the conji, they drop a fanam (local coin) into the vessel containing it, as a token of assent to the marriage. When the wedding party sets out a large congregation of Cherumans follow, and at intervals indulge in stick play, the women singing in chorus to encourage them 'Let us see, let us see the stick play (vadi tallu), Oh! Cheruman'. The men and women mingle indiscriminately in the dance during the weedding ceremony. On the return to the bridegroom's hut, the bride is expected to weep loudly, and deplore her fate. On entering the bridegroom's hut, she must tread on a pestle placed across the threshold". During the dance, the women have been described as letting down their hair, and dancing with a tolerable amount of rhythmic precision amid vigorous drumming and singing. According to another account, the bridegroom receives from his brother-in-law a kerchief, which the

giver ties round his waist, and a bangle which is placed on his arm. The bride receives a pewter vessel from her brother. Next her cousin ties a kerchief round the groom's forehead, and sticks a betel leaf in it. The bride is then handed over to the bridegroom.

Of the puberty and marriage ceremonies of the Pulayas of Cochin, the following detailed account is given by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer. "When a Pulaya girl comes of age, she is located in a separate hut. Five Vallons (headmen), and the castemen of the kara (settlement) are invited to take part in the performance of the ceremony. A song, called malapattu, is sung for an hour by a Parayan to the accompaniment of drum and pipe. The Parayan gets a para of paddy, and his assistants three annas each. As soon as this is over, seven cocoanuts are broken, and the water thereof is poured over the head of the girl, and the broken halves are distributed among the five Vallons and seven girls who are also invited to be present. Some more water is also poured on the girl's head at the time. She is lodged in a temporary hut for seven days, during which food is served to her at a distance. She is forbidden to go out and play with her friends. On the morning of the seventh day, the Vallons of the kara and the castemen are again invited. The latter bring with them some rice, vegetables, and toddy, to defray the expenses of the feast. At dawn, the mother of the girl gives oil to the seven pulaya maidens, and to her daughter for an oil-bath. They then go to a neighbouring tank (pond) or stream to bathe, and return home. The girl is then neatly dressed, and adorned in her best. Her face is painted yellow, and marked with spots of various colours. She stands before a few parayas, who play on their flute and drum, to caste out the demons, if any, from her body. The girl leaps with frantic movements, if she is possessed by them. In that case, they transfer them to a tree close by driving a nail into the trunk after due offerings. If she is not possessed, she remains unmoved, and the Parayas bring the music to a close. The girl is again bathed with her companions, who are all treated to a dinner. The ceremony then comes to an end with a feast to the castemen. The ceremony described is performed by the Valluva Pulayas in the southern parts, near and around the suburbs of Cochin, but is unknown among other sub-tribes elsewhere. The devil-driving by the Parayas is not attended to. Nor is a temporary hut erected for the girl to be lodged in. She is allowed to remain in a corner of the hut, but is not permitted to touch others. She is bathed on the seventh day, and the castemen, friends and relations, are invited to a feast.

"Marriage is prohibited among members of the same koottam (family group). In the Chittur taluk, members of the same village do not intermarry, for they believe that their ancestors may have

been the slaves of some local landlord, and, as such, the descendants of the same parents. A young man may marry among the relations of his father, but not among those of his mother. In the Palghat taluk, the Kanakka Cherumas pride themselves on the fact that they avoid girls within seven degrees of relationship. The marriage customs vary according to the sub-division. In the southern parts of the State, Pulaya girls are married before puberty, while in other places, among the Kanakka Cherumas and other sub-tribes, they are married both before and after puberty. In the former case, when a girl has not been married before puberty, she is regarded as having become polluted, and stigmatised as a woman whose age is known. Her parents and uncles lose all claim upon her. They formally drive her out of the hut, and proceed to purify it by sprinkling water mixed with cow-dung both inside and outside, and also with sand. She is thus turned out of caste. She was, in former times, handed over to the Vallon, who either married her to his own son, or sold her to a slave master. If a girl is too poor to be married before puberty, the castemen of the kara raise a subscription, and marry her to one of themselves.

"When a young Pulayan wishes to marry, he applies to his master, who is bound to defray the expenses. He gives seven fanams* to the bride's master, one fanam worth of cloth to the bride-elect, and about ten fanams for the marriage feast. In all, his expenses amount to ten rupees. The ceremony consists in tying a ring attached to a thread round the neck of the bride. This is provided by her parents. When he becomes tired of his wife, he may dispose of her to any other person who will pay the expenses incurred at the marriage. There are even now places where husband and wife serve different masters, but more frequently they serve the same master. The eldest male child belongs to the master of the mother. The rest of the family remain with the mother while young but, being the property of the owner, revert to him when of an age to be useful. She also follows them, in the event of her becoming a widow. In some places, a man brings a woman to his master, and says that he wishes to keep her as his wife. She receives her allowance of rice, but may leave her husband as she likes, and is not particular in changing one spouse for another. In other places, the marriage ceremonies of the Era Cherumas are more formal. The bridegroom's party goes to the bride's hut, and presents rice and betel leaf to the head of the family, and asks for the bride. Consent is indicated by the bride's brother placing some rice and cloth before the assembly, and throwing rice on the headman of the caste, who is present. On the appointed day, the bridegroom goes to the hut with two companions, and present the girl

*One fanam=four annas eight pies.

with cloth and twelve fanams. From that day he is regarded as her husband, and cohabitation begins at once. But the bride cannot accompany him until the ceremony called mangalam is performed. The bridegroom's party goes in procession to the bride's hut, where a feast awaits them. The man gives sweetmeats to the girl's brother The caste priest recites the family history of the two persons, and the names of their masters and deities. They are then seated before a lamp and a heap of rice in a pandal (booth). One of the assembly gets up, and delivers a speech on the duties of married life, touching on the evils of theft, cheating, adultery, and so forth. Rice is thrown on the heads of the couple, and the man prostrates himself at the feet of the elders. Next day, rice is again thrown on their heads. Then the party assembled makes presents to the pair, a part of which goes to the priest, and a part to the master of the husband. Divorce is very easy, but the money paid must be returned to the woman.

"In the Ooragam proverthy of the Trichur taluk, I find that the marriage among the Pulayas of that locality and the neighbouring villages is a rude form of sambandham (alliance), somewhat similar to that which prevails among the Nayars, whose slaves a large majority of them are. The husband, if he may be so called, goes to the woman's hut with his wages, to stay therein with her for the night. They may serve under different masters. A somewhat similar custom prevails among the Pula Cherumas of the Trichur taluk. The connection is called Merungu Kooduka, which means to tame, or to associate with.

"A young man, who wishes to marry, goes to the parents of the young woman, and asks their consent to associate with their daughter. If they approve, he goes to her at night as often as he likes. The woman seldom comes to the husband's hut to stay with him, except with the permission of the thamar (landlord) on auspicious occasions. They are at liberty to separate at their will and pleasure, and the children born of the union belong to the mother's landlord. Among the Kanakka Cherumas in the northern parts of the State, the following marital relations are in force. When a young man chooses a girl the preliminary arrangements are made in her hut, in the presence of her parents, relations, and the castemen of the village. The auspicious day is fixed, and a sum of five tanams is paid as the bride's price. The members assembled are treated to a dinner. A similar entertainment is held at the bridegroom's hut to the bride's parents, uncles, and others who come to see the bridegroom. On the morning of the day fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom and his party go to the bride's hut, where they are welcomed, and seated on mats in a small pandal put up

in front of the hut. A muri (piece of cloth), and two small mundus (cloths) are the marriage presents to the bride. A vessel full of paddy (unhusked rice), a lighted lamp, and a cocoanut are placed in a conspicuous place therein. The bride is taken to the booth, and seated by the side of the bridegroom. Before she enters it, she goes seven times round it, with seven virgins before her. With prayers to their gods for blessings on the couple, the tali (marriage badge) is tied round the bride's neck. The bridegroom's sister completes the knot. By a strange custom, the bride's mother does not approach the bridegroom, lest it should cause a ceremonial pollution. The ceremony is brought to a close with a feast to those assembled. Toddy is an indispensable item of the feast. During the night, they amuse themselves by dancing a kind of wild dance, in which both men and women joyfully take part. After this, the bridegroom goes along to his own hut, along with his wife and his party, where also they indulge in a feast. After a week, two persons from the bride's hut come to invite the married couple. The bride and bridegroom stay at the bride's hut for a few days, and cannot return to his hut unless an entertainment, called Vathal Choru, is given him.

"The marriage customs of the Valluva Pulayas in the southern parts of the State, especially in the Cochin and Kanayannur taluks, are more formal. The average of a young man for marriage is between fifteen and twenty, while that of a girl is between ten and twelve. Before a young Pulayan thinks of marriage, he has to contract a formal and voluntary friendship with another young Pulayan of the same age and locality. If he is not sociably inclined, his father selects one for him from a Pulaya of the same or higher status, but not of the same illam (family group). If the two parents agree among themselves, they meet in the hut of either of them to solemnise it. They fix a day for the ceremony, and invite their Vallon and the castemen of the village. The guests are treated to a feast in the usual Pulaya fashion. The chief guest and the host eat together from the same dish. After the feast, the father of the boy, who has to obtain a friend for his son, enquires of the Vallon and those assembled whether he may be permitted to buy friendship by the payment of money. They give their permission, and the boy's father gives the money to the father of the selected friend. The two boys then clap hands, and they are never to quarrel. The new friend becomes from that time a member of the boy's family. He comes in, and goes out of their hut as he likes. There is no ceremony performed at it, or anything done without consulting him. He is thus an inseparable factor in all ceremonies, especially in marriages. I suspect that the friend has some claims on a man's wife. The first observance in marriage consists in seeing the girl. The bridegroom-elect, his friend, father and maternal

uncle, go to the bride's hut, to be satisfied with the girl. If the wedding is not to take place at an early date, the bridegroom's parents have to keep up the claim on the bride-elect by sending presents to her guardians. The presents, which are generally sweetmeats, are taken to her hut by the bridegroom and his friends, who are well fed by the mother of the girl, and are given a few necessaries when they take leave of her the next morning. The next observance is the marriage negotiation, which consists in giving the bride's price, and choosing an auspicious day in consultation with the local astrologer (Kaniyan). On the evening previous to the wedding, the friends and relations of the bridegroom are treated to a feast in his hut. Next day at dawn, the bridegroom and his friend, purified by a bath, and neatly dressed in a white cloth with a handkerchief tied over it, and with a knife stuck in their girdles, go to the hut of the bride-elect accompanied by his party, and are all well received, and seated on mats spread on the floor. Over a mat specially made by the bride's mother are placed three measures of rice, some particles of gold, a brass plate, and plank with a white and red cover on it. The bridegroom, after going seven times round the pandal, stands on the plank, and the bride soon follows making three rounds, when four women hold a cloth canopy over her head, and seven virgins go in front of her. The bride then stands by the side of the bridegroom, and they face each other. Her guardian puts on the wedding necklace a gold bead on a string. Music is played, and prayers are offered up to the sun to bless the necklace which is tied round the neck of the girl. The bridegroom's friend, standing behind, tightens the knot already made. The religious part of the ceremony is now over, and the bridegroom and bride are taken inside the hut, and food is served to them on the same leaf. Next the guests are fed, and then they begin the poli or subscription. A piece of silk, or any red cloth, is spread on the floor, or a brass plate is placed before the husband. The guests assembled put in a few annas, and take leave of the chief host as they depart. The bride is soon taken to the bridegroom's hut, and her parents visit her the next day, and get a consideration in return. On the fourth day, the bridegroom and bride baths and worship the local deity, and, on the seventh day, they return to the bride's hut, where the tali (marriage badge) is formally removed from the neck of the girl, who is bedecked with brass beads round her neck, rings on her ears, and armlets. The next morning, the mother-in-law presents her son-in-law and his friend with a few necessaries of life, and sends them home with her daughter.

"During the seventh month of pregnancy, the ceremony of puli-kuti, or tamarind juice drinking, is performed as among other castes. This is also an occasion for casting out devils, if any, from

the body. The pregnant woman is brough back to the hut of her own family. The devil-driver erects a tent-like structure, and covers it with plantain bark and leaves of the cocoanut palm. The flower of an areca palm is fixed at the apex. A cocoanut palm flower is cut out and covered with a piece of cloth, the cut portion being exposed. The woman is seated in front of the tentlike structure with the flower, which symbolises the yet unborn child in the womb, in her lap. The water of a tender cocoanut in spoons made of the leaf of the jack tree (*Antocarpus integrifolia*) is poured over the cut end by the Vallon, guardian and brothers and sisters present. The devil-driver then breaks open the flower, and, by looking at the fruits, predicts the sex of the child. If there are fruits at the end nearest the stem, the child will live and, if the number of fruits is even, there will be twins. There will be deaths if any fruit is not well formed. The devil-driver repeats an incantation, whereby he invokes the aid of Kali, who is believed to be present in the tent. He fans the woman with the flower, and she throws rice and a flower on it. He repeats another incantation, which is a prayer to Kali to cast out the devil from her body. This magical ceremony is called Garbha Bali (pregnancy offering). The structure, with the offering, is taken up, and placed in a corner of the compound reserved for gods. The devotee then goes through the remaining forms of the ceremony. She pours into twenty-one leaf spoons placed in front of the tent a mixture of cow's milk, water of the tender cocoanut, flower, and turmeric powder. Then she walks round the tent seven times, and sprinkles the mixture on it with a palm flower. Next she throws a handful of rice and paddy, after revolving each handful round her head, and then covers the offering with a piece of cloth. She now returns, and her husband puts into her mouth seven globules of prepared tamarind. The devil-driver rubs her body with *phlomis*(?) petals and paddy, and thereby finds out whether she is possessed or not. If she is, the devil is driven out with the usual offerings. The devil-driver gets for his services twelve measures and a half of paddy, and two pieces of cloth. The husband should not, during this period, get shaved.

"When a young woman is about to give birth to a child, she is lodged in a small hut near her dwelling, and is attended by her mother and a few elderly women of the family. After the child is born, the mother and the baby are bathed. The woman is purified by a bath on the seventh day. The woman who has acted as midwife draws seven lines on the ground at intervals of two feet from one another, and spreads over them aloe leaves torn to shreds. Then, with burning sticks in the hand, the mother with the baby goes seven times over the leaves backwards and forwards, and is purified. For these seven days, the father should not eat anything made of rice. He lives on toddy, fruits, and other things. The

mother remains with her baby in the hut for sixteen days, when she is purified by a bath so as to be free from pollution, after which she goes to the main hut. Her enangathi (relation by marriage) sweeps the hut and compound, and sprinkles water mixed with cowdung on her body as she returns after the bath. In some places, the bark of athi (*Ficus glomerata*) and ithi (*Ficus Tsiela?*) is well beaten and bruised, and mixed with water. Some milk is added to this mixture, which is sprinkled both inside and outside the hut. Only after this do they think that the hut and compound are purified. Among the Cherumas of Palghat, the pollution lasts for ten days.

"The ear-boring ceremony is performed during the sixth or seventh year. The Vallon, who is invited, bores the ears with a sharp needle. The wound is healed by applying coconut oil, and the hole is gradually widened by inserting cork, a wooden plug, or a roll of palm leaves. The castemen of the village are invited, and fed. The landlord gives the parents of the girl three paras of paddy, and this, together with what the guests bring, goes to defray the expenses of the ceremony. After the meal they go, with drum-beating, to the house of the landlord, and present him with a para of beaten rice, which is distributed among his servants. The ear-borer receives eight edangazhis of paddy, a cocoanut, a vessel of rice, and four annas.

"A woman found to be having intercoruse with a Paraya is outcasted. She becomes a convert to Christianity or Mahomedanism. If the irregularity takes place within the caste, she is well thrashed, and prevented from resorting to the bad practice. In certain cases, when the illicit connection becomes public, the castemen meet with their Vallon, and conduct a regular enquiry into the matter, and prononuce a verdict upon the evidence. If a young woman becomes pregnant before marriage, her lover, should he be a Pulaya, is compelled to marry her, as otherwise she could be placed under a ban. If both are married, the lover is well thrashed, and fined. The woman is taken before a Thandan (Izhuva headman), who, after enquiry, gives her the water of a tender cocoanut, which she is asked to drink, when she is believed to be freed from the sin. Her husband may take her back again as his wife, or she is at liberty to marry another. The Thandan gets a few annas, betel leaves and areca nuts, and tobacco. Both the woman's father and the lover are fined, and the fine is spent in the purchase of toddy, which is indulged in by those present at the time. In the northern parts of the State, there is a custom that a young woman before marriage mates with one or two paramours with the connivance of her parents. Eventually one of them marries her, but this illicit union ceases at once on marriage."

Of the death ceremonies among the Cherumas of South Malabar, I gather that "as soon as a Cheruman dies, his jenmi or landlord is apprised of the fact, and is by ancient custom expected to send a field spade, a white cloth, and some oil. The drummers of the community are summoned to beat their drums in announcement of the sad event. This drumming is known as parayadikka. The body is bathed in oil, and the near relatives cover it over with white and red cloths, and take it to the front yard. Then the relatives have a bath, after which the corpse is removed to the burying ground, where a grave is dug. All those who have come to the interment touch the body, which is lowered into the grave after some of the red cloths have been removed. A mound is raised over the grave, a stone placed at the head, another at the feet, and a third in the centre. The funeral cortege, composed only of males, then returns to the house, and each member takes a purificatory bath. The red cloths are torn into narrow strips, and a strip handed over as a sacred object to a relative of the deceased. Meanwhile, each relative having on arrival paid a little money to the house people, toddy is purchased, and served to the assembly. The mourners in the house have to fast on the day of the death. Next morning they have a bath, paddy is pounded, and gruel prepared for the abstainers. An elder of the community, the Avakasi, prepares a little basket of green palm leaves. He takes this basket, and hangs it on a tree in the southern part of the compound (grounds). The gruel is brought out, and placed on a mortar in the same part of the compound. Spoons are made out of jack (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) leaves, and the elder serves out the gruel. Then the relatives, who have gathered again, make little gifts of money and rice to the house people. Vegetable curry and rice are prepared, and served to the visitors. A quaint ceremony called ooroonulka is next gone through. A measure of rice and a measure of paddy in husk are mixed, and divided into two shares. Four quarter-anna pieces are placed on one heap, and eight on the other. The former share is made over to the house people, and from the latter the Avakasi removes four of the coins, and presents one to each of the four leading men present. These four men must belong to the four several points of the compass. The remaining copper is taken by the elder. From his share of rice and paddy he gives a little to be parched and pounded. This is given afterwards to the inmates. The visitors partake of betel and disperse, being informed that the Polla or postobituary ceremony will come off on the thirteenth day. On the forenoon of this day, the relatives again gather at the mourning place. The inmates of the house bathe, and fish and rice are brought for a meal. A little of the fish is roasted over a fire, and each one present just nibbles at it. This is done to end pollution. After this the fish may be freely eaten. Half a seer or a mea-

sure of rice is boiled, reduced to a pulpy mass, and mixed with turmeric powder. Parched rice and the powder that remains after the rice has been pounder, a cocoanut and tender cocoanut, some turmeric powder, plantain leaves, and the rice that was boiled and coloured with turmeric, are then taken to the burial ground by the Avakasi, a singer known as a Kalladi or Moonpatkaren, and one or two close relatives of the departed. With the pulped rice the elder moulds the form of a human being. At the head of the grave a little mound is raised, cabalistic lines are drawn across it with turmeric, and boiled rice powder and a plantain leaf placed over the lines. The cocoanut is broken, and its kernel cut out in rings, each of which is put over the effigy, which is then placed recumbent on the plantain leaf. Round the mound, strings of jungle leaves are placed. Next the elder drives a pole into the spot where the chest of the dead person would be, and it is said that the pole must touch the chest. On one side of the pole the tender cocoanut is cut and placed, and on the other a shell containing some toddy. Then a little copper ring is tied on to the top of the pole, oil from a shell is poured over the ring, and the water from the tender cocoanut and toddy are in turn similarly poured. After this mystic rite, the Kalladi starts a mournful dirge in monotone, and the other actors in the solemn ceremony join in the chorus. The chant tells of the darkness and the nothingness that were before the creation of the world, and unfolds a fanciful tale of how the world came to be created. The chant has the weird refrain Oh: ho: Oh: ho. On its conclusion, the effigy is left at the head of the grave, but the Kalladi takes away the pole with him. The performers bathe and return to the house of mourning, where the Kalladi gets into a state of afflation. The spirit of the departed enters into him, and speaks through him, telling the mourners that he is happy, and does not want them to grieve over much for him. The Kalladi then enters the house, and, putting a heap of earth in the corner of the centre room, digs the pole into it. A light is brought and placed there, as also some toddy, a tender cocoanut, and parched rice. The spirit of the deceased, speaking again through the Kalladi, thanks his people for their gifts, and beseeches them to think occasionally of him, and make him periodical offerings. The assembly then indulge in a feed. Rice and paddy are mixed together and divided into two portions, to one of which eight quarter-annas, and to the other twelve quarter-annas are added. The latter share falls to the Avakasi, while from the former the mixture and one quarter-anna go to the Kalladi, and a quarter-anna to each of the nearest relatives. The basket which had been hung up earlier in the day is taken down and thrown away, and the jenmi's spade is returned to him".*

*Madras Mail 1895.

It is noted by Mr. Logan that "the Cherumans, like other classes, observe death pollution. But, as they cannot at certain seasons afford to be idle for fourteen days consecutively, they resort to an artifice to obtain this end. They mix cow-dung and paddy, and make it into a ball, and place the ball in an earthen pot, the mouth of which they carefully close with clay. The pot is laid in a corner of the hut, and, as long as it remains unopened, they remain free from pollution, and can mix among their follows. On a convenient day they open the pot, and are instantly seized with pollution, which continues for forty days. Otherwise fourteen days consecutive pollution is all that is required. On the forty-first or fifteenth day, as the case may be, rice is thrown to the ancestors, and a feast follows."

The following account of the death ceremonies is given by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer. "When a Pulayan is dead, the castemen in the neighbourhood are informed. An offering is made to the Kodungallur Bhagavati, who is believed by the Pulayas to watch over their welfare, and is regarded as their ancestral deity. Dead bodies are generally buried. The relatives, one by one, bring a new piece of cloth, with rice and paddy tied at its four corners, for throwing over the corpse. The cloth is placed thereon, and they cry aloud three times, beating their breasts, after which they retire. A few Parayas are invited to beat drums, and play on their musical instruments — a performance which is continued for an hour or two. After this, a few bits of plantain leaves, with rice flour and paddy, are placed near the corpse, to serve as food for the spirit of the dead. The bier is carried to the graveyard by six bearers, three on each side. The pit is dug, and the body covered with a piece of cloth. After it has been lowered into it, the pit is filled in with earth. Twenty-one small bits of leaves are placed over the grave, above the spot where the mouth of the dead man is, with a double-branched twig fixed to the centre, a cocoanut is cut open, and its water is allowed to flow in the direction of the twig which represents the dead man's mouth. Such of the members of the family as could not give him ganji (rice gruel) or boiled rice before death, now give it to him. The six coffin-bearers prostrate themselves before the corpse, three on each side of the grave. The priest then puts on it a ripe and tender cocoanut for the spirit of the dead man to eat and drink. Then all go home, and indulge in toddy and aval (beaten rice). The priest gets twelve measures of rice, the grave-diggers twelve annas, the Vallon two annas, and the coffin-bearers each an anna. The son or nephew is the chief mourner, who erects a mound of earth on the south side of the hut, and uses it as a place of worship. For seven days, both morning and evening, he prostrates himself before it, and sprinkles the water of a tender cocoanut on it. On the eighth day, his relatives, friends,

the Vallon, and the devil-driver assemble together. The devil-driver turns round and blows his conch, and finds out the position of the ghost, whether it has taken up its abode in the mound, or is kept under restraint by some deity. Should the latter be the case, the ceremony of deliverance has to be performed, after which the spirit is set up as a household deity. The chief mourner bathes early in the morning, and offers a rice-ball (pinda bali) to the departed spirit. This he continues for fifteen days. On the morning of the sixteenth day, the members of the family bathe to free themselves from pollution, and their enangan cleans the hut and the compound by sweeping and sprinkling water mixed with cow-dung. He also sprinkles the members of the family, as they return after the bath. The chief mourner gets shaved, bathes, and returns to the hut. Some boiled rice, paddy, and pieces of cocoanut, are placed on a plantain leaf, and the chief mourner, with the members of his family, calls on the spirit of the dead to take them. Then they all bathe, and return home. The castemen, who have assembled there by invitation, are sumptuously fed. The chief mourner allows his hair to grow as a sign of mourning (diksha), and, after the expiry of the year, a similar feast is given to the castemen."

The Cherumans are said by Mr. Gopal Panikkar to "worship certain gods, who are represented by rude stone images. What few ceremonies are in force amongst them are performed by priests selected from their own ranks, and these priests are held in great veneration by them. They kill cocks as offerings to these deities, who are propitiated by the pouring on some stones placed near them of the fresh blood that gushes from the necks of the birds". The Cherumans are further said to worship particular sylvan gods, garden deities, and field goddesses. In a note on cannibalism,* the writer states that "some sixteen years ago a Nair was murdered in Malabar by some Cherumans. The body was mutilated, and, on my asking the accused (who freely confessed their crime) why had this been done- they answered 'Tinnal papam tirum, i.e., if one eats, the sin will cease'". It is a common belief among various castes of Hindus that one may kill, provided it is done for food, and this is expressed in the proverb Konnapavam thinnal thirum, or the sin of killing is wiped away by eating. The Cheruman reply probably referred only to the wreaking of vengence, and consequent satisfaction, which is often expressed by the lower classes in the words pasi thirndadu, or hunger is satisfied.

Concerning the religion of the Pulayas, Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer writes as follows, "The Pulayas are animists, but are slowly coming on to the higher forms of worship. Their gods are Parakutty, Karinkutty, Chathan, and the spirits of their ancestors.

*Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

Offerings to these gods are given on Karkadaka and Makara Sankrantis, Onam, Vishu, and other auspicious days, when one of the Pulayas present turns Velichapad (oracle), and speaks to the assembly as if by inspiration. They are also devout worshippers of Kali or Bhagavati, whose aid is invoked in all times of danger and illness. They take part in the village festivals celebrated in honour of her. Kodungallur Bhagavati is their guardian deity. The deity is represented by an image or stone on a raised piece of ground in the open air. Their priest is one of their own castemen, and, at the beginning of the new year, he offers to the goddess fowls, fruits, and toddy. The Pulayas also believe that spirits exercise an influence over the members of their families and therefore regular offerings are given to them every year on Sankranti days. The chief festivals in which the Pulayas take part are the following:—

1. *Pooram Vela.*—This, which may be described as the Saturnalia of Malabar, is an important festival held at the village Bhagavati temple. It is a festival, in which the members of all castes below Brahmans take part. It takes place either in Kumbham (February-March), or Meenam (March-April). The Cherumas of the northern part, as well as the Pulayas of the southern parts of the State, attend the festival after a sumptuous meal and toddy drinking, and join the procession. Toy horses are made, and attached to long bamboo poles, which are carried to the neighbourhood of the temple. As they go, they leap and dance to the accompaniment of pipe and drum. One among them who acts as a Velichaped (devil-dancer) goes in front of them, and, after a good deal of dancing and loud praying in honour of the deity, they return home.

2. *Vittu Iduka.*—This festival consists in putting seeds, or bringing paddy seeds to the temple of the village Bhagavati. This also is an important festival, which is celebrated on the day of Bharani, the second lunar day in Kumbham. Standing at a distance assigned to them by the village authorities, where they offer prayers to Kali, they put the paddy grains, which they have brought, on a bamboo mat spread in front of them, after which they return home. In the Chittur taluk, theirs is a festival called Kathiru, celebrated in honour of the village goddess in the month of Vrischikam (November-December), when these people start from the farms of their masters, and go in procession, accompanied with the music of pipe and drum. A special feature of the Kathiru festival is the presence, at the temple of the village goddess, of a large number of dome-like structures made of bamboo and plantain stems, richly ornamented, and hung with flowers, leaves, and ears of corn. These structures are called sarakootams, and are fixed on a pair of parallel bamboo poles. These agrestic serfs bear them in grand

processions, starting from their respective farms, with pipe and drum, shouting and dancing, and with fireworks. Small globular packets of palmyra leaves, in which are packed handfuls of paddy rolled up in straw, are also carried by them in huge bunches, along with the sarakootams. These packets are called kathirkootoos (collection of ears of corn), and are thrown among the crowd of spectators all along the route of the procession, and also on arrival at the temple. The spectators, young and old, scramble to obtain as many of the packets as possible, and carry them home. They are then hung in front of the houses, for it is believed that their presence will help in promoting the prosperity of the family until the festival comes round again next year. The greater the number of these trophies obtained for a family by its members, the greater, it is believed, will be the prosperity of the family. The festival is one of the very few occasions on which Pulayas and other agrestic serfs, who are supposed to impart, so to speak, a long distant atmospheric pollution, are freely allowed to enter villages, and worship in the village temples, which generally occupy central positions in the villages. Processions carrying sarakootams and kathirkootoos start from the several farms surrounding the village early enough to reach the temple about dusk in the evening, when the scores of processions that have made their way to the temple merge into one great concourse of people. The sarakootams are arranged in beautiful rows in front of the village goddess. The Cherumas dance, sing, and shout to their hearts content. Bengal lights are lighted, and fireworks exhibited. Kathirkootoos are thrown by dozens and scores from all sides of the temple. The crowd then disperses. All night, the Pulayas and other serfs, who have accompanied the procession to the temple, are, in the majority of cases, fed by their respective masters at their houses, and then all go back to the farms.

3. *Mandalam Vilakku.*—This is a forty-one days' festival in Bhagavati temples, extending from the first of Vrischikam (November-December) to the tenth of Dhanu (December-January), during which temples are brightly illuminated both inside and outside at night. There is much music and drum-beating at night, and offerings of cooked peas or Bengal gram, and cakes, are made to the goddess, after which they are distributed among those present. The forty-first day, on which the festival terminates, is one of great celebrations, when all castemen attend at the temple. The Cherumas, Malayars, and Eravallars attend the festival in Chittur. They also attend the Konga Pata festival there. In rural parts of the State, a kind of puppet show performance (olapava koothu) is acted by Kusavans (potters) and Tamil Chettis, in honour of the village deity, to which they contribute their share of subscription.

They also attend the cock festival of Cranganore, and offer sacrifices of fowls".

For the following note on the religion of the Pulayas of Travancore, I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Iyer. "The Pulayas worship the spirits of deceased ancestors, known as Chavars. The Matan, and the Anchu Tamprakkal, believed by the better informed section of the caste to be the five Pandavas, are specially adored. The Pulayas have no temples, but raise squares in the midst of groves, where public worship is offered. Each Pulaya places three leaves near each other, containing raw rice, beaten rice, and the puveri (flowers) of the areca palm. He places a flower on each of these leaves, and prays with joined hands. Chavars are the spirits of infants, who are believed to haunt the earth, harassed by a number of unsatisfied cravings. This species of supernatural being is held in mingled respect and terror by Pulayas, and worshipped once a year with diverse offerings. Another class of deities is called Tevaratumpuran, meaning gods whom high caste Hindus are in the habit of worshipping at Prassalay; the Pulayas are given certain special concessions on festival days. Similar instances may be noted at Ochira, Kumaranallur, and Nedumangad. At the last mentioned shrine, Mateer writes,* 'where two or three thousand people, mostly Sudras and Izhuvas, attend for the annual festival in March, one-third of the whole are Parayas, Kuravas, Vedars, Kanikkars, and Pulayas, who come from all parts around. They bring with them wooden models of cows, neatly hung over, and covered, in imitation of shaggy hair, with ears of rice. Many of these images are brought each in a separate procession from its own place. The headmen are finely dressed with cloths stained purple at the edge. The image it borne on a bamboo frame, accompanied by a drum, and men and women in procession, the latter wearing quantities of beads, such as several strings of red, then several of white, or strings of beads, and then a row of brass ornaments like rupees, and all uttering the Kuraya cry. These images are carried round the temple, and all amuse themselves for the day'. By far the most curious of the religious festivals of the Pulayas is what is known as the Pula Saturday in Makaram (January-February) at Sastamkotta in the Kunnattur taluk. It is an old observance, and is most religiously gone through by the Pulayas every year. The Valluvan, or caste priest, leads the assembled group to the vicinity of the banyan tree in front of the temple, and offerings of a diverse nature, such as paddy, roots, plantain fruits, grame, pulse, coins and golden threads are most devoutly made. Pulayas assemble for this ceremony from comparatively distant places. A deity, who is believed to be the most

*Native Life in Travancore.

important object of worship among the Pulayas, is Utaya Tampuran, by which name they designate the rising sun. Exorcism and spirit-dancing are deeply believed in, and credited with great remedial virtues. The Kokkara, or iron rattle, is an instrument that is freely used to drive out evil spirits. The Valluvan who offers animal sacrifices becomes immediately afterwards possessed, and any enquiries may be put to him without it being at all difficult for him to furnish a ready answer. In North Travancore, the Pulayas have certain consecrated buildings of their own, such as Kamancheri, Omkara Bhagavathi, Yakshi Ampalam, Pey Koil, and Valiyapattu Muttan, wherein the Valluvan performs the functions of priesthood. The Pulayas believe in omens. To see another Pulaya, to encounter a Native Christian, to see an Izhuva with a vessel in the hand, a cow behind, a boat containing rice or paddy sacks, etc., are regarded as good omens. On the other hand, to be crossed by a cat, to see a fight between animals, to be encountered by a person with a bundle of clothes, to meet people carrying steel instruments, etc., are looked upon as very bad omens. The lizard is not believed to be a prophet, as it is by members of the higher castes".

Concerning the caste government of the Pulayas of Travancore, Mr. Subramania Iyer writes as follows. "The Ayikkara Yajamanan, or Ayikkara Tamara (king) is the head of the Pulaya Community. He lives at Vayalar in the Shertalley taluk in North Travancore, and takes natural pride in a lace cap, said to have been presented to one of his ancestors by the great Cheraman Perumal. Even the Parayas of North Travancore look upon him as their legitimate lord. Under the Tamara are two nominal headmen, known as Tatteri Achchan and Mannat Koil Vallon. It is the Ayikkara Tamara who appoints the Valluvans, or local priests, for every kara, for which they are obliged to remunerate him with a present of 336 chuckrams. The Pulayas still keep accounts in the earliest Travancorean coins (chuckrams). The Valluvan always takes care to obtain a written authority from the Tamara, before he begins his functions. For every marriage, a sum of 49 chuckrams and four mulikkas* have to be given to the Tamara, and eight chuckrams and one mulikka to the Valluvan. The Valluvan receives the Tamara's dues, and sends them to Vayalar once or twice a year. Beyond the power of appointing Valluvans and other office-bearers, the authority of the Tamara extends but little. The Valluvans appointed by him prefer to call themselves Head Valluvans, as opposed to the dignitaries appointed in ancient times by temple authorities and other Brahmans, and have a general super-

*A mulikka is the collective name for a present of five betel leaves, one raeca nut, and two tobacco leaves.

vising power over the Pulayas of the territory that falls under their jurisdiction. Every Valluvan possesses five privileges, viz., (1) the long umbrella, or an umbrella with a long bamboo handle; (2) the five-coloured umbrella; (3) the bracelet of honour; (4) a long gold ear-ring; (5) a box for keeping betel leaves. They are also permitted to sit on stools, to make use of carpets, and to employ kettle-drums at marriage ceremonials. The staff of the Valluvan consists of (1) the Kuruppan or accountant, who assists the Valluvan in the discharge of his duties; (2) the Komarattan or exorciser; (3) the Kaikkaran or village representative; (4) the Vatikkaran, constable or sergeant. The Kuruppan has diverse functions to perform, such as holding umbrellas, and cutting cocoanuts from trees, on ceremonial occasions. The Vatikkaran is of special importance at the bath that succeeds a Pulaya girl's first menses. Adultery is looked upon as the most heinous of offences, and used to be met with condign punishment in times of old. The woman was required to thrust her hand into a vessel of boiling oil, and the man was compelled to pay a fine of 336 or 64 chuckrams, according as the woman with whom he connected himself was married or not, and was caste out of society after a most cruel rite called Ariyum Pirayum Tittukka, the precise nature of which does not appear to be known. A married woman is tried by the Valluvan and other officers, when she shows disobedience to her husband".

It is noted by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer, that, "in the Palghat taluk of South Malabar, it is said that the Cherumas in former times used to hold grand meetings for cases of theft, adultery, divorce, etc., at Kannati Kutti Vattal. These assemblies consisted of the members of their caste in localities between Valayar forests and Karimpuzha (in Valluvanad taluk), and in those between the northern and southern hills. It is also said that their deliberations used to last for several days together. In the event of anybody committing a crime, the punishment inflicted on him was a fine of a few rupees, or sometimes a sound thrashing. To prove his innocence, a man had to swear 'By Kannati Swarupam (assembly) I have not done it'. It was held so sacred that no Cheruman who had committed a crime would swear falsely by this assembly. As time went on, they found it difficult to meet, and so left off assembling together".

In connection with the amusements of the Pulayas, Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer writes that "their games appear to be connected in some way with their religious observances. Their favourite dance is the kole kali, or club dance. A party of ten or twelve men, provided with sticks, each a yard in length, stand in a circle, and move round, striking at the sticks, keeping time with their feet, and singing at the same time. The circle is alternately widened and

narrowed. Vatta kali is another wild dance. This also requires a party of ten or twelve men, and sometimes young women join them. The party move in a circle, clapping their hands while they sing a kind of rude song. In thattinmel kali, four wooden poles are firmly struck in the ground, two of which are connected by two horizontal pieces of wood, over which planks are arranged. A party of Pulayas dance on the top of this, to the music of their pipe and drum. This is generally erected in front of the Bhagavati temple, and the dancing takes place immediately after the harvest. This is intended to propitiate the goddess. Women perform a circular dance on the occasions of marriage celebrations."

The Cherumas and Pulayas are, like the Koragas of South Canara, short of stature, and darkskinned. The most important measurements of the Cherumans whom I investigated at Calicut were as follows :—

	Stature, cm.	Nasal index.	Cephalic index
	Average	Average	Average
Males . . .	157.5	78.1	73.9
Females . . .	147.8	77	74.8

Extract on "CHERUMAN" from Census of India, 1891, Volume XIII, Madras. The Report on the Census by H. A. STUART of the Indian Civil Service; Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society; Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras. Madras: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press. 1893. pages 249 to 250.

395. CHERUMAN OR PULAYAN: (258, 402).—This caste is called Cheruman in South Malabar and Pulayan in North Malabar. The ordinary derivation of Cheruman given by the people is a 'small man', but Mr. Logan says they are so called because they are the aborigines of the Chera Country*. Pulayan is probably from the same root as Paraiyan, Holeya, & c. Even in South Malabar where they are called Cheruman, a large sub-division numbering over 30,000 is called Pulacheruman.

The total number of sub-divisions returned is 39, of which the most important are Kanakkan (73,000), Pulacheruman (38,000), Eralan (23,000), Kudan (14,000) and Rolan (12,000). Kanakkan and Pula Cheruman are found in all the southern taluks, Kudan almost wholly in Walluvanad, Rolan in Ernad and Walluvanad, and Eralan in Palghat and Walluvanad. I understand that there are no true sub-divisions among the Cherumans of North Malabar.

They are all small in stature and very black in complexion. Some of them wear a tuft of hair in front like Nayars; others shave the heads clean like Muhammadans. They are for the most part field labourers and formerly were agrestic slaves. Their religion is devil-worship. The caste priest is called *Janmari* or *Janmi*. In the north the succession is in the female line as among Nayars, while in the south the succession is from father to son.

After childbirth the females are regarded as impure for 28 days and in the extreme north for 42 days. During this period no males may take meals from the house, but a separate hut is generally built for confinement. It is strange to find so inconvenient a custom existing among such a class. The child is brought to the master of the mother and he gives it a name, a practice that is, of course, a relic of the days of slavery. Their marriage ceremonies are of the simplest kind. In parts of the south there is hardly anything more than a feast. When a marriage is arranged, the couple is brought to the master at the close of a working day, and the latter measures out the daily wages of rice for both together in recognition of their having become husband and wife. Money is paid to the girl's parents. In the north money is paid to the caste

*Malabar Manual, vol. i, p. 14.

priest and to the uncle of the girl. The marriage ceremonies are there somewhat more formal. First the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house and presents rice, betel-leaf, & c., to the head of the family and asks for the bride. Consent is indicated by the bride's brother, placing some rice and a cloth in the assembly and throwing rice on the head of the headman of the caste who is present. On the appointed day the bridegroom goes to the house with two companions and presents the girl with cloth and money. From that day he is regarded as her husband and cohabitation begins at once. But the girl cannot be taken to his house until the ceremony called *'Mangalam'* is performed. The bridegroom's party go in procession to the bride's house, where a feast awaits them. The man presents sweetmeats to the girl's brother. Then the caste priest recites the names and family history of the two persons and the names of their masters and deities. They are seated in a *pandal* before a lamp and a heap of rice. One of the assembly gets up and delivers a speech on the duties of married life, touching upon the evils of theft, cheating, adultery, & c. Rice is then thrown on the heads of the couple and the man prostrates himself at the feet of the elders. The next day they proceed to husband's house and rice is again thrown on their heads. Subsequently there is another feast and throwing of rice on the couple in the husband's house. Then the party assembled make presents to the pair, a part of which goes to the priest and a part to the master of the husband. Divorce is easy, but the money paid must be returned by the woman. On death, pollution is observed for 8 days in the north and 14 days in the south, and it is removed by the caste priest sprinkling a mixture of milk and the water of the tender cocoanut.

Extract on 'CHERUMAN' from Census of India, 1901 *Vol. XV Madras Part-I Report by FRANCIS, W. Madras* 1902 *page* 149.

CHERUMAN (253, 347): A Malayalam caste of agricultural serfs. (C. R. 1891, para, 395; *Malabar Man., Vol. I. pp.* 147-152; Buchanan's *Mysore,* etc. Vol. II, p. 151; Pharoah's *Gazetteer of Southern India,* p. 520; *Calcutta Review of April* 1900).

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Extract on 'CHERUMAN' from Madras District Gazetteers 'Malabar and Anjengo' by C. A. INNES, I.C.S., Edited by F. B. EVANS, I.C.S., Madras: Printed by the Superintendent Government Press, 1908 *page* 133 *and* 134.

CHERUMANS AND PULAYANS: The principal representatives of the agrestic serfs are the Cherumans or Pulayans. The names seem to be alternatives and both are probably generic terms applied to the aboriginal inhabitants of the country by their conquerors, Cheruman perhaps means "slave" (*Cheru:* little, mean) and Pulayan, "Polluters" or "polluted" (*pula,* pollution). They are said to be divided into 39 divisions, the more important of which are the Kanakka Cherumans or Kanakkans, the Pula Cherumans or Pulayas, the Era Cherumans or Eralans, the Roli Cherumans or Rolans, and the Kudans. Whether these sub-divisions should be treated as separate castes or not, it is hardly possible to determine; some of them at least are endogamous groups, and some are still further subdivided. Thus the Pulayas of Chirakkal are said to be divided into one endogamous and 11 exogamous groups, called Mavadan, Elamanam, Tacchakudiyan, Kundaton, Cheruvulan, Mulattan, Talan, Vannattam, Eramalodiyan, Mullaviriyan, Egudan and Kundon. Some at least of these group names obviously denote differences of occupation. The Kundotti, or women of the last group, acts as midwife; and in consequence the group is considered to convey pollution by touch to members of the other groups, and they will neither eat nor marry with those belonging to it. Death or birth pollution is removed by a member of the Mavadan class called Maruttan, who sprinkles cow dung mixed with water on the feet, and milk on the head of the person to be purified. At weddings the Maruttan receives 32 fanams, the prescribed price of a bride, from the bridegroom, and gives it to the bride's people.

The Era Cherumans and Kanakkans, who are found only in the southern taluks of the district, appear to be divided into exogamous groups called *Kuttams,* many of which seen to be named after the house name of the masters whom they serve; in some marriage is forbidden between relations on the mother's side.

The Cherumans are almost solely employed as agricultural labourers and coolies; but they also make mats and baskets. They pollute the high castes at a distance of 64 feet, and it is proper for them when addressing superiors to call themselves slaves (*adiyan*),

and to refer to their rice as chaff, etc. They are wholly illiterate; their dwellings are wretched huts (*chalas* or *madams*) and their dress of the scantiest and coarsest. The woman usually wear a profusion of bead and shell necklaces, and brass or pewter bangles and rings. The men cut the hair close all over the head. Their chief deities are Kuttichattan and Kuli.

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Extract on "PULAYANS" from Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras. By A. AIYAPPAN, M.A., Ph.D., Secretary, Aboriginal Tribes Welfare Enquiry Committee, printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, 1948 *page* 100.

14. PULAYANS : The Pulayans are found in five amsoms of Wynaad and number only a few hundreds. They follow the Marumakkattayam law of succession, and, on account of this and other customs, have to be distinguished from the untouchable Pulayars of the plains portions of Malabar. Each village has got a Pulaya Headman known as 'Marutan', elected by the community for his ability to manage the social affairs of the community. They are field labourers, only very few having their own paddy cultivation. They are carrion eaters, and are considered to be lower in status than the Paniyas who are polluted by their touch. The Pulayans are chiefly by Moplahs as coolies.

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Extract on "PULAYARS" from Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Provinces of Madras. By A. AIYAPPAN, M.A., Ph.D., Secretary, Aboriginal Tribes Welfare Enquiry Committee, Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras 1948 *pages* 131 *and* 132.

PULAYARS : The Pulayars have been aptly described by the phrase "the Pulayan of the wild looks". They are met with even on the slopes of the Anamalais as we ascend from Udamalpet. Early writers have remarked on the enormous length of their hair. The Pulayar would not cut it but arrange it into six or eight plaited coils gathered into one single lock at the back of the head. It is said that a Pulaya 5 feet 10 inches in height had hair trailing a foot on the ground. Some dandies of the tribe would wear their hair in large bunches at the side bound round the forehead with a small brass chain. Some, however, are said to have taken no pride whatever in their hair and had them standing out in a dishevelled fashion like savages. The dress of the Pulaya is similar to that of a plainsman. Generally, they are dressed in dirty rags. A few well-to-do can afford even a turban. Their village consists of scattered huts built with bamboo and thatched with grass. They usually have *pandals* in front of their houses. They also built temporary huts while they are on the move.

The Pulayars are not particular as to what they eat. They eat all animal food, and rats are favourite dishes. They have ingenious traps made with bamboo and string for catching the rats, jungle fowls and other birds. Their economic condition is very bad. They are slave-like in their habits, and are generally mostly useful in carrying loads up the hills. Some of them possess guns and shoot pigs, etc. The Pulayars eat bison also.

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Extract on "THE PULAYANS" from the Cochin Tribes and Castes, Volume—I, *by L. K. ANANTHA KRISHNA IYER, B.A., L. T. Superintendent of Ethnography, Cochin State; Corresponding Member of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, London; the Bureau of American Enthnology, Washington; and Corresponding Member of the Anthropological Society, Bombay. MADRAS Published for the Government of Cochin By Higginbothams Co., Mount Road, LONDON: Luzac & co.* 1909 *from page* 87 *to* 127.

CHAPTER V

THE PULAYANS : The pulayans of Cochin from an important class of the agrestic serfs, both in point of number and as forming a typical representative of a tribe. They are, in the northern parts of the State, called the Cherumans. They are wholly illiterate and speak a kind of low Malayalam largely mixed up with Tamil words and terminations. It is very probable, that they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Kerala who must have been Tamil-speaking, for the earliest from of the Malayalam language is Kodum Tamil (the oldest form of Tamil). Dr. A. H. Keane remarks, that the fact that these and other low tribes speaking Dravidian Malayalam is very curious, and that it finds its analogue in the broken English of the Negroes of North America and elsewhere. He thinks that they had a language which is now forgotten. When they speak of bodily members such as an eye or ear to a superior; they prefix to it the epithet 'old' and say 'old eye' or 'old ear'. They call their children 'calves', their silver 'copper' and their paddy 'chaff'. When addressing one, they begin by saying, 'Your slave has got permission'. The Nairs they call thampurans (Lords).

Traditions of the caste :

The question of their origin is still undecided. The word 'Pulayan' is derived from *'pula'* which means pollution. If the word *'Pula'* may be regarded as another from of *'Palla'* the Pallans of the Tamil Districts and the Pulayans of Kochin, Travancore, and Malabar are identical tribes, who have been, from a remote period, subject to the same kind of treatment from their masters. The name 'Cherumans' or 'Cheramakkal' is said to signify 'the sons of the soil', but some say it means *cheriamakkal* (little children), as Parasurama is said to have directed their being cared for and treated as such. It is said that Malabar constituted the ancient Chera Kingdom. In the name Cheranad or the country (*nad*) of the Cheras given to the district lying along the cost, and inland south-east of Calicut, we still find that the ancient name is preserved. Chernad, part of the Ernad Taluk and the neighbourhood of it,

appear to have been the most thickly populated parts of the country. Earned, valluvand, and Ponnani are the three Taluks of Malabar from which converts to Islam have been drawn from the slave population, which must have been denser in these Taluks than elsewhere. There is therefore something to be said in favour of the view that the Pulayans or Cherumans were the aborigines of Malabar. According to one tradition they are supposed to be descendants of the aborigines conquered by the Chola kings who preferred slavery to freedom and starvation in the jungles. The native tradition assigns their creation to Parasurama who is said to have given them to the Brahmans to till the soil. They are regarded, by some, as the descendents of the Dravidian immigrants and, by others, as the descendants of the old Turanean race that people India before the Aryan invasion. Like Africa, India has received influxes of population from other parts of the world, but the dark peoples are now merged in the fairer invaders. Dr. A. H. Keane also is of the same opinion, and adds, that, judging from the short Stature, low forehead, and the high check bones, they belong to the Negrito race, which once formed a substratum throughout the peninsula, though now mainly submerged by the later arrivals of the Kolerians, Dravidians, and the Aryans. From traditions current among the Pulayans themselves, it would appear, that once upon a time they had dominions over several parts of the country. A persion called Aikkara Yajaman whose ancestors were Pulaya kings, is still held in considerable respect by the Pulayans of north Travancore and duly acknowledged as their chieftain, and lord, while the name Aikkaranad still remains to suggest that there is some truth in the ancient tale. In Trivandrum on the banks of the Velli lake is a hill called Pulayanar Kotta (fort), where it is belived that a Pulaya king once ruled. The Pulayans round Trivandrum, assert even to this day, that in former times, a Pulaya king ruled and had his castle not far from the present capital of Travancore.

As a Parayan found at Melkota the image of Chelva Pillai, as a Savara was originally in possession of the sacred stone which became the idol in the temple of Jagannath, so also is the worship of Padmanabha in Trivandrum, intimately connected with a Pulayan. Once, the story goes, a Pulakalli (Pulaya woman) who was living with her husband in the *Ananthan Kadu* (jungle) suddenly heard the cry of a baby. She rushed to the spot, and saw to her surprise a child lying on the ground, protected by a cobra. She had pity on it and nursed it like her own. The appearance of the snake intimated to her the divine origin of the infant. This proved to be true, for the child was an incarnation of Vishnu. As soon as the Raja of Travancore heard of the wonderful event, he built a shrine on the spot where the baby had been found and dedicated it to Padmanabha.

There is also another story regarding the origin of these people. The Pulayans got, as a boon from the God Siva, along with a spade and an axe, the right to clear forests, to cultivate lands, and to own them. When other people came and took possession of their lands, they were advised to work under them. That they were the original inhabitants of the land is proved by certain rights they have possessed from time immemorial in the Bhagavathi temples in the villages they live in.

Regarding the origin of the Thanda Pulayans, one of the subtribes among the Pulayans of the southern parts of the State, the following account is given. The name 'Thanda Pulayan' is given to them because of the *thanda* garment worn by their females. *Thanda* is a waterplant (Isolepis articulata Nees), the leaves of which are cut into lengths of two feet woven at one end and tied round their waist, in such a manner that the strings unwoven hang loosely round the loins up to the knees. In regard to the origin of this kind of dress, there is a curious story that a certain high caste-man who owned lands in the localities inhabited by these people, chanced to sow seeds and plant vegetables. He was surprised to find that his work was useless, for he found that everything he did, disappeared in a mysterious manner. Not a trace of what he sowed or planted was to be seen the next day. With a view to clear the mystery, he kept a close wath at night, when he saw coming out of a hole, certain human beings quite naked, The were pursued, when a man and a women were caught. Impressed with the sense of shame at their wretched condition, he threw his upper garment to the male. Having nothing to give to the other, he plucked and threw a few *thanda* leaves on her to dress herself with. They are also called Kuzhi Pulayans, because they were found emerging from a pit (*Kuzhi*).

In Travancore, the Pulayans are said to have been divided into the Eastern and Western clans. The eastern Pulayans were the slaves of Duryodhana, while those of the west were attached to the Pandus. These formed the two rival parties in the war of the Mahabharata. The defeat of Duryodhana is the cause of their degradation. Some attempts were made to trace the origin of this story, but nobody could enlighten me on the subject.

Predial Slavery :

By far the greater part of the labour in the field was and is even tow performed by the Cherumans or Pulayans in Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore. These people were the absolute property of the *thampurans* or lords, and were employed in any kind of labour which their masters pleased. They were not attached to

the soil, but might be sold or transferred in any manner that their masters thought fit only a wife could not be sold separately. Children were separted from their parents, and brothers from their sisters. The slaves were of different castes, namely, Pulayans or Cherumans, Eralans, and Parayans, and the differences in the marriage customs of these castes caused considerable variations in the rights of masters to the children of their slaves, as these rights depend upon the caste to which they belonged. The master was bond to give the slave a certain allowance of provisions. A man or women able to work received two to three annas worth of paddy daily. Children and old persons unable to work were given half this pittance, while no allowance whatever was given for infants. This was totally inadequate to support them, but the slaves on each estate used to get one twenty-first part of the grose paddy crop in order to encourage them to be careful and industrious. A male slave received seven cubits of bloth—sufficient for two *mundus*—and a woman fourteen cubits—sufficient for two *muris:*

Condition of the slaves in former times:

Slavery was common in former times throughout the western coast and the prejudices of the high caste people rendered the degradation of the slaves complete. They were in many places attached to the soil, and their market value was not much above that of the cattle united with them in the same bondage, while they were far below them in the estimation in which they were held. Though a slavery deserving commiseration, it was by no means the most rigid form of that wretched state. They were regarded with capricious indifference by their masters, who were either Brahmans, Nairs or Native Christians, who though they were divided in caste, agreed in oppression. Personal chastisement was not often inflicted, yet they experienced little sympathy in sickness, when they were left to nature. They were also dismissed to poverty, and in age abandoned. Manumission was rarely practised nor indeed even desired. They never possessed property of any kind. Their freedom could only be productive of starvation or a change of servitude which occurred, when they were presented to a temple in compliance with some superstitious vow.

In very early times the murder of a slave was scarcely considered a crime. The deed of transfer generally contained the clause, "You may sell or kill him or her". They had no ideas beyond their masters, to whome they were absolutely obedient from the sluggish apathy of their character, which rendered them ever mindful of their own lot. Being themselves born slaves, their children also were born slaves, and every landlord had a number of them. In cases of indigence, a Pulaya uncle and mother might sell a child

for about fourteen or seventeen rupees, and if a higher price had been given, it would have been of no use to them, as the proprietor would have taken the surplus. The eldest son was the property of the owner, but the mother had also the right of redeeming the first child for four rupees and a half whether the possessor liked it or not.

The subsistence of the slaves:

The Pulayans were employed only in agriculture and their labours were repaid in grain, their wages being three measures of paddy for a man, two for a woman, and one for a child. This was all they had to live upon, and even this was not regularly paid, being reduced to half on days they did not work, and withheld entirely if they showed any symptoms of refractoriness. Harvest to them was a period of comparative plenty, but their meagre, squalid appearance often betrayed the insufficiency of their diet to which both sexes were equally doomed. A large number of slaves belonged to the Government to which they were escheated along with other property on the extinction of their owners' families and they were partly employed on Government lands and partly rented to ryots. These poor creatures, as forming a peculiar and numerous caste, were granted certain privileges which secured their maintenance, so that none might perish from want. Their masters no doubt were bond to give them food, but in Malabar, the Pulayans had the right of building, planting, and doing all agricultural work, and for that, they received wages in paddy. The estates on which they worked might belong to their masters or to some one else. If their master were not in need of out-door labour, they might seek it elsewhere, but they had to take care to be ready to appear before him at his summons, and if they failed to appear, they were punished.

In ancient times slaves were held by different kinds of tenure. There were, says Francis Buchanan, three modes of transferring the usufruct slaves. The first was by *jenm* or sale, where the full value of the slave was given, and the property was entirely transferred to a new master who was, in some measure, bound by his interest to attend to the welfare of his slave. A young man with his wife used to be sold for seventy or hundred rupees. Four or five children, two of whom were beginning to work, would make the family worth one hundred and forty or one hundered and seventy rupees. The second manner of transferring the labour of slaves was by *kanom* or mortgage. The proprietor by this received a loan of money, generally two-thirds of the value of the slaves, and a small quantity of paddy to show that his right over them still existed. He might either resume his property i.e., the slaves, whenever he pleased to repay the money borrowed without the payment of any interest.

In the case of any of the slaves dying, the *Kanom* holder was bound to supply another of equal value. The lender of the money maintained them and had their labour for the interest of his money and for their support. The third method of transferring or employing slaves was letting them out for *pattom* or rent. In this case, for an annual sum, the master lent them to another man who commanded their labour and supported them. The annual *pattom* or rent was two rupees and a quarter, and half as much for a woman. The last two tenures, says Buchanan, were abominable; for the person who exacted the labour and furnished the subsistence of the slave was directly interested in increasing the former and diminishing the latter as much as possible. In fact the slaves were severely treated, and their diminutive stature and squalid appearance certified to the want of adequate nourishment. Five families of slaves numbering twenty-five persons of all ages are, it may be mentioned, adequate for the cultivation of twelve and a half acres of rice land.

Abolition of slavery.

Theoretically serfdom in Malabar was abolished about sixty years ago. Mr. Logan gives the following account of the abolition of slavery in his Manual of Malabar :— The question of slavery and the slave trade attracted the early attention of the Honourable Company's Government. In the year 1792, the year in which British rule commenced, a proclamation was issued against dealing in slaves. A person offering a slave for sale was considered to be a thief. Both the dealer and the purchaser were severely dealt with. Fishermen and Moplahs conveying slaves were severely flogged and fined at the rate of ten rupees for each slave and the vessels used in trade were confiscated. This proclamation was directed against the prevalent practice of robbers carrying off by force the children of the most useful inhabitants, the Tiyyans, and their cultivators. This practice was kept alive by the facility with which the slaves could be sold on the coast to be agents of vessels engaged in the trade, sailing from the French settlement at Mahe and the Dutch settlement at Cochin. These ships in general, carried the slaves to the French islands. In 1819 the Principal Collector wrote a report on the condition of the Cherumans, and received orders, that the practice of selling slaves for arrears of revenue be immediately discontinued. In 1836, the Government ordered a remission in the Collector's accounts of Rs 927.13.0 which was the annual revenue from the slaves on the Government lands in Malabar. In 1841, Mr. E. B. Thomas, the Judge at Calicut, wrote in strong terms, a letter to Sadir Adalat in which he pointed out that women in some Taluks fetched high prices in order to breed slaves; that the average cost of a young male under two years was about Rs. 380, of a female

somewhat less; that an infant two months in age was sold in a court auction for Rs. 1-10-6; and that, in a recent suit, the right to twenty slaves was the sole matter for litigation and was disposed of on its merits. In a further letter he pointed out that the slaves had increased in numbers. The Government of India passed Act V of 1843 of which the provisions were widely published throughout Malabar. "Any person claiming a slave as *jenm, Kanom* or *panayam,* the right of such claim will not be investigated into at any one of the public offices or courts". In 1852, and again in 1855, the fact that traffic in slaves still continued, was brought to the notice of the Government, but no measures for the emancipation of the Cherumans were deemed to be necessary. The penalties for slave dealing contained in the Penal Code which came into force on 1st January, 1862 were the final below to slavery in India, especially in Malabar.[1]

In the Cochin State also, the same kind of slavery and slave dealing as was prevailing in Malabar had been long in existence. A copy of the proclamation dealing with the abolition of slavery and the slave trade was communicated to His Highness the then Raja of the State. It was published in the same year, declaring it a serious offence to buy and sell slaves in the State, to thrash and confine them for petty faults. It also put a stop to the sale of slaves for court decress and arrears of rent, and gave freedom to the Pulaya slaves residing and working in the Government lands.

The present condition of the slaves:

Though emancipated the Pulayans were for a long time, and are even now in many localities, more or less in the same condition as formerly, and have been unable to appreciate the benefits conferred upon them. They are still obliged to depend upon their masters for maintenance. The extreme conservatism of their masters and their bigotted adherence to caste, coupled with the primitive customs of the people, and the physical configuration of the soil prevented them from having any intercourse with the outside world and caused their utter degradation. Their name is still connected with everything recolting, and they are shunned as if infected with plague. The high caste-men view their presence with a mixture of alarm and indignation and even towns and markets would be considered to be defiled by their approach. The old men amongst the Pulayans still say, that they were better off in the days previous to their emancipation, for they were then well fed, married, and looked after by their masters, while they are now left to a great extent to shift for themselves. Though slavery has now been abolished for many years, the

1. Logan's Manual of Malabar, pages 148 to 151.

name slave, *valliyal*, (a person receiving *valli*, the allowance of paddy given to a slave) still survives, and there is bondage real though not nominal. There are *jenmies* (landlords) and farmers in the State owning twenty, thirty and even more than a hundred Pulayans who work under them and are satisfied with the two or two and a half measures of paddy doled out to them as wages for their hard work in the fields during the day and for watching the crops at night. Now-a-days, their masters are afraid of their running away, but do nothing to improve their condition, and their wages are still at the rates above referred to. In some places that I visited, I found I was regarded with suspicion, as it was thought, that I was being employed by the Government, with a view to loosening the existing bond between the Pulayans and their masters. Nevertheless their condition is slowly changing. They have begun to understand that they are no longer in a state of bondage under their masters. Some go to plantations in the Wynaad or to work in the Kolar gold mines, where they get high wages for their work and missionaries of various societies do their best to improve their social condition.

Internal Structure of the caste :

There are numerous classes of subdivisions among the Pulayans, and though all are regarded as degraded by the higher castes, they are as punctilious as to shades of difference between them and as to questions of social precedence, as are their more fortunate masters, the Nairs. The total number of sub-divisions in Malabar according to the last census statistics is thirty-seven, of which the most important were Kanakka Cherumans, Pula Cherumans, Eralans, Koodans, and Rolans. In the northern parts of the Cochin State, especially in the Chittur Taluk, the following sub-tribes which are merely endogamous septs are found in the order of social precedence in which it is stated : Eralans or Era Cherumans so called because of their being permitted to come as far as the eaves (era) of the Izhuva houses, Konga Cherumans, Koodans, Kanakka Cherumans, and Pula Cherumans or Pasu Pulayans. In the southern parts of the State, the Pulayans are divided into several classes, namely, Kulamary or Valluva Pulayans, Vettuvans or Vettuva Pulayans, and Thanda Pulayans. There are quite different divisions in Travancore. The fact is that in rural parts they form a kind of isolated community consisting of one or two sub-tribes, each professing its superiority to the other with no intermarriage nor interdining, and professing total ignorance of their brethren in other localities. Hence a proper classification in their order of social precedence becomes difficult, each sub-tribe claiming superiority to the other. Each sub-tribe is further subdivided into *illamas* or koottams (family groups) which

are ascertained during marriage negotiations so as to avoid connections being formed between the members of the same family group. The following are the names of some of them obtained from the Pulayans around Cochin : Thandelathu Koottam, Moothanam Koottam, Nambiyar Koottam, Thachili Koottam, Pulikunnethu Koottam, Paruthi Koottam, Kochanam Koottam, Mannathu Koottam, and Naringana Koottam. These names are either the house names of their masters or those of the masters whose slaves their ancestors may have been in former times. Invariably the Koottams go after the names of their masters.

Habitations :

Their habitations, which are generally called *madams*, are put up on the banks of fields, or nestle under trees along their borders, so that they may watch the crops after the toils of the day are over. They are so situated as to be far out of the way of polluting high caste people. The Pulayans were discouraged from erecting better accommodation under the idea, that, if they were more comfortable they would be less disposed to move as cultivation required. Their huts are similar to those of the poorest among other low castes. The floor is slightly raised and is generally damp during the rainy months. The roof which is thatched either with palmyra or plaited cocoanut leaves, is supported on four or six bamboo or wooden posts, with the sides covered with bamboo mats, palmyra leaves, plaited cocoanut leaves or reeds. In some parts huts with mud walls and thatched roofs are also seen. There is only a single room and the door is low and made of a single palm leaf or reeds. Sometimes a small low opening serves the purpose of the door. The fire-place is in one corner of the hut, and cooking is done inside the hut in the rainy months and outside during summer. These huts are deficient in ventilation and the air is always more or less foul. In the Chittur and Palghat Taluks, the huts of the Kanakka Cherumans are made of mud walls, with wooden doors and roofs thatched with palmyrah leaves. They are provided with verandahs either in front or on all sides, and are situated in small compounds (*parambas*) in the midst of paddy fields. Their furniture consists only of a few mats and their utensils of a few pots for cooking and for keeping water, and a few dishes for holding food. In addition to these, I found in the huts examined a wooden mortar and a few pestles for pounding rice, several pans, a few fish baskets, a few cocoanut shells for keeping salt and other things, a few baskets, some big and small, (in one of which their dirty cloths were kept), some mats of their own making, and a vessel for containing toddy. These form the total property of a Pulayan and seem to satisfy all his requirements.

Puberty Customs:

When a Pulaya girl comes of age, she is lodged in a separate hut for seven days, during which food is served to her at a distance, and she is forbidden to go out and play with her friends. On the morning of the first day, a song called *malapattu* is sung for an hour by a Parayan to the accompaniment of drum and pipe, for which he gets seven annas worth of paddy and his assistants get three annas each. As soon as this is over, seven cocoanuts are broken, and the water is poured over the head of the girl, and the broken halves are distributed among the five vallons and the seven girls who are invited to take part in the performance of the ceremony, besides caste-men of the *kara* (village). On the morning of the seventh day, the vallons of the kara and the caste-men are again invited, when the latter bring with them some rice, vegetables, and toddy to defray the expenses of the feast. Some more water is also poured on the girl's head at the time and each of the *Vallans* is paid a measure of rice. At dawn, the chief host, the mother of the girl gives oil to the seven Pulaya maidens and to her daughter for an oil bath, when they go to a neighbouring tank or stream to bathe and return home. The girl is then nearly dressed and adorned in her best. Her face is painted yellow and marked with spots of various colours. She stands before a few Parayans, who play on their flute and drum to cast out the demons, if any, from her body. The girl leaps with frantic movements if she is possessed with them, in which case, the Parayans transfer them to a tree close by, driving a nail into the trunk after due offerings. If she is not possessed with them, she remains unmoved, and the Parayans bring the music to a close. The girl is again bathed with her companions who are all treated to a dinner, and the ceremony comes to an end with a feast to the caste-men. The ceremony described above is performed by the Valluva Pulayans in the Southern parts, near and around the suburbs of Cochin, but is unknown among other sub-tribes elsewhere. It is a belief among these and other people that girls and women during the menses are under the malign influence of demons which are cast out by ceremonial offerings.

Marriage customs:

Among the Pulayans marriage is endogamous so far as the sub-tribe is concerned. It is, however, strictly prohibited among the members of the same *kottam* (clan). In the Chittur and Palghat Taluks the members of the same village do not generally marry, for they believe that their ancestors may have been the slaves of some local landlord, and may have descended from the same parents, though their relationship may be forgotten. In many places a young man marries the daughter of his maternal uncle.

The marriage customs of the Pulayans are different in different places. In more than half a dozen places where my notes have been taken, they vary with the subdivisions of the caste. In the southern part of the State the Pulaya girls are married before they are grown up, while in other places, this custom is not followed. Where it is followed, and near and around Cochin the custom is universal, it is considered a great disgrace for a girl to remain unmarried. In some cases if a girl is too poor to be married, the caste-men of her *kara* or village raise a subscription and marry her to one of themselves. In some subdivisions the relations of girls, who fail to obtain husbands for them, lose all their rights over to the head-men (*vallons*) who either married them to their own sons or sold them to slave-masters.

The marriage customs of the Pulayans, as has been said, vary in different places as their subdivisions. When a Pulayan wished to marry, he applies to his master who is bound to defray his expenses. He gives two rupees to the bride's master, one rupee seven annas to her mother, four and a half annas worth of cloth to the bride, seven annas worth of cloth to the bridegroom, and about three rupees for the marriage feast. In all the expenses may come about ten rupees. The ceremony consists in putting a brass ring on the bride's finger, which is followed by a feast to friends and relations of the *kara* (village) who are invited. The wife accompanies the bridgroom on the following day. If the husband becomes tired of his wife, he may, with her consent, give her to any other person who will pay the expenses incurred at the marriage. In some cases the husband and wife serve different masters, and the women of this class are given in usufruct, scarcely ever in complete possession. The eldest male child belongs to the master of the father; the rest of the family remain with the mother, while young, but being the property of the owner revert to him when of an age to be useful. She also follows in the event of her becoming widow.

In some places a man brings a woman to his master and says that he wishes to keep her as his wife. She receives her allowance of rice, but she may leave her husband when she likes, and is not particular in changing one spouse for another. The husband's master by the old law maintains his wife and children until they are able to work, when the eldest son becomes his property and the other children the property of the mother's master.

In other places the marriage ceremonies of the Era Cherumans are more formal. The bridegroom's party goes to the bride's hut and presents rice and betel-leaf to the head of the family, and then asks for the bride. Consent is indicated by the bride's brother placing some rice and cloth in the midst of the assembly and throwing rice

on the head-man of the caste who is present. On the appointed day the bridegroom goes to the hut with two companions and presents the girl with cloth and three rupees two annas. From that day he is regarded as her husband, but the girl cannot be taken to the hut until the ceremony called *Mangalam* is performed. The bridegroom's party goes in procession to the bride's hut where a feast awaits them. The man presents sweetmeats to the girl's brother. Then the caste priest recites the names and the family history of the two persons and the names of their masters and deities. They are seated in a pandal before a lamp and heap of rice, when one of the assembly gets up and delivers a speech on the duties of married life, touching upon the evils of theft, cheating, adultery, and the like. Rice is thrown on the heads of the couple and the man prostrates himself at the feet of the elders. The next day they proceed to the husband's hut, and rice is again thrown on their heads. Then the party assembled makes presents to the pair, a part of which goes to the priest and a part to the master of the husband.

Among the Konga Cherumans, a young man who wishes to marry sends his sister to tie the *tali* and bring her to his family. The custom is borrowed from the Izhuvans of the same Taluk.

In the Oorakam Proverthy of the Trichur Taluk, where my notes were taken, I find that the marriage prevalent among the Pulayans of that locality and the neighbouring parts is a rude form of *sambandham* (free will union), the form of marriage which prevails among the Nairs, whose serfs a large majority of them are. A young woman's husband is called a *sambandhakaran*, and he comes to her hut with his wages after the day's work and stays there for night. Both may serve under different masters. A somewhat similar custom prevails among the Pula Cherumans of the Trichur Taluk. The connection is called *merungu kooduka* which means to tame or to associate with the girl. A young man who wishes to marry goes to the parents of the young woman and asks their consent to associate with their daughter. If they approve, he goes to her at night as often as he likes. The woman seldom comes to stay in the husband's hut and only with the permission of the *thamar* (landlord).

The Kanakka Cherumans in the northern parts of the State have the following form of marriage. The preliminary arrangements for the wedding are made in the bride's hut in the presence of her parents, relations, and the caste-men of the village. The auspicious day for the wedding is fixed, and a sum of one rupee seven annas is paid as the bride's price. Those assembled are treated to a dinner. A similar entertainment is also held at the bridegroom's hut to the

parents of the bride, her uncle, and others who come to see the bridegroom. On the morning of the day fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom and his party go to the bride's hut where they are welcomed and seated on mats in a small pandal put up for the occasion. A *muri* (a piece of cloth), a *thoda* (ear disc), and two small mundus (pieces of cloth) are the marriage presents to the bride elect. A vessel full of paddy, a lighted lamp, and a cocoanut are placed on a conspicuous part in the booth, to which the bride is taken and seated by the side of the bridegroom. With prayers to their gods for the blessings on the couple, the bridegroom ties the *tali* round the neck of the bride. The ceremony is soon closed with a grand feast to the guests and others invited to attend the wedding. Toddy is an indispensable item of the feast. During the night they amuse themselves by dancing a kind of wild dance in which both men and women joyfully take part. The next day the bridegroom goes to his own hut along with his wife an his party. The guests are entertained in his hut. After a week, two persons from the bride's hut come to invite the bridegroom and the bride to the hut of the latter, where the bridegroom stays for a few days, and returns home. The marriage is now practically over and he goes to the bride's hut as often as he likes. Before the bridegroom enters the pandal, the bride has to go seven times round the pandal with seven virgins also before her. By a strange custom the bride's mother does not approach the bridegroom, least it may cause ceremonial pollution.

The marriage customs of the Valluva Pulayans in the southern parts of the State especially in the Cochin-Kanayanur Taluk are more formal and interesting. The average age of a young man for marriage is between fifteen and twenty, while that of a girl is between ten and twelve. Before a young Pulayan thinks of marriage, he has to contact a formal and voluntary friendship with another young Pulayan of the same age and locality. If he is not socially inclined, his father selects one for him from a Pulaya family of the same or higher status, but not of the *sameilam*. If the two parents agree among themselves, they meet in the hut of either of them with a view to solemnising it. They fix a day for the ceremony and invite their *vallon* and the caste-men of the village. The guests are treated to a feast in the usual Pulaya fashion. The chief guest and the host eat together from the same dish. After the feast, the father of the boy who has to obtain a friend for his son enquires of the vallon and those assembled there, whether he may be permitted to buy friendship by the payment if money. They give their permission and the boy's father gives the money to the father of the selected friend. The two boys then claps hands and they are never to quarrel. The few friend from that date, becomes a member of the boy's family. He comes in and goes out of their hut as he

likes. There is no ceremony performed in it, nor anything done without consulting him. He is thus an inseparable factor in all ceremonies especially in marriage.

The first observance in marriage consists in seeing the girl. The bridegroom elect, his friend, father, and maternal uncle go to the bride's hut to see whether they are satisfied with the girl. If the wedding is not to take place at an early date, the bridegroom's parents have to keep up their claim on the bride elect, by sending presents to her guardians. The presents, generally sweetmeats, are taken to her hut by the bridegroom and his friend, who are well fed by the mother of the girl and are given a few necessaries, when they take leave of her the next morning. The next observance is the marriage negotiation, which consists in giving the bride's price and choosing an auspicious day in consultation with the local astrologer (Kaniyan). On the evening previous to the wedding, the friends and relations of the bridegroom are treated to a feast in his hut. Next day at dawn, the bridegroom and his friend purified by a bath, and each neatly dressed in a white cloth with a handkerchief tied over it, and with a knife stuck into their girdles, go to the hut of the bride elect, accompanied by a party of friends. They are all well received and seated on mats spread on the floor. Upon a mat specially made by the bride's mother are placed three measures of rice, some particles of gold a brass plate a plank with a white and red cover on it. The bridegroom after making seven round around the pandal, stands on the plank and the bride soon follows making three rounds, when four women hold a canopy of cloth over her head and seven virgins go in front of her. The bride then stands beside her man and then they face each other. The girl's guardian puts on the wedding necklace, a gold bead in a string. Musical tunes are played, and prayers are offered up to the sun to bless the necklace which is tied round the neck of the girl. The bridegroom's friend standing behind tightens the knot already made. The religious part of the ceremony is now over, and the bridegroom and the bride are taken inside the hut, and food is served to them in the same leaf. Next the guest are fed, and then they begin the *poli* or subscription. A piece of silk or any red cloth is spread on the floor or a brass plate is placed before the husband. The guests assembled put in a few annas and take leave of the chief host as they depart. The bride is soon taken to the bridegroom's hut, and her parents visit her the next day and get a consideration in return. On the fourth day the bridegroom and the bride bath and worship the local deity, and on the seventh day they again return to the bride's hut, when the *tali* is formally removed from the neck of the girl who is bedecked with brass beads round her neck, rings in her ears, and armlets. The next morning, the mother-in-law presents her son-

in-law and his friend with a few necessaries of life and sends them home with her daughter.

At a wedding among the Cherumans of Malabar, when the wedding party sets out they form a large gang of people, and at intervals, the men set to at stick play, the women singing in chorus to encourage them. Let us see-let us see—the stick play (*vaditallu*). Oh Cherumar! At their weddings men and women mingle indiscriminately in dancing. On the arrival of the bride at the bridegroom's hut, she is expected to weep loudly and deplore her fate; and, on entering, she must tread on a pestle placed across the threshould. The custom prevails among the Pula Cherumans and is dying out.

In the northern parts of the State there is a relic of the primitive custom, namely, that a young woman before marriage mates with one or two paramours with the connivance of her parents. Eventually one of them marries her, but this illicit union ceases at once after marriage.

Thanda Marriage :

The Thanda Pulaya girls are married either before or after they come of age, but there is another ceremony performed for every girl during her seventh or eight year. This is called the *Tahanda Kalyanam* or *Thanda* marriage. It consists in having the girl dressed, in an auspicious hour, usually at twelve O' clock on the day appointed with a leafy garment made of the *thanda* plant by woman, generally a relative, or, in her absence, one that is selected for the purpose. The relations and friends are invited and entertained with rice. curry, toddy and fish obtained from the back-water. The ceremony comes to an end after meals. Before this ceremony, the girl is devoid of any dress except the tender bark of an areca plant to prevent exposure. The *thanda* garment can be worn only after the preformance of this ceremony.

Among the Thanda Pulayans, the wedding presents to the girl consist of a piece of cloth and a marriage badge (*tali*) made of conch shell. The price of the girl, which is usually six and a quarter to ten and a half rupees, is given by the parents of the bridegroom before the performance of the ceremony. Of this amount, one rupee ten and half annas goes to the brother of the bride's father; similar sums are given to the bride's maternal uncle and *thamar* or the landlord, while the balance is received by the parents of the bride. The *tali* is tied round the girl's neck at the suspcious hour usually at twelve O'clock, after which the guests assembled are sumptuoly fed with rice, curry, fish,and toddy. The girl is then taken to her landlord who gives one rupee worth of paddy and all the cocoanuts of the

tree on which she happens to lean. The marriage is over by the evening, when the bride is taken to the hut of the bridegroom. At the tim of departure, the bride's uncle catching hold of her hand gives her in charge of the bridgeriom's uncle. Usually nobody accompanies the girl to her husband's hut at the time.

Polygamy and polyandry are almost unknown but the former is common among the Tanda Pulayans. The Kanakka Cherumans of Palghat consider it a disgrace to have two wives located either in the same on different huts. Men who have two wives are not admitted into their society. A Thanda Pulayan may take two or three wives all married in the usual fashion.

A woman, after the death of her husband, may marry anybody she likes, except her brother-in-law. If she marries again, the children, if any, go with the mother to the new husband and, if sufficiently grown up, they stay in the mother's family, and live by their own labour. A woman who does not like her husband may leave him after returning the money spent on her marriage, while a man who wished to relinquish his wife, is not entitled to any portion of the money spent. In the former case the money is generally provided by the new husband.

Pregnancy and Childbirth :

During the seventh month of pregnancy of a young women, the ceremony of *Pulikudi* or tamarind juice drinking is performed for her, similar to that Performed for the young women of other castes. This is also an occasion for finding out whether or not she is possessed, and, if she is, of casting out the devils that are in her. The wife is brought back to the hut of her own family. The devil-driver erects a tentlike structure, and covers it with plantain bark and leaves of the cocoanut tree. The flower of an area palm is fixed at the apex. A cocoanut palm flower is cut out and covered with a piece of cloth, the cut part being exposed. The woman is seated in front of the tentlike structure with the flower in her lap, which symbolizes the yet unborn child. The water of a green cocoanut in spoons made of the leaf of the jack tree is poured over the cut end by those assembled, namely, the *vallon,* guardian, the brothers, and sisters present. The devil-driver then breaks open the flower, and, by looking at the fruits, predicts the sex of the child to be born. If there are fruits at the end nearest the stem, the child will live, and if the number of fruits is even, there will be twins. There will be a death if any fruit is not well formed. The devil-driver repeats an incantation whereby he invokes the aid of Kali who is belived to be present in the tent. He fans the woman with the flwer, and she throws up rice and a flower on it. He repeats another incantation.

which is a prayer to Kali, to cast out the devil from her body. This *margical* ceremony is called *Garbha-bali* (pregnancy offering). The structure, with the offering, is taken up and placed in a corner of the compound reserved for gods. The devotes then goes through the remaining forms of the ceremoney. She pours into twenty-one leaf spoons placed in front of the tent, a mixture of cow's milk, water of the tender cocoanut, flowers, and turmeric powder. Then she walks round the tent seven times, and with a palm flower sprinkles the same mixture on it. Next she throws a handful of rice and paddy, after revolving each handful of rice round her head and then she covers the offering with a piece of cloth. She now returns and her husband puts into her mouth seven globules of prepared tamarind which is believed to have a medicinal effect. The devil-driver now rubs her body with Phlomis petals and paddy, and thereby finds out whether she is possesse or not, and if she is, the devil is driven out with the usual offerings. The devil-driver gets, for his services, twelve measures and a half of paddy and two pieces of cloth. Similar customs also prevail among other castes. The husband should not, during this period, get shaved.

When a young woman is about to give birth to a child, she is lodged in a small hut near her dwelling, and is attended by her mother and a few elderly women of the family. After the child is born, the mother and the baby are bathed. She is purified by a bath on the seventh day. The woman who has acted as midwife draws on the ground seven lines at an interval of two feet from one another, and spreads over them aloe leaves torn to shreads. Then with burning sticks in her hand, the mother with the baby goes seven times over the leaves backwards and forwards, and the mother is purified. For these seven days the father should not eat anything made of rice. He manages to live on toddy, fruit, and other things, it is customary during these days for the friends of the woman to visit the hut where she is and see the baby and the mother. The mother and the baby remain in the lodge for sixteen days, when she is purified by a bath so as to be free from pollution, after which she goes to the main hut. Ter *enangathy sweeps* the hut *and* compound, and sprinkles water mixed with caw-dung on her body, as she returns after the bath. In some places the barks of *athi* (Ficus Racemosa) and *ithi* (Ficus Indica) are well beaten and bruised and mixed with water. Some milk is also added to this mixture and this is sprinkled both inside and outside the hut. Only after this do they think that the hut and the compound are purified. Among the Cherumans of Palghat, the period of pollution lasts for ten days. The expenses connected with this are defrayed by the husband. The woman is under no special treatment after delivery. Her body is rubbed with oil and turmeric which are washed off by a bath in warm water.

The husband also bathes to cleanse himself from pollution. The mother eats the usual food, rice, and fish or fowl, and for two months, she takes a ball of an acid pulp of the fruit of Garcina roxburgha and black papper ground, both morning evening. To the new born child, water of green cocoanut is given either on the third or the fourth day, to supply the deficiency in mother's milk. The child is bathed in warm water and after ten days it is rubbed with oil and turmeric which are soon removed. The limbs are shaken, the nose gently pulled out, and the child is nursed for two years.

The naming ceremony falls on the twentyeighth day after birth. The day is one of festivity to friends and relations. The names in common use among men are, Kurmumban, Chathan, Thevan, Anjanan, Thuluvan, Maniyan, Vallon, Vithon, Kochen, Oonniyalan, Payinkili, Charalan, Mathakili, Izhuvathi, Kurali, while those among women are Kurumba, Punala, Mayithanam, Azhaki, Kunjala, Thiruma, Pazhukka, Thenankili, Cherukoti, Cherunila, Oma, Puna, and Anathara.

The ceremony of ear-boring takes place during the sixth or seventh year of a boy or girl. The *vallon,* who is invited, bores the ears with sharp needle. The wound is healed by applying cocoanut oil, and the hole is gradually widened by inserting cork, a wooden plug, or a roll of plam leaves. The caste-men of the village are invited to be present and fed. The landlord gives the parents of the child a rupee worth of paddy and this, together with what the guests bring, goes to defray the expenses of the ceremony. After the meal, they go with drum-beating to the house of the *thamar* (landlord) and present him with beaten rice which is distributed among his servants. The ear-borer gets, for his services, eight annas worth of paddy, a cocoanut, a vessel of rice and four annas. The hair of the child is cut when it began to walk.

Adultery and divorce :

A woman found to be going wrong with a parayan is outcasted, and she becomes a convert to Christianity or Mahomadanism. If it takes place within the caste, she is well thrashed and prevented from resorting to the bad practice. In certain cases when the illicit connection becomes public, the caste-men of the village meet with their *vallon* (head-man), and conduct a regular enquiry into matter and pronounce verdict upon evidence. If a young woman becomes pregnant before marriage, her lover, should be a Pulayan, is compelled to marry her, as otherwise she is placed under a ban. If both are married, the lover is well thrashed and fined. The woman is taken before a *thandan* (an Izhuva headman) who, after enquiry, gives her the water of a green cocoanut which she is asked to drink, when she is believed to be freed from the sin. Her husband may take her back

again as wife or she is at liberty to marry another. The *thandan* gets a few annas, betel-leaves, nuts, and tobacco. Both the woman's father and the lover are fined, and the fine is spent in the purchase of toddy which is indulged in by those present there at the time. Inclinations to such wicked purposes are said to be rare among these half starving people nevertheless, instances of boys and girls of very handsome appearance were met with by me in the course of my investigations, which are the products of clandestine intercourse with the members of other castes. There is a curious custom current among the Thanda Pulayans, that, when one of them is thrashed with a *thanda* garment he is so much disgraced in the eyes of his fellowmen that he is not admitted into their society.

CHAPTER VI

THE PULAYANS

Inheritance :

Both systems of inheritance, namely, succession through the son and that through the nephew, are found amongst the Pulayans. When questioned as to which custom they follow, they invariably answer the latter, while at the same time they say that they look after their sons and daughters properly. The truth is that they have no property to bequeath, but merely subsist on the wages of their work. In many cases they follow the custom of their Nair landlords. The Kanakka Cherumans of Palghat follow the system of inheritance through sons.

Tribal Assembly :

The Pulayans have a tribal assembly which consists of the elderly members of the caste, who meet on all important occasions affecting the welfare of the caste. They have their *vallon* or *valiyavan* (great man) who presides at their marriage, funeral and other ceremonies, and decides all disputes among the Pulayans with the aid of the caste-men of the village. He is entitled to a fee for all his services, as also to the following privileges, namely, an umbrella of palm leaves slightly concave with a long handle, the bracelet of honour, the box for keeping betel-leaves and a long ear-ring made of gold. As the president of the elders, he is the supreme judge and law-giver or the expounder of the tribal custom, and his verdict is binding in all cases of theft, adultery, and the like. As has been already said, his presence and sanction are necessary for all marriage and funeral ceremonies. In fact he is responsible for the good behaviour of his people. The other functionaries are the Karuppan and the Vadikkaran, Karuppan is a corrupt form of KURIPPAN, which means one who makes notes or writes. He is the officer who is next in dignity to the *vallon*, and helps the *vallon* in the exercise of his authority. In the trial of offences, he takes the chief part in sifting evidence, and declares the facts of the case. The Vadikkaran is the constable who brings the parties to the suit, keeps order, and inflicts punishment on the offender.

In the Palghat Taluk of south Malabar, it is said that the Cherumans in former times used to hold grand meetings for cases of theft, adultery, divorce, etc. at *Kannati kutti vattal**. These

*Beneath a large banyan tree at Kannati near Palghat.

assemblies consisted of the members of their caste in the localities between the Valayar forests and Karimpuzha (in the Valluvanad Taluk), and in these between the northern and southern hills. It is also said that their deliberations used to last for several days together, and that this was their tribal court. In the event of anybody's committing a crime, the punishment inflicted on him was a fine of a few rupees or sometimes a sound thrashing. To prove his innocence, an accused man had to swear,

"கண்ணுடி சொரூபம் அருகே ஞான் செய்திட்டில்ல"

[By Kannati Swaroopam (assembly) I have not done it]. This assembly was held so sacred that no Cheruman, who had committed a crime, would swear falsely by it. As time went on, they found it difficult to meet and so left off assembling together. At present, for all similar cases, they invite the head-men and the elderly members of several villages to come together for deliberation and decision. For all cases of adultery a fine of eighteen rupees or thirty-three rupees four annas, was imposed upon the parents of the woman and her lover. Such a woman was allowed to marry one or two years after the birth of the child.

Religion :

The Pulayans are pure animists, but are slowly adopting the higher forms of worship. Their gods are Parakutty, Karinkutty, Chathan and the spirits of their ancestors. Offerings to these gods are given on *Karkadakam* and *Makara sankaranthis, Onam Vishu* and other auspicious days, when one of the Pulayans present turns a *velichapad* and speaks to the assembly as if by inspiration. They are also devote worshippers of Kali or Bhagavati, whose aid is invoked in all times of danger and illness, and they take part in the village festivals celebrated in honour of her. Kodungallur Bhagavathi is their guardian deity, and she is rudely represented by an image or stone on a raised piece of ground in the open air. Very probably, Kali has been identified with the village goddess of the Dravidians, who watches over the welfare of the inhabitants of the villages in rural parts. The Pulayans also believe that spirits exercise an influence over the members of their families, and, therefore, regular offerings are given to them every year on *Sankaranthi* days. Their priest is one of their own caste-men, and at the beginning of the new year, he offers to the goddessfowls, fruits, and toddy.

The chief festivals in which the Pulayans take part, are—

(1) *Pooram Vela.*—This, which may be described as the Suturnalia of Malabar, is an important festival held in the village Bhagavathi temples. It is a festival in which the members of all

castes below Brahmans take part, and it is held either in Kumbhom (February-March), or in Meenom (March-April). The Cherumans of the northern parts as well as the Pulayans of the southern parts of the State, attend the festival, and join the procession after a sumptuous meal and toddy drinking according to their custom. Toy horses are made and attached to long bamboo poles, and these are carried by the people to the neighbourhood of the temple. As they go, they leap and dance to the accompaniment of pipe and drum. One among them who acts as a *velichaped* (devil-dancer) goes in front of them, and after a good deal of dancing and lour praying in honour of the deity, they return home.

(2) *Vittu iduka.*—This festival, which consists in bringing paddy seeds to the temple of the village goddess Bhagavathi, is an important one and is celebrated on the day of *Bharani,* the second lunar day in Kumbhom (February-March). Standing at a distance assigned to them by the village authorities, where they offer prayers to Kali, they put the paddy grains, which they have brought, on a bamboo mat, apread in front of them, after which they return home.

In the Chittur Taluk of the State, there is a festival called *Kathiru,* celebrated in honour of the village goddess in the month of Vrischikam (November-December). A special feature of these festivals is the presence, at the temple of the village goddess, of a large number of domelike structures made of bamboo and plantain stems, richly ornamented and hung with flowers, leaves, and ears of corn. These structures called *Sarakoodams,* and small globular packets of palmyra leaves (*Kathirkoodus*) containing handfuls of paddy rolled up in straw, are fixed on a pair of parallel bamboo poles, and carried by the Pulayans, who, with pipe and drum, start in procession from the various farms surrounding the village, early enough to reach the temple about dusk in the evening, when they all merge into one great concourse of people, shouting, and dancing, and setting off fireworks as they advance. The former are arranged in beautiful rows in front of the village goddess, when Bengal lights are lighted, and fireworks again exhibited. The latter are thrown away among the crowds of spectators all along the route, and also on arrival at the temple. The spectators, both young and old, scramble to obtain as many of the packets of corn as possible and carry them home. They are then hung in front of the houses, for it is believed that their presence will help to promote the prosperity of the family, until the festival comes round again next year. The greater the number of trophies obtained for a family by its members, the greater, it is believed, will be the prosperity of the family. The crowds then disperse. At night the Pulayans and other serfs who have accompanied the procession to the temple are,

in the majority of cases, fed by their respective masters at their houses, and then all go back to the farms. The festival is one of the very few occasions on which Pulayans and other agrestic serfs, who are supposed to impart, so to speak, a long distance atmospheric pollution, and consequently may not approach the habitations of high caste Hindus, are freely allowed to enter villages and worship in the village temples which generally occupy the central positions in those villages.

(3) *Mandalam vilakku.*—This is a fortyone days festival held in Bhagavathi temples lasting from the first of Vrischikam (November-December), to the tenth of Dhanu (December-January). During it the temples are brightly illuminated both inside and outside at night. There is much music and drum beating at night, and offerings of cooked peas or Bengal gram and cakes are made to the goddess, after which they are distributed among those present. The forty first day, the day on which the festival terminates, is one of grand celebration, when all caste-men attend the temple. The Cherumans, Malayans and Eravallens attend the festival in Chittur. They also attend the *Konga Pada* festival there. In rural parts of the State, a kind of puppet show performance (*Olapava koothu*) is acted by Kosavans (Potters) and Tamil Chetties, in honour of the village deity to which they contribute their share of subscription. They also attend the cock festival of Cranganore and offer sacrifices of fowls there.

Funeral Customs :

When a Pulayan is dead, the caste-men in the neighbourhood are informed. An offering is made to the Kodungallur Bhagavathi who is believed to watch over their welfare, and is regarded as their ancestral deity. The relatives, one by one, bring a new piece of cloth, with rice and paddy, which are intended to be thrown over the dead, tied in the four corners of the cloth. The cloth is placed over the corpse and they cry aloud three times beating their breasts after which they retire. The corpse is then bathed, dressed, and placed on a bier. A few Parayans are invited to beat drums and to play on their musical instruments—a performance which is continued for an hour or two. After this, a few bits of plantain leaves with rice flour and paddy are placed near the corpse to serve as food for the spirit of the dead. The bier is carried to the graveyard by six bearers, three on each side. The grave is dug, and after the body covered with a piece of cloth has been lowered into it, it is filled in with earth. Twentyone small bits of leaves are placed over the grave above the spot where the mouth of the dead man would be, with a double-branched twig fixed to the centre. A cocoanut is cut open, and its water is allowed to flow in the direc-

tion of the twig which represents the dead man's mouth. Such of the members of the family as could not give him *Kanji* or boiled rice before death, now give it to him. The six bearers prostrate themselves before the corpse, three on each side of the grave. The priest then puts on the grave a ripe cocoanut and a tender one for the spirit of the dead man to eat and drink. Then all go home and indulge in toddy and *aval* (beaten rice). The priest gets twelve measures of rice, the grave diggers twelve annas, the *vallon* two annas, and the bearers each an anna. The son or the nephew is the chief mourner, who erects a mound of earth on the south side of the hut and uses it as a place of worship. For seven days, both morning and evening, he prostrate himself before it and sprinkles the water of a tender cocoanut on it, and on the eighth evening, his friends, relatives, the *vallon,* and the devil-driver assemble together. The devil-driver turns round and blows his conch, finds out the position of the ghost and whether it has taken up its abode in the mound or is kept under restraint by some deity. Should the latter be the case, the ceremony of deliverance has to be performed, after which the spirit is set up as a household deity. The chief mourner bathes early in the morning and offers a rice ball offering (*pinda bali*) to the departed spirit. This he continues for fifteen days, and on the morning of the sixteenth, the members of the family bathe to be free from pollution, and their *enangan* cleans the hut and the compound by sweeping and by sprinkling water mixed with cow-dung. He also sprinkles the same water on the members of the family as they return after their bath. The chief mourner gets shaved, bathes and returns to the hut. Some boiled rice, paddy and pieces of cocoanut are placed on a plantain leaf, and he, with the members of his family, calls on the spirit of the dead to take them. Then they all bathe again and return home. The caste-men who have assembled there by invitation are sumptuously fed. The chief mourner observes the *deeksha* (allowing the hair to grow as a sign of mourning), and after the expiry of the year a similar feast is given to the caste-men.

Occupation :

The Pulayans are by occupation agricultural labourers, and take part in every kind of agricultural work, such as fencing, ploughing, manuring, sowing, weeding, transplanting, reaping, pumping out water and putting up embankments for *kole* cultivation, thatching farm-houses and watching the gardens of their masters. The cultivation of paddy is the occupation to which they devote most attention, and the grain is not defiled though it is the product of their labour. Men, women, and children are always seen working together in their master's paddy fields which must be guarded during night against the tresspass of cattle and the depre-

dations of robbers or wild animals. They keep awake during night, shouting aloud or singing in a dull monotonous tone or beating drum to ward off the approach of cattle or wild beasts. It is astonishing to see these people sinking in water, four or five feet in depth, for the whole day without any fear of disease, to take from the back-water heavy slabs of solidified mud by means of sharp stakes, for the purpose of putting up embankments. When once they put up, they begin the pumping out of water from the field day and night by means of water wheels trodden by six, seven, or more men. Given a quantity of toddy every now and then, they can work for any length of time. During the rainy months they live from hand to month, while during the harvest they are able to save something, and it is then that they devise the means of spending what they save. It is also then that they can afford to lie ill and to call for the assistance of the devil-driver, to hold social feasts and dances, to celebrate marriages, to go to law over women's quarrels, and to give offerings to their gods. Thus, all their savings are soon squandered. During the summer months, they are in some places engaged in agriculture, while in other localities they go to the forests to bring firewood or thorn bushes for their masters. In all kinds of work, except during harvest, their wages are at the rate of work, already described. Sometimes when expressed by want or hunger, they steal the cocoanuts, areca nuts, or paddy belonging to their masters, and when they are about to be caught, they run away to distant places to work under some other landlord. If they are caught in the meanwhile, they are well thrashed. Some are found working in the houses of Syrian Christians, where Pulaya women act as sweepers, cooks, and as ricepounders. The hard work is only from six to eight months when they get, for their wages, two annas worth of paddy, which they take to the nearest shop called *mattupeedika* (exchange shop), where they purchase salt, chillies etc. for a portion of the paddy. The other portion is boiled and dried to get the rice out of it. It is then that they often prepare the *kanji* for the night's meal. It is often very late in the evening that they get their wages. Some of the Pulayans work in plantations where their wages are higher. Pulaya women are sometimes seen kneeling in water to gather in their basket any grains that may have been left in the fields after harvest. They catch fish from the back-waters, and make baskets and coarse mats for sale.

There are some curious customs connected with harvest prevalent amongst the Pulayans of the southern parts of the State. Before reaping, the Pulaya headman asks his master whether he may begin to reap. Permission having been granted, he faces to the east and puts the sickle to the stalks. The first stalks he reserves for the gods of his master, and the second for those of his caste-men.

Before threshing, the same headman takes a few stalks of corn from the sheaf intended for their gods, and sprinkles toddy on them. Another Pulayan does the same thing for the various reapers, and says, as he does so, "Come threshing corn, increase". This is called "filling the threshing floor", and each man threshes his own sheaves. When the threshing is over, the head-man puts his master's sheaf in the centre of the floor and his own at a short distance outside in order that the two sets of gods may look on with favour. The head-man is privileged to measure the corn sitting with his two assistants, saying, "Come paddy, increase", as he counts. He has a peculiar method of counting. The first measure he calls "Good paddy," the second, "Bad paddy", the third, "Good paddy", and so on alternately, the odd numbers being called "good paddy", and the even "bad paddy", until he has counted ten. The eleventh is the share of the reaper. He takes a handful of it and places it in a basket, half of which falls to him, to his assistants, away in charity to the poor men that come to the threshing place.

In the northern parts of the State, before reaping is begun, offering of goats, fowls and cocoanuts are made to Mallan and Muni. The Cheruma head-man faces east and applies his sickle to the stalks, reserving the first stalk for the deities above mentioned. The corn is threshed and measured by one of them, and, as he does so, he says *labham* (profit) for one, *chetham* (loss) for two, and so on alternately up to ten. The eleventh becomes the share of the reapers who thus get one-tenth of the total quantity of corn threshed. The poor people that attend the spot at the time are also given a handful of the grain.

After reaping, the members of the castes named below receive a small portion of the corn and straw for the services rendered by them to the farmers in the course of the months during which cultivation has been carried on. A large heap, sufficient to produce a few measures of paddy is given to each of the following:—(1) The Carpenters, for making and repairing ploughs, etc. (2) The Blacksmiths, for making sickles, knives, and other tools. (3) The Parayans, for lifting and placing the loads of straw on the heads of the Cherumans who have to carry them to the farm-yard. (4) The Mannan or Washerman, for keeping birds, insects, etc. away from the fields by magic. (5) The Vilkurup, for treating the Cherumans when they are ill and for shampooing them when wanted. (6) The Kaniyan or Astrologer, for informing them of the auspicious times for ploughing, sowing, transplanting and reaping and also of the time for giving rice, vegetables, oil, etc. to the Cherumans during the *Onam* festival. A small portion of the field near the reshut of the Pulaya watchman is left unreaped, the crop on which gives the watchman about ten annas worth of paddy. The

Cherumans who are engaged in reaping get two heaps of corn each for every field. For measuring the corn from the farm-yard, a Cheruman gets an anna of paddy in addition to his daily wages. One rupee eight annas worth of paddy are also set apart for the local village deity. During the month of Karkadakam, the masters of the Cherumans give every Cheruman a fowl, some oil, garlic, mustard, anise seeds, pepper, and turmeric. They prepare a decoction of seeds and boil the flesh of the fowl in it, and on this they feast for three days, during which they are allowed to take rest. Three day's wages are also given in advance. This more nourishing diet and the rest are intended to give them strength.

Social Status :

As regards social status, Pulayans eat at the hands of all castemen above them, but abstain from eating the food prepared by the Velakkathalavans (barbers), Mannans (Washermen), Panans, Vettuvans, Parayans, Nayadis, Ulladans, Malayans and Kadars. The Pulayans in the southern parts of the State have to stand at a distance of ninety feet from Brahmans and sixty-four feet from Nairs, and at shorter distances from the lower castes according to their position in the social scale. They are polluted by Pula Cherumans, Parayans, Nayadis and Ulladans. The Kanakka Cherumans of the Chittur Taluk pollute Era Cherumans and Konga Cherumans by touch and by approach within a distance of seven or eight feet, and are themselves polluted by Pula Cherumans, Parayans and Vettuvans, who have to stand at some distance for them. Pulayans and Vettuvans bathe when they approach one another, for as regards their status, there is a point of dispute as to who are superior to the other. Pulayans live far away from the vicinity of the high caste-men, and cannot approach within a hundred and twenty feet of the outer wall of the temples of the high castes. They are denied admission to the market, and must stand at a distance to make their purchases or sales. They are a debased ignorant race, and appear almost as timid as hares at the approach of human beings. A European can scarcely succeed in coming near them, as their eyes and ears are always on the watch for strangers, and they rush away at their approach, in spite of every attempt to stop them. They rarely go along the public roads, but if they do, they keep looking about to see if any person of a higher caste is near, and if there is, they dare not proceed. When on or near a road, they shout to give notice or warning of their approach, as their presence within a certain distance causes pollution to the people of the superior castes. When defiled by the touch of a Nayadi, a Cheruman has to bathe in seven tanks and let a few drops of blood flow out from one of his fingers. A Brahman who enters into

the compound of a Pulayan, has to change his holy thread, and take *Panchagavyam* so as to be purified from pollution. In this connection it is curious to note that Malayans who have sometimes been said to be inferior in status to Pulayans are above them; for, a Malayan considers himself to be defiled by the touch, or by approach within a certain distance, of a Pulayan, and bathes to be free from pollution. Further a Malayan stands at a less distance from the high caste-men than the Pulayans or the Cherumans do. The Valluva Pulayan of the Trichur Taluk fasts for three days living on toddy and green cocoanuts, if he happens to touch a cow that has recently calved. He has also to fast for three days after his wife has had a child.

Food :

Rice, vegetables, fish, and any quantity of Toddy form their chief articles of food. Early in the morning they drink the remains of the *kanji* or rice-water prepared during the previous night, but those who live in the southern parts of the State are said not to do this. They take two meals a day and at them partake of fish and toddy whenever they can procure them. When the rice is half boiled, fish and vegetables are put in, and the mixture thus made is eaten. Sometimes when a Pulayan keeps watch in the fields at night, his wife catches some fish, gathers some vegetables, and gives him rice and curry in the field. If she fails to catch fish, she takes the boiled rice, salt, and chillies, and on her way to him, she catches a fish or two, which she puts inside the pot, and the Pulayan eats the mixture with relish. The husband eats the food from the rice basket, and the wife from the pot. It is the privilege of the wife to eat the remains of what the husband has eaten. It often happens that they have nothing to eat on days on which they do not work, and though they work hard, they often suffer from want of food. Like all slaves they form evil habits of stealing, sensuality drunkenness, and vice which produce or increase suffering. Their lot is a hard one. In rural parts, very early in the morning, they may be seen going with a pot or leaf-basket to their masters' houses for the remains of food and instructions for the day's work. They are kept toiling all day manuring, planting, weeding, and transplanting with the sun or rain beating upon their naked heads and often with their feet in the mire or water several feet deep. In the evening after their hard work, when they return to their huts hungry or fatigued, they have to prepare their food which consists of rice with some pepper and salt or perhaps some curry and before their meal is prepared, it is about ten O'Clock or sometimes even later. They hunt for crabs, tiny fish, snails in the fields, the eggs of red ants, or winged white ants, or anything else they can get. They abstain from eating beef, and therefore rank above the Parayans. The Pula

Cherumans, on the contrary kill cows when they can afford to do so, and eat the beef and sell the hide. Instances of cow killing by the Parayans and Pula Cherumans are frequent in rural parts.

Dress and Personal Adornment:

As regards dress, the men wear round the loins *mundus* which seldom extend below the knees and are worn until they fall to pieces. They wear a similar dirty cloth on their shoulders. Kanakka Cherumans in the northern parts, and Pulayans in the southern parts, shave their heads clean, while the Era Cherumans, Konga Cherumans, and Pula Cherumans grow a tuft of hair on the top of their heads. They are seldom seen with any ornaments on. Women wear a kacha, a piece of cloth seven cubits in length, round the loins, and seldom cover their breasts. They wear a black thread round the loins to which is attached a strip of cloth. The hair on the head is neither well parted nor oiled, but is merely tied into a knot pointing upward and slightly inclined to the back of the head. The ear holes are sufficiently dilated to contain wooden plugs, by the side of which there is another small hole containing ten to fifteen small iron rings. These latter are seen among the Pulaya women of Chalakudi and not in other localities. A necklace of glass beads of European manufacture, long enough to go several times, is worn round the neck. Brass armlets, sometimes more than a dozen in number, are worn round each arm, and sometimes they are so numerous as to extend as far as the elbow.

Games:

The Pulayans are fond of music and dancing, their musical instruments being the pipe and the drum. Their dances and games appear to be connected in some way with their religious observances. Their favourite dance is the *Kole kali* or club dance. A party of ten or twelve men, provided with two sticks, each a yard in length, stand in a circle, and move round, striking at the sticks and keeping time with their feet and singing at the same time. The circle is alternately widened and narrowed. It is an exciting game. The *Vatta kali* is another kind of wild dance. This also requires a party of ten or twelve men, and sometimes young women also join them. The party move in a circle, clapping their hands while they sing a kind of rude song. Another of their performances is called the *Thattinmel kali* which is intended to propitiate the goddess Bhagavathi. Four wooden poles are firmly stuck into the ground, two of which are connected by two horizontal pieces of wood, over which planks are arranged. A party of Pulayans dance on the top of this to the music of their pipe and drum. This is generally erected

in front of the Bhagavathi temple, and the dancing takes place immediately after the harvest. They have also a circular dance performed on the occasion of marriage celebrations by women.

Missionary work :

Much missionary work is being carried on among the Pulayans. The following information has been obtained through my correspondence with the Christian Societies in the State. In the Archdiocese of Verapoly, a few hundreds of cases of conversion of the Pulayans to Christianity take place every year, and the converts are given secular primary instruction. Their moral and religious instruction is attended to in a special manner. The reverend A. E. David, of the Church Mission Society of Trichur, says:— "We have been working among the Pulayans for the last thirty-five years in and around Trichur. There are two hundreds of Pulaya converts in two places, and they have been very much raised from their low state of degradation—their mode of living, their manners and position they now occupy, are vastly superior to what their fellow-men enjoy. Many of their men, women, and children are taught reading and writing, and their girls needle work also. One boy and girl have passed the Lower Secondary Examination and this is the highest standard they have reached in education. There are some boys in the Upper Primary classes reading English. A school for them was started in a rural part, which went on well for some time, but was abolished owing to the opposition of the masters of the Pulayans. In the Kunnamkulam Pastorate, there are, I hear, twelve families of Pulaya converts consisting of thirteen men, eighteen women, and twenty-five children, making a total of fifty-six persons in all". The Reverend P. J. Joshua says that as soon as a Pulayan becomes a convert, he is allowed unreservedly to mingle with the other Christians, who give him free entrance into their houses, and in this respect they are more liberal and less superstitious than those in Cochin and Travancore. In the latter State, they have separate churches, but their attendance in other churches is freely allowed. The Pulaya converts are more decent and less uncleanly in their habits than other Pulayans. Their children are admitted into the schools and some of them are learning English and the vernacular. They are poor and maintain themselves by cooly-work, but have shown their aptitude for other kinds of work as well. One of them is a teacher, another a farmer on a small scale, a third a coppersmith, and a fourth is a maistry with a small number of coolies under him. The reverend gentleman says that, if opportunities are given them of improving their talents, they will be a benefit to their downtrodden community and to the mission societies that are ever doing their best to improve their condition.

Vital Statistics :

The Pulayans with the various sub-tribes numbered at the last census 59,840; 28,814 being males and 31,026 females. The latter exceeded the former by 2,212. They form about 75 per cent of the agrestic serfs and 11 per cent of the Hindu population of the State. It is said that, if men or any other kind of animals were invariably mated early and if their offspring were always reared with care, their numbers would increase in a geometrical ratio, and that in no large number of generations they would occupy every habitable space. As a matter of fact, the number of inhabitants of most countries remains fairly stationary, for there are certain influences which neutralize the tendency to increase. I made an investigation into the vital statistics of twenty Pulaya families in different parts of the State. Of the fifty women belonging to these families, I found that two had no children and that the other forty-eight had had 258 children. Of these children, seventy had died. Of the living children, eighty-one were males, and one hundred and seven females. The proportion of male to female children is thus as two to three. Fever, small-pox, dysentery, diarrhoea are the prevailing causes of mortality. There are few unmarried Pulayans and very few of the married women have no children. The child-bearing age which is between fifteen and twenty-five ends between the forty-fifth and fifteenth years. No diet is adopted nor any practice followed by Pulaya women to check fertility. They welcome the birth of children as God's gift, and fecundity is esteemed as conducive to increasing the numerical strength of the caste. Comparing the population of the census return of 1891, (51,251) with that of 1901, the latter shows an increase of 8,589. The Pulaya population has thus been increasing in spite of the numerous instances of conversion to Christianity.

Appearance :

The external appearance of these serfs varies very much. They are sometimes remarkable for an extreme darkness of complexion, and their black colour, which cannot be the effect of exposure, approaches that of an African; but they are invariably stamped with the Hindu features and they do not bear the appearance of being a distinct race. The bark (spathe) of the areca palm furnishes, in some places, the whole of their clothing which, at best, never exceeds a bit of cloth merely sufficient for the purposes of decency. Their hair is allowed to grow wild and forms an immense matted and filthy mass. The Era Cherumans and Konga Cherumans are fairer in complexion than the Pulayans and Cherumans with their sub-tribes. The Cherumans of the northern parts of the

State and the Pulayans of the southern parts are either of short or medium stature. Their complexion is invariably dark, and only rarely dark-brown or reddish brown.

Conclusion :

The Pulayans are very quarrelsome among themselves, but always unite to oppose the members of other castes when disputes arise with them. Closely connected with their masters, as they are, they do not appear to be equally affectionate and faithful to them. This is perhaps owing to their being overworked and underfed by their masters. They ought to be better housed, better clothed, and better fed. If attempts are not made for the improvement of their present condition, they will be in course of time lost to the Hindu community, as many of them have become and are becoming converts to Mahomadanism and Christianity.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Castes and Tribes of Southern India, by EDGAR THURSTON, C. I. E. Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondant Etranger, Societe; d' Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, Assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M. A. of the Madras Government Museum, Volume VI—P to S. Government Press, Madras, 1909 *page* 225.

Pulayan :

See Cheruman and Thanda Pulayan

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Volume—VII by EDGAR THURSTON, C. I. E. Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondant Etranger, Societe d' Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum, Government Press, Madras: 1909 *from pages* 19 *to* 27.

THANDA PULAYAN

For the following note, I am indebted to Mr. L. K. Anantha-krishna Aiyar*. The Thanda Pulayans constitute a small division of the Pulayans, who dwell in South Malabar and Cochin. The name is given to them because of the garment worn by the females, made of the leaves of a sedge, called thanda (apparently *Scirpus articulatus*), which are cut into lengths, woven at one end, and tied round the waist so that they hang down below the knees. The following story is told with regard to the origin of this costume. A certain high-casteman, who owned lands in those parts, chanced to sow seeds, and plant vegetables. He was surprised to find that not a trace of what he sowed or planted was to be seen on the following day. With a view to clearing up the mystery, he kept a close watch during the night, and saw certain human beings, start naked, come out of a hole. They were pursued, and a man and a woman were caught. Impressed with a sense of shame at their wretched condition, the high-caste man threw his upper garment to the male, but, having nothing to give as a covering for the woman, threw some thanda leaves over her. The Thanda Pulayans are also called Kuzhi Pulayans, as they were found emerging from a pit (kuzhi). The leafy garment is said to be fast going out of fashion, as Mappillas, and others who own the Pulayans, compel them to wear cotton cloths. According to the Rev. W. J. Richards, a division of the Pulayans, who are called Kanna Pulayans, and found near Alleppey, wear rather better, and more artistically made aprons.**

The following legend is current regarding the origin of the Thanda Pulayans. In the south, the Pulayans are divided into the eastern and western sections. The former were the slaves of Duryodhana, and the latter were attached to the Pandus. These formed the two rival parties in the war of the Mahabaratha, and the defeat of Duryodhana was the cause of their degradation.

*Monograph Etn. Survey, Cochin No. 1, 1905.

**Ind. Ant., IX, 1880

The Thanda Pulayans appear to have been the slaves of the soil till 1854, when they were emancipated. Even now, their condition has not undergone much material improvement. Though they are left more to themselves, they still work for farmers or landlords for a daily wage of paddy (unhusked rice). If they run away, they are brought back, and punished. There is a custom that, when a farmer or landlord wants a few Pulayans to work in the fields, he obtains their services on payment of fifteen to twenty rupees to them, or to their master. When a Pulayan's services are thus obtained, he works for his new master for two edangalis of paddy a day. They can obtain their liberation on the return of the purchase-money, which they can never hope to earn. Having no property which they can claim as their own, and conscious perhaps that their lot will be the same wherever they go, they remain cheerful and contented, drudging on from day to day, and have no inclination to emigrate to places where they can get higher wages. The Cherumars of Palghat, on the contrary, enjoy more freedom. Many go to the Wynad, and some to the Kolar gold-fields, where they receive a good money-wage. The Thanda Pulayans work, as has been said, for some landlord, who allows them small bits of land. The trees thereon belong to the master, but they are allowed to enjoy their produce during their residence there. When not required by the master, they can work where they like. They have to work for him for six months, and sometimes throughout the year. They have little to do after the crop has been garnered. They work in the rice-fields, pumping water, erecting bunds (mud embankments), weeding, transplanting, and reaping. Men, women, and children may be seen working together. After a day's hard work, in the sun or rain, they receive their wages, which they take to the nearest shop, called mattupitica (exchange shop), where they receive salt, chillies, etc., in exchange for a portion of the paddy, of which the remainder is cooked. The master's field must be guarded at night against the encroachment of cattle, and the depredations of thieves and wild beasts. They keep awake by shouting aloud, singing in a dull monotone, or beating a drum. Given a drink of toddy, the Pulayans will work for any length of time. It is not uncommon to see them thrashed for slight offences. If a man is thrashed with a thanda garment, he is so much disgraced in the eyes of his fellowmen, that he is not admitted into their society. Some improves their condition by becoming converts to Christianity. Others believe that the spirits of the departed would be displeased, if they became Christians.

The Thanda Pulayan community is divided into exogamons illams, and marriage between members of the same illam is forbidden. Their habitations are called matams, which are miserable huts, supported on wooden posts, sometimes in the middle of a paddy

field, with walls of reeds, bamboo mats or mud, and thatched with grass or cocoanut leaves. A few earthen pots, bamboo vessels, and cocoanut shells constitute their property. They are denied admission to the markets, and must stand at a distance to make their purchases or sales.

Pulayan girls are married either before or after attaining puberty, but there is special ceremony, which is performed for every girl during her seventh or eighth year. This is called thanda kalyanam, or thanda marriage. It consists in having the girl dressed at an auspicious hour in the leafy garment by a woman, generally a relative, or, in her absence, by one selected for the purpose. The relations and friends are entertained at a feast of curry and rice, fish from the backwater, and toddy. Prior to this ceremony, the girl is destitute of clothing, except for a strip of areca bark.

At the marriage ceremony, the tali (marriage badge) is made of a piece of a conch shell (*Turbinella rapa*), which is tied on the bride's neck at an auspicious hour. She is taken before her landlord, who gives her some paddy, and all the cocoanuts on the tree, beneath which she happens to kneel. When the time has come for her to be taken to the hut of the bridegroom, one of her uncles, taking her by the hand, gives her into the charge of one of her husband's uncles.

On the third morning, her paternal and maternal uncles visit her at the hut of the bridegroom, by whom they are entertained. They then return, with the bride and bridegroom, to the home of the former, where the newly-married couple stay for three days. To ascertain whether a marriage will be a happy one, a conch shell is spun round. If it falls to the north, it predicts good fortune; if to the east or west, the omens are favourable; if to the south, very unfavourable.

The Thanda Pulayans follows the makkathayam law of inheritance (from father to son). They have their tribal assemblies, the members of which meet together on important occasions, as when a woman is charged with adultery, or when there is a theft case among them. All the members are more or less of equal status, and no superior is recognised. They swear by the sun, raising their hands, and saying "By the sun I did not". Other oaths are "May my eyes perish" or "May my head be cut off by lightning."

Every kind of sickness is attributed to the influence of some demon, with whom a magician can communicate, and discover a means of liberation. The magician, when called in professionally, lights a fire, and seats himself beside it. He then signs, mutters some mantrams (prayers), and makes a discordant noise on his

iron plate (kokkara). The man or woman, who is possessed by the demon, begins to make unconscious movements, and is made to speak the truth. The demon, receiving offerings of fowls, sheep, etc. sets him or her free. A form of ceremonial, called urasikotukkuka is sometimes performed. At a place far distant from the hut, a leaf, on which the blood of a fowl has been made to fall, is spread on the ground. On a smaller leaf, chunam (lime) and turmeric are placed. The person who first sets eyes on these becomes possessed by the demon, and sets free the individual who was previously under its influence. In the event of sickness, the sorcerer is invited to the hut. He arrives in the evening, and is entertained with food toddy, and betel. He then takes a tender cocoanut, flower of the areca plam, and some powdered rice, which he covers over with a palm leaf. The sick person is placed in front thereof, and a circle is drawn round him. Outside the circle, an iron stylus is stuck in the ground. The demon is supposed to be confined within the circle, and makes the patient cry out "I am in pai (influence of the ghost) and he is beating me", etc. With the promise of a fowl or sheep, or offerings thereof on the spot, the demon is persuaded to take its departure. Sometimes, when the sorcerer visits a house of sickness, a rice-pan containing three betel leaves, areca nuts, paddy, tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), sacred ashes, conch and cowry (*Cypraea moneta*) shells, is placed in the yard. The sorcerer sits in front of the pan, and begins to worship the demon, holding the shells in his hands, and turning to the four points of the compass. He then observes the omens, and, taking his iron plate, strikes it, while he chants the names of terrible demons, Mullva, Karinkali, Aiyinar, and Villi and utters incantations. This is varied by dancing, to the music of the iron plate, sometimes from evening till noon on the following day. The sick persons works himself up into the belief that he has committed some great sin, and proceeds to make confession, when a small money fine is inflicted, which is spent on toddy for those fine is inflicted, which is spent on toddy for those who are assembled. The Thanda Pulayans practice maranakriyas, or sacrifices to certain demons, to help them in bringing about the death of an enemy or other person. Sometimes affliction is supposed to be brought about by the enmity of those who have got incantations written on a palm leaf, and buried in the ground near a house by the side of a well. A sorcerer is called in to counteract the evil charm, which he digs up, and destroys.

When a member of the tribe has died an unnatural death, a man, with a fowl and sword in his hands, places another man in a pit which has been dug, and walks thrice round it with a torch. After an hour or two, the man is taken out of the pit, and goes to a distance, where certain ceremonies are performed.

The Thanda Pulayans worship the gods of Brahmanical temples at a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile. A stone is set up in the ground, on which they place tender cocoanuts and a few puttans (Cochin coins). A temple servant takes these to the priest, who sends in return some sandal paste, holy water, and flowers. They worship, as has been already hinted, demons, and also the spirits of their ancestors, by which small brass figures of males and females representing the pretas (ghosts) are supposed to be possessed. They worship, among others, Kandakarnan, Kodunkali, Bhairavan and Arukola pretas, who are lodged in small huts, and represented by stones. In the month of May, they celebrate a festival, which lasts for several days. Chrysanthemum and thumba (apparently *Leucas aspera*) flowers are used in the performance of worship, and paddy, beaten rice, tender cocoanuts, toddy, etc. are offered up. There is a good deal of singing, drumbeating and devil-dancing by men and women, who on this occasion indulge liberally in toddy. The Pandavas, whom they call Anju Thamburakkal, are favourite deities. They devise various plans for warding off the evil influence of demons. Some for example, wear rolls of palm leaf, with incantations written on them, round their necks. Others hang baskets in the rice fields, containing peace offerings to the gods, and pray for the protection of the crop. Wherever there is a dense forest, Matan and Kali are supposed to dwell, and are worshipped. From the end of November to April, which is the slack season, the Thanda Pulayans go about dancing from hut to hut, and collecting money to purchase fowls, etc. for offerings. Club-dancing is their favourite amusement, and is often indulged in at night by the light of a blazing fire. The dancers, club in hand, go round in concentric circles, keeping time to the songs which they sing striking each other's clubs, now bending to ward off a blow on the legs, or rising to protect the head.

The dead are buried, and lighted torches are set up all round the grave, on to which the relations of the dead person throw three handfuls of rice. Near it, squares are made in rice flour, in each of which a leaf with rice flour and paddy, and a lighted torch or wick is placed. The chief mourner, who should be the son or nephew, carrying a pot of water, goes several times round the grave, and breaks the pot over the spot where the head rests. A few grains of rice are placed at the four corners of the grave, and a pebble is laid on it, with mantrams to keep off jackals, and to prevent the spirit from molesting people. Every morning the chief mourner goes to the grave, and makes offerings of boiled rice, gingelly (*Sesamum indicum*) seeds, and karuka grass. On the fourteenth day, he has an oil-bath, and, on the following day, the Pulayans of the village (kara) have a feast, with singing and beat-

ing of drums. On the sixteenth day, which is pulakuli or day of purification, the chief mourner makes offerings of rice balls, the guests are fed, and make a present of small coin to the songester who has entertained them. Similar offerings of rice balls are made to the spirit of the deceased person on the new-moon day in the month of Kartigam. During the period of pollution, the chief mourner has to cook his own food. The spirits of deceased ancestors are called Chavar (the dead), and are said to manifest themselves in dreams, especially to near relations, who speak in the morning of what they have seen during the night. They even say that they have held conversation with the deceased. The Rev. W. J. Richards informs us that he once saw "a little temple, about the size of a large rabbit-hutch, in which was a plank for the spirits of the deceased ancestors to come and rest upon. The spirits are supposed to fish in the backwaters, and the phosphorescence, sometimes seen on the surface of the water is taken as an indication of their presence".*

The Thanda Pulayans will not eat with the Ulladans or Parayans, but stand at a distance of ninety feet from Brahmans and other high-caste people. They are short of stature and dark-skinned. Like the Cherumans, the women adorn their ears, necks, arms and fingers with masses of cheap jewellery.

*Ind. Ant., IX. 1880.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Ethnographic Notes in Southern India, with 40 Plates by Edgar Thurston, Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Superintendent of Ethnography, Madras; Correspondent Etranger, Societe D' Anthropologie De Paris First Edition Second Issue, Madras: Reprinted by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1907 *pages* 20 *and* 21.

At a wedding among the Mala (hill) Arayans of Travancore, the bride and bridegroom sit and eat from the same plantain leaf, after which the tali is tied. The bride then seizes any ornament or cooking vessel in the house, saying that it is her father's. The bridegroom snatches it from her, and the marriage rite is concluded.* The mother of a Pulayan (agrestic serf) bride in Travancore, is, by a curious custom, not permitted to approach the bridegroom on the wedding day or after, lest she should cause ceremonial pollution†.

*Travancore Census Report, 1901.

†*Ibid.*

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Ethnographic Notes in Southern India, with 40 Plates by EDGAR THURSTON Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Superintendent of Ethnography, Madras; Correspondent Etranger, Societe D' Anthropologie De Paris, First edition, Second Issue, Madras: Reprinted by the Superintendent; Government Press, 1907 *pages* 377 *and* 378.

The patterns range from a dot or straight line to complex geometrical or conventional designs. Figures of wild animals are not met with, but scorpions, birds, fishes, flowers and the Vaishnava sect mark are common. So, too, are the initials or name in Tamil characters on the forearm. Sometimes Hindu males are tattooed, as an amusement, when boys or in some cases among the lower classes, when grown up. For example, many Pulayan men in Travancore are tattooed on the forehead with a crescent and circular spot, and the Irulas of Chingleput with a vertical stripe along the middle of the forehead. The Chakkiliyan men of Madras are very freely tattooed, not only on the forehead, but, also with their name, conventional devices, dancing girls, etc. on the chest and upper extremities.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Hindu Tribes and Castes' together with Three Dissertations: On the Natural History of Hindu Caste; The Unity of The Hindu Race; AND The Prospects of Indian Caste; And including A General Index of the Three Volumes by the REV. M. A. SHERRING, M.A., L.L.B, Lond., Fellow of the Calcutta University; Corresponding Member of the Bengal Asiatic Society; Author of "The Sacred City of The Hindus", "The History of Protestant Missions in India", etc. "Humo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto". Vol III, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, And Co. London; Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill Bombay: Thacker And Co., Limited, Madras: Higginbotham And Co. 1881 *pages* 187 *and* 188.

THE TRIBES AND CASTES OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY

VI—The Pulayan, or Pulayar TRIBE

The most numerous of the slave tribes of Travancore. It is exceedingly degraded, and is consequently much abhorred by pure Hindus. It has three divisions, as follows :—

1. Valava 2. Kanaka 3. Munri Pulayan

These three clans differ in comparative debasement in the order in which they are given; the vilest, in popular estimation, being the last. The tribe numbers nearly one hundred thousand persons.

"The Pulayars", says Mr. Mateer, who has resided for many years in Travancore, and has had excellent opportunities for studying the native tribes and their characteristics, "dwell in miserable huts on mounds in the centre of the rice swamps, or on the raised embankments in their vicinity. They are engaged in agriculture as the servants of the Sudra and other landowners. Wages are usually paid to them in kind, and at the lowest possible rates. To eke out their miserable allowances, therefore, they are accustomed to enter the grounds of their neighbours at night, to steal roots, cocoanuts and other produce; and they are but too ready to commit assault and other crimes. These poor people are steeped in the densest ignorance and stupidity. Drunkenness, lying, and evil passions prevail among them, except where, of late years, the Gospel has been the means of their reclamation from vice and of their social elevation. They differ from the Pariahs, however, in abstaining from the flesh of all dead animals" (a) Although legally emancipated from bondage the social abjectness of this and the other slave tribes has undergone little change.

. . . The Pulayan wears a coarse cloth around his loins, and another small piece he wraps round his beard. He must not wear shoes or use an umbrella; and his wife must only decorate herself with brass ornaments and beads. In speaking he must not say 'I', but 'your slave'; must not call his own rice by its proper name, but as dirty gruel; must not talk of his children by this appellation, but as 'monkeys' and 'calves'; must live in a small hut without furniture, and built in a certain miserable situation far from the habitations of the upper Castes; and in speaking must place the hand over the mouth, lest the breath should go forth and pollute the person whom he is addressing. He is "not allowed to use the public road when a Brahman or Sudra walks on it. The poor slave must utter a warning cry, and hasten off the road, lest the high caste man should be polluted by his near approach, or by his shadow. The law is, that a Pulayan must never approach a Brahman nearer than sixty-six paces, and must remain at about half this distance from a Sudra. He could not, until lately, enter a court of justice, but was obliged to shout from the appointed distance, and took his chance of being heard and receiving attention. A policeman is sometimes stationed halfway between the Pulayan witness or prisoner and the high caste magistrate, to transmit the questions and answers, the distance being too great for convenient hearing. As he cannot enter a town or village, no employment is open to him except that of working in rice fields and such kind of labour. He cannot even act as a porter, for he defiles all that he touches. He cannot work as a domestic servant, for the house would be polluted by his entrance; much less can he (even were he by some means to succeed in obtaining education or capital) become a clerk, school-master, or merchant. Caste affects even his purchases and sales. The Pulayars manufacture umbrellas and other small articles, place them on the highway, and retire to the appointed distance, shouting to the passers by with reference to the sales. If the Pulayan wishes to make a purchase, he places his money on a stone, and retire to the appointed distance. Then the merchant or seller comes, takes up the money, and lays down whatever quantity of goods he chooses to give for the sum received—a most profitable mode of doing business for the merchant " (a) Such is the position of the Pulayar and of the other slave tribes—a scandal to the semi-civilized Government of Travancore, and by no means honourable to the British Government of India, by which it is controlled.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Land and Society in Malabar by ADRIAN G. MAYER, with a preface by RAYMON FIRTH F.B.A. Professor of Anthropology in the University of London, issued under the auspices of the International Secretariat Institute of Pacific Relations Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press 1952 *pages* 28 *and* 29.

According to the Nambudris the 350,000 Paraiyan and Pulaya outcastes were among the lowest in the hierarchy, and had no recognized place in society. Yet they were implicitly admitted into it by having prescribed distances of pollution. Their value to society was economic, since they were first legal, and until comparatively recently, virtual serfs working the land for land owners and tenants. The Pulayas, or (as they are known in south Malabar) Cheramas, formed the largest group of these agrarian serfs. The Paraiyans were basket-makers as well as practitioners of black magic. The Nayadis, lowest of the low, were beggars. In addition, there were some aboriginal tribes from the Wynaad jungle who occasionally came down into the plains.

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There was no application of caste law above the village level, though there were often wider meetings to decide points of law; this was mainly because the law usually operated at the individual or family level, and used as its sanction the excommunication of the individual from his local community, either by withholding the religious backing of caste, or by stopping essential economic services. There were also economic incentives to keep the laws. For instance, the family of a Nambudri girl accused of adultery had to provide many feasts for the members of the caste council as well as for their relatives, and since a case often lingered for several years before the girl was sentenced the family was frequently driven into insolvency through the fault of one of its members.

The sanctions upholding caste law are weakening. For example, an outcaste was previously refused the services of the caste barber and other necessary tradesmen. But with the emergence of urban communities, he can now go to a town where no questions are asked about his previous status and home, and need, therefore suffer little inconvenience from the application of such sanctions. Nevertheless, although caste law has now no Governmental backing and though many of the offences it prosecuted are now dealt with by the Courts, the caste elders still have power in their villages; for many people have not the money or freedom from belief in rituals to take advantage of their theoretical freedom from caste sanctions. One Pulaya told the author that an infringement of caste rule in his village (such as eating with a lower-caste Parayan) would mean a boycott by the elders and by conservative opinion. The offender could not get his daughter married in the village, and any necessary ceremonies would be carried out without the elders and thus would 'not be as they ought to be'. For Pulayas, the expense of moving to another village could not be countenanced, and though public opinion might be against the elders, the latter still would have considerable unofficial power. But this power is waning as the older men who believe in it die, and it seems probable that eventually the idea of concrete laws will give way to a more fluid sanction of 'public opinion', as in Western societies.

Outside the caste law was the law extended to the people by the rajas who ruled the land, or who at least held nominal power as feudal overlords. They, and the learned Brahmins, judged cases

of theft, debt and so forth, and trials by ordeal were frequently used to decide the guilty party. Some authority was delegated to the Nairs, who had the function of seeing that customs were observed, that peace was maintained, and that the rights of the different castes were safeguarded. Thus, by traditional account, the Nairs and considerable power and in return for this they served in the overlord's wars, a number being levied from each district by its headman.

Western domination changed this situation. The British took over paramount powers from the kings and put a stop to their endless quarrels which had necessitated the Nair militia. There was recruitment into the Indian Army, it is true, but the majority of Nairs, having no local fighting to do, lost their old martial ambitions and settled down to a more peaceful and civilian life. The legal powers of the rajas and Nairs were replaced by those of judges and police. In many ways the introduction of European law was disastrous—conducted in a different language, based on a different standard of morality and employing a set of sanctions whose force was misunderstood, British law was an unwieldy, expensive and often an inefficient instrument of justice. The practice of witchcraft now went unpunished, and penalties might alter from mutilation to a few months in prison; such changes were strange to the average man, and tended to lower his ideas of the importance of the Courts. But British justice must be given credit for its weakening influence on the caste system. All people were equal under the law, a concept unknown outside the court-house, and lower castes were thereby encouraged to use the law to break the hold of caste in such matters as the right of all castes to use the public highway.

In the administrative field the British threw open the job of village headman to any qualified person, rather than to Nairs alone, and recruited suitable people from the lower castes for service as clerks and officers. Though in fact the Nairs still largely occupied the post of village headman on a hereditary basis, it was possible for a small but growing group of Tiyas and others to gain practical administrative experience, and this paved the way for lower-caste entrance into the wider fields of politics. Today there are Pulaya and Tiya Members of the Legislative Assembly, and a Tiya is President of the Malabar District Board. On the other hand, one leading Tiya of North Malabar told the author that since the end of British administration caste differences have tended to increase in administrative circles. There is more favouritism shown in appointments, and this means that fellow caste-members, whether relatives or not, are usually given posts. Such a change is not so serious in South Malabar where Tiyas, being less educated, offer less competition to Nair and Brahmin aspirants for office though

one prominent Tiya asserted that there were fewer southern Tiyas in service than previously. The real competition occurs between Nairs and the educated, advancing northern Tiya community, and there is concern lest its results, now confined to the political and administrative field, spread to other inter-caste relations. Thus, though theoretical and legal equality played a great part in weakening caste, it is not yet an established fact that all posts are open equally to all castes on the basis of ability.

Extract on "PULAYA" from 'Land and Society in Malabar' by ADRIAN G. MAYER, with a preface by RAYMOND FIRTH, F.B.A. Professor of Anthropology in the University of London, Issued under the auspices of the International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1952 from page 35.

Nowadays people of all castes send their children to school, though preference is often given to boys, as potential money-earners, if there is any question of priority for education within a family. But it is clear that the purpose of education is not the same for all. The higher castes may have economic or intellectual reasons, as may some lower-caste folk who see their fellow caste-men as comparatively well-paid teachers or clerks. But this is not always the case. In Mudadi there is a large school, most of whose pupils are Pulayas and Tiyas. When asked why the children came to school, the headmaster, a veteran of thirty years' experience, replied unhesitatingly. 'Their parents want to oblige me'. He and his assistants have to visit their pupils' homes every two or three days otherwise the parents will lose interest and will not send them. After some good showers, many of the boys were away, helping with the agricultural work which the rain had started. Thus, though it can be said that education is reaching the lower castes, it will take some time before any considerable effects are felt.

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In Chunangad for example the author was advised against visiting a Nambudri house because of the trouble a purification ritual would cause after his departure. In Mudadi he called on an old Nair gentleman, in company with a Nair and a Panikkar. The latter stayed outside; he was not sure that the Nair would not ask him to leave, but it was sufficiently probable that he sat outside to save himself from such a delicate and embrassing situation. Among lower castes there are still strict rules; a Paraiyan is not allowed to enter a Pulaya house, for example. Untouchability has therefore been banished from public places, and anyone practising it in a temple, road or hotel could be used. But 'an Indian's home is his caste', and there he can do what he likes. Consequently in rural parts the custom is dying hard, though few doubt its eventual end.

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Tiyas formerly had a similar mixture of their own gods and ceremonies and those they had gleaned from the Nambudri ritual. However, recent reformers like Sri Narayana Guru dedicated temples to Siva and Vishnu and carried out orthodox worship, at the same time fighting for admissions to high-caste temples. Now that this has been gained, Tiya rites approximate more and more to the Vedic Hinduism professed by Nambudris and Nairs, especially among Tiyas in the towns. For instance, some Tiyas include the sacred fire as witness of the marriage vows, a Brahmin rite not previously followed by Tiyas. Similarly, Pulayas, if they can afford it, have exchange of rings, tying of the *tali* thread and the mutual garlanding of the couple as additions to their old rite of exchange of clothes. All castes are conforming increasingly to such rites, especially now as they are able to take part in them more and more or at least observe them; here yet another differential of castes is disappearing. It must be noted that religion is here treated with relation to Malayali social structure.

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The differences imposed by caste, on the other hand, have been traditionally enforced by the whole weight of caste machinery. One primary distinction was that of vegetarianism. The traditional division between vegetarians and meat-eaters was made at the hierarchical level between higher and lower sub-castes of Nairs. Among the lower castes the kinds of meat eaten differed, since Paraiyans would eat beef, whereas the Nayadis refused to do so. Besides this there were certain ritual diets which varied in different castes. Thus, Variyans were not allowed to eat onion, papaya or coriander for one year after the death of a near relative; Pulayas were not allowed to eat meat for a similar period. This help, given by the different diets to caste division is lessening. Many high-caste folk now take meat, though often in private or at hotels. Some Tiyas and Pulayas have turned vegetarian, by preference or in imitation of the higher caste habits; in fact, the food one eats is becoming more and more a matter of personal predilection.

The expression of the hierarchy was found, however, not so much in the kinds of food eaten as in the restrictions of commensality and the delineation of those eligible to cook for each caste. For it is to be expected that castes who could not approach each other could not eat with each other. Commensal restrictions were carried even further, for a Nambudri was not only prohibited from eating with a Nair, but could also not be seen eating by him. And this situation was duplicated all through the caste hierarchy. It is therefore not surprising that here were also restrictions on the castes eligible to cook food for each other. As a rule, higher castes could cook for lower castes, and Brahmin cooks were acceptable everywhere. There was a distinction made between food cooked in oil and that cooked in water, the former being regarded as purer. The taking of food has been a weapon of castes and sub-castes wishing to move up in the hierarchy; by refusing to eat food cooked by those hitherto considered their equals, a caste has endeavoured to obtain the acceptance of its superiority over that caste. There was, therefore, a very tangled relationship between castes and sub-castes on this matter, which often did not coincide with other standards of grading of the hierarchy. The whole system of food restriction has been weakened in recent times. With increased travel, many caste members find it impossible to prepare and eat food in the

traditional manner at all times, and this trend has been reinforced by the general weakening of caste sanctions.

An Ambalavasi told the author of the first time he took tea with a Nair. It was eighteen years ago, and interdining was still rare. At the time he handled the cup gingerly, afraid that it had perhaps been used to cook meat. For the rest of the day he felt a sense of guilt; though he told himself that he had committed no specific crime in following his beliefs of equality between castes, the traditional restrictions were nevertheless strong enough in his mind for him to feel he had done something very wrong. Now he eats with all castes, and he has persuaded even his old mother to eat with Pulayas. This story could be duplicated; but, like untouchability, commensal restrictions have been truly banished only from public places such as hotels and to a lesser extent in larger towns. In private homes there is little intercaste dining among rural people, and progress in this direction is usually limited to marriage feasts and other gatherings where only light refreshments are taken together by the different castes. People may eat with each other in hotels and stations, but this does not mean that they do not revert to the old customs when at home. . . . .

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Human labour is of two kinds, 'tied' and free. Free labourers are those who work for anyone, and who are paid in cash or in kind by the day. Wages are at present roughly Re. 1 for a man and As. 8-12 for a woman. In former times, however, the main agricultural labour force was composed of Cheramas and Pulayas who were virtual slaves on their owners' lands. They were not allowed to leave the land, and in fact were sold along with the land to the new owner; in return they enjoyed a security denied to casual labourers. This system still exists in a modified form today. For instance, in Erimayur the labourers are given a daily wage throughout the year, whether they are working or not. Depending on the type of work, this wage is between two and three *edangalis* of paddy (about four to six pounds of rice). Though this may seem high when compared with the ordinary rice ration of eight ounces, this wage must feed all dependants, and is also sold or bartered for other foodstuffs, kerosene and so forth. Formerly labourers were given cloth and coconut oil at Onam and Vishu, the two main Malayali festivals, and small sums of money were provided for their marriages, funerals and other feasts. Some landowners still have these responsibilities, which are balanced by giving a smaller daily wage allotment of paddy; others give the larger wage, and restrict themselves to token presents at Vishu, when tied labourers still pledge their services for the coming year. This pledge is not as important as it used to be, since any labourer can now leave his master without penalty. The one important reason why they do not at present do so is that they are paid with paddy. At the present time of food shortage it is better to have a larger rice ration than to receive higher wages, which will not buy the amount of rice lost by being on the ordinary ration. Tied labourers thus have an assured food supply, and also a fair amount of money, since they sell their surplus at black-market rates. Most of the cases of tied labour encountered by the author were in South Malabar. In the north there is less such labour. . . . .

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In North Malabar conditions are different. There are very few Nambudris there. Many so-called Nambudris are landless Brahmins from Canara who work in temples, and are sometimes small and relatively poor janmis. Instead it is the Nairs who have extensive janmam holdings. But there are also many small janmis Nairs, Tiyas and Moplas. The latter are often descendants of Nairs converted by Tipu Sultan; only a few of them have large janmam lands. In Mudadi, Nair janmis are most common, both in their private capacities and also as managers of temple trusts. Kuzhikanam leases are held by the lower castes, and more Pulayas are tenants in the north than are the equivalent grade of Cheramas in the south. There is thus less differentiation of tenure along caste lines in the north. This may partly be due to the fact that a kuzhikanam lease on waste land is still relatively easier to obtain than a verumpattam lease on paddy land that has been cultivated for generations. Poor people in the north can thus more easily become tenants. . . . . .

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Cheramas and Pulayas have always been patrilineal in their inheritance, and have been unaffected by recent legislation. They rarely live together as a joint family. Usually a son on marrying will go with his wife to a house given to him by the cultivator for whom he works, or perhaps to a kudiyiruppu rented at a nominal sum. Usually after the father's death, property and goods are divided amongst the sons to prevent quarrelling, or often because of it. Daughters do not receive any shares, but if they are not married their brothers assume responsibility for arranging and financing their marriages. The inheritance law of Moplas has been the Shaafi law of Sunni Muslims in the south,[2] and in the north a law similar to that followed by the Nairs; it was based on the impartible tarwad following the matrilineal line, and has been similarly, though separately, modified. As with the two Tiya systems of inheritance, the children of a northern mother and a southern father might inherit doubly, whereas marriages of a northern man and a southern woman have been much rarer, since neither side inherited the family's wealth. . . . .

[2] This law provides for shares of the property to be inherited through the male lines, the shares diminishing proportionately with the distance of relationship from the dead person.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Land and Society in Malabar' by ADRIAN G. MAYER, with a preface by RAYMOND FIRTH, F.B.A. Professor of Anthropology in the University of London, Issued under the auspices of the International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1952, *pages* 133-134.

Though theoretically anybody with wealth enough can purchase land, the buyer's previous social status makes it hard, even dangerous, for him to press his legal equality too far if he belongs to one of the lower castes. For instance, near Mudadi a Pulaya had made money by selling mats and coir, and was able to purchase the janmam right to some land from a Nair, an impossibility some years ago. The Mopla tenant tried to build a house on the land, so as to make eviction impossible through the high compensation charged for improvements which would have had to be paid. But the Pulaya got a court order restraining this building and sued the Mopla for eviction under the Act of 1930, alleging *bona fide* economic need to cultivate the land himself. There seemed to be no case against him, but the day before the suit was to be heard he died—under highly suspicious circumstances. The son is now janmi, but the Mopla still cultivates the land as his tenant, the suit against him having been discreetly dropped. . . . .

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Malabar and Its Folk', A systematic Description of the Social Customs and Institutions of Malabar, by T. K. Gopal Panikkar, B.A. with special account of "The Land System of Malabar" by Dr. V. K. John, Bar-At-Law, "The Moplahs" by Mr. HAMID ALI, Bar-At-Law. Third Edition Revised and enlarged. Published by: G. A. NATESAN & Co., MADRAS from page 126 *to* 131.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME DEPRESSED CLASSES OF MALABAR

The question of the depressed classes of the inhabitants of Malabar is a very interesting and important one, and deserves the serious attention of all who are interested in its social history. These people constitute our unquestioned aborigines, a study of whose racial life, manners and institutions, and a permanent record of them, will form a useful addition to the ethnological literature of the world. They are numerically on the increase, and they threaten to swamp the country. The miseries incidental to their wretched conditions of existence are untold; and the problem of the amelioration of that condition is every moment gathering additional prominence, much like the Pariah problem of the East Coast. They may be variously designated as *Cherumas, Pulayas, Kanakkars, Pariahs, Malayar* and *Kadar, Nayadis*. There are also one or two more of these classes found in parts of the country; but they present much the same tribal peculiarities as those I have enumerated. I will now proceed to dispose of these in the order which their social circumstances would seem to justify.

The *Cherumas* are a numerous class and are styled in the vernacular, *Cherumukkal;* their name imparting that they are sons of the field (from *Chera,*—dam, and *Mukkal*—children). They are born and live mostly on or near the fields. They are a very inferior rare and are regarded merely as agricultural instruments in the hands of the landlords, their masters, who supply them with houses on their estates and work them in a way little better than that in which they utilize their live stock. Every morning, the master's agent summons them to his house and takes them away to work in the fields, in ploughing, drawing water from wells, and, in short, doing the whole work of cultivation. In the evenings, a certain quantity of paddy is doled out to them as wages. Both, in theory and practice, in the great majority of cases, they are to be fed at the master's cost the whole year round, whether they work in the fields, or not. But this is not now done. It is very seldom that they can have a holiday, regard being had to the nature of

agriculture in Malabar. Their children are trained from an early age in the work of their elders.

Their houses are little huts, generally built of bamboo material and thatched with straw, or a particular variety of dried grass found in great abundance on the hill-sides. Earthen pots constitute their only domestic utensils. Some of them live far from the fields, while others live, particularly during the rainy season, on the fields themselves, in small huts on the field-sides, or on the big earth mounds which separate them.

They are divided into families and practically they have no recognised chiefs to safe-guard their social interests and to hold them together. There are certain assemblies of elders, with a kind of chief at their head, invested with certain powers for the adjudication and settlement of disputes.

Their staple food is the rice which they obtain as wages; but any deficiency in the food which their daily wages bring them, they make up in other ways, as by eating roots, fish etc. Toddy forms their main article of drink. They do not eat carrion; but are extremely fond of fish, which, cooked in the poorest fashion, they reckon a delicacy. They have no peculiar customs worth recording. Their whole life is spent in cultivation, and they show no taste for hunting or other pastimes. They are a socially low and ignorant class, as timid as hares at the approach of human beings. On all important festivals of the year, they collect at the master's house and are given each a fixed quantity of rice or paddy, with other articles, and a small coarse piece of cloth to serve as a dress for the whole of the ensuing year. Their personal appearance is forbidding. They are a dark, muscular race, with much of their natural muscularity adversely affected by their scanty food and poor clothing. Their one piece of cloth they tie round their waists. They wash this only at times; but their work being mostly in the fields, and in the open, it gets washed, with their bodies, in the constant rains which fall during the monsoons. During the height of the season, they protect themselves from its biting cold by means of the fires which they keep burning inside their huts all night long and often throughout the whole day.

Their chief ornaments are, for males, large bunches of earrings and sometimes rings on the fingers. But the women are adorned with nose and chest ornaments and rings on the fingers and even on the toes. It is worthy of note that all these ornaments are invariably made of brass. The razors with which they shave are, in some instances, rude iron knives which, during the operation, subject them to intense pain. Some of these classes wear aft front tuft, while others shave the head clean. Their females do all

the cooking and take care of the children; but often when they find leisure they accompany their males to the fields and do such work therein as they are capable of doing.

They are a dolichocephalic people, with mediumsized eyes and dark complexion. They follow the *Makkathayam* line of inheritance, or descent through the fathers; and their household consists mostly of husband and wife and children, if any. Polygamy, polyandry and divorce are unknown amongst them.

They worship certain gods, who are represented by rude stone images. What few ceremonies are in vogue amongst them are performed by priests selected from their own ranks, and these priests are held in great veneration by them. They kill cocks as offerings to these deities, who are propitiated by the pouring, on some stones placed near them, of the fresh blood that gushes forth from the necks of the birds. Their dead are disposed of by burying. The whole class without exception are believers in the existence of one God, who, to their rude imagination, lives in the stone images of their deities; and some of them believe also in a life beyond the grave, while others believe in the total extinction of the individual, his spirit being annihilated along with the body.

The *Pulayas* are a variety of *Cherumas,* as also are the *Kanakkars;* but the latter can approach a highcaste man more closely than the other two without polluting him. These latter share the racial characteristics of the *Cherumas* and *Pulayas* and are a purely agricultural class living and working in the fields. The *Kanakkars* shave their heads clean like the Syrian Christians, whereas the other two retain the front tufts like the Nairs. All the three are an extremely loyal class of people, devotedly attached to their masters, whose interests they watch and protect most jealously. On the death of any member of the master's household, their families collect in the vicinity of his house and mourn the loss by beating their chests and crying aloud till their sorrow is assuaged, quite as naturally and unaffectedly as if the loss were personal to them.

The existence of these three classes furnishes an instance of practical slavery in our midst even in these days of advancing civilization. They are believed to be the slaves of their masters, who frequently subject them to inhuman punishments in case of disobedience or negligence; and their master's commands and deeds are invested with a certain sanctity and involability in their eyes. They are the master's chattel or property, and can be sold away or otherwise dealt with at his will. The fact is that these slaves, or their ancestors more correctly, were purchased in days of yore by

the masters or their ancestors for fixed prices, and hence originates the latter's unchallengeable authority over them. Any slave running away from his legitimate owner and joining the working ranks of another master, if caught, is subjected to brutal punishments at the hands of the former master. In the view of some people, such improper admission of a renegade slave is against the law. But such views are only theoretical in our days, and are no longer within the realm of reality.

The slavish nature of these people is illustrated by the following and like forms of address employed by them. They still speak of themselves in the presence of superior classes as *Adivangal,* i.e. he who lies at (your) feet. When speaking of their eyes, hands or other members of their bodies, they are required to call them *old eyes, old hands,* & c. So also with *rice,* which they mention as *stone-rice.* Their children are all *kidangal,* or calves, and their silver money is *copper* cash, or *chempin kasu.* They call all Nairs *Thampurans,* or kings. These and many other curious forms of address used by them irresistibly point to the prevalence of an idea amongst them that they are only slaves, and their masters, lords capable of doing anything with them. It is enough to say that, though their emancipation was effected as far back as A.D. 1854, yet it has only been nominal, and has not yet been carried out in its entirety; and people even now speak of slaves in some places, quite forgetting that the political doctrine of human equality and fraternity has been authoritatively insisted on since the advent of the British Government.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Caste in India, its Nature, Function, and Origins' by J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E. M.A., D.Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press, Glossary, page 289, 1946.

PULAYAN

A caste of agrestic serfs in the north of Malabar district, in Cochin, and in Travancore, corresponding to the Tamil Paraiyan (q. v.).

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Caste in India, its Nature, Function, and Origins' by J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E. M.A., D. Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1946 *Glossary, page* 293.

THANTAPULAYANS

A primitive tribe of southern India.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Caste in India, its Nature, Function, and Origins' by J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E. M.A., D. Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1946 *page* 9.

A little less primitive in their mode of life than the Pantaram and Paliyan are Malavetan, Thantapulayan, Urali and other similar tribes, mostly of hybrid origin though predominantly proto-Australoid, who practise a shifting or migratory cultivation in addition to hunting and food collecting. Many retain individual primitive traits of social behavour of one sort or another. Some of the Malavetan for instance chip their incisor teeth to a sharp point like the Kadan;[3] the Thantapulayam women wear (or did till recently) a skirt of leaves or grass; the Urali are particularly given to making tree houses 50 feet or so above the ground, and it is in such houses that their women seclude themselves at adolescence, menstruation and even at childbirth, which takes place in isolation, advice and instructions being shouted from a distance to the woman in travail. The hills and forests of Travancore, Cochin and the other parts of southern India contain a number of tribes of this kind, many of them—the Mala—Aryan for instance—matrilineal, others patrilineal and some like the Ulladan in an intermediate stage in which the property of a man passes half to his sons and half to his sister's sons. . . . . .

[3]L. A. K. Iyer, *Travancore Tribes*, 1, p. 159, and illustrations at pp. 145, 149.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Man in India' A quarterly Record of Anthropological Science with Special Reference to India, Edited by RAMESH CHANDRA ROY, W.G. ARCHER VERRIER ELWIN, Vol. XXIV 1944 Ranchi, Chotanagpur, India, pages 35 and 36.

MATRIARCHY IN KERALA

By

L. A. KRISHNA IYER

Under the system of female kinship, there was no change of clanship after marriage, and both husband and wife retained their own clans, and the children belonged to the mother's clan. This is the case among the Kanikkar, Muthuvan, Mannan, Malayarayan, Vishavan, Paraya and Pulayan. The clan is still the pillar of their social culture. The family was continued through the mother. All rank and property descended through her. Matrilineal descent is now fighting a losing game.[1]

In regard to inheritance of property, the right to inherit a dead man's property was co-extensive with the duty of performing his obsequies and offering sacrifices to his spirit. It is interesting to observe that the nephew is the chief mourner among the Thantapullayas, and he observes pollution for sixteen days. The wife and children do not observe any pollution. Inheritance is in the female line among them. It is the same thing among the Muthuvans and Mannans among whom mother-right prevails. It is a mixture of matriarchy and patriarchy among the Kanikkar, Malavetans and Paliyans. Among the Uralis, the nephew is the chief mourner even now, but the children of the dead man inherit the property, because they have been in joint possession of it. The nephew is the chief mourner among the Nayadis. He observes pollution for sixteen days, while the son observes it for ten days. Sons now inherit the property. A similar change has come over the Eastern Pulayas.[2]

The evolution of the family transformed the system of inheritance, but left that of dignity untouched. In every primitive community, age is a source of reverence and influence. Considerations of fitness made it desirable to entrust the management of common interests of the family to the eldest and most experienced member, and this has produced collateral inheritance by brothers. Among Muthuvans, a man's property goes to his elder or younger sister's son with the reservation that the property is first enjoyed by his younger brother before it passes to his nephew. Debts are inherited

[1] Ibid, Vol. III, pp. 90-91

[2] Ibid Vol. III p. 120

by the nephew as property is. The Mannans have the same system of inheritance. Outside India the custom prevails in Sumatra, where property and rank are enjoyed by brothers before they pass to sister's children.[3]

The inheritance of the widow of the deceased is placed in the same category as property. The claims of the mother to subsistence out of her husband's property make her remain with her sons. These claims are, according to Starcke, connected with the customs that included her in her brother-in-law's inheritance. A Mannan marries the widow of his deceased brother. Among the Western Pulayas, it is said that, before a man dies, he says, 'Oralum olakkayum Anantharavanu'. By this declaration, the nephew of the Pulaya inherits the mortar and pestle and the youngest wife of his uncle. He keeps his aunt as his wife. This custom has now died out.[4]

3. Ibid, Vol. III p. 121
4. Ibid, Vol. II p. 165

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Kerala and Her people, by L. A. KRISHNA IYER, M.A., Corresponding Member of the Societa Italiana Di-Anthropologia E Ethnologia, Formerly Officer in charge of Ethnographic Survey, Travancore and Head of the Department of Anthropology, Madras University, with Forewords by VERRIER ELWIN D.Sc., F.A.S. And Shri V. V. GIRI, Governor of Kerala and an Introduction by SARDAR K. M. PANIKKAR, Publishers: The Educational Supplies Depot, Palghat, Page 30.

It is possible that the bow is the invention of the Negrito. It is used by the Urali, the Muthuvan, the Vishavan and the Kanikkar. Further, evidence of serological tests among the Kanikkar, the Pulaya, and the Kadar exhibits a larger precentage of group O than group A. They support the findings of physical anthropologists in regard to their affinity to the Australians.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Kerala and Her people by L.A. KRISHNA IYER, M.A. Corresponding Member of the Societa Italiana Di-Anthropologia E Ethnologia, Formerly Officer in charge of Ethnographic Survey, Travancore and Head of the Department of Anthropology, Madras University, with Forewords by VERRIER ELWIN, D.Sc., F.A.S., and Shri V. V. GIRI, Governor of Kerala and an Introduction by SARDAR K. M. PANIKKAR, Publishers: The Educational Supplies Depot. Palghat pages 41 *and* 42.

CASTE IN KERALA

A brief reference may be made here to the traditional social structure of Kerala before dealing with the sweeping changes that have come over there. From the point of view of precedence, the Nambutiris are at the apex. They were construed to be custodians of the Vedas. The Embrantiris and the Tamil Brahmins came next. The Kshatriyas were placed next to them. They formed only a small section of the population and were the rulers of Kerala exercising their sovereignty over their respective dominions. A group of the Antaralar Jatis (intermediate castes) constituted by the Ambalavasis and the Samanthans came below the Kshatriyas. The Samanthans were the superior section of the high caste Nayars. Some of them were ruling chiefs. They were lower than the Kshatriyas in status. The Nayars who came next constituted a considerable bulk of the population. The members of castes who were not permitted to approach members of the high castes within certain distances included the Kammalans, Kaniyans, Ishavas, Velans and Arayans or Mukkuvans. Then came the Parayans, Pulayans, Nayadis and hilltribes. Outside the periphery of the caste system were two major communities the Christians and the Mappilas, who grew in strength through prosely*tism of local people.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Kerala and Her people by L.A. KRISHNA IYER, M.A. Corresponding Member of the Societa Italiana Di-Anthropologia E Ethnologia, Formerly Officer in charge of Ethnographic Survey, Travancore and Head of the Department of Anthropology, Madras University, with Forewords by VERRIER ELWIN, D. Sc., F.A.S., and Shri V. V. Giri, Governor of Kerala, and an Introduction by SARDAR K. M. PANIKKAR, Publishers: The Educational Supplies Depot. Palghat pages 65 and 66.

Culture is that complex whole which includes art, belief, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits, acquired by man as a member of society. The culture of a people is the sum total of all their customs, activities and beliefs. It stands for the moral, spiritual, and intellectual attainments of man. There are three kinds of forces which influence human action either in co-operation with or in opposition to each other, namely, the natural environment of the individual, the human environment, and the intellectual or mental environment. Life was then, as it is now, a constant adjustment to environment. The physical environment furnishes the brick and mortar of the culture of the community. Of all aspects of civilisation, material culture is the most closely allied to environmental factors dealing with such material things as clothing, ornaments, food, habitations, and implements.

The long range of the Western Ghats dominated the cultural geography of Kerala. The forests give shelter and subsistance to the shy jungle tribes. Their physical features, technology, art, religious lore, and concepts seem to point to real historical relationship between the food-gathering tribes of Kerala and the Negritos of Malayasia. They live a life of isolation, surrounded by civilized peoples, with a culture resembling the most primitive culture. The people belonging to this group are the Paniyan, the Kurichiyan, and the Vettuvan of Malabar, the Kadan and the Malasir of Cochin and the Kanikkar, the Malavetan, the Malayarayan, the Malapataram, the Urali, the Mannan, the Muthuvan, the Malapulaya, the Vishavan, the Paliyan, the Ullatan, the Pulayan and the Thantapulayan of Travancore. Kerala contains three of the few surviving food-gatherers, the Paniyan, the Kadan, and the Malapantaram without agriculture, animal husbandry, or the knowledge and technique of hunting which would justify the description of hunters. Though correct figures are not available, the tribals of Kerala are about 1.35 lakhs in number. Their smallness in number is a significant cause of the great attention devoted to the study of primitive culture.

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Painting is a form of temporary adornment among primitive tribes, the survivals of which may be found among the higher castes. The red colour is chosen to paint themselves with. During the village festivals of Karala, the Parayas and the Pulayas paint their faces in various colours and dress themselves in fantastic costumes. The custom existed from prehistoric times and the history of cosmetics dated from the days of Biblical antiquity and would be traced back to the Ice Age.

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POLYGAMY

Polygamy is practised by the Muthuvan, the Paliyan, the Kanikkar, the Pulayas, and others. The real reason is one of an economic or social character. It is essential to remember that, among, any tribe, it is practised more by the minority than the majority. It contributed to a man's material comforts or increased his wealth through the labour of his wives. It adds to a man's importance, reputation, and authority. The Kadan indulges in polygamy to increase the tribe. The first wife has precedence. An exception is made in the case of the Scheduled Tribes practising polygamy as defined in clause 3 of article 336 of the Indian Constitution.

POLYANDRY

Polyandry is of two kinds, the matriarchal, where the husbands are not related, and the fraternal, where they are brothers or cousins on the father's side. The matriarchal type is found among the Karavazhi Pulaya, the Plateau Muthuvan, and the Mannan. The husbands are reckoned as lovers and lose their privilege at the pleasure of the woman. Fraternal polyandry prevails among the Malayarayn, the Ullatan, the Paliyan, the Urali, the Southern Pulayan, and the Parayan. Polyandry may be traced to various causes. It may keep family property intact where the husbands are brothers. Poverty and paucity of women may be a combined cause of polyandry.

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Kerala contains the two types of social organisation, matrilineal and patrilineal and all the castes, sub-castes are grouped under one or the other based on inheritance. The tribes and castes governed by the matrilineal systems are given below :—

1. Kanikkar, Muthuvan, Mannan, Malayarayan, Vishavan, Parayan, *Pulayan*, Kadan, Kurichiyan and Vettuvan among the tribes.

2. Nayar, Ambalavasi, Samantan, Kshatriya, Ishava, Vaniyan, Mukkuvan, Vannan and Velan.

3. The Nambutiri of Panniyar village in North Malabar, according to M. S. A. Rao.

The tribes and castes governed by patrilineal inheritance are given below:—

1. Cheruman, Pulayan (Malabar), Nayadi, Paniyan and Malapantaram among the tribes.

2. Kammalar, Kaniyan, Chaliyan, Tiyan (South Malabar, Northern part of Cochin and some parts of Travancore).

3. Nambutiri, Embran, Pattar or Tamil Brahmin, Musad, Muthathu, Chakkiyar and others.

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KINSHIP THROUGH MOTHER

The system of tracing kinship through the mother is still found among the Kerala tribes, the Kanikkar, Muthuvan, Mannan, Malayarayan, Vishavan, Parayan and Pulayan of Travancore, the Nattu Malayan of Cochin, and the Kuruchiyan and Vettuvans of Malabar. The relation found to subsist between a man and his sister's children may be a survival of matriarchy under which a woman's children belonged to her family and her husband had no proprietory right or authority over them.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Census of India, 1901 *Volume, XX, Cochin, Part I Report by M. SANKARA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam, Printed at The Cochin Government Press,* 1903 *pages* 172 *to* 175.

AGRESTIO SERFS

105. India is essentially an agricultural country, for over two-thirds of the population, whether as landlords, tenants or labourers, live upon income derived from land; and the Madras Presidency is no exception, for 69 per cent. of the people subsist upon land, and in Cochin, 51 per cent. of its inhabitants look to land as the means of their livelihood. Agrestic serfs have therefore been an essential element in the population of the Empire as a whole, and of the State. As in India generally, slavery is an institution of ancient growth in the State also, and in times gone by serfs attached to estates as agricultural labourers used to be bought and sold with the land itself, a practice which was continued even up to March 1854 A.D. when by means of a Proclamation issued by the Darbar, the practice of buying and selling slaves or mortgaging them as live chattels was made penal. The obnoxious practice still lurked in the rural parts but was altogether put a stop to by a reaffirmation of the Proclamation in September 1872, which made it an offence punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term of 7 years. These serfs were perhaps the first owners of the land, but they have been so far displaced by successive waves of aggressive immigrants, and reduced by their conquerors to a condition of absolute slavery with many social disabilities, that they are even now compelled to live in special places far away from the village in their miserable hovels by the side of the fields or on the out-skirts of hills. Referring to the State itself, the various classes of agricultural serfs such as Kanakkans (5,917), Kootans (99), Pulayans or Cherumans (59,840), Paraiyans (8,841), and Vettuvans (6,349) seem to represent the types of various grades in the process of evolution. They form nearly 15 per cent. of the Hindu population and 10 per cent. of the total population of the State. Of the above, the Kanakkans and Kootans are superior to the rest in status; the former have almost given up their original occupation, and many of them are now engaged in fishing and boat service. From the nature of their profession, and the high position they hold as compared with the rest, they are more in touch with the civilized world and they are therefore better off than the other classes. The Paraiyans have likewise taken to other professions, such as making baskets and bamboo mats. They are much dreaded on account of their supposed skill in sorcery and witchcraft. They are votaries of parti-

cular demons, through whose aid they are believed to practise the black art. All these classes are profoundly ignorant and superstitious, and are steeped in abject poverty. They are absolutely shut out from all civilizing influences by the most humiliating disabilities, and have therefore to stick to heir occupation and to work very hard to keep the wolf from the door. They are dark in complexion, but strong, muscular, and capable of standing a great deal of hard work. The Christian missions are endeavouring to ameliorate their low and impoverished condition. Their conversion to Christianity or Islam gives them a passport to tread over the field forbidden to them up to that time; their approach no longer pollutes castes above them; in fact, they find themselves in a position much better than they ever were in. By becoming a convert, any one of the dark skinned sons of the soil rises by one leap from the most degraded position to one of equality with most others. But yesterday a slave, compelled to stand at a distance of 64 feet from his Brahman or Nayar master, and even from castes below these two, and always restricted to the limits of the field, from which he steps out but with loud warnings of his approach, to-day he walks on the public road almost shoulder to shoulder with the most orthodox Brahman, and approaches within reasonable distance of the sacred edifice of the latter. When thus metamorphosed, he is able to engage himself in whatever work he can do, earn higher wages and lead a comparatively easy and comfortable life.

PULAYANS:

1901: 59,840

1891: 51,251

Of the several classes mentioned above, the Pulayans or the Cherumans are the most important not only in numerical strength but also as representing the type of the class. They form about 75 per cent of the agrestic serfs and 11 per cent of the Hindu population. They are still field labourers properly so called, being engaged in digging, ploughing or irrigating the fields, watching the crops or tending the cattle. In 1891, the Pulayans and Cherumans were separately classed. But, as the two names are applied to the same caste and indicate but difference in name used in special localities, the enumerators were asked to enter the name 'Pulayan' for both Pulayan and Cheruman. In the Southern Taluks they are invariably called Pulayans, while in the Northern Taluks, they are termed Cherumans or Mulayans. As a rule, the Pulayans of the Northern Taluks keep the front tuft of hair like other Malayalis, while those of the Southern Taluks shave their heads clean like Jonaka Mappillas or Native Christians. Some consider that Cherumans are so

called, because they are the aborigines of the Chera country, while others say Cheruman means 'a small man', probably a low man. A *'Cheru'* in Malayalam means wet soil, and *man* is a personal noun termination of the masculine gender, it is not improbable that the name is a modified form of *Cheru man*, meaning one connected with the soil, while Pulayan means merely one causing pollution. They are sometimes called *Pula-Cherumans*, which seems to favour this view. In view of the practice in many places of giving them in the evening their wages for the day in paddy, they are also called *Valli al* (a man receiving wages). In the Cochin Taluk, there is a class of Pulayans known as *Thanda* Pulayans, so called because they wear a kind of dress made of a species of grass called *Thanda*. Their approach pollutes the ordinary Pulayans. Toddy is their favourite drink, and the old and the young (males and females) drink it at least twice a day. After a day's hard toil, they refresh themselves with this beverage in the evening. They will forgo their meals rather than their toddy. Even little children are fed with it. They drink arrack only as a luxury.

In the work of conversion, the Christian missions have been most successful among the Pulayans. In spite of the facilities thus afforded to them, and the large number of persons that avail themselves of the same, the percentage of increase in the community is nearly 17 against the average increase of 12.33 per cent in the population of the State as a whole. This result appears to be due to better enumeration, for an average enumerator of the old type used to consider the inclusion or exclusion from the returns of a number of persons belonging to these servile classes as quite immaterial.

Their headman is called *Kuruppan*, who is appointed by His Highness the Raja. He has his subordinate local heads, who are called Muppans, and whose social jurisdiction extends over particular villages or desams.

Like the Chogans, Valans and several other Malayali castes, the Pulayans too have the two ceremonies of Talikettu and nuptials. Failure of the performance of Talikettu, before the girl attains maturity, entails loss of caste. The Talikettu ceremony takes place invariably before the tenth year. Degraded and illiterate as they are, they too consult astrologers, for they also seek his opinion in regard to agreement of horoscopes and auspicious moments. The astrologer is paid two or four puthans and betel-leaf for his trouble. As soon as either form of marriage is arranged, the senior member of the family communicates his desire to his master, who generally helps him with paddy and money for the celebration. When the Pulayans brings home his wife, wages will be given to her also along with her husband. They too have to seek and obtain the permission

of their headman or Kuruppan for the performance of all ceremonies. The Talikettu is celebrated in the bride's house, where at the auspicious moment the maternal uncle or other near relative of the girl puts the Tali with a small quantity of paddy into a pouch made at one end of the cloth worn by the bridegroom, who then ties the Tali in the presence of the Muppan and villagers. When prearranged, the Pulayan who ties the Tali takes the girl to wife. In all cases of this nature, the bridegroom who ties the Tali has to take the Tali made at his expense, and a piece of cloth, the latter of which is presented to the girl as a guarantee for subsequent consummation.

If the two ceremonies are performed separately, the Kuruppan gets 12 puthans for the Talikettu and 32 puthans, betel leaf and rice for the nuptials. The proposal for marriage, or betrothal is made by the father or maternal uncle of the bridegroom and four Pulayans from the village, visiting the bride's relatives with rice, betel-leaf, a few gallons of toddy, and four puthans. At the time of the ceremony, the bridegroom and his relatives go to the bride's house with a piece of cloth, and money varying from 64 to 300 Puthans, which latter is distributed among the relatives of the bride. The ceremony consists of the presentation of the cloth to the bride in the presence of the relatives of the two parties, villagers and Muppan, and the payment of the money to the bride's relatives. Feasts are held at the house of the bride and the bridegroom. Divorce is effected with less ceremony for the Kuruppan's permission is not always obtained for the same. They have a special subcaste to dig the grave in which they are burried and not burnt. Their death pollution lasts for 15 days. They also perform funeral ceremonies for the benefit of the departed soul. On ceremonial occasions, the priest is generally paid 7 puthans and a few measures of rice. They have to stand at a distance of 64 feet from Brahmans. Their approach pollutes all polluting castes above them. While a Paraiyan pollutes a Pulayan only by touch, a Vettuvan pollutes him by approach, and an Ullatan has to stand as far away from a Pulayan as the Pulayan has to do in his relations to castes above him. If polluted by the approach of an Ullatan, a Pulayan has to take seven baths and to shed a small quantity of blood from his little finger to remove the pollution. The relative status of the Pulayans and Vettuvans is a disputed point, for each section claims superiority over the other.

In regard to the ceremonies of Talikettu, nuptials, funeral ceremonies, & c., the Kanakkans, Kootans, Paraiyans and Vettuvans follow customs more or less similar to those of the Pulayans.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Census of India, 1931, Volume XXVIII Travancore' Part I—Report by RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., B.Sc. (Edin) Ph.D. (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore Trivandrum: Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1932 page 385.

549. PULAYAN: (Cheramar)—Pulayas (Cheramar) are mainly agricultural labourers found mostly in the central and northern taluks of Travancore. According to one tradition they were an influential community during the time of Cheraman Perumals, and on the fall of the Chera dynasty the members of the ruling family became petty princes holding sway in different parts of the country, such as Pulayanarkotta in Trivandrum, Kokkothamangalam and Ulamalakkal in Nedumangad, Chathannur in Quilon and Aikaranad in Kunnathunad. How this community came to be called Pulaya is not known. The use of this name is now disliked and even resented by a section of the community, particularly the Christian converts, who are adopting the name 'Chearmar', which means the ancient inhabitants of Cheranad; but a few other prominent members are anxious to retain the name Pulaya only.

Pulayas are grouped into two main divisions, viz. the Kilakkan Pulayas and the Padinjaran Pulayas, the latter ranking above the former chiefly owning to their abstention from eating beef. Their mother-tongue is Malayalam. There are many exogamous clans among them and a man cannot marry a woman of his own clan. A woman retains her clan even after marriage and her children belong to her clan. The males generally marry after their twentieth year and girls either before or after puberty. Widow marriage is allowed and divorce is common. Inheritance is either makkathayam or marumakkathayam.

The population of Hindu Pulayas according to the present census is 207,337 which is only 5.7 per cent more than that in 1921. This small increase is due to their strength being depleted by conversion to Christianity. The Christian converts returned at this census number 157,813, so that the total population of the community, Hindu and Christian together, is 365,150.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Census of India, 1921, *Volume XIX, Cochin, Part I—Report, Part II—Imperial Tables by P. GOVINDA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam: Printed at the Cochin Government Press,* 1922 *page* 66.

PULAYAN (69,423)—These are field labourers who were originally slaves. They are also called Cherumas.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Census of India, 1931, Volume XXI Cochin, Part I—Report, Part II—A & B Tables by T. K. SANKARA MENON, M.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, 1933, Printed by The Superintendent, Cochin Govt. Press, Ernakulam page 273.

PULAYAN: (82,043)—Agrestic serfs emancipated in 1854. They are also called Cherumans. They are all engaged in field labour—ploughing, sowing, crop-watching and reaping—and are generally paid in kind. They are all poor and illiterate, and live in the confines of paddy flats in miserable huts. They polluted the higher castes by approach within 64 feet. Parayans polluted them by touch, and Nayadis, Vettuvans, Ullatans, etc. by approach.

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Extract on "PULAYAN" from Census of India, 1921, *Volume XXV, Travancore, Part I Report Part II Imperial Tables by MURARI S. KRISHNAMURTHI AYYAR, M.B. & C.M., Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum: Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press* 1922 *page* 107.

175. PULAYAN: There was a decrease of over 10 per cent among the Pulayas in 1911 as compared with 1901, and this time an increase of 6 per cent is observed. The small increase may be the result of their convertion to Christianity.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from the Census of India, 1891 *Volume XIII, Madras, The Report on The Census, by H. A. STUART, of the Indian Civil Service; Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society; Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras, Madras: Printed by the Superintendent Government Press,* 1893 *pages* 249-250.

395. CHERUMAN OF PULAYAN : 258,402—This caste is called Cheruman in South Malabar and Pulayan in North Malabar. The ordinary derivation of Cheruman given by the people is a 'small man', but Mr. Logan says they are so called because they are the aborigines of the Chera country*. Pulayan is probably from the same root as Paraiyan, Holeya, & c. Even in South Malabar where they are called Cheruman, a large sub-division numbering over 30,000 is called Pulacheruman.

The total number of sub-divisions returned is 39, of which the most important are Kanakkan (73,000), Pulacheruman (38,000), Eralan (23,000), Kudan (14,000), and Rolan (12,000). Kanakkan and Pula Cheruman are found in all the southern taluks, Kudan almost wholly in Walluvanad, Rolan in Ernad and Walluvanad, and Eralan in Palghat and Walluvanad. I understand that there are no true subdivisions among the Cherumans of North Malabar.

They are all small in stature and very black in complexion. Some of them wear a tuft of hair in front like Nayars; others shave the heads clean like Muhammadans. They are for the most part field labourers and formerly were agrestic slaves. Their religion is devil-worship. The caste priest is called *Janmari* or *Janmi*. In the north the succession is in the female line as among Nayars, while in the south the succession is from father to son.

After childbirth the females are regarded as impure for 28 days and in the extreme north for 42 days. During this period no males may take meals from the house, but a separate hut is generally built for confinement. It is strange to find so inconvenient a custom existing among such a class. The child is brought to the master of the mother and he gives it a name, practice that is, of course, a relic of the days of slavery. Their marriage ceremonies are of the simplest kind. In parts of the south there is hardly anything more than a feast. When a marriage is arranged, the couple is brought to the master at the close of a working day, and the latter measures out the daily wages of rice for both together in recognition of their having become husband and wife. Money is

*Malabar Manual, vol. i, p. 14.

paid to the girl's parents. In the north money is paid to the caste priest and to the uncle of the girl. The marriage ceremonies are there somewhat more formal. First the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house and presents rice, betel leaf, &c., to the head of the family and asks for the bride. Consent is indicated by the bride's brother, placing some rice and a cloth in the assembly and throwing rice on the head of the headman of the caste who is present. On the appointed day the bridegroom goes to the house with two companions and presents the girl with cloth and money. From that day he is regarded as her husband and cohabitation begins at once. But the girl cannot be taken to his house until the ceremony called '*mangalam*' is performed. The bridegroom's party go in procession to the bride's house, where a feast awaits them. The man presents sweetmeats to the girl's brother. Then the caste priest recites the names and family history of the two persons and the names of their masters and deities. They are seated in a *Pandal* before a lamp and a heap of rice. One of the assembly gets up and delivers a speech on the duties of married life, touching upon the evils of theft, cheating, adultery, &c. Rice is then thrown on the heads of the couple and the man prostrates himself at the feet of the elders. The next day they proceed to husband's house and rice is again thrown on their heads. Subsequently there is another feast and throwing of rice on the couple in the husband's house. Then the party assembled make presents to the pair, a part of which goes to the priest and a part to the master of the husband. Divorce is easy but the money paid must be returned by the woman. On death, pollution is observed for 8 days in the north and 14 days in the south, and it is removed by the caste priest sprinkling a mixture of milk and the water of the tender cocoanut.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Census of India, 1901 *Vol. XV by W. FRANCIS page* 175.

PULAYAN : (3,484)—A synonym for Cheruman; also a Tamil caste of hill cultivators found in Madura and Coimbatore (C. R. 1891, para 420; *Coimbatore Man.* Vol. I p. 409; *Madura Man,* Part II, p. 65; Mateer's *Native Life in Travancore,* pp. 33-59; *Madras Review,* May 1896, pp. 237-272).

Extract on "PULAYAN" from 'Census of India, 1901' Volume XXVI, Travancore, Part I Report by N. SUBRAMHANYA AIYAR, M.A., M.B., C.M., Dewan Peishcar—Census Commissioner, Trivandrum: Printed at the "Malabar Mail" Press 1903 from pages 341 to 345.

219. PULAYAN: Pulaya is supposed to be derived from Pula, a word meaning pollution, because, of all the indigenous castes and tribes of Malabar, they cause the greatest impurity from the stand-point of medieval conventionalism. They may be said to correspond to the Holeyas of the Canarese Districts whose name too has perhaps a similar origin, but which Mr. Lewis Rice of Mysore derives from 'Hola' a field. In British Malabar, they are more generally known as Cherumar or Cherumakkal, meaning a short-sized people. It is also supposed that the word Cherumakkal is a corruption of Cheramakkal and this name they have come to own, it is said on the idea that they are the original inhabitants of the land. From tradition current among the caste-men, it would appear that once upon a time they had dominion over several parts of the country. A person called Aikkara Yagamanan whose ancestors were Pulaya king is still held in considerable respect by the Pulayas of North Travancore and duly acknowledged as their chieftain and lord, while their *Nat* or country (Aikkaranat in the Kunnatnad Taluk) still remains to suggest an ancient tale. In Trivandrum on the banks of the *Veli* lake is a hill called Pulayanai *Kotta* where it is believed a Pulayaking once ruled. Similarly at Uzhamalaikkal in Nedumangad and Chatayamangalam in Kottarakara, Pulaya kings are said to have held sway.

Sub Divisions:

The Pulayas are divided into a number of sub-divisions. The chief of them are (1) Kanappulayas, (2) Vettupulayas, (3) Kanakkappulayas and (4) Inappulayas. Of these, the Kanakkappulayas form the highest class. There are two other divisions, the Kizhakkan Pulayas and the *Pattingngaran* Pulayas. The former usually live in the eastern-most Taluks and the latter in the western. Of these, the Western rank above the Eastern, as the latter are beef-eaters which the former are not. Hence, they are often known as Pasu (cow) Pulayas. The difference is so pronounced that the Kizhakkan Pulayas have to stand at a considerable distance from the Patingangaran Pulayas. Other divisions of note are the Pichchatan, the Kuruppan and the *Valluvan*. The *Valluvan* performs the priestly function of the Pulayas and believes that he forms a different caste altogether from his Pulaya congregation.

Clothing and Ornaments:

The peculiarity about the colthing of Pulayas is that among the Vettupulayas who live in the Shertally Taluk the women wear but a leafy garment. The following tradition is related in regard to it :—"The men of these *Tandu* Pulayans (who wear the *Tandu* grass) wear the ordinary lower cloth of the kind worn in this country, but the distinctive name of the tribe comes from the women's dress which is a very primitive article indeed. The leaves of a certain water plant (*Isolepis articulata,* Nees) are out into lengths of a foot long, and tied round the waist in such a fashion that the strings unwoven hang in a bushy tail behind, and present the same appearance in front, reaching nearly to the knees. This dress is accounted for by a tradition that in former days a certain high-caste man of that region had been sowing grains and planting vegetables in the fields, but found that his daily work was in some unknown way frustrated; for whatever he planted or sowed in the day was carefully picked up and taken "when men slept". So he set a watch and one might he saw coming out of a hole hitherto unknown to him certain beings like men, but quite naked, who set to work destroying his hopes of a crop. Pursuing them, he succeeded in catching a man and a woman; and he was impressed with shame at their condition that he gave the man his own upper-cloth, which was hanging on his shoulder, and made him put it on, but not having one to spare for the woman, she made herself an apron of grass as above described. These were the progenitors of the numerous slaves who are found there at this day. They are so called Kuzhi or pit Pulayans, from having originated as above said"*. Having regard to the various stages through which a people has been known to pass, before it becomes extinguished in the competition of inter-racial life, one does not at all feel prepared to accept these traditions, which can only have the effect of throwing off the track the unsuspecting student of national history. On the other hand, the belief which some hold is not wholly unjustifiable that the Pulayas and all their congeners are merely depressed specimens of Indian humanity and that their present position ought to serve as a warning for their now more fortunate bretheren. The Pulaya woman wears a number of bead-strings around the neck and some shells. No other ornaments are known, except in some instances, the *Rasi* and a few brass bangles.

Food and Drink:

The Pulayas live on rice, only for a few months in the year. During the remaining months when harvest is distant, they have

*The Revd. Mr. W. J. Richards in the *Indian Antiquary*.

to live upon fruits and roots. Toddy is a favourite drink. It is considered a sacred offering to their tribal divinities.

Occupation :

The occupation of the Pulayas from time immemorial has been field-labour for which they are paid in kind. They are in many cases hereditary attaches to agricultural holdings and though at the hands of some short-sighted land-owners they have suffered unpleasant treatment at times, their lot on the whole has not generally been one of helpless isolation as is often believed.

Religious Worship :

The Pulayas worship the spirits of deceased ancestors called Chavars. The *Matam* and the Panchavar or Anchu Tampurakkal believed to be the five *Pandavas* are specially adored. The Pulayas have no temples but raised spuares in the midst of groves where public worship is offered. The spirits of persons who have died before 16 years of age and of virgins receive special attention. The sun is the highest of all their deities. Many Hindu divinities are also held in great reverence. In the Mahadeva temple at Parachalay the Pulayas are given certain special concessions on some festive days. Instances of a similar kind, at the temples of Ochchira and Kumaranallur are also observed.* At Sastamkotta in the Kunnattur Taluk, a special Saturday in a year is reserved for the Pulayas and is known as Pulassaniyazhcha. Prof. Oppert, in his *original Inhabitants of India* mentions many shrines in South India where similar provision is made to corresponding classes on the East Coast. Exorcism is in great favour with Pulayas and represents to them the sovereign remedy for all diseases. The Kokkara (iron rattle) is the instrument employed by the Pulaya exorcist.

Marriage :

The marriage of a Pulaya boy usually takes place before he is 20 years of age. Girls may be wedded either before or

*"At the Nedumangad temple says the Rev. Mr. Mateer where two on three thousand people, mostly Sudras and Izhavas, attend for the annual festival in March. One-third of the whole are Parayar, Kuravar, Vetar, Kanikkar and Pulayar who come from all parts around. They bring with them wooden models of cows neatly hung over and covered in imitation of shaggy hair with ears of rice. Many of these images are brought, each with a separate procession from its own place. The head-men are finally dressed with cloths stained purple at the edge. The image is borne on a bambu frame, accompanied by a drum, and men and women in procession, the latter, wearing quantities of beads, such as several strings of red, then several of white, or strings of beads and then a row of brass ornaments like rupees—and all uttering the Kurava cry. These images are carried round the temple, and all amuse themselves for the day".

after puberty. Among the Kana Pulayas, however, it would appear more meritorious to marry girls before puberty. In certain places, when an unmarried girl of this Pulaya division attains maturity, the father and the maternal uncle gives up their charge and she becomes the property of the Valluvan who may either sell her and receive the price or send her beyond Cochin, which means that she is once more an honoured member of the community. About three or four years before the actual marriage, the guardians of the boy go to the bride's house and make proposals to her guardians. A small sum has to be given as earnest money to the latter. The bridegroom then goes to the house of the bride-elect and stays there for a few days. After once returning, he again repairs with his relations to the house of the bride for the purpose of deciding on an auspicious, day for the wedding. The Kaniyan is asked to fix the date of marriage. If he finds that the union between the bridegroom and the bride is not auspicious, he directs a brother of the boy to marry the girl and thus gets over the difficulty. The bridegroom's friend, guardian and about a dozen others of the *Kara* assmble in the bridegroom's house on the day previous to the marriage. Certain purification ceremonies are then gone through and the bridgroom made ready for entering the stage of wedlock. In the early morning the bridegroom and party proceed to the house of the bride accompanied by music and the beating of drums. Before he enters the marriage *pendal,* the bride has to go seven times around it, seven Pulaya women going with lighted lamps in front of her. After several preliminary ceremonies, the sister of the bridegroom ties the tali around the neck of the bride. The husband pays 22 fanams to the brides relations as a present. The mother of the bride by a curious custom is not permitted to approach the bridegroom at any time on the wedding day or after, lest it should cause ceremonial pollution. In the night both the bride and bridegroom eat out of the same vessel in the presence of the elders of the *kara.* In the early morning she is taken to the bridegroom's house. The blessing of the Sun-god is invoked at the time of departure.

Divorce takes place at will. The husband has only to take the girl to her parents' house and leave her in their care. If on the other hand, it is the bride that desires the divorce, the bride-price paid by the husband has to be returned to him. Polyandry is unknown among the Pulayas, even of the fraternal kind. Polygamy is on the other hand common, a single Pulaya taking as many as four or five girls as wives. Each Pulaya woman is an earning member and no great burden is felt by the husband in maintaining them. If the husband dies, his brother may be accepted as husband by the widow. Adultery is severely punished by the castemen. The offence itself is very rare as it is believed that the Kannis (the spirits of the

deceased virgins) will wreak fell vengeance upon wrong-doing women.

Ceremonies After Marriage :

Vayattu Ponkala is celebrated in the 7th Month of pregnancy. An oblation of rice is made to the rising sun on that occasion and a small feast given for the assembled Pulayas. The Velattan or the Pulaya exorciser performs various incantations for the safe delivery of the child. A few drops of tamarind juice are also poured into the mouth of the pregnant woman. At the time of dilivery the woman is accommodated within a shed erected for the nonce, the approach of which is pollution to the other Pulayas for seven days. After her purification the shed is set fire to. Annaprasanam (first feeding) ceremony is, observed in a small way, six months after delivery. The Karnavedha and the Chaula ceremonies are also practised by the Pulayas of course, in their own humble way. When a girl attains puberty she is sent out of the main hut to a temporary shed where she has to stay for seven days and nights. In fact none may be said to observe ceremonial pollution with greater rigour and strictness than this caste which by common consent is about the most depressed of the Hindu castes on this Coast.

Death and Succeeding Ceremonies :

When a Pulaya dies, a piece of unbleached cloth is thrown over the corpse by the relatives. The Komarattan or the exorciser and the Valluvan or the priest are invited. 4 or 6 persons carry the dead body to the graveyard which is a retired part of the compound wherein the family lives. After the corpse is laid on the ground a penitent prayer has to be offered to the Sun-God, or the Utayatampuram by those who bore it thither. The son or in his absence the nephew is the chief mourner. Pollution lasts for seven days.

Caste Government :

The Aikkara Yagamanan, as has been before observed, is the highest and the most honoured member of the Pulaya community. Cheraman Perumal is believed to have presented an old ancestor of this family with a lace cap which is remembered with great pride. Though all the Pulayas look upon this Yagamanan as their communal head, practically the authority which he exercises is but little. It is wholly centered in the *Valluvan* of each *Kara*. Under the former are two chieftains known as Tatteri Achchan and Mannattu Koyil *Vallon*. There are also Head

Valluvans who have a general supervising authority over the tract of territory that falls under their jurisdiction. It was these Head *Valluvans* who were given power over the Pulayas in ancient days and who were responsible for providing the necessary labour. The *Valluvan* is the headman and priest of the caste. The word is said to be a corruption of Valiya or great. The *Valluvan* prides himself on five privileges (1) the long urbrella, i.e. an umbrella with a long handle (2) the five-coloured umbrella (3) bracelets (4) long earings made of gold and (5) a box for keeping betel-leaves. His staff consists of (1) Kuruppan or the accountant, who assists the *Valluvan* in the discharge of his duties, (2) the *Komarattan* or the devilexorciser, (3) the Kaikkaran or the representative of the people and (4) the Vatikkaran or the constable. "Summing up" says a careful observe in the *Madras Review* for 1896. "We see the Kara constitution, a tolerably complete village organization, but with a territorial basis. No such organization exists among the higher castes".

Names :

The most common names for males are Aiyyan (father) Chattan (Sasta) Chatayan (hairy), Kiliyan (Parrot), Arangan (one of the stage), etc. Females are called Aiyyi (mother) Velutta (white) Karutta (black) Chakki (Sakti or female power) and so on.

General : The following description of the Pulayas given by Mr. Featherman in his *Social History of Mankind* may be read with interest. "Though the Pooleahs belong" he says "to the Cherumar or Slave class, yet they nevertheless form a regularly organized tribe. Public affairs are controlled by an assembly of elders who punish delinquents by the imposition of a fine. They eat animal food whenever they can procure it, but they reject carrion and drink spirituous liquors. A married man may sell his wife with her consent; which he does sometimes to recover the money expended in contracting marriage. They worship a goddess called *Paradevata* who is represented by a stone resting on a mound of earth. Their *Pugaris* or priests who belong to their own tribe offer at a new year's festival a sacrifice of fowls, fruits and spirituous liquors and it is supposed that if this offering were omitted the goddess would revenge herself by afflicting the people with sickness. They believe in the ghostly survival of the dead". There are, he continues, "both good and evil spirits and sacrificial offerings are presented to both to propitiate their favour; but more especially to the good ghosts which are considered to be most powerful". They are in industrious, obedient and honest community. As observed by Mateer "they are simple-hearted, grateful for kindness, deeply attached to those who

show themselves their friends and improving with marked rapidity under instruction."

The total number of Pulayas in Travancore is 206,503. They are found in the largest numbers in Kunnatnad (17,537) Muvattapuzha (17,311). Tiruvalla (15,247) and Neyyattinkara (13,901). Five other Taluks, Ettumanur, Vaikam, Trivandrum, Chengannur and Mavelikara contain more than 10,000 of them each. The strength of the Kanappulayas is 89,685, of the Vettupulayas 21,386 the Kanakkappulayas 1,750 and the Inappulayas is 2,881. The Kizhakkan Pulayas number 6,554 and the *Patingnagarans* 11,276. As many as 4,605 have been returned as Pasuppulayas. In 1891 the total number of Pulayas was 202,616.

Extract on "PULAYAN" from Census of India, 1911, *Cochin Vol. XVIII Part—I Report by C. A. MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam* 1912 *page* 78.

PULAYAN (72,787): Aggrestic serfs emanipated in 1854. They are also called Cherumans. They are all engaged in field labour—ploughing, sowing, crop-watching and reaping—and paid in kind. They are all poor and illiterate, and live in the confines of paddy flats in miserable huts. They pollute the higher castes by approach with 64 feet. Parayans pollute them by touch, and Nayadis, Vettuvans, Ullatans, etc. by approach.

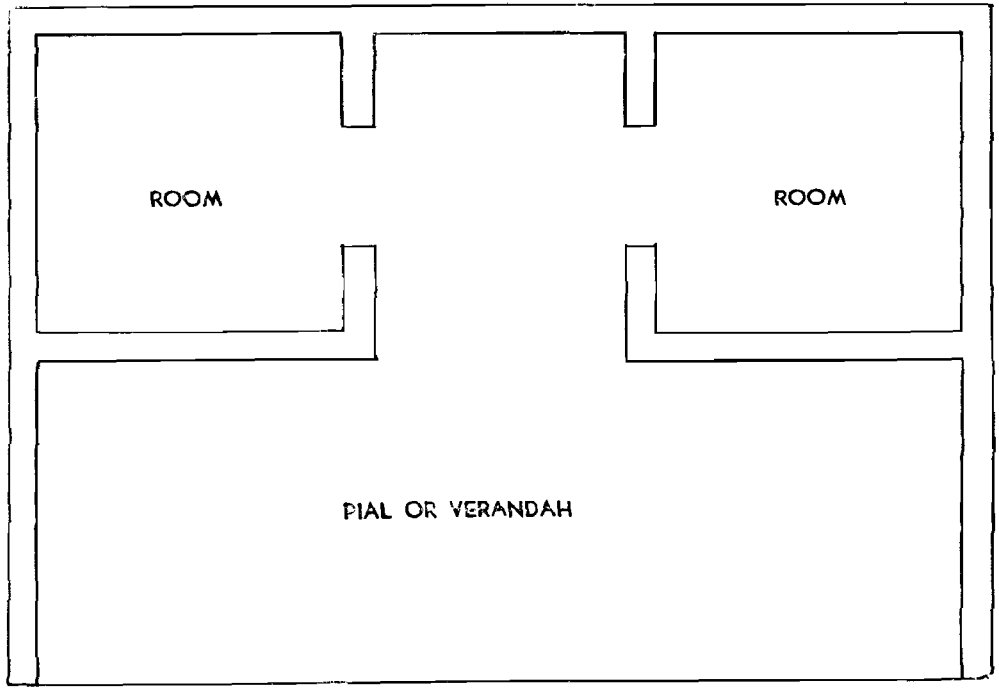
Extract on "PULAYAN" from Census of India, 1911, Vol. XXIII Travancore, Part—I Report by N. SUBRAMHANYA AIYAR M.A., Dewan Peishcar, Census Commissioner, Trivandrum: Printed at the 'Ananda Press' 1912 page 266.

PULAYAN (185,314): The Pulayars correspond to the Cherumar or Cherumakkal of British Malabar. They are divided into a number of sub divisions, Kanappulayas, Vettuppulayas, Kanakkappulayas and Inappulayas being the chief of them. According to certain accounts, they are merely the most depressed layer of the comprehensive industrial caste of Indian society, their function in the organism being agricultural labour. In many cases, they are herediary attaches to agricultural holdings. The Sun is their chief object of worship. They also revere the spirits of the deceased. The marriage of a male takes place before he is 20, while girls are wedded either before or after puberty. The dead are buried and pollution lasts for seven days.

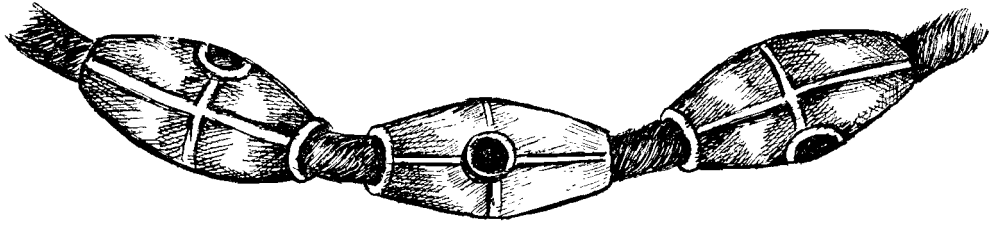
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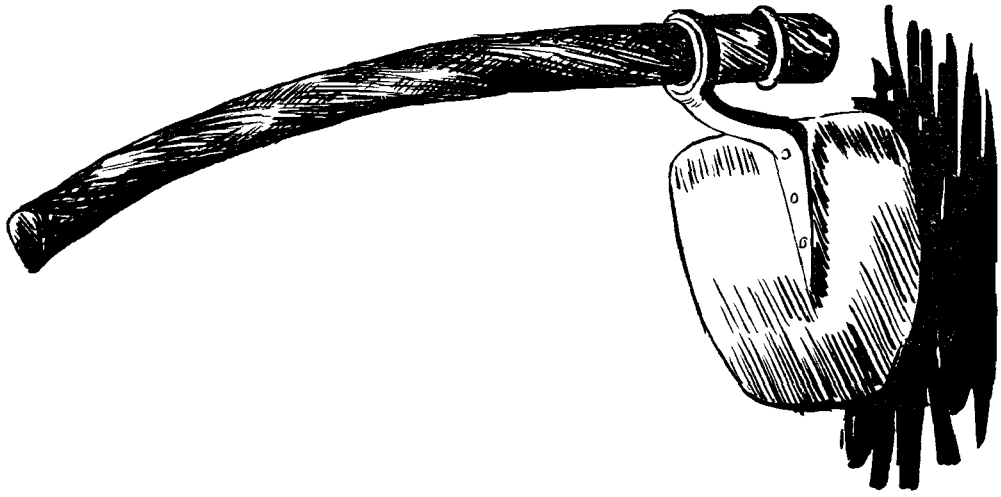
A twin house of Pulayans consisting of two apartments inside.



Inner view of the twin-house of Pulayans.



Tali worn by Pulaya women.



Spade used by Pulayans.

KAKKALAN

I. Name, identity, origin and History :

Consequent on the reorganisation of States in 1956, Kanyakumari and Shencottah areas were detached from Travancore State and merged with Madras State. The list of Scheduled Castes for Madras State was also amplified so as to include the Scheduled Castes found in the merged areas. Kokkalan, a Scheduled Caste in some of the areas of Kerala State was declared a Scheduled Caste in Kanyakumari District and Shencottah taluk of Madars State and was included in the Scheduled Castes Lists Modification Order 1956. Prior to this order it was declared a Scheduled Caste according to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950 and in 1931, it was declared a depressed class in the above areas (Census of India, 1961, India, Vol. I Part V. B. (ii) pp. 42-43). Kakkalans may be found in other parts of Madras State also but they have not been enumerated as such in 1961 Census. Only 26 persons belonging to this community were returned from Kanyakumari district in 1961 Census. They are not found in Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district.

They are identified with the Kakakuravans of the South. (Census of India, 1911, Travancore Part I, 259). According to the version of the Kakkalans interviewed in Kanyakumari district, they are different from the Nanjil Kuravans of the South. In Kanyakumari district, they are found in Nagercoil town and in Thumbodu hamlet of Thiruparappu village of Kalkulam taluk. A study of this community was conducted in the above places.

The literal meaning of the term 'Kakkalan' is not clear. As already reported they are referred to by others as Kaka kuravans and when they refer to themselves the term 'Kakkalan' is used. Other castes call them as 'Maistries', since they pursue the occupation of tailoring also. However, their main occupation is fortune-telling. The Kakkalans interviewed in Kanyakumari district are not aware of the etymological significance of their caste name. About their origin, Thurston has narrated the following legend : "The Kakkalans have a legend concerning their origin to the effect that Siva was once going about begging as a Kapaladharin and arrived at a Brahman Street from which the inhabitants drove him away. The offended God immediately reduced the village to ashes and the guilty villages begged his pardon, but were reduced to the position of the Kakkalans and made to earn their

livelihood by begging". (Thurston, III, 1909, 45). The Kakkalans in Kanyakumari district are not quite aware of the above legend but they narrate the following story to indicate why they got the name 'Kakkalan'. "Long ago a child was eating a piece of sweet-meat and a crow snatched it away from the child's hands. It ate a portion of it and dropped the rest. One of the ancestors of Kakkalans, who was looking at this, ran and picked the sweet-meat dropped by the crow and ate it even without caring that it was previously eaten by a child and a crow. He was in such a degradation that his descendants came to be called by others as 'Kakalans', which in course of time became "Kakkalans"." An account of Kakkalans found in the Travancore Census Report, 1911, runs as follows: "The indigenous tailor caste of Malabar now becoming reduced to the status of a wandering community. They are met with in North and Central Travancore and are identified with Kaka kuravans of the South." The Kakkalans met with in Kanyakumari district report that their forefathers were migrants from Thiruvanandapuram and Chembangudi of Kerala State.

II. Distribution and Population trend :

As already reported, Kakkalans were enumerated from Kanyakumari district where their population, according to 1961 Census, is 26. They may be found elsewhere also in the state but they have not been enumerated as such. They were not enumerated in any of the earlier Censuses. Though they are scheduled in Schencottah taluk in Tirunelveli district, no person belonging to this community has been returned from that area in 1961 Census. In Kanyakumari district they are found in Nagercoil town and in Thiruparappu village of Kalkulam taluk. In Thumbodu hamlet of Thiruparappu, five households of them live in a piece of *poramboke*, (waste Government land) adjoining the irrigation canal flouring from Pechiparai. In Nagercoil five households are living in Vadaseri hamlet. In Madras State this community was not enumerated earlier than 1961 Census, and as such a discussion of population trend of this community is not feasible. (Census of India 1961, Madras Vol. IX, Part V-A (i), 440). In addition to Madras State they are found in Kerala State also, where their population is considerable. According to 1961 Census, their strength in Kerala State is 2830 consisting of 1380 males and 1450 females. They are found mostly in the areas of Kottayam, Quilon, Trichur and Trivandrum. On the whole, they are spread throughout Kerala State barring Malabar.

The 26 persons enumerated in 1961 Census in Kanyakumari district comprise 14 males and 12 females. Their distribution in the rural and urban areas is 19 and 7 respectively. But actually their strength in Nagercoil town is more than that reported

by the Census as there are five households of them living there. Out of the 26 persons enumerated, only one was recorded as having born in the place of enumeration. All others were born elsewhere, either in the other places of district of enumeration or in the adjacent Kerala State. The distribution of 26 persons age-groupwise is as follows:

Age groups	No. of persons		
	Males	Females	Total
0—14	8	4	12
15—44	3	7	10
45+	3	1	4

In the age-group of 0-14, there are 12 persons who account for 46.2%. The population of Kakkalan is too small to arrive at sex-ratios for comparison with the sex-ratios of the Scheduled Caste population and general population of the district. The workers among the 26 persons form 50% and the majority of them are found in rural areas.

IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and other analogus Divisions

The five families of Kakkalans surveyed in Thumbodu hamlet are simple families. They have encroached upon a piece of land on the left bank of the Kodaiyar canal. In Vadaseri hamlet of Nagercoil town also they live as simple families. Usually a joint family split into simple units due to misunderstanding or quarrels between father and son. Sometimes brothers living together fall-out among themselves and split into independent families. As regards the size of the households of the 5 Kakkalan families surveyed in Tiruparappu village, there are 3 households consisting of 3-4 members and the other two households consist of 4 to 6 members. The average size on the whole works out to 3-8. In Nagercoil town, out of the five families found, two consist of 4 members each and 3 consist of 6 to 7 members each. As soon as a son gets married, to solve the accommodation problem, he moves to a different site to have his own hut. As Kakkalans are a patriarchal group, the residence after marriage is patrilocal. Descent and clan name are also reckoned through male line. The children of a couple belong to the sept of their fathers. In property inheritance, they are *makkathayis and hence inheritance is in* male line. A mother's property, however, is divided equally among sons and daughters.

Solely for marriage purposes they are divided into four clans. Speaking about the existence of clan system among Kakkalan, Thurston states: "There are among them four endogamous divisions called *Kavitiyan, Manipparayan, Melluttan* and *Chattoparayan* of which the first two are the most important. The *Kavitiyans* are further sub-divided into *Kollak Kavitiyan residing in* Central Travancore, Malayalam *Kavitiyan and Pandi Kavitivan* or immigrants from the Pandyan country". (Thurston 111, 1909, 44-45). In Kanyakumari district, only two divisions are found among them, Kavitiyan and Manipparayan. The above two sub-divisions are endogamous and marriage between persons belonging to different sub-divisions is tabooed. A sort of ceremonial relationship exists between the two clans found among the Kakkalans in Kanyakumari district .In a *Pandit Kavitlyan marriage,* the eldest member from *Mani Parayan clan is engaged to officiate* in ceremonies.

V. Dwelling, dress, food, ornament and other material objects distinctive of the community.

In Thumbolu hamlet Kakkalan dwelling, built on plain ground, are found scattered facing different directions. They are mostly hutments built of mud walls and cocoanut thatches. The walls are raised only to a height of three feet and above that bamboo trellies have been put up to serve as walls. Sometimes cocoanut thatches are also used for this purpose. The roofings are low. They are intentionally kept low so that rain water may not splash inside. Only two hutments have doors made of thin wooden planks. In the other houses bamboo trellies are used as doors. In Nagercoil also the Kakkalan huts are similar to that found in Thumbodu hamlet with the difference that they are nucleated in the midst of other hutments belonging to the other castes, such as Kammala, Asari, Muslim and Chaliamar (weavers). The huts are rectangular in shape and mostly one roomed without any front varandahs or pials. Of the five huts found in Thumbodu, only one contained two rooms. The huts are mainly used for keeping the household articles and sleeping during nights. Cooking is mostly done in the open front yard of a hut. On rainy days it is done inside the hut itself. The space surrounding the hut is cultivated with tapioca, plantations, cocoanuts, jack etc. As already stated, in Thumbodu, the Kakkalan dwellings are found on the left bank of Kodaiyar canal. The canal water is used for drinking, bathing and washing. In Nagercoil the Kakkalans use a common well, found near their settlement, for the above purposes.

The raw materials for putting up a hut are available locally and the cost of construction of a hut does not exceed Rs. 100/-. Being economically at the rock bottom level they are unable to

carry out even the small repairs to their hutments as a result of which they are in shambles. However, there is adequate light and ventilation inside the huts. Since the male members of a household always go away for fortune-telling for periods lasting from 15 to 20 days in a month, the accommodation available is more or less enough for children and women folk.

Regarding dress, the menfolk wear dhotis of two yards and leave the body mostly uncovered. However when they go out for work they wear a stitched shirt and a towel round their neck. They do not wear any type of head-gear. Their womenfolk wear white 'Mundoos' which they tie round their waist. They cover their bosom with a loose jacket having long arms extending a little beyond the elbows. They do not generally put on any upper cloth over the jacket. Young children are mostly naked. Grown up boys wear shirts and elderly girls wear skirts or gowns. The dress style of men and women in Nagercoil is similar to the pattern described above. Weaving of 6 yards saree is not uncommon among the Kakkalan women in Nagercoil. Chappals are commonly used by both sexes among Kakkalans. The menfolk always wear sandals in view of the fact that sometimes their professional rounds involve covering of long distance by foot.

Their men practically wear no jewels. Even their womenfolk have few jewels. Except for small stone studded ear-rings (Kammals) made of cheap metal, they do not wear anything else. One or two wear glass bangles in the wrists. Except for Thali string their neck is almost bare. The Thali worn by the married women consists of a cotton thread, in which two conch-shaped beads made of gold or some other base metal are hooked. In Nagercoil women are found wearing nose-screws, ear-studs made of either silver or gold and chains made of beads. The chains are worn close to the neck.

In Thiruparappu, Kakkalan women comb their hair backwards without parting it in the middle at the front and tie the tuft into a loose, hanging knot at the back. The male crop their hair and grow mustaches. Some of the women in this community are seen with tattoo marks in the forearms and legs. In Nagercoil also Kakkalan women have tattooed their bodies. Tattooing is also done by them to other caste people. Traditionally Kakkalan women are pursuing the occupation of tattooing to lower castes. According to Thurston: "They are Tattooed, and tattooing members of other castes is one of their occupations....." (Thurston, III, 1909, 45). The art of tattooing is known to both the sexes of Kakkalans of Kanyakumari district. Formerly they used ordinary needles to do the job, but now they employ machines available for

the purpose. Womenfolk of all lower castes including the Nadar community employ Kakkalan women for tattooing. The charges collected by them for the work vary from 25p. to 50p. according to the design and size of the object tattooed. As regards personal hygiene both men and women take bath daily and have a neat appearance. In their fore-head they apply sacred ash.

Food :

The stape diet of the Kakkalans is rice. In the morning they take rice in the gruel form which they repeat for the mid-day also. For the night they cook rice and take it with some sauce or flesh. In food habits they are non-vegetarians and once in a way, they take mutton or chicken. However, they take plenty of fish. Beaf is a taboo for them. They also say that they do not eat pork. It is learnt that they generally do not take any alcoholic liquor. But they are accustomed to chewing betel leaves with tobacco. In fact a considerable portion of their meagre income is spent on chewing. They do not generally prepare tea or coffee in their houses but whenever any one gets money he or she resorts to a tea shop which can be found in every village in these parts.

The household equipments in a Kakkalan hut comprise cheap vessels made of Aluminium and mud, Porcelain plates and a few items of furniture like coir-cot, wooden stools and small Almirahs and the parrot-cage used in their profession of fortune-telling. In Thiruparappu, one Kakkalan family was possessing a wooden Almirah, supplied by the Welfare Department. Due to economic backwardness the quantum of household and other equipments found in a Kakkalan hut is very meagre.

VI. Environmental sanitation :

The environmental sanitation in their settlements both in Tiruparappu and Nagercoil is satisfactory. The approach to the huts and their surroundings are kept somewhat clean. As already stated, in the matter of personal hygiene they are far better than the other lower castes people living by their side. The river banks and barren lands are used by them for answering calls of nature.

VII. Language and literature :

The ancestral language of Kakkalans is said to be Malayalam. Actually the language spoken by them in their families appears to be a slang of Malayalam. They also know Tamil which is the regional language and in fact they pursue the occupation

of fortune-telling in that language. They are bilingualists using Malayalam in their households and conversing freely in Tamil with their neighbours. A few Kakkalans in Nagercoil know to read and write, Tamil language.

According to 1961 Census, out of 26 Kakkalans enumerated in Kanyakumari district 17 persons (11 males and 6 females) are found to be literates. The illiterates number 9 (3 males and 6 females). The rate of literacy in this community is as high as 65.4%. Of the 17 literates found in this community 13 persons (9 males and 4 females) are literates without any educational qualifications, three persons (1 male and 2 females) have studied upto Primary or Junior Basic and one male comes in the category of Matriculation and above. A little knowledge of reading and writing is helpful and necessary to Kakkalans in pursuing the occupation of fortune-telling. As such almost all male members of the community know Malayalam and Tamil to read and write. It is reported that the present generation among Kakkalans knows only Tamil, the regional language which is the medium of instruction in all the schools in this district. Though female education in this community is not encouraging, two girls are reported to have studied up to Sixth Form. One boy belonging to this community in Nagercoil has passed Matriculation and is trying for admission in a Polytechnic School. A few Kakkalans interviewed during the survey reported that they want their sons and daughters to take up some other lucrative occupations without resorting to their traditional occupation of fortune-telling and hence this community is bent upon getting all their children educated. They are aware of the fact that their community has been scheduled and educational concessions are granted to them by the Government.

VIII Economic life :

Fortune-telling is the traditional and main source of livelihood for Kakkalans. Tailoring is also pursued by them as a subsidiary occupation by almost all the Kakkalan men and women. Tattooing other caste members is also pursued by them and according to Thurston "They are tattooed and tattooing members of other castes is one of their occupations which include the following :

(i) Katukuttu or boring the lobes of the ears, Katuvaippu or plastic operations on the ear which Nayar women and others who wear heavy pendant ear ornaments often require.

Kainokku or palmistry, in which the women are more proficient than the men.

Kampuvaippu or placing the twig of a plant on any swelling of the body and dissipating it by blowing on it.

Taiyyal or tailoring. Pampatam or snake dance in which the Kakkalans are unrivalled and "Fortune-telling". (Thurston III, 1909, 45).

In the Travancore Census report of 1931, the occupations of Kakkalan are stated as tattooing, boring the lobes of ears, palmistry and tailoring (Census of India, 1931, Travancore Part I, Volume XXVIII, 382). Following is the account found in the Travancore Census Report of 1911; "The indigenous tailor caste of Malabar now being reduced to the status of a wandering community. They follow many subsidiary occupations, tattooing, boring the lobes of the ears and palmistry being chief of them" (Census of India 1911, Travancore Vol. XXIII 1912, Part I, 259).

The Kakklans interviewed in Thumbodu hamlet of Thiruparappu village pursue the occupation of fortune-telling and tailoring. There are 10 workers (5 males and 5 females) in the 5 households covered there and all of them are pursuing fortune-telling as the main occupation. In Nagercoil besides fortune-telling, tailoring is also another important subsidiary occupation which is more seasonal in nature. The males and females stitch garments during *Pongal, Deepavali* and *Onam* seasons and market the readymade garments in rural areas. The menfolk take their goods on cycles and market them in the surrounding areas. A few women who do not go out for fortune-telling do tailoring at home and market the garments in the weekly shandies at Nagercoil. Tattooing is another subsidiary occupation pursued by the womenfolk of this community. Tattooing is done to other caste Hindus including Nadars by them. In olden days, a needle and a particular kind of leaves were used by them. But of late, they use ink and machine for this purpose. Only 25p. to 50p. is charged per head for this and the income is meagre and unsteady.

The occupation of fortune-telling in which both men and women of the community are proficient is done with the aid of caged parrots. They set out early morning taking the caged bird and return in the evening. Sometimes the menfolk go on tour for 30 or 60 days staying away from the home surveying the region and return with the earnings. For this occupation they either catch or buy a parrot and train it to pick out an envelope from out of a heap of envelopes spread out in a row before it. Each envelope contains a picture of some GOD or demon and these are some inscriptions or legends indicating the types of future in

stores for the persons who has come to consult about his fortunes. The cost of a parrot may range from Rs. 3 to 10 depending upon the training imparted to it. The life of a parrot is said to be from 10 to 15 years. Both male and female parrots are trained in this. The feathers of these birds are cut to some length so that they may not fly away when they come out of the cage. The birds are put in small box like cages which can be opened by lifting a trap door at the front side. When called, the bird comes out and picks an envelope. The bird will not come out, if a coin is not dropped inside the cage through a slit at the top. So the fee for the consultation is obtained before hand from the client and dropped into the box. The fee may range from 6p to 10p. The daily earnings of a person engaged in this occupation may be anything from 50p. to Rs. 3/- depending on the mood and belief of the people. The Kakkalans visit towns and market places and spread themselves out on a pavement or some stratagic corner, so as to attract the people to have a consultation. After all, the fee paid is a small amount and the people are not sorry if the predictions do not come true. Soon after bird picks out an envelope and hands it over to its master, the parrot receives a grain of paddy or rice as a reward and gets back into the cage. The area of operation of Kakkalans on this pursuit may be within a radius of about 15 miles from their place of residence. They do not go to far off places on this trade.

According to 1961 Census the workers among Kakkalan number 13 consisting of 6 males and 7 females. Their distribution in rural areas is 12 (5 males and 7 females) and only one male worker is found in the urban area. Out of the 13 workers found in this community 2 males and 4 females are engaged in the traditional occupation of fortune-telling, 2 males are engaged in tailoring, 3 females are engaged in basket making and 2 males are engaged in other occupation. No one is engaged either in cultivation or agricultural labour. As such we see that the traditional occupation of fortune-telling has still a greater hold on the economy of this community. Even those who pursue tailoring or basket making as main occupation pursue fortune-telling as a subsidiary occupation. In olden days Kakkalan women attended to deliveries, rendering maternity assistance, but it is no longer pursued now. The Kakkalans of Nagercoil report that they would prefer a diversion from their present vocation.

The main source of income to them is their earnings through the traditional occupation of fortune-telling. In majority of the cases it ranges from Rs. 40-60 p.m. In Thumbodu, out of the 5 households, 4 are found in the income group of Rs. 26-50 and

only one household comes in the income group of Rs. 51-75. Tailoring and basketry pursued by them as subsidiary occupations do not provide substantial income to them because they are pursued in small scale and on only during certain seasons. The Harijan Welfare Department have given two sewing machines to two Kakkalans in Thumbodu. Since the recipients have no clear aptitude for tailoring work they do not earn much out of the machines. One of the main reasons for the poor earnings by the persons of this community is their indolent temperament. The occupation of fortune-telling which does not warrant any kind of manual labour adds to their laziness. In fortune-telling all that they have to do is to sit under a tree. The intricacies of fortune-telling and palmistry are handed over from father to son casually and hence their trade does not demand any manual and mental labour in substantial scale. As regards the expenditure pattern in Kakkalan households, on an average a family incurs an expenditure of Rs. 38/- per month. Next to food, the major item of expenditure is smoking and chewing. Since income is meagre, expenditure is mostly adjusted to it. No Kakkalan family is however in debts.

IX. Life Cycle :

Puberty :

Pollution due to puberty is observed in all the Kakkalan families. The girl who attains puberty is segregated in a portion of the house itself for a period of 8 days. In Nagercoil it is reported that puberty entails pollution for 15 or 21 days. Males are not allowed to see the girl during the pollution period. Attainment of puberty is known as "Ruthu Auguthal". At the time of termination of pollution the girl is given an oil bath. She is dressed up in new clothes and ornaments presented to her by her maternal uncle. There would also be a small feast on this day. This celebration is known as 'Sadangu Kalyanam' and celebrated for one day only. Thurston however reports that "when a girl reaches puberty a merry celebration is kept up for a week (Thurston, III, 1909, 46)". The period of pollution in case of ordinary menstruation is four days.

Birth :

Delivery takes place in the inner portion of the house itself. During the prenatal and postnatal period no special restriction regarding diet is observed. For the first delivery the mother is taken to her parents place. During the 7th month a ceremony known as 'Vayathu Pongal' is got up in which Pongal is cooked and offered to a pregnant lady which appears to be a common

custom in almost all the communities in the region. In Nagercoil the Kakkalans call this ceremony as 'Neiundi' or 'Pulikudu'. Generally a Mukkuvar woman attends to the deliveries. In case she is not available, any elderly lady with some experience in the field offers maternity assistance. Soon after delivery the umblical chord and placenta are buried in the backward of the house. A woman after confinement is put to half starvation for two or three days during which period rice gruel is given. From the third day onwards the diet is slowly increased in quality and quantity. For a period of 21 days, effective herbal medicines such as 'uringi kozhambu', 'Sorakathi Aristam', and Thaisamorthi Aristams' are given. A delivery usually entails pollution for 41 days but effective pollution is observed only for 12 or 15 days. On the 11th day, the purification ceremony known as *punyahavachanam* is performed. Water sanctified by the purohit by uttering mantras is sprinkled throughout the house to eradicate pollution. In practice the mother starts cooking after 12 or 15 days. Naming of the child is known as 'Nool Kattal', and the eldest member of the family names the child and ties a thread round its hip. In this ceremony, celebrated on 28th day after the birth, the child is given an oil bath and dressed in new clothes presented by the maternal uncle. In Kakkalan community technonomy is prevalent as fathers' names stand prefixed to the names of the sons and mothers names to the daughters. When we ask the name of any boy he would say the name of his father first and then his own name. Sometimes a child is taken to a temple of Subramaniar or Iyenarappan and the Poothi or Poojari (priest) there names the child. For this function he is paid the conventional sum of Rs. 2/- or 3/-. Normally the duration of suckling of babies extends for two to three years. No specific preference is shown either to a male or female baby, but the birth of a male child is often greeted with jubilence. Earboring ceremony and tonsuring of the head usually take place when the child is one to three years old.

Marriage :

The age of marriage for a girl is 16 years which will always be after puberty and boys are married when about 20 years. As already stated for purposes of marriage they are divided into four exogamous clans. A few sub-divisions of the clans are reported by Thurston but in Kanyakumari District the two main divisions found are *Kavitiyan* and *Maniparayan.* There is ceremonial relationship between the above two clans. In a *Kavitiyan* marriage the eldest member from *Maniparayan* clan is invited to officiate in the ceremonies and *vice-versa.* Consanguineous marriages are common among Kakkalans. The preferential mates are

maternal uncle or paternal aunt's daughter. Though marrying of sister's daughter is tabooed a few marriages of this kind have taken place mainly to safeguard property rights. Widow remarriage is permitted and practised among Kakkalans. Monogamy appears to be the common pattern but polygamy is not infrequent. Referring to the practice of polygamy by Kakkalans, Thurston says "The Kakkalans are conspicuously polygamous and some have as many as twelve wives who are easily supported as they earn money by their professional engagements" (Thurston, III, 1909, 46). During the revisit, a case was reported of a person marrying two sisters with their consent. Sorrorate and levirate types of marriages are also found among them. The mode of acquiring a mate among Kakkalans is mostly by negotiation. Payment of bride price is prevalent in this community. The bride price known as 'Sowthaya Panam' is Rs. 3.50 and paid by the groom's party to the bride's parents along with a 'Mundu', a jacket cloth, betel leaves etc.

The initiative for an alliance comes from the groom's side. The horoscopes of both the bride and the groom are consulted before the alliance is taken up for active consideration. The Kakkalans themselves are experts in reading the horoscopes. Of late, the groom in the company of his maternal uncle, elder brother or father goes to see the girl. Marriage is always preceded by betrothal known as 'Nichiyam'. The bride price is paid to the bride's parents along with a saree or *mundu* and a blouse piece. In the bethrothal, the marriage day is also fixed. Generally Sundays are considered auspicious.

The marriage celebrated for one day only takes place in the bride's house. The groom's party arrives the previous day on the eve of marriage and are stationed in a relatives' or neighbour's house of the bride's family. On the marriage day the groom is taken in procession to the marriage place. The brother of the bride receives the groom and washes his feet. He is given a gift by the groom which is mostly a ring. Either a Brahmin priest or the eldest member from the brother clan of the community presides over the functions. The important ceremonies consist of 'Kappu Kattuthal' and 'Thali tying'. The thali tied by the groom round the bride's neck is known as 'Sangu thali'. The ceremonies come to a close with the removal of 'Kappu' (கப்பு). The consummation ceremony takes place mostly on the 15th day after marriage.

The mode of celebration of marriage in Thumbodu is different from the Tamilian pattern described above and is similar to that prevalent in Kerala. In this pattern the bridal pair are asked to sit in a decorated pandal erected in front of the bride's

house. A five faced 'Kuthu vilakku' and a ceremonial pot are placed inside the pandal. A Brahmin priest or an eldest member from the brother clan is asked to perform the rites. In the presence of the gathering the groom ties the 'Thali' round the neck of the bride. The above pattern which is simple costs anything from Rs. 100/- to 200/-.

Thurston while dealing with the life cycle of Kakkalans describes the mode of celebration of marriage which is more or less similar to that described above with slight variation however in details. According to him "A first marriage must be celebrated on Sunday, and the festivities last from Saturday to Monday. Subsequent marriages may also be celebrated on Thursday. On the night of the day before the wedding, a brother or other near relation of the bridegroom, places the Sambandham (alliance) by bringing a fanam (coin), material for chewing, and cooked rice to the marriage pandal (booth). Fruits and other things are flung at him by the bride's people. On the following day the bridegroom arrives at the pandal, and, after raising the tali (marriage badge) three times towards heaven, and, invoking a blessing from on high, ties it round the bride's neck". (Thurston, III, 1909, 46).

Divorce is freely allowed in this community. The divorce which they call 'Idavadutheerthal' is granted on grounds of adultry, incompatibility and barrenness. The council of elders among them sanction a divorce after an enquiry. In case divorce is granted the tali is immediately untied and returned to the husband. The children of the divorced pair usually go with the father unless any child is very young. When a divorced woman remarries, the marriage is celebrated in a simple way and a tali is tied as in the case of first marriage.

According to 1961 Census the marital status of the 26 Kakkalans returned from Kanyakumari District is as given below: There are 8 males and 4 females in the category of never married. The married males and females number 12, 6 in each of the sexes and widowed number 2 (both females). The marital status of the population age-groupwise is as given below:

Marital status	0—44		15—44		45+	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Never married	8	4	..	..	..	..
Married	..	..	3	6	3	1
Widowed	..	..	..	..	..	1
	8	4	3	6	3	2

Death :

Young persons after death are buried. In case of elderly persons, the dead bodies are cremated. Before the dead body is carried to the burial ground it is bathed, perfumed and decorated with flowers. In case of burial the body is placed, head facing southwards and face looking up. On the seventh day, a ceremony called 'Sanchayanam' is performed. A small quantity of milk and ghee is poured in the place of burial or cremation. When cremation takes place the ashes are collected and immersed in a river or pond closeby. On this day, a cocoanut sapling is planted near the place of burial or cremation. On the 16th day another ceremony called 'Pulakkuli' performed. Rememberance ceremonies are performed for two years on new moon days.

X. Religion :

The Kakkalans belong to Hinduism and all of them have returned themselves as Hindus, in 1961 Census. Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Siva, Vishnu, Parvathi, Lakshmi etc. are worshipped by them. But they appear to be primarily Saivites. Other popular deities, indigenous in nature worshipped by them are *Kumara Kadavul, Kaliamman, Sudalimadan, Iyenarappan,* etc. These deities are considered as reigning deities of their families. Their occupational deity however is *Kumarakadavul* or *Subramaniar* who is supposed to have conferred them with the power of fortune telling. Invariably one can find a portrait of this deity exhibited in the place where they sit and pursue the occupation. They also worship the rising sun on every Sunday, to whom cooked rice (pongal) is offered. Referring to the religion of Kakkalans, Thurston reports that "the chief object of worship by Kakkalans is the rising sun, to which boiled rice is offered on Sunday. They have no temples of their own but stand at some distance from Hindu temples and worship the gods thereof" (Thurston, III, 1909, 45). In Nagercoil the Kakkalans however report that they have got their own temple which is at Trivandrum. They are now allowed to enter Hindu temples and offer worship like any other caste Hindu. They also visit the temples at Palni and Tirunelveli. This trend in the sphere of religion was brought out by the ex-Travancore Cochin State in 1936. The then Maharaja of Travancore, on the 27th Thulam 1162, corresponding to 12th November 1936, issued Temple Entry Proclamation under which all the castes including Scheduled Castes were allowed to enter all the temples of worship controlled by the Government. Subsequently the Travancore Cochin Act 27 of 1950 was passed according to which every Hindu is allowed to enter any place of worship throughout the State. Since Kakkalans are highly reli-

gious, they are superstitious also. They attach great importance to oaths. The commonest form of practising it is by extinguishing burning camphor in front of a deity.

The important communal festival celebrated by them are Vishu (New years day) and Adi Arudi festival. They also celebrate Deepavali and other Hindu festivals. The Adi Arudi festival falls on the last day of Adi month or the first day of Avani month. This festival is got up in honour of "Suryabaghavan' the source of energy and light to the entire universe. On this day, small oil lamps are lighted and placed in rows in front of the houses. The members of the family wear new clothes for the occasion and participate in a vegetarian feast. The oil lamps burn till the evening of the next day. This festival is celebrated in a grand or small scale depending upon the economic status of a family. The Kakkalans do not celebrate Onam which is considered a national festival for all Kerala people.

XI. Leisure and Recreation :

Fortune-telling pursued by them is highly unremunerative and they sit very late in the evening for business. As such they have very little time for any organized recreational activity. However, the only form of recreation in which persons of all grades in both sexes are interested is going to cinemas. Gossiping is another popular form of recreation for them.

XII. Inter community relationship :

The relationship between Kakkalan and their neighbouring communities is cordial. A few neighbouring communities found to live together with Kakkalans are Muslims, Nadars, Kerala Mudalis and Panikkars. Barring Sambavar and Nadars, they interdine with all other castes. But of late there is significant social mobility in this sphere also and they have no objection to inter-dine with any caste in their locality. The other higher caste Hindus do not practice any kind of untouchability towards them. They are allowed to take water from the wells used by the caste Hindus and the barbers and washermen who serve the caste Hindus also serve them. As already reported, they are permitted to enter all the Hindu temples in the region.

XIII. Structure of social control:

The Kakkalans have no communal organisation or hierarchy to effect social control over their community. However, in Thumbodu an old man claimed as 'Moopan' and exercised some sort of social control over them. But this old 'Moopan' died

recently and no person has succeeded him so far. The Kakkalans living in Nagercoil also do not have any caste panchayat. Any dispute or quarrel is referred to the municipal member of their ward or to any influential person of their locality irrespective of his caste. They feel that no organised body is necessary for them as their population is very slender.

XIV. Social Reform and Welfare :

There is significant mobility in the social and economic spheres among Kakkalans which is of recent origin. They are no longer known as Kaka Kuravans or Kakkalans which terms they consider derogatory. On the other hand, they prefer to call themselves as 'Maistries,' a more honourable title. Since they pursue tailoring also, they have no difficulty in assuming the title 'Maistry'. The Welfare Department of the Madras Government have supplied sewing machines and furniture like stools, almirahs to Kakkalans at subsidised rates and thereby improve their living conditions. In spite of such schemes implemented in their favour, they are still economically backward.

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Extract on "Kakkalans" from 'The Cochin Tribes And Castes' Vol. II by ANANTHA KRISHNA IYER (L. K.) 1909, pages 379 to 384.

KAKKALANS : The Kakkalans are a vagrant tribe found all over the State and are identical with the Kakkakuravans. There are among them two endogamous divisions called *Kavitiyan* and *Maniparayan,* and these are known as Meluthon and Chattaparayan in the Chittur and Talapilli Taluks of the State. The Kavitiyans are further divided into Kollam (Quilon) Kavitiyan, Malayalam-Kavitiyan, and Pandi-Kavitiyanas, the last being old immigrants from the Pandiyan country.

The Kakkalans have a legend concerning their origin to the effect that Siva was once going about begging as a Kapala-Dharin and arrived at a Brahman street, from which the inhabitants drove him away. The offended God reduced the village to ashes, and the guilty villagers begged his pardon, but were reduced to the position of the Kakkalans, and made to earn their livelihood by begging.

Though, in the presence of other castemen, the Kakkalans speak Malayalam, they have a peculiar language of their own, which is not easily understood by others.

Marriage customs :

The Kakkalans of Trichur generally intermarry with those in Palphat and other places but not with those beyond Irinjalakuda. A young man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle or the daughter of his paternal aunt.

When a young man is to be married, his father and maternal uncle go in search of a suitable girl and when she is selected, they negotiate with her father and maternal uncle. If the latter agree, the friends and relations on both sides meet together in the house of the girl, when they formally talk over the matter and settle the bride's price, which varies from 120 to 360 *fanams,* a fanam being equal to four annas and seven pies. The castemen assembled in the bride's house are then entertained at the expense of the bridegroom. A day is also fixed for the celebration of the marriage, and on that day the bridegroom's party assemble at the house of the bride, and his sister dresses the bride with the wedding costumes brought by her, after which the *tali* is tied round the girl's' neck at an auspicious hour, generally at sunrise. The bridegroom's party are then entertained, after which either the bridegroom's *Enangan* or his uncle says that they purchase the girl at a cost of so many fanams and that they give so much of it then with a promise to give the

balance on demand thereafter. The girl's uncle and father hand over the bride on receipt of the sum and consent to receive the balance as promised.

In some cases if ready-money or a portion of it is not paid, a document is received instead before the girl is handed over. As soon as this is done, either on the same day or on the next, the bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, where the bride's party are sumptuously entertained. The binding portion of the ceremony consists in their eating together from the same vessel. In some places the married couple are seated side by side, and the elderly women of the family give them some milk and slices of plantain fruits which is called *Madhuram Kotukkal* or giving of sweets. Then the bride and the bridegroom go to the house of the former, where they stay for a few days.

In cases where the bride's price or a portion of it is not paid as promised, the amount received is returned, and the woman is sold to another member of the caste. Any child born of the earlier union remains with its father. If this be a girl, half the bride's price goes to the mother at her marriage.

In the Talapilli and Chittur Taluks, the first marriage must be celebrated on a Sunday, and the festivities last from Saturday to Monday. Subsequent marriages may be celebrated on a Thursday. On the night of the day before the wedding, a brother or other near relation of the bridegroom places the *Sambandham* alliance by bringing a *Fanam* (coin) worth of material for chewing, and cooked rice to the marriage pandal (*both*). Fruits and other things are flung at him by the bride's people. On the following day the bridegroom arrives at the pandal, and after raising the *tali* (marriage badge) three times towards Heaven and invoking a blessing from on high, ties it round the bride's neck.

Puberty-customs :

When a girl comes of age, she is lodged in a separate room and three or four other girls are kept with her during the days of her pollution. The girl is purified by a bath either on the seventh or the eleventh day, when the castemen in the neighbourhood are treated to a feast. During the menses the girl is given a little oil mixed with turmeric and the white of egg, and is fed with rice during these days. If the girl is believed to be under demoniacal influence, a Panan is sent for, who, by his exorcism sets her free from such attacks.

The Kakkalans are conspicuously polygamous, and some have as many as six or seven wives who support themselves by their professional engagements (palmistry) and begging for alms. Among

them, generally speaking, the women support their husbands. A woman, who becomes a widow, is at liberty to marry her brother-in-law, who must be her senior in age. In the event of her intention to marry another, the bride's price must be returned to her deceased husband's family.

Delivery customs :

Soon after delivery both the mother and the baby are bathed. The woman is fed with rice-gruel and with cocoanut shavings and afterwards with boiled rice. On the fourth day she is given a dose of a mixture of sugar and dried ginger, and this is continued for the next three days, and afterwards with other similar medicines. The expenses connected with it are defrayed by her husband.

Among the Kakkalans inheritance is from father to son. A childless widow is a copartner with the brothers of the deceased. They have also the rudiments of caste government.

Religion :

They profess the low form of Hinduism. Their chief deity is Bhagavati, whom they worship and to whom offerings of sheep, fowls, etc. are made in Karkitagom (July-August) and Thulam (October-November). Sometimes their Gods are located underneath a tree in their own compound where a floor is raised and a shed put up on the suspicious days in the year, and where offerings are made. They worship the spirits of the departed, and to them offerings are made on certain auspicious nights. They also worship some demoniacal Gods, namely, Mundiyan, Chattan, Kantakaranan and Kappiri. When their dyes become spoild, when they meet with snakes in the forests, or when they go for grass, they worship Mallan, their sylvan deity, and offerings are made to him with the help of a Velan. They worship the rising Sun, to which boiled rice is offered on Sundays. They have no temples of their own but stand at some distance from the Hindu temples and worship the Gods therein. Though leading a wandering life, they try to be at home for the Malabar New Year, on which occasion they wear new cloths and hold a feast. They do not observe the national *Onam* and *Vishu* festivals however. They also worship in Christian churches and light a scandle in honour of the divinity.

Funeral customs :

The dead bodies are generally buried. The son is the chief mourner. Pollution lasts for fifteen days. The *Enangan* performs the priestly functions.

Occupation :

The Kakkalans make excellent mats from grass (Cynoporus Corymborus) which they generally obtain from the neighbourhood

of marshy places in the forest, and split it into four, seven, or eight fibres and remove the pith. These fibres are then dried in the sun and after being well-soaked in water and dried become white. They prepare several vegetable dyes in large earthen pots, in which they arrange the piles of grass fibres over which they sprinkle the dying powder and again pile up the grass and boil the vessels consecutively for three days, alternately drying and placing the bundles of grass fibres in the various vegetable dyes. Red dyes are prepared from Chappangam (Caesalpinia sappan) and the dry leaves of *kasa*, both of which are powdered after drying. The yellow colour is obtained by dipping the red fibres in water in which powdered turmeric has been dissolved. Black dyes are prepared either by placing the fibres in mud or in a vessel containing a liquid mixture of gall-nut and ferrous sulphate. The grass thus dyed is woven into fine mats of various dimensions, and patterns in looms similar to the ordinary cottage looms, hemp yarn being used as warps and dyed splits as wefts. There is no limit to the length, but at the blades of grass seldom grow longer than three or four feet, they cannot generally be made to exceed a yard in breadth. The industry is still primitive and requires organization. The mats thus made vary in price according to their size and quality, the finer ones costing twenty-five rupees and the coarser ones from one to five rupees. A Kakkalan and his wife working steadily could easily make over 20 rupees monthly, but they seldom make five. They too lead a vagrant life. The women are said to be proficient in palmistry. There is a tradition that a woman of the caste predicted to the wives of Dasaratha, regarding the birth of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna. Some Kakkalans tame snakes and monkeys, while others make beds and pillows for low caste men. Some again do agricultural work and earn a few annas a day. Other occupations of women include 1. *Kathukuttu* or boring the lobes of the ears, 2. *Kaṭuvaippu*—plastic operation of the ear which the Nayar women and others who wear heavy pendants ear ornaments often require, 3. *Kompu-vaippu* or placing the twigs of a plant on any swelling of the body and dissipating it by blowing on it, 4. *Taiyyal* (tailoring), 5. *Panpaṭam* (Snake dance), 6. Fortune telling. The Kakkalans are, in short, a lazy, wandering people preferring to eke out their livelihood by snake charming and fortune telling.

Rope-dancing :

A man for this is well trained during his boyhood between ten and twelve years of age. A mixture of gingelly oil, castor oil, and the oil of the margosa seed is well prepared, and with this mixture he is well shampooed for fourteen days and bathed in hot water. After this a strong rope is tied between two poles, on which the beginner is made to walk, holding the hands of a person who

walks on the ground. Then he is made to walk alone. In the course of three months or so he becomes clever enough to perform various feats and for one performance he gets ten to twelve rupees.

Social Status :

Kakkalans bathe when polluted by Parayans and Nayadis; and they pollute by touch almost every high caste man. They are their own barbers and washermen. The women wear iron and silver bangles and a *Palunkumala* or necklace of variously coloured beads. They tatoo their arms. They numbered 682 at the last Census, 323 males, and 359 females.

——*Extract on "KAKKALAN" from 'Castes And Tribes of Southern India by EDGAR THURSTON, C.I.E., Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Corerspondant Etranger, Societe d' Anthropoligie de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, Assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum, Volume III-K Government Press, Madras* 1909, *pages* 44 *to* 46.

KAKKALAN : The Kakkalans or Kakkans are a vagrant tribe met with in north and central Travancore, who are identical with the Kakka Kuravans of south Travancore. There are among them four endogamous divisions called Kavitiyan, Manipparayan, Meluttan, and Chattaparayan, of which the two first are the most important. The Kavitiyans are further sub-divided into Kollak Kavitiyan residing in Central Travancore, Malayalam Kavitiyan, and Pandi Kavitiyan or immigrants from the Pandyan country.

The Kokkalans have a legend concerning their origin to the effect that Siva was once going about begging as a Kapaladharin, and arrived at a Brahman street, from which the inhabitants drove him away. The offended god immediately reduced the village to ashes, and the guilty villagers begged his pardon, but were reduced to the position of the Kakkalans, and made to earn their livelihood by begging.

The women wear iron and silver bangles, and a palunka mala or necklace of variously coloured beads. They are tattooed, and tattooing members of others castes is one of their occupations, which include the following :—

Katukuttu or boring the lobes of the ears.

Katuvaippu, or plastic operations on the ear, which Nayar women and others who wear heavy pendant ear ornaments often require.

Kainokku or palmistry, in which the women are more proficient than the men.

Kompuvaippu, or placing the twig of a plant on any swelling of the body, and dissipating it by blowing on it.

Taiyyal, or tailoring.

Pampatam or snake dance, in which the Kakkalans are unrivalled.

Fortune telling.

The chief object of worship by the Kakkalans is the rising sun, to which boiled rice is offered on Sunday. They have no temples of their own, but stand at some distance from Hindu temples, and

worship the gods thereof. Though leading a wandering life, they try to be at home for the Malabar new year, on which occasion they wear new clothes, and hold a feast. They do not observe the national Onam and Vishu festivals.

The Kakkalans are conspicuously polygamous, and some have as many as twelve wives, who are easily supported, as they earn money by their professional engagements. A first marriage must be celebrated on Sunday, and the festivities last from Saturday to Monday. Subsequent marriages may also be celebrated on Thursday. On the night of the day before the wedding, a brother, or other near relation of the bridegroom, places the sambandham (alliance) by bringing a fenam (coin), material for chewing and cooked rice to the marriage pandal (booth). Fruit and other things are flung at him by the bride's people. On the following day the bridegroom arrives at the pandal, and, after raising the tali (marriage badge) three times towards heaven, and, invoking a blessing from on high, ties it round the bride's neck. When a girl reaches puberty, a merry celebration is kept up for a week. The dead are buried. Inheritance is from father to son. A childless widow is a coparcener with the brothers of the deceased, and forfeits this right if she remarries.

Though in the presence of other castes the Kakkalans speak Malayalam, they have a peculiar language which is used among themselves, and is not understood by others*.

*For this note I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar.

Extract on "KAKKALAN" from 'Census of India 1911', *Cochin, Vol. XVIII Part-I—Report by G. A. Menon, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam* 1912, *page* 76.

KAKKALAN (682) : A gipsy tribe, whose males are Tailors, mat makers, jugglers and snake charmers, and whose females are professional beggers and palmists. They speak a corrupt Tamil. They are called Kuravans in the northern taluks.

Extract on "KAKKALAN" from 'Census of India', 1911. Vol. XXIII Travancore, Part-I—Report by N. SUBRAMHANYA AIYAR, M.A., Dewan Peishcar, Census Commissioner, Trivandrum : Printed at the Ananda Press, 1912 page 259.

KAKKALAN (860) : The indigenous tailor caste of Malabar, now becoming reduced to the status of a wandering community. They are met within North and Central Travancore and are identical with the Kakkakuravans of the South. There are among them four endogamous divisions—Kavityan, Manipparayan, Melkuttan and Chattaparayan. The Kavitiyans are further divided into Kollakkavitiyan, Malayalam, Kavitiyan, and Pandi-Kavitiyan. They follow many subsidiary occupations, tattooing, boring the lobes of the ears and palmistry being his chief of them. Inheritance is from father to son. They bury their dead.

Extract on "KAKKALAN" from Census of India, 1921, Volume XIX, Cochin, Part-I—Report, Part-II—Imperial Tables, P. GOVINDA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam, Printed at The Cochin Government Press, 1922, page 65.

KAKKALAN (508)—A gipsy tribe whose females are professional beggers. The majority of males are mat-makers; and the rest are jugglers and snake-charmers. They are also called Kuravans.

Extract on "KAKKALAN" from the Census of India, 1921, *Volume XXV, Travancore, Part-I Report Part-II—Imperial Tables by MURARI' S. KRISHNAMURTHI AYYAR, M. B. & C. M., Fellow of The Royal Statistical Society, Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum : Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press* 1922 *page* 111.

KAKKALAN : The indigenous tailor caste of Malabar, now becoming reduced to the status of a wandering community.

Extract on "KAKKALAN" from Census Of India, 1931, *Volume XXI, Cochin, Part-I—Report, Part-IIA&B Tables by T. K. SANKARA MENON, M.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State,* 1933, *Printed by The Superintendent, Cochin Govt. Press, Ernakulam page* 270.

KAKKALAN : (732)—A gipsy tribe, whose males are tailors, mat makers, jugglers and snake charmers, and whose females are professional beggers and palmists. They speak a corrupt Tamil. They are called Kuravans in the northern taluks.

Extract on "KAKKALAN" from Census Of India, 1931, Volume XXVIII Travancore, Part-I—Report by RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., B.Sc. (Edin.) Ph.D (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum, printed by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1932 page 382.

KAKKALAN: 534. According to the Travancore Census Report of 1911 the Kakkalan is the indigenous tailor caste of Malabar, who has now been reduced to the status of a wandering community. The members of this caste are divided into four exogamous clans, two of which only are found in Travancore. They are identical with the Kakka Kuravans of the Tamil country. Their traditional occupations are tattooing, boring the lobes of ears, and palmistry; but many of them have now taken to tailoring. Polygamy which was largely in vogue among them is being given up. Girls are married before puberty and bride's price is generally paid. Divorce is very common. Inheritance is in the male line. The younger generations of Kakkalans wish to change their caste name to Siddhanar. Their number according to the present census is 1,666.



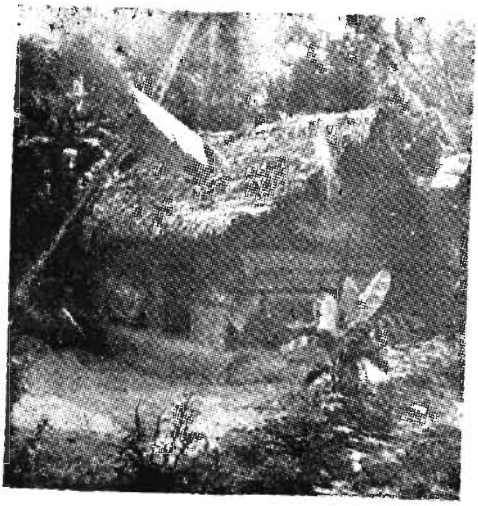
A typical Kakkalan mother with child.



Dress of Kakkalan female is not streamlined but bandaged. Kakkalans live in small huts, their bread-winners in still smaller-ones.



Kakkalans are civilized enough to be tailors. In his kitchen this is their bread-winner—the parrot in cage.



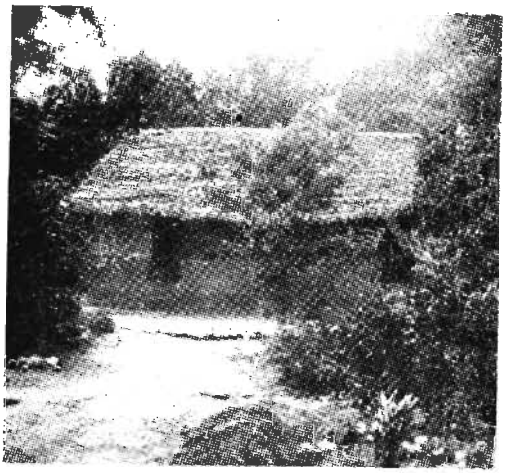
Kakkalans live close to nature in habitat, dress and bread-winning.



The parrots' jailor is the Kakkalan whose parrot talk is simplified by parrot—pick to fortune hunters.



Plying their trade, Kakkalans exhibit parrots which pick forecasts for the credulous.



Quarters of Kakkalan travelling in tranquil surrounding.



A typical Kakkalan Woman.



A typical hut of "Kakkalans" of Kanyakumari District

PANAN

Name, Identity, Origin and History:

Panan is a Scheduled Caste in Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli District of Madras State. This area was transferred from Trivandrum State to Madras consequent on the re-organisation of states on the basis of language in 1956. It was treated as a Depressed class in Travancore during 1931 Census. It would be interesting to recall that according to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, Panan was declared as Scheduled Caste throughout the Madras State which included Malabar area. But in the Order issued in 1956, Panan was omitted from the list as it was declared as Scheduled Caste in some part of Kerala State by that order. It is now treated as Scheduled Caste in those areas transferred from the Madras State. This Community has been enumerated as a separate caste in all the censuses during the period 1891 to 1931 and in 1961.

This study is based on the investigation conducted in Tiruvettar village in Kalkulam Taluk and Kottar hamlet in Nagercoil town of Kanyakumari District.

According to 1961 Census their number in Kerala State is 26,781. It is treated as a Scheduled Caste only in Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli District of Madras State. 157 Panans have been returned from Kanyakumari District in 1961. The total number found in Madras State is 182 Panans. Though Panans are generally found in Madurai and Tirunelveli Districts, they have not been treated as Scheduled Caste in those areas. We are inclined to the view that the strength of this community should be more than what has been shown in the Census returns. During our survey, we found that 70 to 80 families live in Kottar hamlet in Nagercoil Town. Apparently the members of these families were not returned as Panans in 1961 Census, and it is quite possible they have either returned as a Scheduled Caste and included in the other categories and returned as part of the general population.

The word Panan is of Tamil origin. It means (1) one who signs songs in praise of somebody or (2) a tailor. Edger Thurston quoting the Malabar Gazetteer states, "The name is perhaps connected with 'Pan' music". In the same volume quo-

ting N. Subramania Iyer, Thurston says, 'The word is of Tamil origin and means a tailor. The title taken by them is Panikkan, the usual honorific appellation of most of the industrial castes of Malabar. They are supposed to be one with the Panans of the Tamil country, though much below them in social scale' (Thurston, VI, 1909, 33). The Panans of Malabar are mainly sorcerer and umbrella makers. A good account is found in Thurston's volume which is reproduced below : 'The men also make umbrellas and the women act as mid-wives. In parts they are called Malayans and they are descendants of that a hill tribe who settled in the plains'. In the South Canara manual the Panans are said to be 'the Malayalam caste corresponding to the Naikes and Pambadas. They are numerous in Malabar, and they are also known by the name of Malayan. The devils whom they personify are supposed to have influence over crops and at the time of harvest the Panans go about begging from house to house dancing with umbrellas in their hands. On such occasions, however, it is only boys and girls who personify the demons. Mr. Gopal Panikkar writes 'The village magician or conjurer goes by different names such as Panan, Malayan etc. His work consists in casting out petty devils from the bodies of persons (chiefly children) possessed, in writing charms for them to wear, removing the pernicious effects of the evil eye, and so on' (Thurston, VI, 1909, 30). Mr. Logan writes. 'The Kurup belongs to the Panan caste. He is the barber of the polluting classes above Cherumans and by profession he is also an umbrella maker'. (Thurston, VI, 1908, 30-31).

The Panans enumerated as Scheduled Caste in Madras State are found to be mostly tailors. The description given by N. Subramania Iyer generally describes the Panans found in the Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk. They do not, however, seem to have assumed titles such as Malayan or Panikkan. However, they are addressed as Maistries by other caste-men. They refer to themselves as Panans. Though the Panans of Tiruvettar speak Malayalam, none of them knows anything about sorcery or magic. The area of their social interaction is limited to Madurai, Trichi and Tirunelveli districts and the southern portion of Trivandrum district of Kerala State. As such it is difficult to say whether the Panans of Kanyakumari District belong to the same group as Panans found in Malabar and Cochin who according to Thurston are traditional magicians and exorcists and appear to have titles such as Malayan, Panikkan, etc.

The Panans of Kottar and Tiruvettar are unaware of any legend or myth about their origin. According to them their forefathers migrated from South Travancore and settled in the above areas some four generations ago. The following account about the origin of Panans is also worth mentioning. "They trace their des-

cent from the Yalpanara (Singers) whose original home was Yalpana (Jaffna). The ancient Tamil Literature refers to the Yalpanars as singing to the accompaniment of an instrument called 'Yal' and this art was greatly patronised by the old Tamil Kings. After the decline of these kings the Yalpanas put aside their instrument and took to tailoring ...." Edgar Thurston quoting a note of Shri L. K. A. Iyer about the origin of Panans states as follows:

"The Panans give about the traditional account of their origin a distorted version of the tradition as to the origin of the Izhuvans which is found in the Mackenzic Manuscripts. The Panan version of the story is as follows: One day a washerman of Cheruman Perumal chanced to wash his dress very clean. On being asked by the Perumal as to the cause of it, the washerman said that it was due to the suggestion of a handsome carpenter girl who saw him while washing. The Perumal pleased with the girl desired her to be married to his washerman. The parents of the girl were duly consulted and they could not refuse the offer as it came from the sovereign. But his fellow carpenters resented it for if the proposal was accepted and the marriage celebrated, it might not only place the members of her family under a ban but would also bring dishonour to the castemen. To avert the contemplated union they resorted to the following device: A pandal (marriage booth) was erected and tastefully decorated. Just at the auspicious hour, when the bridgegroom and his party were properly seated on mats in the pandal, the carpenters brought a puppet exactly resembling the bride, and placed it by his side, when suddenly, by a clever artisfice, the carpenters caused the building tumble down and thereby killed all those who were in it. They immediately left the Perumal's country and took refuge in the Island of Ceylon. The ruler was embarassed by the disaster to the washerman, and the flight of the carpenters for he had none in his country to build houses. A few Panans were sent for and they brought the carpenters back. On their return they were given some fruit of the palmyrah palm, which they ate. They sowed the seeds in their own places and these grew into a large fruit-bearing palms. The Panans possessed the privilege of keeping these trees as their own, but subsequently made them over to the Izhuvans, who, in memory of this give even today two dishes of food to Panans on all ceremonial occasions in their houses. They have been, on that account, called by the Izhuvans nettaries, for their having originally planted these trees". (Thurston VI, 1909, 34-35).

No historical reference can be found about the origin of Panans other than that they were formerly employed by Moolam Thirunal, Raja of Travancore who employed them as Tailors and that they were prosperous during his regime.

II. Distribution and population trend :

According to the Panans of Kanyakumari District relatives are living in the adjoining districts of Madurai, Tiruchirapalli and other parts of Tirunelveli District. But they have not been treated as Scheduled Caste in those areas. In Kerala State where their numerical strength according to 1961 Census is 26,781 (13,087 males and 13,694 females), they are found mostly in the districts of Kottayam, Malabar and Trivandrum. In Kanyakumari District they are found in and around Nagercoil.

The population trend of Panans from 1901 to 1961 and its variation between these periods are shown below :—

Place	Population				Variation between		
	1901	1911	1941	1961	1901-11	1901-61	1941-61
Tirunelveli . .	62	53	93	25 In Shencottah taluk	—9	—37	—68
Kanyakumari .	282	364	215	157	+82	—125	—58
Total . .	344	417	308	182	+73	—162	—126

In 1901 the population of Panan was 344 and in 1911 it registered an increase of 109, the population being 417. In 1941 it declined to 308. It further decreased to 182 in 1961 Census. This sudden decline from 1941 to 1961 in the population of Panans may be largely due to linguistic reorganisation of State in 1956 which resulted in the constitution of Kerala as a separate State. According to 1961 Census, the Panans number 182 consisting of 88 males and 94 females. In Shencottah Taluk their strength is 25 and in Kanyakumari district, 157. The districtwise strength of the 182 Panans is as follows :—

District	Total	Rural	Urban
Kanyakumari District . . .	157	52	105
Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli District .	25	..	25
	182	52	130

Their concentration is found to be more in urban areas where the scope of getting employed as tailors is greater.

Sex ratio among Panans of Kanyakumari District works out to 1068 females per 1,000 males. This should be considered slightly higher when compared to the ratio existing among the Scheduled Caste population of the district which is 1,027 females per 1,000 males and much higher to that found among the general population of the district which is 977 females per 1,000 males. Their distribution according to broad age-groups is as follows:

Age—group	Percentage
0—14	42.9
15—44	42.3
45 & over	14.8

There are 28 males and 50 females in the age-group 0-14 which accounts for 42.9% of the total population. Persons in the age-group 15-44 number 77 consisting of 35 males and 42 females who constitute 42.3% of the total population. In the age-group 45 and above the strength is 27 consisting of 25 males and 2 females. Concentration in the age-group 0-14 is high indicating the trend of increasing birth rate among them.

III. Family, Clan, Kinship etc.:

The basic unit of the social organisation is the family. Simple families are general norm among Panans in Kottar and Tiruvettar. In the past, they lived as joint families. The size of the Panan family, on an average, is 5 to 6 members which can be termed as optimum. A Panan family is generally composed of parents and children with or without one or more unmarried dependants. The residence is always patrilocal and as soon as a son gets married, the son sets up his own family, and migrates. Though traditionally, the Panans are *Makkathayis*, wherein the sons, always inherited the properties of their parents, they now follow a mixed system of inheritance under which daughters are also entitled to inherit a portion of the mother's properties, if the parents so desire, along with the sons. Thurston has quoted the Gazetteer of Malabar as follows:

"In South Malabar there are said to be four sub-divisions called Tirurengan, Kodaketti (umbrella tying), Minpidi (fish catching) and Pulluvan of which the last named is inferior in status to the other three. They are also divided into exogamous *illams or Kiriyams*". (Thurston, VI, 1909, 31-32). It is also reported that among the Panans of Malabar a woman always retained her clan even after her marriage. However, on enquiry it is found that the Panans of Kottar and Tiruvettar are not divided into any sub-divisions or clans and the whole group functions as an endogamous unit. They marry among themselves and the majority of them pursue their traditional occupation of tailoring.

IV. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments and other material Objects :

In Kottar the Panans live in pucca, well built houses in the midst of the other caste Hindus. Each family has its own separate house in which invariably a simple family lives. All the houses are found in rows on either side of the street without any gap in between two dwelling units. The majority of the houses are rectangular in shape, tiled, brick walled and neatly plastered with cement or lime mortar. In Tiruvettar, Panan houses are thatched having unbaked brick walls. A tiled house of a Panan of average economic means is of the following pattern : It contains a front verandah known as 'Tharcha', a corridor known as 'Ul Muri', a kitchen called 'Adukkalai' and a backyard. The front verandah of the house is either left open or screened with trellys. In any case there are parapet walls to the verandah. The doors and windows are neatly wrought and put up. A house contains more than two rooms and invariably a bath room. In the backyard of a house there are plenty of open space for growing a few trees. Mostly coconut palms are found in the backyard of Panan houses. The raw materials for house construction are procured locally. The tiles are procured from Villukiri, a village in Kalkulam Taluk. The source of drinking water is wells. In Tiruvettar the four Panan families use a common well for drinking and bathing. The housing conditions among Panans in Kanyakumari District, on the whole, appear to be satisfactory.

The Panans use only cotton garments which suit the climatic conditions of the region. In the village Tiruvettar the male members wear mostly dhoties and shirts or banians. The dhoti known as Mundu measures four cubic. It is worn round the waist, extending up to the ankle and one end is tucked on the right side of the hip. The shirts, either half or full sleeves, are neatly tailored. At home they wear either banians or go barebodies. But while going out for work they use stitched shirts. In Kottar the younger generation are seen wearing pants, slacks of shirts stitched in modern style. Panan womenfolk in rural areas, wear lungi in their waists and blouse over their body. They do not put any covering cloth above the blouse. However, in Kottar, the womenfolk wear sarees, length of which is six yards. The saree is worn in the regional fashion, the Pallav resting on the left shoulders. Old Panan women in Tiruvettar wear sarees of 14 cubic and the mode of wearing slightly differs from that ordinarily noticed in Kottar. The saree Pallav is taken in the latter style, round the back and brought over the right shoulder and tugged at the hip. Old women do not wear blouses. Young boys and girls wear shorts and skirts.

The ornaments worn by woman are made of gold or some cheap metals. In the nose and ear lobes they wear stone studded 'Mookuthis' (nose-screw) and 'Kammals' (ear-studs). Old women wear heavy ear ornaments like Nadar women and it is known as *Pambadam*. In the neck they wear one or two strings of chain and cotton string containing 'Sangu Thali' which is flanked on either side by stars called 'Seravus'. On the wrists they wear 'valai' (Bangles), made of either glass or plastic. Some of the well-to-do men in Kottar were seen wearing the above types of ornaments made of gold. Panan males in the past used to wear ear-studs but now excepting one or two old men, others do not wear any such ornament. They also used to have tufts. Today the menfolk of this community crop their hair and have trimmed moustaches. The women part the hair in the middle and tie it into a loose knot or like a bun at the back. One or two old women have tatoed their forearms and foreheads.

The staple diet of Panans in Kottar is rice. In Tiruvettar tapioca is also taken with rice. Generally meals are taken thrice a day. In rural areas the morning meal is mostly boiled tapioca accompanied by a piece of dried fish roasted with a little chilli powder. For the night meal they cook rice and take it in a solid form. It is difficult to procure vegetables other than green plantains. In Kottar the Panans get plenty of vegetables and meat since it is an urban area.

V. Environmental sanitation, hygienic habits etc.:

The Panans keep the premises of their houses clean and tidy. They use the nearby open fields or the banks of the river for answering calls of nature. They generally look healthy and are meticulous in personal hygiene. They take bath daily and wear neat garments. They put on either the sacred ash or sandal paste 'Thilak' on their foreheads. The surroundings of drinking water wells are kept neat and clean.

VI. Language and literacy:

The mother tongue of the Pannas of Tiruvettar is Malayalam. They also know Tamil, the regional language and converse freely in that language with others. However, the mother tongue of the Panans in Kottar is Tamil. The mother tongue of the Panans of Shencottah Taluk is also Tamil which is their ancestral language. Though there is regional variation among Panans in the matter of language they belong to one and the same community in as much as there is social relationship between the Malayalam speaking and Tamil speaking Panans. The two groups freely intermarry

and inter-dine. It is reported by the Panans of Kottar that a large number of their relatives are living in the adjoining Trivandrum district of Kerala State.

According to 1961 Census, the rate of literacy among the Panans in the State is 58.2%. The percentage of literacy among the males is 70.5% and among the females 46.8%. Their literacy rate in Kanyakumari district is 59.2% which is considerably higher when compared to the rate of literacy of entire scheduled caste population in the district which is 26.44%. The literacy rates among the males and females in the district are 73.2% and 47.7% respectively. The above rates are higher when compared to the rates among the males and females of the Scheduled Caste population of the district which are 33.25% and 19.82% respectively.

The literacy level among the 182 Panans is as follows: Out of the 25 Panans found in Shencottah Taluk, 12 (7 males and 5 females) are illiterates, 9 persons (6 males and 3 females) are literates without any educational qualification and 4 persons, all males have studied upto Junior basic or primary standard. Among the 52 Panans found in the rural area of Kanyakumari district, 26 persons (10 males and 16 females) are illiterates (50%), 11 are literates without any educational qualification and 15 persons (10 males and 5 females) have studied upto Primary or Junior basic. Among the 105 Panans found in the urban areas in Kanyakumari District 38 (9 males and 29 females) are illiterates, and 54 persons (29 males and 25 females) are literates without any educational qualification, 10 persons (4 males and 6 females) are qualified upto primary or junior basic and 3 persons (all males) have studied Matriculation.

An analysis of the percentage of literacy among the Panans, age-group-wise has been made in the following statements:

Age-group (in years)	Percentage of literacy
5—9	48.7
10—14	90.5
15—19	100.0
20—29	62.1
30—44	58.5
45+	70.4

In the two age-groups 10-14 and 15-19 the rate is the maximum which indicates that children of school going age are invariably put into schools and that Panans in urban areas have realised the value of

education. Even in rural areas in Kanyakumari district where their literacy rate is only 44.8% which is low when compared to the rate of 59.8% for the district as a whole, the Panans, of late, have started sending their children to schools.

According to 1961 Census only 3 persons are returned as Matriculates. We found in Kottar a large number of highly qualified persons. There is a retired Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies who is a graduate in Arts. Two of his sons are studying in Engineering College and of his two daughters, one has been admitted in a Medical College and the other is studying in the P.U.C. Another person of this community has taken his degree in Economics. Though in the past the traditional occupation of the Panans, namely tailoring has resulted in low level of literacy among them, of late, there is a remarkable increase in their literacy level. They have realised the value of education and started educating their children utilising the benefits extended to them by the Government.

VIII. Economic life :

Panans of Madurai, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts are tailors. The Malyalam Panans are described as "exorcists and devil dancers. The men also make umbrellas and the women act as midwives". (Thurston, VI, 1909, 29). Quoting N. Subramania Iyer Thurston further adds that "In Keralarpatti the traditional occupation of the Panans is said to be exorcism and in British Malabar this occupation seems to be continued at the present day. Umbrella making is a secondary occupation for the men. In Travancore, however, the only occupation pursued by the Panans is tailoring. The Pànan is the barber of the polluting castes above Cherumans. By profession he is an umbrella maker. Panans are also engaged in all kinds of agricultural work. In villages they build mud walls. In North Travancore the Panans are professional musicians, drummers and magicians and follow umbrella making as a subsidiary occupation". (Thurston, VI, 1909, 41).

The traditional occupation of the Panans in Kanyakumari District is tailoring. It would appear that they were formerly employed as tailors by Moolam Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore and that they flourished under his rule. In olden days they used to go from house to house and made pillow covers and similar items. They were also paid in kind. On festive occasions they used to get some presents from their clients. This practice is not prevalent in the areas surveyed by us. It is likely that they were making dresses formerly by hand stitching and with the introduction of sewing machines they must have switched over to tailoring with sewing machines. All the seven Panan workers in Tiruvettar covered in the

survey are tailors. In Kottar, however, besides tailoring, Panans are engaged in business, private and Government services etc. However tailoring continues to be the main source of livelihood of the majority.

According to 1961 Census, workers among the Panans number 57 males and 10 females. They form 36.81% of the total population of 182 Panans in the State. Female workers constitute 14.93% of the total population. The proportion of female workers is small because women do not go out for any work. A few who chose to do so, do that on account of acute poverty. In their houses also they do not seem to pursue any occupation. They are excellent housewives devoting themselves to the upkeep of their children and households. Though Edgar Thurston had reported that in South Travancore their womenfolk undertake the job of preparing pillows and mattresses in individual homes and sometimes also assist in delivery, the Panan women in Kanyakumari District are not aware of any of the occupations mentioned above.

As regards the percentage distribution of workers in the community, 67.16% are engaged in the traditional occupation of tailoring, 14.93% are employed in other services like private or Government service, 5.97% are working as agricultural labourers, 4.48% are engaged in constructions, 2.99% in trade and commerce, 1.49% in household industry and 1.49% in cultivation.

Panans are not agricultural surfs and a few who pursue cultivation are lessees. Any occupational mobility now found among Panans is of recent origin. In Kottar, a few Panans are engaged in running grocery shops, petty pan-shops, etc. There are also a few educated Panans who work as teachers, clerks, etc.

The monthly earning of a Panan engaged in tailoring ranges from Rs. 30 to 50. A glance at the income and expenditure pattern of the Panan families indicates that the majority of them are in the low income groups of Rs. 25 and below 25—50 p.m. The monthly expenditure pattern varies from Rs. 20 to 50 in the case of the above families. Generally expenditure is adjusted to the income. The items of expenditure include food, dress, house rent and other miscellaneous items. The expenditure pattern of the majority of the households shows that generally the amount spent on food items constitutes 59.4%. The expenditure on chewing and smoking is high. Panans are very fond of betel chewing. All the Panan households surveyed in Tiruvettar are in debts. The debts on an average work out to Rs. 300 per family. The causes of indebtedness are explained as house construction and marriage expences.

VIII. Life Cycle :

Birth :

The Panans entertain beliefs that stillbirths and infant deaths are due to previous sins committed by them. Delivery of a child takes place in a separate room in the dwelling house itself. No ceremony is conducted to a pregnant woman for first pregnancy nor any special treatment accorded to her. During the prenatal period no special restriction regarding diet is observed excepting that consumption of fish and meat in large quantities is avoided. Generally, a few elderly women, not necessarily belonging to the Panan community, attend to delivery. In Kottar it is reported that the assistance of a barber woman is also sought. Soon after the delivery the placenta is usually buried in the backyard of the house. A delivery entails pollution for 16 days. On the 16th day, a purification ceremony called 'Punyahavachanam' is conducted. The Panans of Tiruvettar obtain from a Sivan temple priest, water sanctified by mantras and sprinkle that throughout the house to eradicate pollution. The child is named on the same day which is known as 'Peyar Poduthal'. In a few households the mother taking the new born, visits the nearby temple. Generally a woman after delivery resumes her normal duties only after 40 days. The tonsuring and ear-boring ceremonies to a child are generally conducted after one or two years. The tonsuring ceremony is known as 'Thala Vilakkuthal' in local parlance. They do not observe any ceremony while admitting their children in schools in view of their poor economic status.

Puberty :

When a girl attains puberty she is segregated to a comer of the house for a period of 7 days during which pollution is observed. In olden days the period of pollution was for 40 days. No male is allowed to see her during this period. On the 8th day, the girl terminates pollution by taking an oil bath. Turmeric water specially obtained from a Brahamin priest is sprinkled throughout the house to get rid of the pollution completely. The maternal uncle presents her new sarees. This function which is mostly informal ends with a feast given to close relatives.

Marriages :

Among the Panans of Kanyakumari district monogamy appears to be the usual norm. They give their daughters in marriage soon after they attain puberty. The initiative for an alliance should always come from the groom's side. They consult a Kaniyan or Assan to find out the 'Porutham' (agreeability). If the horoscopes

agree, the boy's parents and his maternal uncle go to see the girl. After their approval the betrothal known as 'Nichiya Thambulam' takes place. The groom's party presents a saree to the girl on this occasion. After betrothal, the marriage is celebrated within 15 or 30 days.

Marriage celebrated for one day only takes place either at the groom's or bride's place. Sometimes a marriage is celebrated in the Kumaran or Subramaniyar temple. The marriage ceremony itself is very simple. The bridal couple sit on a square shaped 'Mavukkolam' (Rangoli drawn with rice flour) in front of ornamental pots. A five faced 'Kuthuvilakku' is lighted. In the presence of the relatives, the groom ties 'Sangu Tali' which was already blessed by a Brahmin priest. The eldest member of the family officiates as the priest. The Panans of Kottar, however, follow the Brahmanical form. The various ceremonies in their marriages include functions like *Kankanam Kattal* getting up *Homam*, *Thali* tying etc. It is claimed by the Panans of Kottar that a Brahmin officiates in their marriage ceremonies. After marriage, on the 7th day, the groom goes to the bride's place for 'Maruvunnal' (feasting). The mode of celebration of a marriage among the Panans of Kottar is similar to that prevalent among the Tamilians of the region.

Thurston reports that among the Panans of Malabar fraternal polyandry was the common type of marriage. But it is found on enquiry that polyandry was never practised by the Panans of Kanyakumari district. Thurston describing a Panan marriage quotes N. Subramaniya Iyer as follows: *"The Thalikattu* celebration takes place before the girl attains puberty. If the ceremony is intended to signify a real marriage, the girl is taken to her husband's house on the fourth day of the first menstrual period and they remain henceforth man and wife. Otherwise a *Sambandam* ceremony has to be performed either by a tali-tier or some one else". (Thurston, VI, 1909, 33). The pattern of marriage described by Thurston is different from that prevalent among the Panans of Kanyakumari district. Barring a few stray instances child marriages generally do not take place.

The Panans are not divided into clans or gotras for marriage purposes and the entire community is endogamous. Consanguineous marriages are commonly found among them and the pereferential mates are maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughters. The Panans of Kottar marry one's sister daughter as is found among the local Tamil speaking people. Out of the 6 marriages recorded at Tiruvettar three relate to marrying maternal uncle's daughters. Levirate and sorrorate are not commonly found among them. They allow

widow remarriages. Young widows invariably choose another spouse. The marriages in such cases are very simple and non-expensive. Divorce is freely allowed. A divorce is effected when the wife returns the 'Thali' (Marriage badge). A portion of the marriage expense is also returned. Divorce is resorted to on reasons like adultery, temperamental incompatibility, barrenness etc. According to 1961 Census, out of 182 Panans, 82 persons (45 males and 37 females) are reported to be unmarried and 79 persons (39 males and 40 females) are found to be married. The widowed persons number 13 (4 males and 9 females). The number of persons divorced/separated is 8 (all females). The percentage distribution of the marital status of the Panans is given below :

Marital status	Percentage	
	Males	Females
Never married	51.2	39.3
Married	44.3	42.6
Widowed	4.5	9.6
Divorced or separated	..	8.5

The proportion of widowed and divorced/separated persons is greater among the females. An analysis of the marital status of Panans age-groupe wise indicates that there are nine married females in the age-group 0.14 which perhaps indicates the tendency for child marriages.

Death :

The Panans resort to burial or cremation for the disposal of the dead. In Kottar, it is reported that dead bodies are mostly cremated. The bodies of elders are usually cremated and children buried. Before the body is cremated it is given a bath in cold water and anointed with turmeric sandal paste etc. A cloth is also put on it and taken in an improvised bier to the burial ground or burning ghat. In case of burial, the pit is dug north-south and the head placed towards the south. On the third day, a ceremony called 'Sanapaluthal' is observed. During the ceremony the funeral celebrant takes to the burial ground a basket containing cooked rice other eatables, milk, money, pansupari, plantain, flower, etc., and offers them to the departed soul. 'Sanapaluthal ceremony' prevalent among the Panans of Tiruvettar is similar to that observed by the Malayalee Nairs of the region. The ashes

of the deceased are collected, put in a clay pot, and immersed in a stream or pond close-by. On the 16th day, obsequies are performed by cleaning the house and white-washing it. In Kottar the 16th day ceremony is known as 'Karumathi' which is similar to that prevalent among the Tamilians of the area. On this day the relatives are invited and given a feast. The Panans observe the remembrance day for the departed soul by celebrating anniversaries.

IX. Religion :

Panans are Hindus and according to 1961 Census all the Panans have been returned as Hindus. In Tiruvettar they worship deities like *Paradhevathai, Kaliamman, Mariamman, Andavar, Vinayagar, Siva* etc. They appear to be primarily Sakthi worshippers. Their popular deity however is *Kumara Kadavul.* In Tiruvettar they have no temple and they visit other Hindu temples such as Sivan and Ganesa temples, where they offer worship with equal devotion. The supreme deity however is Kaliamman or Mutharamman. A temple dedicated to this supreme deity is found in Kottar which is known as 'Panan Kudi Amman Temple'. The temple is situated very near the Panan residence in Kottar. The functionary there belongs to the Saivite Pillai caste. There is a temple Management Board which looks after its maintenance. The members who constitute the board belong to the Panan community. The 'Panankudi Amman Temple' is frequented by all castes Hindus such as Asari, Pillai and Ilavanigar. It is reported that the Nadars who never used to step into their temple some 3 to 4 decades back now visit and offer their worship in Panan temple.

The Annual festival to the deity takes place in Kodai (Summer months) and lasts for 3 days. Every Panan family takes part in it. Contributions are made by all Panan households at the rate of Rs. 5/- each. The important and famous festival is celebrated in the month of 'Karthigai' which is known as 'Karthigai Sirappu'. All the Panans of the region take part in it and the expenditure is met from collections made among themselves.

The Panans of Tiruvettar celebrate Onam, similar to that observed in Kerala which perhaps indicates their greater affiliation with Kerala. They offer worship to Mahabali on that day, wear new clothes and partake in a non-vegetarian feast. However, it is reported that they do not celebrate Hindu festivals such as Deepavali and Pongal. The Panans of Kottar celebrate Deepavali and Pongal in the manner just as the Tamilians of the region do. The other Hindu festivals are also celebrated by them in the traditional Hindu form.

X. Leisure and Recreation:

The only recreation for the Panans of all ages is going to cinema—Nagercoil lying near Kottar, provides this entertainment to them. Another popular form of recreation is gossiping in which both men and women participate. In olden days Panans used to drink heavily but now it is not ordinarily resorted to.

XI. Relation among different segments of the community:

Panans of Kottar and Tiruvettar are not divided into any recognized segments or sub-divisions. The two groups found among them based on language are Tamil-speaking and Malayalam-speaking Panans. However, the two groups function as one unit and social relationships such as intermarriage and interdining exist among them.

XII. Inter-community relationship:

The Panans in Kottar claim that 2 Brahmins extended their services to them on occasions like marriage, festivals, etc., but the Panans of Tiruvettar report that they never used to engage Brahmins for any function. The barbers and washermen who serve the caste Hindus also serve them in Kottar. The other castes living in the hamlet of Panans in Kottar are Asari, Nadar, Pillai etc. and in Tiruvettar, Nairs also live side by side with them. However, they do not interdine with Panans but they allow them to take water from their wells. Panans report that the caste Hindus like Asari, Nadar attend their marriage, if invited, but do not dine with them. In Kottar, Panans claim that of late, they have no objection to dine with them. On the whole, it appears that there is no social disability for Panans in this region as they are allowed to take water from the wells belonging to the caste Hindus, live without distinction amidst Hindu dwellings and enter any Hindu temple in the areas without reservation. They live amicably with other caste members maintaining cordial relationship.

XIII. *Structure of social control, Prestige and leadership:*

It is reported that the social and religious affairs of this community were controlled by an organisation known as 'Panan Mutt' at Tirunelveli. Some 35 years back, the head of this organisation visited Kottar and the Panans received his blessings. But now, it is reported that the organisation is defunct due to succession troubles. A small choultry in Tiruchendur temple was built by the Mutt for the benefit of the pilgrims. Now the Panans have no traditional Commnnity Organisation to control social or religious discipline among them. There is no leader in the community nominated as headman. If any dispute arises among the members, it is settled by taking it to some influential persons in the village,

not necessarily belonging to their community. For social delinquencies such as adultery, the elders of the community meet and dispose off the matter.

XIV. Social reform and welfare :

Even though Panans were treated as untouchables in the past, caste incompetence towards this community is now no longer practised. Now there is significant occupational mobility among them. They have taken up business, private or Government service and because of this mobility, their social status has also improved considerably. They are socially sufficiently advanced. The Harijan Welfare Department is also carrying out Scheme for the welfare of Panans and many of them have received sewing machines as free grants from that department. They are also deriving educational concessions as a Scheduled Caste.

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10. Menon P. G . . . Census of India, 1921, Vol. XIX Cochin, Part I : Report Ernakulam 1922, p. 66
11. Ayyar M. S K. . . Census of India, 1921 Vol. XXV Travancore Part I : Report Trivandrum, 1922, p. 113
12. Menon T. K. S. . . Census of India, 1931 Vol XXI : Cochin Part-I : Report, Ernakulam, 1933, pp. 85, 119, 274
13. Pillai N. K. . . . Census of India, 1931 Vol. XXVIII Travancore, Part-I : Report Trivandrum 1932, pp. 384-385

Extract on 'PANAN' from Caste in India, Its Nature Function, and Origins by J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E., M.A., D.Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, page 288 *Glossary.*

PANAN:—*See* Malayan

Page 285 *Glossary*

MALAYAN: A patrilineal caste of Malabar which cures disease by expelling the demon responsible for it by dancing in masks and diaguises (= Panan ; Malayan means 'hillman').

Extract on 'PANAN' from Caste in India, Its Nature Function, and Origins by J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E., M.A. D.Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, page 15.

Among the non-Nayar Hindu castes of Malabar mention must be made of the Tiyar, a caste corresponding to the Shanar of the Tamil Country, whose traditional occupation is the extraction of toddy from palm trees, and the Iruvar, who seem to have reached Malabar by sea from the Indian archipelago by way of Ceylon; the *Panan* caste also is of interest for its picturesque practice of the curing of sickness by dancing in the guise of demons about the body of the sick, a practice used also by the Malayar, as well as by the Parava caste.

Extract on 'PANAN' from 'Caste in India', Its Nature Function, and Origins by J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E., M.A., D.Sc., Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, page 79.

In southern India, on the other hand, many castes are regarded as polluting by proximity, and are not allowed to approach within certain distances of Hindu temples; so much is this the case that common expressions of spatial measurement are, or were, *Tiyapad, Cherumapad,* etc., indicating a distance equivalent to that within which a Tiya or a Cheruman, as the case may be of course, may not approach a man of high caste. At the same time this spatial measurement must be anything but exact, as not only is the polluting distance less for a Nayar, for instance, than for a Brahman, but different standards are mentioned by different authorities. Jonathan Duncan, in his *remarks on the coast of Malabar,*[22] says that a Nayar may approach a Nambudri Brahman, but must not touch him; a Tiyan (toddy-drawer) must remain 36 paces off; a Malayan (*i.e.* PANAN, exorcist basketmaker) must remain 'three or four' paces farther; a Pulayan (cultivator and untouchable) must keep 96 paces from a Brahman. A Tiyan must not come within 12 paces of a Nayar; a Malayan (Panan) must keep 3 or 4 paces farther off, and a Pulayan must still keep his 96 from a Nayar as well as a Brahman. A Panan may approach but not touch a Tiyan, but a Pulayan must not even approach a Panan. If he wishes to address a man of higher caste, he must stand afar off and 'cry aloud'.

22. Asiatick Researches, V (1807), p. 5.

Extract on "THE PANANS" from the Cochin Tribes And Castes, Volume—I, by L. K. ANANTHA KRISHNA IYER, B.A., L.T., Superintendent of Ethnography, Cochin State; Corresponding Member of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, London; the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington; and Corresponding Member of the Anthropological Society, Bombay. MADRAS: Published for the Government of Cochin By Higginbotham & Co. Mount Road, LONDON: Luzac & Co. 1909 from page 171 to 180.

CHAPTER X

THE PANANS

The Panans are a caste of people who claim an equal social status with the Kaniyans because of their knowledge of magic, sorcery, and devil driving. They numbered 2,781 according to the last Cochin Census Report, 1,403 being males, and 1,378 females. It is sometimes said that the Panans and Kaniyans form a division of the Izhuva caste, but according to the results of my investigations, they are distinct communities without interdining. They are also called Koravans in the south.

Traditions of the Caste :

In the Madras Census Report of 1891, it is said that the Panans are, in some places, called Malayans and that they may be descendants of that hill tribe who have settled in the plains. The Panans who, as a matter of fact, know nothing of their origin, give as the traditional account of their origin a distorted version of the tradition as to the origin of the Izhuvans which is found in the Mackenzie Manuscripts and is mentioned by me in my account dealing with that caste. The story in the Panan version is as follows: One day a washerman of Cheraman Perumal chanced to wash his dress very clean; on being asked by the Perumal as to the cause of it, the washerman said, that it was due to the suggestion of a handsome carpenter girl, who saw him while washing. The Perumal, pleased with the girl, desired her to be married to his washerman. The parents of the girl were duly consulted and they could not refuse the offer as it came from their own ruler but the carpenters resented it, for, if the proposal were accepted and the marriage celebrated, it might not only place the members of her family under a ban, but would also bring on dishonour to the castemen. To avert the contemplated union, they resorted to the following device. A pandal was erected and tastefully decorated. Just at the auspicious hour, when the bridegroom and his party were properly seated on mats in the pandal, the

carpenters brought a puppet exactly resembling the bride, and placed it by his side, when, suddenly, by a clever artifice the carpenters caused the building to tumble down, and thereby killed all those who were in it. They immediately left the Perumal's country and took refuge in the island of Ceylon. The ruler thereupon was much embarrassed both because of the disaster to the washerman and by the flight of the carpenters, for he had none in his country to build houses. A few Panans were sent for and they brought the carpenters back. On their return, they were given some fruit of the palmyra palm which they ate. They sowed the seeds in their own places and these afterwards grew into large fruit bearing palms. The Panans possessed the privilege of keeping these trees as their own, but subsequently made them over to Izhuvans, who, in memory of this, give even to-day two dishes of food to the Panans on all ceremonial occasions in their houses. The Panans have been called NETTARIS by the Izhuvans because of their having originally planted these trees.

There are no sub-castes among the Panans. The caste is endogamous; but the caste-men belong to different KIRIYAMS. The names of some of the Kiriyams in the Palghat Taluk are Puthana Kiriyam, Mangat Kiriyam, Chera Kiriyam, Kanaya Kiriyam, Pandiyam Pulli Kiriyam, Kaniyathi Kiriyam, Valayanthatta Kiriyam, Kallu Kiriyam, Karutha Kiriyam, and Ariri Kiriyam.

Habitations :

The Panans are found in small numbers in all the rural parts of the State. Every village consists of a few families, the members of which live by their labour in their own and in the adjacent villages. They live in small thatched huts, similar to those of Kaniyans, and other allied caste-men. Usually each hut is situated in a small separate compound, but sometimes several small huts are built near one another in one compound, with a small one wherein their gods are located. Their huts are provided with verandahs.

Marriage Customs :

Marriage is endogamous with regard to the caste, and exogamous in respect of the KIRIYAMS. A young man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle. Marriage is permissible as in other castes both before and after puberty. The TALI tying ceremony for girls below twelve years of age is indispensable, and the neglect of this ceremony is punishable by excommunication. The real marriage is a kind of SAMBANDHAM, such as prevails among the Nairs, and is similar to that of the Kaniyans and other allied caste-men. The bridegroom's sister gives the wedding dress to the bride and seats her alongside of the bride-

groom. A sweet preparation made of mile, sugar, and pieces of plantains is given to the couple, and it is this ceremony which unites them as husband and wife. After regular feasts in their own fashion, the bridegroom and his party along with the bride and her relatives go to the bridegroom's house, and there they are well entertained. The same sweet preparation is given to both of them. In cases where the formal marriage ceremony is postponed after the negotiations between the bridegroom's and bride's parties have been completed in the presence of their respective middlemen (ENANGANS) and the bride's price has been given, the bridegroom is at liberty to go to the bride's house and live with her—a fact which shows that it is considered that the young woman is his, as soon as the price is paid. The caste-men are poor, and several brothers may enter into wedlock with one young woman. The ceremonies connected with it are the same as those of the Kaniyans and the Izhuvans of the northern parts of the State. Polygamy does not prevail among them; but a widow may marry her brother-in-law. The customs connected with divorce are similar to those prevailing in other castes.

Inheritance :

Among the Panans, the sons inherit the property of their fathers; as a matter of fact they are poor and have very little to bequeath.

Titles are practically unknown among them; but a Panan who was brought to me for examination at Trichur told me that one of his ancestors got the title of PANIKKAN, and that he had the privilege of wearing a gold ear-ring, of carrying a walking-stick with a silver head at one end, and of using a knife provided with a stile. KAPRADAN also is a title given to the head-man in the Palghat Taluk, and he is also endowed with certain privileges as will be seen from my account of their funeral ceremonies. When a KAPRADAN dies, his son inherits the title on condition of his presenting an umbrella to the Palghat Raja.

Magic and sorcery :

There are magicians and sorcerers among them, who sometimes, at the request even of the high castemen, practise the black art. Some of the Panans like the Parayans engage in magical rites of a repulsive character, in order to become possessor of a powerful "medicine", the possession of which is believed to have the power of obtaining anything he wishes. They also believe in the existence of a demoniacal hierarchy. Changili

Karuppan, Pechi, Oodara Karuppan, Kali, Chotala Karuppan, Chotala Bhadrakali, Yakshi, Gandharvan, and Hanuman are the names of the chief demons whom they profess to control with the aid of MANTRAMS and offerings. They also believe that they can both send one or more of these demons into the bodies of men, and that they can cast them out when persons are possessed of them. They profess to cure all kinds of diseases in children with the aid of magic and medicines; and all caste-men believe that harm or even death may be caused to men with the aid of these sorcerers. In such cases an astrologer is consulted, and according to his calculations, the aid of a magician is sought for.

When a person is suffering from what are believed to be demoniacal attacks, he is relieved by the performance of the following ceremony called *Pathalahomam*. A pit about six feet in length, three feet in depth, and a foot or two in breadth is dug. A Panan covered with a new piece of cloth is made to lie in the pit which is filled in with earth, a small hole being left for him to breathe. Over the middle of his body the earth is raised and made level. A sacred fire (*homam*) is made over this with the branches of a jack tree. Near it a large square is drawn with sixty-four small divisions, in each of which a small leaf with some paddy, rice, and flowers and lighted candles is placed. Gingelly seeds, mustard seeds, grains of *Chama* (Panicum miliaceum), horsegram, eight fragrant things, the skin of snakes, the dung of the elephant, the milk of the *Pala* tree, twigs of the banyan tree, *Dharba* grass, *nila narakam* (Naregamia alata) oil, and ghee are put into it, until it burns bright. The sick man is brought in front of it, and then the sorcerer authoritatively asks him—or rather the demon residing in his body—to take these things. The sorcerer puts the above mentioned substances into the fire, muttering his prayers all the while, invoking the favour of Veerabhadran or Kandakaranan. The significance of the prayers is this: "O Kandakarana, the King of the Devas, I have no body, that is, my body is getting weaker and weaker and I am possessed of some demon which is killing me. Kindly help me and give me strength." This done, another operation is begun. A fowl is buried, a small portion of the earth above it is raised and made level. The figure of a man is drawn by the side of it. Three *homams* (sacred fires) are raised, one at the head, one at the middle, and one at the foot. The above mentioned grains and substances are put into fire. A large square with sixtyfour smaller squares in it is drawn, in each of which a leaf with grains of paddy, rice, and flowers is placed. Another *mantram* in praise of the deities already mentioned is uttered, and a song is sung at the time. After finishing this, a small structure in the form of a temple is made, and a small plantain tree is placed by the side of it. A *padmam*

(floral diagram) is drawn and a *puja* is performed for the Paradevatha, the queen of demons. The sorcerer makes offerings of toddy, beaten rice, plantains, and cocoanuts. When he soon turns an oracle and, as one inspired, tells them what the deity wishes, and gives them information as regards the departure of the demons from his body. It is now believed that the patient is free from all demoniacal attacks. The buried man is exhumed and allowed to go home.

In the Palghat Taluk, the following act of sorcery is practised, which is believed to relieve persons from demoniacal attacks and from disease. If, in the house of any caste-men, it is suspected that some malign influence is being exercised by demons, a Panan is sent for, who comes in the evening with his colleagues. A *homam* or sacred fire is lit with the branches of the trees above mentioned, into which are thrown six kinds of grains, as well as oil and ghee. Whilst this is being done, Kallatikode Neeli, the presiding archdemon, is propitiated with songs and offerings. The next part of the ceremony consists in bringing a bier, and placing a Panan on it and a measure of rice at his head. He is, as is done in the case of a dead body, covered with a piece of new cloth, and a small plantain tree is placed between the thighs. At his head, a sheep, and at his legs, a fowl is killed. He pretends gradually to recover consciousness. In this state he is taken outside the compound. The Panan lying on the bier evidently pretends to be dead as if killed by the attack of some demon. The propitiation with songs and offerings is intended to gratify the demons. This is an instance of sympathetic magic.

Oticult :

Some among the Panans practise the *oti* cult like the Parayans. A Panan who is an adept in the black art, bathes early in the morning, dresses in a cloth unwashed, and performs the *puja* to his deity, after which he goes in search of a *kotuveli* plant (Plumbago Ceylanica). When he has found it, he goes round it three times every day, and continues to do so for ninety days, prostrating himself every day before it, and on the last night which must be a new moon night, at midnight, he performs the *puja* to the plant, burning camphor and frankincense, and, after three times going round it, prostrates himself before it. He then thrusts three small candles on it, and advances twenty paces in front of it. With his mouth closed and without any fear, he plucks the root and buries it in the ashes on the cremation ground, after which he pours the water of seven green cocoanuts on it. He then goes round it twenty-one times, muttering all the while certain *mantrams*. This being over he plunges himself in water and stands erect until it extends

to his mouth. He takes a mouthful of water which he empties on the spot, and takes the plant with the root out, which he believes to be possessing peculiar virtues. When it is taken to the closed door of a house, it has the power to entice a pregnant woman and cause her to come out, when the foetus is removed. It is all secretly done at midnight. The head, hands, and legs are cut off, the trunk is taken to a dark coloured rock, on which it is cut into nine pieces, which are all burned until they are blackened. At this stage one piece boils, and it is placed in a new earthen pot into which is added the water of nine green cocoanuts. The pot is removed to the burial ground, where the Panan performs a *puja*, in honour of his favourite deity. He fixes two poles deep in the earth at a distance of thirty feet from each other. The two poles are connected by a strong wire from which is suspended the pot to be heated and boiled. Seven fire-places are made beneath the wife, over the middle of which is the pot. The branches of the following trees, namely, bamboo, *katalati* (Achyranthes aspera), conga (Bauhinia variegata), cocoanut palm, jack tree, and *pavatta* (Pavetta Indica), are used in forming a bright fire. The mixture in the pot is soon boiled, and becomes oily, at which stage it is passed through a fine cloth. The oil is preserved, and a mark made with this on the forehead enables the possessor to realize anything that is thought of. The sorcerer must be in a state of vow for twenty-one days, and live on a diet of *chama kanji*. The deity whose aid is necessary is also propitiated with offerings.

One of the ceremonies the Panans perform is called *Thukil onarthuka* (waking from sleep). In the month of Karkadakam (July-August), a Panan with his wife, provided with a drum and cymbals (kuzhithalam), goes to the houses of Brahmans and Nairs after midnight and sings sacred songs. During the first week, they sing standing underneath a banyan tree near the western gate of the Trichurtemple. From the temple authorities they get five measures of paddy, half a measure of rice, some gingelly oil, and a cocoanut. For their services in other houses, they get a similar remuneration. This is intended to drive evil spirits, if any, away from houses.

Another of their festivals is known as *Panan kali*. The traditional account of its institution is the following. Once when a Panan and his wife went to a forest to bring bamboos for the manufacture of umbrellas, they missed their way and the night approached when they could not return. They soon became afraid because of the varieties of noise heard by them in the forest. They collected some pieces of dry bamboo and leaves of trees, which they burned. In the presence of the light thus obtained, the woman caught hold of a creeper hanging from a tree, and danced in honour of Bhagavathi, when the husband of the woman sang songs

in praise of the goddess. The day dawned at least and they found their way home in safety. In memory of this incident the Panans organize a party for a regular play. There should be two female actors and ten male actors for the play, which is acted all through the night.

Religion :

Like every great intellectual and moral manifestation, the religious feelings in any caste is the expression of the mental condition peculiar to that caste. The Kaniyans and the Panikkans are a somewhat learned caste; and their astrology and divination lead them to the worship of higher deities. The Panans, on the other hand, resort to the practice of the black art; and their religion consists in an all-pervading demonology. Their chief gods are Mookkan, Chathan, Kappiri, Malankorathi, and Kali. *Pujas* are performed to them on the first of Medam (April-May), Karkadakam (July-August), at the Desara, and on a Tuesday in Makaram (January-February). These deities are represented by stones placed under a tree. They are washed with water on the aforesaid days, and offerings of sheep, fowls, as also *malar* (parched rice), plantains, cocoanuts, and boiled rice are made to them. Their belief is, that those deities are ever prone to do harm to them, and should therefore be propitiated with offerings. The Panans also worship the spirits of their ancestors who pass for their household gods and whose help they seek in all times of danger. They fast on new moon nights, and on the eleventh night after full or new moon.

Funeral customs :

The dead bodies of Panans are generally buried, but those of the old and somewhat well-to-do men and women are burned. The chief mourner is the son, or in the absence of a son, one of his brothers, if any, takes the place. The pollution is for fifteen days. The caste-men being very poor, the rice-ball offering is made only on the last day. In Palghat when the *Kapradan* dies, the Raja is informed and he sends to the chief mourner a sword, a shield, a spear, a few small guns with some gunpowder for a few discharges, a silver bangle, and a few necklaces. As the dead body is taken to the burial ground, the chief mourner, his son, wearing the ornaments follows it. In front of it go a few persons armed with the weapons above-referred to. Three discharges are fired, (1) when the dead body is removed from his house, (2) when it is placed on the ground, and (3) when it is burned. The chief mourner returns home after a bath along with the rest of the family. During the period of pollution, the chief mourner bathes early in the morning and propitiates the spirit of the departed with rice-ball offerings (*pinda bali*). On the sixteenth morning he and the rest of the family bathe to free themselves.

from pollution, and entertain the caste-men to a feast that day. The next day he pays his respects to the Raja with umbrella of his own making, when the Raja bestows upon him the title of Kapradan. He observes the *deeksha* (a vow by which he does not shave) for a year, at the end of which he gives a similar feast to his caste-men.

Occupation :

The Panan is the barber of the polluting castes above the Cherumans. By profession he is an umbrella maker, but curiously enough, he cannot make the whole of an umbrella. He may make the frame work, but the covering of it must be the work of the females of his caste. If he has no female relatives of his own capable of finishing the umbrellas he makes, he must secure the services of other females in the neighbourhood. The covering is of palmyra leaves. The price of an ordinary umbrella varies from three to eight annas. They are more serviceable than those of European manufacture. Panans also engage in all kinds of agricultural work and earn from three to four annas a day. In villages they build mud walls and get about the same wages. Their women act as midwives.

Social Status :

As regards social position, they eat at the hands of the Brahmans, Nairs, Kammalans, and Izhuvans, and abstain from taking the food of all caste-men below them. They have to stand at a distance of thirty-two feet from the Brahmans. Panans and Kaniyans pollute one another if they touch, and both bathe should they happen to do so. They are their own barbers and washermen. They live in the vicinity of the Izhuvans, but cannot live in the Nair *tharas*, nor can they take water from the wells of the Kammalans. They cannot approach the outer walls of the Brahman temples, neither are they allowed to enter the Brahman streets in Palghat.

Extract on "PANAN" from 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India' by EDGAR THURSTON, C.I.E., Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondant Etranger, Societe d' Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum. Volume VI—P to S. Government Press, Madras, 1909 *pages* 29 *to* 42.

PANAN: The Tamil Panans are said, in the Census Report, 1901, to be also called Mestris. They are "tailors among Tamils in Madura and Tinnevelly. They employ Brahmans and Vellalas as purohits. Though barbers and washermen will not eat food prepared by them, they are allowed to enter Hindu temples". The Malayalam Panans are described in the same report as "exorcists and devil-dancers. The men also make umbrellas, and the women act as midwives. In parts they are called Malayans, and they may be descendants of that hill tribe who have settled in the plains". In the South Canara Manual, the Panans are said to be "the Malayalam caste corresponding to the Nalkes and Pombadas. They are numerous in Malabar, where they are also known by the name of Malayan. The devils whom they personify are supposed to have influence over crops, and at the time of harvest the Panans go about begging from house to house, dancing with umbrellas in their hands. On such occasions, however, it is only boys and girls who personify the demons". "The village magician or conjurer", Mr. Gopal Panikar writes,* "goes by different names, such as Panan, Malayan, etc. His work consists in casting outpetty devils from the bodies of persons (chiefly children) possessed, in writing charms, for them to wear, removing the pernicious effects of the evil eye, and so on". On certain ceremonial occasions, the Panan plays on an hour-glass shaped drum, called thudi.

In an account of the funeral ceremonies of the Tiyans, Mr. Logan writes† that "early on the morning of the third day after death, the Kurup or caste barber adopts measures to entice the spirit of the deceased out of the room in which he breathed his last. This is done by the nearest relative bringing into the room a steaming pot of savoury funeral rice. It is immediately removed, and the spirit, after three days' fasting, is understood greedily to follow the odur of the tempting food. The Kurup at once closes the door, and shuts out the spirit. The Kurup belongs to the Panan caste. He is the barber of the polluting classes above Cherumans, and by profession he is also an umbrella maker. But, curiously enough, though an umbrella maker, he cannot make the whole of an umbrella. He may only make the framework; the covering of it

*Malabar an its Folk, 1900.

† Manual of Malabar.

is the portion of the females of his caste. If he has no female relative of his own capable of finishing off his umbrellas, he must seek the services of the females of other families in the neighbourhood to finish his for him. The basketmakers are called Kavaras. Nothing will induce them to take hold of an umbrella, as they have a motto, do not take hold of Panan's leg".

In an account of a meremonial at the Pishari temple near Quilandy in Malabar, Mr. F. Fawcett writes that "early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Panan caste. He carried a small cadjan (palm leaf) umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. The umbrella should have a long handle, and with this in his hand he performs a dance before the temple. He receives about 10lbs. of raw rice for his performance". It is further recorded by Mr. Fawcett that, when a Tiyan is cremated, a watch is kept at the burning-ground for five days by Panans, who beat drums all night to scare away the evil spirits which hanut such spots.

The following account of the Panans is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "The name is perhaps connected with pan, music. They follow the makkattayam family system (of inheritance from father to son), and practice fraternal polyandry. In South Malabar there are said to be four sub-divisions, called Hirurengan, Kodaketti (umbrella tying), Minpidi (fish catching), and Pulluvan, of which the last named is inferior in status to the other three. They are also divided into exogamous illams or kiriyams. They worship Kali, and inferior deities such as Parakutti, Karinkutti, Gulikan, and Kutti Chattan. Their methods of exorcism are various. If any one is considered to be possessed by demons, it is usual, after consulting the astrologer, to ascertain what Murti (lit form) is causing the trouble, to call in Panans, who perform a ceremony called Teyattam, in which they wear masks, and, so attired, sing, dance, tom-tom, and play on rude and strident pipes. Other of their ceremonies for driving out devils called Ucchaveli seem to be survivals of imitations of human sacrifice, or instances of sympathetic magic. One of these consists of a mock living burial of the principal performer, who is placed in a pit which is covered with planks, on the top of which a sacrifice (homam) is performed with a fire kindled with jack (*Artocarpus integrifolio*) branches. In another variety, the Panan cuts his left forearm, and smears his face with the blood thus drawn. Panans also take part with Mannans in various ceremonies at Badrakali and other temples, in which the performers personate, in suitable constumes, some of the minor deities or demons, and fowls are sacrified, while a Velicchapad dances himself into a frenzy, and prononuces oracles". It is further noted, in

the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "to constitute a valid divorce, the husband pulls a thread from his cloth, and gives it to his wife's brother, saying 'Your parisha is over'. It is a traditional duty of the Panans to furnish a messenger to announce to an Izhuvan (or Tandan) girl's mother or husband (according to where she is staying that she has attained puberty".

In the Census Report, 1901, Anjuttan (men of the five hundred) and Munnuttan (men of the three hundred) are returned as sub-castes of the Malayalan Panans.

For the following account of the Panans of Travancore, I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar. The word is of Tamil origin, and means a tailor. The title taken by them is Panikkan, the usual honorific appellation of most of the industrial caste of Malabar. They are supposed to be one with the Panans of the Tamil country, though much below them in the social scale. They observe a pollution distance of thirtysix feet, but keep Mannans and Vedans at a distance of eight, and Pulayas and Paraiyas at a distance of thirty two feet from them. They are their own barbers and washermen. They will eat food prepared by Kammalans, of whom there is a tradition that they are a degraded branch. Tiruvarangan, one of the popular sages of Malabar, who are reputed to be the descendants of a Paraiya woman, is said to have been a Panan, and the Panans pay him due reverence. In the Keralolpatti, the traditional occupation of the Panans is said to be exorcism, and in British Malabar this occupation seems to be continued at the present day. Umbrella-making is a secondary occupation for the men. In Travancore, however, the only occupation pursued by the Panans is tailoring. The tali-kettu celebration takes place before the girl attains puberty. If this ceremony is intended to signify a real marriage, the girl is taken to her husband's house on the fourth day of the first menstrual period, and they remain thenceforth man and wife. Otherwise a sambandham ceremony has to be performed either by the tali-tier or some one else, to establish conjugal relations. Inheritance is mostly paternal. The dead are buried, and death pollution lasts for sixteen days. The spirits of deceased ancestors are appeased once a year by the offering of cooked food on the new-moon day in the month of Karkatakam (July-August). Ancestors who died from some untoward accident are propitiated in the month of Avani (August-September) by offerings of flesh and liquor. The latter ceremonial is termed vellamkuli or water drinking. Small earthen sheds, called gurusalas or Kuriyalas and matams, are erected in memory of some ancestors.

The following account of the Panans of the Cochin State is extracted from a note by Mr. K. Ananta Krishna Aiyar*

"The Panans give, as the traditional account of their origin, a distorted version of the tradition as to the origin of the Izhuvans, which is found in the Mackenzie Manuscripts. The Panan version of the story is an follows. One day a washerman of Cheraman Perumal chanced to wash his dress very clean. On being asked by the Perumal as to the cause of it, the washerman said that it was due to the suggestion of a handsome carpenter girl, who saw him while washing. The Perumal, pleased with the girl, desired her to be married to his washerman. The parents of the girl were duly consulted, and they could not refuse the offer, as it came from their sovereign. But his fellow carpenters resented it, for, if the proposal was accepted, and the marriage celebrated, it might not only place the members of her family under a ban, but would also bring dishonour to the castemen. To avert the contemplated union, they resorted to the following device. A pandal (marriage booth) was erected and tastefully decorated. Just at the auspicious hour, when the bridegroom and his party were properly seated on mats in the pandal, the carpenters brought a puppet exactly resembling the bride, and placed it by his side, when suddenly by a clever artifice, the carpenters caused the building to tumble down, and thereby killed all those who were in it. They immediately left the Perumal's country, and took refuge in the island of Ceylon. The ruler was much embrassed by the disaster to washerman, and by the flight of the carpenters, for he had none in his country to build houses. A few Panans were sent for, and they brought the carpenters back. On their return, they were given some fruit of the palmyra palm, which they ate. They sowed the seeds in their own places, and these grew into large fruit-bearing palms. The Panans possessed the privilege of keeping these trees as their own, but subsequently made them over to the Izhuvans, who, in memory of this, give even to-day two dishes of food to the Panans on all ceremonial occasions in their houses. They have been, on that account, called by the Izhuvans nettaries, for their having originally planted these trees.

"There are no titles among the Panans, but one, who was brought for examination at Trichur, told me that one of his ancestors got the title of Panikkan, and that he had the privilege of wearing a gold earring, carrying a walking-stick lined with silver, and using a knife provided with a style. Kapradan is a title given to the headman in the Palghat taluk. In Palghat, when the Kapradan dies, the Raja is informed, and he sends to the chief mourner (the

*Monograph, Eth. Survey of Cochin.

son) a sword, a shield, a spear, a few small guns with some gunpowder, a silver bangle, and a few necklaces. As the dead body is taken to the burial ground, the chief mourner, wearing the ornaments above mentioned, goes behind it. In front go a few persons armed with the weapons referred to. Three discharges are made (1) when the dead body is removed from the house, (2) when it is placed on the ground, (3) when it is burnt. The next day, the chief mourner pays his respects to the Raja, with an umbrella of his own making, when the Raja bestows upon him the title of Kapradan.

"There are magicians and sorcerers among the Panans, who sometimes, at the request even of the highcaste men, practice the black art. Some of the Panans, like the Parayans, engage in magical rites of a repulsive nature, in order to become possessors of a powerful medicine, the possession of which is believed to confer the power of obtaining anything he wishes. They also believe in the existence of a demoniacal hierarchy. Changili Karuppan, Pechi, Oodara Karuppan, Kali, Chotala Karuppan, Chotala Bhadrakali, Yakshi, Gandhaarvan, and Hanuman are the names of the chief demons whom they profess to control with the aid of mantrams (consecrated formulae) and ocerings. They also profess that they can send one of more of these demons into the bodies of men, and cast them out when persons are possessed of them. They profess to cure all kinds of diseases in children with the aid of magic and medicines, and all the castemen believe that harm or even death may be caused to men with the aid of sorcerers. In such cases, an astrologer is consulted, and, according to his calculations, the aid of a magician is sought for. When a person is suffering from what are believed to be demoniacal attacks, he is relieved by the performance of the following ceremony, called pathalahomam. A pit about six feet in length, three feet in depth, and a foot or two in breadth, is dug. A Panan, covered with a new piece of cloth, is made to lie in the pit, which is filled in with earth, leaving a small hole for him to breathe. Over the middle of his body, the earth is raised and made level. A sacred fire (homam) is made over this with the branches of a jack tree. Near it a large square is drawn with sixtyfour small divisions, in each of which a small leaf, with some paddy (unhusked rice), rice, flour, and lighted torches, is placed. Gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds mustard seeds, grains of chama (*panicum miliaceum*), *horse gram* (*Dolichos biyorus*), eight fragrant things, the skin of snakes, dung of the elephant, milk of the pala tree, twigs of the banyan tree, dharba grass, nila narakam (*Naregamia alata*) oil, and ghee (clarified butter) are put into it until it burns bright. The sick man is brought in front of it, and the sorcerer authoritatively asks him—or rather the demon residing

in his body—to take these things. The sorcerer puts the above mentioned substances into the fire, muttering all the while his mantrams invoking the favour of Vira Bhadra or Kandakaruna. The significance of these is 'Oh' Kandakaruna, the King of the Devas, I have no body, that is, my body is getting weaker and weaker, and am possessed of some demon, which is killing me, kindly help me, and give me strength'. This done, another operation is begun. A fowl is buried, and a small portion of the earth above it is raised and made level. The figure of a man is drawn by the side of it. Three homams (sacred fires) are raised, one at the head, one in the middle, and one at the feet. The above mentioned grains, and other substances, are put into the fire. A large square with sixty-four smaller squares in it is drawn, in each of which a leaf, with grains, of paddy, rice, and flowers, is placed. Another mantram is praise of the demons already mentioned is uttered, and a song is sung. After finishing this, a small structure in the form of a temple is made. A small plantain tree is placed by the side of it. A padmam is drawn, and a puja (worship) is performed for the Paradevatha, the queen of demons. The sorcerer makes offerings of toddy, beaten rice, plantains, and cocoanuts, and soon turns oracle, and, as one inspired, tells what the deity wishes, and gives information as regards the departure of the demons from the body. It is now believed that the patient is free from all demoniacal attacks. The buried man is exhumed, and allowed to go home.

"In the Palghat taluk, the following form of sorcery is practiced, which is believed to relieve persons from demoniacal attacks and disease. If, in the house of any casteman, it is suspected that some malign influence is being exercised by demons, a Panan is sent for, who comes in the evening with his colleagues. A homam is lighted with the branches of the trees already mentioned, and into it are thrown six kinds of grains, as well as oil and ghee. As this is being done, Kallatikode Nill, the presiding archdemon, is propitiated with songs and offerings. The next part of the ceremony consists in bringing a bier and placing a Panan on it, and a measure of rice is placed at his head. He is, as in the case of a dead body, covered with a piece of new cloth, and a small plantain tree is placed between the thighs. At his head a sheep and at his feet a fowl are killed. He pretends gradually to recover consciousness. In this state he is taken outside the compound. The Panan, lying on the bier, evidently pretends to be dead, as if killed by the attack of some demon. The propitiation with songs and offerings is intended to gratify the demons. This is an instance of sympathetic magic.

"Some among the Panans practice the oti (or odi) cult, like the Parayas. The following medicines, with the aid of magic, are

serviceable to them in enticing pregnant women from their houses. Their preparation is described as follows. A Panan, who is an adept in the black art, bathes early in the morning, dresses in a cloth unwashed, and performs puja to his deity, after which he goes in search of a Kotuveli plant (*Manihot utilissima*). When he finds such a one as he wants, he goes round it three times every day, and continues to do so for ninety days, prostrating himself every day before it. On the last night which must be a new-moon night, at twelve O'clock he performs puja to the plant, burning camphor, and, after going round it three times, prostrates himself before it. He then places three small torches on it, and advances twenty paces in front of it. With his mouth closed, and without any fear, he plucks the plant by the root, and buries it in the ashes on the cremation ground, on which he pours the water of seven green cocoanuts. He then goes round it twenty-one times, muttering all the while certain mantrams, after which he plunges himself in the water, and stands erect until it extends to his mouth. He takes a mouthful of water, which he empties on the spot, and then takes the plant with the root, which he believes to possess peculiar virtues. When it is taken to the closed door of a house, it has the power to entice a pregnant woman, when the foetus is removed (*cf.* article Parayan). It is all secretly done on a dark midnight. The head, hands and legs are cut off, and the trunk is taken to a dark-coloured rock, on which it is cut into nine pieces, which are burned until they are blackened. At this stage, one piece boils, and is placed in a new earthen pot, with the addition of the water of nine green cocoanuts. The pot is removed to the burial-ground. The Panan performs a puja here in favour of his favourite deity. Here he fixes two poles deep in the earth, at a distance of thirty feet from each other.

The poles are connected by a strong wire, from which is suspended the pot to be heated and boiled. Seven fire-places are made beneath the wire. The branches of bamboo, katalati (Achyranthes Emblica), Conga (*Bauhinea variegata*), cocoanut palm, jack tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), and pavatta (*Pavatta indica*), are used in forming a bright fire. The mixture in the pot soon boils and becomes oily, at which stage it is passed through a fine cloth. The oil is preserved, and a mark made with it on the forehead enables the possessor to realise anything that is thought of. The sourcerer must be in a state of vow for twenty-one days, and live on a diet of chama kanji. The deity, whose aid is necessary, is propitiated with offerings.

"One of the ceremonies which the Panans perform is called Thukil Onarthuka (waking thukil, a kind of drum). In the month of Karkadakam (July-August), a Panan, with his wife, provided

with a drum and kuzhithalam (circular bell-metal cymbals), goes to the houses of Brahmans and Nayars after midnight, and sings sacred songs. During the week, they sing standing underneath a banyan tree near the western gate of the Trichur temple. From the temple authorities they get five measures of paddy, half a measure of rice, some gingelly oil, and a cocoanut. For their services in other houses, they receive a similar remuneration. This is intended to drive evil spirits, if any, from houses. Another of their festivals is known as Panan Kali. The traditional account therefore is as follows. Once, when a Panan and his wife went to a forest to bring bamboos for the manufacture of umbrellas, they missed their way, night approached, and they could not return. They began to be frightened by the varieties of noise heard by them in the wilderness. They collected pieces of dry bamboo and leaves of trees, and burned them. In the presence of the light thus obtained, the woman caught hold of a creeper hanging from a tree, and danced in honour of Bhagavathi, while her husband sang songs praising her. The day dawned at last, and they found their way home in safety. In memory of this incident, the Panans organise a party for a regular play. There are ten male and two female actors, and the play is acted during the whole night.

"The religion of the Panans consists of an all-pervading demonology. Their chief gods are Mukkan, Chathan, Kappiri, Malankorathi, and Kali. Pujas are performed to them on the first of Medom (April-May)) Karkadakam (July-August), Desara, and on Tuesday in Makaram (January-February). These deities are represented by stones placed under a tree. They are washed with water on the aforesaid days, and offerings of sheep and fowls, malar (parched rice), plantains, cocoanuts, and boiled rice are made to them. Their belief is that these deities are ever prone to do harm to them, and should therefore be propitiated with offerings. The Panans also worship the spirits of their ancestors, who pass for their household gods, and whose help they seek in all times of danger. They fast on newmoon nights, and on the eleventh night after fullmoon or new-moon.

"The Panan is the barber of the polluting castes above Cherumans. By profession he is an umbrella-maker. Panans are also engaged in all kinds of agricultural work. In villages, they build mud walls. Their women act as midwives.

"As regards social status the Panans eat at the hands of Brahmans, Nayars, Kammalans, and Izhuvans. They have to stand at a distance of thirty-two feet from Brahmans. Panans and Kaniyans pollute one another if they touch, and both bathe should they

happen to do so. They are their own barbers and washermen. They live in the vicinity of the Izhuvans, but cannot live in the Nayar tharas. Nor can they take water from the wells of the Kammalans. They cannot approach the outer walls of Brahman temples, and are not allowed to enter the Brahman streets in Palghat".

In the Census Report, 1891, Panan occurs as a sub-division of the Paraiyans. Their chief occupation as leather-workers is said to be the manufacture of drum-heads.*

*A. Chattertor. Monograph on Training and working Leather, 1904.

Extract on "PANAN" from Census of India, 1891, Vol. XIII Madras, The Report on the Census by H. A. STUART, of the Indian Civil Service; Fellow of The Royal Statistical Society; Member of The Royal Asiatic Society, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras, MADRAS: Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1893 pages 307 and 308.

GROUP 47(a)—SORCERERS, & C.

Panan, Malayan; 13,418, Velan 3,364

546. These two castes may be considered together. They are both devildancers and sorcerers, but the Velan is the more respectable of the two, as he is a bit of a quackdoctor also. The females of these castes are also midwives of Nayar and other women. Inheritance is in the male line. The Velan caste is also known as *Koppalan, Munnuttan* and *Anjuttan.* The customs are somewhat similar to those of Kanisans (Group 10). Panans and Velans do not intermarry.

Extract on "PANAN" from Census of India, 1901, *Vol. XV Madras Census Report. Part I Report by W. FRANCIS, Madras* 1902 *page* 171.

PANAN: (Tamil) 3,517—Also called Mestris. Tailors among Tamils in Madura and Tinnevelly. They employ Brahmans and Vellalas as purohits. Though barbers and washermen will not eat food operated by them, they are allowed to enter Hindu temples.

Extract on "PANAN" from Census of India, 1901, *Vol. XV Madras Census Report, Part I by W. FRANCIS, Madras* 1902 *page* 172.

PANAN (Malayalam) 13,424—Exorcists and devil dancers. The men also make umbrellas, and the women act as midwives. In parts they are called Malayans and they may be descendants of that hill tribe who have settled in the plains. (C. R. 1891, para 546; *Malabar Man;*, Vol. I. page 146).

Extract on "PANAN" from 'Census of India, 1921' *Volume XIX Cochin, Part I—Report, Part II—Imperial Tables.* ***P.*** *GOVINDA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam: Printed at the Cochin Government Press,* 1922 *page* 66.

PANAN:(2,642)—A caste whose hereditary occupation is sorcery and exorcism. They have lost much of their so-called power in this direction and are now following the peaceful occupation of agriculture and umbrella-making.

Extract on "PANAN" from 'Census of India, 1931' Volume XXI—COCHIN, Part I—Report, Part II—A &B—Tables by T. K. SANKARA MENON, M.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, 1933 Printed by The Superintendent, Cochin Govt. Press, Ernakulam page 119.

. . . . . .The wide prevalence of syphilis in the community will perhaps explain why our Malayan friend, the child of Nature, living for the most part in the green glades of his shady and cool forests, should be a member of this blind brotherhood. The Kammalans including blacksmiths, goldsmiths and leather-workers (shoemakers), whose occupations are exacting to the eyes, have strangely enough a much lower proportion of the blind among them, while the Panditttans (Tamil goldsmiths) are wholly free from this affiction ! The case statistics of leprosy are no less puzzling. The high incidence of the disease among the Malayans, the Sambavans (Parayans), the PANANS, the Ottanaikans etc. may perhaps be explained on the ground of want of personal cleanliness, of dirty and unwholesome food, and other evils that characterise these socially inferior castes. There are, however, other castes whose habits of life are almost identical, but they are much less effected by the infirmity. It is not clear why the Chaliyans (weavers) who are far superior in social status and in their standard of life to the castes mentioned above should have a much higher proportion of the afflicted among them. Nor can one understand how the educated Malayali Kshatriyas, who are models of neatness and simplicity in their habits of life, came to have the highest proportion of lepers in their community. The vagaries of these statistics appear to be really inexplicable.

Extract on "PANAN" from 'Census of India, 1931' *Volume XXI—COCHIN, Part I—Report, Part II—A &B—Tables by T. K. SANKARA MENON, M.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State,* 1933 *Printed by The Superintendent, Cochin Govt. Press, Eranakulam page* 273.

PANAN (3,603)—A polluting caste according to the old caste system, whose hereditary occupation is sorcery and exorcism. Some of them still exercise that profession, but the great majority of them are agriculturists and umbrella makers. Fraternal polyandry once prevailed among them. Their pollution distance was 24 feet.

Extract on "PANAN" from Census of India, 1931 *Volume XXVIII—Travancore, Part-I—Report by : RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., B.Sc. (Edin.) Ph.D. (Leipbzg), .Census Commissioner, Travancore Trivandrum, Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press,* 1932, 384—385.

546. Panan, a small community in Travancore, consist of Tamil and Malayali sections. The former are tailors by occupation and are found chiefly in Kottar and Trivandrum. They trace their descent from the Yalpanars (singers) whose original home was Yalpana (Jaffna). The ancient Tamil literature refers to the Yalpanars as singing to the accompaniment of an instrument called *Yal* and this art was greatly patronized by the old Tamil kings. After the decline of these kings the Yalpanars put aside their instrument and took to tailoring. They are Makkathayis. Widow marriage is not permitted. The Malayali Panars are divided into four clans. A woman retains her clan after her marriage and her children also belong to her clan. They are also makkathayis and were probably Tamilians originally. In North Travancore the Panars are professional musicians, drummers and magicians, and follow umbrella-making as a subsidiary occupation. The total number of Panars at present is 3,812.

PUTHIRAI VANNAN

Puthirai Vannan, locally known as Pothara Vannan or Puratha Vannan, are traditional washermen of the Pallans and Paraiyans. Thurston considers "the Pothera (Podora) Vannans are of inferior status because they wash only for Paraiyans, Pallans and other inferior castes". (Thurston, 1909, VIII, 316). In the Madras State they are found in large numbers in the districts of Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram and Madurai. A field study was conducted in the village of Viralur in Kolathur Taluk of Tiruchirapalli district and the information furnished here is based on this study.

In the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes Lists Modification Order 1956, Puthirai Vannan is scheduled throughout the State except Kanyakumari district and Shencottah Taluk of Tirunelveli district. In the 1931 Census, it was a Depressed caste in the above areas, while in the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936 and in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, it was declared a Scheduled Caste in the same area. In other states, it is scheduled in the Malabar district of Kerala and in the South Kanara district and Kollegal Taluk of Mysore district in Mysore State. In Madras and in Kerala Vannan/Mannan is the traditional washerman community. The term Vannan is supposed to have been derived from the Sanskrit word 'Vannam' meaning beauty and hence Vannan or one who beautifies. The exact meaning of the word Puthirai or Puratha Vannan is not known. But according to one tradition, once a particular Vannan family washed the clothes of outcastepeople, and since then it has been outcasted (*Purakkanikkapatta* meaning outcasted). The descendants of this family continued to wash for the outcastes and formed a caste of their own.

Because the Puthirai Vannans wash clothes for Parayans and Pallans, they are called as Parayavannans in areas dominated by Paraiyans and Palla Vannan in the areas dominated by Pallans. Though they wash for the Paraiyans and Pallans there is no social intercourse among them. The Paraiyans and Pallans treat the Puthirai Vannans as lower in social status but the latter consider themselves superior to Chakkiliyans and Madigas. In some areas they do not even wash their clothes.

II. Distribution and population trend :

According to 1961 Census returns, 9,696 Puthirai Vannans have been returned, comprising 4,914 males and 4,782 females. Madurai,

Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts have larger concentration of this caste in the State. The other districts where they have been returned along with their population are given below.

District	Persons	Males	Females
Madras	79	25	54
Chingleput	155	73	82
North Arcot	557	287	270
South Arcot	398	224	174
Salem	50	33	17
Coimbatore	117	56	61
Nilgiris	140	60	80
Madurai	1,419	719	700
Tiruchirapalli	862	440	422
Thanjavur	334	183	151
Ramanathapuram	1,489	762	727
Tirunelveli	4,096	2,052	2,044
Total .	9,696	4,914	4,782

The above table shows that Tirunelveli district itself accounts for 42% of the total population. Next comes Ramanathapuram with 1,489 or 15% and Madurai with 1,419 or 14·6%. Puthirai Vannans forms 0·16% of the total Scheduled Caste population for the State. In Kerala, 2,856 persons have been returned during the 1961 Census, while none has been returned from Mysore State. Though Puthirai Vannan has not been scheduled in the districts of Kanyakumari and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district, it is reported that the caste is found in these areas as well.

Rural areas accounts for 83% (8,021) of the population, while 17% (1,675) have been returned from urban areas in the State. The sex ratio of the caste works out to be 973 females per 1,000 males. 3,633 persons (37·5%) belong to the 0-14 age group comprising 1,849 males and 1,784 females. Under the 15-44 age group are returned 4,407 persons (45·4%) with 2,175 males and 2,232 females. In the age group of 45 and above, 1,655 persons (17·1%) have been returned with 889 males and 766 females.

III. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments, etc.

The Puthirai Vannans generally live, in the localities where other untouchable castes dwell, away from the main village site. In case of areas with spares Scheduled Caste population, they usually live in a central village from where they can serve the Scheduled Castes of the surrounding villages. While selecting the area for dwelling they may also bear in mind adequate facilities for washing clothes, preferably with a stream or pond close by.

In the Viralur village the houses of the Puthirai Vannan are located in a dry field which they have purchased for themselves. Each house is surrounded by a fenced enclosure. No particular pattern of lay out is adopted for the construction of houses. They are in a jumbled state and face different directions. The houses are small with low roofs, thatched with hay. The walls are made of mud with or without plastering. The floor is plastered with mud and daubed with cow-dung paste.

Almost all the houses are single roomed, the same serving both as a kitchen and for living. A few houses have adjoining small sheds used either for storing agricultural implements or for keeping firewood, etc. There is only one entrance to the house with a door frame and door leaves made of country wood. Generally very few windows and ventilators are provided to give sufficient light and air to the living room. They keep the inside of the house clean and neat by frequently daubing it with cow-dung paste. The plastering of the wall is renewed once a year and whitewashed in the month of Thai (January-February). The roofing is renewed whenever occasion demands. No separate arrangements are provided for bathing and toilet. The nearby fields are used for answering calls of nature. Very few villages have drinking water wells. In Viralur the people of this caste get drinking water from a nearby irrigation well.

The males are found dressed in 'Lungis' wrapped round the loins. They do not generally have any upper garment. The women are found wearing sarees of 6 yards. Most of them do not wear blouses. Young children are found mostly naked. Children of school-going age are, however, dressed scantily. Washermen as a class are found dressed in varying style depending upon the clothes which they receive for washing, but the Puthirai Vannans being washermen for a poor class of people do not generally enjoy this facility.

The women folk wear 'Thodu' studded with or without cheap stones, or 'Poochikoodu' in the ear-lobes. In the wrist they wear glass bangles or cheap metal 'Kappu'. In the neck they wear cheap

chains. Married women wear 'Tali' (marriage badge) which is usually made of gold. The 'Tali' is horn-shaped, with two or three prongs. In the nose some wear Mookuthis (nose screws). Their men, however, do not wear any ornament. Differences in the pattern of ornaments from region to region have been reported. The elderly men keep tufts at their back and shave the frontal region. The youngsters do not seem to relish the traditional hair style and, therefore, crop their hair. The women roll their hair into a lock (Kondai) and keep at the back. Young girls are seen with plaited hair.

The staple diet of the Puthirai Vannans is small millet, such as ragi (Kezh varagu) and maize (cholam). These are mostly grown in their own fields or purchased from the local people. They may also get these grains as wages from their clients. Rice is a luxury for them. They may take a rice meal once in a while or on festive occasions. The food is cooked once a day, in the evening. Night meal forms the principal meal which is taken in a solid form and the left over is consumed in the morning and during the noon. To avoid fermentation the balance is preserved in water. They are non-vegetarians but the consumption of flesh, in any form, is limited to festive occasions. They consume mutton, chicken and pork. Taking of beef is not tabooed, but now-a-days they very seldom resort to it. They report that they do not take carrion. Consumption of liquor is very limited but chewing of betel and tobacco by both men and women and smoking of beedi by the men is very common. Their material possession is limited to a few earthen cooking vessels, cheap metal plates, tumblars and ladles for serving of food and water and large earthen vessels to be utilised for laundry purposes.

IV. Health and hygiene :

Puthirai Vannans keep their houses neat and clean by sweeping regularly and daubing cow-dung paste occasionally. The surroundings are also kept neat and clean. They regularly take bath and clean their clothes. The women keep their hair oiled and well kept.

V. Language and Literacy :

The mother tongue of the Puthirai Vannan is Tamil and they speak that language both at home and with outsiders. A few educated persons speak a little of broken English. During the 1961 Census a good number of persons have been returned as literate. The literacy rate for the caste works out to be 19·1%, when the general literacy rate for the state is 31·4% and that of the Scheduled Castes as a whole is 14·7%. The district-wise figures indicate that a large percentage of literates (62·86%) is in the Nilgiris, following by Madras district with 50·63%. The minimum literacy rate (10·97%) is recorded from Chingleput district. The other districts show the follow-

ing literacy rates; North Arcot 8·31%, South Arcot 18·31%, Salem 28·00%, Coimbatore 16.24%, Madurai 13·81%, Tiruchirapalli 12·53%, Thanjavur 23·95%, Ramanathapuram 12·69% and Tirunelveli 22·63%.

Rate of literacy in the urban areas is much more than that in the rural areas; the former accounts for 41% and the latter 15%. Out of the 1,856, literates 1,307 are males accounting for 70% and 549 are females which works out to be 30%. Only 11% of the females are literates while among the males, the same is 27%. If we see the break up of the age groups and literacy rates, it is revealed that the same is more in the middle age group. While 35% of literates are found in the age group of 0-14 with 23% males, and 12% females, in the age group of 15-44, 51% are literates with 37% of males and 14% of females. In the age group of 45 and above only 14% are returned as literates with 10% of males and 4% of females. In the Viralur village, where this study has been conducted, the percentage of literacy is as low as 2·1. Only one person in the age-group of 20-24 is found to be literate. Although there is a High School and a few elementary schools, in Viralimalai and Viralur which are close-by, the Puthirai Vannans very seldom send their children to school. None, out of the 21 children, in the age group of 0-14 attends school.

VI. Economic Life :

As mentioned earlier the traditional occupation of the Puthirai Vannan is washing of clothes for the Paraiyans, Pallars and others who belong to very low social status. For this purpose, each Puthirai Vannan household has a conventionally accepted professional jurisdiction of two or three villages. As the clients themselves are economically poor, they have only very few clothes to be washed and as such even one household would not get sufficient work from three or four villages to engage it all the year round. During the lean period they, therefore, take up other subsidiary occupations like agricultural labour and casual labour to supplement their income from washing. The other Puthirai Vannan households in the area eke out their living by agricultural labour or casual labour. A few of them have also acquired some land for cultivation.

The remuneration Puthirai Vannan gets for his services rendered to his clients is mostly in kind, either in the form of grains or other agricultural products. Each Paraiyan or Pallan household served by a Puthirai Vannan gives the latter three Marakkals (1 marakkal is equal to approximately 16 litres) of grain per year for the services rendered by him. Thus, he may get, on an average, four to five bags of grain, by way of wages for the washing done. He may also get small presents in the form of grains during festival occasions like Pongal and Deevali.

The Puthirai Vannans are not considered to be good washermen. Many of them do not generally know the use of iron box nor do they know the modern techniques of washing. They also do not use donkeys for carrying their load. Their methods of laundrying are primitive, perhaps, in keeping with the economic status of their clients. They cannot afford to improve the techniques as the remuneration they receive is very low.

The technique of washing adopted by the Puthirai Vannan can be described as follows. Soiled clothes to be washed are collected from their clients and are brought home in separate bundles. Having brought home, dhobi-marks are given for identification. The resin used for marking is prepared out of a nut, locally known as, Sembrakottai (carthamus tinctorius) available in the market. Now the clothes are dipped in a solution of a kind of earth known as Ura (Uzha) mun (Fuller's earth). Some of them use washing soda in place of Ura mun. Care is taken that the coloured and uncoloured clothes are dipped separately to avoid staining. The drenched clothes are piled over the special type of oven, made near about the water sources, and steamed. The clothes are steamed for about six hours and then allowed to remain in the same condition for another five to six hours. They are then taken out and washed, preferably in running water. The washed clothes are dried in the sun either by spreading on the ground or by hanging on ropes.

Those who require their clothes to be better washed and ironed, give them to laundries in the nearby towns. A few of the Puthirai Vannans living near towns have, however, learnt the technique of ironing and starching and undertake the washing of clothes of the townsmen who do not care whether the washerman is a high caste Vannan or Puthirai Vannan, provided the wash is good.

The community has to stand good competition and many of them are leaving their traditional occupation and taking up other means of livelihood. In Viralur, for example, almost all the Puthirai Vannan households have taken to cultivation as their principal occupation. Washing of clothes is only a subsidiary occupation for them. Many of them here possess cultivable land, the average landholding works out to be 3·60 acres. The type of land they possess is unfertile and dry in which ragi, cumbu, (Bajra), samai (millet) and pulses are grown. The technique of cultivation adopted by the Puthirai Vannan is the same as that of the local agricultural communities. Five of them have wells in their dry lands and irrigation is done by bailing water with the help of bulls. They have not taken any loan from the Government, either for improving the agricultural practices or for irrigation facilities. They borrow money from other castepeople of the locality at an interest of 12% to 20%.

The statistics collected during the 1961 Census throw some searching light into the occupational pattern and economic conditions of Puthirai Vannan. 57·7% of their population are workers. 56·3% of the total workers are males and 43·7% are female workers. The high percentage of workers is attributed to the fact that comparatively more children are returned as workers. It is generally believed that in the trade of washing more women are engaged when compared to men. Out of the 3,483 persons engaged in laundrying, 1,762 are women. The distribution of workers in the various industrial categories among Puthirai Vannans according to the 1961 Census, is discussed below. The maximum percentage of workers (85·3%) is engaged in Transport and other services which also includes washing. The next largest category comes under cultivators which accounts for 7·8% and next to that is agricultural labourers accounting for 5:3%. Mining, quarrying, etc. has absorbed 0·5% while in household industry, manufacturing and construction 0·4%, 0·4% and 0·2% respectively are employed. If we look at the occupations in which the workers of the community are employed, it is seen that the bulk of them are employed in their traditional occupation of laundrying. Out of the total of 5,596 workers, 3,483 or 62% are engaged in this trade, Next to that comes general labourers which account for 18%. Cultivators and agricultural labourers account for 8% and 5% respectively. 106 workers or 2% have been returned as barbers or engaged in related trades. The rest are engaged in other jobs. It is very unusual for the Puthirai Vannan to work as a barber. The bulk of them viz., 96 are returned from Tirunelveli district.

VII. Life cycle:

Birth:

Delivery takes place in the house itself attended by some local elderly experienced women belonging to the same caste or other castes of Pallans or Paraiyans. Only in very difficult castes the services of a doctor or a trained midwife is sought. Pollution is observed for nine days. During post natal period she is given nourishing food. The child is named either on the 10th day or at any time later. Tonsuring and ear-boring are done after a year or two.

Puberty:

Immediately after the girl attains puberty, the maternal uncle is sent for and asked to construct a small seclusion shed with the stalks of millets. The girl remains in the shed for 16 days. On the 17th day, the shed is dismantled and burnt. The polluted girl is given a bath and presented with new clothes. In some cases the relatives are given a vegetarian feast.

Marriage :

Though the caste is not divided into sub-divisions for the purposes of marriage, they do not marry in the family having the same Kulatheivam (family deity). The most preferred concubial relations are between the cross cousins (one's maternal uncle's daughter or paternal aunt's daughter). One may also marry his sister's daughter.

A girl is generally married only after she attains puberty. (A few cases of child marriages, however, have been reported in the 1961 Census.) The initiative for marriage is taken by the groom's side and is settled by elders. The traditional bride price is Rs. 12 but this amount is usually enhanced to cover a part of the marriage expenses. The actual marriage ceremony takes place at the groom's house. A pandal is erected at this place for this purpose. A Valluvan (priest of the Paraiyans) is asked to officiate the marriage ceremony. A Tali (marriage badge) is tied round the neck of the bride by the groom after having both propitiated 'Pillaiyar' (Ganapathy). Those who attend the marriage are treated to a feast after the actual ceremony. It costs about Rs. 300/- for the groom which will cover the expenses like, clothes, jewellery and feast.

Divorce is permitted under certain circumstances like adultery or incompatibility, and they call it 'Muri', which literally means to separate. This is to be decreed by the caste Panchayat and is signified by the sudden breaking of a piece of straw. Now-a-days a written 'Muchilikai' (bond) is also obtained, agreeing to the divorce from the parties concerned. The divorced woman returns the Tali tied by her husband. After the divorce is granted, she is free to marry whomsoever she likes. Widows are permitted to remarry. A simple but regular marriage ceremony is undergone in the marriage of a widow. Monogamy is the norm though a few of them practice polygomy (marry more than one woman). Since women assist their husbands in their trade of washing an addition of a wife is very much liked. In Viralur, one person has married two women, who are sisters.

According to the 1961 Census 51·57% of males and 43·02% females are returned as never married. Married population of the caste works out to be 43·40% males and 44·71% females. 3·99% males and 11·31% females are widowed, while Divorced/Separated men and women account for 1·04% and 0·96% respectively.

According to the same source 2 males and 6 females of 0-14 age group are found to be married, out of 1,849 males and 1,784 females respectively, indicating very rare cases of child marriages. In the 15-44 age group, 64% of males and 79% of females are found

to be married, while in the 45 and above age group the corresponding figures are 83% and 48%; the extent of widowed being 15% among males and 50% among females aged 45 and above.

Death :

The Puthirai Vannans bury the dead. Before taken to the burial ground the dead body is washed and adorned with new clothes. The corpse is carried, on a bier made out of green bamboos, by the caste-men. The grave is dug in the north-south direction and the dead body laid in it with the head directing towards the south. Pollution is practised for 16 days. On the 16th day, rice is cooked and offered to the crows. Relatives are fed on the occasion. On the 17th day, a non-vegetarian feast is given and that marks the end of the period of pollution.

VIII. Religion :

Puthirai Vannans practise Hinduism. According to the 1961 Census all have been returned under this religion. Their principal deity is Kollimalai Karruppuswami. The other deities worshipped by them are Alagamalayan, Iluppur Pidari, Palaniandavar, Viraliamalai Subramaniar, etc. They also venerate some of the deities of the caste Hindu pantheon like the Pillaiyar (Ganapathi). They have a temple of their own, two miles away from Viralur, where almost all the deities are installed. Once a year, a festival is celebrated in this temple and goats are sacrificed on this occasion. The Puthirai Vannan may also join the other caste people of the village in the celebrations at Muthumariamman temple. Festivals like Deepavali and Karthigai are celebrated by them. They do not have a priest of their own. A 'Valluvan' officiates during marriages and other ceremonies.

IX. Structure of Social control and leadership :

The social discipline of the Puthirai Vannan is supposed to be controlled by a caste Panchayat. The information collected from the field indicates that the same is not very effective in all the areas. In the Viralur area, there is a caste panchayat covering a region consisting of 10 villages. The important office bearers are *Karia Karan* (the chief) *Kanakkapillai* (assistant to the former) and *Qdum Pillai* (the messenger). All caste elders sit as members of the assembly. The office bearers and the members are collectively called *Periathanakarans* (chief headmen). They convene the Panchayat when an occasion arises for deciding issues like divorce, elopement, adultery, etc. Issues like petty factions, quarrels, etc. do not generally come in the purview of the Panchayat. The verdict of the assembly is normally accepted by the parties concerned.

X. A caste in crisis:

Here is a caste, in the midst of a social as well as economic dilemma. Traditionally, a washerman community of the Pallans and Paraiyans who are themselves socially downtrodden, the Puthiraivannan commands but little respect in the society. Economically they are not capable of consolidating their position either because of the slackness in their trade or because of the stiff competition they have to face. Finding it difficult to eke out their living by the traditional trade, many of them have switched over to other occupations like cultivation, agricultural labour and even barbering. A few of them have even migrated to urban areas to take up their own occupation there, which too, as reported, could not bear the desired fruits, either because of their inferior skill or because of the stiff competition they are to face. Those who have switched over to agriculture find it difficult to eke out their living, as the land at their disposal is neither sufficient nor fertile. The inferior technology is another bar to progress. Pallans and Paraiyans, the traditional agricultural serfs, equipped with better skill in agricultural labour, are preferred by the landowners to Puthirai Vannan. Even those who have taken up barbering, report that they cannot match the traditional barbers. Thus, even occupational mobility could not retrieve them either from the social degradation or from the economic stagnation.

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.....Fully Right-Hand castes include at any rate the following: Balija, Banajiga and Komati (trading castes), Vaniyan (who yoke one bullock only), Chaliyan and Seniyan (weaving castes), Janappan (hemp dressers), Kusavan (potters), Melakkaran (musicians), Shanan (toddy drawers), Ambattan (barbers), Vannan (washermen), Idaiyan (shepherds), Vellala, Paraiyan, Mala, Holeya (cultivating castes), Kurava, Odde, Irula, Vedan and Vettuvan (mostly labourers). In addition to the above there seem to be, as already stated, the women of the Chakkiliyan or Madiga caste, but the Right-or Left-handedness of castes differes apparently to some extent with locality).

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Extract on "VANNAN" from Caste in India, Its Nature, Function, and Origins by J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., M.A., D.Sc., Professor emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Page 293 *Glossary.*

VANNAN: A Tamil Caste of washermen, corresponding to Dhobi (q. v.) in northern India.

Extract on "VANNAN" from 'Hindu Tribes and Castes' together with An Account of The Mahomedan Tribes of the North-West Frontier and of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces by the REV. M.A. SHERRING, M.A., LL.B., Lond., Fellow of the Calcutta University; Corresponding Member of the Bengal Asiatic Society; Author of "The Sacred City of the Hindus". "The History of Protestant Missions in India", etc. "Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto" Vol. III, Calcutta; Thacker, Spink, and Co., London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill. Bombay: Thacker and Co., Limited., Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1872 *page* 124.

SECTION VII—VANNAN OR WASHERMAN

There are upwards of half a million members of this tribe in the Presidency, who are called Vannan, in Tamil; Sakalu, in Telugu, Agasa in Canarese; Asavun in Malayalam; and Dhobi in Hindustani. There are apparently no subdivisions of the cast in Southern India, whereas in the North-Western Provinces there are nearly a dozen, which are separated socially from one another, and do not intermarry (c): Two-thirds of the caste in Madras are worshippers of Vishnu. The Vannans seem to occupy a lower rank in Southern India than the corresponding caste of Dhobis in Northern India.

(c) *Ibid,* pp. 342, 343

SECTION VIII—POTHARA-VANNAN

The members of this tribe wash the clothes of Pariahs, Pallans, and other low castes, and therefore are regarded as much lower in the social scale than the Vannans, who only wash for the respectable castes.

Extract on "VANNAN" from 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Volume VII by EDGAR THURSTON, C.I.E., Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondent Etranger, Societe d'Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, Assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum, Government Press, Madras, 1909 *pages* 315 *to* 321.

VANNAN : The Vannanas are washermen in the Tamil and Malayalam countries. The name vannan is, Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,+ "derived from vannam, beauty. There is a tradition that they are descendants of the mythological hero Virabadra, who was ordered by Siva to wash the clothes of all men, as an expiation of the sin of putting many people to death in Daksha's Yaga. Hence the Tamil washermen are frequently called Virabadran. Having to purify all the filthy linen of the villagers, they are naturally regarded as a low, unclean class of Sudras, and are always poor. They add to their income by hiring out the clothes of their customers to funeral parties, who lay them on the ground before the pall-bearers. so that these may not step upon the ground, and by letting them out on the sly to persons wishing to use them without having to purchase for themselves. In social standing the Vannans are placed next below the barbers. They profess to be Saivites in the southern districts, and Vaishnavites in the north. The marriage of girls generally takes place after puberty. Widow remarriage is permitted among some, if not all, sub-divisions. Divorce may be obtained by either party at pleasure on payment of double the bride-price, which is usually Rs. 10-8-0. They are flesh-eaters, and drink liquor. The dead are either burned or buried. The Pothara (or Podora) Vannans are of inferior status, because they wash only for Paraiyans, Pallans, and other inferior castes".

It is noted, in the Madura Manual, that those who have seen the abominable substances, which it is the lot of the Vannans to make clean, cannot feel any surprise at the contempt with which their occupation is regarded. In the Tanjore Manual, it is recorded that, in the rural parts of the district, the Vannanas are not allowed to

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+Manual of the North Arcot district; Madras Census Report, 1891.

enter the house of a Brahman or a Vellala; clothes washed by them not being worn or mixed up with other clothes in the house until they have undergone another wash by a caste man.

It is on record that, on one occasion, a party of Europeans, when out shooting, met a funeral procession on its way to the burial-ground. The bier was draped in many folds of clean cloth, which one of the party recognised by the initials as one of his bed-sheets. Another identified as his sheet the cloth on which the corpse was lying. He cut off the corner with the initials, and a few days later the sheet was returned by the washerman, who pretended ignorance of the mutilation, and gave as an explanation that it must have been done, in his absence, by one of his assistants. On another occasion, a European met an Eurasian, in a village not far from his bungalow, wearing a suit of clothes exactly similar to his own, and, on close examination, found they were his. They had been newly washed and dressed.

The most important divisions numerically returned by Vannans at times of census are Pandiyan, Peru (big), Tamil, and Vaduga (northerner). It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of the Madurai district, that Vannan "is rather an occupational term than a caste title, and, besides the Pandya Vannans or Vannans proper, includes the Vaduga Vannans or Tsakalas of the Telugu country, and the Palla, Pudara, and Tulukka Vannans, who wash for the Pallans, Paraiyans, and Musalmans respectively. The Pandya Vannans have a headman called the *Periya Manishan* (big man.) A man can claim the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter. At weddings, the bride-groom's sister ties the tali (marriage badge). Nambis officiate. Divorce is freely allowed to either party on payment of twice the bridge-price, and divorcees may marry again. The caste God is Gurunathan, in whose temples the pujari (priest) is usually a Vannan. The dead are generally burnt, and, on the sixteenth day, the house is purified from pollution by a Nambi".

Some Vannans have assumed the name Irkuli Vellala, and Rajakan and Kattavaraya Vamsam have also been recorded as synonyms of the caste name.

The vannans of Malabar are also called Mannan or Bannan. They are, Mr. Francis writes* "a low class of Malabar washermen, who wash only for the polluting castes, and for the higher castes when they are under pollution following births, deaths, etc. It is believed by the higher castes that such pollution can only be removed

*Madras Census Report.

by wearing clothes washed by Mannans, though at other times these cause pollution to them. The washing is generally done by the women, and the men are exorcists, devil-dancers and physicians, even to the higher castes. Their women are midwives, like those of the Velakkatalavan and Velan castes. This caste should not be confused with the Mannan hill tribe of Travancore".

It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "the Mannans, a makkattayam caste of South Malabar, apparently identical with the marumakkttayam Vannans of the north, are a caste of washermen; and their services are indispensable to the higher castes in certain purificatory ceremonies when they have to present clean clothes (mattu). They are also devil-dancers and tailors. They practice fraternal polyandry in the south. Mannans are divided into two endogamous classes, Peru-mannans (peru, great), and Tinda-mannans (tinda, pollution); and, in Walavanad, into four endogamous classes called Choppan, Peru-mannan, Punnekadan, and Puliyakkodam. The Tinda-mannan and Puliyakkodam divisions perform the purificatory sprinklings for the others".

The services of the Mannan, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes,* "are in requisition at the Nayar Thirandukalianam ceremonies on the attainment of puberty by a girl, when they sing ballads, and have to bring, for the girl's use, the mattu or sacred dress. Then, on occasions of Nayar females. All the dirty clothes and bed sheets used, these Nayars, on the fourth, or rarely the third day after the menses, the woman has to use, during her bath, clothes supplied by Mannan females. The same duty they have to perform during the confinement of Nayar females. All the dirty clothes and bed sheets used, these Mannan females have to wash". Mr. S. Appadorai Iyer informs us that those Mannans who are employed by the Kammalan, or artisan class, as barbers, are not admitted into the Mannan caste, which follows the more honourable profession of washing clothes. The Mannans perform certain ceremonies in connection with Mundian, the deity who is responsible for the weal or woe of cattle; and, at Puram festivals, carry the vengida koda or prosperity umbrella, composed of many tiers of red, green, orange, black and white cloth, supported on a long bamboo pole, before the goddess.

It is recorded by Bishop White head† that, in various places in Malabar, there are temples in honour of Bhagavati, at which the pujaris (priests) are of the Vannan caste. "There is an annual feast called gurusi tarpanam (giving to the guru) about March, when the

*Malabar and its Folk, 1900.

†Madras Dioc; Magazine, 1906.

hot weather begins, and the people are at leisure. Its object is to appease the wrath of the goddess. During the festival, the pujari sits in the courtyard outside the temple, thickly garlanded with red flowers, and with red kunkuma marks on his forehead. Goats and fowls are then brought to him by the devotees, and he kills them with one blow of the large sacrificial sword or chopper. It is thought auspicious for the head to be severed at one blow, and, apparently, pujaris who are skilful in decapitation are much in request. When the head is cut off, the pujari takes the carcase, and holds it over a large copper vessel partly filled with water, turmeric, kunkuma, and a little rice, and lets the blood flow into it. When all the animals are killed, the pujari bales out the blood and water on the ground, uttering mantrams (sacred lines or verses) the while. The people stand a little way off. When the vessel is nearly empty, the pujari turns it upside down as a sign that the ceremony is ended. During these proceedings, a number of Vannans, dressed in fantastic costumes, dance three times round the temple. During the festival, processions are held round the various houses, and special swords with a curved hook at the end, called palli val (great or honourable sword), are carried by the worshippers. These swords are worshipped during the Dusserah festival in October, and in some shrines, they form the only emblem of the deity. The Tiyans have small shrines in their own gardens sacred to the family deity, which may be Bhagavati, or some demon, or the spirit of an ancestor. Once a year, Vannans come dressed in fancy costume, with crowns on their heads, and dance round the courtyard to the sound of music and tom-toms, while a Tiyan priest presents the family offerings, uncooked rice and young cocoanuts, with camphor and incense, and then rice fried with sugar and ghi (clarified butter)".

In an account of the Tiyana, Mr. Logan writes* that "this caste is much given to devil-charming, or devil-driving as it is often called. The washermen (Vannan) are the high priests of this superstition, and with chants, ringing cymbals, magic figures, and waving lights, they drive out evil spirits from their caste at certain epochs in their married lives. One ceremony in particular, called teyyattam—a corrupt form of Deva and attam. that is, playing at gods—takes place occasionally in the fifth month of pregnancy. A leafy arbour is constructed, and in front of it is placed a terrible figure of Chamundi, the queen of the demons, made of rice flour, turmeric powder, and charcoal powder. A party of not less than eighteen washermen is organized to represent the demons and furies—Kuttichattan (a mischievous imp), and many others. On being invoked, these demons bound on to the stage in pairs, dance, caper, jump, roar, fight and drench each other with saffron (turmeric) water. Their capers and exertions gradually work

*Manual of Malabar.

up their excitement, until they are veritably possessed of the devil. At this juncture, fowls and animals are sometimes thrown to them, to appease their fury. These they attack with their teeth, and kill and tear as a tiger does his prey. After about twenty minutes the convulsions cease, the demon or spirit declares its pleasure, and, much fatigued retires to give place to others; and thus the whole night is spent, with much tom-tomming and noise and shouting, making it impossible for Europeans at least, to sleep within earshot of the din".

Extract on "VANNAN" from Report on the Census of The Madras Presidency, 1871, *with Appendix Containing The Results of The Census Arranged In Standard Forms Prescribed By The Government Of India by W. R. CORNISH,, F.R.C.S., Surgeon-Major, Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, Vol. I MADRAS: Printed by E. Keys, at the Government Gazette Press,* 1874 *page* 164.

THE WASHERMAN CASTES (VANNAN)

Numbers

Another primitive division of labour under the caste system was the cleansing, or washing, of clothing. Every communal village had its public servant of this description, who, like the barber, was paid by a share of the village produce. These people are called *Vannan* in Tamil, *Sakala* in Telugu, *Agasa* in Canarese, *Asavun* in Malayalum. They are more numerous than the barbers. There were 524,660 of them at the time of the census, or 265,515 males and 259,145 females, the proportion of the latter to the former being 97.6 to 100. They are stronger in the Telugu country, compared with other portions of population, than in the southern districts. There they average from two to three per cent of the Hindus, while in the south the average is from 1 to 1·5 per cent. For the whole Presidency the average is 1·8 per cent of the Hindu population.

Occupation

The washing castes, like the barbers are rarely brought together in considerable communities, and consequently they have NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF SPLITTING up into sub-sections of castes like the rest of the people. There may be subdivisions of castes among them, but none have been reported. From the nature of their duties, the washers do not hold a high place in social esteem. About 47·5 per cent. of the males are engaged in their trade occupation, but a few of them till the ground (7·2 per cent): others are common labourers (6.9 per cent). In religion and customs they are, like the barbers, attached to the popular side in the districts they inhabit, only that on the whole more of the washers are *Sivaites* than *Vishnavaites* or 64 and 33.8 per cent respectively. In social customs the washers conform to the practices of other subordinate castes.

Extract on "VANNAN" from 'Census of India' 1891 Vol. XIII Madras, The Report on The Census by H. A. STUART, of the Indian Civil Service; Fellow of The Royal Statistical Society; Member of The Royal Asiatic Society, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras, Madras: Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1893, *pages* 286-287.

GROUP 24—WASHERMEN

488. The Vannans are the Tamil Washermen, the VANNAN: 225, 161 word being derived from *Vannam* (Sanskrit *varnam*), which means colour or beauty. With regard to their origin, there is a tradition that they are the descendants of the mythological hero *Virabadra,* who was ordered by Siva to wash the clothes of all men as an expiation of the sin of putting many people of death in the Daksha's *yaga.* Hence the Tamil washermen are frequently called 'Virabadran'.

They have returned 226 sub-divisions, of which only three are numerically important.

Sub-division	Strength	Local distribution
Pandiyan . . .	17,155	Madura and Tinnevelly
Peru	9,262	Malabar
Tamil	15,163	Tamil division except Tinnevelly
Vaduga	14,769	Tamil division except Tinnevelly

About 100,400 individuals have returned Vannan as both caste and sub-division.

In social standing they are placed next below the barbers. They profess to be Saivites in the southern districts and Vaishnavites in the north. The marriage of girls generally takes place after puberty. Widow remarriage is permitted among some, if not all, sub-divisions. Divorce may be obtained by either party at pleasure on payment of double the bride-price, which is usually Rs. 10½. They are flesh-eaters and drink liquor. The dead are either burned or buried. The *Pothara Vannans* are of inferior status, because they wash only for Paraiyans; Pallans and other inferior castes. In Malabar only the females wash clothes, the males being tailors or devil-dancers.

Extract on "VANNAN" from 'Census of India, 1921' Volume XXV, Travancore, Part I-Report, Part II-Imperial Tables by MURARI S. KRISHNAMURTHI AYYAR, M.B. & C.M. Fellow of The Royal Statistical Society, Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum; Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1922 *page* 115.

VANNAN: A Tamil caste of washermen.

Extract on "VANNAN" from Census of India, 1901, *Vol. XV Madras, Part I—Report, by W. FRANCIS, Madras* 1902, *page* 183.

VANNAN (208, 713: M-47) : Tamil washermen. In Malabar, the same as Mannan, (q.v.) (C.R. 1891, para 488 *Madura Man.,* Part II, p. 73 ; *Tanjore Man., p.* 197 : *North Man.* Vol. L. p. 237)

Extract on "VANNAN" from Census of India, 1911 *Cochin Vol. XVIII Part-I Report by C. A. MENON, B. A. Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam* 1912 *page* 79.

VANNAN (97): Tamil Washerman.

Extract on "VANNAN" from Census of India, 1911, *Vol. XXIII Travancore, Part-I Report by N. SUBRAMHANYA AIYAR, M.A., Dewan Peishcar, Census Commissioner, Trivandrum: Printed at the Ananda Press'* 1912 *page* 268.

VANNAN (2,690): A Tamil caste of Washermen.

Extract on "VANNAN" from 'Census of India, 1921' Volume XIX, Cochin, Part I-Report, Part II-Imperial Tables by P. GOVINDA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam : Printed at the Cochin Government Press, 1922 page 67.

VANNAN (2,038) : Also called Mannan. They are Tamil washermen.

Extract on "VANNAN" from 'Census of India, 1931 Volume XXI COCHIN, Part I-Report Part II-A&B—Tables by T. K. SANKARA MENON, M.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, 1933 Printed by the Superintendent, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam page 275.

VANNAN (443): Tamil washerman.

Extract on "VANNAN" from Census of India 1931 *Volume XXVIII Travancore, Part I-Report by RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A. B.Sc. (Edin.) Ph. D. (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore, Trivandrum : Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press,* 1932 *page* 386.

553. VANNAN (Mannan, Pathiyan): Vannan is found both in the Tamil and Malayalam districts. Vannan is the Tamil name and Mannan the Malayalam name. In Thiruvella and Minachil taluks they are also known as Pathiyan. The traditional occupation of Vannans is washing clothes. Among Mannans, females wash clothes while males are exercists, devildancers and physicians. Among the Pathiyans the occupation of females is washing clothes and that of males tree-climbing. The system of inheritance is makkathayam except in Karunagapally taluk where it is marumakkathayam. At the last Census Vannans were included with Veluthadans. Vannans are none other than Mannas and should, therefore, have been included with the latter. The total population of Vannans including Mannans and Pathiyans is now 16,022 consisting of 13,433 Hindus and 2,589 Christians.



An affluent Puthirai Vannan's tiled dwelling.



Another type of tiled house of Puthirai Vannan.



A Vannan Family.



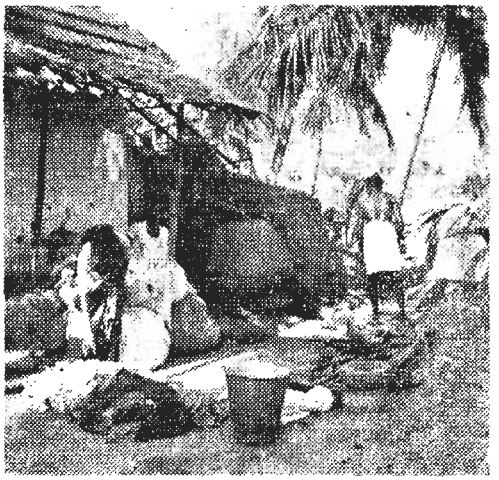
Seldom falling sick. Puthirai-Vannans are hardy folk. They are dhobies for the Scheduled castes.

His strength is the detergent for dirt in clothes. Soap isn't all.



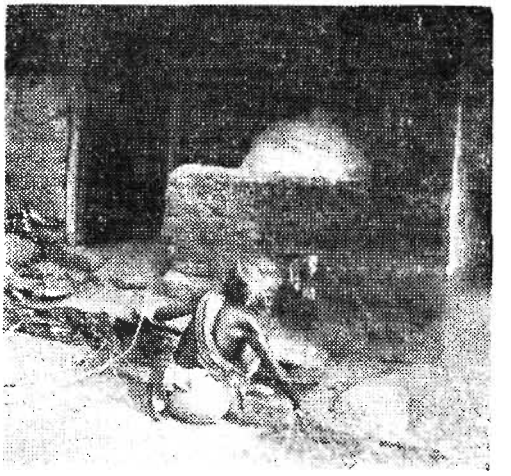


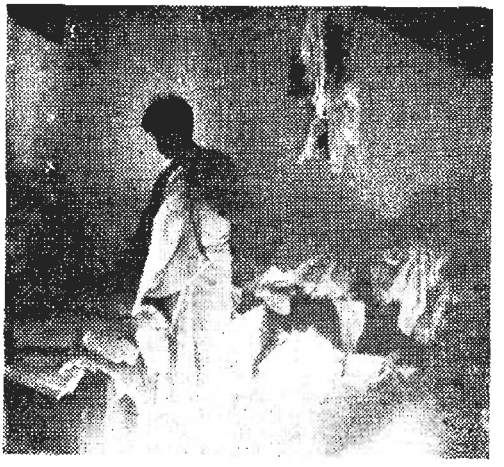
A Puthirai Vannan woman in simple dress.



Cleaning dirty linen is done with Soap and Sodium Carbonate.

To obtain dazzling results the very dirty linen are steamed.





Out from steam pressure, the clothes get individual attention.



The wash being dried in Sunlight.

The donkey is dhobi's dearest friend. He hazards tract where others fear to tread. And this too with a back-breaking burden !





'Operation Wash' is done in the river. A girl plods with a payload of dirty linen.

SEMMAN

I. Name, Identity, Origin and History:

In the whole of India, Semman is a Scheduled Caste only in the Madras State as it existed prior to the States Reorganisation in 1956 (i.e.) throughout the present Madras State except Kanyakumari District and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli District, Malabar District of Kerala State, Kollegal taluk and South Canara district of Mysore State (Census of India, Paper No. 2, 1960, Registrar General, India, New Delhi, pp. 88 and 89). In these parts they were classified as Depressed Class in 1921 and 1931 Censuses, Scheduled Caste according to the "Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936", "Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes), Order, 1950" and "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists Modification Order, 1956". Tolmestri, Tondaman and Semmaravan are considered to be synonyms for Semman (Census of India, 1961, Volume IX Madras, Part V. A(i), Appendix I, Page 438).

In his Madras Census report of 1891 Steward observes that "Semmans are an insignificant caste of Tamil leather workers found only in the districts of Madura and Tinnevely. The Semmans are, in fact, a sub-division of the Paraiyans and they must have been the original leather-workers of the Tamil tribes. The immigrant Chakkiliyans have, however, now taken their place."

In 1914, Sri M. Srinivasa Ayyangar has written that "The Semman is another important sub-division of the Paraiyas, whose existence is almost unknown outside the districts of Madura and Tirunelveli. It was once a numerous caste of Tamil leather workers. (புகன்ற தோற்றொழில் செம்மான்). Since the immigration of the Telugu and Canarese Madigas or Chakkiliyans, some time after the fifteenth or sixteenth century, the Semmans have almost entirely given up their traditional occupation and adopted, like the Panans, menial services in villages and tailoring and lime selling in towns". ("Tamil Studies" N. Srinivasa Ayyangar M.A., 1914, p. 85). Tamil term Semman (செம்மான்) means leather worker. It could therefore be reasonably inferred that this caste derives its name from its traditional occupation of leather working.

The present study was made of the leather working section of Semmans in Palayamcottah, a municipal town of Tirunelveli District. Semmans were living there on a piece of Government land

35—5R . G India/72

near Samathanapuram, a locality adjoining Tirunelveli—Tiruchendur road. They were said to be formerly living in Palayamcottah Bazaar Street itself. Due to indebtedness, they sold their houses to other prosperous people and shifted themselves to the Government land three years back. There were still some families of Semmans, living in their old locality, pursuing a lucrative trade in footwear shops.

II. Distribution and population trend :

176 persons were returned as Semmans in 1961 Census comprising 76 males and 100 females but how many of them were enumerated along with the 1,513,627 Paraiyans, the second Major Scheduled Caste of Madras State, is not known. Paraiyan forms 24.94457% of all the Scheduled Castes of the State, whereas the 1961 Census has reported only a very meagre figure of 0.00290 percentage for Semmans, which can be considered as negligible. It is also quite possible that they were enumerated by the generic term of Harijan or merely as Scheduled Caste without the name of the particular caste. They are not scheduled in Kanyakumari District and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli District and do not exist in the districts of Madras, Chingleput, Salem, Coimbatore, Nilgiris and Madurai. Their position in other Districts are as follows:—

Districtwise distribution of Semmans

State/District	No. of persons returned in 1961 Census	Percentage to the State	Descending order of size within State	Percentage among all the Scheduled Castes	Rank among all the Scheduled Castes
Madras State	176	100.00	..	N	N
North Arcot District . .	2	01.14	V	N	N
South Arcot District . .	15	08.52	III	N	N
Tiruchirapalli District . .	12	06.82	IV	N	21
Thanjavur District . . .	2	01.14	VI	N	N
Ramanathapuram District .	91	51.70	I	00.02	15
Tirunelveli District . . .	54	30.68	II	00.01	20

N=Negligible.

(*Basis* : Census of India, 1961 Vol. IX Part V-A SCT Part-A).

In spite of its limited scope, the above table is useful, presenting the minimum limit. The above table reveals that Semmans predominate only in Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli Districts, both of which account for 82% of the total Semmans in the State. South Arcot and Tiruchirapalli have recorded 9% and 7% respectively followed by 1% each in North Arcot and Thanjavur. The high concentration in Ramanathapuram (which formed part of Madurai District in earlier days) and Tirunelveli districts falls in line with the past observations quoted at the beginning.

Semmans is not a Scheduled Caste in Kanyakumari district. As such they were not enumerated separately in Census. So their strength for Kanyakumari District has not been presented in 1961 Census tables. However, the present study indicated that Semman exists as a distinct caste in Kanyakumari District, and they have social ties with those of Tirunelveli District. Their social and economic conditions are believed to be similar with each other. There are many marriage ties between the Semmans of Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts. This anomaly was brought to the notice of the State Government of Madras through a representation. The State Government have taken up the issue with the centres. Meanwhile pending inclusion of Chemman of Kanyakumari District in the list of Scheduled Caste, the Government of Madras, in their order Ms. 1082 I.L.C. dated 2-3-1960, directed that, all the concessions enjoyed by the Scheduled Castes from the Harijan Welfare Department and the Education Department be extended to the Chemman community of Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district. In principle, this is the first step for recognising the Semman of Madras State and Chemman of the territories transferred from the erstwhile Travancore State as identical.

The 1961 Census data for Madras State indicate that, among the general population and all the Scheduled Castes put together, more people live in the rural areas, the percentage being 73.31 for the former and 84.74 for the latter. But Semmans have recorded only 50.00 per cent which means lower than those of general population and all Scheduled Castes. This is quite reasonable as they are traditional leather workers and still continue to be associated with leather works such as shoe making and shoe repairing. etc. which will be discussed in greater detail under their economic life. The 1961 Census data indicate 99 females for every 100 males among the general population as well as among all the Scheduled Castes put together. But Semmans have recorded 132 females for every 100 males. Neither their social customs nor any other available information give any reasonable clue for such a large variation, especially in Tirunelveli District.

The following statement indicates the percentage of population within various age-groups :—

Percentage Age Distribution

Age—Group	General Population	All Scheduled Castes	Semmans
All ages	100.00	100.00	100.00
0—4	13.68	14.76	12.50
5—9	12.79	12.52	09.66
10—14	11.13	11.43	15.34
15—19	08.47	08.55	10.23
20—24	08.82	08.96	06.82
25—29	08.65	08.98	10.80
30—34	07.07	07.49	03.98
35—44	12.14	11.49	11.36
45—59	11.64	10.97	14.20
60+	05.60	04.84	04.55
Age not stated	00.01	00.01	00.57

Broadly speaking, Semmans record low proportions in the earlier age-groups. Even though a firm conclusion cannot be arrived based on age data for such a thin population of 176, the above trend may be either due to infantile mortality or higher expectation of life among Semmans.

III. Physical characteristics :

No scientific study has been undertaken on their racial stock and appearance. From a layman point of view, they are medium sized or short in stature. Their complexion varies from dark brown to pale brown. Most of them appear corpulent with round chubby face.

IV. Clan and other Division :

As early as 1891, Steward, the then Superintendent of Census Operations considered (Census of India, 1891—Madras—Volume XIII) Semmans as a sub-division of the Paraiyans. In the Glossary of Castes, Tribes and Race of Madras State from Census of India, 1901, Madras, it is stated that "the Caste has two hypergamous sub-divisions called Tondaman and the Tolmestri and men of the former take wives from the latter, but men of the latter may not marry girls of the former". It is also stated in the Madras Census Report, 1901, that "The Tondamans are also called Sunnambukkaran, a Tamil caste of lime (chunam) burners found only in the Tinnevelly district. They are said to be a branch of Kallans who migrated to Tinnevelly from Pudukkottai or the Tondaman's country" Semmans at Palayamcottai, where the field study was undertaken, are not aware of the existence of such a division among them. They take to the caste title of 'Maistris'. It appears that Tondaman is no doubt a sub-caste of Kallar community which is engaged in lime burning. The few Semmans who have taken to the occupation of lime-burning in Ramanathapuram district appear to have assumed the title of 'Tondamans', eventhough they belong to the caste of Semmans. Because of the assumption of the slightly superior caste title of Tondamans, it may be, that the Semman families going under the title of Tondamans assumed slightly superior status in social caste hierarchy and refused to give their daughters in marriage to the Semmans going under the title of Tol maistries. For purposes of marriages, Semmans claim to have a number of exogamous septs as detailed under "IX Life Cycle". However, they are unable, to give more details about these so called septs. These septs do not seem to have any totemistic tendencies, but the sept names seem to refer to lineage.

V. Dwelling, Dress, Ornaments and Food Habits :

The Semmans of Samathanapuram in Palayamcottai town live in a piece of Government land adjoining the Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur Road. The houses are built in two rows with a common front yard. The houses are mostly mud walled and temporary in construction. In a few huts the walls consist of coconut thatches. The walls have not been properly plastered. The flooring is also mud plastered. The roofing is thatched with palmyra leaves. The ground plan of the houses is mostly rectangular and one-roomed with a small front verandah, which is screened to ensure a little privacy. In some houses, the front verandah is used for cooking purposes; in some others, the inner room is used as kitchen-*cum*-living room. The washing and bathing etc. are done in the front-yard or in the narrow space existing between the houses. The

roofing of the houses is generally low and they are overspread on all the four sides. This is perhaps done to avoid the draught of winds.

Their men crop the hair. Women part their hair in the middle and put on a loose tuft at the back. A few women of the elder generation are found to have tied their hair without making a partition at the front. As regards dress, they conform to the pattern of the towns people of the locality. Their men, while at work, have nothingelse except a dhoti tied to their waist. They put on shirts when they go out into the towns for shopping or seeing a cinema. Their women wear sarees of 6 yards length. The fold of the sarees is adjusted to the front and the pallav thrown over the left shoulder. Inside the saree they wear skirt (pavadai). They wear tight-fitting blouses and many are also found to wear bodies or brassieres. The pattern of the sarees worn by them is mostly of the printed type. The boys are seen in shorts and shirts and girls in skirts and blouses.

The ornaments worn by the women are cheap. In the wrists they wear glass bangles. They wear nosescrews on both sides of the nose. Stone-studded ear-rings (Kammals) are popular with them. A few older women are however seen wearing the heavy type of ear ornaments like *Pampadan, Thandatti etc.* over extended ear lobes. In the neck they wear some cheap chain or a string of beads. The Tali worn by them is of two types; some wear M shaped disc called pushpa Tali, while others wear Pillayar Tali, along with Seravus. These types are common among most castes in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts.

The household utensils used by them are of common type. The vessels in use by them may consist of a few mud pots, one or two brass *Kudams, Andas,* a few aluminium or enamelled plates and some brass basins and pans. Bamboo baskets and trays are also in use by them. As the houses are not electrified, they use kerosene lamps or hurricane lanterns.

The occupation of all the Semman households living in Samathanapuram is foot-ware making. For pursuit of this trade, each one of them possesses a complete set of leather-stitching implements. A few of the Semmans have been recipients of leather stitching sewing machines from the Harijan Welfare Department. Many of them have also received other implements as free grants.

The staple diet of the Semmans is rice. They cook only once a day and that is after dusk. They take hot food for the night and keep the residual for consumption early on the next morning and for midday. Almost all of them take coffee in the morning but

this is sweetened with palm jaggery instead of white sugar. Once in a week they purchase mutton and have non-vegetarian items. They do not eat beef or pork. This is where they consider themselves as different from the Parayan and the Chakkilian. Chewing and smoking habits are widely prevalent among the adult members. It is said that many of them are addicted to drinks, on which they do not grudge to spend large amounts.

VI. Sanitation :

Semmans keep their locality generally clean. They keep the inside of the houses also clean and tidy. They frequently take bath which may be twice or thrice in a week and present a neat appearance. They do not appear to be suffering from any chronic disease. At Samathanapuram they get their drinking water from the Municipal tap.

VII. Language and literacy :

Semmans are indigenous in Tamil Nadu and as such their mother tongue is Tamil, the local tongue. Of the 176 Semmans returned in 1961 Census 57 were reported as literates, consisting of 26 males and 31 females. 12 of the male literates and 30 of the female literates were in urban areas. These figures are presented as a percentage along with those for the general population and all the scheduled castes put together for easy comparison.

Percentage of literates

	Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
General Population . .	37.81	1.57	62.66	36.67
All Scheduled Castes . .	20.86	4.23	38.34	13.96
Semmans	32.56	2.22	36.36	54.55

Basis : Census of India Vol. IX Part IIC(1) and V-A(ii).

The statement indicates that in the rural sector, Semmans' male literacy lies midway between the General population and all Scheduled Castes put together but female literacy stands as the lowest. In the urban sector, same trend prevails among the males, but an abnormal trend is noticed among the females. However, the more detailed table below will indicate that their women are in no way better than other Scheduled Castes, not to speak of General population.

Percentage Distribution of Educational levels in the urban sector

Educational level	MALES			FEMALES		
	General Population	All Scheduled Castes	Semmans	General Population	All Scheduled Castes	Semmans
Literate without educational level . .	52.00	61.61	91.67	57.45	61.77	66.67
Primary or Junior Basic	31.67	33.66	8.33	35.60	36.04	33.33
Matriculation or Higher Secondary . .	13.44	4.47	Nil	6.25	2.12	Nil
Above Matriculation or Higher Secondary .	2.89	0.26	Nil	0.70	0.07	Nil

Basis : Census of India, 1961 Vol. IX Part V-A(ii) SCT-III Part A (i) and B(i).

The above table indicates that Semmans are backward in education.

VIII. Economic Life :.

It has already been observed the Semmans are traditional leather workers of indigenous origin. The 1961 Census data indicate their economic way of life as follows :—

Means of livelihood

Category	Absolute figures				Percentage total			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Workers and Non-workers combined	43	45	33	45	48.86	51.14	37.50	62.50
Workers								
All categories	26	18	18	1	29.55	20.45	20.45	01.14
Cultivator	13	7	..	..	14.77	07.95	..	..
Agricultural Labourer	1	2	..	..	01.14	02.27	..	..
Livestock, Forestry, Hunting etc.	2	..	..	..	02.27	..	..	..
Household Industry	2	6	..	..	02.27	06.82	..	..
Manufacturing other than Household Industry	5	..	15	1	05.68	..	17.05	01.14
Construction	..	..	1	..	..	..	01.14	..
Trade & Commerce	2	3	1	..	02.27	03.41	01.14	..
Transport	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Services	1	..	1	..	01.14	..	01.14	..
Non-workers	17	27	15	54	19.32	30.68	17.05	61.36

Basis : Census of India, Vol. IX Part IV—A (i)(SCT—I Part—A)

In the rural sector 50% of the Semmans are workers, which resembles the trend in the general population but is less by 5% than the 55% of workers among all the Scheduled Castes. Women participation is 30% against 43% for Scheduled Castes and 37% for General population. The total labour force as well as the rate of women participation in the labour force decrease in the urban sector. Urban working force among Semmans, Scheduled Castes and General population are 22%; 42% and 34% respectively, urban women participation rates being 5%, 34% and 21%. Agricultural operations are the main source of livelihood among the Semmans of rural areas followed by "Manufacturing", both in household and non-household industries. In urban sector, "Manufacturing" is the chief means of livelihood. The actual details of "Manufacturing" can be found out from the "Occupational classification". "Occupational classification" of 1961 Census was made on the basis of the code structure laid down by the occupational information unit of the Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India. Table SCT VII of Census of India, 1961, Vol. IX, Part V-A(ii) gives such detailed classification for the Scheduled Castes of Madras State. Such detailed classification for Semmans is as follows:—

Code No. and description of occupation	Males	Females
120 and 301 working proprietors	2	..
330 and 331 Salesmen, hawkers etc.	1	3
431 Fishermen	2	..
440 Forest workers	1	..
704 Weavers	1	1
720 Shoe makers and shoe repairers	18	..
791 Bricklayers	1	..
810 Furnacemen, Kilnmen and Ovenmen	1	6
839 Chemical and related process workers	1	..
890 Loaders and unloaders	1	..
899 Casual labourers	1	..
Cultivators	13	7
Agricultural labourers	1	2
Total workers	44	19

The above statement indicates 7 persons or nearly 18% as Kilnmen. This confirms the earlier observation under the Caption "IV Clan and other Division" that few Semmans have taken to the occupation of limeburning in Ramanathapuram district. The process of lime making is simple and is as follows: Kankar stones, hidden deeply in certain areas where they are available, are first

dug out and collected. They are then broken into small bits of uniform size and mixed with charcoal or coal cinder. A small quantity of water is sprinkled over this mixture. It is then put in a small kiln called *Kavalai* and set fire. When the lime stones are fully burnt, they are collected and sold in markets.

The occupational classification also confirms another earlier observation that Semmans are traditional leather workers. In this profession, they confine themselves to leather stitching. They consider the work connected with leather tanning as unclean. So they feel that such works are not fit for them but for Madigas and Chakkilians.

In Samathanapuram, where we studied the Semmans, all the households are engaged in leather stitching. Their elderly male members are employed in foot-ware shops in Palayamcottai and Tirunelveli. A few of the Semmans have established themselves on pavements and attend to petty repairs of foot-wares of pedastrians. The persons employed in the foot-ware shops are paid on out-turn basis at the rate of half-a-rupee per pair of sandal stitched. Each worker is able to earn about Rs. 3/- a day. The actual stitching of the sole for the sandals is done by their womenfolk at home. They are paid at the rate of six annas (37 paise) per dozen pairs of soles stitched. In addition to attending household duties, each woman is able to turn out stitching of a dozen pairs a day and the income that they get out of this goes to supplement the wages earned by the male members.

It has been estimated that their average income per household may be about Rs. 50/- a month. It has also been estimated that food forms 61% of their expenditure. Dress costs them only 6.9%. Smoking and chewing average 20.3%. Being town-dwellers, they visit cinemas frequently and this costs them 5.6% of their monthly income. 19 out of 20 households are found to be in debt. The average debt per household works out to Rs. 131.58. The chief causes of indebtedness are reported to be sickness and ordinary household wants.

IX. Life Cycle:

Birth:

Semmans observe pollution for child birth. The delivery takes place either in their homes or in the hospitals. The latter are more popular in Palayamcottai. Pollution is observed for nine days. On the last day, the child and the mother are given baths and taken home. No separate ceremony is observed by them for giving a name to the child. The head tonsuring and ear-boring ceremonies are performed at convenience after two or three years.

Puberty :

On a girl attaining puberty she is put in a separate place in the verandah. She is given rich diet for a period of 11 days. On the 11th day, she is given a ceremonious bath and taken home. On this day, the relatives are invited and given a feast. The maternal uncle and the close relatives give some presents to the girl.

Marriage :

The initiative for a marriage alliance should always come from groom's side. A brideprice, ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 is usually given by the groom's parents to fix up the marriage. The actual marriage takes place in the bride's house. The expenses incurred in connection with marriage are shared equally by both the parties. The essential ceremony on the marriage day is tali tying which is done by the groom over the neck of the girl.

The Semmans recognise divorces which however are granted only in extreme cases of total incompatibility or adultery. In Samathanapuram, no case of any dirvorce being granted in recent years is reported. In case, the husband dies, the widow is permitted to remarry if she is young enough. Otherwise she should continue to be a widow wearing white saree. For purposes of marriage alliances, the Semmans are divided into a number of exogamous septs. The name of some of their septs are the following:

> "Manapattan, Moopan, Sankanparai, Kooliyankuppam, Suntha Panickan, Akkaselai, Vaduvan Pattian, Kanyampuliwan, Kania lan, Poomalai etc."

The clan line descends by the male-line. Consanguineous marriages among them occur but these are not so frequent as among Paraiyans. Out of 15 cases studied in Samathanapuram, 5 relate to marrying maternal uncle's daughter, one relates to paternal aunt's daughter and two to sister's daughter. The remaining other 8 cases relate to marrying in unrelated families.

Of the 76 males and 100 females, 36 and 43 are reported in 1961 Census as 'Never married' representing 47% and 43% respectively as against 54% and 43% among all the Scheduled Castes and 55% and 43% among the general population. These facts indicate that whereas the women of all the categories maintain the same trend, less number of Semman males remain as bachelors.

Death:

The most common method of disposing the dead among the Semmans is by burial. Cremation is given only if the dead person happens to be the eldest boy of the family. The dead body, before taken to the burial ground is given a bath with cold water. A new cloth is spread over the body and decorated with flowers. The body is taken in an improvised bier. At the burial ground, a pit is dug north-south and the body is lowered into it with its head towards north. This is at variance from general practice followed by most other Hindu castes who place the body head towards the south. On the third day after burial, a little ghee and milk are poured near the place of burial. The last day obsequies are performed on the 13th day when a feast is given to near relatives.

X. Religion :

It is learnt that a few of the Semmans have embraced Christianity. Extent of such conversion is not known. One or two in Samathanapuram colony have recently been won over by the Penta Cost Mission. The Hindu Semmans worship *Badra Kaliamman and Sudaai Madan* as their deities. They observe most of the Hindu festivals like *Deepavali, Pongal, Adi Iruthi,* and *Karthigai* The relationship between the converted and non-converted sections of the community is cordial.

XI. Inter Community Relationship :

In rural parts, the Semmans are treated as untouchables. They are not allowed to take water from the public drinking water well of the caste Hindus. In urban areas however untouchability is not observed but the Semmans are treated as a little unclean people. They live in separate localities. The Paraiyans and Pallars will not eat in their houses, but then the Semmans also will not eat in the houses of Paraiyans and Pallars. As the Semmans do not eat beef, they consider themselves superior to the Chakkilians, who are also engaged in this kind of profession.

XII. Structure of Social control, prestige and leadership :

Within the community, no caste hierarchy exists to control social discipline from among the members. No caste-head is nominated and elected by the Semman community living in Samathanapuram. If there is any dispute or complaint to be heard, elderly male members assemble for the purpose and dispose of the matter after hearing the parties. Such a meeting of the elders is however very rare. Being mostly town people, it is rather difficult to enforce social discipline among them.

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Extract on "SEMMAN" from 'Hindu Tribes And Castes' as represented in Benaras by The Rev. M. A. SHERRING, M.A.,LL.B., Lond., Fellow of the Calcutta University, Corresponding Member of the Bengal Asiatic Society, Author of "The Secred City of The Hindus", "The History of Protestant Missions in India" etc., "Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto". Volume III, Calcutta : Thacker, Spink, and Co., London : Prubner & Co., Ludgate Hill, Bombay : Thacker and Co., Limited Madras : Higginbotham and Co., 1879 *page* 129.

6. SEMMAN : Lime-burners and sellers.

"Extract on "SEMMAN" from Castes and Tribes of Southern India, by EDGAR THURSTON, C.I.E., Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondant Etranger, Societed Anthropologie, de Paris; Socio Corrispondante, Societa Romana di Anthropologia, Assisted by K. RANGACHARI, M.A., of the Madras Government Museum, Volume VI— P to S, Government Press, Madras 1909 *pages* 359-360.

SEMMAN : The Semmans are described, in the Mâdras Census Report, 1891, as "an insignificant caste of Tamil leather-workers, found only in the districts of Madura and Tinnevelly (and in the Pudúkottai State). Though they have returned tailor and lime-burner as their occupations, the original occupation was undoubtedly leather-work. In the Tamil dictionaries Semman is explained as a leather-worker, and a few of them, living in out-of-the way villages, have returned shoe-making as their occupation. The Semmans are, in fact, a sub-division of the Paraiyans, and they must have been the original leather-workers of the Tamil tribes. The immigrant Chakkiliyans have, however, now taken their place". The Semmans are described, in the Madura Manual, as burning and selling lime for building purposes. In the Census Report, 1901, the caste is said to have "two hypergamous sub-divisions, Tondaman and Tolmestri, and men of the former take wives from the latter, but men of the latter may not marry girls of the former".

Girls are married after puberty, and divorce and remarriage are freely allowed. As the caste is a polluting one, the members thereof are not allowed to use village wells, or enter caste Hindu temples. The caste title is Mestri.

Extract on "SEMMAN" from Census of India, 1891, Volume XIII, Madras. The Report on The Census by H.A. STUART, of The Indian Civil Service; Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society; Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras, Madras : Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press, 1893 page 302.

531. SEMMAN : 1871—The Semmans are an insignificant caste of Tamil leather-workers found only in the districts of Madura and Tinnevelly. Though they have returned tailor and lime-burner as their occupations, the original occupation was undoubtedly leather-work. In the Tamil dictionaries 'Semman' is explained as a leather-worker, and a few of them, living in out-of-the-way villages, have returned shoe-making as their occupation. The Semmans are, in fact, a sub-division of the Paraiyans, and they must have been the original leather-workers of the Tamil tribes. The immigrant Chakkiliyans have, however, now taken their place.

Extract on "SEMMAN" from Census of India, 1901, *Vol. XV Madras, Part—I : Report, Madras,* 1902 *by FRANCIS W., page* 77.

SEMMAN : (2,000)—Tamil leather-workers. The caste has two hypergamous sub-divisions, Tondaman and Tolmestri, and men of the former take wives from the latter, but men of the latter may not marry girls of the former. They have no purohits, perform no araddha and are not admitted into temples. Their agnomen is Mestri. (C. R. 1891, para 531).

Extract on "CHAKKILIYAN" from Census of India, 1931 *Volume XXVIII, Travancore Part I—Report by RAO SAHIB N. KUNJAN PILLAI, M.A., B.Sc. (Edin.), Ph.D. (Leipzig), Census Commissioner, Travancore. Trivandrum Printed by The Superintendent, Government Press,* 1932 *page* 381.

528. CHAKKILIYAN (including Chemman): Chakkiliyans are probably immigrants from the Telugu districts. They are more or less equal in status with the Parayans and are engaged as scavengers and street sweepers in municipal towns. They speak Telugu and are supposed to be the progeny of the soldiers of the Vijayanagar kings. Their girls are married after puberty, the bridegroom being sometimes younger than the bride. Widow remarriage and divorce are common. Their traditional occupation is working in leather. The Chemmans are an indigenous caste of leather workers. Both these classes of people speak Tamil and follow makkathayam law of inheritance. They number 6,328 of whom 6,188 are Hindus and 140 are Christians.

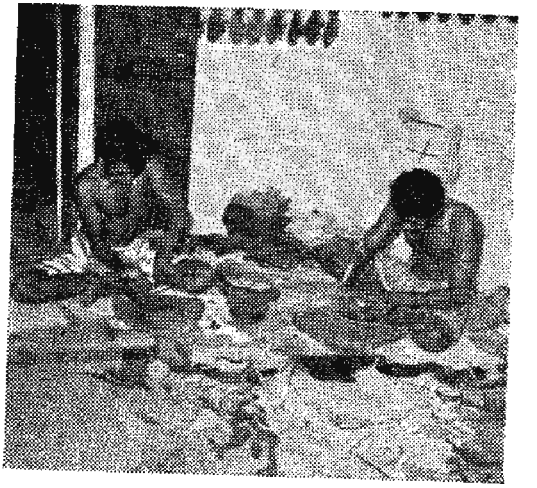
Extract on "SEMMAN" from Tamil Studies or Essays on the History of the Tamil People, Language, Religion and Literature by M. SRINIVASA AIYANGAR, M.A., 1914 *page* 85.

The Semmans is another important sub-division of the Paraiyas, whose existence is almost unknown outside the districts of Madura and Tinnevelly. It was once a numerous caste of Tamil leather-workers, (புலையர் தொழிலாளி செம்மான் Nig) Since the immigration of the Telugu and Canarese Madigas or Chakkiliyans, sometimes after the fifteenth or sixteenth century, the Semmans have almost entirely given up their traditional occupation, and adopted, like the Panans, menial services in villages and tailoring and lime selling in towns.



Dressed simple, Semman female at home' is typical of her clan.

Their bread is in the boot. Semman, a class of foot-wear makers, are seen at breadwinning toil.



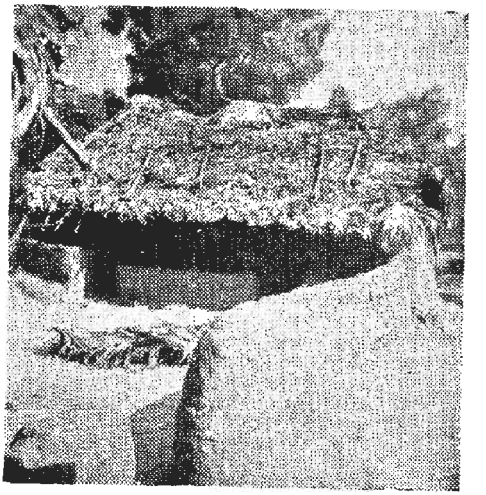


Time is money for the woman too. A female soul works on a shoe sole.



Seldom clad above waist, Semman males dress fully on occasions only.

The Semman hovel is a picture of poverty. Mud and thatch hatch a house.

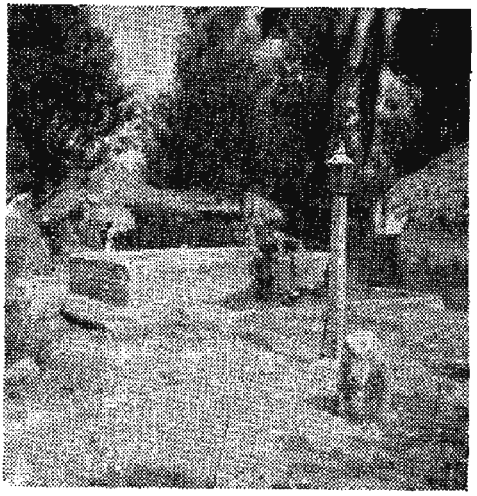




She mends a sole and gets a dole. Semman women spend time lucratively.



Plenty to choose from. Footwear on display at a Semman workshop-cum-dwelling.



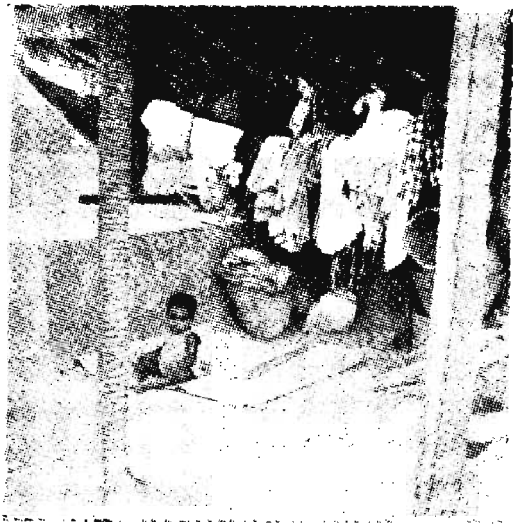
Kerosene, not electricity, spells light in the Semman ghetto.



Fair hands stitch soles as good as machine.



As bare her child, so barren the home. Cooking is woe, what with brittle mud utensils.



The stock of Semman home: Clothes, receptacles, rice in bag, booms, mat and a forlorn child.



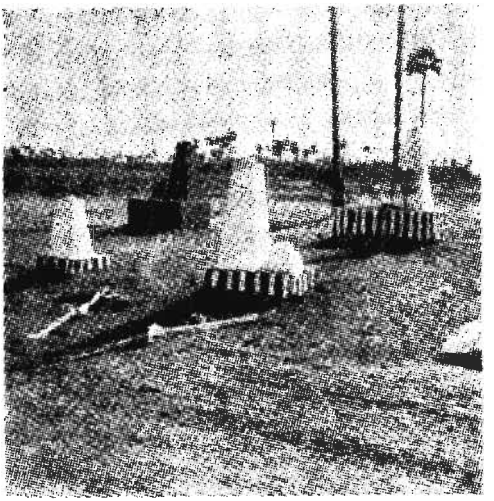
These two tiled houses are the exception to Semmans' thatch habitats.



Age ripens, then rots. Two Semman women wear time's cruelty.



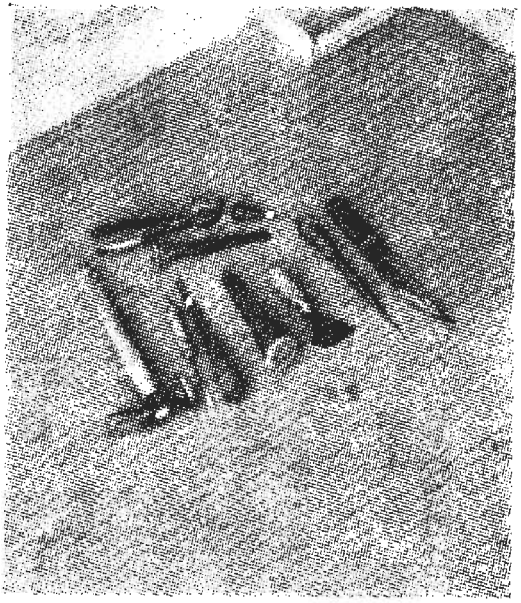
Semmans' God.



Semmans' Gods.



Interior decoration—Semman style.



The tools which title Semman a smith.

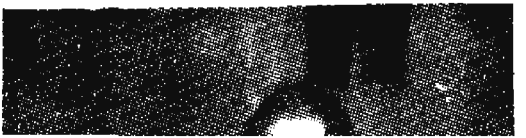




Her worth weighs on her. Gold is not trusted to vaults, but ear lobes bear them until death unloads.

Beautiful as the raven, the Semman belle glorifies black colour.

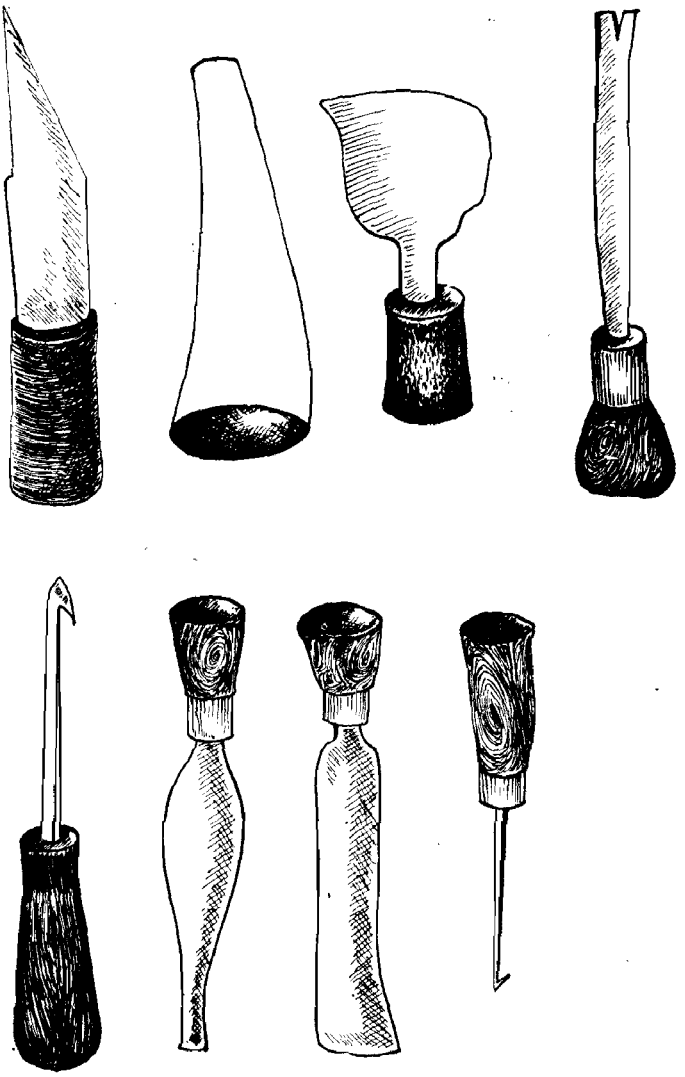


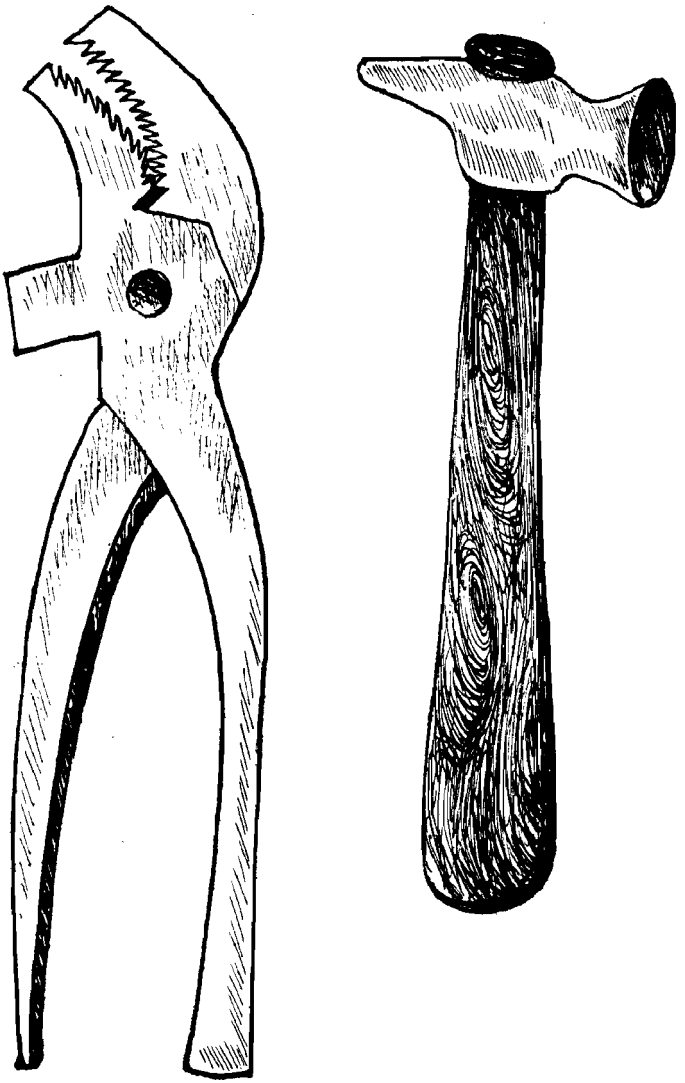




The spectrum of a Semman house-hold.

Leather stitching Implements of Semmans





Tools used in leather working by Semmans

VALLUVAN/TIRUVALLUVAN

Name, Identity, Origin and History :

Valluvan is a Scheduled Caste in the whole of Kerala and Madras State and Kollegal taluk and South Kanara District of Mysore State which formed part of Madras prior to the States Re-organisation in 1956. (Census of India, Paper No. 2 of 1960). They were classified as Depressed Class in 1931 Census in the then Madras State which excluded Kanyakumari District and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli District and as Scheduled Caste according to the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936. They continue to be scheduled caste throughout the State according to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists Modification Order, 1956 [Census of India 1961, Volume I, India Part V-V(ii)]. They are known by various synonyms like Paraiyan, Tade, Alwar Dasari, Tavide Dhari, Valluva Pandaram, Panisaivan or Panisavan, Nandan, Kothali Valluvan, Thothida Valluvan, Pandaram, Nayam and Nokkan. Along with Pandaram and Vaduvan, Valluvar is considered to be a synonym for Tiruvalluvar, another Scheduled Caste throughout Madras State except Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli District. [Census of India, 1961, Volume IX, Madras, Part V-A (i).] Tiruvalluvar was also a depressed class in 1931 Census. Thurston considered Tiruvalluvan as a sub-division of Valluvan (Castes and Tribes of Southern India 1909, Vol. VII, p. 5).

The present study was made at Vanathiraiyanpattinam in Udayarpalayam taluk of Tiruchirapalli District. It is an unelectrified village four miles from Udayarpalayam on the Ariyalur-Anaikarai road. It had an approximate population of 3,000, inhabited mainly by Brahmins, Vanniars, Karkath-Vellalas, Chettiars, Paraiyars and a few artisan Castes. It is a predominantly agricultural village, the main crops in this dry village being millets, pulses and gingelly. There were 47 Valluvans at the time of survey. They lived in a separate site adjoining the Paraiyar settlement, which itself was isolated at about two furlongs from the main village.

There are several references in very ancient Tamil epics and classics like *Manimekalai, Kambaramayanam* etc., to the effect that Valluvans mounted on elephant and proclaimed royal messages. At present, they are known to be the traditional priests of the Paraiyans and Pallans. In addition to their function as priests, both men and

women were employed as astrologers and doctors and were often consulted by all classes of people (Census of India, 1891, Vol. XIII Madras p. 268). However, there is a greater occupational mobility in the community, details of which are discussed under their economic life.

At times, some are called as Paraya Valluvans or Pallar Valluvan depending on the caste (i.e.) either Parayars or Pallars for whom they officiate as priest. The prefixes should not be construed to mean that they are a sub-division of Parayar or Pallar caste. Again non-Brahmin priests are called in general as Pandaram and as such Valluvars are also called either as Pandaram or Valluva Pandaram. This should not be confused with Pandaram, a distinct caste dedicated to temple service but which is not a Scheduled Caste.

In 1893, H.A. Stuart observed that "Tiruvalluvar, the famous Tamil Poet author of the 'Kural', belonged to this (Valluvan) caste. It appears that the Valluvans were priests to the Pallava Kings before the introduction of the Brahmans and even for some time after it. In an unpublished *Vatteluthu* inscription, believed to be of the 9th Century, the following sentence occurs—

"இத்தனி உவச்சன் ஸ்ரீவல்லுவம் பூவணவன் நியதம் ஆருளிட்டு, உவச்ச பணி செய்பவன்"

(Sri Valluvam Puvanavan, the Uvachchan or Ochchan (a class of temple servant) of this temple, will employ daily six men for doing the temple service). Again the Valluvans must have formerly held a position at least equal to that of the Vellalas, if the story that Tiruvalluva Nayanar married a Vellala girl is true." "Tiruvalluvan was reported to be one of the 82 most important sub-divisions of Valluvan" (Census of India, 1891, Volume XIII, Madras pp. 267-268).

In his "Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 1909, Vol. VII", Thurston refers to a saying that Tiruvalluvar, the Tamil Poet "refused to acknowledge the distinctions of caste and succeeded in obtaining a Vellala woman as his wife, from whom, a section of the Valluvans say, it has its descent". He quotes another account according to which Valluvans are the descendants of an alliance between a Brahman sage and a Paraiyan woman, whose children complained to their father of their lowly position. He blessed them and told them that they would become very clever astrologers, and, in consequence, much respected.

II. Distribution and Population Trend :

In 1961 Census 62,450 were reported as Valluvan and 10,077 as Tiruvalluvar. The former had 31,312 males and 31,138 females and

the latter had 4,738 and 5,339 respectively (Census of India 1961 Volume I, India Part V-A(i)—p. 220). Of the 67 Scheduled Castes reported in Tamilnadu during the 1961 Census, the 62,450 Valluvans account for 1.03% and the 10,077 Tiruvalluvars account for 0.17%. They are the 9th and 17th major Scheduled Castes respectively in the State. Even if both the castes are taken together, their position will remain as 9th. Their distribution is indicated in the following statement—

Districtwise Distribution of Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar

State/District	VALLUVAN				TIRUVALLUVAR					
	No. of persons returned in 1961 Census	Percentage to the State	Descending order of size within State	Percentage among all the Scheduled Castes	Rank among all the Scheduled Castes	No. of persons returned in 1961 Census	Percentage to the State	Descending order of size within State	Percentage among all the Scheduled Castes	Rank among all the Scheduled Castes
Madras State	62,450	100.00	..	01.03	9	10,077	100.00	..	00·17	17
Madras District	630	01.01	XI	00.29	8	145	01.44	IX	00.07	12
Chingleput District	3,358	05.38	VIII	00.54	7	169	01.68	VIII	00·03	12
North Arcot District	6,568	10.52	V	01.06	7	4,304	42.71	I	00.69	9
South Arcot District	13,493	21.61	I	01.68	4	3,055	30.32	II	00.38	8
Salem District	6,964	11.15	III	01.26	7	122	01.21	X	00.02	20
Coimbatore District	5,724	09.17	VI	01.07	9	530	05.26	IV	00.10	17
The Nilgiris District	397	00.64	XIII	00.51	12	Nil	00.00	XII	00·00	..
Madurai District	4,861	07.78	VII	00.99	9	604	05.99	III	00·12	14
Tiruchirapalli District	6,779	10·86	IV	01·20	7	491	04.87	V	00.09	15
Thanjavur District	10,808	17·31	II	01·44	5	286	02·84	VII	00·04	16
Ramanathapuram District	669	01·07	X	00·18	13	58	00·58	XI	00·02	16
Tirunelveli District	1,632	02·61	IX	00·38	12	313	03·11	VI	00·07	15
Kanyakumari District	567	00·91	XII	01·41	11	Non-Scheduled.				

(*Basis* : Census of India, 1961, Volume IX, Part V-A(i), pp. 282—386.)

Figures for Tiruvalluvar are also given since they are considered to be a sub-division of Valluvan. Nearly three-fourths of Tiruvalluvars are reported from North and South Arcot Districts alone. South Arcot also holds the maximum of nearly 22%, of Valluvans, and North Arcot a fairly high proportion of 11%. Thanjavur, Salem and Tiruchirapalli are the other districts recording more Valluvans. Nilgiris records the lowest proportion, preceded by Kanyakumari, Madras, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli. Trend of distribution of Valluvans among the various districts of the State closely follows that of Parayars for whom they are the priests. Such trends are not so close between Valluvans and Pallans who also engage them as their priests. In Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts, Pallans are moderately dispersed against the low proportions of Valluvans; but in North Arcot and South Arcot, proportions of Pallans are meagre. (.02% and .04% of the State total) against 10.52% and 21.61% of Valluvans. But for these districts, similar trends of distribution are noticed among Valluvans and Pallans. Such similarities are quite obvious in view of their traditional service relationship.

84.80% of Valluvans and 75.17% of Tiruvalluvans occupy the rural sector of Tamilnadu bearing a similarly with 84.74% for all the Scheduled Castes put together, but a slight variation from 87.34% for Pallans and 89.75% for Paraiyans. Females per 100. Males are as high as 113 among Tiruvalluvans, but they are more or less equal among general population, all the Scheduled Castes put together, Valluvans, Paraiyans and Pallans, the figures being 99; 99; 99; 100 and 101 respectively. Variation, noticed in rural urban distribution and Sex ratio are not marked to mean any discussion. The sub-joined statement furnishes the percentage of population within various age-groups.

Percentage Age Distribution

Age-group	General Population	All Scheduled Castes	Valluvan	Tiruvalluvar
1	2	3	4	5
All Ages . . .	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
0—4 . . .	13.68	14.76	13.16	12.40
5—9	12.79	12.52	12.59	11.09
10—14	11.13	11.43	12.04	11.18

1	2	3	4	5
15—19	08.47	08.55	08.91	08.62
20—24	08.82	08.96	08.82	09.59
25—29	08.65	08.98	08.42	09.32
30—34	07.07	07.49	07·03	07·41
35—44	12.14	11.49	10.83	12.53
45—59	11·64	10·97	12·24	12·31
60+	05·60	04·84	05.95	05.51
Age not Stated . .	00·01	00·01	00·01	00·03

(*Basis:* Census of India, 1961—Vol. IX PartV-A(i) Madras Appendix. IV)

Proportions of Tiruvalluvars are less than Valluvan upto 19 years of age and more afterwards with a single exception in the last age-group of over 60 years of age. This indicates that Tiruvalluvars live longer than Valluvan. But the distribution of Valluvan, compared either with the General population or with all the scheduled castes, indicates a fluctuation. However, the fluctuation is not too much.

III. Physical Characteristics:

Valluvans at Vanathiraiyanpattinam are dark in colour and of medium height. In many respects they resemble the paraiyars of the locality.

IV. Divisions, Clan, Etc.

Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar are presented as two distinct castes in the Scheduled Castes lists, but the latter is merely a sub-division of the former. Thurston quotes a saying that Tiruvalluvar, the well known Tamil sage and poet "refused to acknowledge the distinctions of caste and succeeded in obtaining a Vellala woman as his wife, from whom a section of the Valluvans say, it has its descent. As their aneestor (Tiruvalluvar) amused himself in the intervals between his studies by weaving, they employ themselves in mending torn linen, but chiefly live by astrology, and by acting as priests of Paraiyans and officiating at their funerals and marriages, though some refuse

to take part in the former inauspicious ceremony and leave the duty to those whom they consider impure Valluvans called Paraiya Todas. Another section of the Valluvans is called Alvar Desari or Tavada-dhari (those who wear the necklace of tulsi beads). Both Saivites and Vaishnavites eat together, but do not intermarry". He also remarks: "The most important sub-divisions of the Valluvans, returned at time of Census, are paraiyan, levidadari and Tiruvalluvar. From information supplied to me, I gather that there are two main divisions called Arupathu Katchi (sixty house section) and Narpathu Katchi (forty house section). The former are supposed to be descendants of Nandi Gurukkal and take his name as their gotra. The gotra of the latter is Sidambara Sayichya Ayyangar. Sidambara or Chidambaram is the site of one of the most sacred Siva temples. The sub-division Alvar claims descent from Tiruppan Alvar, one of the twelve Vaishna saints. In the Tanjore District, the Valluvans have exogamous septs or *pattaperu* (பட்டப்பெயர்) e.g. Marulipihan. Govindazhvan etc., (Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. VII, 1909 Thurston, E. pp. 305-306). Valluvans of Vanathirayan-pattinam neither have a knowledge of such sub-division nor do they have any. Probably either they try to put into practice, at least within themselves, the high ideology of the famous Tamil poet Tiruvalluvar claimed to be their ancestor, to have a casteless and creedless society; or they do not have time to think about sub-division among themselves in the context of their insecure social status discussed elaborately under inter-community relationship.

V. Dwelling, Dress, Ornaments, Food and Other Material Objects:

The general pattern of housing in Vanathiraiyan-pattinam follows the normal rural pattern in any other part of the State. The Valluvar community here consists of 14 households huddled together in 6 houses about two furlongs away from the main locality, but very near the Paraiyar settlement. Of these one house is separate, with an enclosure around it. The other houses touch each other so as to form a contiguous building, but with separate entrances. The houses are mud-walled and built on a raised platform. The platform is nearly 4 feet high and one has to climb a height of four or five steps to get into any house. Almost all these houses have front verandahs and in one case, the front verandah is used as a place for tethering cattle. The walls are not white-washed but plastered with mud mixed with charcoal powder. Even the groundfloor looks grey because of such a plastering. The exterior walls look shabby because of the plastering fell off. The doors and windows lack finish and are made of country-wood. The roofing of some of the houses is thatched, the material used being hay and the stalks of millets. The other houses are country tiled. One or two houses have small interior courtyards

with verandahs all around. Beyond the inner verandahs there are one or two rooms. More than one household usually live in such a house. Insides of the houses look clean but the colour of the walls and the flooring makes the interior dark. The two or three households living in such a house usually happen to be closely related and may use the verandahs in common but there may be very little privacy for them. Cooking is done either in the inner verandah or in the rooms. Washing is done in the inner courtyard.

Of the three Valluvans interviewed by Thurston at Coimbatore, one, with a flowing white beard, had a lingam wrapped up in a pink cloth round the neck, and a charm tied in a pink cloth round the right upper arm. Another, with a black beard, had a solmon coloured turban. The third was wearing a discarded British soldier's tunic. All wore necklaces of ருத்ராட்சம் (Rudraksha-Elaocorpus Ganitrus) beads, and their foreheads were smeared, with oblong patches of sandal paste. Each of them had a collection of பஞ்சாங்கம் (Panchangams) or 'Calendars for determining auspicious dates', and a bundle of palm leaf strips (ulla mudyan) inscribed with slokas for astrological purposes. (Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 1909 Vol. VII Thurston, E).

A few of the Valluvans at Venthirayanpattinam have their frontal region of the head shaved, but leave the other region to have its normal growth of hair, which, they tie with a knot at the back. Others have their hair cropped. Women folk part their hair in the middle and tie it into a chignon at the back called Kondai (கொண்டை). Young girls plait their hair at the back.

The men are seen wearing short dhoties and upper cloth or towel like any other villager. One or two wear shirts. When they work in the fields, they tuft up the Dhoti and tie the upper cloth as a headgear. The women folk wear coloured sarees of 8 yards. They do not generally wear blouses. They cover their bosom with the "Pallav" of the saree which they throw over the left shoulder and bring one end of it from the rear to the front along the waist. The folds or Kosuvam of the saree is adjusted to the rear side. The boys are seen in shorts, with or without shirts to cover their body. The girls wear skirts and blouses The widows are expected to wear only white sarees, but now this is not strictly observed. They wear even coloured sarees: but the difference between a married woman and widow can be noticed from the absence of flowers on Chignon (கொண்டை), Kumkum and jewels, especially bangles.

The Valluvar women in Vanathiraiyanpattinam wear very few jewels and ornaments. Poverty is the cause of it. The few ornaments which they wear are cheap ones made of silver or base metal. A kammal' (ear stud) in the ear and a few glass bangles are all that could be seen on a woman of ordinary means. One or two young women are however found to wear neck chains, Kappu (bangles), nose-screws and Mattal (ear link). The Tali (marriage badges) to be worn by married women is rather peculiar shaped and no other caste in these parts is known to wear such a type of Tali. It is made of gold and three pronged. Though the good old convention is not to part with it at any cost before one becomes a widow, the local Valluvar women either pledge or sell and thus found bare necked some time. Many women are found with tatoo marks on their arms and legs. They say that when a close relative comes to stay for a few days, a small piece of tatooing is undertaken both by the guest and by the host-lady to remember the occasion. The actual tatooing is however done by Koravars. The men-folk do not wear any jewels, but most of them being saivites are found to wear Rudhraksham round their neck or an image of Lingam.

The staple diet of the Valluvans in Vanathirayanpattinam is both rice and millets, depending upon the availability. If they have both rice and millets, they eat rice for the night meal and keep the millet meal for the morning and for the midday. Normally they consume food thrice a day, but cook only once, and that is after dusk. The night meal is in a solid form and the morning and midday meals are generally in gruel form ("koozh"). When they take their meal in a solid form, they always have a side-dish in the shape of some sauce, prepared with vegetables or dried fish. Occasionally they take mutton and chicken. Unlike the Paraiyans, they do not take beef and they observe certain days like Tuesdays and Fridays as days of obstenance. They generally do not take any beverages like tea or coffee, but they are accustomed to chew pan with tobacco and smoking bidis. No one in this village is learnt to be an addict to alcoholic liquor.

VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Disease Etc.

The Valluvans look generally healthy. They do not appear to be suffering from any disease endemic to the area. It is said that Udayarpalayam area was formerly subject to widespread attacks of guinea-worm, but now after the conversion of the step-wells into draw-wells, the disease is under control. No one in the community is suffering from leprosy, although cases of leprosy are not wanting in these parts. For small ailments, the Valluvans have their own remedies, prepared out of crude drugs, which is a common phenomenon among other

castes too. But when they are laid up with some serious illness, they visit the Government Hospital at Udayarpalayam or Jayankondan. There is a Child Welfare Centre in the village with a midwife attached to it, and the expectant mothers get advice and help from this Centre.

The outskirts of the Valluvar locality in this village are not clean. All sorts of rubbish are strewn alround and no attempts are made to clean them, either by the villagers or by the Panchayat. The drainage water coming out from the houses stagnates as cess pools. During the rainy months, the village site becomes slushy due to water stagnation. There is no latrine in the village. The Valluvans, like other people use the nearby fields for this purpose.

There is a drinking water well in the Paraiar settlement. They take water from it. For bathing they go to a pond closeby. They wash their clothes in this pond. Though the Valluvans claim that they bathe daily, this does not appear to be correct. They do not use soap for cleaning their body. But when they take oil-bath, they use soap-nut powder. They generally wash their clothes with washing soap. Occasionally they have their clothes washed by a Dhobi who belongs to the caste of Puthirai Vannan. They put on sacred ash in their foreheads and present a saintly appearance. They keep the inside of the houses clean and their personal cleanliness appears to be far better than that prevailing among the other Harijan caste people.

VII. Language and Literacy :

Both Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar are indigenous. As such their mother tongue is the regional language of Tamil. In their attempt to elevate their social status, which is discussed in detail under inter-community relationship, some of them memorise a few sanskrit mantras and chant them while officiating as priests. However, they do not seem to have any inclination to learn either Sanskrit or Hindi.

Of the 62,450 Valluvans returned in 1961 Census, 21,358 were reported as literates consisting of 17,420 males and 3,938 females. 2,633 of the male literates and 998 of the female literates belong to urban areas. Among the 10,077 Tiruvalluvars, 3,407 were literates consisting 2,794 males and 613 females. 1,045 of the male literates and 255 of the female literates belong to urban areas. For easy comparability, these figures are presented as percentage along with those for the general population and all the Scheduled Castes put together—

Percentage Literates

	Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
General Population .	37·81	11·57	62·66	36·67
All Scheduled Castes .	20·86	4·23	38·34	13·96
Valluvan	55·61	1·12	55·78	20·90
Tiruvalluvar . .	54·74	8·17	67·73	26·59

(*Basis :* Census of India, Vol. IX Part-II.C(i) and V-A(ii).

Compared with all the Scheduled Castes put together, female literacy among Valluvans in rural areas is less. In all other castes, literacy among Valluvans and Tiruvalluvars are much higher than all the Scheduled Castes. Literacy rates among males exceed those of general population. It would therefore be valuable to proceed a step further and compare, among the literates, the proportional distribution with various educational level.

Percentage Distribution of Educational Levels

Sex		Rural			Urban			
		Literate without educational level	Primary or Junior basic	Matriculation and above	Literates without educational level	Primary or Junior basic	Matriculation or higher Secondary	Above Matriculation or higher Secondary
Males	General Population	78·76	17.47	3.77	52·00	31.67	13·44	2.89
	All Scheduled Castes	82·70	15·83	1·47	61·61	33·66	4·47	0.26
	Valluvan	78·12	20·02	1·87	59·82	33·88	5·77	0.53
	Tiruvalluvar	83·99	14·18	1·83	62·97	30·24	6.51	0.29
Females	General Population	79·46	18·88	1·66	57·45	35·60	6.25	0.70
	All Scheduled Castes	84·35	15·01	0·64	61·77	36·04	2.12	0.07
	Valluvan	84·12	15·10	0·78	63·33	33·87	2.81	Nil
	Tiruvalluvar	81·01	18·44	0·56	52·55	45.49	1.57	0.39

(*Basis* : Census of India, 1961 Vol. IX Part V-A(ii) SCT-III Part A(i) and B(i).)

The above table furnishes a refined picture than the previous one. It is obvious from the table that Valluvans and Tiruvalluvars are far backward from general population in regard to Matriculation and above and are slightly better than the Scheduled Castes in this regard. General trend is that even though their rate of literacy suggests their being educationally forward, they have not progressed very much to attain higher level of education. Their educational attainment by their age group is as follows—

Educational Levels for 100.00 Valluvan/Tiruvalluvar Enumerated in the state (by sex and Age-Group)

Name of Scheduled Caste	Males					Females			
	Age-group	Illiterates	Literates without educational level	Primary or Junior basic	Matriculation and above	Illiterates	Literates without educational level	Primary or Junior basic	Matriculation and above
VALLUVAN	All ages	22·25	21·02	06·16	00·71	43·56	04·97	01·25	00·08
	0—4	06·44	Nil	Nil	Nil	06·72	Nil	Nil	Nil
	5—9	03·47	02·66	00·24	Nil	04·71	01·46	00·04	Nil
	10—14	02·04	02·62	01·56	00·01	04·27	01·14	00·39	Nil
	15—19	01·42	01·73	01·31	00·15	03·37	00·55	00·35	00·03
	20—29	02·53	03·93	01·43	00·37	07·61	01·04	00·30	00·04
	30—44	02·67	04·97	01·01	00·13	08·39	00·57	00·12	Nil
	45+	03·68	05·10	00·61	00·05	08·48	00·21	00·06	Nil
TIRUVALLUVAR	All ages	19·27	21·11	05·60	01·02	46·91	04·21	01·81	00·07
	0—4	05·23	Nil	Nil	Nil	07·18	Nil	Nil	Nil
	5—9	03·28	01·97	00·07	Nil	04·58	01·17	00·04	Nil
	10—14	01·56	02·56	01·25	Nil	04·20	00·97	00·63	00·02
	15—19	01·25	01·47	01·18	00·15	03·65	00·53	00·38	00·02
	20—29	02·20	04·47	01·43	00·51	08·94	00·87	00·46	00·03
	30—44	02·94	05·57	01·14	00·16	09·48	00·48	00·19	Ni
	45+	02·81	05·08	00·53	00·21	08·88	00·19	00·12	Nil

(N—Negligible).

(*Basis* : Census of India, Vol. IX, Part V-A(ii).

The above statement indicates that proportions of those with educational qualifications, whether it be "primary or junior basic" or "Matriculation and above", are higher in the lower age-groups than in the upper age-groups. This is a welcome trend and a sign for their increasing aptitude to get themselves educated. Perhaps this is an impact of the free education with mid-day meals afforded by the State Government.

VIII. Economic Life:

The 1961 Census data indicates that among the 62,450 Valluvans, 15,550 males and 9,699 females were rural workers and 2,526 males and 694 females were urban workers. Corresponding figures for Tiruvalluvars are 10,077; 1,978; 1,733; 961 and 151 respectively. Since rates and ratios will be a better type of measure for comparability, these details, along with the industrial break up, are furnished in the following abstract—

Means of Livelihood

Category	Percentage to total Valluvan in				Percentage to total Tiruvalluvar in			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Workers and Non-workers combined	50·22	49·78	49·71	50·29	42·18	57·82	61·67	38·33
Workers—								
All Categories	29.36	18·32	26·60	07·31	26·11	22·88	38·41	06·04
Cultivator	10·10	05·09	00·67	00·13	10·39	07·51	01·12	00·36
Agricultural labourer	07·98	09·59	01·78	01·66	04·03	11·06	00·16	00·08
Live stock, forestry, hunting etc.	00.38	00.15	00.99	00.85	00.16	00.05	01.96	00.40
Household Industry	00·90	00·46	00·38	00·37	01·73	00·33	00·60	00·00
Manufacturing other than household Industry	01·41	00·10	05·13	00·82	02·61	00·40	07·07	00·36
Construction	00·23	N	01·15	00·13	00·46	00·05	00·68	00·04
Trade and Commerce	00·37	00·18	02·21	00·54	00·44	00·30	01·32	00·40
Transport, Storage and Communication	00·24	00·00	01·66	00·03	00·32	00·00	01·24	00·00
Other Services	07·74	02·74	12·63	02·78	05·98	03·17	24·26	04·40
Non-workers	20·85	31·47	23·11	42·98	16·07	34·94	23·26	32·29

N—Negligible.

(*Basis* : Census of India, Vol. IX, Part IV-A(i) SCT-I Part (A).

In the rural sector 48% of Valluvan and 49% of Tiruvalluvar are workers against 55% among all the Scheduled Castes and 50% among the general population. Women participation is 30% for Valluvan and 47% for Tiruvalluvar against 43% for Scheduled Castes and 37% for general population. Rate of women participation in the labour force in the urban sector decreases by 8% for Valluvan and 33% for Tiruvalluvar from that of rural, while the total labour force reduces by 14% for the former and by 5% for the latter. Urban working force among Valluvan, Tiruvalluvar, Scheduled Castes and general population are 34%; 44%; 42%; and 34% respectively, urban working force among Valluvan, Tiruvalluvar, Scheduled Castes and among Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar, agricultural operations are the main source of livelihood followed by other services, which includes their traditional occupation of priesthood and astrology. Other Services occupy the first place in the urban sector, followed by manufacturing in the case of urban males and agricultural operations in the case of urban females.

Occupational classification of Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar, returned as workers in 1961 Census, on the basis of the code structure laid down by the occupation unit of the Directorate General of Settlement and Employment. Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India are available in greater detail in Table SCT VII of Census of India, 1961 Vol. IX Part V-A (ii). Occupations which have reported less than 1% of the total workers in each sex are of little significance. Number of workers in other occupations are indicated below :—

Significant Occupations Among Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar

Code Number and Description of significant occupation	Valluvan		Tiruvalluvar	
	No. of Males	No. of Females	No. of Males	No. of Females
1	2	3	4	5
031 to 033 Non-Allopathic Physician .	200	11	31	2
050 to 059 Teachers	362	48	60	7
0X0 to 0X1 Religious workers ordained and non-ordained . .	239	2	25	1
0X2 Astrologers, Palmists and related workers	1,775	23	320	6
200 to 290 Clerical and related workers .	252	4	57	3

1	2	3	4	5
301 Working proprietors, retail trade .	176	76	34	14
411 Animals, Birds and Insects rearing .	100	22	4	..
415 Plantation labourers . . .	85	95	25	10
700 to 709 Spinners, Weavers and related workers	326	158	56	20
710 to 719 Tailors, Cutters and related workers	194	5	71	4
750 to 759 Mechanists, Plumbers, Welders, Platers and related workers .	221	..	37	..
770 Carpenters	367	1	140	..
810 to 819 Potters, Kilnmen, Glass and Clay formers and related workers .	12	6	57	15
820 to 829 Food and Beverage workers .	136	61	16	22
842 Cheroot, Cigar and Bidi makers .	81	34	35	..
850—859 Basketry weavers and other such craftsmen	165	130	32	13
890—899 General labourers . . .	1,944	1,573	455	326
900 to 909 Watchmen, Chowkidars and related workers	88	..	41	...
920 Waiters and other related workers .	32	1	48	..
931 Cleaners, Sweepers and Watermen .	43	14	52	4
Cultivators	5410	2706	813	578
Agricultural Labourers . . .	4,397	5,239	309	340
All workers (including negligible) proportion in other occupations) .	18,076	10,393	2,939	1,884

The above table indicates that agricultural operations are the chief occupation followed by general labour. Other than these two predominant occupations and their traditional occupations significant proportions are recorded against carpentry, teaching, spinning and weaving and clerical and related workers. These are clear indications of greater occupational mobility. A good proportion of males as well as females have been recorded against working proprietors of retail trade and food and beverage workers. These categories represent petty shops and street vending of eatables like rice cake (இட்லி), Vadai (வடை) etc.

Their position as agriculturists at Vanathiranpattinam, where the case study was undertaken, may perhaps give a very broad outline of the nature and extent of their dependency on such means of livelihood.

In Vanathirayapattinam, it is seen that all the households own lands and they do personal cultivation. The extent of land owned by them is however small. The lands owned by them are dry and they raise in them "punja" crops like millets, groundnut, pulses, gingelly etc. The cultivation practices adopted by them are similar to the ones adopted by the other people of the locality. They do not have anything peculiar in this respect. They also go out as seasonal agricultural labourers. Some even go to Thanjavur district during the harvest season for this purpose.

Their traditional occupation of astrology and officiating as priests in the marriage ceremonies of Paraiyars and Pallars are practiced as Chief occupation by a limited few, whereas most of them pursue astrology and priesthood as a subsidiary occupation in combination with cultivation, as no steady income could be expected from the former. Such professional duties include writing charms for sick people, preparing horoscopes and making forecast of good or evil by means of cobalistic square marked on the ground.

Practice of Astrology :

The total figure of 2,124 persons referred to in the table against astrology refers to those who pursue it as a main occupation. Many others in the community, as in Vanathiraiyanpattnam, practice it as a subsidiary occupation along with cultivation, agricultural labour, or teaching profession. Though most of them pursue it as a means of livelihood with an imperfect knowledge of it, some in the community have risen up to eminent positions. Such eminence is usually attributed to a divine gift rather than to a masterly study of the text-books on astrology. Actually the science of astrology, if it could be called a science, is based on the belief that the future of the individual is to a large extent controlled by the planetary positions, which differ from individual to individual depending upon his time of birth. The belief in astrology by the people of Tamilnad is intense and universal. No marriage alliance is settled without a reference to the Jathagams (horoscopes) which give the planetary positions of the individuals to be married. In certain circles, no major business commitment is entered into without consulting the astrologers. The prosperity of the astrologers to a large extent is based on the general weakness of man to know about his future, without sufficient thought as to whether all the predictions, read through by the astrologers, come true or not.

The prosperity of the Valluvan astrologers is to a large extent dependent upon this desire of mankind. Though the Valluvans belong to a Scheduled Caste, their clientele in this respect are mostly the caste-Hindus. The other Scheduled Caste people are too poor to worry about their future and they do not generally consult the Valluvans on astrology. So the earnings of Valluavans by way of astrology come from the caste-Hindus who call them for this purpose.

When a consultation with a Valluvan is necessary, the caste-Hindu does not usully visit the house of the Valluvan. The latter on the other hand visits the house of the caste-Hindu and he is admitted to sit in the pial or the front verandah of the house. This is one step more than what is allowed to other Harijans. The fee given for such a consultation is a small one, usually not exceeding a rupee. It may even be a quarter-rupee. The Valluvans however see to it that the fee is paid in advance as a matter of tradition, sanctified by a belief that the predictions come true only if the fee is paid in advance.

The consultations may be of different kinds and may be for different purposes. When a child is born, the Valluvan may be asked to prepare Jathagam for fixing the planetary position from the birth-time. If the Jathagam foretells any *thosham* (blemish), he is asked to set it right by tying a talisman (*Thayathu*) or by offering special prayers to propitiate the bad effects of particular planets. When a marriage alliance is contemplated he is asked to see from the Jathagams, whether the couple have "*Porutham*", i.e. whether they match each other in all respects. If they agree, he is asked to fix an auspicious day for the celebration of the marriage. For girls, the Jathagam is asked to be prepared from the time of attainment of puberty. The Valluvan is also consulted, whenever a big business undertaking is contemplated or when a series of bad things occur in the house indicating a bad time for the family. He usually prescribes a remedial measure to offset the effect of bad stars. For all these consultations he receives a fee which is always moderate.

For those who do not have Jathagams, the predictions are made by reading the palm. Palmistry is practised by a few Valluvans as a sideline to cover up cases without Jathagams. They also undertake to tell "*Arudams*", which are mostly predictions of a guessing nature. The starting point for such a guess-prediction may be from a chance utterance of a number, the name of a flower, or the time of consultation. The general belief in the village is that "*Arudams*" come true, only if the astrologer has some divine gift in him. He is consulted in this way when there is theft of some property. The astrologer could say in which direction the stolen property has gone, and in whose hands it is now. Such a consultation would cost only Twenty Five Paise.

The know-how about the trade of astrology is a trade secret, usually handed over from father to son. Besides, the apprentices may also have to read through, such books as *'Sathaga Alagaram'*, 'Sathaga Puthathi', 'Sathaga-Aparanam' etc. The Valluvans of Vanathirayanpattinam also possess some old palm leaf books. Whether the Valluvans could master them or not, they do not fail to exhibit them before their consultants to instil belief in them.

Practice as purohits or priests :

Besides astrology, the Valluvans also go as purohits in celebrating marriage ceremonies. The clientale in this respect is however confined to Paraiyars and Pallars. They receive a small fee for officiating on these occasions. They may also get one or two measures of grains. In this they imitate the Brahmins in extracting fees, grains, and vegetables while officiating as purohits. They copy many of the rituals performed by Brahmin Purohits, such as burning a Homam, chanting the Mantra of Sanskrit origin.

IX. Life Cycle :

Birth :

Delivery among the Valluvans usually takes place in the house of the husband unless it be the first delivery in which case, the expectant mother is taken to her parents house during the 7th or 9th month. They do not have any separate pollution shed in the village for giving birth to children. The delivery takes place in a room within the living house. Delivery is normally attended to by elderly woman of the caste, who has some experience by constant practice. Pollution is observed for 7 to 9 days. On the 7th or 9th day, the mother and child are given bath and taken home after worshipping Murugan. The placenta is buried in the backyard. There is no fixed day on which a name is given to the child. Naming the child may be done at any time before the child attains two or three years according to convenience. It is done by the respected eldest member of the family. Within this period, the child is usually taken to any nearby Murugan temple frequented by one and all and its head tonsured by the family barber. Ear-boring ceremony is also done on this occasion.

Puberty :

When a girl attains puberty, pollution is observed for 15 days. During this period, she is kept in a partitioned enclosure within the house. The partitioning may either be with green leaves or with gunny sack. On the 16th day, the girl is given a ceremonious bath, after which she has free access into any part of the house. The temporary partitioned shed put up, is dismantled and burnt. During these

15 days, the girl is given rich diet consisting of eggs, sweetened rice-flour, chicken etc. On the 16th day, the maternal uncle presents her with new clothes. The close relatives are invited and fed. During subsequent menstruation, the girl is secluded till the period is over.

Of the 31,312 Valluvan males and 31,138 females; 17,074 and 13,376 are reported in 1961 Census as 'never married' representing 55% and 43% as against 54% and 43% among all the scheduled castes and 55% and 43% among the general population respectively, indicating more or less equal proportions among the three categories of population. However, corresponding figures are slightly lower among the Tiruvalluvar (i.e.) 50% for males and 39% for females. If such proportions are worked out for each of the age-groups 0-14; 15-44 and 45+; it is revealed that same trend prevails in the age-group 0-14 among all the categories, including Tiruvalluvar. Broadly speaking, this means that the age at first marriage does not have large deviations, if there is any. The noteworthy feature is among the widowed females in the age groups 15-44 and 45+. Their proportions in the former group are 8% for Valluvan as well as Tiruvalluvar, but only 7% for general population as well as all the Scheduled Castes. In the latter age-group of 45+, the proportions are 59% for Tiruvalluvar, 55% for Valluvan 57% for Scheduled Castes and 54% for the general population. Valluvan and Tiruvalluvar do not allow remarriages for their widowed women. This may be one of the causes for the higher proportion of widowhood. Whether this is the sole and only one cause or whether there are other causes like a higher survivance rate for wives than for husbands is a matter for specialised study.

From the enquiries at Vanathirayanpattinam it is understood that when a husband dies, the Tali or marriage badge is removed and the widow is not expected to marry any one else. But in practice, if a girl is widowed early in her life, no objection is raised to her being kept as a concubine by any one within the community. They live like any other husband and wife and their children are recognised as legal heirs. The only difference is that tali or marriage badge is not tied. Divorce among Valluvar or Tiruvalluvar is very rare.

Marriage :

Marriage for the first time is arranged by elders. The initiative for a marriage is always made by the groom's side. If the proposal is mutually agreeable among the parents or guardians of the prospective bride and groom, then the amount to be given as bride-price by the groom's parents, ranging from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 100/- is negotiated and settled. Afterwards, on a day fixed by common consent, caste elders are invited and in their presence betrothal is celebrated by the exchange of 'Pan-supari'.

In his report on Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. VII (P. 306) Thurston explains in greater detail the ceremonial aspects of social customs and manners. Now-a-days one or two of them may be noticed here and there, but such customs and manners are not universely adopted by all the members of the community. Since they are distributed throughout the state, they have orientated themselves to the regional customs of the Caste Hindus rather than preserving any of their traditional customs. The following may parhaps be the broader aspects of their customs.

The Valluvans arrange the marriage of their girls only after they attain puberty. The marriage ceremony takes place in the house of the bridegroom. A pandal is erected in front of the house. The girl's party arrive on the previous day evening. A number of ceremonies are undergone. Some elderly men in the caste officiate as Purohit for such Ceremonies. The groom ties the Tali round the neck of the girl in the presence of the assembled guests. It is not usual for them to make a new Tali for each marriage. They may for this purpose borrow a Tali from somebody having it. It will be returned to the owner after a few days. A vegetarian dinner is given to the assembled guests on the marriage day. The Paraiyars play pipes and drums on the occasion. A marriage among the Valluvans may cost for either side anything from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1,000/- depending upon the status of the parties contracting the marriage.

Death :

When any one dies in the community, the close relatives are intimated through the local menials. The corpse is bathed and adorned with new clothes. A bier is constructed of green bamboos and decorated with flowers. The body is taken in the bier to the burial ground. In most places, the burial is in a lying posture with head towards the south. In some places, it is said that the body is buried in a sitting posture. The eldest son pushes the first shod of earth into the pit in which the corpse is to be buried. The last day obsequies are performed on the 16th day. The relatives revisit the place of burial and perform pooja to a Lingam moulded for the occasion with earth. Rice and edibles are presented in a leaf before the Lingam and left there to be eaten by crows. The party returns home and the members take oilbath which marks the end of the period of pollution. It is on this day, Tali is removed from the widow of the deceased.

X. Religion :

The Valluvans are broadly divided into two sects, the Saivite and the Vaishnavite. But these two sects are not endogamous. However intermarriages from members of one sect to another are known to

exist. The Vaishnavite sect worship Murugan besides Vishnu. The Saivite sect wear Rudhraksham (Sacred beads) or a replica of a Lingam in their neck. In Vanathirayanpattinam, the Valluvans worship local Murugan as their principal deity. They celebrate the *Murugan Thirunal* every year in the month of Panguni (March-April). On this occasion elderly religious men purify themselves by taking baths and dance round the village with Kavadi (காவடி) to the accompaniment of drums played by Paraiyans. They visit the Murugan temple at Palni very frequently. The important festivals observed by the Valluvans are the Pongal, Deepavali, and the 18th of Adi (July-August) when the river is considered to flow with its fresh water to its brim.

XI. Inter-community Relationship :

Adi Dravidas, Paryans, Pallans and Chakkiliyans constitute the majority of Scheduled Castes in Madras State representing 29%, 25%, 16% and 13% respectively to the total scheduled castes returned at 1961 Census. None among other castes has recorded more than 5%. Ali Dravida is rather a movement and congregation of suppressed communities than a caste in its strict sense. Valluvans, consisting of 1.03% of the Scheduled Castes of the State; and Tiruvalluvars, consisting of 0.17%; are the traditional priests of Parayans and Pallans but do not condescend to serve as priests for Chakkiliars or other minority Scheduled Castes. They assume high sounding sanskritised names for themselves and put on sacred thread while officiating as priests and on ceremonious occasions. A few of them assume high sounding gothra names. They manage to memorise a few sanskrit mantras and chant them while officiating as priests. As such they are respected among the Scheduled Castes similar to Brahmins among the general population. But they are not so much respected among the non-Scheduled Castes, mainly for the reasons themselves being a Scheduled Caste, and secondly serving as traditional priests for two of the major scheduled caste of the State. However Valluvans claim a higher status in view of their being priests and in any case not less than to that of Vellala Pandaram, a non-scheduled non-Brahmin caste of traditional priests and temple servants. Thus Valluvans and Tiruvalluvars may better be described as a combination of two positions—the position of untouchables in the eyes of caste Hindus and the position of a superior caste in the eyes of untouchables and Scheduled Castes. They exist at all levels in the context of the reference group. This means that they are haunted by a sense of status insecurity, which is likely to be manifested in their personality type, as well as culture pattern. As a result, they are likely to swing from one extreme of sanskritisation to another extreme of parochialisation. Both would apply frantic efforts for escape from a cultural dilemma.

XII. Structure of social control, prestige and Leadership :

In his Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 1909 (P. 306) Thurston state that the affairs of the Community are adjusted by a caste council and there are, in most places, two hereditary officers called Kolkaran and Kanakkan (Tamil equivalents of Chief and accountant). Further he states that any betrothal ceremony is the proper time for setting caste disputes by the village council. At present the caste hierarchy is not well organised. The community is spread throughout the state with no great concentration in any one place. In villages where they live in greater number, they elect some one among them as a head and call him as "periathana-karan" (பெரிய தனக்காரன்) of the caste. Social discipline within the community in the village is enforced through him. With the help of other elders in the community, he decides on any issues brought to him for arbitration. Difference of opinion on any issue within the community members are not taken cognizance of Even if they are, the decisions of the Panchayat are not enforced strictly. However, matters affecting castes solidarity and prestige, such as adultery with outside the caste, are viewed seriously and the offenders are sometimes ex-communicated.

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Extract on "VALLUVAN" from 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Volume VII — Pages 303 to 311 By E. Thurston and Rangachari, Madras 1909.

VALLUVAN : The Valluvans are summed up by Mr. H. A. Stuart* as being "the priests of the Paraiyans and Pallans. Tiruvalluvar, the famous Tamil Poet, author of the Kural, belonged to this Caste, which is usually regarded as a sub-division of Paraiyans. It appears that the Valluvans were priests to the Pallava kings before the introduction of the Brahmans, and even for some time after it. @ In an unpublished Vatteluthu inscription, believed to be of the ninth century, the following sentence occurs 'Sri Velluvam Puvanavan, the Uvac'chan (Oc'chan) of this temple, will employ daily sixmen for doing the temple service'. Again, the Valluvans must have formerly held a position at least equal to that of the Vellalas, if the story that Tiruvalluva Nayanar married a vellala girl is true & He is said to have "refused to acknowledge the distinctions of caste, and succeeded in obtaining a Vellala woman as his wife, from whom a section of the Valluvans say it has its descent. As their ancestor amused himself in the intervals between his studies by weaving, they employ themselves in mending torn linen, but chiefly live by astrology, and by acting as priests of Pariyans, and officiating at their funerals and marriages, though some refuse to take part in the former inauspicious ceremony and leave the duty to those whom they consider impure Valluvans called Paraiya Tadas. Another section of the Valluvans is called Alvar Dasari or Tavadadhari (those who wear the necklace of tulsi beads.). Both Saivites and Vaishnavites eat together, but do not intermarry. Unlike Paraiyans, they forbid remarriage of widows and even polygamy, and all males above twelve wear the sacred thread". According to one account, the Valluvans are the descendants of an alliance between a Brahman sage and a Paraiyan woman, whose children complained to their father of their lowly position. He blessed them, and told them that they would become very clever astrologers, and, in consequence, much respected. At the Travancore Census, 1901, the Valluvans were defined as a sub-division of the Pulayas, for whom they perform priestly functions.

"Both men and women are employed as astrologers and doctors, and are often consulted by all classes of people. In many villages they have the privilege of receiving from each ryot a handful of

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* Madras Census Report, 1891, and Manual of the North Arcot District.

@ See Divakaram and Chudamani Nikhandu ;

& See Life of Tiruvalluvar, in Lazarus' edition of the Kural.

grain during the harvest time".* Of three Valluvans, whom I interviewed at Coimbatore, one, with a flowing white beard, had a lingam wrapped up in a pink cloth round the neck, and a charm tied in a pink cloth round the right upper arm. Another with a black beard, had a salmon-coloured turban. The third was wearing a discarded British soldier's tunic. All wore necklaces of rudraksha (Elaeocarpus Ganitrus) beads, and their foreheads were smeared with oblong patches of sandal paste. Each of them had a collection of panchangam, or calendars for determining auspicious dates, and a bundle of palm leaf strips (ulla mudyan) inscribed with slokas for astrological purposes. Their professional duties included writing charms for sick people, preparing horoscopes, and making forecasts of good or evil by means of cabalistic squares marked on the ground. Some Valluvans would have us believe that those who officiate as priests are not true Valluvans, and that the true Valluvan, who carries out the duties of an astrologer, will not perform priestly functions for the Paraiyans.

The most important sub-divisions of the Valluvans, returned at times of census, are Paraiyan, Tavidadari, and Tiruvalluvan. From information supplied to me, I gather that there are two main divisions, called Arupathu Katchi (sixty house section) and Narpathu Katchi (forty house section). The former are supposed to be descendants of Nandi Gurukkal, and take his name as their gotra. The gotra of the latter is Sidambara Sayichya Ayyangar, Sidambara, or Chidambaram, is the site of one of the most sacred Siva temples. The subdivision Alvar claims descent from Tiruppan Alvar, one of the twelve Vaishnava saints. In the Tanjore District, the Valluvans have exogamous septs or pattaperu, named after persons, e.g., Marulipichan, Govindazhvan, etc.

The Valluvans include in their ranks both Vaishnavites and Saivites. The majority of the latter, both males and females, wear the lingam. The affairs of the community are adjusted by a caste council and there are, in most places, two hereditary officers called Kolkaran and Kanakkan.

At the betrothal ceremony the bride's money (Pariyan), betel, jewels, flowers, and fruit, are placed in the future bride's lap. The money ranges from seven to ten rupees if the bridegroom's village is on the same side of a river as the bride's and from ten to twenty rupees if it is on the other side. A small sum of money, called uramurai kattu (money paid to relations) and panda varisai (money paid in the pandal) is also paid by the bridegroom's party for a feast of toddy to the relations. This is the proper time for settling caste disputes by the village council. On the the wedding day, the milk-

*Madras Census Report, 1891,

post, consisting of a green bamboo pole, is set up, and a number of pots, brought from the potter's house, are placed near it. On the dais are set four lamps, viz., an ordinary brass lamp, Kudavilakku (pot light), alankara vilakku (ornamental light), and paligai vilakku (seedling light). The bride and bridegroom bring some sand, spread it on the floor near the dais, and place seven leaves on it. Cotton threads, dyed with turmeric, are tied to the pots and the milk-post. On the leaves are set cakes and rice, and the contracting couple worship the pots and the family gods. The Valluvan priest repeats a jumble of corrupt sanskrit, and ties the kankanams (threads) on their wrists. They are then led into the house, and garlanded with jasmine or *Nerium* flowers. The pots are arranged on the dais, and the sand is spread thereon close to the milk-post. Into one of the pots the female relations put grain seedlings, and four other pots are filled with water by the bridegroom's party. A small quantity of the seedlings is usually wrapped up in a cloth, and placed over the seedling pot. Next morning the bundle is untied, and examined, to see if the seedlings are in good condition. If they are so, the bride is considered a worthy one; if not, the bride is either bad, or will die prematurely. The usual nalagu ceremony is next performed, bride and bridegroom being anointed with oil, and smeared with *Phaseolus Mungo* paste. This is followed by the offering of food on eleven leaves to the ancestors and house gods. Towards evening, the dais is got ready for its occupation by the bridal couple, two planks being placed on it, and covered with cloths lent by a washerman. The couple, sitting on the planks, exchange betel and paddy nine or twelve times, and rice twenty-seven times. The priest kindles the sacred fire (homam), and pours some ghi (clarified butter) into it from a mango leaf. The bridegroom is asked whether he sees Arundati (the pole-star) thrice, and replies in the affirmative. The tali is shown the sky, smoked over burning camphor, and placed on a tray together with a rupee. After being blessed by those present, it is tied round the neck of the bride by the bridegroom, who has his right leg on her lap. On the second day there is a procession through the village, and, on the following day, the wrist-threads are removed.

In some places, the Valluvans, at their marriages, like the Pallis and some other castes, use the pandamutti, or pile of pots reaching to the top of the pandal.

The Saivite lingam wearers bury their dead in a sitting posture in a niche excavated in the side of the grave. After death has set in, a coconut is broken, and camphor burnt. The corpse is washed by relations, who bring nine pots of water for the purpose. The lingam is tied on to the head, and a cloth bundle, containing a rupee, seven bilva (*Aegle Marmelos*) leaves, nine twigs of the tulsi

(*Ocimum sanctum*), and nine *Leucas aspera* flowers, to the right arm. The corpse is carried to the grave on a car surmounted by five brass vessels. The grave is purified by the sprinkling of cow's urine and cowdung water before the corpse is lowered into it. On the way to the burial-ground, the priest keeps on chanting various songs, such as "This is Kailasa. This is Kailasa thillai (Chidambaram). Our request is this. Nallia Mutthan of the Nandidarma gotra died on Thursday in the month Thai in the year Subakruthu. He must enter the fourth stage (sayichyam), passing through Salokam, Samipa, and Sarupa. He crosses the rivers of stones, of thorns, of fire, and of snakes, holding the tail of the bull Nandi. To enable him to reach heaven safely, we found rice, and put lights of rice". The priest receives a fee for his services, which he places before an image made on the grave after it has been filled in. The money is usually spent in making a sacred bull, lingam, or stone slab, to place on the grave. On the third day after death, the female relatives of the deceased pour milk within the house into a vessel, which is taken by the male relatives to the burial-ground, and offered at the grave, which is cleaned. A small platform, made of mud, and composed of several tiers, decreasing in size from below upwards, is erected thereon, and surmounted by a lingam. At the north and south corners of this platform, a bull and paradesi (mendicant) of mud are placed, and at each corner leaves are laid, on which the offerings in the form of rice, fruits, vegetables, etc., are laid. The final death ceremonies are celebrated on the seventeenth day. A pandal (booth) is set up, and closed in with cloths. Within it are placed a pot and five pestles and mortars, to which threads are tied. Five married women, taking hold of the pestles, pound some rice contained in the pot, and with the flour make a lamp, which is placed on a tray. The eldest son of the deceased goes, with the lamp on his head, to an enclosure having an entrance at the four cardinal points. The enclosure is either a permanent one with mud walls, or temporary one made out of mats. Within the enclosure, five pots are set up in the centre, and four at each side. The pots are cleansed by washing them with the urine of cows of five different colours, red, white, black, grey and spotted. Near the pots the articles required for puja (worship) are placed, and the officiating priest sits near them. The enclosure is supposed to represent heaven, and the entrances are the gates leading thereto, before which food is placed on leaves. The eldest son, with the lamp, stands at the eastern entrance, while Siva is worshipped. The priest then repeats certain stanzas, of which the following is the substance. "You who come like Siddars (attendants in the abode of Siva) at midnight, muttering Siva's name, why do you come near Sivapadam? I will pierce you with my trident. Get away. Let these be taken to yamapuri, or hell". Then Siva and Parvati, hearing the noise, ask "Oh ! sons, who are you that keep on saying Hara,

Hara? Give out truly your names and nativity". To which the reply is given "Oh ! Lord, I am a devotee of that Being who graced Markandeya, and am a Virasaiva by faith. I have come to enter heaven. We have all led pure lives, and have performed acts of charity. So it is not just that we should be prevented from entering. Men who ill-treat their parents, or superiors, those addicted to all kinds of vice, blasphemers, murderers, perverts from their own faith and priests, and other such people, are driven to hell by the southern gate". At this stage, a thread is passed round the enclosure. The son, still bearing the lamp, goes from the eastern entrance past the south and western entrances, and, breaking the thread, goes into the enclosure through the northern entrance. The Nandikol (hereditary village official) then ties a cloth first round the head of the eldest son, and afterwards round the heads of the other sons and agnates.

The Valluvans abstain from eating beef. Though they mix freely with the Paraiyans, they will not eat with them, and never live in the Paraiyan quarter.

The Valluvans are sometimes called Pandaram or Valluva Pandaram. In some places, the priests of the Valluvans are Vellala Pandarams.

Extract on "TIRUVALLUVAN" from 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India' Volume VII—Page 35.

TIRUVALLUVAN : A sub-division of Valluvan. Tiruvalluvar, the author of the Kural, is said to have belonged to the Valluva caste.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" Census of India, 1891, Volume XIII MADRAS, The Report on the Census, by H. A. STUART, of the Indian Civil Service; Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society; Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras. Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press — 1893, pages 267-268

437. VALLUVAN 39,831 : The Valluvans are the priests of the Paraiyans and Pallans. Tiruvalluvar, the famous Tamil poet, author of the Kural, belonged to this caste, which is usually regarded as a sub-division of Uaraiyans. It appears that the Valluvans were priests to the Pallava kings before the introduction of the Brahmans, and even for some time after it* In an unpublished Vatteluttu inscription, believed to be of the 9th century, the following sentence occurs : "இத்தளி உவச்சன் ஸ்ரீ வல்லுவம் பூவணவன் நியதம் ஆருளிட்டு, உவச்ச பணி செய்பவன்" (Sri Valluvam Puvanavan, the Uvachchan or Ochchan of this temple will employ daily six men for doing the temple service). Again the Valluvans must have formerly held a position at least equal to that of the Vellalas, if the story that Tiruvalluva Nayanar married a Vellala girl is true.†

They have returned 82 sub-divisions, of which the following are the most important :—

Sub-division	Strength	Local distribution
Paraiyan	3,461	South Arcot (2,297)
Tavidadari	3,286	South Arcot (3,102)
Tiruvalluvan	3,388	Salem (780) and Coimbatore (1,120)

Valluvan has been returned both as caste and sub-division by 22,875 individuals. In addition to their function as priests both men and women are employed as astrologers and doctors, and are often consulted by all classes of people. In many villages they have the privilege of receiving from each ryot a handful of grain during the

*See Divakaram and Chudamani Nikhandu.

†See Life of Tiruvalluvar in Lazarus's edition of the Kural.

harvest time. They nominally worship both Siva and Vishnu. Their girls are married either before or after puberty. Re-marriage of widows is practised in some places. They will eat all flesh except beef and pork. They are sometimes called Pandaram or Valluva Pandaram.

In Malabar the Valluvans are boatmen. I am not at present in a position to say whether they were originally the same as the Tamil *Valluvans,* but this seems probable.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" Census of India, 1901 *volume XV Madras, Part—I : Report, Madras,* 1902, *page* 182 *by Francis, W.*

VALLUVAN: (54,760, M. 2)—A caste of priests to the Paraiyans and Pallans who were originally Paraiyans themselves, but now will not dine or intermarry with them. (**North Arcot Man.,** Vol. I, pp. 199-200; C. R. 1891, para 437). In Malabar, it is the name of a class of boat-men.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" from 'Census of India, 1921 Volume XIX' Cochin. Part—I Report, Part—II —Imperial Tables, P. GOVINDA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State, Ernakulam. Printed at the Cochin Government Press, 1922 *page* 67.

VALLUVAN (30) : They are the priests of Parayans.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" from 'Census of India, 1921 *Volume XXV', Travancore Part I—Report, Part II—Imperial Tables By MURARI S. KRISHNAMURTHI AYYAR. M.B. & C.M., Fellow of The Royal Statistical Society, Census Commissioner, Travancore. Trivandrum : Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press,* 1922 *page* 115.

VALLUVAN : The priests of the Parayans.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" from 'Census of India, 1931 *Volume XXI'—COCHIN, Part I—Report, Part II—A&B—Tables By T. K. SANKARA MENON, M.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State.* 1933 *Printed by the Superintendent, Cochin Govt. Press, Ernakulam page* 275.

VALLUVAN (212) : A Tamil caste of priests to Parayans. They consider themselves superior to Parayans and will not dine or inter-marry with them.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" from Census of India, 1911, *Volume XVIII Part—I Report by C. ACHYUTA MENON, B.A., Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin State page* 79.

VALLUVAN (502) : A Tamil caste of priests to Parayans They consider themselves superior to Parayans and will not dine or inter-marry with them.

Extract on "VALLUVAN" from Census of India, 1911, *Volume XXIII, Part I — Report, Trivandrum* 1912, *by SUBRAMHANYA AIYAR M.A., Dewan Peishcar & Census Commissioner page* 268.

VALLUVAN (982) : **The priests of the Parayan. They are also** engaged as astrologers and Physicians and consulted by all classes of people.

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