

An Ethnographic Study Of Paliyar Tribes Of Kodaikanal Region In India

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ABSTRACT

The Paliyar tribes have a traditional identity with certain territories of community living especially in the Palani hills, Kodaikanal hills, and Sirumalai hills of Tamil Nadu, located on the Western Ghats continuing from the Anamalai hills of Kerala. The tribal economy is labelled as primitive economy. Most of the tribes depend on agriculture, by collecting fruits, cultivating vegetables and honey for their existence. This paper is contemporary ethnographic research to understand the health, social, economic, and level of education attained by the Paliyar tribes who live in Sirumalai hills in India. This paper also highlights the various ceremonies and rituals celebrated by them on several occasions of their day-to-day life like birth ceremonies, naming functions, marriage, life, and death. The paper relies on the explored authentic facts stated through quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the various dimensions of life and livelihood of the Paliyar tribes in association with their inseparable life in the forest and the influencing determinants.

KEYWORDS: Paliyar Tribes; Livelihood; Health; Education; Ethnographic studies; Sustainable practices of tribes; Contemporary Ethnography.

JEL classification: JI1, JI2, JI3, JR1, JZ13

I. INTRODUCTION

India has the largest tribal population next to Africa, as per the report of 2006 “Major Tribals and Bands.” In India roughly among 4,635 populations, 532 are tribes, which includes 72

tribes of primitive origin (36 hunter-gatherers are also included). The tribal group consists of 8.6% of the entire population of India (Samvaad,n.d.; Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021). The census of 2011 states that 72.14% million and 7.95 lakhs of tribal population and the state population is about 1.1% (Ministry of Tribal Affairs,2021).

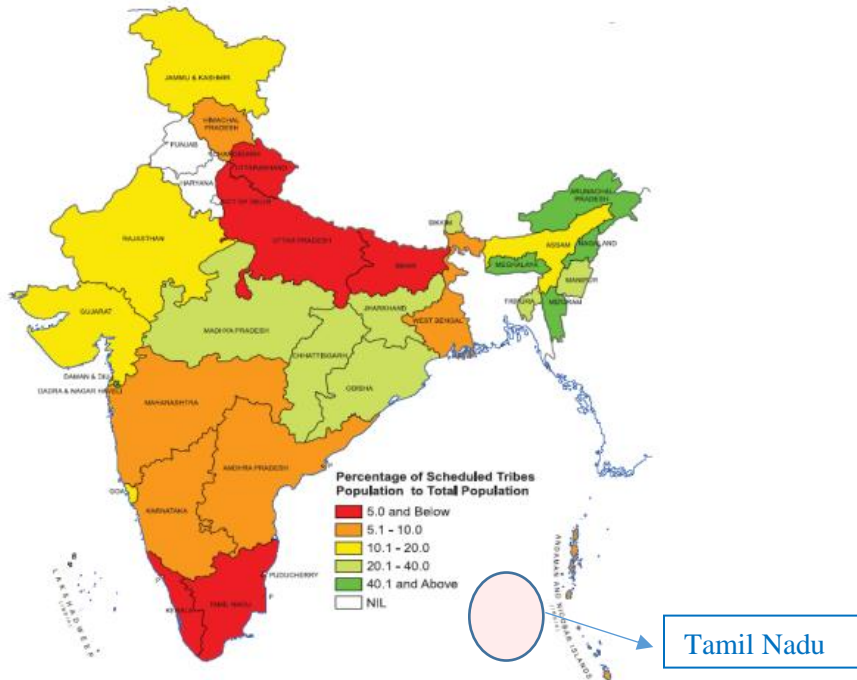


Figure 1. Percentage of Scheduled Tribe Population in 2011 (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014).

Constitution of India assures social and economic justice, equality of status and opportunities guarantees individual's dignity of all the citizens (Rao, 2012). Article 342(1) says that the President with regard to any State or Union territory delivers a public notification after the consultation with the Governor specifies the tribes or tribal communities or parts of a group or groups within tribes or tribal communities. The Constitution through the Governor's declaration considers the Scheduled Tribes in relation to the State or Union territory and by law the Parliament may comprise or reject from the list of Scheduled Tribes which is stated in the notification under Clause (1) any tribe or tribal community or part or group within any tribe or community. Religion is not a fact of consideration as far as Scheduled Tribes are concerned. After independence, the major concern was the welfare and development of the weaker sections of the society.

The tribes have a traditional local association with the terrain or area where the tribal groups enjoy a collective command over the natural resources. The Paliyar tribes in Sirumalai are more associated with the territory and with their particular community. Paliyar tribes officially recorded as Palliyan, often highly observed in small, isolated packets all along the Western

Ghats from the Palani hills in the North down to the Tirunelveli hills in the South and Kerala (M, 2008; Kasturi, 2019). Paliyars are considered as food gathering, hunting and food collection tribal group under the economic category. They are one of the 36 Scheduled Tribes (STs) of Tamil Nadu given in the Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976 (Saravanan, 2009). According to Castro & Nielsen (2001) the tribal groups experience grave hardships to obtain access to the services and resources despite various government initiatives for uplifting their population. The outsiders of the tribal areas have emerged as influential cliques that dominate the tribes that eventually sustain the experience of poverty, illiteracy, land alienation, indebtedness, poor infrastructure, and healthcare services (Prakash & Raju, 2010). This paper investigates the socio-economic, culture, lifestyle, and best practices of Paliyars living in the hilly areas of Sirumalai in South India through contemporary ethnographical procedures in the selected villages in the areas of Sirumalai. This ethnographic study has led to a period of one year for collecting relevant data through observation and in-depth interviewing.

2. ABOUT PALIYAR TRIBES

2.1 Paliyar tribe

The word “tribe” has been defined by scholars as the tribal life is a social group with a definite area usually with a definite dialect cultural similarity and uniting organization. Tribal group also includes subgroups namely clans or sibs. A tribe normally has an ancestor and a patron deity (Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford, 2013). The families or groups which constitute the larger tribal units are linked through blood ties as the term is usually used and through religious practices. There is no common definition of tribal peoples, but ILO Convention No 169 takes a practical approach to the issue and provides the objective and subjective criteria for identifying the peoples concerned (Deeb & Marcus, 2011). Thus, their social, cultural, and economic conditions differentiate them from other sections of the national community and their status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations (“Who are the indigenous and tribal peoples?” 2016).

In India there are 427 tribal communities and around 36 tribal communities in Tamil Nadu (Appendix-A-1) and this paper is focused on Paliyar tribes. Even today, many local and indigenous communities in the Asian countries meet their basic needs from the products that they manufacture and sell the products based on their traditional knowledge. Paliyar tribes depend on plant resources mainly for herbal medicines, food, forage, construction of dwellings, making household things, sleeping mats, and for fire and shade. Herbal drugs/ medicines obtained from plants are much safer and this has been proved in the treatment of various ailments. They not only depend on wild plants as sources of food, medicine, fodder, and fuel, but have also established methods of resource management, which may be important to the conservation of some of the world's important habitats (Kirubakaran, 2011b).

2.2 Paliyar before and after independence

Paliyar were living peacefully without any disturbance in the forest in small groups before the arrival of the Europeans. The Mughals as well as the native rulers before the advent of the Britishers looted the resources of the tribes using

their illegitimate power. The tribes were also forced to pay regular taxation through the channel of the Bengal Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, and this served as the beginning of unrest and rebellions in all tribal areas of the country (Gupta, 2008). The widespread tribal resistance movements forced the British administration to negotiate workable peace in the tribal areas and this led to the concept of partially or completely excluded areas of administration in British India. In fact, this made the British administrators to follow a ‘policy of isolation’ and tried to keep the tribes away from the mainstream of national life (Eswarappa, 2017).

After independence the tribal areas remained separated and distributed over several non-tribal states except in the Northeast, where the tribal people had their own states formed along cultural aspects. The then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who framed ‘Tribal Panchsheel’ was later enforced by many commissions and made novel recommendations for the uplift of tribes in India. In the new millennium, the central government had increased the outlay for tribal development which had resulted in the growth of the infrastructural facilities, fulfilment of basic needs and improvement of the living standards, expansion of coverage of the tribal population (“Constitution of India,” 2017). Protective measures have been taken for the welfare of tribes like forests, shifting of cultivation, abolition of bonded labor, rehabilitation of displaced family, land alienation, land reforms, tribal education, vocational training, health, and nutrition in the country over a period of time for the tribes in the country (Kalaiyarasan & Rao, 2012).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a. To study the socio– economic status of Paliyar tribe of Sirumalai region in India.
- b. To comprehend the lifestyle of Paliyar tribe.
- c. To reflect on their best lifestyle practices and enrich their cultural identity.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies which have surveyed on the problems and prospects of tribes and many empirical studies have revealed that majority of the tribes still reside in the rural areas. Tribe signifies a group of people who speak a common language, observe uniform rules of special organization, and work together for a common purpose (Ramya, 2014). Another typical characteristic of the tribe is that they have a common name belonging to a constant territory and they follow a uniform culture or way of the lifestyle and a common tradition which descended from their ancestors (Bharthi, Ghritlahre, Das, & Bose, 2017). The problems of the tribes are different in different regions of the country and in different areas of the regions. 'Indigenous and tribal people' is a common denominator for more than 370 million people, found in more than 70 countries worldwide. Indigenous and tribal people have their own cultures, languages, customs, and institutions, which distinguish them from other parts of the societies in which they find themselves ("Who are the indigenous and tribal peoples?" 2016).

One of the countries where tribal people are focused is India. According to the 2011 Census, a total of 1045.46 Lakh tribal people live in India and there is the Ministry of Tribal Affairs with the objective of providing a more focused approach towards the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (ST's) (the most underprivileged section of the Indian Society) in a coordinated and planned manner (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021). Kirubakaran (2011) observes that reservation has been granted to all the sections of STs regardless of their levels of education, income, social status, and political power has formed a difference between different tribes and within the tribes. Despite various measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribes, they remain vulnerable. They are subjected to various atrocities, indignities, humiliations, and harassments. They are also denied a number of civil rights (Aya K., 2009). Apart from the laws and state action, the society itself has to accept, imbibe, and internalize the values of equality, non-discrimination, human dignity, justice, and democratic practices. The development of Scheduled Tribes is a part of a sustained quest for

equality and social justice, the objectives enshrined in the Constitution and pursued since independence in the free India (Bhasin, 2006). Among the tribes, the so-called primitive tribal groups are really vulnerable. They are still living in isolation and their lifestyles show little change over the years (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011).

According to Meher (2009), the Government should create awareness among the tribes before implementation of the development programmes. Infrastructural facilities should be developed in the tribal areas including minor irrigation facilities. Commercial banks, cooperatives and self-help groups should provide financial assistance to the tribes. Food processing, medicine and other small industries should be set up in the tribal areas in order to create employment opportunities and achieve the goal of self-reliance among tribes (Mandal, 2010). Qualitative research approaches are essential to provide deep insights into the problems of the tribes. The participatory research is required to establish the reliability and validity of the information pertaining to tribal community in India. Babu & Kusuma (2002) has studied about Thoti tribe of Andhra Pradesh in which they dealt both genetic disorders related to abnormal haemoglobin specially sickle cell anaemia and enzyme deficiency and demographic variables are predominant among the Thoti tribe. Sharma & Tiwari (2007) have studied on indigenous health practices of Bharia tribe of Patalkot indicating treatment of fever and malaria by herbal medicine compositions of Brahmasiand Kadupad, Chirayata, Neemand Kadupad; Gurbaeland Tuhar Dhal; Chirayta, Adrakand Brahmasi; Chirayta, Adrak, Barr and Daruhaldi; Chirayta, Tejraj, Utran, Chirayta, Kadupadand Gadhor. These are used depending on the symptoms of fever. Health seeking behaviors of tribes was observed and noticed that however primitive a society is, it has some scientific knowledge, which has been gathered through traditional experience. Tribes may not have scientific knowledge, but they have learnt through trial-and-error method (B & P, 2021).

The tribals were enforced to depend much upon agriculture and mainly on produce like vegetables, rice and some coarse grains such as

maize and millets. The study revealed tremendous changes in the food habits of tribal (Jain, Suman, Goyal, Meghwal, & Meena, 2017). Ray (1975) in his study on Langia Saoras - a primitive tribe of Orissa, stated that they are not so unclean as compared to some other tribes. The Langia Saoras do not take bath in the winter seasons every day, however in summer they take bath daily. Instead of using soap they use a type of mud or pieces of bark from some trees for cleaning the body. They brush their teeth with green twigs of Salor Karaja. Varghese (2016) contended that the economic liberalization, privatization, and globalization model of development in India is practically depriving the tribal people who are depended on their traditional means of sustainable livelihood by promoting the unregulated growth of mineral-based industries in the tribal areas. The dietary practices of the Paliyar and the nutrient content of unconventional foods consumed was studied by Eswarappa (Eswarappa, 2017). He found that staple food of Paliyar was rice followed by wheat and other millets such as Ragi, Thenai, Samai, Amaranth seeds, and Bamboo seeds. A number of unconventional plant foods like greens, roots, tubers, cereals, and minor seeds were eaten and used externally for medicine by the Paliyar depending on the availability. Apart from the common non-vegetarian foods rabbit, rat, porcupine, wild bear, pork and kooran like squirrel and goat are also eaten. Their meal pattern was unintentional and monotonous in nature. Boiling was the pre-dominant cooking method.

Jain, Suman, Goyal, Meghwal, & Meena (2017) has focused on the different aspects of migration of Banjara tribe and found impact of migration on them in terms of working conditions, wages and earnings and their living conditions. Bharthi, Ghritlahre, Das, & Bose (2017) in their study on the Kolam tribe gives in sight in to study the genesis and affinity of the core aspects of the culture of Kolams and other neighboring dominant tribe on one hand and total cultural heritage of local tribes and its affinity with culture of caste groups of this area on the other. Xaxa (2014) captured the changing tribal scenario and a whole diversity of issues related to tribal economy, agronomy, politics, ethnicity, ecology,

education, technology transfer, social political movements, religious faiths, and rituals in an indigenized, yet more clear outlining, with both diagnostic and remedial models. The political aspects of the Bhils and the process of the creation of elite in Bhil society was studied by Rasheed (2018). He questioned the validity of observing stratification pattern among the Indian tribes on the basis of caste hierarchy. Tribal population in present market and production systems and their incorporation into modern political systems are shown with regional variations in occupations. Prakash & Raju (2010) discussed the processes and problems of displacement, rehabilitation and socio-cultural changes occurred among the displaced Scheduled Tribe of the Andhra Pradesh and tries to depict the traditional social and cultural fabric and adaptation of the Yanadi islanders prior to their displacement, which serves as the basis for understanding the endurance and change in the environment, society, and culture. He analyzed the rehabilitation programme and the subsequent factors and the forces behind the system of forced migration and adaptation of the Yanadis to the new environment, outside the rehabilitation centers.

5. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The fieldwork for the present study was conducted in the Sirumalai hills in Tamil Nadu. The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in 03 villages of the region. The extensive fieldwork was conducted from January 2018 to December 2018. During this period, the researchers were involved in participant observation and ethnographic interviews. The important events, activities, happenings, and circumstances of the community were observed very closely by being one among them. The observed incidents and features of the community were recorded as field notes and processed further. The ethical guidelines were strictly followed, and informed consents were taken for the conduct of ethnographic interviews.

5.1 Location of the study

Dindigul (Tīṇṭukkal) is a city in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is the administrative headquarters of the Dindigul district. Dindigul is located 420 km (260 mi)

southwest of the state capital Chennai and 100 km (62 mi) away from Thiruchirapalli and the nearest city (66 km) is Madurai. Dindigul has 200,000 hectares of cultivatable land, and agriculture continues to be the main occupation of its inhabitants. Located between the Palani and Sirumalai Hills, Dindigul has a reserved forest area of 85 hectares. The study has selected 03 villages in Sirumalai hills for ethnographic study of Paliyar tribes namely Tholukadu, Poonuravi and Kalakadai.

5.2 Sampling

It is estimated that the tribe of Tamil Nadu occupy 1.05% of the total state population and 0.77% of the total tribal population of the country. According to the Ministry of Tribal affairs, Tamil Nadu covers 36 types among the total Paliyar population, 1000 samples were taken covering villages in Sirumalai Hills of Dindigul district. Paliyar tribes are living in six villages and among them 3 villages are taken for this study. Nearly 1000 Paliyar families are living in Sirumalai Hills. For the purpose of this study 3 hamlets from Sirumalai representing 1000 tribes starting from the age of 15 were taken as the sample size. Sirumalai is region of 60,000 acres (200km) situated 25 km(16ml) from Dindigul and 90 km (56ml) from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, and India. There are many high hills in this area. Sirumalai is an impenetrable forest region with a moderate climate throughout the year. With an attitude of 1600 meters above sea level, it contains

diversified flora and fauna. The hill has 18 hairpin bends and on the 18th hairpin bend one can view the whole of Dindigul city and the Dindigul Rock Fort. The Sirumalai hills contain a small water fall also. Sirumalai is famous for banana plantation. The fires made by man at times on the hills to have the medicinal plants and had threatened the fauna inhabitants. Fires often set by the people to promote vegetation growth used for animal fodder, clear land for cultivation as well as to improve their access to timber. Abundant natural wealth of Sirumalai hills is the only source of income for the Paliyar community. They collect forest resources, and they live as the habitats of this hill being oneness with nature.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following section is the compiling of investigation into socio-economic, cultural practices of Paliyar tribe as reported by them. Some demographic characteristics of the Paliyar tribe are presented in Table 1. As it can be seen from Table 1, there is a significant young population, especially between the ages of 15-35, in the Paliyar tribe. Most of the Paliyars followed Hindu religion and prefer nuclear families. The illiterate population rate is 31.6%, which is below 41% of the illiterate rate of Scheduled Tribes, that was calculated in the 2011 Census in India (Ministry of Tribe Affairs, 2021). There is lot of scope on improving the literacy as it remains close to 15 % of the sample.

Table 1: Demography of Paliyar respondents

Variables	Paliyar respondents (Person)	Percentage (%)
Age		
15-35	567	56.7
36-55	354	35.4
56-75	74	7.4
76-95	4	0.4
96-107	1	0.1
Religion		
Hindus	1000	100
Type of Family		
Nuclear	857	85.7

Joint	143	14.3
Literacy Rate		
Illiterate	316	31.6
Primary School	539	53.9
Middle School	145	14.5

An individual's belonging to the country in which he lives in and the ability to use his official rights in that country, depend on his official recognition within the country. Official recognition is parallel to the requirement of being a voter in order to have the identity of that country and to have a say in the country. One of the most common problems, especially among local and tribal people, is that although he is accepted as a member of the society (tribe) he lives in, he is not officially registered in the country that he lives in. This situation causes the tribal people not to be recognized officially, their status cannot be

followed exactly (statistical and physical), and they cannot benefit from state facilities and aids when it is necessary. In the study, both ration and voter card ownership status of the people interviewed in the Paliyar tribe were examined and the results are presented in Figure 1. When the figure was examined, it was determined that 29.3% of the individuals in the Paliyar tribe did not have any ID card. The high rate of this ratio, which corresponds to approximately 1/3 of the population, indicate that there may be significant deviations in tribal life statistics.

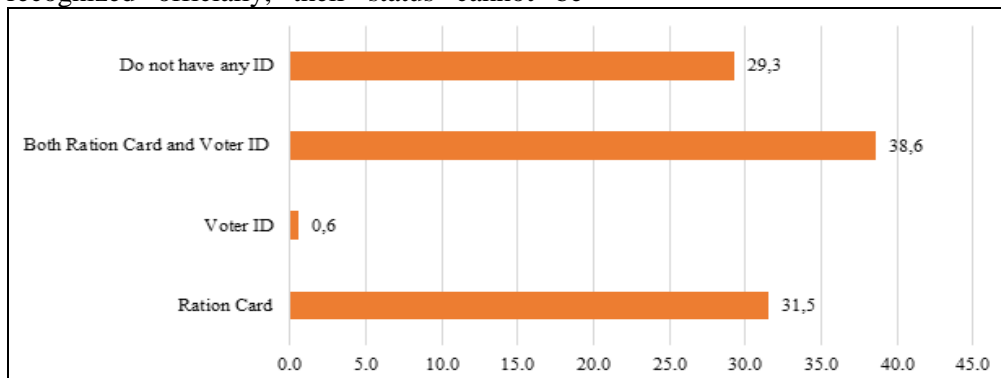


Figure 1. Nativity identity situation in the Paliyar tribe

It is inferred from figure-2 that most of the Paliyar nearly 199 (19.9%) travel to nearby places using their two wheelers, 801 (80.1%) travel to other places only by walk. Table 2 presents information on some of the basic facilities that families living in the Paliyar district have. These opportunities are more necessary to meet the basic needs than the advanced technologies offered by the modern age. Among these possibilities, the electricity situation, the toilet situation, some basic household items, and the way of meeting their heating needs were examined. Among the 1000 Paliyars, 794 (79.4%) houses have electrical lights, 58 (5.8%) houses have television sets, 148 (14.8) houses do not have the electrical facilities such as electrical lights and television sets. Even

the basic needs of the Paliyar community are not met by the Government. One of the good aspects prevailing among them is to find that they live in oneness with nature without any electrical gadgets and without watching the TV. They are happily living in the forests because they think that forests are their native lands, and they are their own possessions for many generations. Among the 1000 Paliyar 3.9 % have Aattukkal (handicraft food grinder made of stone), 11.9% houses have Ammikkal (handicraft food grinder made of stone), and 84.2% houses have both the facilities like Attukkal and Ammikal to use as grinding equipment. 85.1% of tribes use firewood as their fuel for cooking purposes and 14.9% either gas stoves or kerosene stoves for cooking

(refer table 2). This reveals that the Paliyar still use the olden cooking methods like their ancestors, as they believe that cooking using firewood would promote good health benefits. The appalling fact 15.4% houses do not have

toilets inside their home, 73% of them use public toilets that are constructed by the Government in a particular place in a village. But as water facilities are not available in the public toilets, most of them still use open defecation.

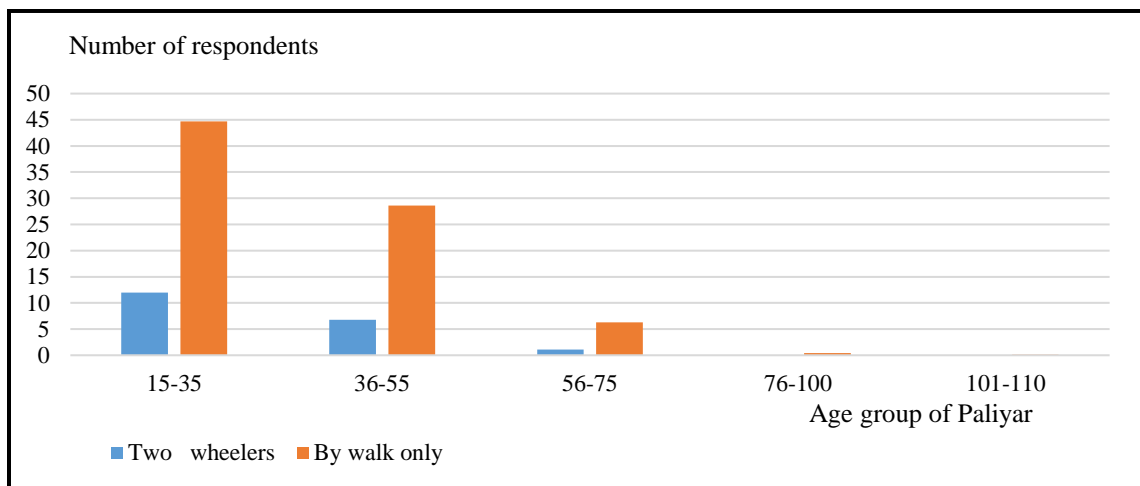


Figure 2. Means of transport used by the Paliyar tribe

The most important source of life is water. Access to clean and safe water is at the primary level of the hierarchy of needs. According to the 2011 Census conducted in India, it is stated that 27% of the tribes do not have access to safe drinking water source and 75% do not have toilet facilities,

which are important in terms of hygiene. Figure 3 shows the water supply sources and distances to the water of the families in the Paliyar tribe. As can be seen in the figure, a little more than half of the families can fetch water from bore water and mostly can reach water up to 5 km away.

Table 2. Facilities available at the households of the Paliyar

	Respondents in number	Respondents in %
Types of electrical facilities		
Electrical lights alone	794	79.4
Electrical lights and television	58	5.8
No lights & TV	148	14.8
Total	1000	100
Home appliances available		
Aattukkal (round stone to grinder)	39	3.9
Ammikal (flat stone to grind)	119	11.9
Both Aattukal and Ammikal	842	84.2
Total	1000	100
Fuel used		
Fire wood	851	85.1
Kerosene stove	149	14.9
Total	1000	100
Toilet Facilities		
Number of private toilets in house	154	15.4
Government built toilets outside their houses	116	11.6
Common public toilets for a village	730	73

Total	1000	100
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Information about the living spaces of the Paliyar tribal people is presented in figure 4. When the figure is examined, it was determined that the

houses of 73.0% of the interviewees were donated by the government.

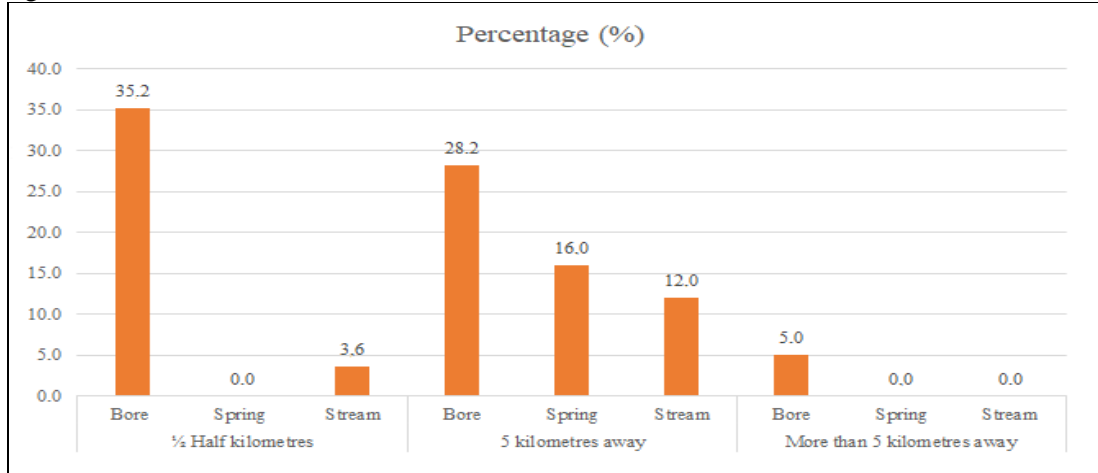


Figure 3. Water facilities available at the villages of the Paliyar

It has been determined that the houses where people live are mostly built with either cement with concrete roof or mud with asphalt sheet. As can be seen from the study, it can be said that the

Indian government has provided significant support in the creation of the Paliyar tribe's living spaces.

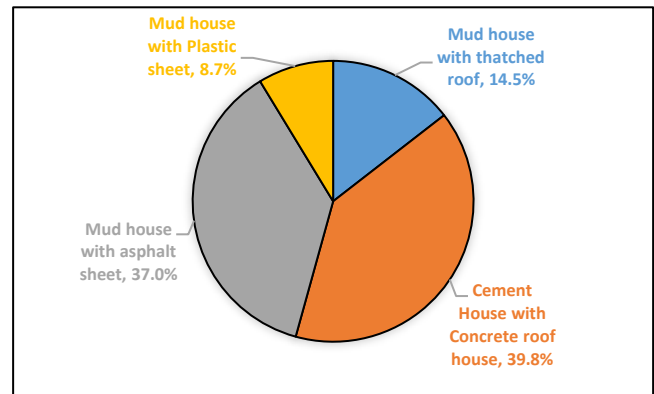
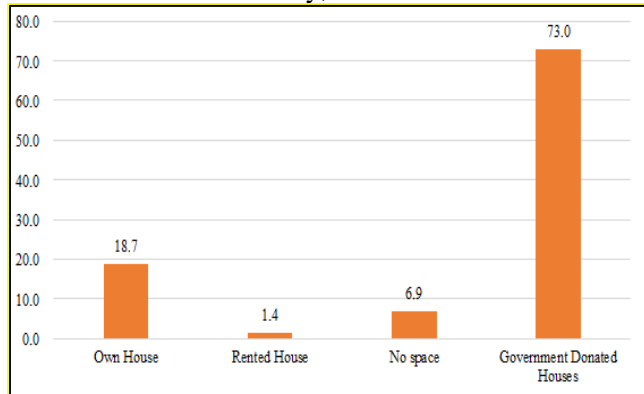


Figure 4. The ownership of the houses with regard to the lifestyle practices and the nature and the structure of the houses of the Paliyar

personal hygiene. Like, they use the age-old method of brushing their teeth with Neem sticks and use of ashes to rub their teeth clean. Use of soaps and detergents for personal cleanliness is also evident.

From Table 3 its evident that Paliyar tribe do have some good traditional methods of keeping

Table 3. Habitual practices for personal care

	Age Group of the Respondents				Chi Square Value
	15-35	36-55	56-75	75+	

Tooth cleaning practices					
Use Neem sticks	1.1	0.8	4.1	0.0	17.7
Use Baniyan sticks	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Use Ash powder (Sampal)	5.8	4.5	12.2	20.0	
Use Kadukkai powder	9.2	11.3	5.4	20.0	
Use all Brands of toothpastes	83.8	83.3	78.4	60.0	
Habit of using soaps for bathing					
Use all types of bathing soap	99.8	100.0	97.3	60.0	211.1***
Use soil as soap	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Never use any soap	0.0	0.0	2.7	40.0	
Use of washing detergents for cloths					
Using washing soap	90.3	93.2	60.8	60.0	175.8***
Using washing powder	2.1	2.8	35.1	0.0	
Never use any soap	7.6	4.0	4.1	40.0	

Statistically significant at *90%, **95%, and ***99% confidence levels

Rice is one of their staple foods as 80.3% of them consume rice with Kulambu (broth) as their food for breakfast in the morning as well as at night for supper daily, 15.0% of them consume rice or variety rice regularly in the afternoons for lunch

meal. At the same time, when we look at the vegetable consumption pattern, they consume vegetables daily and more prevalent with older people.

Table 4. Habitual food practices of Paliyar

		Age Group of the Respondents				Chi Square Value
		15-35	36-55	56-75	75+	
Habitual food practices prevailing among the Paliyar Tribe						
Morning and Night	Rice-Kulambu (Broth)	77,6	86,7	70,3	80,0	19,9***
Afternoon	Rice / Variety Rice	17,3	9,9	23,0	0,0	
Night Alone	Tiffin	5,1	3,4	6,8	20,0	
Habit of consuming Vegetables with food						
Consuming Vegetables daily with food		41,3	41,8	31,1	100,0	35,9***
Consuming vegetables once in a week		32,1	39,5	59,5	0,0	
Consuming Vegetables twice in a week		26,6	18,6	9,5	0,0	

Statistically significant at *90%, **95%, and ***99% confidence levels

Among the 1000 Paliyars 13.6% are engaged as full-time workers, 9.3% work as seasonal time workers very few as part time workers and they involve in Mara Pasaam picking with regard to climatic conditions. It was found that most of them prefer to do a part time work and get involved in coffee bean picking, vegetable

cultivation with regard climatic conditions (Table 5). The pepper picking is common work they get indulged into when they find time. On the whole be it seasonal or full-time work, pepper picking has been one of their most preferred jobs to make their living.

Table 5. Climatic conditions and livelihood of the Paliyar tribe

		Full time		Seasonal		Part time		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Type of Occupation	Mara Pasaam picking	136	13.6	93	9.3	9	.9	238	23.8
	Coffee picking	186	18.6	80	8.0	27	2.7	293	29.3
	Vegetable cultivation	41	4.1	44	4.4	22	2.2	107	10.7
	Pepper picking	187	18.7	136	13.6	39	3.9	362	36.2
	Total	550	55.0	353	35.3	97	9.7	1000	100

There is certain work that tribes consider as leisure time activity like collecting honey, home garden and small business activities. Almost 3.9 % collect honey as their hobby or leisure time

activity. Home garden is more convenient and popular among part time workers than the seasonal work.

Table 6. Leisure time activity for Paliyar

	Part time Work		Season Time Work		Permanent Work	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Collecting Honey	39	3.9	601	60.1	3	.3
Home Garden	205	20.5	114	11.4	28	2.8
Own Business	165	16.5	110	11	9	.9
Total	409	40.9	825	82.5	40	4.0

It is inferred from table 7 that among the 1000 Paliyar tribe, nearly 17.3% believed that God is everything, 33.4% believed that God solves all their problems and almost 50 % believed that God gives them peace. There were some beliefs about supernatural powers like Kuri Soluthal which means prophecy about future, and some had rituals and beliefs about Samiyaduthal which

means Gods descending on them. They also had knowledge and belief on palm reading. Strong faith on safe-guarding spirits and some believed that their grand parents' spirits descend on them. Some of these tribes also had no belief on spirits or ghosts. Paliyar consider best practice is the belief and faith that their dead ones live with them as Gods, and they do reverence to them.

Table 7. The belief and worship practices of the Paliyar Tribe

Type of beliefs in God, supernatural powers, spirits and ghosts		Total	
		N	%
Belief in Gods	Believed that God is everything	173	17.3
	Believed that God solves their problems	334	33.4
	Believed that God gives peace	493	49.3
	Total	1000	100
Beliefs in supernatural powers	(Kurisolthal) prophecy about future	94	9.4
	(Samiyaduthal) Gods' descending on them	745	74.5
	(KairekaiParthal) palm reading to tell about their future	161	16.1
	Total	1000	100
Beliefs in spirits / ghosts	Believed on some safeguarding sprits	54	5.4

	Believed that some spirits help them	64	6.4
	Believed that their grand parents' sprits descend on them	865	86.5
	Never believed on any spirits or ghosts	17	1.7
	Total	1000	100

7. CONCLUSION

The Paliyar tribe's lifestyle and practices are shaped by the surroundings in which they live and without discarding their past practices, the tribals are very rigid in the matter of following their community life styles generation after generation but when they migrate to cities where the majority of the people lifestyle is totally different theirs then the tribal are caught in conflicts. Nowadays, the tribal adjust with the new environment and have undergone lot of changes in their traditional lifestyle particularly with regard to food habits, clothing pattern, standard of living, social behavior, and cultural life. This study has enabled to collect data from the respondents covering all these aspects of lifestyle and best practices prevailing among them. As a result of the study, information about the way tribes meets their basic needs, their access to basic facilities and their lifestyles examined were presented. In the light of this information, it can be said that the Indian government has made important studies on tribes, but there are still some things to be done about the access of people living in tribes to basic facilities. Although tribal life seems like a destiny, it can be seen that people living in the tribe have a tendency to continue their traditions in the choices they make in determining their own lifestyles. For this reason, it is necessary to take into account the traditions and customs of the tribes in the aid and interventions and to be careful in the interventions to change the preferences of the people. Government needs to empower the tribes, educate them, and bring them in all growth and development process. The Central, State and Local- Self governments should take up the responsibility to formulate suitable policies and develop the tribes.

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9. APPENDIX

A-1 Tribal communities in Tamil Nadu

Sl. No	Description
1	Adiyan
2	Kattunayakan
3	Kurumbas (in the Nilgiris district)
4	Malayali (in Dharmapuri, North ArcotPudukottai, Salem, south Arcot and Tiruchirappalli districts)
5	Aranadan
6	KochuVclan
7	Kurumans
8	Malayekandi
9	Muthuvan
10	Eravallan
11	Konda Kapus
12	MahaMalsar
13	Koraga
14	Irular
15	Kondareddis
16	MalaiArayan
17	Mudugar, Muduvan
18	Kadar
19	Malai Pandaram
20	Paliayar (Kodaikanal,Sirumalai)
21	Kota (excluding Kanyakumari district and Shenkottah taluk of Tiruneleli district)
22	MalaiVedan

23	Kaniyan, Kanyan
24	Kurichchan
25	Malasar
26	Uraly
27	Kudiya, Melakudi
28	Palleyan
29	Palliyan

A-2 Some pictures taken during interview





Petty shop





A tree more than 100 years