

Literacy and Demographic Aspects of Kurumbar of Palakkad District of Kerala

Dr. Syam S K

drsyamsk@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics
School of Indian Languages, University of Kerala

Abstract

Aspects of Literacy rate and Educational developments are the key variables in the case of demographic deviations. It is worthwhile mentioning that the list of scheduled tribes in Kerala had undergone drastic changes during the decade 2001-011, resulting in change in proportion of scheduled Tribes. The entire literacy rate of scheduled tribe according to 2001 Census has increased from 57.2% recorded at 1991 Census to 64.4%. In 2011 Census the literacy rate is 74.04%. Growth of Literacy and Education has a valuable role in every sphere of life such as population. This paper deals with preliminary study on population and literacy and its connection with education of Kadar and Kurumbar Community in Palakkad District.

Keywords: Kurumbar, Literacy, Demographic, Census, Tribe, Vulnerable, Mother tongue, Endangerment

Introduction

The popular term 'tribe' is derived from the Latin expression 'tribus', Umbrian trifu, linguistic terms designating Indo- European institutions. In the old form they designated a peculiar kind of social and political organization existing in the society. The term was used to refer to the largest kind of social and political group which existed before the appearance of the state. It was Lewis Morgan, in the middle of 19th century attempted to analyze this in terms of science in his Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the entire human Family (1871). India has the largest tribal community population in the world. One of the Indian state, Andhra Pradesh has the largest tribal concentration in southern India. The tribal heritage constitutes the fruitful component of the cultural heritage of Kerala. The tribal population is found in almost every part of the world. Tribes are believed to be the earliest settlers in Indian Peninsula.

According to 2011 Census of India, The Tribal population is 8.6 % of the entire population of India, which is 104.2 million of the total population. According to the rate of literacy of scheduled tribes in India by NSSO, 2010 is 63.1%. In India, most tribal concentrated

states are Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Gujarat, and Jharkhand.

The tribes of Kerala are descendants of the Pre- historic settlers of the entire region. Kerala has around 36 Scheduled Tribal Communities. The total Scheduled Tribe population of Kerala, according to 2011 census is 4,84,839 which constitute 1.45% of the total population of Kerala. Wayanad district has the highest number of tribal people (1, 36,062). Idukki (50973) and Palakkad (39665) districts are the next two that make the lion portion of the native tribal groups in the state. Palakkad is the third largest tribal concentrated districts in Kerala state. Major scheduled tribes in the district are Irular, Kadar, Kurumbar, Eravalan, Malasar, Mahamalar, and Mudugar. Irular scheduled tribe is the dominant tribal community with highest number of population.

In this study, Kurumbar residing at Palakkad district are going to discuss through their demographic and literary aspects. Kurumbar is the primitive tribal group in Kerala. In 2006 the government of India proposed to rename "Primary tribal group" as particularly vulnerable tribal group". PTG has since been renamed particularly vulnerable tribal group by the government of India. The Scheduled Tribe communities who were identified as more isolated from the wider community and who maintain a distinctive cultural identity have been categorized as 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PTGs) by the Government of India. So far 75 tribal communities have been noted as 'particularly vulnerable tribal groups' in different States of India. The Kurumbar Scheduled tribes are recognized as a Primitive Tribal Group (PVTG) by Government of India in 1975. The Kurumbar community, which is one among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribe Groups (PTG's) of the State, is known for its geographical isolation or remoteness and backwardness when compared to most of the Scheduled Tribal communities of Kerala State.

Kurumbar are distributed in the Puthur Gramapanchayath of Agali block which included under Mannarkad Taluk of Palakkad. They have been found in the 17th Settlement reserve forest area of Attapadi. Kurumbar lives in Attapady regions of Palakkad district. Kurumbar inhabit 14 hamlet out of which nine are in the reserve forest and the rest in the vested forests. The nine Kurumbar hamlets placed in the forest reserve areas. The names of hamlets is Melai Tudukkil, Thazhe Thudukki, Murukala, Anavayi, Kadukanannu, Galazi, Kurukkati Kallu, Gotisar Kandi and Tadikundu. The five hamlets placed in the vested forests were Boothayar, Yadavani, Pazhayur, Soothara and Moola Komb.

According to Census 2001, Kurumbar's population is estimated to be 2174 where, male population is 1132 and female population is 1042. According to Census 2011, the total estimated population among Kurumbar Community is 2586 where, male population is 1302 and female

population is 1284. The Kurumbar were residing at Palakkad district of Kerala state. Around 426 tribal settlements are located in Palakkad district. According to the basic scheduled tribe information 2010, 45 percentages of the 426 tribal settlements, they are located in Attapady. According to 2011 Census the entire scheduled tribe population of the district is 48972 where, 24314 are males and 24658 are females. The total number of scheduled tribes of the district constitutes 1.74 percent to the total population of the district. The detailed list is given bellow.

	Year	
	2011	2001
Population	2810892	2617482
Male	1360067	1266985
Female	1450825	1350497
ST Population	48972	39665
Male	24314	19990
Female	24658	19675
Literacy (All communities)	88.49%	84.35%
Male	92.27%	89.52%
Female	84.99%	79.36%

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Palakkad District, Source: Census Data, (2001 and 2011)

Objectives

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To understand the life of the communities in the context of the Demographic profiling.
2. To understand the educational and literacy aspects of the community.

Area of Study

The present study is intended to cover the selected settlements of the Kurumbar community in the State.

Statement of the Problem

Kurumbar Tribal Community is the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Community, and they are in a state of educational backwardness. The educational as well as literacy attainment of these communities is not at all encouraging. The education of tribes is still a big problem. A small number of students have the proper opportunity for education in the medium of their mother tongues. In spite of a lot of efforts, they have not yet been brought to the mainstream. Almost all students are admitted to schools, but a majority among them became dropouts in the school. Low level school learning was found among children not only because of household or personal

factors but also problems with the language of instruction which is quite different from their mother tongue. They still remain as the excluded and marginalized group of the population. Both their languages are in the state of endangerment according to the WALE Report by Moseley. (Dr. Prema, Dr Syam SK: 2016).

Methodology

Descriptive and Analytical methodologies are going to follow in this study. The primary data required for the study is intended to be gathered through intensive field work among the community. Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted at the time of the field interactions in order to get an in-depth understanding about the various aspects of the community. Secondary data of the study is to be collected from published books, journals, official records, local historical writings, Internet etc.

Significance of the Study

The proposed study is of great relevance in the present scenario as it intends to cover the various dimensions with regard to the actual life situations of an excluded and marginalized group of the population with a view to develop a new look for their overall well-being.

Kurumbar Community

The tribal people from Kurumba community were shifting cultivators and food gatherers. They sow all seeds, paddy, Red green, ragi etc. Harvest of the same has done as and when each crop ripens. Among Kurumbar a number of them were illiterate, but now a small number of people are literate. Kurumbar have their own language exactly their mother tongue called Kurumba Bhasha, which belongs to Dravidian language family. The influence of contact language such as Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam are also seen in their language. Now they speak more than one language. When they go out, they need to talk in Tamil or Malayalam. Apart from these occasions, they always speak their own language (Dr. A. Ayyappan). There are fifteen such 'uuru' in Attappady. They are anavay, melethudukki, Thazhethudukki, kadukumanna, Thadikkundu, Murugala, Galasi, Kurukkathikkallu, Pahayuuru, Bhuthayuuru, Edabaani, Muulekombu, Chuttara, pettikkallu and Abbanuuru. Each uuru has a headman known as 'Urumooppan' and he has three assistants viz. 'Kuruthale', 'Bandari', and 'Mannukkaaran'. All the ceremonies are presided over by the urumooppan. The Kurumbar are very well at making different shapes of baskets using bamboo, and they claim to have more skill in basket making than the Irulas and Mudugas. They use these bamboo baskets for storing cereals and household goods. For storing paddy, Ragi and Chama they make large bamboo baskets. (Dr. A. Ayyappan)

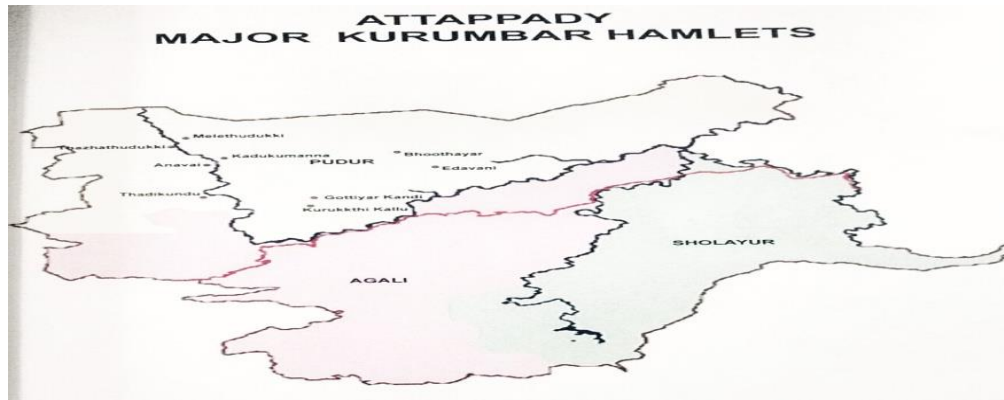


Fig: 1. Attappady –Major Kurumbar Hamlets- Dr. S Bindu, Ethnography of Kurumbar Demographic Profiling

In Palakkad district, the community is concentrated in Parambikulam and Nenmara regions Kuriarkutty, Earth Dam, Kadavu, Thekkadi Allumoopan Colony and Muppathuacre Colony.

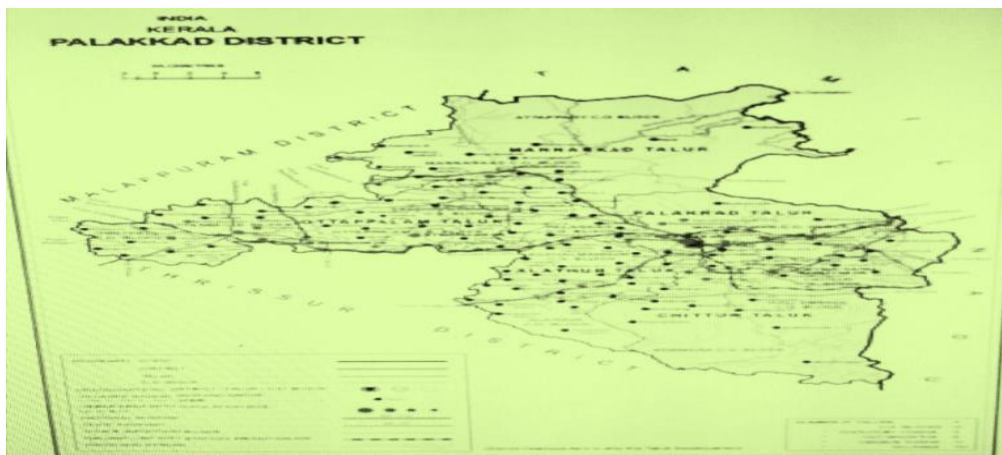


Fig: 2. Demographic Profile of Palakkad District, Source: Census Data, (2001 and 2011) Literacy rate of Kurumbar.

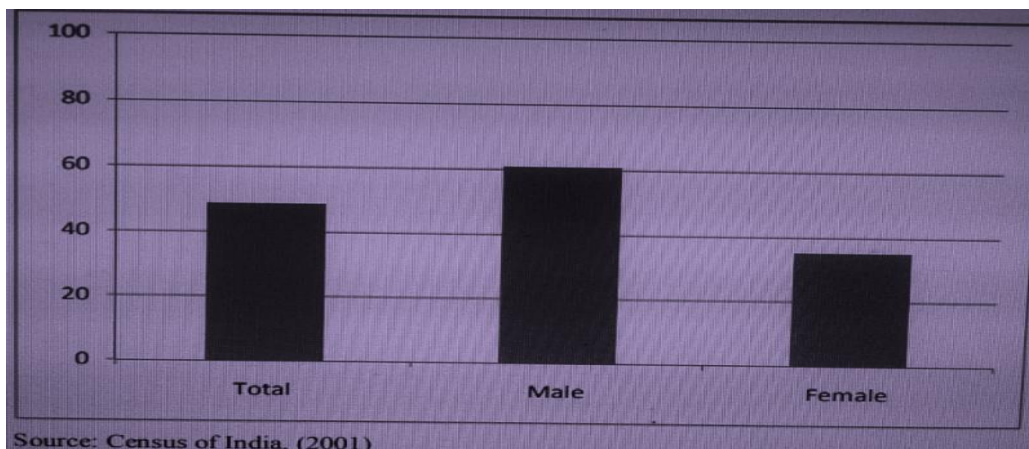


Fig:3. (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/71861/13/13_chapter%202.pdf)

Educational attainments of Kurumbar

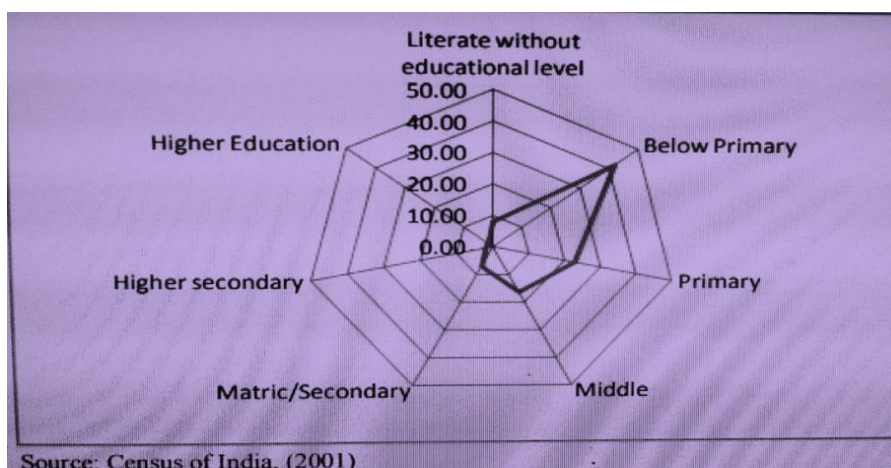


Fig:4. (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/71861/13/13_chapter%202.pdf)

In 2011, the state, Palakkad had population of 2,809,934 of which male and female were 1,359,478 and 1,450,456 respectively. Palakkad had a total population of 2,617,482 of which males were 1,266,985 and remaining 1,350,497 were females according to 2001 census. In the previous census of India 2001, Palakkad District documented an increase of 9.88 percent to its population compared to 1991. So we can say that there was change of 7.35 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001. (censusindia.gov.in, 2011)

Palakkad Data	2001	2011
Total Population	2617482	2809934
Male	1266985	1359478
Female	1350497	1450456
Population growth	9.88%	7.35%

Table 2. (<https://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/276-palakkad.html>)

So we can say that an average literacy rate of Palakkad (in 2011) was 89.31 compared to 84.35 of 2001 as compared the literacy rate 2001 and 2011. There are certain gender wise differences also noted such as male and female literacy were 93.10 and 85.79. According to Government of India census 2001, the numbers decided as 89.52 and 79.56 in Palakkad District. The total number of literate people in Palakkad District were 2,239,492 and from which the number of male were 1,122,600 and female were 1,116,892. Palakkad District had figured 1,938,818 according to Government of India census 2001, in its district. According to 2011 Census of India, the total literacy rate of Kurumba is documented as 56.36%. Distance from their living place to the educational institutions and lack of interests are the main reason for their low

level of literacy rate. Literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes in the state of Kerala is worked out at 74.44 per cent, which is lower than the State average literacy rate of 93.91 per cent (2011). The highest literacy rate is noted in Kottayam District which stands as 94.31 per cent followed by Thiruvananthapuram (89.85 %) and Patthanamthitta (88.50%) districts respectively. The literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes in Palakkad is reported as 57.63 per cent which is the lowest among the districts in the State. Thrissur District stands with 67.88 per cent followed by Wayanad District with 71.36 per cent. Literacy rate of Cholanaickan, a community in PVTG, is 39.63 per cent which is the lowest among the Scheduled Tribe communities. The literacy rate of other communities in the PVTG, except Koraga is far lower to the State average. It is 56.36 per cent for Kurumbar, 58.74 per cent for Kadar and 59.37 per cent for Kattunayakan. Among the numerically smaller groups the lowest literacy rate is recorded for Maha Malasar (43.55 %) followed by Aranadan (49.28%) and Malaipandaram (51.73%). For Paniyans, the literacy rate is 65.19 per cent. Irular claims only 60.01 per cent of literacy. The literacy rate of Malayan community is registered as 63.23 per cent followed by Mudugar (64.15%). (stdd.kerala.gov.in 2008.)

A small number of students have the real opportunity for education in the medium of their home languages such as mother tongues a lot of efforts, have already given by the state government, but they have not yet been brought to the mainstream. Almost all are admitted to schools, but a majority among them became dropouts. Lower level school learning was found among tribal children not only because of household factors but also problems with the language of teaching which is quite distinct from their mother tongue. (censusindia.gov.in/2011).

Dropout Rate in Primary Level

Average Drop-out Rate at Primary Level	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11 All	Boys	Girls
Andhra Pradesh #	5.75	5.39	6.17	6.69	5.62
Arunachal Pradesh	20.70	18.71	14.82	15.38	14.23
Assam	9.64	8.60	11.71	12.47	10.93
Bihar	13.44	6.39	5.68	7.08	4.18
Chhattisgarh	6.20	5.37	4.93	5.12	4.72
Goa	5.00	0.97	-	-	-
Gujarat	3.86	4.27	2.99	2.94	3.04

Haryana	0.15	6.21	-	-	0.15
Himachal Pradesh	2.83	-	0.72	0.41	1.07
Jammu & Kashmir	3.47	1.22	11.33	11.21	11.47
Jharkhand	15.79	10.49	12.62	13.00	12.23
Karnataka	4.11	3.64	2.03	2.15	1.91
Kerala	-	-	0.08	0.04	0.13
Madhya Pradesh	8.20	8.61	8.31	9.07	7.54
Maharashtra	3.32	2.10	1.86	1.84	1.88
Manipur	10.48	9.06	12.06	11.78	12.34
Meghalaya	17.28	12.67	15.11	16.23	14.01
Mizoram	5.28	11.95	7.04	8.42	5.51
Nagaland	11.41	5.18	6.04	6.44	5.63
Odisha	6.34	6.05	5.37	5.30	5.44
Punjab	4.73	1.82	1.80	1.91	1.65
Rajasthan	10.54	10.76	7.79	8.40	7.09
Sikkim	4.46	7.11	4.34	5.68	2.92
Tamil Nadu	0.15	1.19	0.98	1.08	0.87
Tripura	8.82	11.93	6.18	6.20	6.16
Uttar Pradesh	16.71	11.06	11.85	12.30	11.39
Uttarakhand	9.93	5.84	4.93	5.45	4.36
West Bengal	8.66	6.49	6.61	7.39	5.80

UNION TERRITORIES					
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1.54	3.50	-	-	-
Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	-
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	2.82	2.04	2.48	2.29	2.70
Daman & Diu	2.29	6.27	2.61	2.78	2.42
Delhi	0.30	-	-	-	-
Lakshadweep	4.20	2.38	1.29	1.53	1.04
Puducherry	-	0.44	-	-	-
All States /UTs	9.11	6.76	6.50	6.92	6.07

Table 3. (<http://niti.gov.in/content/dropout-rate-primary-level>)

Literacy of Scheduled Tribes and General State Average

Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
General Literacy	55.08	69.75	78.85	89.81	90.92	93.91
ST Literacy	17.26	25.72	31.79	57.22	64.35	75.81
Gap in Literacy	37.82	44.03	47.06	32.59	26.57	18.10

Table 4. (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/71861/13/13_chapter%202.pdf)

SI NO	YEAR	PERSONS	MALE	FEMALE
1	1951	47.18	58.35	36.43
2	1961	55.08	64.89	45.56
3	1971	69.75	77.13	62.53
4	1981	78.85	84.56	73.36
5	1991	89.81	93.62	86.17
6	2001	90.86	94.24	87.72
7	2011	93.91	96.02	91.98

Table 5. Literacy rate in 1951 – 2011

Education	Palakkad			
	Male	Female	Total	%
Literate without Schooling	13	6	19	4.26
Anganwadi	28	23	51	11.46
Lower Primary	94	85	179	40.22
Upper Primary	56	42	98	22.02
High School	39	33	72	16.17
Higher Secondary School	11	13	24	5.39
Graduate	0	1	1	0.22
Poly Technical Diploma	1	0	1	0.22
Total	242	203	445	100

Table 6. Gender wise Education Attainment

The above table shows that in Palakkad male members are more educated than females. In Palakkad 40.22% completed Upper Primary school. Only 22% completed higher education. This shows the lower educational attainment of this community. (censusindia.gov.in/2011)

Conclusion

Literacy rate and Educational developments are the key variables in the case of demographic deviations. As per 2001 Census report of government of India, the scheduled tribe population is 364189 constituting 1.14% of the total population of the state. According to 2011 Census, the literacy rate was found to be 74.04%. To increase the rate of literacy, the government has made a lot of policies especially, there is a law that every child under the age of 14 should get free education. Consider female literacy rate according to 2011 census is 65.46% and that of the male person's literacy rate is over 80%. Literates in 2011 constitute 74% of the total population in 2001.

Availability of infrastructure requirements in school have drastic change on the school environment and are considered one of the principal indicators for assessing whether the schools are producing a conducive learning environment for children" (DISE report). In the state of Kerala, percentage of schools with Library Facilities in primary schools consist of about 94.69%, for upper primary schools it is 98.93%, for secondary it is 98.20% and for higher secondary school Kerala has witnessed 96.36%. (Fahad Fayaz1, Ms. Shivani Mehta). Illiterates from 26% of the total population in 2011 as compared to 35% in 2001. So 217700941 additional persons have become literate during the decade 2001-2011. In this Census, person who can both read and

write with understanding in any language is taken as literate. A person who can only read but cannot write is not literate. (censusindia.gov.in/2011). The educational inputs are expected to drive not only economic development but also to bring inner ability to meet the challenges due to the exposure to the modern societies. The entire literacy can be achieved only through attacking this problem at both formal and non-formal levels. A carefully designed course content of education can raise anew hope of life and a feeling of equality with other non tribes. Low level of enrolment ratio of children absenteeism of teachers and high dropout rates are the prominent impediments to Kurumbar education. In this context the following recommendations are made. Initiation and follow up projects for bringing back to school dropouts by inducement and compensations for the tribal parents for the earning cost lost by the children in contribution to the family's entire economy. Proper and first step to improve and to increase tribal's participation in Higher education is to improve their interest in study even from the primary level. Proper encouragement, systematic counseling, Motivation classes, efficient awareness programs, special incentives, more number of schools in tribal areas, more flexible teachers, etc. has to be included in the educational streams. (censusindia.gov.in/2011). Automatically the pass percentage ratio of the tribal people will increase. That will result in more talents from tribal area in higher education.

References

- Census of India, 2001
Dr S Bindhu, (2011), Ethnography of Kurumbar, Kirtads, Calicut, Kerala
Dr Syam, (2016) Creation of the Script for Paniyan Languages, kirtads, Calicut.
Dr. A. Ayyappan (1948), Kurumbas of Kerala.
Dr. Prema, Status of Dravidian tribal Languages of Kerala, Academia.com
Dr. Haseena V.A., Dr.Ajims P. Mohammed, Scope of education and dropout among tribal students in Kerala -A study of Scheduled tribes in Attappady, International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2014 1 ISSN 2250-3153
Fahad Fayaz1, Ms. Shivani Mehta, Analysis of Education Sector – Study of Kerala and Jammu & Kashmir, IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 23, Issue 3, Ver. 10 (March. 2018) PP 44-51 e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845.
Iyer, 1981:3-14: GOI, 1959:3, Tribes of India.
Jobin Joy, Srihari (2014) A Case study on the School dropout Scheduled Tribal students of Wayanad District, Kerala, Research Journal of Educational Science, ISSN 2321-0508
Luiz, 1962, Tribes of Kerala, University of Michigan
Mathur, P.R.G. (1977) Tribal situation in Kerala, Trivandrum, Kerala Historical Society.
Nssso Report, 2010
P. Singh. (C). 1992. *Anthropology of Development* text. ed

Research Publication Series I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII Kirtads, Calicut, Kerala.
T. Madhava Menon, (2002), A Handbook of Kerala, International School of Dravidian Linguistics, - Kerala (India)
The imperial Gazetteer of India, 1911
Thurston, (1975) 'Casters and Tribes of Southern India'
Thurston, Edgar (1909) 'Casters and Tribes of Southern India'
WALE Report by Mosely.2010, UNESCO

Websites

censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/india/Final_PPT_2011_chapter6.pdf
http://censusindia.gov.in/2011Census/C-16_25062018_NEW.pdf
http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/india/Final_PPT_2011_chapter6.pdf
http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/ESG2016_0.pdf
http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/71861/13/13_chapter%20.pdf
<http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0114/ijsrp-p2578.pdf>
<http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2023%20Issue3/Version-10/F2303104451.pdf>
<http://www.languageinindia.com/dec2017/syاملanguagekanikar1.pdf>
<http://www.languageinindia.com/dec2018/drsyamforensiclinguisticspolicing.pdf>
<http://www.languageinindia.com/jan2016/syamkurichiyatribe.pdf>
<http://www.languageinindia.com/june2019/syamuralyfinal1.pdf>
http://www.stdd.kerala.gov.in/sites/default/files/inline-files/surveyd_2008.pdf
<https://kirtads.kerala.gov.in/2021/09/07/chetham-sound-preparation-of-a-handbook-for-kani-language-of-kannikkar-community/>
<https://kirtads.kerala.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/descriptive-grammar-of-muduga-and-kurumba.pdf>
<https://kirtads.kerala.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Kirichyans-Oral-Literature.pdf>
<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=tIxSNv4AAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312137276_A_Case_study_on_the_School_dropout_Scheduled_Tribal_students_of_Wayanad_District_Kerala
<https://www.tribal.nic.in/writereaddata/AnnualReport/AnnualReport2016-17.pdf>
www.google.com.

=====