
**ETHNOGRAPHY OF
THE PACHAIMALAI
MALAIYALI TRIBES**



**NEW SERIES - GENERAL SECTION,
VOL. XVIII, NO. 2, 2007.**

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**The Special Commissioner and
Commissioner of Museums,
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Chennai-600 008.**

Dr. C. Maheswaran

Ethnography of The Pachaimalai Malaiyali Tribes

Dr. C. Maheswaran

Curator,
Government Museum,
Erode-638 001.

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Phone : 24926712, 42177037
Email : gpvc_2006@yahoo.com

Dr. R. Kannan, Ph.D., I.A.S.,
Special Commissioner and
Commissioner of Museums,
Government Museum,
Egmore, Chennai-600 008.



Off: +91 44 2819 3778
Fax: +91 44 2819 3035
Email: govtmuse@md4.vsnl.net.in

FOREWORD

Ethnographic description requires methods of processing observed data so as to construct inductively a theory of how the ethnic people has organized the same data. The Department of Museums, Government of Tamilnadu brought out a number of ethnographic studies since its inception. In his series of ethnographic works, Dr. C.Maheswaran, Curator, Government Museum, Erode has added an ethnographic account of one more ethnic people, the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, a hill tribe who inhabit the Pachaimalai Hills in the Thuraiyur Taluk of the Thiruchirapalli District, Tamilnadu.

The author of this present ethnographic study of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis presents his monograph in the structural – functional theoretical framework. Thus, each and every part, institution and role of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis is integrated so as to function and maintain the structural whole.

I am indeed happy to publish this work born out of both extensive and intensive study under the publication series of our Department of Museums. I hope that this work will form a useful reference work for people of all walks of life, viz. Researchers, Administrators, Social Workers and General Public.

Station : Chennai – 600 008.

Date : 14-02-2007.

(Dr. R.KANNAN, I.A.S.)

Dr. C. MAHESWARAN
Curator

Government Museum,
Municipal Office Campus,
Erode - 638 001.

PREFACE

Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, the hill tribes inhabiting the Northern part of Tiruchirappalli is conceived as one of the sub-sects of the Malaiyali tribes of Tamilnadu. I had an opportunity to study both the language and the culture of this ethnic group during 1978-'79 and 1980-'81 respectively. Since then it was my cherished ambition to bring out my Anthropological and Explorative Studies as a publication. Now it has come true and I am happy to present this book entitled, "Ethnography of Pachaimalai Malaiyali Tribes". I earnestly hope that this monograph will reach a wider circle as a standard reference work on the ethnography of Tamilnadu tribes, in general and the ethnography of Pachaimalai Malaiyali tribes, in particular.

I thank profusely Dr. R. Kannan, I.A.S., our beloved Special Commissioner and Commissioner of Museums, Government of Tamilnadu for having included this monograph as one of the publications of our Department of Museums.

I hope that this monograph on the "Ethnography of Pachaimalai Malaiyali Tribes" will be a welcome addition of anthropology works of our Department of Museums and a useful work of reference as well.

Camp : Chennai – 600 008.

Date : 14-02-2007

C. Maheswaran

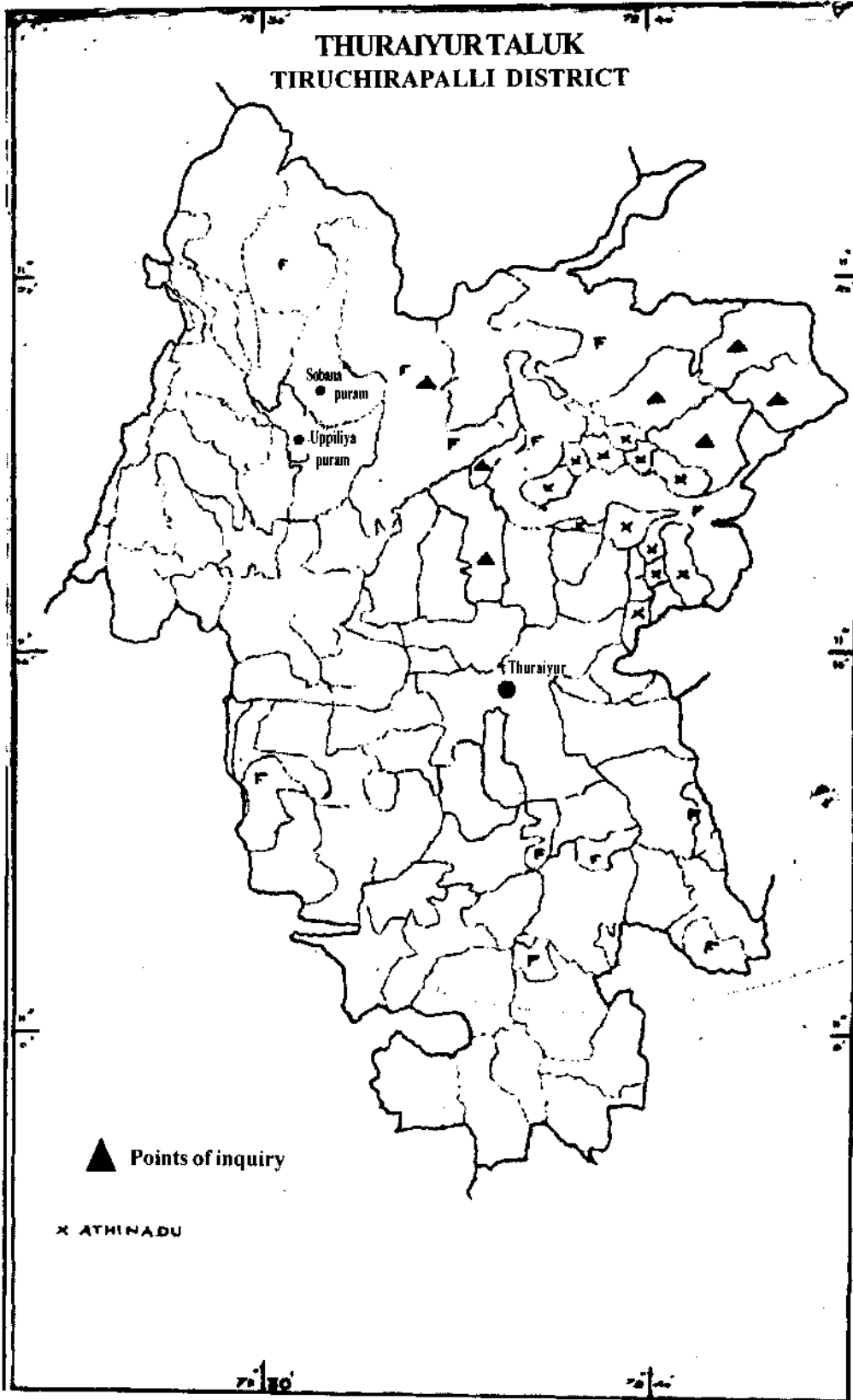
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THURAIYURTALUK
TIRUCHIRAPALLI DISTRICT



▲ Points of inquiry

x ATHINADU

1. INTRODUCTION

ETHNOGRAPHY AND ETHNOLOGY

Cultural Anthropology is dichotomised into 'Ethnography' and 'Ethnology'. "The description of societies around the world is the domain of ethnography" (Garbarino, 1979:2). In other words, "that aspect of anthropological work which described adequately is known as ethnography" (Goodenough, 1964: 36). Much of ethnography is taken with a description of the material setting in which a culture exists and of its technological, social, mythological and emotional artefacts. "It is the ethnographer who records the cultures of the various peoples and usually publishes his findings in a book or monograph called an ethnography" (Garbarino, 1979: 2-3). Bromley opines, ".....according to the most widespread opinion, it is peoples which form the main object of ethnography" (1978:9). Moreover, he adds "..... ethnography points directly to a definite category of objective reality, the ethnos." Otherwise stated ethnography is called upon to reveal a picture of an ethnos as a whole not only its ethnic-differentiating features but also those which it shares with other ethnoses. And thus, the main zone of ethnographic investigation is determined through the study of the ethnos and its components which reveal their ethnic differentiating features.

Traditionally, the subjects of ethnographic research were from the people of non-western and non-industrialised societies. It is because of the actual monopoly of ethnography in studying the archaic features of economically backward peoples, it has led to its active participation in working out problems of the primitive society. A remarkable turning point took place during the Second World War. That is, since the Second World War, all cultures, including American Urban and industrial European, have come within the field of ethnography. Thus, complex societies also have become a major target of Anthropological research.

In giving a concrete outline for ethnographic investigation and its prospects, we must not forget that ethnoses are not merely a sum of separate components, but are integral

systems too. The necessity of comprehensive study of these systems has led to the emergence of a series of borderline disciplines linking ethnography with related sciences: ethnic geography, ethnic anthropology, ethnodemography, ethnolinguistics, ethnosociology etc. Hence, so long as people exist ethnography preserves his objects of preservation, and not only as a historical past but also as an existing reality. But, the relative significance of different zones in the subject matter of ethnographic investigation is changing with the changes in ethnic significantly. Moreover, in the course of social progress, the subject matter of ethnography is becoming more complex, setting before it new areas of inquiry. Conclusively speaking, "ethnography studies, describes and finds generalisations for the ethnically specific and differentiating components of culture"(Arutyunov, 1978:18).

The notion of ethnography as the scientific study is mainly tribal communities, population of exotic lands for survivals of old customs and morals still existing in developing countries is disappearing. Today, ethnography while continuing research into the study of traditional problems has turned its main attention to a study of the contemporary peoples of the world and present ethnic processes. Such a study not only helps to understand the present but also to create the basis for forecasting the future.

Further as stated earlier, we can say, "the ethnographic study is called upon to reveal a picture of an ethnos as a whole, not only its ethnic differentiating features but also those which it shares with other ethnoses".

Besides, in our times, the scientific and technological revolution and social progress are accompanied by the rapid disappearance of archaic phenomena. Hence, one of the most important tasks of ethnographers today and in the near future is to record those archaic phenomena which still exist. And thus the Ethnographic study gathers and supplies the first hand knowledge about an ethnic group and this forms the source material for further ethnological studies.

In the 17th and the 18th Centuries A.D., ethnographic studies were conducted by contemporary travellers and thus their accounts formed the then ethnographic materials. These early travel accounts whether they portrayed the savage as brutish or noble, were generally fanciful or malicious, superficial, and full of inappropriate judgements. Moreover, "it was generally to establish parallels between the peoples of whom they wrote and the ancients

with whom they were familiar from literature, often with the purpose of showing that there must have been some historical influence of the higher cultures on the lower”(Evans-Pritchard, 1972:66).

Between the middle of the 18th Century A.D. and middle of the 19th Century A.D., knowledge of primitive peoples and the peoples of the far East were generally increased. Accordingly, the character of ethnographic description of the peoples of the regions, viz., India, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa began to change from traveller’s tales to detailed studies by missionaries and administrators” (Ibid:67).

In the latter part of the 19th Century A.D. it became customary for ethnographic investigators to send out list of questions to those living among primitive peoples in order to get ethnographic details. The first among them was Lewis H.Morgan who elicited kinship terminologies. He sent the questionnaires to American agents in foreign countries. It was on the basis of their replies that he published his famous work, **Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family** in 1871.

“Many accounts written about primitive peoples by laymen around the latter part of the 10th Century A.D. and the earlier part of the 20th Century A.D. were excellent, and in a few cases their descriptions have hardly been excelled by the best professional fieldworkers”, says the eminent social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard.

Till the end of the 19th Century A.D., all ethnographic studies were carried out by “arm-chaired ethnographers” with the exception of Morgan’s study of the Iroquois. We have now reached the final and natural stage of development in the fieldwork tradition, in which observations and the evaluations are made by the same person and the scholar is brought into direct contact with the subject of his study. Now-a-days, the anthropologist goes into the field with the most advanced tools and methods of investigation available. There he seeks to explain the acceptable social behaviour of a group by abstracting a set of rules from what is observed and heard.

Ethnographic description requires methods of processing observed phenomena so that we can inductively construct a theory of how our informants have organized the same phenomena. It is the theory, not the phenomena alone, which ethnographic description aims

to present. The mere collection of what are called facts unguided by theory in observation and selection is of little value. Hence, knowing the importance of a framework for ethnographic description, the author presents this monograph in the structural-functionalistic framework. Thus, in the view of the author, each and every parts, institutions and roles of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, the tribes under study, is integrated so as to function and maintain the structural whole.

THE PROBLEM

The present study focuses its attention on the ethnography of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, a hill tribe in Tamil Nadu. They inhabit the Pachaimalai-Hills, situated in the northern part of Trichirapalli District of Tamilnadu. Though we find the word "Malaiyali" in their nomenclature there is no direct connection between the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis and Malaiyalis of Kerala state either ethnically or linguistically. In other words, the word Malaiyali in their ethnic name stands for "the inhabitant of the hill" (Tamil) *malai* "hill"/ "mountain"; *aali* "the inhabitant" / "owner". They are not the native inhabitants like other tribes Todas, Kotas, Kattunaickas, Irulas who occupy Tamilnadu. On the contrary, the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis are immigrants from plains at recent time, like their bretheren tribes Kolli Malaiyalis and Kalrayan Malaiyalis.

It is established that the ancestors of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis have migrated from the plains sometimes during the 16th and the 17th Century A.D. when Mohamedan rule was dominant in Southern India (Maheswaran, 1981). They claim themselves as Karala Vellalas who have descended from Kanchipuram, the place very near to Madras (Ta. *kaaraalan* 'one who rules the sky'). Hunters were the original inhabitants of the Hills. At the 16th or the 17th Century A.D. the Kaaraala Vellaalaas overcame and massacred the menfolk of the hunter community. Then they have established a mixed ethnicity with the then hunter women. Because of this mixed ethnicity the entire life and culture remnants for instance, each and every aspect of the life of a Pachaimalai Malaiyali is seen with the impact of his ancestor (both Hunters and Kaaraala Vellaalaas). By quoting an observation at the time of marriage ceremony, as an instance, we can infer the reality of the above statement. At once the marriage badge is tied around the neck of the bride, one of the tribals fire a gun towards the sky to indicate the death of the Hunter ancestors. The influence of the mixed ethnicity is such that one can

realize it in each and every sphere of their life, viz., social organization, economic organization, political organization, religious organization and so on. The present ethnographic account is also focussed with such an outlook.

THE OBJECTIVES

The entire ethnographic study is intensively carried out, with the following objectives in mind:

- (a) To understand the economy, social organization, religion and political organization of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis;
- (b) To study the different phases of life of an individual Pachaimalai Malaiyali;
and
- (c) To trace out the different culture traits of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis which stand as remnants of their past stages.

METHODOLOGY

SELECTION OF THE TRIBAL VILLAGES

During the pilot phase, the design of the study along with the methodology adopted was framed. Moreover, the preliminary work of the methodological nature, selection of hamlets, preparation of questionnaires were almost completed during the first phase of the study.

Two hamlets from northern part of the Hills (Sembulilchampatti and Puthur) and two hamlets from southern part of the Hills (Top Sengattupatti and Perumparappu) were selected as points of inquiry. The above mentioned four hamlets were selected with a number of considerations. Sembulilchampatti of northern Hills and Perumparappu of southern Hills are at the interior, devoid of plains' contact, totally. This sort of selection of points of inquiry is considered by the author in order to reveal the drastic differences, if any, in the life and

culture of the tribes, by the contact and non-contact with plains. Certainly, the author felt the cultural difference between the people of the peripheral hamlet with that of the people of the interior hamlet. For example, the women of the peripheral hamlet are not in the practice of entering common menstrual hut during their menstruation period. On the contrary, the women of the interior hamlet practise entering into common menstrual hut, during their menstrual period.

FIELDWORK

The actual fieldwork is carried out by the author at first in the month of January 1981. At that time the northern part of the Hills, viz., *Vannadu* was surveyed and studied for more than a fortnight. The second fieldwork in the southern part of the Hills, viz., *Thenparanadu* was carried out in the month of April 1981, and this study extended for more than a week.

The chief research technique followed was participation - observation. As participant-observer, the author took part in a wide range of activities such as betrothal, construction of new hut, repairing of old hut, divining by the shamon etc., The author has combined the participation-observation technique with other anthropological research techniques such as key-informant interviewing, genealogies, case histories etc., In addition to these, a comprehensive questionnaire was framed and administered.

Next to the participant-observation technique, the author followed mostly the key-informant interviewing, to elicit the ethnographic data. The author developed a few key-informant with whom he collected ample data, especially about the political organization and religion. The key informants systematically pursued for these were the tribal headman, his assistants and the shamon. The majority of the information that the author has collected are directly related to his ability to make and maintain rapport among his informants. There were other new roles that he had followed to establish good rapport. One of those was the role of a physician. Cases of petty ailments such as head ache, stomach ache, diarrhoea, fever were attended by him. This sort of other roles have strengthened the rapport which was already established.

Genealogies were of great help in learning how the villagers were related to each other. However, the author was able to collect only two extensive genealogies and these materials were utilised for the ethnographic description.

Case histories of three informants were also studied and utilised for the ethnographic descriptions.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

On completion of the fieldwork, the author was confronted with the sorting of a huge mass of data collected by him. Moreover, the tabulation and compilation of data alone took the entire time set for writing the final report. A scientific analysis demanded careful examination of all the data which in consequence took time beyond the author's expectations.

The present monograph is the exhaustive as well as first hand ethnographic informations about the little known Tamil speaking Malaiyalis, occupying the topography of the Hills. Thurston (1909) and A. Ayyappan(1948) have mentioned some notes about this particular tribe, not as a separate topic but under the general head "Malaiyalis". That is to say, they have treated the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis along with their bretheren tribes viz., Kalrayan Malaiyalis and Kolli Malaiyalis.

The entire collected ethnographic details were analyzed within the framework of the structural-functionalistic model covering not only major ethnographic details such as social organization, political organization, economy, religion but also the minor ethnographic details such as murder, extra-marital relations.

Interpretations and discussions were given wherever felt necessary by the author, especially while citing certain culture traits, their mixed ethnicity is at once quoted. For instance, while the womenfolk put a portion of meal before serving their husbands, it is believed as offering to their Hunter ancestors and is also observed.

Despite the exhaustive study, the present work also has some limitations. They are as follows:

- (a) The third major division of the Hills, viz, Kombai was not included in the present work, because of want of time;

- (b) The role of *taay maamen* (mother's brother), is not worked out extensively. This is also due to lack of sufficient time to the author; and
- (c) Despite sincere watching, subjectivity might have crept in, atleast a bit into the ethnographic description. This is because of the fact that any description of another group of people, another way of life, is to some extent bound to be subjective, especially in those aspects, where the culture is shared by the ethnographer also.

~~~~~



## 2. LAND AND PEOPLE

### THE ENVIRONMENT

The Hills are situated in the Thuraiyur Taluk of the Tiruchirapalli District, in Tamilnadu State. It is surrounded by Rasipuram and Namakkal in the West; in the North by Attur Taluk of Salem District and in the East by Perambalur Taluk of Tiruchirappalli District. The entire hill range is scattered over approximately an area of about 35,000 hectares. Its altitude ranges between 2,000 and 3,000 feet. There are as many as 50 villages which are referred to as *ooru* in their speech. Ta. *ooru* 'hamlet'. All these hamlets are grouped under three nadus, viz., Thenpuranadu (Temporanaadu), Vannadu (Vannaadu) and Aathinadu (Aathinaadu). At present, Thenpuranadu, the southern part of the Hills alone is fertile than the other two.

The temperature in the Hills is moderate. The average maximum and minimum temperature in the Hills are recorded as 78°F and 72°F, respectively. The rainfall is also moderate. The average rainfall for the last three years is observed to be 54 inches per year.

During the summer season, day time is felt with scorching sun and night time with cold. During winter, the day is soothing while the night is with biting cold.

The Hills have a rich flora. The forests are thickly wooded with many gigantic trees and bamboo thickets. Among the flora, the most important trees yielding timber are *irumpalaa*, *aami*, *puli*, *coori*, *vaanaarom* and *manjanam*. Besides, the forests are also enriched with herbs, shrubs and tall jungle grass known as *kavattaampillu*. Sandalwood tree, gall nut tree are the noteworthy flora of commercial value. Pineapple, jack, orange are grown by the tribes, for their consumption and marketing.

Among the fauna, boar, bear, jackal, iguana, porcupine, spiny ant-eater, wild cat, civet cat are found in large numbers. Though tigers and leopards are found to be living in the forests, their number is said to be meagre. Wild buffalo is reported as extinct variety of this zone. There

are many game animals like antelope, spotted deer, rabbit, hill goat, wild fowl; In addition, several kinds of small birds viz., sparrow, weaver bird, water fowl are found in the forest of the Hills.

The Hills are not easily accessible to visitors as there is no proper road connections. One of the routes which take us to Thenpuranadu is recently regularized as vehicular road by the Highways Department to facilitate the movements of the goods to the co-operative supermarkets located on the Hills. From Thuraiyur we have a number of buses (both route buses and town buses) upto Sobanapuram, a village just 5 kilometres away from the foot of the Hills. Sometimes the visitor has to alight at Uppiliyapuram, a village 11 Kilometres away from Thuraiyur. And then, he has to get another town bus to alight at Sobanapuram. From the foot of the Hills the visitors should walk 7 kilometres climbing the steep rocks. If fortunate, they can have free ride by the mercy of the lorry drivers who occasionally visit the top of the hills, to deliver the goods at the supermarket.

## THE PEOPLE

The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis are the only Scheduled Tribes living in the Hills. They live in more than 50 isolated settlements, throughout the Hills both in its periphery and interior regions. The Pachaimalai Malaiyali settlements are known by the term *ooru*. Besides the tribes, the other non-tribal people living in the Hills are Lubbais, Mudaliars and Christians. However, these people mainly inhabit the Top Sengattupatti settlement, one which is situated in the periphery of Thenpuranadu.

The population figures of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis in the Hills, according to the census of 1971 is 6,291. The number of households is noted as 1,340 from the Government records.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERS

Somatoscopic observations reveal that they have short limbs and short stature, sturdily built body and dark-brown complexion. Their hairs are black and straight, showing tendency towards wavy. Shape of the nose varies from flat to medium with slight depression at the root. Many individuals have receding chin and thick lips. However, the author does not find any distinct feature in them, by ordinary observations.

## THE FIELD-CENTRES

### LOCATION

Out of the sixteen settlements of Thenpuranadu, Top Sengattuppatti and Perumparappu were selected to conduct fieldwork. Likewise, two settlements viz., Sembulichampatti and Puthur were selected from Vannadu, the Northern part of the Hills.

To reach Thenpuranadu, as already mentioned, one has to start from Thuraiyur and alight at Sobanapuram. From the foot the Hills, one has to climb further 7 kilometres. Then the person can reach the Top Sengattupatti settlement. The other settlement viz., Perumparappu is situated just 5 kilometres away in the North-East of Top Sengattupatti. If one should enter the northern part of the Hills, viz., Vannadu, he should reach Punachi, a village situated at the 9<sup>th</sup> kilometre off Thuraiyur, in the North-East direction. From Punachi, the visitor has to walk 3 kilometres to reach the foot of the Hills. From the foot of the Hills, the person has to climb approximately 7 kilometres. Then, he or she can enter Sembulichampatti settlement. Another settlement viz., Puthur lies approximately at the 5<sup>th</sup> kilometre from Sempulichampatti.

### POPULATION

Top Sengattupatti is the most thickly populated settlement compared to the other three. Its population figure comes round about 1,100. On the contrary, the Puthur settlement shows only 43 tribals. The other two settlements, viz., Sembulichampatti, Perumparappu shows 720 and 36 respectively as the population figure.

## LANGUAGE

The tribals have a Tamil dialect of their own. It is a unique dialect and possesses a number of Old Tamil features in it. By its uniqueness it has been given the dialect area status.

PTD is a regional dialect. There are 23 segmental phonemes in it. Of those, 10 are vowels and the rest are consonants. All the short vowels have the corresponding quantitative opposition with their counterparts. There are 5 categories of consonants in this dialect, viz., (i) Stops (ii) Approximants, (iii) Nasals, (iv) Laterals, and (v) Flap.

All the vowels occur both initially and medially in the final position, except /o/ all other vowels occur.

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

|    |                                     |                              |                                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| i  | <i>ittu</i> "is"                    | <i>alicci</i> "having cut"   | <i>nerupputti</i> "fire"                                |
| i  | <i>i:tʃi</i> "spear"                | <i>mi:nu</i> "star"          | <i>mi:ni</i> "fish"                                     |
| e  | <i>eyki</i> "to me"                 | <i>mettele</i> "betal leaf"  | <i>ka:re</i> "string"                                   |
| e: | <i>e:nom</i> "thing"                | <i>ce:ru</i> "granery"       | <i>po:re</i> "go-you(sg.)"                              |
| a  | <i>appe</i> "father"                | <i>pace</i> "honey"          | <i>pantal</i> "pandal"                                  |
| a: | <i>aariyom</i> "ragi"               | <i>ta:ci:le</i> "loin cloth" | <i>paynkaa</i> "fresh land for cultivation"             |
| o  | <i>ocinti</i> "fasting"             | <i>toʃrakku</i> "owl"        | —                                                       |
| o: | <i>o:le</i> "an ornament"           | <i>ko:ya</i> "temple"        | <i>anʃippo:</i> "go away-you(Sg.)"                      |
| u  | <i>Uʃumpu</i> "iguana"              | <i>sunʃaan</i> "mouse"       | <i>veruvu</i> "flying fox"                              |
| u: | <i>u:mekko:tta:n</i><br>"an animal" | <i>tu:va</i> "broom"         | <i>kurunamu:</i> "a kind of flower<br>with rich nector" |

All the consonants except *n* and *l* occur initially. Medially, all the consonants occur. The consonants *c*, *m*, and *n* are the only phonemes which occur finally.

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

|   |                                                   |                                                 |                             |
|---|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| p | <i>pr:eykki</i> "afterward"                       | <i>simpu</i> "bamboo piece"                     | -                           |
| t | <i>tu:ve</i> "broom"                              | <i>pavuti</i> "portion(of things)"              | -                           |
| t | <i>ta:p senka:ttuppatti</i> "Top Sengaattuppatti" | <i>muʃlu selavu</i> "marriage expense"          | -                           |
| c | <i>cevuni</i> "region around ear lobe"            | <i>mu:si</i> "things offered<br>for bride"      | <i>neklic</i><br>"necklace" |
| k | <i>ke:le</i> "antelope"                           | <i>neka</i> "shadow"                            | -                           |
| v | <i>veruvu</i> "flying fox"                        | <i>karava maariyaayi</i><br>"shrine of a deity" | -                           |

|   |                                    |                           |                                |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| y | <i>yaaru</i> "who"                 | kaayi "unripe fruit"      | -                              |
| s | <i>so:mom</i> 'dhothi'             | misom "swimming"          | -                              |
| n | <i>naraca:ti</i> "ancestral deity" | <i>e:nom</i> "thing"      | avtten "boy<br>with big belly" |
| l | <i>lo:la:kku</i> "an ear ornament" | <i>alunku</i> "ant eater" | -                              |
| r | <i>rakuṭu</i> "vulture"            | ca:ru "sauce"             | -                              |

Some of the special linguistic features that are attested in the phonological, the grammatical and the lexical levels of PTD are as given below:

There is no voiced stop or fricative as phonemes. Thus, the Old Tamil phonological system is retained in this dialect, regarding the stop phonemes.

The first and second person singular pronouns have oblique forms which are of peculiar phonemic shape, especially in the dative case. *ey / e:y*

*ey-kki / e:y -kki* "to me"

This corresponds to the common standard colloquial variety *enakku*. In Kollimalai Tamil Dialect and Saliyar Dialect of Tamil, this is represented as *u:kku* : *ne:kku* in Brahmin Dialect of Tamil as *ne:kku*. Likewise *oy / o:y*-

*oy -kki / o:y - kki* "to you"

This corresponds to the common standard colloquial variety *onakku*. In Kollimalai Tamil Dialect and Saliyar dialect of Tamil this is represented as *e:kku*: in Brahmin Tamil Dialect as *no:kku*:). PTD is the only Tamil dialect showing inclusive marker in the finite verbs, However, this is restricted only to future tense only.

eg. *naambe varu-mu* "we(Incl.) will come"

The demonstrative pronouns of PTD show peculiar forms *i:ye* and *ayye* which can be equated with standard varieties *ivarkal* and *avarkal*, respectively.

|             |                           |                 |
|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>PTD</b>  | <i>Literary<br/>Tamil</i> |                 |
| <i>i:ye</i> | <i>ivarkaḷ</i>            | “these persons” |
| <i>ayye</i> | <i>avarkaḷ</i>            | “those persons” |

New phrases and expressions can be found.

### Noun-Noun

|                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>aṭuppu teruvu</i>      | “spacious area over hearth”   |
| <i>pennam periyavunka</i> | “elderly persons”             |
| <i>paṭṭi parlu</i>        | “cattle pound”                |
| <i>pakkuvom para:yom</i>  | “suitable period”             |
| <i>pannom pankali</i>     | “co-sharers”                  |
| <i>ceṭi cette</i>         | “dry plants and their leaves” |
| <i>ka:y kacavu</i>        | “vegetables”                  |
| <i>rokkom rocone</i>      | “cash”                        |

### Noun-Verbal noun

|                          |                                                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>pi:ca:ṇṭipo:ṭratu</i> | “the act of sprinkling turmeric water over cross-cousins” |
| <i>paṇṭi aṭikratu</i>    | “the act of killing pigs”                                 |
| <i>poṭulu kolutratu</i>  | “the act of burning crackers”                             |
| <i>mo:ttu viṭratu</i>    | “formation of tender unripe fruits”                       |

### Sentences

|                       |                                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>e: ku:ṭṭu</i>      | “cry loudly(during hunting expedition)” |
| <i>kompū po:ṭratu</i> | “blow the musical horn”                 |
| <i>mu:nci pu:cu</i>   | “wash the face”                         |

In the lexical level, one can find a number of lexical items which are unique in this dialect alone. In their speech a number of archaic forms are also attested. The obvious reason for such a wide difference from standard literacy Tamil is their isolation because of natural barrier, viz., the Hilly area. The uniqueness in the lexical level can be studied at different domains such as kinship, types of lands, adverbs of time and general items. The classified lists are given below:

### KINSHIP TERMS

|                      |                                                             |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>ciyya:mpe:tti</i> | “sons son’s daughter/daughter’s daughter’s “daughter”       |
| <i>ciyya:mpe:ren</i> | “son’s son’s son/daughter’s daughter’s son”                 |
| <i>maamiyatte</i>    | “father’s sister/mother’s brother’s spouse/spouse’s mother” |
| <i>nanke</i>         | “brother(er.)’s spouse”                                     |

### TYPES OF LANDS

|                           |                                                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <i>oḷavu ka:tu</i>        | “a kind of cultivable land”                       |
| <i>u:tti ka:tu</i>        |                                                   |
| <i>paṭatti/ceṭi ka:tu</i> | “a land wherein maize alone cultivated”           |
| <i>paynka:</i>            | “fresh land ready for the cultivation of millets” |
| <i>pone ka:tu</i>         | “burnt land”                                      |
| <i>tittu ka:tu</i>        | “a kind of cultivable land”                       |
| <i>ce:kre ka:tu</i>       | “a kind of cultivable land”                       |
| <i>punce ka:tu</i>        | “land wherein gram variety alone cultivated”      |
| <i>maruvu ka:tu</i>       | “land wherein gram variety alone cultivated”      |
| <i>mo:ṭṭa:nka:tu</i>      | “uplevel land”                                    |
| <i>ṛayppu ka:tu</i>       | “land with loose soil”                            |
| <i>nance vaya ka:tu</i>   | “wet land”                                        |

**ADVERBS OF TIME**

|                                                       |                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>antippu:ttu</i>                                    | “time of tieing oxen after releasing them from plough” |
| <i>porna:ti</i>                                       | “previous day”                                         |
| <i>teḷicci/ kirimicci/<br/>pre:ykki / piruppa:tu/</i> | “afterwards”                                           |
| <i>me:laykki</i>                                      | “next year”                                            |
| <i>macaṅṅalu</i>                                      | “mixing time”                                          |
| <i>ma:tu macankra<br/>ne:rom</i>                      | “twilight”                                             |

**GENERAL VOCABULARY**

|                   |                                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>me:tta:ppu</i> | “front part of the sari over the chest” |
| <i>e:ttu</i>      | “lirrigating instrument”                |
| <i>pa:ti</i>      | ‘parennial water hole’                  |
| <i>taṭuvili</i>   | “ a trap for wild boar”                 |
| <i>tu:ve</i>      | “room”                                  |
| <i>ciluppi</i>    | “cheeta”                                |
| <i>kaṭippa:n</i>  | “side dish”                             |
| <i>kaṭe</i>       | “entrance”                              |
| <i>vara ka:yi</i> | “dried fruit”                           |
| <i>va:ci</i>      | “axe”                                   |



## DRESS AND DECORATION

### DRESS

Men tuck a piece of cloth namely *thaaseele* to their waist covering the loins. They simply cover their upper portion, by a blanket or dhoti. When they visit the plains they wear that dhoti around their waist. Persons who used to visit often the nearby town have shirts too in use. In the Top Sengattupatti settlement, it was observed that the young men wear nickar and shirts. Schooling boys are also seen with this type of dress. In the interior settlements, all elderly men were seen with loin-cloth only.

The dress of women consists of *seele* (sari). While wearing the sari, one of the fold is tucked to one of the sides of the waist and the other fold is drawn frontside so as to cover the breasts and hung over the back on the left shoulder. Elderly women and women of the interior settlements wear the sari around waist only leaving their breasts uncovered. Young women in Top Sengattupatti settlement and young women of Sembulichampatti settlement were found to wear sari, blouse and undergarments too.

### HAIR STYLE

Majority of men follow the method of western style of cropping hair while they visit the barber shops at Sobanapuram village or Uppiliapuram village. But, young men prefer to crop their hair at Thuraiyur town. Some elderly persons allowed their hairs to grow on the head without cropping them at all. Menfolk occasionally shave their beard. Young men and also some elderly persons take pain to have mustache.

Women adopt the hairs style of either keeping a hair bun at the back of the head, or leaving the hairs unplaited. To have braid, the smoothly combed hairs are collected and tightly tied high at the back. Then, the hair hanging from the knot are folded three or four times over the knot itself and tied tightly with a piece of cloth or ribbon taking care to preserve the folded hair in a flat spread manner. Elderly women tie their hair at the back in a single knot.

Both men and women occasionally tonsure their head as their offering to the deities.

Men and women use margosa oil for the hairs. However, the youngsters now-a-days

prefer coconut oil. Whether one bathes regularly or not, he applies oil to the head and combs the hair smoothly atleast once in two or three days. Whenever they go out, they first oil and comb their head.

## ORNAMENTS

Only a few were found to wear rings in their fingers. Likewise, it was noticed that among men, a few elderly persons were found to wear an ear ornament called *kadukken*.

On the contrary, women wear a number of ornaments, *alandhamudicci*, *moodi*, *oale*, *uruttu*, *koppu*, *talukku*, *maatlu* and *loalakkallu* - all made of gold are worn by elderly women, as the different ear ornaments. They are worn at the base of the ear lobe. In addition, a small ornament called *pottu* is also worn by the elderly women. This ornament is worn by them at the distal region of their ear lobes. However, it is noticed that young women wear only *thodu*, an ear ornament usually worn by the plains, women.

Young girls have either *maatlu* or *loalakkallu* as their ear ornament.

Besides these ear ornament, they were found to wear a few other ornaments such as *kaappu* (anklet), *valey*a (bangle), *ceynu* (chain), *neklic* (necklace) are worn around the neck by young women and girls have *mookkuthi* as their nose rings.

Married men wear two plain silver rings known as *vinci* in the toe of each leg at marriage ceremony. In the past, it has been reported men continued to wear it even after marriage but now-a-days they wear it only for the occassion.

Married women in addition to *vinci*, have *thaali* (marriage badge) around their neck. It may be of mere yellow string with tumeric piece with it or golden chain with single or double gold plates. Women of *kavenden* (tribal headman) sect have gold chain, provided she should be given in marriage to a man of *kavenden* sect. On the contrary, the women of *kudiyaanaven* (citizen under tribal headman) sect have only yellow strings. The note worthy point in this juncture is that even a woman of *kudiyaanaven* sect is permitted to have gold chain as marriage badge, if she is given in marriage to a man of *Kavenden* sect.

The young women of the hills know new arts such as embroidery and sewing which are

taught by some social service leagues in and around Thuraiyur town. In addition to new arts, folk arts of the plains such as decoration called *koalom* by white powder on the floor of the parlour and wall of the huts are also taught by those social service leagues.

Use of costumes like talcum powder, collyrium by young women are because of such cultural contact with the plains.

At Top Sengattupatti settlement, non-formal education is given to the young women from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. This is maintained by a Pachaimalai Malaiyali woman.

There is a government tribal residential secondary school at Top Sengattupatti settlement, with one head master and a lady teacher. In addition, there is a primary school upto V standard, at Sembulichampatti settlement.

Puthur and Top Sengattupatti are provided with a branch post office of their own with a single runner for the whole hilly area. He is a Pachaimalai Malaiyali.



### 3. ECONOMY

#### TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis of the Hills are largely dependent upon their traditional economic pursuits. Since the tribes are coming in contact with the people of other cultures, some of them have been taking up modern economic pursuits also. In this chapter, salient features of the various economic activities pursued by the people are described.

The traditional economy of the tribes is mostly based on cultivation and collection of minor forest produce. In addition, other minor economic activities such as hunting are also practised by them.

#### SHIFTING CULTIVATION

The shifting cultivation is done mainly on the mountain ridges in the forests. The tribes begin the work of shifting cultivation in the forest land by the end of January. The felling of the jungle growth, cutting of stumps and weeds mark the commencement of the agricultural operation for the new year. The branches and leaves of jungle trees in the lands are chopped off leaving a few of them sparingly for building garrets on the top of trees. Upto one week the clearings in the fields are left to dry. Then they are burnt. The land at this stage is called *ponekkaadu* (burnt land). The sticks which are not affected by fire are picked up and collected. Those unburnt sticks are termed *podulu* and the collection of such sticks are known as *podulu edukradhu*. The sticks so collected are made use of as fuel. On the other hand, the ash of the burnt wood and leaves is left in the field itself till the fall of rains during monsoons. The monsoon showers moisten the fields with the absorption of the ash, and the field becomes ready for sowing. Before sowing, the land is leveled by means of *kalekkoththu* (hoe). The land at this stage is termed *paynga* (fresh land).

The sowing is initiated by the headman after conducting a ritual in honour of *padaeriyammen* (deity of earth). A ceremonial feast also accompanies this ritual.

At the time of sowing a handful of seeds (say, maize or millet) is taken at the right hand by the sower. The seeds were dropped into the holes made by the digging stick held in the left hand, and those holes were then covered with earth treading over it by a foot. At the time of sowing the maize or millet, no particular system like sowing in any orderly row is practised. Because of the above said types of sowing, the seeds are dibbled at random in all directions leaving gaps intermittently. However, each of the holes dibbled so is get apart at a uniform distance of one foot each. The sowing of maize or millet is followed simultaneously by sowing of the pulses in the same way. In doing so, men keep the maize seeds in a cloth bag hung over their shoulders while women carry the seeds in the folds of their sari.

Starting from sprouting till ripening of grains, the tribals were involved in clearing the weeds at least twice. It is done by the help of hoe. Weeding is usually done on all lands excepting those plots on which the transplanting was done. In addition to the weeding, the young crops are to be guarded from the ravages of wild animals and birds. The entry of domestic animals into the field was avoided by the erection of stone wall around it.

No major rituals connected with cultivation were observed after the sowing was over, till the harvest, viz., *aravattom* begins. When maize or millet (as the case may be) ripens harvest starts. Harvests were accompanied by folk songs. Few crops of them were cut and placed on the earth by the tribals as a kind of offering to the earth deity. From then onwards, utilization of grains begins. The stalk of the crops were cut with the sickle and the cut-ends were collected in one place and were allowed to get dry. When they were completely dried, they were threshed by wooden sticks so as to separate the grains from the sheath. In the case of millet, the grains were cleared off the chaff by dropping the threshed grains from some height. In this process, the operator stands on a raised platform that is fixed in the *kalom* (threshing floor).

The grain is dropped from the height by a winnowing pan. The chaff is blown off by the wind and the millet get separated.

At July-August, maize is harvested. The millet is harvested at October- November, while the pulses sown along with the millet is harvested in the months of November-December. In addition, castor is also cultivated along with the millets. At January the castor pods are cut and dried in the sun. Dried castor pods are threshed with sticks in order to separate the seeds from the pods.

Various agricultural activities are done by both the sexes. Men do the hard task such as cutting trees, building fences, harvesting crops.

At the time of harvest in his field, a Pachaimalai Malaiyali will normally invite all the inhabitants (at least one person from a family) to his assistance. Until the day of thrashing, all should work in his field, even if they have their own works. Throughout that period food will be offered to them by the owner of the field. Sometimes, even without one's invitation, people use to gather and participate in the harvest. By such gatherings, at times, the owner of the field has to face over expenditure than his income out of his yield. A ceremonial feast known as *ocindhi* is given to all the inhabitants of the settlement, at the last day of threshing. This ceremonial feast and the feasts given daily while the harvest was going on are considered by the author as potlaches.

The agricultural yield derived from shifting cultivation is said to be just adequate for a period of four or five months, in case the harvest is plentiful.

Various agricultural activities are done by both sex. Men do the hard task of cutting trees, building fences, harvesting crops, while women do the less arduous works like broadcasting, sowing, plucking weeds, etc., The tribals do not employ outside labour for their work in the fields. The patch of land cut for cultivation by each family is usually in accordance with their capacity and need.

### **TERRACED CULTIVATION**

On the hill slopes small patches of land were cleared off the forest growth. As those hill slopes were cut off as steps water would not stop in the patches. Hence, even by heavy rain they enjoy irrigation and feel contented. Cultivation done on such land is called *mottaankaattu vellaame* (terraced cultivation) Paddy alone is cultivated in this sort of cultivation. Transplantation of *naaththu* (seedling) is observed in the case of paddy cultivation.

In a period of 40 days from the day of sowing, the seedlings normally grow to a height of 40 centimeters to 50 centimetres. Then, they are taken out from the wet land. They are tied into a bundle when a handful of them are collected and left on the plot where it can remain alive for about one and half days, planting on the water. All the seedlings are bundled in a day or two and the other plots on which the seedlings are to be planted are kept ready by then. The seedlings are planted uniformly on these plots leaving the required distance. Operation of transplanting should

be completed within two months after the sowing but within one and half day of their plucking.

Those who have more lands prefer broadcasting method of sowing as transplanting is quite a laborious and time taking process. Those who possess less lands prefer transplanting method for the following reasons:

- 1) If the transplantation method is adopted relatively less quantity of seeds will suffice than that are required in broadcasting method;
- 2) Broadcasting method gives chance for a wider growth of weeds on the plots; and
- 3) The yield of crops is better if the transplantation method is adopted.

## **PLOUGH CULTIVATION**

Cultivation done with the help of plough is known as plough cultivation. The wooden plough used here is similar to the one used by the people of the plains. The interesting and noteworthy point in this context is that the ploughs were made by one of the tribes (of Top Sengattupatti settlement) and not from the carpenters of the plains.

A number of varieties of paddy, millet, gingelly, maize, horse gram, bean, black gram, tubers, brinjal, chillies, onion, garlic and other spices were cultivated by the plough cultivation.

*puluti kaaru nellu, mare nellu, toonga nellu* are some varieties of paddy cultivated by the people of the hills. *kaevuru, thene, soalom, saame, kambu* are a few to mention the millet varieties cultivated here. *sattikkarne, saene, saeppankelangu* are the yams grown in the hills.

Season is referred by the term *pattom* by the tribes of the hills. The different seasons of cultivation were listed as follows:

- |      |                          |                     |
|------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| I)   | <i>aadi pattom</i>       | (July-August)       |
| II)  | <i>cithre pattom</i>     | (April-May)         |
| III) | <i>vayyaci pattom</i>    | (May-June)          |
| IV)  | <i>pirattaaci pattom</i> | (September-October) |

**VARIOUS TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF  
THE PACHAIMALAI MALAIYALIS AND  
THE RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM IN A CALENDAR YEAR**

| S.No. | Calendar month    | Month according to the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis | Major traditional economic activities                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                               | Specific ritual activities associated with them                                                                                                                  |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |                   |                                               | Slash and burn cultivation                                                                                              | Collection of minor forest produce                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                  |
| i.    | April-May         | <i>cithre</i>                                 | Initiation of sowing by headman of the settlement. Maize, pulses and castor seeds are sowed while millet is broadcasted | Collection of bark of cassia officinalis. Collection of <i>maavali kkelangu</i> . Collection of barks of cassia fistula and Terminalia chebula in the early days of the month | A ritual in honour of <i>pederiyammen</i> is observed. Balls of cooked rice is offered along with goat sacrifice. A ceremonial feast accompanied this ritual     |
| ii    | May-June          | <i>vayyaaci</i>                               | Remaining weeds grown in the midst of maize and millet crops                                                            | Collection of honey, collection of <i>maavulikkkelangu</i> , collection of cassia officinalis in the early days of the month                                                  | Before beginning the collection of honey, a short ritual offering consists of parched rice, gram with jaggery is observed. In cense sticks and camphor are burnt |
| iii.  | June-July         | <i>aani</i>                                   | Harvesting the maize                                                                                                    | Collection of <i>maavulikkkelangu</i>                                                                                                                                         | Offering a few maize crops to earth deity                                                                                                                        |
| iv.   | July-August       | <i>aadi</i>                                   | Threshing the maize                                                                                                     | Same as above                                                                                                                                                                 | —                                                                                                                                                                |
| v.    | August-September  | <i>aavani</i>                                 | Removing weeds grown in the midst of maize and millet crops for the second time                                         | Collection of gallnut and <i>maavulikkkelangu</i>                                                                                                                             | —                                                                                                                                                                |
| vi.   | September-October | <i>pirattaaci</i>                             | Same as above                                                                                                           | Collection of gall nut and <i>maavulikkkelangu</i>                                                                                                                            | —                                                                                                                                                                |

contd...



**VARIOUS TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF  
THE PACHAIMALAI MALAIYALIS AND  
THE RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM IN A CALENDAR YEAR**

.. 2 ..

| S.No. | Calendar month      | Month according to the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis | Major traditional economic activities         |                                                                                                                                               | Specific ritual activities associated with them                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |                     |                                               | Slash and burn cultivation                    | Collection of minor forest produce                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| vii.  | October - November  | <i>appiye</i>                                 | Harvesting of the millet                      | Collection of honey, collection of <i>maavulikkelangu</i> and <i>malenkelangu</i>                                                             | Offering few crops of millet to earth deity. Before beginning the work of honey collection, a short ritual offering consists of parched rice, gram with jaggery is observed. Incense sticks and camphor are burnt |
| viii. | November - December | <i>kaaththiye</i>                             | Harvesting pulses                             | Collection of <i>malenkelangu</i> in the earlier days of the month. Collection of <i>maavulikkelangu</i>                                      | --                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| ix.   | December-January    | <i>maaruve</i>                                | Harvesting castor pods                        | Collection of barks of <i>Cassia officinalis</i> in the latter part of the month. Collection of <i>maavulikkelangu</i> .                      | --                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| x.    | January-February    | <i>thay</i>                                   | Burning the jungle growth in the forest lands | Collection of barks of <i>Cassia officinalis</i> . Collection of <i>maavulikkelangu</i>                                                       | --                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| xi.   | February - March    | <i>maaci</i>                                  | --                                            | Collection of barks of <i>Cassia officinalis</i> . <i>cassia fistula</i> and <i>Terminalia chebula</i> . Collection of <i>maavulikkelangu</i> | --                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| xii.  | March - April       | <i>panguni</i>                                | --                                            | Same as above                                                                                                                                 | --                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

**I) *aadi pattom* (July-August)**

It starts in *aadi* and ends in *thay* (January–February)

*kaevuru*, *thene*, *saame*, and *puluti kaaru nellu* are the different crops cultivated in this season.

**II) *cithre pattom* (April-May)**

This season starts in the Tamil New Year (April-May). It ends in *aadi* (July-August). The cultivation at the season is termed *koade vellaame* (summer cultivation) *kambu*, *coalom* and *gingelly* are the crops of this season.

**III) *vayyaaci pattom* (May-June)**

If *cithre pattom* is missed due to the failure of monsoon then *vayyaaci pattom* is undertaken. The crops cultivated are just like that of *cithre pattom*.

**IV) *pirattaaci pattom* (September-October)**

This starts in *pirattaaci* (September-October) and ends in *thay* (January-February). The crops cultivated in this season are just the same as in the case of *aadi pattom*.

**AREA OF LAND CULTIVATED**

Till recently, the tribes were quite contented with subsistence economy and hence they have practised shifting cultivation and terraced cultivation only, that too on limited areas of land, however big and well to do a household was. As regards the wet land cultivation, Pachaimalai Malaiyali cultivated only that quantity of land, the yield from which would suffice his wants.

The lands are also sold. The price of land varies as per nature, that is whether it is up land or low land or wet land .

The following table presents the price-list of three different varieties of lands:

**Table-1**

| Type of Land | Price per Acre(in rupees)<br>approximately |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Up land      | 1,000                                      |
| Low land     | 2,000                                      |
| Wet land     | 4,000-5,000                                |

They make use of *aattervu*(manure of goat)and *maattervu*(manure of cattle) and they are not familiar with green leaves as manure .

### COLLECTION OF MINOR FOREST PRODUCE

The chief among the minor forest produce collected by the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis of the hills are known are *konna patte* (bark of *Cassia officinalis*), *saenga patte* (bark of *Cassia fistula*, *maavulikkelangu* (a kind of edible rhizome) *malankelangu* (tubers of hills), *katukkaayi*(gall nut) and *thaenu* (honey).

Bark of *Cassia officinalis* is used in tanning industries. It is available in plenty from January to May. Bark of *Cassia fistula* and that of *Terminalia chebula* are useful in the dyeing industries. They are collected during the summer months especially from February to April.

The edible tubers, viz., *malankelangu* are uprooted during the monsoon period (i.e.,October - November). The tools employed in uprooting are *katappaare kambi* (crow bar), and *kalekkoththu* (hoe). For collecting tubers, the land should be in moist condition. The tubers so collected are boiled by immersing in water and taken as food.

Collection of *maavulikkelangu* will be seen irrespective of the seasons. Unlike that of the tubers of hills, the uprooting of this edible rhizome needs digging pits at waist level. Because its root system was so much innervated deep with multifarious ramifications. The implements used are just the same as in the case of earlier context.

Gall nut, one of the forest produce of the Hills, is collected primarily by women and children, from the interior forest. The collected gall nuts are dried in the parlour of hut. The dried specimens are packed in gunny sacks and are marketed to the plains' men. The plains' men used to purchase the gall nuts from the tribes either at the Hills itself or at the town. For the tribes, the collection of gall nuts is the chief source of deriving money. Though the State Government has arranged to purchase the gall nuts directly from the tribes through co-operative super markets they would not sell their collections to them but will be selling to the merchants coming from plains. The author was told that the officials of the co-operative super markets are purchasing for relatively low price, that too with improper measures.

Honey, as an item of minor forest produce, fetches considerable remuneration for the tribes. Honey collection is termed *pace edukaradhu* and the honeycomb is termed *raattu*, in their dialect.

There are two seasons for collecting honey viz., May-June and October-November. Honey is collected during these seasons from the combs which are found to be sticking to cliffs, rocky crevices and the branches of giant trees. Usually the tribes extract honey combs from such remote and inaccessible places using bamboo scaffoldings or ladders. Honey obtained from such places is called *vara theanu*. *poar theanu* is extracted from the combs attached to the small types of trees. These combs are mostly found on the ant hills. It is not found in large quantities. Because of the medicinal contents assumed to be present in these varieties there is a great demand for it and obviously costs more. The *poar theanu* is generally found in the hollows of trees.

With the sprouting of wild flowers such as *sentu malli*, *sekattaa malli*, *kurungomboo* in the forest, honey bees begin to suck the nector from the flowers and that act transformed it into honey. The tribes start searching for the places of the combs when they see the wild flowers blooming.

Only during the collection of *vara theanu* they observe a ritual, offering parched rice, jaggery etc., This is done with the view of praying the deities to protect them from the danger of falling from the heights or being bitten by the bees.

The technique of collecting of *puththu theanu* and *poar theanu* is very simple when

compared to that of *vara theanu*. For collecting honey from ant hills or hollows of trees, the tribe will throw *uli* (chisel) so as to tear the honeycombs. The honey extruded from the damaged honeycomb is collected by placing a vessel. As said earlier, the collection of *vare theanu* involves not only a number of tools but also complicated techniques. The tools used for the operation are *kayru* (long rope), *eani* (bamboo scaffoldings or ladder) *eatti* (spear) *soradu* (curved sickle) and few tin containers for the collection of the extruding honey. Ladder is placed in order to reach the honey combs at heights. If the ladder is not long enough, bamboo scaffoldings are preferred. After the bamboo scaffoldings are built in order to reach the honey combs at different heights, several bundles of green leaves are placed on the ground floor of the rock and burnt. Being green the leaves do not burn, instead, smoke left out from them. This thick smoke clouds the rock thereby making the honey bees either fly away, or being “smoke drunk” and become harmless.

The actual operation begins, however, only on the succeeding day. Usually two or three persons climb the scaffoldings, carrying torches of green leaves in order to escape from the ravages of the bees. Other members wait on the ground floor to receive the tin containers suspended from above. Those who climb over the scaffolding, pick up the honeycombs either by means of spear or curved sickle attached with a long bamboo pole. After filling them in the tin containers they suspend them below by means of ropes. The process is repeated until the combs are exhausted. In order to avoid the risk of falling to floor while removing the comb at great heights, the tribals used to tie strong ropes at their chest and hip and connect those ropes with stems of the neighbouring trees.

Then honey is squeezed off the raw haneycombs. Afterwards the combs are boiled in tin containers. The solution so obtained is filled in the moulds dug in earth and wax is extracted out of them.

## HUNTING

Every year at the month of *pirattaaci* (September-October) *mooppen*(headman) of a hamlet used to call the people for hunting expedition, Atleast one male person from a family should join the expedition. If in a family no such youngmen or even old people capable of hunting are present a representative should participate on behalf of them. This custom is obligatory.

Each settlement is surrounded by a considerable land of forest. Adjoining to the forest, one can see the reserved forests. The tribes of the Hills are permitted to hunt in the reserve forests. They prefer a shower of rains on the day prior to their starting as this helps them to follow the tracks of animals which leave imprints of their foot-steps on the wet lands and slopes.

The special aptitude for hunting in a Pachaimalai Malaiyali and the skill in aims acquired right from his teen age are the essential tools which he possesses. His mechanical aids for hunting are *eatti*, (spear) *koduvaa* (bill hook), *thuppaakki* (gun). Only gun is used for hunting while spear and bill hook are used to cut the hunted games.

In Top Sengattupatti for five households, one possesses a gun. They buy the gun powder and lead from the market of the plains and make lead pellets themselves, from the lead bought.

*veattai* is the local term for hunting. It can be done with the help of *veatte naayi* (hunting dog) or by trapping called *thaduvili* or with the help of guns.

*udumbu* (iguana), *koore* (spotted deer) *keale* (antelope) are caught by the hunting dogs themselves. At once the animal is spotted out and caught by them, the tribes use to snatch from their clutches; or else the games will be spoiled by the dogs.

Wild boar is at times captured alive by using a special kind of trapping device called *thaduvili*. For this purpose pits are dug in the located areas of the intrusion of the wild boars. Usually two or three sharpened wooden spikes are fixed in vertical positions in those pits, at a depth of about 4 metres. Then the mouth of the pits are covered by layers of leaves, so as to disguise the identity of the spot where the pits exist and deceive the catch. The animal is driven towards the pits by terrorizing it by their shouting. When the wild boar falls into the pit with great force, it is either struck or hurt by the spikes. Then, the animal is beaten to death by means of sticks. However, the tribes of the Hills prefer to hunt the wild boar by using guns and not by this sort of trapping.

At the day fixed for hunting, the tribes assemble at the previously appointed place. A number of them take the dogs along with them. As soon as all have assembled, the headman

invokes the deity *aynaaru* to guide them in their hunting expedition and to enable them to bring plenty of game. If the expedition is for wild boar, then earlier to their starting they will observe one custom. That is, they will order carpenter of nearby town to make an idol of *aynaaru*. Then they will vow to the deity telling that only after getting expected number of games(say,seven) they will get the idol with them. sometimes, they are very fortunate enough to have that said number at single expedition itself; if not, the idol will be seen unclaimed at the house of the carpenter.

The expedition group finds their way along the forest by slashing and clearing *podhe*(bush) throughout their hunting expedition they make yelling sounds. If they find out a game by following its foot steps, then they will surround it. Those with gun will march side by side, forming a chain. Such sort of chain arrangement is formed in all the directions so as to encircle the spotted game. If the game tries to escape towards south then gun men of other directions will alert the gun men of the south, saying *thekke thekke*(south, south-be alert). Likewise, if it tries to escape eastwards then the gun men of other directions will alert the gun men at east, saying *kelakke kelakke* (east, east-be alert). On the other hand those without gun will make the game to appear before gun men by producing noises, both by means of empty tin containers brought with them and by their rough cries. The gun men, when the game appears before them, aim and shoot them by their guns. Shooting of wild boars is observed with great care as they are dangerous even at their last breath. That is to say, at the cost of its struggle for existence wild boar usually fights ferociously. Always its aim is to tear the enemies by its powerful teeth. Once a wild boar is shot to death it is carried, having tied with two *thandu*(wooden poles). After successful hunting they used to burn ten *potlu*(crackers), in honour of the deity *maasimalayaan*. This is not observed in the case of *keale veatte*(antelope hunting).

The hunted animal is brought from the forest to the entrance of the settlement and is kept at the temple of *elle karuppu* deity. By using knife and spear they will cut the flesh and hog them into pieces. The distribution of the flesh of the hunted game is of worth mentioning here (Detailed table is presented in the next page).

**DIVISION OF GAME IN THE VARIOUS FORMS OF HUNTING ON THE BASIS OF  
THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE HUNTERS**

| S.No. | Role of the individual                                                                                                                       | Share in wild boar hunting                              | Share in antelope hunting    | Share in other hunting (such as rabbit hunting etc.) |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| i.    | Those who help in driving the hunt by terrifying it by sounds produced by mouth and by beating empty tin containers, carried along with them | One - extra share, while dividing the meat at the end   | Same as in wild boar hunting | Same as in wild boar hunting                         |
| ii.   | The one who detects the tract of the hunt and calls others                                                                                   | --                                                      | Same as in wild boar hunting | One extra-share while dividing the meat at the end   |
| iii.  | The one whose bullet first hits the hunt                                                                                                     | 2/4 flesh and one hind leg                              | Same as in wild boar hunting | Head                                                 |
| iv.   | The one who first approaches the killed animal                                                                                               | One half of the flesh below the belly and above the hip | Same as in wild boar hunting | --                                                   |
| v.    | Those who approach the killed animal second and third                                                                                        | One piece of flesh from the belly region to each        | Same as in wild boar hunting | --                                                   |
| vi.   | Those who carry the killed animal from the place killed to the place where the animal is divided                                             | Intestine                                               | Same as in wild boar hunting | --                                                   |
| vii.  | The one who cuts and distributes the animal                                                                                                  | One share extra than what each gets a participant       | Same as in wild boar hunting | Same as in wild boar hunting                         |

contd ...



**DIVISION OF GAME IN THE VARIOUS FORMS OF HUNTING ON THE BASIS OF  
THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE HUNTERS**

... 2 ...

| S.No. | Role of the individual                                  | Share in wild boar hunting                                                                           | Share in antelope hunting etc.) | Share in other hunting (such as rabbit hunting) |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| viii. | Those who bring their dogs along with them, for hunting | A portion of a hind leg is divided equally among them all                                            | Same as in wild boar hunting    | Same as in wild boar hunting                    |
| ix.   | All the participants - whether active or not in hunting | The rest of the flesh is divided equally amongst all keeping in view of the extra shares to be given | Same as in wild boar hunting    | Same as in wild boar hunting                    |

### NON-TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

Besides their traditional subsistence economy, the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis are also engaged in various other economic activities such as forest labour, Highways Department labour and animal husbandry.

The Forest Department employs the tribes for cutting jungle trees on casual labour. Since the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis are experts in these jobs and the labour charges are relatively cheaper, the contractors who are authorised by the Forest Department always engage them. The forest works are mostly available during summer months, when contractors and officials of the Forest Department undertake work in the forests.

The contractors of the Highways Department also employ the tribes of the Hills for their works. Since the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis are hard working people, the contractors employ them for constructing buildings, road laying and similar other works. The daily wage given is five rupees

to men and only three rupees to women. These sorts of jobs are also available only during summer months.

Rearing of pigs is found among the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis without a single exception. As pork forms delicious food for them, the tribes of the Hills spared more time of their daily routine in this rather than any other work. In front of each hut we can see *panaasi* (water pot) made of logs, an earthen pot with food for pigs over a tripod twig, the *pannimogudu*. The earthen pot is filled with porridge, rice water and brine of millets. In addition, even if any waste food material such as banana skin is found it is also added into that pot. A ladle is always there on the pot. Whenever they want to nourish their pets they will call them by a peculiar sound. On hearing the call, the pigs are found to rush to the spot of food distribution. In a day, at least thrice they provide food to them. Likewise, they use to pour water, approximately six times a day into the water pot.

On special occasions such as betrothal ceremony, marriage ceremony, child birth ceremony, the pork is served as an essential item in the respective ceremonial feasts. Besides, the fines collected are also spent in getting a pig and pork is served as the main item.

In the author's opinion, pig seemed to play a vital role in shaping the intra-tribal relations. Because, even if pig is killed in a family the pork obtained is distributed to almost all the families of that settlement. The Pachaimalai Malaiyali says, as an explanation for this practice, "How is it possible to eat the pork while the children of other families are with us?" He adds, moreover, "Do you think that, if eaten without sharing, the pork will get digested?" Not only the pig rearing seems to strengthen the intra-tribal relations but also the intra-family relations. Because, the parents use to bring their children who were sent to another settlement at considerable distance for schooling, if they have pork as one of the items in their menu.

Pig is only relished and not sold. Hence the tribes of the Hills are not deriving cash out of pig rearing.

Women usually look after the bovines. These cattles are fed on the grass and other vegetation on the slopes of Hills. Young girls and boys usually less than sixteen years of age or old men and women who are no longer strong enough to attend the heavy routine on the lands attend to cattle keeping.

The cattle pen known as *maattu patti* is built either on the field itself or on the adjoining

lands of each household. It is rectangular enclosure built with bamboo splices and logs. The size of the pen depends on the stock of cattle one possesses. The dung of the cattle is heaped on one side of the pen for periodical use on the fields as manure.

The womenfolk are found milking the cows and she-buffaloes once in a day in the mornings. The yield of milk is very low, say 250 or 300 ml. They have learnt a better way of milking the cows only recently. This is because there is a change in their outlook due to the impact of the people of the plains on these womenfolk. They are presently selling the milk to other ethnic people nearby their settlement for ready cash.

Each family possesses at least two to four bovines. Maximum possession of bovines in a family is estimated as twelve. They do not know selective mating of bovines and hence only natural mating between grazing animals is observed. Consequently, they lack knowledge of pregnancy in their bovines and they come to know the fact only when they happen to see the formation of shaply mammae in them. Delivering the calf is not attended to and their bovines themselves look after their offsprings. Only when they see the cow and calf they used to look after them. The urine of the cow is considered as sacred and used during the purification ceremony after death, birth or first menstruation.

Milk and dung are the chief products obtained from the bovines. From milk they prepare curd, buttermilk etc., Dung is used to smear the floor of their hut. The accumulated dung is put in pits and manure is prepared out of that, at long run.

Sheep and goat are also treated in the same way as that of the bovines. Each family owns atleast ten to twenty goats and sheep. The pen for them is just like the same as that of bovines and is called *aattu patti*.

They do not derive milk or mutton from their sheep or goat; Rather they use them as movable property and market them. One goat is usually sold for hundred to hundred and fifty rupees while the price of sheep is hundred rupees only. In addition to grazing their sheep and goat at day time, the tribes used to place bunches of leaves on a 'V' shaped twig called *thale maatra kokki*. Poultry-raising is primarily done by womenfolk. All over the settlement and more particularly around husking places poultry are seen in dozens. Every house has a small shed on one side of its verandah for keeping their poultry in the night. In the day time they are left free to have their feed. Only chicken are fed with raw millet for a week after which they are also set free to have their own food.

The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis hang a basket from the rafters of roof in the verandah, in which the hen lays eggs and hatches. The eggs are neither sold nor consumed but allowed to hatch. They prefer to have their hens hatch the eggs than selling them or eating them away as eggs, on the following two grounds. A chicken fetches a better price than an egg and the fowls are used predominantly for their magico-religious practices.

Besides pigs, cattles, fowls, dogs are also reared by the tribes of the Hills. The dogs aid them in hunting. On other occasions, they keep a watch over their houses.

Cultivation of cash crops such as cocoa, chillies, ginger and turmeric is also seen among the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis. In addition jack, mango, tomato, brinjal etc., are also grown by them in their gardens. The cocoa plant was introduced by the Government Forest Department as one of the steps of Tribal Welfare Scheme.

## **DIVISION OF LABOUR**

Members of a household have clearly demarcated duties to perform. The allotment of duties is based on age, sex and ability of each member.

The entire household is collectively responsible for its activities but the Head of the household is the central figure controlling every activity. If he is not very old, he is the chief worker in the activities of cultivation. His adult sons, if any in his household help him in arriving at decisions and carrying them out. These adult men prepare the lands for shifting cultivation, plough the land, sow seeds, weed, thresh the harvested crop, carry the grains to hut, hunt the games along with the expedition party, build pen for their calves such as goats and sheeps. In these household in which there are surplus hands, some of the men go for wage earning as forest labourers and so on. The men also bring fuel to the hut. Once a year or so they rethatch and repair their huts.

Womenfolk husk the millet, cook, clean the house and utensils, fetch water and take care of the children. The grown up daughters and the women attend to transplantation of seedlings, harvesting, winnowing, manuring the field with dung.

Planting of chillies, ginger and turmeric is done both by men and women.

Old men and women who are not healthy enough to work on the lands take the cattle out for grazing. If their health does not permit them to do that work, they remain at home and take care of the children. Young boys and girls upto the age of fourteen or fifteen are attending schools now-a-days.

## MARKET

The tribes of the hills cannot afford to sell their agricultural produce to market as they do not grow in surplus. However, at least they sell some quantity of their gross produce to others in exchange of other food materials or for cash. Maize, millet, castor are the chief agricultural produce which are sold to the local merchants of the nearby plains.

There are no markets in the vicinity of the Pachaimai Malaiyalis' settlement. The nearest market town for them is Thuraiyur. A weekly market locally known as *candhe* is held here every Sunday. One can buy clothes, tools and implements, baskets, pots, betal leave, pots, areca nuts, tobacco, provisions, vegetables and dry fish from this market.

However, many petty merchants dealing in earthenware, winnowing pans, clothes, eatables, etc., often pay visit to the Pachaimalai Malaiyali settlements and trade their goods in exchange of goods (i.e., barter system) and many for cash too.

Owing to the expansion of the village Sobanapuram, which lies 12 kilometres away from Thuraiyur, now-a-days the tribes of the Hills have minimised their visit to the weekly market at Thuraiyur. In addition, the presence of a grocery shop at Top Sengattupatti also plays a role in restricting their movement towards the weekly market. The noteworthy point in this context is that they are least interested in having transactions with the Government Co-operative Supermarkets situated at Top Sengattupatti.

## PROPERTY AND INHERTIANCE

Among the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis there is nothing worth the name as personal property which has value in terms of money, because of their subsistence economy and way of life. At best

there are a few articles such as earthenware, aluminium vessels, basketry, tools, clothes, ornaments of cheap varieties which form their list of property. Due to the scanty belongings it is much easier for the tribes of the Hills to leave their huts and work in the far off places or in search of other forest produce in the forests.

After the death of a man his properties are handed over to his wife. After her death the property is inherited by her children. Inheritance of the property in the form of standing crop is always through the male progeny. In the case of cattle and other domesticated animals, they are shared among all the sons in equal proportions. A daughter does not get any share of any kind of property that her parents possess.



## 4. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis constitute an endogamous group. Descent is recognised through the male line. The endogamous group does not show any segmentations such as phratries, moieties and clans. Hence, the social organization of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis is directly perceived from family as basic unit. In this chapter, the settlement pattern, structure and types of family, kinship behaviour are attempted.

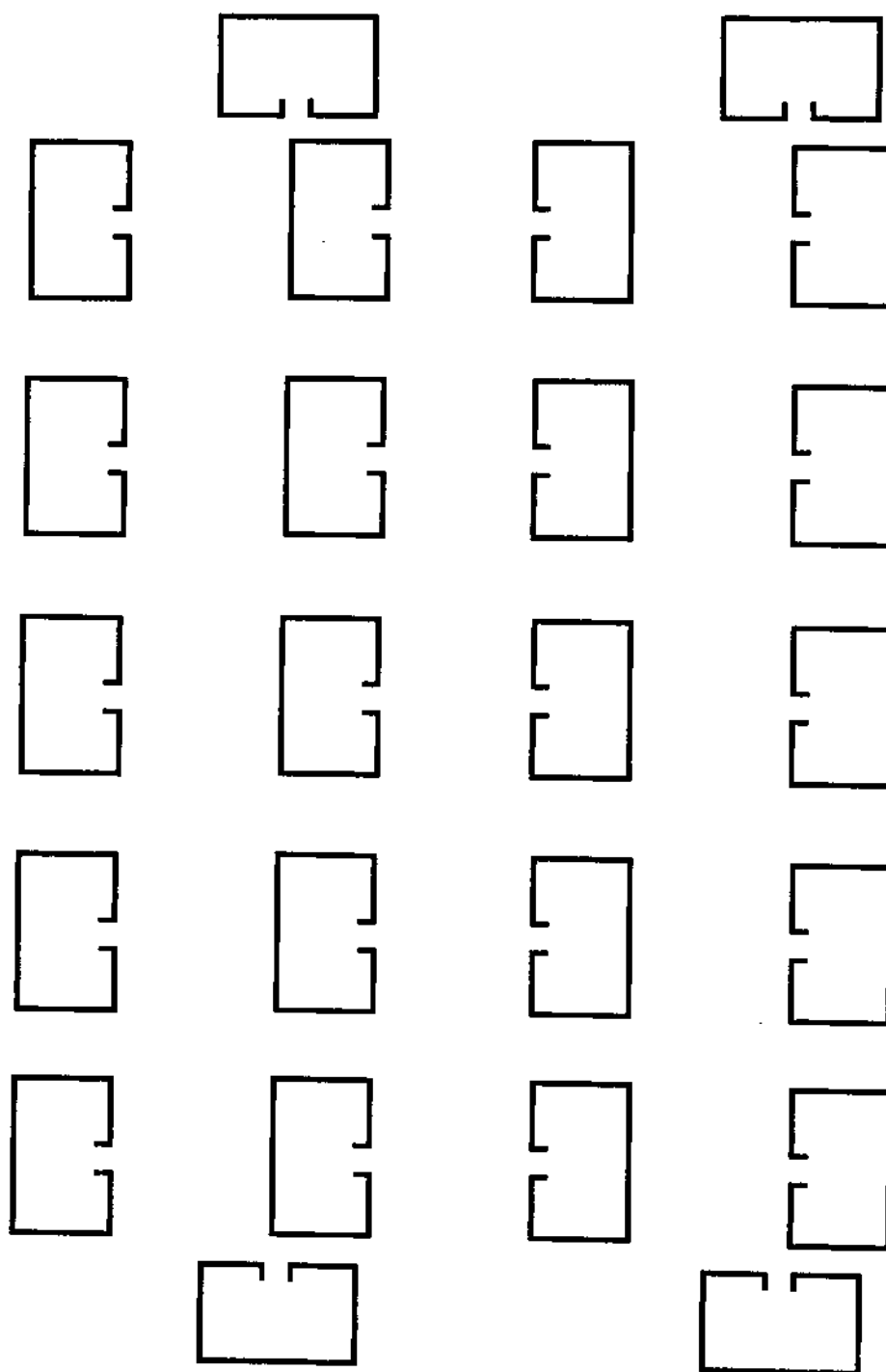
### SETTLEMENT

The tribes of the Hills live in more than 50 settlements. Each settlement consists of a few clusters of house. A Pachaimalai Malaiyali settlement is known by a distinct word *ooru*. However, each settlement is given with a specific name such as Top Sengattupatti, Perumparappu, Sembulichampatti, Puthur and so on. A boundary is recognized by demarcating a certain area between two adjacent settlements. Natural surroundings like bamboo thickets, rocky surface, water source etc, generally determine the boundaries of a settlement. The Pachaimalai Malaiyali settlements are amorphous and their size vary from one another depending upon the number of huts in a settlement.

The tribes of the Hills dwell in huts, which is locally termed *kudusaa*. The huts are arranged in a characteristic parallel rows. However, the rows of huts are also interrupted by one hut or at times by two or three huts. This forms, ultimately a rectangular view of huts to each settlement. (The above said details is represented schematically in the opposite page). The huts that are found in different settlements of the Pachai Malaiyalis normally do not vary in their structural pattern.

The whole structure of the hut rests on wooden *kave* (forked posts) symmetrically. The length of the two central posts on which the *koore* (roof) rests is about seven metres and the remaining four posts which support the roof is nearly four metres. The roof is slanting on both sides with log of wild tree radiating into two lengthy logs in inverted V shape and supporting the roof structure. The former forms *vittom* (beam) while the latter form *aayakkaalu* (rafters). They

**SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF PACHAIMALAI MALAIYALIS**





are tied together by means of the *kattu kodi* (a kind of creeper) of wild fibres. In addition, horizontally two lengthy logs run on both length-wise sides of the hut and numerous vertical structures of spliced bamboo are seen as extra supporting structures. The former is called *nadu marom* while the latter is termed *kitti*. Both these structures are also tied together by applying the same kind of creeper viz., *kattu kodi*. Only on the above said frame work, the roof is the shed with *kavattaam pillu* (a kind of wild variety of grass). The grass is kept as small bundles (i.e., *patti*) and arranged on the roof as if arranging the tiles. The centre and the height of the hut are tied by using *thottaappu*. Now-a-days, the *saame thatte* (haystick of millet) substitutes the *kavattaam pillu* as its occurrence is scanty. The durability of the thatch varies 4-5 years if the grass is spread thick; if spread thinly then it withstands only 2-3 years. The wooden posts called *thaavaara kaalu* support the roof and are fixed in the ground below the ground level to the depth of about 2-3 metres. These posts are not stripped off the bark and thus not fashioned. However, they are of such good quality that they even withstand the acts of vermins and moths.

The huts are mainly of a single-room apartment. The four walls are made of spliced bamboo wattle intertwined with several wooden and hard bamboo rods. These walls in many cases are not daubed with earth plaster or any other material, but mud pilings at the walls rising from the floor both from inside and outside are made in order to have the proper setting of the wattlewalls. Doors are usually made of bamboo wattle. First of all, the bamboo is spliced and then gently touched with to have smooth finishing. A number of such spliced bamboo wattle are connected to form a single door. At times, doors made by carpenters of plains are used, instead of the bamboo materials. The former type of doors, have no hinges, but they are fastened to the walls by fibre threads. However, in any case no device for locking the door is observed. Whenever the huts are to be locked, the doors are tied to the wooden or bamboo rods of the wall to secure them tightly.

The space in the apartment is divided into a kitchen and living room by means of *kurukku sovuru* (intervening wall). However, this intervening wall is provided with a gap for entry. The space in the kitchen is used for cooking while eating, sleeping and other life activities are carried out in the living room. In case of absence of good terms between sister-in-law and her mother-in-law another intervening wall is constructed so as to form another kitchen to the mother-in-law. The usual height of a Pachaimalai Malaiyali is about two metres at the entrance and nearly six metres in the centre where the roofs incline. There is only one entrance to the hut, that is from the front side. The smoke has to escape through one way, that is from the clefts of the roofs. Only a small

rectangular opening serves the purpose of both window as well as ventilator. Owing to inadequate ventilation, they are around the fire place and is covered with a thick coating of black soot. Most of the household equipments are hold from the wooden pegs or bamboo rods of the roofs. However, for keeping pots and tumblers they have erected *thannippaane palave* (attic). In a Pachaimalai Malaiyali hut, construction of an attic is necessary for keeping pots and other items. It is erected by placing firmly two stones at a considerable distance. On these stones a *palave* (wooden plank) is placed horizontally. This plank is provided with holes on its both sides. Through these holes two short logs are fixed. Above these protruding structures another wooden plank is placed. Now it is ready to keep pots, tumblers, etc.

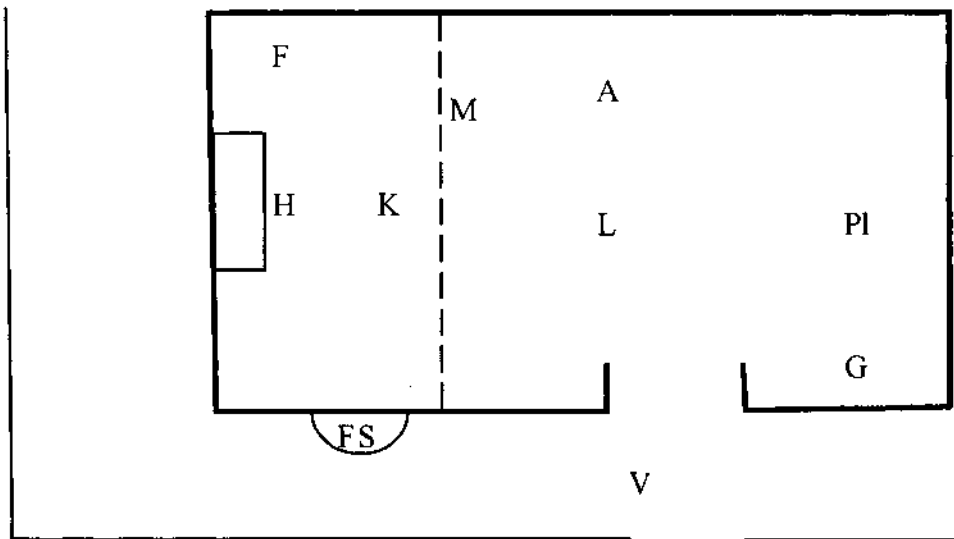
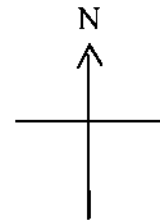
In the forest fields, guarding huts are built while garret shets are built on the branches of the trees as watching houses. Hereupon the tribes of the Hills can easily guard the standing crops. Man uses the garret sheds and guarding huts as sleeping apartments, especially during the ripening of crops and harvesting season when the manace of beasts is to a great extent.

Grains are stored in graneries of two different size and shape, viz., a *kurdhu* (small sized circular granary) and *searu* (big sized rectangular granery). Construction of graneries resembles that of the construction of huts except in the absence of foundation and the presence of layer of stones in the lower level. The entire structure of a granery rests over a layer of stones with considerable gap underneath it. This is to prevent the catching of fire to the granery, in case any fire accident took place.

The ground plan of hut is rectangular and vary in size. The materials used for building huts are locally available. Wood, bamboo and grass or haystick of millet are easily procurable. Men bring materials like wood and bamboo and women bring grass and tieing creeper. Men build the houses, while women assist them in plastering the floor with and making wattle-walls, etc. A wall-built hut lasts for around 4-5 years.

A fowl stay is in the front side of the parlour attached with the pial of the hut. Cattle pen is just at the side of the hut. A hut is built by the consolidated efforts of the members of a family. The time taken, for building a hut usually is not more than two days if the persons engaged are three.

**PLAN OF PACHAIMALAI MALAIYALI HUT**



- A - Attic
- FS - Fowl Stay
- F - Fire wood
- G - Grinding Stone
- H - Hearth
- K - Kitchen
- L - Living room
- M - Waist high intervening mud wall
- P - Parlour
- Pl - Pestle
- PP - Pig pot
- T - Tripod stand (to carry pig pot)
- V - Varandah
- W - Water pot to pig

## HOUSEHOLD POSSESSIONS

The tribes of the Hills have a few household articles and tools used in agricultural and other activities.

*catti* ( earthen pitchers) is in common use for baking and boiling. Water is brought in *paane* (earthen pots). The earthen pots and pitchers are brought from the potters of the Sobanapuram and Uppliapuram villages in the plains. In addition to the earthen wares, aluminium vessels like tumblers, plates, cooking utensils of varying sizes are mostly used. A family in each settlement possess brass and bronze vessels such as *noandi* (water container), *thavale* (water containers of large size), etc.,. These brass and bronze articles are purchased at the neighbouring town. viz.,.

Each and every Pachaimalai Malaiyali family has *thiri* (grinding mill) made of either clay or stone. The former is called *mannu thiri* and used to grind maize and millets. Pestle and mortar made of stone (*aattora*) and wood (*ora*) are used. The former is used to pound the grains into flour. On the contrary, the latter is used to remove the husk of paddy and other grains.

The various articles of basketry which are in use among the tribes of the Hills are made locally by a few families whose members have learnt the art of basket making. The articles of basketry are used mainly for the domestic use of the Pachiamalai Malaiyali. Therefore, those who know the art do not practice it as a profession and do not involve in its trade. The articles of basketry commonly used are *puttaa* (big size basket) and *koodu* (small sized basket) and *morom* (winnowing pan) Baskets are used for keeping grains whereas the winnowing pan is used to clear off the chaff during harvest and to clean the grains.

To the tribes of the Hills, the *vaasi* (axe) is an indispensable tool for cutting trees and felling bamboo in order to prepare the forest field into a cultivable land. The axe has an iron blade fitted with a wooden shaft in the circular groove near the blade. The blades of the axe vary in size. In times of need the axe serves as a defensive weapon, especially when one is attacked by wild boar, etc. Hence, the Pachaimalai men rarely go into the forests without this on their shoulders.

The *vettaruvaa* (billhook) is used for cutting thorny and bamboo thickets etc., in the forests. This tool has a curved convex blade made of a wooden handle with an iron ring as fixtures. Hoe, locally known *kalekkoththu* is an important tool used in the slash and burn cultivation. It is

also used for clearing the surface of the earth after broadcasting millet. It has iron blade, bent in the middle at right angle and fitted to a wooden shaft.

The *kadeppaare kambu* (crow bar) is an iron bar of about 4 metres long with one of its end sharpened. It is used for digging edible roots. It has also replaced the *thadi* (wooden stick) which is used for dibbling maize seeds and pulses. Plough, plough share, chisel, spear, rope, etc., are other tools owned by the tribes of the Hills. The tools described above are bought from the market at Thuraiyur town.

Almost all the tools are similar to those used by the peasants of the neighbouring plains villages.

## FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Family among the Pachamalai Malaiyalis is patrilineal in descent and patrilocal in residence. The authority in the family rests with the man who is the head of the household. The tribes of the Hills have no attachment to any land and they do not possess any valuable property worth the same.

The residence pattern among the Pachaimalai Malaiyali is patrilocal. It is the factor of marriage which brings change in the family. A man after his marriage usually establishes separate household and lives with his family. However, they do not like to lie away from their parents and relatives. The composition of families in a settlement is based on kinships and that the people seek cooperation from one another.

The social organizational basic unit of the tribes of the Hills, viz., family is divided into nuclear, immediate, extended and compound families, based on the different members which it constitutes. As the authority of a family always rests upon man in their society, the family of the tribes is included under the category of patripotential.

Majority of the families of the tribes are of the elementary form, viz., nuclear family consisting a man, his spouse and his unmarried children. Another type of family where husband and wife live with married children and other kin, namely, the extended family is also found. Not only that a widow or divorced woman with children may remarry and form what is called a

compound family. Besides these, there is a miscellaneous kind of mixed type of family observed wherein different kins are found to be living. For instance, a widow and her deceased brother's daughter of his spouse by her former husband with her child are some of the mixed types observed by the author.

The Pachaimalai Malaiyali family is based on cohesive bonds of kinship. Every individual in the family is set in a nexus of a number of affiliations. Though patrilineage is the structural base of their society, kinship bonds exist not only with one's patrilineal kin but also with maternal kins. There are loose kinship ties between kin of one's own married sister and father's sister. It is consanguineous and affinal kinship ties which frame the interpersonal relationship of their entire social organisation.

The following is the terminological classification of the kinship structure of the tribes of the Hills. For this description, as far as five generations, viz., two in the ascending order, two in the descending and one in the contemporary generation are covered.

Kinship nomenclatures used here for various kins in different generations are as follows:

**Ego's Ascending Generation:**

Consanguineous Kin

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. <i>appe</i> (male) | b. <i>amme</i> (female) |
| Fa;                   | Mo                      |
| Fa Br                 | Mo Si                   |

The terminology is classificatory in character. The relative seniority is denoted by qualifying prefixes viz., *periya* (elder) and *cinna* (younger) to the terms *appe* and *amme*, describing the ego's parents. The same terms are referred to both the sexes.

For other kin, the terms used are:

A. Consanguineous Kin

|                         |                                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2. <i>maamen</i> (male) | b. <i>aththe maamiyaththe</i> (female) |
| Fa Si Hu;               | Fa Si;                                 |
| Mo Br.                  | Mo Br Wi                               |

## B. Affinal Kin

2. ma: men (male)

Fa;

Hu Fa (Woman speaking)

b. maamiyaththe (female)

Wi Mo;

Hu Mo (Woman speaking)

**Ego's II Ascending Generation**

The maternal and paternal grandparents are classed together and referred by the same terminology, distinction being made between sexes.

2 . ciyya (male)

Fa Fa;

Mo Fa

b. aayaa (female)

Fa Mo;

Mo Mo

The ranges of parental grandmale siblings and parallel cousins. terms include all

**EGO'S GENERATION**

The terms for siblings and parallel cousins are the same but differentiation is made with regard to age. Separate terms are used for different sexes. Similarly, kin falling under the category of cross-cousins and affines follow the same terminological classification. This is shown as given below:

**KIN CATEGORIES**

| A. Consanguineous Kin | Kinship term                         |          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Male                  | Elder                                | Younger  |
| Br                    | annen                                | thambi   |
| Fa Br So              | "                                    | "        |
| Mo Si So              | "                                    | "        |
| Mo Br So              | macca:n /maccinen /maccaan/ maccinan |          |
| Fa Si So              | "                                    | "        |
| b. Female             |                                      |          |
| Si                    | Akkaa                                | tangachi |

|                               |                                                       |                                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Fa Br Da</i>               | ”                                                     | ”                               |
| <i>Mo Si Da</i>               | ”                                                     | ”                               |
| <i>Mo Br Da</i>               | <i>Machchini/ machchinici/ machchini/ machchinisi</i> |                                 |
| <i>Fa Si Da</i>               | ”                                                     | ”                               |
| <b>B. Affinal Kin</b>         |                                                       |                                 |
| <b>a. Male</b>                |                                                       |                                 |
| <i>Si Hu</i>                  | <i>machchan/ maachchinen/ machchan/ maccinen</i>      |                                 |
| <i>Wi Br</i>                  | ”                                                     | ”                               |
| <i>Hu Br (Woman Speaking)</i> | ”                                                     | ”                               |
| <b>b. Female</b>              |                                                       |                                 |
| <i>Br Wi</i>                  | <i>nange/</i>                                         | <i>maachchini/ machinichchi</i> |
| <i>Wi Si</i>                  | ”                                                     | ”                               |
| <i>Hu Si (Woman speaking)</i> | ”                                                     | ”                               |

Wife is referred to by the term *pentaatti / veettukkaari* while a woman refers her husband by the term *piricen / veettukkaar*. But, usually the term of address is indirect and both the spouses avoid addressing each other in any specific manner.

### **Ego's I Desending Generation**

In the kin categories of this type, the kinship terms referred for the consanguineous and affinal kins are as follows:

### **KIN CATEGORIES**

|                                   |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>A Consanguineous Kin</b>       | <b>Kinship term</b> |
| <b>a. Male</b>                    |                     |
| <i>So</i>                         | <i>maven</i>        |
| <i>Br so (man speaking)</i>       | ”                   |
| <i>Si So (Woman speaking)</i>     | ”                   |
| <i>Fr Br So So (Man speaking)</i> | ”                   |
| <b>b. Female</b>                  |                     |
| <i>Da</i>                         | <i>mave</i>         |
| <i>Br Da</i>                      | ”                   |



|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Si Da                | ”         |
| Fa Br Da             | ”         |
| B. Affinal           | ”         |
| a. Male              |           |
| Da Hu                | maurmaven |
| Wi Br So             | ”         |
| Hu Si So             | ”         |
| Si So (Man speaking) | ”         |
| b. Female            |           |
| So Wi                | marumave  |
| Wi Br Da             | “         |
| Si Da (Man speaking) | “         |

### Ego's II Descending Generation

Children of the sons and daughters in the II descending generation are grouped together. They are referred to as *ciyyaamparen* and *ciyyaampeaththi* respectively, denoting the category of grand children. The kins included within the category are:

|                                        |                                          |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| a. ciyyaampearen                       | b. ciyyaampeaththi                       |
| So So                                  | So Da                                    |
| Da Da Hu (and also their male cousins) | So So Wi (and also their female cousins) |
| Si Da So                               |                                          |
| Si So S o                              | Si So Da                                 |

The younger kin are addressed by their names, while elders are addressed by respective kinship terms, strangers are addressed by such kinship terms like *appe* or *amma*, *appen* or *akka*, *tambi* or *thangachchi*, according to the relative seniority and sex. The terms of address for a government official or any person with some status, is *ayvu* (sir), indicating utmost respect.

The term for Mo Br, Fa Si Hu, and Wi Fa or those in the category of brother to one's mother is *maamen*; and the term *muamiyaththe* is used for Mo Br Wi, Wi Mo, and those who fall

in the category of sister to one's father. The daughters of *maamen* and *maamiyaththe* are cross - consins, and are potential wife (*morepponnu*) to a male 'ego' . The sons of *maamen* and *maamiyaththe* are *machchan* with whom sisters of an 'ego' can marry. This feature characterises the prescriptive bilateral cross-cousin marriage rule. Terminologically, this type may be described as 'bifurcate merging', as there is specification and unification at the same time (Morab, 1977; 79). Though the terminological structure follows the billateral cross-cousin marriage rule, now-a-days instances of cross-cousin marriage are very rare among the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis.

Brothers and sisters are prohibited from marrying or have any sexual relation. But, children of a sister and brother can marry. Again, the offsprings of these unions cannot inter-marry.

The kinship terminology is so structured as to make preferntial cross-cousin marriage possible. A man's sister's son and a woman's brother's son are equated with their daughter's husband by the terms *marumaven* and a man's sister's daughter-and woman's daughter are aligned with the son's wife by the term *marumave*. Besides, unlike parallel cousins, cross-cousins are not merged with real brothers and sisters. A senior male parallel cousin is addressed by the term *annen* (elder brother) and a junior by the term *thambi* (younger brother) An elder female parallel cousin is addressed by the term *akkaal* (elder sister). If younger the term *thangachchi* (younger sister) is applied. But, the terms for cross-cousins are different. For instance, a mother's brother's son or father's sister's son is referred by the term *machchuan* which also embraces the wife's brother.

## KINSHIP WAYS

Patterned attitudes are seen in the context of the Pachaimalai Malaiyali kinship behaviour. The behaviour of the parents towards children is largely ruled by affection and care. Reciprocally, the course of conduct of the children towards parents is regulated by an attitude of love and defence. They obey and respect the teachings of the parents and do not indulge in indiginified talks in their presence. The unfettered spontaneous behaviour of affection and defence between parents and children get mixed with considerable restrain and formality when the latter attain the age of puberty. A son associates more with his father than a daughter does in domestic activities, marketting and cultivation. A father shows all affection to his daughter but at the same time maintains distance. A daughter sleeps with her mother. Grown up sons and daughters run errands and look after the comforts of their infant brothers and sisters

paving way for parents to attend to the daily chores. It is the moral obligation of the parents to share the social and economic responsibilities of marriage of their offspring. A married son may continue to live with his parents until his younger brother marries and unless there is paucity of accomodation in the parental home. It is also the duty of the father to provide his married son a separate hut and some cultivated land for subsistence. However, there are a few instances of members of son's separate household working in the father's undivided cultivable lands and obtaining economic support from the latter's income. Moreover, though a man may live separately after his marriage, he tries to maintain cordial relations with his parents. Parents when grow old and become sick children take proper care of them. Fathers treat their daughters affectionately. Daughters are obedient to their parents and do not violate the advice of elders.

A man behaves with his spouse with an attitude of seniority. He holds authority over his spouse. Moreover, he is responsible for maintenance and well-being of the family. In a household, a woman gives precedence to her father-in-law and husband in serving food. Men do not go against the wishes of their wives but this does not result in any feelig of subordination among men. In short, husband and wife run the household with mutual understanding. Some degree of tolerance is perceptible in the behaviours pattern of either of them. Though adultery is one of the causes for divorce it is often tolerated. There are many examples of husband and wife living conjugally even after disloyalty and misbehaviour on the part of the latter has been known.

A man is expected to show greater respect to his parents-in-law. Father-in-law is regarded as an elder standing in relation to a man's mother's brother or father's sister's husband. A man seeks help and advice from his father-in-law when required whereas the attitude of a man towards his mother-in-law is that of circumspection. There is observance of complete avoidance between a son-in-law and his mother-in-law. On the contrary, a daughter-in-law does not avoid remaining in the presence of her mother-in-law, every action of her show her respect for the latter. For instance, the daughter-in-law does not take intiative in any work without taking the approval of her mother-in-law. However, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship among the tribes of the Hills becomes strained, at times, specifically if the latter is not good at household work. In such cases the mother-in-law abuses the daughter-in-law for every mistake of the latter and by constantly carrying complaints against her to her son, persuades him to divorce his wife. There are also a few instances where the daughters-in-law have managed to subdue their mothers-in-law, on account of their influence over their husbands. But this happens only when the latter is a widow.

Brothers make friends. They work and play together and more or less equally share the domestic tasks. Sisters are play-mates and elders behave affectionately with younger ones. A girl gradually withdraws the intimacy of her brother as she reaches the age of puberty.

A man shows much respect and cordiality to his elder sister's husband and the same behaviour is practised with regard to one's own wife's elder brother. In the case of youngsters in the above kinship relation, a man is friendly towards them. The relatives visit each other's homes during rituals and render help.

The pattern of kinship behaviour shown by a woman towards her husband's elder brother is of utmost reverence. Though there is no strict avoidance a woman generally does not talk to her husband's elder brother. In case of younger brother of her husband, a woman speaks freely and addresses him by name and proper kinship term. However, the author finds no trend of joking relationships existing between them. In other words, the relationship between a woman and her husband's younger brother is almost similar to that between a woman and her brother.

The behavioural pattern between a man and his sister's husband is characterised by cordiality. A sister's husband has important roles in marriage and death. That is, he accompanies his wife's brother when he goes to see a prospective bride and if a man dies, it is his sister's husband who is ritually obliged to bathe the corpse.

Similar pattern of behaviour is seen between a Pachaimalai Malaiyali woman and her husband's sister. During marriage, a bride is attended by a sister of the bride-groom who dresses her, remain by her side all along the ritual and joins her in the marriage feast. To put it in nutshell, it is she who helps the bride in overcoming uneasiness and shyness. If one of them (i.e., either brother's wife or husband's wife or husband's sister) dies, the other has the ritual obligation to bathe the corpse.

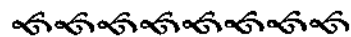
The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is marked by affectionate intimacy. Old grandparents are often left at home when parents attend to agricultural work in the fields.

Children learn stories and facts about notable incidents of the long bygone days, only from their grandparents. Moreover, it is the grandparents who help in reducing the tension between parents and children and heals injured feeling borne by any member of the family.

In the case of separation between parents, children usually join their father. When they attain marriageable age, the other parent shows interest in the marriage arrangements.

Behaviour of the tribes of the Hills towards the people of their community is that of expression of 'we-feeling' For instance, a Pachaimalai Malayali refers another Pachaimalai Malaiyali as 'our Pachaimalai Malaiyali' whether the latter is a known person or not. Moreover, to non-relatives of their own community, they refer affectionately by the kinship terms as used for collateral relatives depending upon generation and sex.

As the people live in smaller settlements and in independent families, their attitudes and behaviour with their close kin and others is generally cordial and there are not many cases of dispute occurring at family level. However, at times, disputes of serious nature, viz., breaches of tribal code, do arise when such matters require to be dealt with not only by the people of a settlement, but by the tribal council also.



## **5. THE PHASES OF LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL**

As this monograph, is presented in the structural functionalistic framework, the different phases of life of an individual Pachaimalai Malaiyali is attempted in this chapter, so as to establish that his each and every part, institutions and roles is integrated and functioned to maintain the structural-whole. The chapter deals about different phases of life of the individual Pachaimalai Malaiyali starting from the conception and ending with funeral ceremony.

### **CONCEPTION**

The sex life of the tribes is not in appreciable manner as the menfolk return to their huts very late at the evening with fatigue due to the hard work throughout the day in the lands and or forests. However, at least twice or thrice in a month the couple used to have sexual intercourse. If a women misses her periods then she is suspected to have conceived. Only if she does not have that month period even after some days lapse from the usual date, her conception is confirmed by her and other women of neighbouring settlements.

### **PREGNANCY**

Days are counted starting from the date when a Pachaimalai Malaiyali woman missed her monthly period. The womenfolk of the Hills when they become pregnant do not seem to take any particular care until the birth of the child. Moreover, they even do not take delivery cases as serious matter. The parents of woman used to receive their pregnant daughter at the time of eighth or ninth month of her pregnancy. In the case of first conception, a woman will be taken to her parents even at the beginning of her eighth month of pregnancy.

As soon as the child is born, its naval string is severed by means of bill hook. The cut naval string is taken to a distant place and buried in a bamboo thicket or tied on branch of a tree

in height. Care should be taken that it is not taken by any wild animals. It is believed that in case wild animals eat it, the mother of the child is bound to suffer serious calamities.

Delivery is only attended by the midwife of their own community. In the case of non-availability of such midwives, an experienced Pachaimalai Malaiyali woman substitutes that place. It was told that in the past, a ceremonial feast was given to the midwife, in honour of their services. Now-a-days, the ceremonial feast known as *maaththuchchi coaru* was extended to all those in the settlement.

Upto two or three months, the delivered woman resides in the hut of her parents. Meanwhile, the affinal relatives should send meals now and then to her. At the end of the second or third month, a purification ceremony is observed. The urine obtained from heifer is sprinkled to the entire hut, as purificatory measure. The child is breast-fed for nearly two to three and half years. However, at the end of first month onwards it is given well boiled rice made into a paste with salt for taste. This rice is just to supplement the mother's milk and prepare the child's system to digest the solid food materials, slowly. As the baby grows the quantity of rice is also raised.

Naming ceremony is observed only on the ensuing pongal festival (i.e., the first of *thay* (December to January). The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis could not explain why it is so. The ritual is observed before a name is given to a child. At that occasion close relatives are invited. On a big leaf of plaintain the *pallayom* (ritual meal) consisting of balls of ragi flour, curry and cooked rice are served. A cocount is broken and incense stick is burnt and shown in front of the deity. It is the mother's brother who names the child. The name is announced loudly, so that the assembled people could hear it. When the naming ceremony is over the ritual meal is partaken by all the people gathered at the time of the observances of that ceremony.

Upto its fifth year, the child used to spare most of the time with its mother that too within its residence. At the time of parents' departure from the hut, a child is looked after by its grandparents who are residing in the hut itself. Socialisation of a child is done by its parents and chiefly by its grandparents. It is the latter who taught stories and facts about notable incidents of the long bygone days. On the third year or so, usually ears of a child (both male and female) are pierced off by a needle. This is done by an elderly Pachaimalai Malaiyali woman. Ornament made of gold or silver is put on those holes. Likewise a girl's nasal septa are pierced at an early age of seven or eighth

years. No ceremonies are associated with these observances. After it becomes a linguistic adult (i.e. when it attains sixth year) it leaves the hut and tends to have the associations of other children of its own settlement. It learns indoor as well as outdoor folk games of their own community. Until a child reaches adolescence it does not distinguish sex and hence in the view of a child male vs female dichotomy is not pronounced.

## ADOLESCENCE

Boys, as they grow, keep away from their huts during the day time and like to wander in the interior forests in search of honey, edible roots and small games like rabbit. But, as they become adult they abandon going in groups, but prefer to go individually. A tribal residential school is functioning in the Top Sengattupatti settlement. But, only very few children are going to the school. Boys over fifteen years of age start participating in the various economic pursuits of the family. Girls stay at home most of the time attending to the several domestic activities. As they grow up they help the womenfolk of the hut in the various agricultural activities, bringing fuels for domestic use, fetching water and also collecting edible roots for their daily consumption, etc.

A Pachaiamalai Malaiyali girl is considered to have attained puberty if she had her first menstruation. On the contrary, puberty attainment by a Pachaimalai Malaiyali boy is not noted immediately by any such observations. That is to say, only when a boy is observed with the growth of mustache and beard he is considered to have attained puberty.

An adult learns facts about sex from friends older than himself or herself as the case may be, in the course of conversation and in the process of growing up. As a girl approaches puberty she refrains from playing with boys. Menstruation frightens a girl and she keeps it secret as it causes embarrassment and she discloses it only to her mother and older sister only. An adolescent girl is expected to behave modestly and should refrain from any physical intimacy.

First menstruation is usually kept secret but the girl tells her mother that it has begun. Then, she is segregated for five to seven days in one of the huts already built for that purpose. These huts, *muttu kudisaa* (menstruation hut) are situated in one of the corners of the settlement just some distance away from the huts. Women members escort her to the hut during the period. She is also given a bill hook made of iron for protection against malevolent spirits. On the fifth or seventh day as the case may be, the girl takes a ritual bath in order to free from the impurity known as *kanni theettu* in their speech.



After the ritual bath, the girl returns to the household. On that day, a ritual is observed. A ceremonial dish known as *maavu vellom*, consisting of flour of paddy and millet along with jaggery is prepared. The parents present her with a new sari, blouse, bangles, flowers, talcum powder along with betel leaf, areca nut and parched rice. The parents of the girl meet the expenditure. First of all, the girl is fed with ceremonial dish. After the girl takes her dish other women assembled there partake in the dish. It is stated that this particular ceremony is observed in order to pray the various deities to bless the girl with fertility of bearing children. Until the end of ninety days, she seldom visits fields or temples and only on ninety first day she is allowed to participate in cultural gatherings.

Likewise, a menstruating women is segregated in one of the huts for a period of three days only. A women considered unclean during her menstruation. She refrains from cooking and served food for three days. She returns to normal household duties following a bath on the fourth day. In the event of violation of this norm, it is believed, troubles will come. It is because of the fact that the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis believe that menstruating women are prone to malevolent spirit's effects and hence such precautions are necessary in order to ward off the malevolence of supernatural beings.

## MARRIAGE

From the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis' point of view, life is meaningless without marriage and it is the moral obligations of the parents of a boy or girl to arrange his or her marriage. However, marriage is not simply regarded as a socially sanctioned institutions for gratification of bio-psychological impulses but also as procreative and economic partnership with bond of affection.

Monogyny is the general rule of marriage. Polygyny is also observed. But, generally a Pachaimalai Malaiyali may marry several times only when his wife is either dead or has divorced him. A Pachaimalai Malaiyali does not venture to take another wife, when one wife is living with him.

Marriageable age is considered 16 years in the case of males and 13 years in the case of females. Negotiated marriage is the sole pattern of marriage observed among the tribes of the Hills.

## NEGOTIATIONS

It is this pattern of marriage in which the tribal headmen of the settlement along with his subordinates and parents of the ego go to the hut of the bride where the parents of the bride agreed to the union to protracted negotiation. This pattern of marriage consists of elaborate rites and formalities.

When one weds for the first time it is called *kanni kannaalom* (lit. 'virgin marriage' (PTD *kanni* 'virgin' *kannaalom* 'marriage'). On the contrary, the marriage between a widow and a man (who may be a widower or unmarried man) is termed *kamnaatti kannaalom*.

The bridegroom party will, first of all, meet and talk to the headman of the Hills, viz., thorekkavanten about the bride they want to have in alliance. Then, the headman of the Hills will send his subordinate, the *mooppen* (headman of the settlement) to the bridegroom settlement, on behalf of him. The role of headman of the Hills is seen only in the case of negotiation between groom of one Naadu with that of another. In the case of groom and bride of one and the same Naadu the headman of the settlement himself sought representing the negotiations.

The headman of the settlement in turn commands his subordinate *mandhiri* and he in turn summons to his subordinate *kangaani* party. In the groom's party, the groom, his parents, his mother's brother, his elder sister, if any, and some of his close friends find place. The *kangaani* tells the girl's kin the purpose of their visit. Then, mutual exchange of information relating to each other's family, kin wealth and property follows. If the negotiations become successful (i.e., if the bride's parents and her mother's brother accept the alliance), some sandal paste is also put on the wall of the hut of the bride. Putting up of the sandal paste is considered as confirmation of the betrothal. On the otherhand, if the girl's kin disfavour the proposition they inform the tribal officials who come there.

After a few days, the bridegroom's party once again visits the bride's hut so as to confirm once again. The actual rituals and formalities concerned with betrothal are carried out only now. All the tribal officials accompany the groom's party during the second visit. The first visit is termed *ponnamathradhu* (lit. 'cause the bride to sit') as it involves showing the girl to the groom whereas the second visit is referred to as *nichchanom* (lit 'confirmation'). Only in the course of the second phase of negotiations all agreements regarding dowry, date of marriage and other details are observed.

The second phase of betrothal, viz., *nichchanom* is celebrated in a grand manner. A *pandal* made up of dried coconut leaves is constructed to give shadow. Banana trees are tied to the poles on each side of the entrance of the *pandal*. Gramophone records are played. The bride receives cash and things as presents from the kin who attend the betrothal ceremony. This practice is called *moy pudikradhu*. No sooner the practice is over, a ceremonial feast is given to all those gathered there.

Upto eighth day from the date of the betrothal, the bride is allowed to visit and receive feasts from her kin. If the bride is a cross-cousin to the negotiated bridegroom then the eighth day's feast is usually given to her by her affinal kins.

The *pariyom* (bride price) is collected by the parents of the bride from the groom's party. Usually, it is four hundred and fifty rupees and four bags of paddy or millets. The cash is referred to as *pariyappanom* (bride price money) while the grains received is termed *tevacom* (grains).

The bride price is collected as a sort of compensation because in the view of a Pachaimalai Malaiyali, a household loses an economic asset due to the marriage of the girl because she is a source of economic gain through her services both at hut as well as on the fields. The amount is, hence, obtained from the groom's party in the name of bride price by the girl's kin. In those cases where the bride's household is too poor to arrange even a single meal for the marriage, the bride price so collected is utilised for giving the feast.

Dowry is known as *seeru* in their speech. It is given by the bride's party to the bridegroom. The dress materials like dhoti, shirt etc., forms the dowry. Usually it does not include any cash. The dowry, unlike the bride price, is not a must. Only rich people can afford to issue dowry.

## WEDDING CEREMONY

Invitation to kin of bride as well as groom are usually conveyed in person by giving betel leaf and areca nut. This practice is termed *paakku pari* (Lit. giving areca nut) in their dialect. The first invitation is given to the headman of the Hills with *anju mugam meththale* (five set of betel leaf and areca nut). Then, the second invitation is given, to the headman of the settlement. The betel leaf and areca nut given to him is shared with by his subordinate officials. The third invitation

is known as *annen-thambi paakku* (Lit. elder brother-younger brother areca nut) and is given to the three representatives of the three Hills, viz., Kalrayan Hills, Pachaimalai Hills and the Kolli Hills. Then only, the rest of the people are given. A temporary shed, viz., *pandha* is erected in the courtyard of the girls' residence for conducting marriage. An iron rod is fixed just in front of the shed. "This is to avoid the entry of the spirit of the hunter", reported one of the informants.

Bridal procession known as *meraganom* took place from her hut to that of the grooms. During the procession she is reported to walk step-by-step, in a relatively slow speed. In the past, as told by the elders of the Hills, the bride has to be given a betel leaf to her every one step. As this sort of practice has created a considerable expenditure, it was given up and now-a-days only some flowers and a handful of betel leaf is given totally to the hands of the bride. She used to keep them in her closed hands for salutation.

Only the bridal procession of the *kavenden* sect is sanctioned use of orchestra.

Marriage badge made of gold with single plate (*oththe thaali*) is tied by the groom around the neck of the bride. The bride shows the maximum resistance by her united hands as salutation while the groom tried to tie the marriage badge around the formers neck . After marriage badge is tied successfully, a gun is shot in the sky. Presents in the form of cash is given to the bride groom, just as the bride has received during betrothel ceremony. Only the *kavenden* sect enjoys the privilege of gold marriage badge called *thanga kaare* made out of  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  or 4 sovereigns of gold depending upon the capacity of the household. On the contrary, only a turmeric tied thread (i.e., *manje kayru*) is used as marriage string in the case of the other sect . However, it is also reported, a *kavenden* women from poor household will be given only turmeric tied thread. Pork is served as the main item of the menu. The bride groom's mother awaits at the entrance of her residence with a lit oil lamp to receive her daughter-in-law and son.

## DIVORCE

Divorce is referred to as *valakkarukradhu* (Lit.removing the bond of movements between each other) in their dialect. The Pachaimalai Malayali's marriage is easily dissoluble. Husband and wife have equal rights to divorce at any stage of their married life. However, divorce is uncommon as considerable tolerance in sex life is generally practised by each of them.

Divorce is sought when there is no adjustment between husband and wife.

The authority to grant divorce rests with the tribal council. In the case of a woman seeking a divorce, parents are to pay double the amount of the bride price (i.e., Rs.900/-) and other compensation because the man had spent money while marrying that woman. On the contrary, the man refuses to live with the woman, then he has no right to claim from the woman's party the bride price and other compensation. Usually children of a woman divorcee live with her only, and when a man remarries her the children also stay in her newly married husband's hut. However, the children have the right to return to their father's hut any day they like and can live with him or his kin if he is no more. The father may arrange their marriages when they grow adult.

Extra-marital sexual relationship, sterility, extreme laziness and attitude of irresponsibility, and also prolonged ill treatment are the main causes for divorce.

## REMARRIAGE

A Pachaimalai Malaiyali may marry several times in life. Both men and women remarry after dissolution of wedlock by divorce or death. Widows and widowers are rare in this community, as they usually remarry. However, if there are any who continue to remain widows, they do not suffer from any social condemnation. Moreover, it is rather difficult to identify a widow among a group of married women because there is no difference in their attire.

Widow remarriage is known as *kamnaatti kannaalom*. It is also referred to by the term *naattu kannaalom*. It is done in a relatively simple manner when compared to the *kanni kannaalom*. Moreover, it lacks elaborate rituals and only a simple ritual is observed. The man or widower who wants to remarry a widow or woman seeks the approval of that woman and also of her parents. Negotiation pertaining to this is done by elders in the settlement and not by the officials of the tribal council. When approval is given both by the woman and her parents, then a formal ceremony is held. One day is chosen for observance of the ceremony when close relatives and elders of the tribal council are invited. The man presents a sari, blouse piece and bangles to the woman whom he is going to remarry. He also gives a feast to the assembly and it is obvious that the expenses of the feast is borne by the man himself. The entire ceremony is held in the house itself without any other cash as dowry. Moreover, the bride price is reduced to half of the amount (i.e.,Rs.225/-)

A formal ceremony is observed when the remarriage of a divorce takes place. It is a simple ceremony as observed in the case of widow remarriage which is described above. Children, if any of a divorcee woman stays with her in her newly married husband's hut. In the case of a divorcee woman who intends to remarry the second husband has to give Rs.400 to the first husband. In addition, the first husband receives Rs.500/- as compensation from the father of the woman.

## OLD AGE

When a person becomes old it is the son and daughter who take care of the old. The old people are treated with respect and tenderness. It is they who socialize their grandsons and grand daughters not only in the absence of his son or daughter but also in their person. In the division of labour of their society, the old people are given only mild jobs such as housekeeping etc., that too while the head of the household has gone to fields.

## DEATH

### DEATH AND ASSOCIATED RITES

The tribes of the Hills believe that death occurs when a person becomes too old. However, they also believe in the magico-religious i.e. malevolent spirits or sometimes magical devices such as sorcery and witchcraft as the cause for death. Death of children due to diarrhoea is reported as high incidence. Cases of suicides and murders are also pronounced but in a lower rate. As soon as a death occurs, the member of the bereaved's household burst into loud wailing. This serves notice to the neighbours who come immediately. An elderly Pachaimlai Malaiyali closes the eyes and mouth of the dead if they are by chance open.

The two toes are tied together with a small length of cloth and so also the two thumbs. An oil lamp known as *nallavelakku* is lighted by the elders of that household and some incense sticks are burnt until the corpse is buried.

Messages to close relatives of the deceased are sent and until they come, the corpse is kept. The chief mourner should provide wollen blanket to the headman and salute him who came there to enquire about the death of the dear departed of the former. Moreover, the latter should be

given betal leaf, areca nut and lime which is referred to as *mooppen meththale*. The death ceremony begins by giving a hot water bath to the corpse. It is decorated with washed clothes and the body is garlanded with wild flowers. Coconuts are broken and campher is burnt in front of the dead. With this preliminary ritual the corpse is then tied to long bamboo poles by means of a strong fine thread in three places so as to secure the body tight. Then, it is carried by two persons on their shoulders. Thus, it is taken to the graveyard situated near the settlement. At this moment, wailing of the kindred becomes louder.

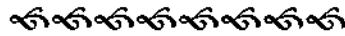
As soon as the kin of the deceased have assembled, a pit is dug near the hut at its southern side. The chief mourner (usually the eldest son, in the case of death of a married man) removes the first sand of earth. After going round the pit thrice, the corpse is lowered into the grave and placed on a cloth kept over its inside with its right side up and its head southwards. The bamboo used for carrying the corpse is broken into three pieces and placed on the grave, in horizontal position. Now, an elderly male gets down into the pit cuts the two pieces of clothes fastened earlier around the toes and thumbs. Then, the relatives attending the burial throw some rice towards the mouth of the corpse one by one. They go round the pits thrice and thereafter the man who initiated digging of pit begins to close it, being helped by others. When the mourners return home, they take bath and the hut of the deceased is washed by water mixed with little cowdung.

Death is considered as a sort of pollution and the kin must remove impurity of contact with it. The pollution is observed for a period of sixteen days. During this period the chief mourner is expected to abstain from sexual pleasures. The *karumaari* (pollution breaking ceremony) takes place on the sixteenth day. On this morning, the entire hut is sprinkled with holy water, known as *paappaan thanni* from the prohibit of the plains. With the sprinkling of that holy water, it is believed, the entire pollution occurred due to the death gets eroded. This pollution breaking ceremony ends with a ceremonial feast to the assembled kin.

In the case of poor household, the pollution breaking ceremony is finished within the very same day of occurrence of death. If the chief mourner is incapable of meeting the various expenses for the death rituals, the entire settlement collects four measures of millet per household and gives the collection to him so as to meet his basic requirements to practise the ceremonial feast.

One more ritual done connected with death ceremony is the ritual of setting at rest the spirit of the deceased symbolised in the stone-image, known as *padhuve*.

Exactly at the end of sixth month from the day of the death, the chief mourner, accompanied by kins, approaches the *koadaangi\_poosaari* (diviner) of their settlement. The diviner invokes the spirit of the deceased by playing his *udukka* (small drum) besides singing song known as *udukke paattu*. It is believed that, having invoked by the music of the small drums and the song, the spirit of the deceased visits and communicates the diviner. During his conversation (through song) with the spirit, the diviner asks the former about its choice of place which it wants to have as its abode. Usually, it is reported, the spirits tend to occupy the shady place beneath the tree which was planted by them, say mango tree or tamarind tree. Then, a stone image (or many times stone itself) is put along with ball of flowers. The author has witnessed a number of such stone images and stones viz., the *narasaadhi* beneath a variety of trees such as jack, tamarind, mango, etc. Such a practice of setting up the spirits to rest is referred to in their speech as *neleppaduththradhu* and fixing a stone-image or stone in this ritual is called *sandhivikradhu*. After every harvest they offer *pongalu*, a sweet dish in honour of their ancestral spirits. However, whenever they face impediments such as low yield in the fields, frequent attack of diseases to the family members, they use to get the suggestion of the established spirits by communicating them through the diviner.





## 6. RELIGION

The characteristic features of the religion of the Pachaimalai Malayalis are: There is an innate belief in the spirits of the dead and their belief is carried to such an extent of practising ancestral worship. It is also believed that some spirits in the Hills are malevolent in effect. There are certain preventive magico-religious rites which combat influences of malevolent spirits. Moreover, there is a strong innate belief in the existence of supernatural beings as the protectors and benefactors of human beings. In short, the tribes have their own conceptions about the all-pervading super-human forces. In the following sections, the various religious attitudes and beliefs of the tribes of the Hills are studied with reference to their practices.

### SPIRITS

The basic element in Pachaimalai Malayali religion is the belief in spirits and this culminates into the ancestral worship in one hand and belief in different deities, gods and goddesses, on the other hand.

It is believed that when a man dies the spirit leaves the body and joins other deceased spirits. For the Pachaimalai Malayalis the universe is infested with countless spirits. In their opinion, the spirit of a person who died recently is more active than that of a remote ancestor. During death-pollution breaking ceremony, the chief mourner invites the ancestral spirits from their abodes in the Hills, makes offerings and prays for their blessings.

The ritual of setting at rest the spirit of the deceased is observed at the sixth month from the date of one's death. A diviner does this as per the request of the chief mourner.

An individual may be possessed by the spirit of the dead. When a Pachaimalai Malayali is possessed by any kind of malevolent spirits, he is taken to the diviner for redressal.

## ANCESTORS

The spirits of departed ancestors are worshipped usually at the end of every harvest. In addition, on all festive occasions, marriage and any other auspicious occasions the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis do not fail to remember their ancestors.

Above all, whenever one is in predicament he worships the spirits of the departed ancestors which is set at rest in the form of a stone-image or stone.

The offerings during the ancestral worship includes betal leaves, areca nuts, coconuts, parched rice, chaffed rice, jaggery. The incense sticks and camphor are burnt. An oil lamp is lit.

## SOUL

The soul, the tribes of the Hills believe, has two forms viz., big soul and little soul. The abode of the big soul is conceived as the heart while that of the little soul is not known to them. In the view of Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, when both these souls depart from the human body death occurs.

It is also believed that the big soul of a person wanders in different places as it likes while he is asleep and returns to the body when he wakes up from the sleep. The multifarious activities found to be done in dreams are attributed to the action of the big soul. The state of unconsciousness during sleep is conceived as the result of the temporary departure of this big soul. It is the little soul which is responsible for breathing while a person is asleep.

In addition to their belief in the soul of human beings, the tribes of the Hills also believe that soul exists in animals, plants and trees and also in inanimate objects such as rocks. The tribes do not know exactly how many souls exist in animals, plants and other inanimate objects though many Pachaimalai Malaiyali say that only one soul exists in them unlike that of human beings.

## GODS AND GODDESSES

The Pachaimalai Malaiyali, pantheon consists of a number of Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

### GODS

*Aadhiciven* (Lord Siva), the god of destruction in the Hindu Trinity is considered by them as the protector of human beings. He is worshipped in the form of either 'Linga' (Phallus) or 'Trident'. The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis also deify *perumaalu*, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Tonsuring ceremony is observed as offering to both Siva and Vishnu. Tonsure is done at *keekkare*, a plains village nearby the Hills, if it is offered to Siva and done at Athur of Salem district or Perumal Hills at Thuraiyur of Trichirapalli district, which are nearby plains towns, if it is meant for Vishnu.

In addition, Lord Vigneswara and Lord Muruga, the mythical sons of Lord Siva are also worshipped.

### GODDESSES

Among the goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, the tribes of the Hills deify Parvathi and Lakshmi. The former is the consort of Lord Siva while the latter is that of Lord Vishnu. There are no shrines dedicated in honour of these goddesses in the Pachaimalai Malaiyali settlements.

### DEITIES

The Pachaimalai Malayalis deify a number of deities other than the superior Gods and Goddesses mentioned in the earlier section. The different deities worshipped by them can be dealt under two sub sections viz., family deities and other deities.

Each and every family has inherited one or more family deities, depending upon the ancestral spirits they have set at rest in the form of stone-images or stones. The family deities are known by their terms *nara saadhi* or *kudi dheyyom*.

The *pattaven* is described as a deity who guards the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis. Its body is shown with a mutilated right hand. The deity is seated on a mounted horse but clad in such dress as trousers, shoes. Offerings are given once a year, in honour of this deity in Top Sengattupatti settlement.

This deity is still remembered as their ancestor who is an ex-military official of British regime. Its mutilated right hand is because of its involvement in the welfare, reported the tribes. Moreover, they added that it is he who formed a flower garden, a groove and *aandi koayaa* (temple of Lord Muruga.) in the Top Sengattupatti settlement.

*maariyaayi, kaaliyaayi, ammen, ankaalammen, maariyaavi, kaaliyaavi, padeari ammen, angaalammen, saamundeesvari, paalaththukkaattu kannimaaru, minnadiyaan, aynaaru* (also known as *veatte karuppu*) and *elle karuppu* are the different deities worshiped by the tribes of the Hills. Of these, the first six are female deities while the rest are male deities.

*maariyaayi* and *kaaliyaayi* are twin deities of the diseases small pox and cholera respectively, says the tribes of the Hills. They are worshipped by them with serious devotion. If no proper propitiation is made to these deities, Pachaimalai Malaiyalis believe that there is the likelihood of occurrence of small pox and cholera. Such divine punishments are conceived because of *dheyvakkoanalu* (Lit. wrong committed to deity).

The *padeari ammen* is considered as the earth deity. First curing is done only after propitiating this deity. This had no shrine and is worshipped just forming conical mass of soil in the earth itself. Banana, incense sticks, camphor, betal leaf and areca nut are offered to the deity while observing the ritual for it. A he-goat is sacrificed and cooked rice is offered along with mutton sauce. Observing such a ritual is to ensure a good yield in the ensuing harvest. The two deities *angaalammen* and *saamundeesvari* are conceived as the incarnations of goddess Parvathi, the consort of Siva. Pongal celebration is observed in connection with these deities during the month of *panguni* (March–April).

A folklore prevails with reference to the seven virgin deities known as *paalaththukkaattu kannimaaru*. According to the folklore version, seven daughters were born to a woman in a single delivery. Upto their 30th age no suitable grooms were got for them. In dejected mood they committed suicide by falling after causing the cattle-keeper of their house to fall first. It is believed that these seven virgin deities will sanction fertility and health to the cattles of the tribes of the Hills. Hence, if the cattle of a Pachaimalai Malaiyali is given birth to a calf safely, then the owner of that cattle observes a ritual offering to these virgin deities. The offering is same as in the case of the earth deity.

The *minnadiyaan* is conceived as the husband of *maariyaayi*. In Top Sengattupatti settlement, the shrine of the former is located in a hut known as *kurinjilu*, just in front of the temple of the latter. The tribes have told a folktale so as to reveal the reason for such a separation. The folktale goes so as to reveal the reason for such a separation. The version goes like this: *minnadiyaan*, the husband of *maariyaayi* left the abode when the former is pregnant and returned only long time after her delivery. Hence, she did not allow him to join her and made him to stay in the outside. However, it is believed, she will be pleased and cure small pox, if her husband is given a bathe.

*maasimaleyaan* is worshipped and given offerings if a person gets fever either due to ill health or due to the effect of some malevolent spirits. However, the tribes of the Hills observe a ritual to this deity at the month of *appiye* (September-October). The details about the date, etc., of the ritual is announced by beating the drum called *cearve*. The drum is carried for this purpose upon a temple ox. People use to salute the ox by falling on its legs.

The *ayyanaaru* deity is deified while starting for the hunting *expedition*. Moreover, a share of the hunt it offered to it, after a successful expedition. As this deity is worshipped in relation with hunting practices, it is also known by the term *veatte karuppu* (lit. 'hunting ghost'). The meaning of the term *veattai karuppu* can be traced from two words i.e. *veatte* 'hunting' and *karuppu* 'ghost'. Hence, the author feels that this deity may be one of the ancestral spirits promoted to the deity level. A he-goat is sacrificed and cooked rice is offered. Moreover, at night of that festival day a drama is enacted. Each household gives one measure of grain as its share for cooking food to be offered to the deity.

*elle karuppu* is worshipped whenever severe draught prevails. If rainfall fails atleast they kill a domesticated pig, near the shrine of this deity, by means of a special kind of spear.

## RITUAL AND BELIEF

### HARVEST RITUALS

A ritual is observed while sowing is initiated by the headman of the settlement. Offering goat sacrifice and balls of cooked rice are done in honour of the earth deity. Another ritual follows immediately after the harvest of paddy. In this thanks giving ritual, a sweet dish known as *pongalu*,

prepared out of harvested grain is offered to their respective family deities. Because, in the view of the tribes of the Hills, it is their family deities which are responsible for good yield in the harvest.

### RITUALS CONNECTED WITH HUNTING

Hunting expedition starts with a ritual offered to the deity *aynaaru* alias *veatte karuppu*. Moreover, they will order a shrine of this deity to an artisan of a nearby plains' village swearing that it will be carried from there unless and until they get the number of boars they wish to hunt. When their target is reached they will get the shrine and observe a thanks giving ritual. Meanwhile, the hunt is carried to the temple of the deity situated in the border of this settlement and the expedition observes a minor ritual there providing to this deity its share. Moreover, they fire ten shots in honour of this deity. The noteworthy point in this context is that only hunting of wild boar shows firing of ten shots.

### RITUALS CONNECTED WITH HONEY COLLECTION

Rituals in connection with religion particular are also observed. *elle panni kuthradhu* (the act of killing domesticated pig at the boundary of settlement) and *cearve maadu anupradhu* (offering ox to temple) as per the divine order are of worth mentioning in this context.

If rainfall does not occur even after the observance of pelting each other and in turn the shrine of Lord Vigneshwara by means of cow-dung balls, they observe a ritual known as *elle panni kuthradhu*. A domesticated pig is killed by a group of the tribes of the Hills by the temple of the *elle karuppu* deity. It is believed that it will certainly bring a good shower of rain.

The rituals connected with the *maasimalayaan* deity are informed to the entire Hills by beating a drum known as *cearve*. A temple ox carries this drum and it is named after this as *cearve maadu*. Such temple ox is offered by the tribes of the Hills, it is stated, as per the divine command given in their dreams. It is believed that the deity informs the tribes that the calf which is going to be born in their huts have taken birth to do divine service. Moreover, he confirms this by foretelling some of its special markings such as dots in the forehead, pattern of dots in the body, rosette tail. The calf itself lies and stays in the temple when it attains adolescence. From that day onwards it is conceived as the property of that temple.

If it dies, it will be covered by a new dhoti and two big measures of grain is offered in its grave.

## BELIEFS

The fundamental belief in spirits and supernatural beings has led the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis to believe in a number of beliefs in different domains of their life activities. In this section, an attempt is made to study these multifarious beliefs.

The tribes believe in the magico-religious treatment for ill health. Moreover, they believe that their family deities will suggest remedy not only for ill health but also for their loss. For instance, they believe that if water is showered over *minnadiyaan* deity, *maariyaayi*, its mythical wife will be pleased and as a result the patient will get rid of small pox. The fever due to ill-health or fear of malevolent spirits is believed to be elided if a ritual is observed in honour of the deity *maasimaleyaan*.

If a person shows teeth crushing while sleeping, he is instructed to give up one of his favourite dishes.

The tribes of the Hills believes in the magical power of their deity *ayyanaaru* which causes boars and other wild animals to fall into their aims, while they are involved in hunting.

If a ritual is observed to the earth deity during the initiation of sowing by the headman of the settlement, they believe good yield will result.

The tribals also believe in the achievement of rainfall by pelting each other and then the shrine of Lord Vigneswara by means of cow dung balls. If they did not get rain by the above technique then they observe the killing up of a domesticated pig near the shrine of *elle karuppu* deity following the putting up of the shrine of Lord Vigneswara in a manure pit. By this second phase, they strongly believe, rainfall is achieved.

During marriage ceremony they fix an iron rod near the *ammiyarsaani* (mortar and branch of pipal tree) just in front on the entrance. By this precautionary measure, the tribes of the Hills believe, the malevolent spirit of the hunter is avoided. Otherwise, the spirit will molest the bride, it is believed.

## FESTIVAL

The most important festivals which the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis observe are:

- i) *thalaani* festival      ii) *kotte noami*      iii) *kaaththiye sodale*      iv) *pongal u*

Of all the festivals, the most celebrated one is the *thalaani* festival. It is celebrated in the first of *aani* (June-July). Its significance lies in that the brethren tribes, viz., Kalrayan Malaiyalis and Kolli Malaiyalis also took part in it. It is reported that 'youngest brother' viz., the Kolli Malaiyalis use to sing the *naattukkattu* (folk song) so as to reveal their brotherhood.

The tribes are found to celebrate other Hindu festivals of the plains such as Deepavalli, Vaygunda ekathasi, Sivarathri, Chithrai fullmoon day, Eighteenth of Adi. However, they are not celebrated in such a grand manner and hence not focussed here. However, a list of various festivals celebrated by the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis in a calendar year is given as a Table in the opposite side.

In turn, Kolli Malaiyalis are given cash and other presents by the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis. Moreover, they are fed with delicious feast on that occasion. In short, the author finds this festival as a building force for these three brethren tribes of adjacent Hills.

*kotte noambi* festival is observed once in a year, in the month of *pirattaaci* (September-October). On that day only boiled *mochche kotte* (country bean) is devoured and all other food stuffs are totally discarded. This is observed in honour of Lord Vishnu.

The festival *kaaththiye sodale* (as the name indicates) is observed in *kaaththiye* (November-December). A conical shed like structure erected by means of dried leaves of palmyra is burnt by showing burning camphor on it. This took place in honour of Lord Siva. All the persons surrounding it, then offer salute, by uttering an expression *arokaraa*.

The end of harvest is celebrated in the *pongalu* festival. A sweet dish cooked out of newly harvested grain is offered to their respective family deities. During the preparation of the dish the headman of the settlement, surrounded by his subordinate tribal officials, enquires at each and every household, "*paalu ponguchchaa?*" (Whether the milk put in the oven gets boiled?). As reciprocation, they are treated with cash and feast for that warm enquiry.



**VARIOUS FESTIVALS CELEBRATED BY THE PACHAIMALAI MALAIYALI  
IN A CALENDAR YEAR**

| Sl. No. | Calendar month   | Month according to the pachaimalai | Festival celebrated                         | Remarks                                                                                                                                  |
|---------|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i.      | April-May        | <i>citre</i>                       | <i>cithre praani</i>                        | Fullmoon day of the month                                                                                                                |
| ii.     | May-June         | <i>vayyaaci</i>                    | —                                           | —                                                                                                                                        |
| iii.    | June-July        | <i>aani</i>                        | <i>talaani</i> festival - 1st of the month. | At every year in the first of the month, the bretheren tribes of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis use to assemble and celebrate a get-together |
| iv.     | July-Augus       | <i>aadi paanttaampearu</i>         | 18th day of the month                       | Celebrated in honour of the river Cauvery                                                                                                |
| v.      | August-September | <i>aavani</i>                      | —                                           | —                                                                                                                                        |
| vi.     | Sep.-Oct.        | <i>pirattaaci</i>                  | <i>kotte noambi</i>                         | Observance of eating boiled country bean seen only throughout the day                                                                    |
| vii.    | Oct-Nov.         | <i>appiye</i>                      | <i>theevili</i>                             | Deepavali celebrated in honour of Lord Krishna who killed Naragasura                                                                     |
| viii.   | Nov.-Dec.        | <i>kaaththiye</i>                  | <i>kaaththiye sudale</i>                    | In honour of Lord Siva                                                                                                                   |
| ix.     | Dec.-Jan.        | <i>maaruve</i>                     | —                                           | —                                                                                                                                        |
| x       | Jan.-Feb.        | <i>thay</i>                        | pongalu                                     | In honour of Sun                                                                                                                         |
| xi      | Feb.-March       | <i>maaci</i>                       | —                                           | —                                                                                                                                        |
| xii     | Mar.-April       | <i>panguni</i>                     | —                                           | —                                                                                                                                        |



## 7. POLITICAL ORGANISATION

The Pachaimalai Malaiyalis normally conform to the norms and traditions of their society through the influences of three agencies, viz., authority of elders, public opinion and religious beliefs. In the event of non-settlement of any case, it is the tribal council which is the recognised authority to deal with tribal code and its breaches.

### COUNCILS

The tribal council at the hills' level is known as the *naattu koottom* (hill assembly). It has the jurisdiction over all the settlement in the three chief divisions of the Hills. Only to discuss common problems, development schemes and to fix the date of festivals representatives of all the settlements meet the headman of the tribal council.

### HEADMAN OF THE HILLS

The headman of the tribal council is referred to as *thorekkavenden* and he is the deciding authority of the entire Hills. He periodically arranges and conducts the hill assembly. Those unsettled cases of the settlements are carried and summoned to this office. Any unsettled cases of this office or cases like murder are reported to police of the nearby plains village or town.

### TRIBAL COUNCIL OF A SETTLEMENT

#### GENERAL

Tribal council at the settlement level is called *oor koottom* (settlement assembly). Thus, each and every settlement is with a settlement assembly of its own. For the entire Hills nearly 50 such assemblies are there. The headman of such settlement assembly is termed *mooppen*.

It is the headman of the settlement who presides over the meetings whenever they are convened. The two office-bearers whose functions are mainly to assist the headman of the settlement are the *mandhiri* and *kangaani*.

### HEADMAN OF THE SETTLEMENTS

The headman of the settlement is considered as the chief of that particular settlement but as an assistance to headman of the Hills. He settles amicably all problems concerning the settlement under his rule. Seeking a bride to the groom of one and the same settlement is represented by him. In case, the bride belong to some other settlement, then he seconds the proposal and represent his superior, the headman of the Hills. Moreover, it is he who finalises the negotiations concerning betrothal. However, he visits the bride's but only after the *kangaani* gets the formal acceptance for the alliance. The Headman of the settlement is given invitations for marriage, first of all. Then only the inhabitants of the settlement under his rule receive invitation. Invitation is given in the form of betel leaf and areca nut and one which is given to headman of a settlement is called *mooppen paakku*. During marriage ceremony, only the headman of that settlement is provided with woolen blanket to sit. If the headman of the Hills is also present, it is he who shares that privilege.

However, the first respect goes to the headman of the settlement. Not only that, even in the case of a mourning which took place in the settlement he is given first respect. That is, the chief mourner of that hut should fall at the feet of the headman of that settlement and receive him by giving betel leaf and areca nut.

### THE MANDHIRI AND HIS DUTIES

The *mandhiri* acts as an assistant to the headman of that settlement. His presence is necessary at the time of a meeting. That is to say, he assists the headman, asking questions and counter - questions and thus he is helpful to arrive at a decision. However, his main duty is to convene meetings of the tribal council of the settlement or the Hills.

### THE KANGAANI AND HIS OFFICE

It is the *kangaani* who in turn assists the *mandhiri* in arranging meeting of the tribal council. He visits the various Pachaimalai Malaiyali settlements and announces date, time and

place of the meeting. Moreover, he accompanies his immediate superior, viz., *mandhiri* whenever the latter visits the other settlements. It is he who use to control the offenders if they turn out violent etc., Moreover, he is the man sent to a bride's hut to get the formal acceptance for the alliance sought. Only after his confirmation that the people of that hut is affirmative in this regard, the other superior offices of the tribal council accompanies the groom's parties to that bride's hut.

The noteworthy points in this juncture is that though the major official matters are done by the *kangaani*, his superiors do not show any regard for him as they consider him just as a paid servant.

### **PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TRIBAL COUNCIL**

The entire Pachaimalai Malaiyali community can be divided into two sects, from the point of view of political organisation as i) *kavenden* sect and ii) *kudiyanaven* sect.

The former sect are with ruling power while the latter sect comprises ordinary citizens under the rule of the former. Moreover, the *kavenden* sect enjoys certain privileges like *tying of marriage badge* (whereas only a turmeric tied string is used by the other sect), wearing of turban, possession of umbrella and woolen blanket and the right to sit in wollen blanket during marriage and other ceremonies.

At least one member of each household in a settlement is invited by the *siththampalom*, an assistant to the *kangaani*. Usually a small sum is collected by the office bearers as tax from each household. This sum is used for miscellaneous expenses incurred in connection with convening a meeting.

### **FUNCTIONING OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL**

The tribal council of the tribes of the Hills is functioning effectively with joint actions of the office-bearers. Effective functioning of the tribal council settles the entire matters of the tribes of the Hills. Violation of tribal code and the directions of its office bearers are viewed as serious offences rather than offences such as adultery, theft, non-remittance or refusal of remittance of tax demanded by the tribal council. Only by observing such rigid practices, they are keeping their tribal council as a powerful one till to-day. However, incest is viewed as a serious breach of tribal code, as they posit some supernatural punishment viz., draught, flood, disintegration and

ultimate ruin of that household. However, not even a single case of incest is reported to the author during his ethnographic investigations.

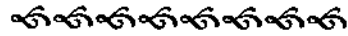
In cases like quarrel, theft, etc., the accused is asked to remit *thandom* (fine) in the form of ease if he or she is proved to be guilty. The fine varies from two and half rupees to five rupees. If he refuses the very offence itself or to remit the fine he is excommunicated upto four days. Hence, generally even if they did not commit that offence they remit the penalty. However, the office bearer of the tribal council are not so blind to victimise a virtuous man.

Divorce, as reported in earlier contexts, is not so pronounced as the womenfolk of the Hills enjoy considerable freedom. However, one cannot deny the fact that it is in practice. Both menfolk and womenfolk are found to apply for divorce before the tribal council. At the first phase, the council tries their level best to compromise the pairs and if only it ends in vein they sanction divorce for remarriage. The second husband should return the bride price to the first husband which was given to the woman by the latter at their first marriage. If it is the man who wants the divorce just for his second marriage he is not repaid the bride price. If the couple wants the divorce just for separation and not for remarriage then no give and take is observed and the separation is sanctioned just by formal declaration of office-bearers of the council. In such case if the man wants his offsprings to be with him, then he is asked to give a sum of Rs.50 or so to his spouse as compensation for her breast-feeding the offsprings in their infancy. This amount is referred to as *paalmadi panom*.

When cases of extra-marital adultery are brought before the tribal council and if ample proof is produced the tribal council takes action such as granting divorce. Pre-marital adultery, on the other hand, is penalised with fine of cash and grain. The noteworthy point in this context is that fine is collected both from man and the girl,. The *thevasom* (grain) collected is utilised to prepare ceremonial feasts and the cash is spent either for getting country liquor or pig. If the adultery is found in the girl's residence, then she is penalised with a low amount than her partner. On the contrary, if it took place at the man's residence, then he is penalised less than his partner. In the case of extra-marital adultery, the fine of woman should be remitted by her husband and in the case of pre-marital adultery her parents or her brother, if she has lost parents, remits the fine. Such a practice of collecting fine from both the man and woman, that too from the kin of their household has minimised the offences, on the one hand and hiding them, on the other hand.

It may be observed that the office bearers and the Pachaimalai Malaiyali elders were keen that the tribals adhered to the tribal code. In the interior settlements, elders do not wish to refer their cases to tribal council unless it is a serious breach of their custom. In view of the huge expenses of feeding the elders of the tribe and also paying of fines etc, the tribes of the hills of the interior settlements refrain from referring their cases to the tribal council. Instead, they try to settle their cases within themselves or through the mediation of other settlements.

As far as the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, life and culture are concerned, the tribal council is proved to be very powerful till today.



## 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### SUMMARY

That aspect of anthropological work which described specific cultures adequately is known as ethnography. It is peoples which form the main object of it. Traditionally, the subjects of ethnographic research were from the people of non-Western and non-industrialised societies. However, since second World war, its scope has been widened and complex societies have become a major target of it. In short, "ethnography studies, describes and finds generalisations for the ethnically specific and differentiating components of culture". Its significance is of worth mentioning as it provides basic source materials for further ethnological studies. Till the end of nineteenth century A.D., all ethnographic studies were carried away by either "traveller", or by "missioneries", or by "laymen" or by "arm-chaired ethnographers". In the present context, the ethnographers visit their fields with the most advanced tools and methods of investigation available. The present monograph which is presented in the structural-functionalistic frame work deals about the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis, a Tamil speaking Hill Tribes of mixed ethnicity with Hunter ancestry, on the one hand and the Kaaraala Vellaala (Plains) (men) ancestry, on the otherhand. The objectives of the monograph, and the methodology followed along with the limitations of the study were also given in the appropriate contexts.

The Hills are situated in the northern part of Tiruchirapalli district. It is chiefly divided into three administrative divisions viz., Thenpuranadu, Vannadu and Athinadu. Each division is again subdivided into a number of hamlets. The altitude, temperature, rainfall, flora and fauna of the Hills are also noted down. A communication channel is also described briefly. Pachaimalai Malaiyalis are the only scheduled tribes living in the hills. Somatoscopic observations do not show any distinct features of their own. The geographical settings of the points of inquiry, their population figure and other details were discussed. The language of

the people is a dialect of Tamil and is termed P(achaimalai) T(amil) D(ialect). The uniqueness of the PTD is focussed in all its levels viz., phonological, grammatical and lexical levels. The dress and decoration of these tribes are also discussed briefly.

The tribes of the Hills have both traditional and non-traditional economy of their own. Cultivation and collection of minor forest produce including honey collection, hunting etc., form their traditional economy. On the contrary, labour, animal husbandry etc., form the non-traditional economy.

Traditional economy is associated with rituals and division of labour. Especially, the division of game in the hunting expedition, as per the role of the individuals, is of worth quoting in this context. The various activities, in relation to the traditional economy, in a calendar year is also discussed briefly. Markets are going to be established in the Hills. The owning of properties and systems of inheritances are mainly through the male line.

The social organisation of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis is directly perceived from family as the basic unit. The tribes of the hills live in settlements. Each settlement consists of a few clusters of huts. However, each settlement is in a characteristic rectangular pattern. The ground plan of the hut is rectangular and vary in sizes. The materials used for building huts are locally available and easily procurable too. Men build the house while women assist them in plastering the floor with mud and making wattle-walls etc., Thus, a hut is built by the unified efforts of the members of a family. Their earthen wares such as pots and pitchers, metal vessels such as water containers etc., hand mills, pestle, mortar, various articles of basketry, axe, billhook, crowbar, plough, plough share, chisel, spear, rope, etc., are some of the important household articles of the tribes of the Hills. Family is showing patrilineal descent with patrilocal residence. Family, among the tribe of the hills, is of the following types as nuclear, immediate, extended, and compound. Each Pachaimalai Malaiyali family is based on cohesive bonds of kinship traced both patrilineally and matrilineally. Consanguineous and affinal kinship ties frame the interpersonal relationship of their entire social organisation. The kinship terminology is so structured so as to make preferential cross-cousin marriage possible. Patterned attitudes are seen in the context of the Pachaimalai Malaiyali kinship behaviour. Behaviour of the tribes of the Hills towards the people of their own tribe is that of expression of 'we-feeling'.



The different phases of life of an individual Pachaimalai Malaiyali starting from the conception and ending with funeral ceremony is attempted. If a woman misses her periods then she is suspected to have conceived. Conception is confirmed if she does not have that month period even after a few days lapse from the usual date. Pregnancy days are counted starting from the date of confirmation of conception and it is not given special care and attention. However, first pregnancy of a woman seems to be exception to this. Even at the beginning of her eighth month of pregnancy she is taken to her parents' home. Delivery is only attended by the midwife of their own community. A ceremonial feast was extended to all those in the settlement. Upto two or three months the delivered woman resides in the hut of her parents. At the end of that period, a purification ceremony is observed. Breast-feeding continues for nearly two to three and half years. Naming ceremony is observed only on the ensuing pongal festival and a ritual is observed, in addition. Upto its fifth year the child used to spare most of its time with its mother. Socialisation of a child is done by its parents and grandparents. On the third year or so, ear piercing is done to a child by an elderly Pachaimalai Malaiyali woman. Likewise, nasal piercing of a girl is done at an early age of seven or eight years.

Usually, at the age of six, a child starts leaving the hut and tends to have the association of other children of its own settlements. Until a child reaches adolescence it does not distinguish sex. As boys grow they like to wander in the interior forests, in search of minor forest produce. As they grow up, the girls help the womenfolk in the various agricultural and domestic activities. First menstruation of a girl indicates her attainment of puberty. An adult learns facts about sex from friends older than himself or herself. An adolescent girl is expected to behave modestly and should refrain from the physical intimacy. A menstruating girl is segregated for five to seven days in one of the menstruation huts already built for that purpose. On the fifth or seventh day, the girl takes a ritual bath. After that, a ritual is observed along with a ceremonial dish. The parents present her with new dresses along with betel leaf, arecanut and parched rice. The parents of the girl meet the expenditure. Likewise, the menstruating women is segregated in one of the menstruation hut for a period of three days only. It is the moral obligations of the parents of a boy or girl to arrange his or her marriage. Monogyny is the general rule of marriage. Polygyny is also observed. However, Pachaimalai Malaiyali do not venture to take another wife, when one wife is living with him. Marriageable age of male and female is considered as 16 years and 13 years respectively. Negotiated marriage is the sole pattern of marriage. This consists of

elaborate rites and formalities. If the negotiations become successful, betrothal is confirmed by putting sandal paste both in the forehead of the groom and on the wall of the hut of the bride. Betrothal is re-confirmed after few days. All agreements regarding dowry, date of marriage and other details are done only on the second phase of negotiations. The bride also receives cash and things on that day. Bride price is collected from the groom's party while dowry is given by the bride's party to the bridegroom. Bride price is an obligatory item while dowry is an optional item. Invitations are given in the form of betel leaf and areca nut. Pandal is erected in the courtyard of the bride's residence for conducting marriage. Bridal procession took place from her hut to that of grooms. Marriage badge is tied by the groom around the neck of the bride. The bride shows the maximum resistance while the groom tried to tie the marriage badge. After successful tying, a gun shot is fired in the sky. Cash and kinds are also given to the bridegroom by the kin. A ceremonial feast follows. The mother of the bridegroom receives her daughter-in-law and son. Divorce is sought when there is no adjustment between spouses. However, it is uncommon, as considerable tolerance in sex life is generally practised by each of them. The authority to grant divorce rests with the tribal council. Children of a woman divorcee live with her only. They even stay in her new married husband's hut in the case of her remarriage with a new man. However, they have the right to return to their father's hut any day they like. Moreover, he may arrange their marriages when they grow into adults. A Pachaimalai Malaiyali may remarry several times in life after dissolution of wedlock by divorce or death. Widow remarriage is also in practice. However, it is conducted relatively in a simple manner. Moreover, it involves no dowry. The bride price is reduced to half of the amount. When a person becomes old it is his sons and daughters who take care of them. They are treated with respect and tenderness. Moreover, they are given only mild jobs such as housekeeping. Death is considered natural and unavoidable, especially when one becomes too old.

They also believe in the magico-religious cause for death. Infant mortality rate is high due to diarrhoea. Suicide and murder are also pronounced, but in a lower rate. As soon as death occurs the members of the bereaved's household burst into loud wailing. Messengers are sent to close relatives of the deceased. The corpse is kept till all come. The headman who visits that house is given woolen blanket to sit and betel leaf and arecanut to chew. Death is associated with a number of rites. As soon as the kins of the deceased have assembled, a pit is dug near the hut. The corpse is lowered into the pit and placed on a cloth kept over its inside. Then the pit is closed. On return from the of burial ground, the mourners

take bath. The cases of death due to suicide, murder or some contagious diseases are immediately disposed. Here, cremation is observed and not buried. The pollution breaking ceremony is observed on the sixteenth day. In the case of poor household, it is finished within the very same day. The ceremony ends with a feast given to the assembled kin. Four measures of millet per household is collected and given to those chief mourner who is incapable of meeting the expenses. The ritual of setting at rest the spirit of the diseased is done at the sixth month from the day of the death. The diviner does the rituals connected with this. He communicates with the spirit and sets it at rest underneath a tree to where it wants to abode. These rested spirits later form the household deities. Belief in soul, belief in ancestral worship and belief in Hindu gods and Goddesses form the various religious attitudes of the tribes of the Hills.

In addition, they deify a number of deities. Each god, goddess or deity is associated with a ritual of its own. The various rituals are classified into rituals connecting with hunting, rituals connected with honey collection, rituals connected with rain-making and so on. Likewise, their various beliefs are also classified as beliefs concerned with health, economy, marriage and so on. A note on various important festivals celebrated is also included. Pachaimalai Malaiyalis normally conforms to the norms and traditions of their society through the influences of three agencies, viz., authority of elders, public opinion and religious beliefs. In the event of non-settlement of any case it is the tribal council to deal with tribal code. Tribal council at the Hills' level has the jurisdiction over all the tribal councils of the settlements. The tribal council has a headman and he is the deciding authority of the entire Hills. He periodically arranges and conducts the Hill assembly. The unsettled cases of the settlements are carried and summoned to this office. The tribal officials in a settlement are the headman of the settlements, *mandhiri* and *kangaani*. The headman of the settlement is considered as the chief of that particular settlement but as an assistance to the headman of the Hills. First invitation for the marriage etc., is given to the headman of a settlement. The *mandhiri* acts as an assistance to the headman of that settlement. However, his main duty is to convene meetings of the tribal council of the settlements or the Hills. *kangaani* in turn assist the *mandhiri*, in arranging the meeting of the tribal council. Moreover, he accompanies his immediate superior viz., *mandhiri*.

Whenever the latter visits the other settlements except *kangaani*, all other tribal officials hold their offices through hereditary. Tribal council is functioning effectively with the

joint actions of the office-bearers. Violation of tribal code and the directives of its office-bearers are viewed as serious offences than offences such as adultery etc., Only by observing such rigid practices they are keeping their tribal council as a powerful one till today.

## CONCLUSION

The author wants to highlight the following as concluding remarks:

i. The disturbances in their traditional economy and the introduction of cash cropping, wage earning, etc., have not brought any structural change in the life of the Pachaimalai Malaiyalis. Values for their traditional way of living have not changed among the tribes and the author hopes that this is the reason for the absence of any remarkable structural change in their life.

ii. The settlement pattern is in the characteristic rectangular pattern. This may be in contrast to that of the circular fashion of their one of the ancestors, viz., the hunters. Because, while they want to restructure their social organisation, the Kaaraala Vellaalas might have introduced this rectangular fashion. This is author's conjecture based on his visit into some of the remnants of the hunter's settlement which remain till to-day.

iii. Presence of an additional waist-level mud wall indirectly reveal the separate cooking of a mother-in-law, in one and the same household.

iv. Though kinship terminology is so structured so as to make preferential cross-cousin marriage possible, the rate of cross-cousin marriage is estimated as low, Hence, it is concluded that the structured kinship terminology still stands as a reflection of high rate of preferential cross-cousin marriages, atleast on those days.

v. Common menstrual huts show the close association of people of a settlement. However, the neglect of menstrual huts by the girls of the Top Sengattupatti settlement, reveals their tendency towards establishing parochialization. This attitude is simply because of the cultural contacts.

vi. The various marriage rites stand as remnants of their cultural history, stating their mixed ethnicity side by side.

vii. The various privileges enjoyed by the *mooppen* sect at times causes murmur among the educated persons of *kudiyaanaven* sect. Even then, their respect for tradition maintains the social organization.

viii. Because they believe in supernatural punishment etc., the religion is thought off as one of the indirect devices that maintains the social control among the tribes of the Hills.

ix. Violation of tribal code and the directives of its office-bearers are viewed as serious offences resulting into excommunication. Only by observing such rigid practices the tribes of the Hills are keeping their political organization as a powerful one till to-day.

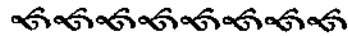


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# **PHOTO PLATES**



Neoliths - in deification  
at the Pachaimalai Hills



Neoliths - in deification  
at the Pachaimalai Hills



Pachaimalai Malaiyalis - in  
front of their hut



Plough and Mortar -  
besides a hut wall



Chick basket - hanging  
at the Pachaimalai  
Malaiyali hut



A View of the Pachaimalai  
Hills

