

## A Paradox within a Paradox: Emerging Signs of Change in the Unappealing Tribal Scenario in Kerala, India

Deepa Chandran, (Doctoral Candidate)  
Center for the Study of Regional Development (CSR),  
Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, Pin Code-110067, India  
E-Mail- [deepachandranjnu@gmail.com](mailto:deepachandranjnu@gmail.com)  
Contact Number- 00-91-9013743483

*The research is financed by Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi, India. (The author at present is a CSIR-Senior Research Fellow.)*

### Abstract

Kerala, a small state in India caught worldwide attention owing to its unparalleled successful but ironical experience of achieving high human development unaccompanied by a matching level of economic development. The “Kerala model of development” was widely appreciated as a development strategy which could be replicated on the newly independent countries plagued with numerous socio-economic tensions. Later, it was observed that this model has several outlier communities in which tribal communities were the most victimized ones. The fact that Kerala had the highest gap between the tribal and non-tribal population in various socio-economic development indicators as compared to the rest of the country presents a situation of “paradox within a paradox”. Nonetheless, signs of change in the tribal situation are slowly surfacing in the state in various forms. The increasing political mobilization of the tribal communities in Kerala is the major driving force behind these positive changes.

**Keywords:** Human development, Kerala Development Model, outlier communities, tribes, paradox, change

### 1 Introduction

India has the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. After independence, the government of India opted an integrated approach in tribal development which offered the tribal communities the freedom for decision making about their lives rather than forcing them to replicate the lifestyles of the larger society. Despite numerous efforts taken for the welfare of these communities (especially in the form of positive discrimination), even today tribal communities stands at the lower most end of the socio economic ladder in the country. Considering the importance of these socio-economic factors in determining the level of social wellbeing, it is obvious that the presently existing wide tribal non tribal differential in the same will prove to be highly unfavorable to meet the long term goals of tribal development. This study points out that marginalization of these communities was found in its worst form in Kerala; the state otherwise becomes the center of academic discussions on account of its amazing human development achievements. The high degree of tribal backwardness in the state comes as an eye-opener for those who wrongly assume a matching high quality of tribal life in the state merely because of its rosy picture in human development. Nonetheless the huge leaps observed in tribal housing and basic amenities availability to the tribal households in the last decade is a positive sign for the slowly fading ironical coexistence of extreme tribal marginalization in the midst of amazingly high human development.

#### 1.1 Paradox of ‘Kerala model of development’

Kerala, a small state in India caught the attention of the international academic community, owing to its unparalleled successful experience of achieving high human development unaccompanied by a matching rate of economic development which often was considered as a paradox in itself. At a time, when the policy makers worldwide had been hunting for a development model which could be successfully replicated on the large number of newly independent countries plagued with variety of socio-economic tensions, “Kerala model of development” captured the attention as an effective solution (T, N, Krishnan 1980). The peculiar pattern of development was explained through situating Kerala society in the specific historical context within which public action was initiated and evolved (Kurian, J, 1995; Kannan, K, P, 1999). The numerous initiatives taken by the first communist government in the state including land reforms, tenancy abolition, implementation of minimum wages etc marked huge leap in the physical conditions of life. These steps made the agrarian population aware of their right and inspired them to fight for it (CDS 1975; Sharma, R. 2003). In addition to the state provision of various services, the high level of awareness among the common man and the public action were critical in achieving the high human development in Kerala (J, Kurian 1995; Lieten, G, K, 2002). The state ranks first in Human Development Index in the country and is often compared with the human development achievements of western countries, especially the Scandinavian nations.

### *1.2 Paradox of tribal marginalization within Kerala model*

It was observed in course of time that in contradiction to the common perception, there were ‘outlier’ or ‘peripheral’ communities in the ‘Kerala model of development’ which had always gone unnoticed behind the attractive average figures of human development (Center for Development Studies, 1975). Several studies proved later that tribal communities were the most marginalized section in the state (Ministry of Rural Development in Kerala, 1993). According to the Census 2001, the total Scheduled Tribe population in the state numbered 3.64 lakhs, comprising only 1.1 percent of the total population which is very low as compared to the national level average of 8.2 percent. The tribal backwardness in the state is evident from the ground reality that Kerala had the largest gap between the tribal and non tribal population in various socio-economic development indicators as compared to the rest of the country. Despite being the forerunner in taking steps to ensure distributive justice, the unsatisfactory implementation of the ‘Transfer and Restoration of Alienated Lands Act’ shows the state apathy towards tribal sufferings (Sreerekha, 2010).

Ironically, the state’s ‘development experience’ from the late 1950s till the late 1980s, which saw the most rapid decline in poverty anywhere in India (Heller, 2000) failed to bring its most backward section out of poverty. When Kerala is one of the states with very low level of poverty, roughly half of its tribal households live in poverty conditions (Planning Commission, 2007). Precisely, the socio-political and economic conditions needed to facilitate the tribal communities to enjoy the fruits of the ‘Kerala development model’ were virtually absent in the state (Chathukulam, John. 2006). Often tribal communities in Kerala were seen as the victims of its peculiar development model (Steur, L. 2009). Hence, Kerala, the state with a unique model of development which is often called as a paradox, bear yet another paradox in terms of ‘coexistence of extreme tribal backwardness and amazing human development achievements’, ultimately ending up in the situation of a “paradox within a paradox”.

### *1.3 Tribal marginalization in Kerala: Reasons for neglect in public discussions*

If one goes through the literature on Kerala, it is clear in the first glance itself that lion’s share of these till 1990s are on “Kerala model of development”. These studies attempted to explain the socio-economic fabric of Kerala society which led to the evolution of the peculiar development model. One another aspect of discussion which was often linked with the former one is the high status of the women enjoyed in Kerala society. The more recent topics for academic discussions about the state are migration to Gulf countries, industrial stagnation, educated unemployment etc. In spite of being rich in constructive yet critical academic discussions, the studies on tribes barring few are almost nil in the state. The main reasons why the tribal backwardness in the state went unnoticed are as follows.

- Tribal population in the state comprises only 1.1 percent of the total population (Census of India, 2001)

which led to the prejudiced perception within the academic circles that tribal studies are not of any significance in context of Kerala. Nonetheless, the tribal marginalization in the state gained wide attention of the academic community after the Muthanga tribal uprising in 2003.

- Negligence in the realm of policy making. As the percentage share and the size of the tribal population in an administrative unit were the prime criteria for the inclusion under various tribal development schemes (before the initiation of Tribal Sub Plans), the tribal population in the state were entirely kept out of various tribal development initiatives. With the introduction of Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) the situation was changed to some extent. But, even today the tribal areas in the state are unable get the attention of the policy makers in the center as none of the tribal pockets in the state are covered under “scheduled areas” of Indian constitution.
- Lack of data available on the tribal communities in the state is a major hindrance for conducting studies on tribals in the state. In most of the tribal studies, Kerala does not find a place in discussion. Besides, majority of the national level surveys by the Government of India on tribes does not take note of the tribals in the state as they comprise very small portion of the tribal population in the country.
- Lack of political mobilization of the tribal communities in the state created a situation where the voice of the tribal people never received attention. As there were always hidden interests behind various political parties, the tribal people were treated only as puppets in their hands. This is evident from the reluctance shown by all the major political parties in the state in the fuller implementation of the Supreme Court order to restore the alienated tribal lands. (Janu, C. K. Geethanandan, M. 2003).

As a result of all these, the problems of the tribal communities in the state especially of land alienation went unnoticed till the Muthanga incident in 2003.

#### *1.4 Literature review*

It was observed that the ‘paradox of high human development in the absence of a similar economic development’ is not applicable to the marginalized sections of Kerala society especially the tribal communities. (Kurian, J. 1995). ‘Kerala model’ consciously ignored comparative statistics across various social groups while attempting to romanticize the past and deliberately hid how the tribal communities were made the ultimate victims of this model. (Steur, L. 2009). The tribal communities in Kerala were very often subjected to various kinds of exploitation by the outsiders from the historical times. But it became intensive after the formation of the state in 1956 (Kalathil, M, J, 2002). Besides the low economic development, tribal groups in the state are characterized by child marriages, high infant mortality and fertility rates etc which are in extreme contrast with the appealing state averages. (Kurian, J. 1980; 1995). It is believed that several policies of the state as well as intervention of outsiders have contributed significantly in the process of alienation of the tribal communities from their land in course of time forcing them to work as agricultural laborers under the newly settled outsiders (Bijoy, C. R. Raman, K. R, 2003).

Most of the state initiatives for ‘the wellbeing of larger population’ did not benefit the tribal population, rather these projects made their life worse than before. The most striking example is the widely appreciated Land reform act of the state government (Sreekumar, Parayil, G. 2006). Tribal communities in the state own abysmally low value of assets compared to any other social and religious groups. (Kerala Shasthra Sahitya Parishad, 2005 as mentioned in Sreerexha 2010). As the level of access of the families to productive resources is inversely correlated to the levels of poverty particularly in the rural areas (Vyas, V. S, Bhargava, P, 1995) there is nothing wrong to believe that the land alienation of the tribal population before and after independence worsened their economic condition. Tribal participation in the political field is abysmally low as they don’t have trust in these institutions and feel themselves as inferior to others. It is a shocking fact that in the highly literate Kerala society, nearly 53 percent of the tribal population surveyed in a study did not know the name of the country to which they belong and 77 percent had not read any newspapers. (Zacharias, S. 2002).

In the state as a whole there are 36 groups of Scheduled Tribes living in nearly 70 thousand families (Census of India, 2001). Perhaps it is because of this small size of the tribal population in the state that they

failed to get the adequate attention of the policy makers (Aiyappan, A. 1994). Apart from this, the major reason for the marginalization of these communities in spite of having taken several policies for their upliftment by the state government is because of their failure in effective social and political mobilization under capable leaders (Kurian, J. 1980; Aiyappan, A. 1994). It is surprising to note that even the leftist parties in the state which played an important role in the evolution of the 'Kerala model' mainly by taking committed stands for the upliftment of economically weaker classes did not agree to organize the marginalized sections especially tribals on community basis. (Heller, 2000).

## 2. Comparison of Socio-economic development between Tribal and Total population

Table.1 gives a comparative picture about the socio-economic development indicators between the tribal and the total population in the state. It reveals the depth of tribal backwardness in the state which is hidden by the state averages. Though the state as a whole stands ahead of the national level figures, the corresponding figures of the tribal population are far below the appealing state averages. The tribal backwardness in the state is not limited to the materials aspects alone, but is also reflected in social development factors like education, health etc which are vital in enabling an individual to realize their capabilities and potential. From Table.2 it is evident that the tribal-total differential in terms of social development indicators is most pronounced in Kerala than in any other states considered. It has to be remembered that all these states barring two (Maharashtra and West Bengal) have very low human development and are generally regarded as backward states. Thus, there is nothing wrong to believe that something is fishy about the tribal development approach adopted in Kerala in spite of being number one in human development achievements.

When the sex ratios of the tribal communities in these states stand better as compared to that of the total population, Kerala is the only state where the reverse trend is noticed. As the tribal societies in general do not have a strong male preference as compared to the non tribal population, the tribal sex ratio in general is always higher than the total sex ratio (Bhasin, 2007). The lower sex ratio of the tribal population in Kerala vis-à-vis to the total population is because of the very low outmigration of male workers from the tribal areas in contrary to the general trend of economically motivated (predominantly male selective) emigration from the state. (Rondinone, A, 2007). This is an indicator for the low levels of income and educational attainment of the tribal communities in Kerala. As educational attainment is very crucial in determining the level of human development, the wide gap between the tribal and total population in the same as shown in Table.2 will severely curtail the scope of the tribal communities in improving their life.

From Table.1 and Table.2 the following facts about the tribal population in the state can be realized.

- 1) Tribal communities in the state have low educational attainment. (Even at present high dropout rates of the tribal children is widely observed in the state due to the factors such as poor functioning of the tribal schools, poor accessibility, teaching in the regional language which is different from the local tribal dialects (Sam, M. 2001). When the state as a whole, the dropout rate till 8<sup>th</sup> standard is below 1 percent, the corresponding figure of the tribal communities is as high as 30 percent. (Planning Commission, 2007)).
- 2) They enjoy very low levels of housing and basic amenities availability. (Substantial share of the tribal households live in houses with thatched roofs and of very poor quality materials. Only few houses have separate kitchen for cooking, latrine facility etc which will have multiplier negative impact on their health condition).
- 3) The tribal communities in the state face severe health problems mainly due to lack of nutritious food intake (NFHS-2, 1999). Tribal areas are always the pockets of poverty deaths in the state. This problem gets aggravated in rainy season when agricultural labor is in low demand (Planning Commission, 2007).
- 4) Tribal households in the state own very fewer assets than the other communities. (Roughly half of the tribal households in the state do not even have a radio. It hints the fact that most of these houses have mere means of sustenance and are deprived of any kind of entertainment or luxuries in their lives).

### **3. Muthanga Tribal uprising and political mobilization of tribals in the state**

Muthanga agitation which took place in the beginning of 2003 was the first large scale tribal uprising in the state. The agitation reached a violent phase with the death of two people in police firing. The root cause of the tribal unrest was the indifferent attitude followed by the political authorities towards the long pending issue of tribal land alienation. Though Supreme Court had issued order for the restoration of the tribal lands in the state, the state assembly passed it after incorporating several clauses to favor the non tribal settlers in tribal areas (Bijoy, C. R. Raman, K. R, 2003). Several poverty deaths reported from the tribal pockets in Kerala in the beginning of 2003, ignited the long existed tribal discontent against political apathy (in implementing the agreement reached between the state government and the tribal organizations for the restoration of alienated tribal lands). Led by Mrs.C.K.Janu and Mr.M.Geethanandan, the leaders of Adivasi Gotra Mahajana Sabha (AGMS), the tribal people occupied the Muthanga Wildlife sanctuary. Instead of attempting to settle the issue peacefully, the State government opted for forceful evacuation of tribals from these lands ending up in the death of a tribal man and a police man. This was the first instance when the political lethargy towards the problems of the tribal communities in the state was exposed.

Indirectly, the incident enabled the academic community across the world to appreciate the politics of tribal marginalization in Kerala which prevented tribals from equally participating in the development process. Kerala government was severely criticized for the brutal handling of the incident and was considered as a gross violation of human rights of its downtrodden population. (Down to earth, 2004). This incident invited criticisms even from various international organizations and called for a rethink about the dark sides of the 'Kerala model of development'. In addition to the revelation of the brutal face of the state, Muthanga incident became a major turning point in the political articulation of the ideas and interests of the tribal communities in Kerala. (Bhaskaran, 2004). The seeds of political mobilization it had left in the tribal struggle for their rights is evident from the fact that numerous tribal organizations took birth in the following years and the most important one being 'Rashtriya Mahasabha' headed by Geethanandan. But the unfortunate part of this political mobilization is that these organizations lacked any concrete ideologies for the broader development of the tribal communities (Chathukulam, J, 2006) which is crucial in making the presence of tribal politics felt in the wider realm of state politics.

### **4. Emerging signs of change in the tribal scenario in Kerala**

In the backdrop of the tribal development initiatives undertaken by the Government of Kerala following the Muthanga incident, it is assumed that the tribal segment in the state would have felt the waves of these ameliorative measures. Taking account of the importance of housing and basic amenities in determining overall social wellbeing, this part of the paper through an analysis of the housing data in 2001 and 2011, attempts to examine if there is any change in the tribal scenario in Kerala during the last decade.

#### *4.1 Role of housing and basic amenities availability in human wellbeing-*

Fulfillment of basic necessities is very crucial in determining the overall social wellbeing. Besides providing a sense of security from the weather/natural phenomena and the social tensions around, the quality of housing along with the availability of basic civic amenities are highly intertwined with the factors determining social status, health condition etc. Poor housing conditions have a detrimental impact on health especially of children. (Nocol, S, 2010) and lead to huge public spending on health related problems (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH),2010). Apart from health, another crucial aspect which is directly linked with housing conditions is education. Poor quality housing has been identified as exerting a negative impact on educational performance, owing to its association with poor health, and factors such as lack of privacy and study space, or because of the poor level of functioning of the schools in the poor neighborhoods. (Wiltshire, S. 2010). Housing not only provides the benefits of shelter but also, through location, access to a further bundle of goods and services (Phibbs. Young. 2005). The study by CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health), (2010) on the relationship between housing conditions

and overall social development reached at the following conclusions.

- An improvement in the housing conditions is always associated with an increase in the span of life.
  - An improvement in housing conditions were linked with improved communities, reduction in crime rate, improved employment opportunities and higher educational attainment.
  - With the improvement in housing conditions, there was clear cut fall in the average number of days when a person falls ill and the number of visits required to a doctor.
  - The housing improvements led to sudden rise in social functioning, mental health, physical functioning and vitality of the people.
  - High prevalence rate of chronic diseases like Asthma associated with poor housing conditions.
- From the above brief discussion, it is apparent that an improvement in the living conditions of any section of population and housing in particular will have significant positive impact on their overall wellbeing.

#### *4.2 Analysis of housing and basic amenities availability*

For the analysis, deprivation index is calculated as follows.

Deprivation index =  $[(d1^3 + d2^3 + d3^3 + d4^3) / 4]^{1/3}$  where d1, d2, d3 and d4 denotes the percentage shares of houses constructed with temporary materials, houses without electricity connection, houses without access to drinking water within a distance of 500 meters and houses without access to safe toilets. Figure.1 illustrates that there was an acute deprivation of housing and basic amenities in the tribal households in Kerala in 2001. In 2001, the worst form of deprivation was observed in case of good housing (with more than 4/5<sup>th</sup> of the tribal families living in partially dilapidated houses). This was followed by access to safe toilet facilities. But by 2011, there had been remarkable progress in housing quality and in the availability of other basic amenities as well. In percentage terms, the share of the houses with permanent materials noticed an increase of 54 points during 2001-11. Table.3 reveals the fact besides achieving huge leap in improving the living conditions of the tribal families, Kerala also could substantially reduce the tribal-total differential in housing and basic amenities deprivation. At the national level, the gap between tribal and total population in deprivation index was more than doubled during 2001-11. Quite contrarily, the respective gap was narrowed down in Kerala during the same period. State level comparison of these figures also reveals that Kerala attained the highest improvements in this regard in the entire country (Census of India, 2001, 2011). At the national level, when the deprivation index in housing and basic amenities fell from 73 to 63 during 2001-11, a steep reduction in the same was observed in Kerala from a high of 67 in 2001 to 40 in 2011. The driving force behind these positive developments is the numerous initiatives taken by the state government in the aftermath of the growing political mobilization of the tribal communities in the state. Apart from this, it has to be also seen as an attempt of the state to regain its lost face after being severely criticized by various national as well as international human right organizations for its indifferent attitude towards tribal communities.

#### **5. Conclusion**

In contrary to the general perception, marginalization of tribal population is found in its worst form in Kerala which often goes unnoticed due to various reasons. From the above discussion, it is clear that though Kerala presented a scene of a “paradox within a paradox” in terms of acute marginalization of its tribal communities in the midst of high human development achievements, signs of positive change can be traced in various realms. The huge leap achieved in the housing and basic amenities coverage as compared to any other states (Census of India, 2001, 2011) in the country supports this fact. Although under the pressure from various politically mobilized tribal groups, it is an appreciable change that the tribal backwardness in the state was given considerable weight by the policy makers during the last decade. Besides, Kerala is the only state where the tribal-total differential in the housing and basic amenities deprivation has narrowed down during the last decade. It is anticipated that the improvement in the living conditions of the tribal households in the state in addition to the increasing political mobilization of the tribal communities, will

gradually lead to narrowing down of the tribal non tribal differential in overall development.

## 6. Drawback of the study

On the basis of the wide consensus that housing conditions and basic amenities availability are very crucial in determining the overall wellbeing of an individual, the author concludes that the huge leaps observed in the same in the tribal households is a proof for the improvement of the tribal scenario in Kerala. Nonetheless, the analysis of the factors like health, education etc is also necessary to arrive at a foolproof conclusion that the tribal suffering in the state is slowly coming down (The author could not do it as the recent data on these aspects are not yet released by Census of India).

## References

- Aiyappan, A. (1994). Tribes in south India. In Thakur, D, Thakur, D. N. (Ed.s). *Tribal Life in India; Customs, laws, administration, education and development towards 2000 AD, Part 1; Tribal life and forests*, Deep and Deep publication, New Delhi, pp.89-97.
- Bhasin, V. (2007), Status of tribal women in India, [Online] Available: <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/S-HCS/HCS-01-0-000-000-2007-Web/HCS-01-1-001-07-Abst-Text/HCS-01-1-001-07-001-Bhasin-V/HCS-01-1-001-07-01-Bhasin-V-Tt.pdf> (1 June, 2012).
- Bhaskaran. (2004). *Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C.K. Janu*. (trans. S, N. Ravi). New Delhi: Kali for Women and Women Unlimited, (Chapter.1)
- Bijoy, C. R. Raman, K.R. (2003). Muthanga: The real story: Adivasis movement to recover land”, *Economic and political weekly*. 38(20), 1975-1982, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413574>
- CDS. (1975). *Poverty, unemployment and development policy: A case study of selected issues with reference to Kerala*, United Nations, New York, (Chapter .2)
- Census of India. (2001). (2011). Government of India, New Delhi.
- Chathukulam, J. John, M. S. (2006). Issues in Tribal Development: The Recent Experience of Kerala. In C.R. Govinda. (Ed.), *Tribal Development in India: The Contemporary Debate*, (pp. 82–102). New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- CIEH. (2010). Good housing leads to good health.[Online]. Available: [http://www.cieh.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Housing/Good\\_Housing\\_Leads\\_to\\_Good\\_Health\\_2008.pdf](http://www.cieh.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Housing/Good_Housing_Leads_to_Good_Health_2008.pdf) (June 10, 2012)
- Down to earth, (2004), The truth behind Muthanga Incident, [Online] Available: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/node/12801> (15 June,2012)
- Heller, Patrick. (2000). *The Labor of Development: Workers and the Transformation of Capitalism in Kerala, India*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Janu, C. K. Geethanandan, M. (2003). Muthangayilekkulla Thirichhupokku. PUCL Bulletin.
- Kakkoth, S. (2005). The primitive tribal groups in Kerala; A situation appraisal, *Studies on tribes and tribals*. 3(1), 47-55.
- Kalathil, M. J. (1996). *Empowering Tribal Women - Giving new birth to an Integrated Value based Eco-Feminit Culture*, New Delhi: D.C. Despatch.
- Kannan, K. P. (1999). Poverty alleviation as advancing basic human capabilities; Kerala’s achievements compared, CDS, Working paper number: 294, P.45.
- Krishnan, T. N. (1980). Demographic transition in Kerala: Fact and factors, CDS, Working paper number: 36, P.39
- Kurien, J. (1980), “Fisherman’s cooperatives in Kerala; A critique”, Available [Online]. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/007/ae494e/ae494e00.pdf> (10 May, 2012).

- Kurien, J. (1995). The Kerala model; Its central tendency and the outlier, *Social scientist*. 23(1/3). pp.70-90.
- Ministry of Rural Development. (1993), *Vikasana Guide: 1993*, Rural Information Bureau, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- National Family Health Survey-2 (1999). International Institute of Population Studies. Mumbai
- Nicol, S. (2010). Health cost benefits. In Nicol, S. (et al). *Quantifying the cost of poor housing*. London: BRE press. (Chapter.6)
- Phibbs, P. Young, P. (2005). Housing and Non-shelter Outcomes, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, [Online] Available: [www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/60008\\_fr](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/60008_fr), (1 May)
- Planning Commission. (2007), Kerala state development report”, Government of India, New Delhi.
- Rondinone, A. (2007). Reconsidering the Status of Women in Kerala (India). A geographical analysis based on recent data on emigration, sex ratio and social status, [Online] Available: [http://unisi.academia.edu/AntonellaRondinone/Papers/196564/\\_Reconsidering\\_the\\_Status\\_of\\_Women\\_in\\_Kerala\\_India\\_-\\_A\\_geographical\\_analysis\\_based\\_on\\_recent\\_data\\_on\\_emigration\\_sex\\_ratio\\_and\\_social\\_status\\_](http://unisi.academia.edu/AntonellaRondinone/Papers/196564/_Reconsidering_the_Status_of_Women_in_Kerala_India_-_A_geographical_analysis_based_on_recent_data_on_emigration_sex_ratio_and_social_status_), (12 May 2012).
- Sam, M. (2001), Mother Tongue Education and Psycho-Societal Involvement in Tribal Communities: A Case of Paniya Tribe, *Language in India*, Vol.1:3. [Online] Available: [www.languageinindia.com/may2001/paniya2.html](http://www.languageinindia.com/may2001/paniya2.html) (25 May, 2012)
- Sreerekha, M. S. (2010). The story behind Kerala’s landless; The story of Aralam farm, Special article- *Economic and political weekly*. 45(21), pp. 55-62.
- Sreekumar, K. K. P, Govindan. (2006). Interrogating Development: New Social Movements, Democracy, and Indigenous People’s Struggles in Kerala, In J. Tharamangalam (ed.). *Kerala: The Paradoxes of Public Action and Development*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp. 215–57.
- Steur, L. (2009), Adivasi mobilization: Identity versus class after the Kerala model of development?, *Journal of south Asian development*”, 1(4), pp.25-44.
- Sundaram, K. Tendulkar, S. D. (2003). Poverty among the various social and economic groups in India in the nineteen nineties, working paper number: 118, [Online] Available: [www.cdeds.org/pdf/work118.pdf](http://www.cdeds.org/pdf/work118.pdf) ( 5October, 2011)
- Vyas, V, S. Bhargava, P. (1995). Public intervention in poverty alleviation: An overview, *Economic and political weekly*, 30 (41/42), pp.2559-2572.
- Wiltshire, S. (2010). A thematic review of literature on the relationship between housing, [Online] Available: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0104563.doc](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0104563.doc), (15 June, 2012).
- Zacharias, S. (2002), Political development among the tribals of Kerala; Case study of Palakkad district, [Online] Available: <http://dspace.pondiuni.edu.in/jspui/handle/pdy/387>, (May 30, 2012).

### Acknowledgement

I deeply acknowledge the valuable insights on tribal development and other developmental issues that I got from the discussions with my Research Guide Prof.B.S.Butola, CSRD, JNU, New Delhi. I am very thankful to him for the immense encouragement that he has given me in course of my research works.



Table.1 Comparison of socio-economic development indicators- 2001  
Source- Census of India, 2001

Name of the State	Gap between the total and tribal averages			
	Sex Ratio	Effective Literacy rate (in %)	Female literacy rate (in %)	% with matriculation and above
Rajasthan	-23	15.8	17.7	6.9
Uttar Pradesh	-36	21.1	21.5	10.2
Bihar	-10	18.8	17.6	7.5
West Bengal	-48	25.2	30.5	11.5
Jharkhand	-47	12.9	11.7	6.9
Orissa	-31	25.7	27.1	11.0
Chhattisgarh	-24	12.6	12.5	7.0
Madhya Pradesh	-55	22.6	21.9	10.3
Maharashtra	-51	21.7	23.9	16.3
Kerala	<b>37</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>20.0</b>
India	-45	17.4	18.5	11.0

Table.2 Tribal and Total differential in social development indicators- 2001  
Sources- Census of India- 2001, National Family Health Survey-2 (1998-99)

Various indicators of development	Kerala		India
	Tribal	Total	Total
Effective Literacy rate(total)	<b>64.4</b>	90.7	64.8
% with matriculation and above	<b>9.2</b>	29.2	18.4
Female literacy rate	<b>42.6</b>	88.7	54
% houses in dilapidated condition	<b>17.2</b>	8.1	11
% houses with no assets	<b>46.6</b>	27.2	34.5
% of agricultural laborers in total workers	<b>42.5</b>	15.8	26.5
% underweight children (below 3SD)	<b>3.8</b>	0.5	18

Table.3 Tribal- Total differential in housing and basic amenities availability

Source- Census of India, 2001, 2011

State	% change in coverage of (tribal and total) housing amenities (2001-11)				Average % change in coverage	Deprivation index of housing & basic amenities	
	d1	d2	d3	d4		2001	2011
Kerala(Tribal)	54	26	0	17	24.1	<b>67</b>	<b>40</b>
Kerala(Total)	11	24	5	2	10.4	<b>27.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>
India(Tribal)	10	13	-6	9	6.52	<b>73</b>	<b>63</b>
India(Total)	7	11	-10	18	6.7	<b>55.9</b>	<b>20.6</b>

(Here d1, d2, d3 and d4 denotes the percentage shares of houses constructed with temporary materials, houses without electricity connection, houses without access to drinking water within a distance of 500 meters and houses without access to safe toilets)

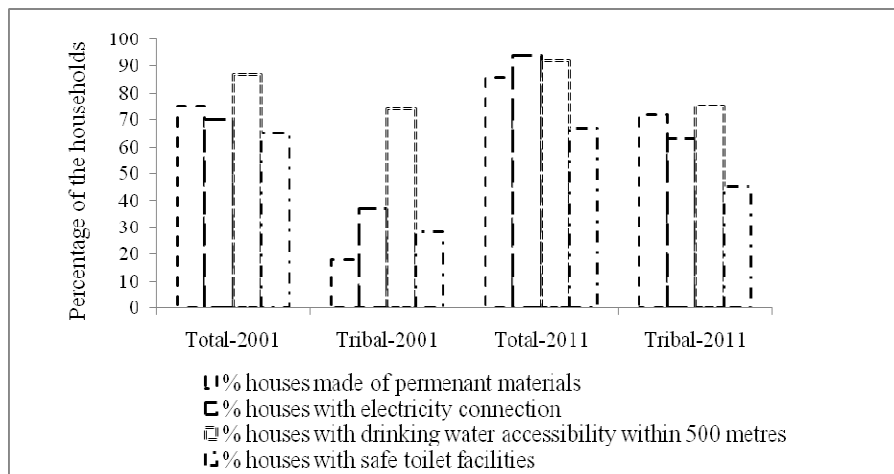


Figure.1 Housing and basic amenities availability in Kerala- 2001 and 2011

From figure.1 it is evident that the gap between the tribal and total population in the availability of housing and basic amenities has narrowed down during 2001-11. When the rate of improvement in the coverage of housing and basic amenities during 2001-2011 had not been very remarkable in the population as a whole, the corresponding improvements in the tribal category is very appreciable.

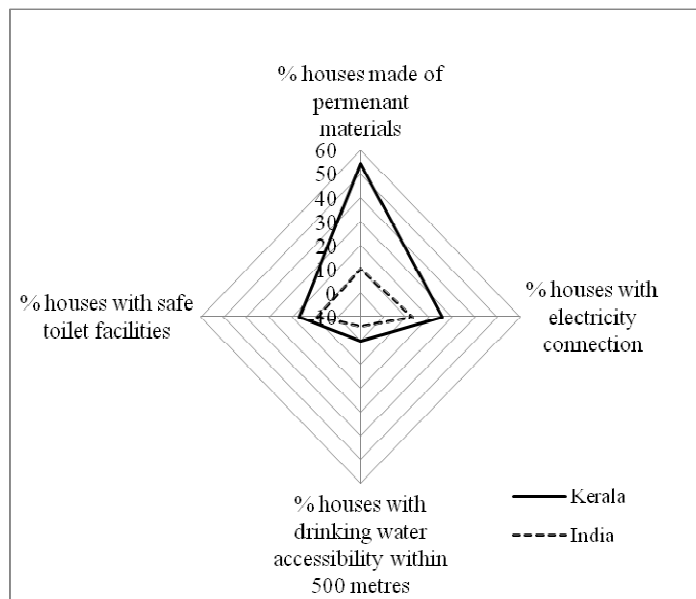


Figure.2 Change in housing and basic amenities availability to the tribal households during 2001-11

Figure.2 clearly depicts that the increase in the coverage of housing and basic amenities to the tribal households in Kerala during 2001-11 had been much higher than the same at the country level. The huge jump in the share of the houses made of permanent material is the most striking factor among the four aspects taken.