

**REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**EXPERIENCE OF DALIT LANDLESS LABOURERS**  
**IN KERALA : A CASE STUDY**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**  
IN APPLIED ECONOMICS OF THE  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI

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**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

**1997**

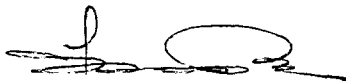
## Declaration

I hereby affirm that the research for this dissertation titled "Rehabilitation and Development: Experience of Dalit Landless Labourers in Kerala- A Case Study" being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy was carried out entirely by me at the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram.

Thiruvananthapuram  
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Certified that this dissertation is the bonafide work of Mr. Renukumar M R and has not been considered for the award of any other degree by any other University. The dissertation may be forwarded for evaluation.

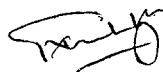


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## Acknowledgement

This is a humble attempt to make a retrospect of my experiences during the last two years in the Centre for Development Studies. On this occasion let me recollect a few faces who have enhanced my days both intellectually and lovingly. I am extremely indebted to my supervisors Dr. P Sivanandan and P K Michael Tharakan for their help and support throughout this study. Without their suggestions and contributions this would not have taken this form. I am immensely obligated to Sivanandan who patiently went through the earlier versions of the text at different times, and tried to make the best of my efforts. I also duly acknowledge the valuable comments of Michael during the various stages of the study. False and inadequacies may still remain, entirely due to my limitations.

I would like to thank Dr. D Narayana, M.Phil Co-ordinator for the concern and encouragement throughout the course. I also thank Dr. Pushpangadan and Dr. Amitab for their enquiries about the progress of my study. I should also thank all the library staff especially, Amir, Gopan and Shoba and all the non-teaching staff of the Centre for their sincere cooperation with me.

Coming to the student community, let me start with the 'old school' Ram Mohan, Raviraman and Anandaraj, I also thank the members of the 'new school' Bhaskar, Sanjith, Dennis, Hari and Suresh for their company. I would also like to express my gratitude to my other seniors namely, Antonetto, Pinaki, Darley, Srijith, Reddy, Deepa, Rajib, Resmi, Binitha, Manju and Tirupathi. I must thank Babu and Neetha for their homely behaviour. My heartfelt thanks to all my class mates Binoy, Fr. Charles, Charwak, Ashok, Geena and Mallika. A special thanks to Lekha for giving a place for my Collage in her thesis. I also thank to Abu, Rajesh, Sunil, Manu and Sojan for their 'live' company.

I should mention Jayachandran for his love, consideration and encouragement in all ups and downs of my life in the Centre. I also thank T T Sreekumar for a wonderful friendship that brushed up the cartoonist in me. Of course, it is beyond the limit of words to express my gratitude to Sam and Uma. Only with their everlasting affection and guidelines could I keep balance in my tragedies and fantasies. I know it is very formal to thank both of them. I also thank Ashita. Before I 'cut the shot' from the campus let me thank all those children who have named me khabi...khabi...

Coming to my field survey experience, I must start with Late Mr. Ramakrishnan who introduced me to the colony. I also thank Madhavansar, Thankamma Chellappan, Kunjooti, Shreedharan, Vasu and Mohanan for their help by providing many information about the colony. I should also mention a few elder mothers who still keep a lot of stories describing about their ignominious past.

I thank Dr. Mathew Kurien for his advice and instructions both about my study and career. I thank Usha and Shibu for their undelayed support through letters. I also thank Dr. Jos Chathukulam and all the members of the Centre for Rural Management, Kottayam who provided a breakthrough in the field of research. I

thank all the faculty members of Government College Kottayam, especially Mr. Raju, Dr. Joseph A Thomas and T A Thomas.

I am immensely indebted to Dalit Womens Society who gave a chance to discover myself through a series of subaltern study programmes and get-togethers. I thank Prof. T M Yesudasan for refilling my mind with 'problems' whenever I tended to get into a mood to relax. I also thank Lovely Stephan who gave me the first inspiration to pursue research. I must thank all the members of the Society and the student group namely Appu, Aniyam, Jayan, Sasi, Jose, Priya and Shylamma Simon. I also thank Rekha and her parents.

My Mother, Sister, her children Monu and Kunjava remain to be thanked, but how can one thank selves, so let me take a backfoot by leaving my pleasure and pain for you...

Renukumar M R

*For  
Shelly  
And  
Sherry*

*My land is my backbone... I only stand straight, happy, proud and not ashamed about my colour because I still have land. I can dance, paint, create and sing as my ancestors did before me... My land is my foundation. I stand, live and perform as long as I have something firm and hard to stand on. Without land... We will be the lowest people in the world, because you have broken our backbone, took away my arts, history and foundation. You have left us nothing [quoted in Roberts 1978].*

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## Chapter 1

### Problem and Objectives of the Study

In this chapter we introduce the problem and the major objectives of the study; the method of enquiry, selection of sample households and the location of the area of study. It further provides the hypothesis and an outline of the study programme.

#### 1.1 Problem stated

Despite over fifty years of planned socio-economic development, both empirical and administrative assessment show that the condition of the poor in India has not improved to the level of our expectation. In developed countries the poor generally belong to the lowest income group. In India they comprise mostly the agricultural labourers and other casual workers. Apart from economic backwardness they suffer from social disabilities also. They are generally characterized as landless, unorganized and illiterates having limited scope for upward social and economic mobility. They share the common disabilities like, limited assets, environmental vulnerability, lack of access to public services and amenities, specifically education and health care, etc. [WCARRD, 1988]. The scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and other differentiated weaker sections comprise broadly the poor in India. Different kinds of development programmes and social security measures are under taken to ensure the upliftment of these vulnerable sections. However, the impact of such efforts has been quite dismal; the target groups continue to remain as the most economically and socially oppressed sections in India.

Compared to their counterparts in the rest of India the conditions of the weaker sections in Kerala may be seen as slightly better especially in terms of indicators like literacy, social awareness etc. However, more than one third of the scheduled caste and tribal population in this state remain below the poverty line. Moreover, majority of them are still at the periphery of development with limited access to gainful opportunities and social mobility. In fact it seems that none of the development policies including 'land reforms' could make significant structural changes among them, instead they continue to share only subsistence level of living. In order to analyze the impact of development programmes on the socio-economic status of the weaker sections in Kerala, we confine our enquiry to a model rehabilitation colony established before independence in the vicinity of the Kuttanad rice growing region.

## 1.2 Objectives

The main objective of the study is to analyze the impact of development programmes on the most backward social group in Kerala. The study focuses on the historical process of rehabilitation and makes an indepth analysis of the contemporary situation. It is essential to

- (1) analyze this rehabilitation programme, since this is the first attempt in Kerala to introduce 'target group development approach' to reduce social inequality and to ensure economic opportunity for the most deprived group.

(2) In this context we may identify the original settlers and their successors in the colony and record the process of socio-economic differentiation over time. Enquiries into their assets, employment, education, living conditions, social practices, welfare schemes etc. are envisaged to capture the process of change.

(3) We would also examine the changing mono caste-multi-community scenario in the colony and ascertain the process of relative empowerment in the context of diverse socio-economic interests.

### 1.3 Method of enquiry

In this study an attempt is made to identify the problems of the weaker sections at the micro level. The study compares the findings of earlier enquiries in the village in 1961, 1979 and 1983. We have conducted a household survey in 1996 comprising all the original households in the settlement area. We have also attempted personal interviews with number of elders in the colony to trace the process of historical change. We have made use of Census Reports, District Census Handbooks, Economic Reviews of various years, Panchayat *Vikasanarekha* and other records. Moreover other publications of Government of Kerala, State Planning Board and of other Non-government organizations also are consulted to make this study.

#### **1.4 Selection of surveyed households**

Basically it is a revisit study. 120 households have been rehabilitated during the different phases of colonization. Now the total number is more than three fold on account of partition and immigration. Among the original 120 houses we could identify only 113, others ceased to exist. We have also conducted a control group study comprising 25 households living outside the colony but within the Panchayat. This is to make a comparison of two groups having similar historical past and socio-economic conditions but diverse development experience.

#### **1.5 Location of the area**

The colony is located at Kurichi Panchayat in Kottayam district, and in the vicinity of Kuttanad region. Kuttanad is a major rice growing area in Kerala consisting of 74 villages spread out in the districts of Alappuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta. It lies between the Arabian Sea on the west and the Main Central road on the east [Report of the Kuttanad Enquiry Commission, 1971]. The original settlers of this colony belong to Kuttanad, because once they were agricultural labourers under the rich landlords of the area [Monograph, 1961]. Even now a small proportion of the workers, especially women commute regularly to Kuttanad during agricultural seasons for wage employment in paddy cultivation.

#### **1.6 Hypothesis**

The study is organized around the hypothesis that, development programmes designed by the government and implemented through government machinery for the upliftment of the weaker sections do seem to have less favourable effect in the long run. Even a

comprehensive development scheme without the initiative and full involvement of the beneficiary groups can lead to only marginal achievements. It is also felt that the status of such 'targeted group' is not significantly different from the experience of the non-targeted groups who strive for development through the general growth process.

### **1.7 Outline of the study**

The outline of the study is as follows: chapter 2 gives a review of literature on development in relation to the weaker sections. Chapter 3 which deals with Kerala situation, is divided into three sections. Section I provides an overview of the socio-economic conditions of the weaker sections, section II gives a profile of the village where the colony is located, and section III highlights the settlement pattern and the process of differentiation since 1961 as evidenced by various enquiries. In chapter 4 we examine the impact of development programmes on the 'targeted group' on the basis of the various enquiries including the survey in 1996. Some effort is also made to compare their situation with that of a non-target group located nearby as a control group. Chapter 5 provides the conclusion highlighting the salient features, observations and the emerging trends in the context of targeted development approach within the general framework of severe socio-economic inequalities.

## Chapter 2

### Development Process: Experience of the Weaker Sections

This chapter provides a general review of the literature on the development experience of the weaker sections in India. Studies relating to the impact of growth oriented development strategies and rehabilitation programmes on the indigenous social groups are particularly selected to highlight the issue. More over, the development experience and living conditions of the vulnerable groups in the state of Kerala are also discussed.

#### 2.1 Introduction

Poverty, dependency and unemployment are hallmarks of all the indigenous communities everywhere [Elias, 1996]. In India, they constitute, by and large the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and other depressed social groups. They remain poor even after fifty years of political independence. All factors influencing their poverty and marginalisation do require intense investigation. Weaker sections in India are not only placed at the bottom rung of the economic order but also the lowest position in the social hierarchy. Under the influence of the institution of caste system they could never aspire for social and economic mobility. Neither the colonial and ministration nor the democratic government (after independence) could change much of the traditional rigidities in the social and economic spheres. While most of the vulnerable and marginalised sections in other parts of the world are poor on account of economic reasons, the weaker sections in India belonging to specific caste groups thus remain poor because of both economic and social reasons.

Generally development is envisaged as a follow up of economic growth. Modern theories of development assume that technological progress would lead to growth and development. While economic growth is an essential prerequisite for combating poverty and human development, growth alone is not enough to ensure overall development [ESCAP, 1996]. Economic growth would generate an increased level of resources in the aggregate, but imbalances in the distribution of these resources may leave many millions to poverty and destitute. Contrary to the growth oriented strategy of development, an alternative approach was initiated during the sixties by radical thinkers to lessen the incidence of inequalities. They maintain that growth should be supplemented with redistribution of wealth and productive assets. Income inequalities among the different sections of the society can be achieved through re-distributive policies and appropriate social security measures. Over time this approach has advocated two strategies: (1) equitable growth and (2) special targeting. Equitable growth refers to simultaneous growth in all sectors of the economy; agriculture, manufacturing and service. It is expected that this would finally result in overall development. Skepticism about the possibility of equitable growth in most third world countries has led to a second alternative strategy based on basic needs theory and special targeting policy [Franke, 1993]. This approach has become a common strategy for many developing countries to eradicate poverty and inequalities. However, fundamental changes through redistribution of assets and redistribution of power relations are undermined when palliative measures through special targeting approach are adopted.

Coming to the Indian scenario it is seen that in spite of the quest for socialistic pattern of society coupled with growth-oriented planned development strategy nearly half of the people remain in poverty and destitution. As Dreze and Sen (1995) observe despite a virtual consensus about some of kind of 'socialism' being a fundamental goal of economic policy, few practical steps have been taken to remove the pervasive inequalities that divide Indian society. Development achievements in India, as elsewhere, is still judged by the number of dams, factories, mines and other projects. While these are cited as landmarks in the path of progress, what is undermined is the displacement of millions from their livelihood activities. Quite often the choice of capital intensive and large-scale infrastructure schemes generally depress the scope of survival of the poor. The prevailing socio-economic structure and the well entrenched growth and development strategies, therefore, adversely affect the prospects of the vulnerable and marginalised sections [Narayanaswamy, 1996].

Growth oriented development is associated with a relative shift in the structure of the work-force away from agriculture, and towards industry and services [Krishnamurthy, 1970]. Though often the aborigines constitute the majority of the agricultural work-force they become the most underprivileged section. They fail to get employed in sectors other than agriculture, due to lack of skills to operate mechanized processing.

The concept of development has become more complex particularly in a society where socio-economic inequalities are predominant and the social mobility is by and large influenced by caste relations.



Development should lead to structural changes and equitable distribution of the means of production. However, redistribution of wealth and power in a caste based society would not take place smoothly because the traditional ruling class would always resist the emergence of an egalitarian society. They would prefer keeping the poor more or less at the subsistence level in order to ensure the easy availability of a dependant labour force. However, in the absence of a thorough restructuring and redistribution of the means of production, an earnest attempt was made to incorporate welfare measures for the benefit of the poor. Distribution of assistances through various development programmes to the weaker sections obviously keep them at the subsistence level due to limited access to socio-economic and educational opportunities. The traditional interests continue to exert an influence over the decision making process and the means of production.

## **2.2 Backwardness**

Of course, backwardness is relative but while we discuss about the 'ex-untouchables' in India, it is necessary to understand how they become socially oppressed and economically deprived. Backwardness often denotes lack of opportunities to earn adequate income to attain a level of living free from perpetual and serious economic insecurities, ignorance, squalor and poor health conditions [Dubey, 1975]. The indigenous people are generally dominated and marginalised by the unscrupulous settlers. In India also the situation is not different.

The causes of backwardness are comprehensive and complex; the very basis of backwardness is related to domination of 'superior' social

group over the 'inferior' ones. Domination is not limited to the political and economic arenas but extends to the cultural and ideological regions of the social formation [Yesudasan, 1995]. To Elsepeth Young [1995] backwardness of the indigenous people is associated with their physical remoteness, poverty and geographical constraints of the environment in which they live; moreover their cultural traits clearly differentiate them from others. Therefore backwardness is directly associated with social, economic and cultural deprivation. In India the phenomenon is inherent in the traditional social hierarchy, the caste system; caste system and backwardness are inversely related. According to Dreze and Sen (1995) it relates not only to large disparities of income and wealth but also to other bases of advantage such as caste, gender, and education.

### **2.3 Weaker Sections**

Since this study examines the impact of development policy on the weaker section, an understanding of who constitute the 'Weaker Section' becomes necessary. A study group on the welfare of the weaker sections of the village community, set-up in 1960 by the Ministry of Community Development, classified the following sections as weaker sections; namely, families who have uneconomic land holdings, Landless agricultural labourers and other labourers, Village artisans and workers engaged in small crafts, fishermen, tanners, potters basket makers, small traders, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, nomadic tribes, women, destitutes (eg. widows, orphans, old people and unemployed persons who do not have any means of livelihood), physically handicapped, members of ex-criminal tribes, etc. [Moorthy, 1975]. This is however a very

broad classification and somewhat mutually inclusive categories. According to Kamble (1979) one can treat small uneconomic farmers-cum-labourers as the weaker sections of the society. He elaborates scheduled castes as the weakest among the poor because they are socially as well as economically at the lowest strata.

There are different views regarding the criteria for determining the weaker sections. Following are some of the opinions presented at the Tenali seminar on the Weaker sections in 1970.<sup>1</sup> One view was that only 'social' criteria should be considered in deciding the backwardness of the communities. But what was meant by 'social' was not spelt out in the discussion. Another major concern of the seminar was that economic status should be considered as a key to determine backwardness of the communities. The advocates of this line of reasoning maintained that social backwardness in the society was entirely due to the perpetuation of economic backwardness. A group of thinkers however suggested for construction of a composite index, comprising the social, economic and political aspects, which would help the Government to identify the weaker sections [Verma, 1970]. The variables suggested for inclusion under the heads 'social', 'economic' and 'political' are: land holding or income, political participation and leadership, ritual caste status, literacy, education, occupation, development-orientation, religious fatalism etc.

Article 46 of Indian Constitution is the only article which specifically mentions 'weaker sections'. The Mysore High Court and the Supreme Court suggested that caste should be the sole criterion

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<sup>1</sup>*Economic and Political Weekly* 5(27):1018-1022.

for determining social backwardness. However, social and educational backwardness had also to be considered in determining the status of economic backwardness [Ibid]. A group of researchers [Sagar, et.al 1987] who studied poverty among the weaker sections in Rajasthan argue that size of land holding, value of assets, caste or unemployment are not uniform throughout the country. Hence, distribution consumption pattern, income, assets and liabilities as well as food consumption pattern are to be considered as indices of backwardness.

In our study, we concentrate on the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, who constitute, by and large an undifferentiated weaker section in our country. While scheduled Castes generally carried the ignominious stigma of untouchability in the past, scheduled tribes are those who have been secluded, living in hills and forests, more or less untouched by the development of civilization [Dubey, 1975]. They are unparalleled to all other marginalised sections in the world because they are the most unfortunate group who have been exploited economically and oppressed socially at the same time.

Since the basic reason of backwardness of the weaker section is their lack of control over the means of production and basic requirements, the government have implemented several development programmes for their amelioration. In this context the programme for rehabilitation of the indigenous people is taken for a close scrutiny.

## 2.4 Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of the most deprived section of the society is an important social welfare programme of the government. Throughout history, rearrangements in human settlement pattern have been a companion of development and are indelibly imprinted in the evolution of industrial as well as developing countries [Mathur,1995]. Rehabilitation is considered as something more than just the provision of houses and gainful employment [Rao, 1967]. Generally, the term rehabilitation is related to the relocation of refugees, war-displaced, mentally disabled and the like. It is a process of helping the weak and the destitutes to establish a stable life by enabling them to take advantage of the opportunities. Essentially, rehabilitation programme is a comprehensive package consisting of resettlement through provision of land, employment, credit, education, training and housing. The aim of rehabilitation is to make the displaced persons self-reliant and to integrate them with the locals as equals [Vamadevan, 1987].

Rehabilitation can be voluntary or involuntary, the former is caused by 'pull' factors and the latter is by 'push' factors [quoted in Asthana 1996]. While 'push' factors force people out of their traditional localities, 'pull' factors attract them to move to new areas. Voluntary settlement is gradual, and social and economic ties with their original villages are maintained. Involuntary settlement programmes, by contrast, are indiscriminate. Entire population are forced to move, disrupting the diverse risk avoidance and social insurance mechanisms present in villages [Ibid]. Involuntary settlement is again divided into disaster-related and development-induced resettlement. The former is

related with displacement caused by famines or wars and latter is an outcome of a planned political decision. People displaced by wars, famines or other natural or man-made disasters are generally able to return to their homelands once the turbulence has subsided. In contrast, development-induced displacement is permanent in nature [Asthana 1996].

## **2.5 Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation**

Displacement is considered as an offshoot of the present pattern of development [Fernandes 1989]. Recent estimates indicate that every year a cohort of at least 10 million people throughout the developing world enter a process of involuntary displacement and relocation, caused by a new set of development programmes that are started each year in dam construction, urban, and transport projects etc. [Mathur, 1995]. In India a very large number of displaced belong to scheduled castes and tribes. While tribals form 7 per cent of the country's population, their proportion among those displaced persons by development projects is as high as 40 per cent [Govt. of India 1985]. Similarly though the scheduled castes form only 15 per cent of the country's population their proportion among the displaced is quite large. However, rehabilitation programmes are still nominal. Various studies have indicated that only less than 25 per cent of those displaced during the last three decades have been rehabilitated properly [Hansda, 1983].

History shows that those who have been forced to sacrifice their lands and homes at the alter of 'development' are nowhere in the picture when it comes to the distribution of the benefits generated

from these developmental projects [Thukral, 1989]. Briefly, the introduction of sophisticated technology without changing the power structure and land ownership pattern, only strengthened those who already owned productive assets since they took control of the new power structure and technical inputs. Such development strategies naturally increased the level of GNP per capita but widened the inequalities. With no participation in the planning or a share in the benefits of the projects that are completed, in most cases the oustees move from a state of poverty to pauperization [Ibid]. Like the First world develops at the cost of the Third World, within the country the rich colonize the tribal and other resource-rich areas and dispossess the local population of their resources in order to enrich themselves. This dispossession is not merely economic but social, political and cultural [Areeparambil, 1989]. Fernandes argued that what the Third World required was not a capital intensive, but a labour-intensive technology that would safeguard the weaker sections from further marginalisation. On the other hand they are being systematically and methodologically deprived of the ownership of their means of production, of the product of their labour and of the very means of human existence. This systematic dispossession results in starvation, squalor, disease and deprivation [Fernandes, 1989]. Persons who are uprooted and rehabilitated in another place undergo an entire process of resocialisation and adjustment in an unfamiliar environment [Tukral 1989]. This process leads to the further impoverishment of the marginalised sections and alienation of their resources will continue, unless the weak organize themselves to resist this onslaught.

On the whole what 'development' did is to dispossess the indigenous people from their homestead, cultural identity and self reliant social atmosphere. This cannot be fully compensated by giving land. In most cases the oustees have been cheated by the proponents of development and led them to further alienation. None such development projects have cushioned the lives of the displaced but regarded them as rootless tramps easy to extract cheap labour

## 2.6 Development experiences of the Weaker Sections

So far we have been trying to highlight the impact of 'development' and growth on the weaker sections and their vulnerable situations. Rehabilitation of the weaker sections is one of the basic steps towards development especially of those who remain landless and houseless. In our study we refer to a colony where a deliberate policy of rehabilitation was implemented. It was a model colony designed for a group of scheduled caste landless households.

Voluntary settlement is one of the major steps to uplift the houseless, landless weaker sections of the society. It provides the basis for become the basic of all other development programmes and social security measures. There are a few studies about the impact of such development programmes on the socio-economic status of weaker sections.

Kamble<sup>2</sup> (1979) points out that weaker sections are economically as well as socially backward and are kept outside the purview of

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<sup>2</sup>Kamble's study attempts to highlight the socio-economic problems of the weaker sections with special reference to small farmers in the village Gulumb. They are neo-Bhudhists (ex-untouchable Mahar caste) and Marathas. While both are economically weak, only the former is socially underprivileged.



developmental schemes. According to him, the socio-economic institutional structures being intact, benefits of planning did not percolate to the bottom, so the poorest among the poor remain static. He argues that inequality arises not only because of economic poverty but also due to social segregation and oppression. He further adds, so long as social segregation and discrimination continues to exist poverty will persist to dog the oppressed like shadow.

In his 'Modern Poverty' Werff [1992] describes the problems of plantation labourers in eastern foothills of Kerala, where landless households are faced with sparse employment opportunities. His study reveals that caste feeling is still alive and this further accentuate the level of poverty. According to him, although caste discrimination has officially been abolished and low castes in Kerala are socially quite emancipated compared to those in other Indian states, observing certain physical proximity is still maintained by the higher communities. Coming to the impact of land reforms on the weaker sections he says that in Kerala it mostly favoured the paddy-growing tenant cultivators.<sup>3</sup> His study also finds that the local government colluded with the rich rubber planters to reserve infertile lands for new colonies at a reasonable distance from the town.<sup>4</sup> Moreover within the colony, segregation of higher and lower communities is carefully observed: the higher communities are located in strategic areas while the

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<sup>3</sup>*It is pointed out by different writers like Herring 1982; Raj 1975; Sivanandan 1992; Mukundan 1995 etc.*

<sup>4</sup>*For instance in Mundakkayam the "disturbing Dalits" were deported to the remote colonies of Panackachira, Punchavayal and Koosady [Werff 1992:60].*

lower communities are pushed to the elevated remote areas [Ibid].

Werff further reveals that, poverty originates mainly out of unemployment, and lack of access to land. To him extreme poverty is the outcome of uneven distribution of land. A collective struggle for more employment is virtually non-existent, but where class struggle occurs, the aim is for higher wages and not for a change in the economic structure [Ibid]. Thus he criticises the radical changes that took place in Kerala. He adds that the marxist successes of mass mobilization that increased the political awareness and self-confidence among the poor have not widened their access to the economic circulation. Of course it is one of the basic reasons for the perpetuation of backwardness among the weaker sections in Kerala.

While assessing the impact of reform strategies on the lives of the worlds poorest people, Franke [1993] wonders whether the criterion of re-distribution of wealth is an effective third world development strategy especially in India where the traditional castes continue to hold control over the entire wealth. He argues that to a certain extent redistribution came into effect in Kerala because of radical movements. He also highlights the social reform movements in Kerala during the first half of the 20th century which gave impetus to a process of social development. Studies on the Kerala situation by Sivanandan [1976], Issac and Tharakan [1986], George [1990], Tharakan [1996] and Krishnan [1996] also highlight the historical process of achieving higher social development indicators even at a low level of economic activity.

Social Scientists like Sivanandan and Kunhaman draw our attention to the specific problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Sivanandan [1976] points out that in the matter of social development, though Kerala stands ahead of all other states in India, the pattern of distribution of social and economic opportunities within the state is highly inequitable among the different social groups, particularly between the Dalits<sup>5</sup> and the rest of the population. Analyzing the socio-economic development of the hill-tribes in Kerala, Kunhaman [1985] finds that by any standard, these Adivasis remain as the most backward section in the state and economists have totally ignored this numerical minority. The inevitable result has been that planners, in their attempt to formulate development as well as welfare schemes for the scheduled tribes, have perforce relied exclusively on sociological and anthropological studies, without a correct perception of the dynamics of the tribal economy. Consequently, therefore, none of the programmes have benefited the this target group to any desired level. Antony (1995) criticizes, that most of the state programmes are designed in such a way as to benefit the landed households who are very few among the vulnerable communities. Obviously this bias in the state policy adversely affects the opportunities of the marginalised groups.

By analyzing the policies of the government Sivanandan [1976] says that, the policies of 'protective discrimination' may not

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<sup>5</sup>According to Franke and Barbara (1994) Dalit is a term preferred by militant untouchables in many parts of the India to designate the political and economic nature of their struggle for their better living conditions and dignity. For further details refer Rajashekar 1989; Omvedt 1995; Wilson 1982; Bhaskar 1984; Chathan 1995; Mohan 1996; Sandeep, ed 1994; Joshi 1986 etc.

adequately help to reduce the disparities in the distribution of income earning opportunities, unless a simultaneous process of fundamental socio-economic transformation to the benefit of all socially and economically weaker sections of the population is under taken. Similarly, while reviewing the various studies on the tribal economy Kunhaman [1985] states that, many of the studies focused mainly on the socio-linguistic aspects of tribal life.<sup>6</sup> Virtually, no attempt has so far been made to capture the dialectics of change among them, in the context of market forces and economic differentiation in a hitherto undifferentiated system. Sivanandan [1976] further observes that the benefits of growth under free market conditions get unevenly distributed accentuating the already marked inequalities among the different social groups. What is lacking in this regard according to Antony [1995] is a systematic and comprehensive orchestration of welfare programmes which are sensitive to the inter-group and intra-group differences among the vulnerable group.

As perceived by Saradamoni [1980] many 'welfare' measures introduced by the government to improve the condition of the lowest strata of the population have not really cracked the hard core of social and economic inequality. Though, land reform, especially the abolition of landlordism, could create some changes in the conventional pattern of land holding in Kerala, it hardly benefitted the weaker sections in any significant level. Joan Mencher's [1980] enquiry affirms that land reform has not benefitted the majority of the agricultural labourers. Sivanandan [1976] has observed that a kind of economic dualism persists between two

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<sup>6</sup>For instance, Thurston 1909; Iyer 1909; Mathur 1977.

distinct section of the population, lower castes and the intermediary/higher castes; the phenomenon has its origins mainly in the sociological legacy of the past. D'Souza [1975] also argues, that economic inequalities have its origin in the social structure. Because of social exclusivism the scope of a person to benefit from the development process depends very much on the collective influence and bargaining strength of his group. The social and economic mobility of person in this respect is directly related to his status in the hierarchical social structure; obviously, therefore, a person from the higher group secure higher position and one from the lower group acquires only lower status [Ibid]. Commending on the disadvantageous scenario of the weaker sections in Kerala Mencher [1980] states that there is little hope for the poor in Kerala, unless and until, a committed leadership emerges from them.

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## 2.7 Conclusion

Most of the studies mentioned above hold the view that though government had implemented various development programmes for the upliftment of the weaker sections none of them could create significant social or even economic mobility. To a certain extent it may be due to the absence of appropriate perspective about the target group and their problems. Another major argument is, that most of the prevailing development programmes are insufficient to 'crack the hard core' of social and economic inequality because, the entire structure of Indian society is built hierarchically by rigid caste relations where a social change is almost impossible at any cost. On the other hand it is seen that there are some improvements in the caste demographic front particularly among the

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weaker sections in Kerala. But these improvements are only the outcomes of general or simultaneous development that has occurred in the state. In a state of 'modern poverty' a cent percent literacy or a higher life expectancy is not sufficient contribute to substantially to redeem the weaker sections from their pitiable conditions in Kerala. The tribal population in Kerala still holds a position far beyond the periphery of the so called indicators of development.

## Chapter 3

### An Overview of the Weaker Sections in Kerala

#### 3.1 Introduction

The weaker sections in India could slowly improve their conditions through persistent struggles and also by taking advantage of the constitutional provisions. Nevertheless, the difference between them and other social groups is still very great. The pattern of distribution of social and economic opportunities within each state is highly iniquitous among the different social groups, particularly between the weaker sections and the rest of the population [Sivanandan, 1976]. In Kerala most of the 'indicators of backwardness' are by and large insufficient to capture the intensity and complexity of the situations faced by the weaker sections. Social researchers also do not seem to highlight such problems in great depth. The weaker sections still remain at the periphery of the "development model" in Kerala. When compared to other parts of India their status may be better in Kerala,<sup>1</sup> but, they always occupy a rank lower than the state averages in almost all indicators of development. To highlight the social inequality and economic insecurity experienced by the weaker sections in Kerala, we have to go beyond the limits of the general indicators of social development. The dynamics of changes at the village level would provide better insights. Therefore, a study of a rehabilitation settlement is undertaken in this context.

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<sup>1</sup>*In almost all indicators of development, the status of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Kerala is better than their counterparts in other states, and better than the national averages also.*

This Chapter is divided into three sections; Section-I gives an overview of the weaker sections in Kerala. Section II provides the profile of a village where a rehabilitation programme was introduced to relocate a group of landless labour households from the Kuttanad region. Section III highlights the evolution of this settlement drawing heavily from historical records and earlier survey analysis.

## SECTION I

### 3.2 Development programmes and the Weaker Sections in Kerala

The concept of rural development is associated with the solution to basic problems of survival like poverty, unemployment, underemployment and persistent inequality particularly of the marginalised sections of the rural population. They consist of small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, rural artisan, and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who are economically and socially poor [Singh, 1994]. According to Census of India, 1991 scheduled castes and scheduled tribes account for 17 and 8 per cent of the total population respectively. A total of 1090 castes and 573 tribes have been declared as scheduled in 1991.

Rural development involves an effective implementation of various target group programmes in an integrated and co-ordinated way so that the desparate groups are able to improve their economic conditions at a greater pace in order to catch up with other groups in higher levels of socio-economic hierarchy [Kumar, 1994]. The rural development programmes figure prominently in the policy



agenda of the Central and State government with emphasis on poverty alleviation and employment generation. Most of the rural development programmes are centrally sponsored and targeted to the population below poverty line<sup>2</sup> [Economic Review, 1996]. Important poverty alleviation programmes are the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc. All these programmes are entrusted with the Rural Development Department aiming at generating employment and income to the identified rural poor. In order to ensure that families belonging to scheduled castes and tribes, women and physically handicapped are properly attended is under the programme, a substantial part of the total outlay is distributed for these specific groups.<sup>3</sup> Irrespective of region and language, the most vulnerable among the weaker sections are the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. They are unparalleled to all other social groups because they are socially and economically backward to begin with.

### 3.3 Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Since the Fifth Five Year Plan, the welfare programmes for scheduled castes and tribes are monitored through Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) respectively.<sup>4</sup> The SCP aims

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<sup>2</sup>With reference to the price level of 1991-92, a family with an annual income of Rs.11000 or less is considered to be below poverty line [Economic Review, 1996].

<sup>3</sup>50 per cent of the total families assisted under IRDP belong to SC/ST, 40 per cent women and 3 per cent physically handicapped [Economic Review, 1996].

<sup>4</sup>SCP and TSP were introduced in the state during 1979-80, and in 1983-84 they have been decentralized at District levels.

at the comprehensive development of the scheduled castes by providing drinking water, houses, educational and health facilities, electrification etc. The main objective of the TSP is to promote the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled tribes and to make them free from exploitation. To achieve these objectives Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) was started in Kerala during the 5th Five Year Plan.<sup>5</sup> During 1995-96 an amount of Rs.153.77 crores was spent under SCP and 30.2 crores under TSP. The Development Departments for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the Kerala State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes implement the schemes for their welfare.

### 3.4 Profile of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Kerala

According to the 1991 census the scheduled caste population in Kerala is 28,86,522 which constitute 9.9 per cent of the total state population; the scheduled tribe population number 3,20,967 which form 1.1 per cent of the population. During the period 1981-91 the growth rate of SC population was 13.2 per cent against the general growth rate of 14.3 per cent in the state. However it was 22.8 per cent for the scheduled tribe population during the same period.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Special projects like Sugandhagiri Cardamom Project, Pookot Dairy Project, Priyadarsini Tea Estate, Attappady Co-operative Farming Society and Vattachira Tribal Collective Farm have been started to rehabilitate bonded tribals in the state.

<sup>6</sup>Population growth among the tribes is significantly higher than among the scheduled caste and the general population. During the period 1971-81 growth rates were 27.3 and 35.2 per cent respectively for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It became 13.2 and 22.8 percent during the period 1981-91. There is more than 50 per cent decline in the growth rate among the scheduled castes. In fact, it went down lower than the state average of 14.3 per cent. On the other hand, among tribes, growth

Table 3.1

## District wise distribution of SC/ST population

Districts	Total Population (lakhs)			Percentage of	
	Total	SC	ST	SC	ST
Thiruvananthapuram	29.38	3.43	0.16	11.7	5.4
Kollam	23.98	3.06	0.04	12.7	0.2
Pathanamthitta	11.87	1.58	0.07	13.5	0.6
Alappuzha	19.90	1.90	0.03	9.5	0.2
Kottayam	18.25	1.36	0.18	7.5	1.0
Idukki	10.77	1.57	0.50	14.6	4.6
Ernakulam	28.12	2.42	0.05	8.6	0.2
Trissur	27.35	3.35	0.04	12.2	0.1
Palakkad	23.76	3.78	0.35	15.9	1.5
Malappuaram	30.93	2.56	0.11	8.3	0.4
Kozhikode	26.14	1.85	0.05	7.1	0.2
Wayanad	6.71	0.28	1.15	4.2	17.1
Kannur	22.44	0.91	0.18	4.1	0.8
Kasaragod	10.70	0.82	0.29	7.7	2.7
State Total	290.32	28.87	3.21	9.9	1.1

Source: Economic Review 1996

Among the districts, Palakkad has the highest proportion of scheduled caste population; 15.9 per cent, which is 13 per cent of the total scheduled caste population in the state. 35.8 per cent of the tribal population is in Wayanad followed by Idukki (15.6 per cent), Palakkad (11 per cent) and Kazaragod (9.0 per cent). Though literacy level among the scheduled caste is almost close to the general level, their educational standards are far below. Among the scheduled tribes even the literacy level is too low, in

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rate has declined but at a slower pace. It may be due to the fact that family planning programmes had only less impact on them while notable changes were seen among the scheduled castes in tune with changes in the population.

Palakkad district the rate is only 29.7 per cent. It is generally found that the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are concentrated in relatively backward regions where access to basic requirements and infrastructural facilities are limited.<sup>7</sup> The tribal hamlets and settlements are usually located in remote high land forests; they move further into the interior when others encroach their original abodes. A significant proportion of the slum dwellers in all the urban and suburban locations also belongs to the scheduled castes.

The list of scheduled castes in Kerala comprises 58 castes, and that of scheduled tribes 28 tribes [Vijayanath, 1982]. Only those who follow Hindu and Sikh are treated as scheduled castes while there is no such restriction for the scheduled tribes [Census of India 1981]. The strength of these castes and tribes vary significantly. For instance 85 per cent of the scheduled caste population is composed of 10 major castes; similarly the population

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<sup>7</sup>Normally, while higher and intermediary caste are concentrated in the mid, land marginalised sections like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are seen in the marshy backwater regions (low land) or forest/hilly regions (high land) of Kerala. Though both high and low land were fertile than the mid land their owners never liked to stay in these regions because of less access to basic requirements and other facilities. But the rich land lords wanted to protect and maintain their land and properties well. For this purpose they granted a few landless agrestic slave castes to make hut in their estates who later became known as Kudikidappukar. Among the agricultural slave castes Pulaya were the prominent, even after the abolition of slavery and landlordism until the middle of the nineteenth Century they continued to work as attached labourers with their earlier masters. The relation ship between the land lord and his attached labourers has been characterized as a system of patron-client relationships. Strong personal bonds and personal loyalty seems to have existed between many Pulayas and their masters [Tharamangalam, 1981]. Refer this text for further details.

of 10 major tribes constitute 82 per cent of the scheduled tribe people of the state.

Table 3.2

Distribution of SC/ST population according to major caste/tribes

Scheduled Castes			Scheduled Tribes	
No.	Name	Percent	Name	Percent
1	Pulaya/Cheramar	32.2	Paniyan	21.9
2	Cheruman	11.5	Malayarayan	9.8
3	Kuravan/Sidhanar	8.6	Kurichyar	8.5
4	Thandan	7.9	Marati	8.5
5	Paraya/Sambavar	7.4	Kurumar	7.9
6	Kanakkan/Padanna	5.7	Irular	7.2
7	Vettuan	4.4	Kaanikaran	5.3
8	Velan	2.3	Ulladan	4.9
9	Mannan	2.0	Mudugar	4.3
10	Pallan	1.7	Urali	3.5
Total		84.7	Total	81.8

Source: *Census of India 1981 Series-10 Kerala Part-XII Census atlas, 255-258.*

The Pulaya community is numerically the largest group among the scheduled castes and they are dominantly found in Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Thiruvananthapuram, Trissur and Kollam districts. Pulayar, Cherumar and Kanakkan are basically one and the same community differing only in nomenclature in different areas [Sivanandan, 1976]. Altogether they constitute 50.3 per cent of the total scheduled caste population in the state. Among the Tribes Paniyan is the largest group, they account for 21.9 per cent of the tribal population. 4.8 per cent of the tribal population belong to primitive tribes.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup>The tribal communities with pre-agricultural stage of development and very low literacy rate are recognized as Primitive Tribes by Government of India. Accordingly, Cholanaikan,

Table 3.3

## Details of SC/ST population in Kerala according to 1991 Census

Description	Unit	SCs	STs	Total
Households	No.	53676	69441	5513200
Population	No.	2886522	320967	29098518
Literates	No.	2002786	156061	22686461
Main workers	No.	1062922	129297	8301087
Marginal Workers	No.	126488	18474	855031
Non-workers	No.	1697112	173196	19952400
Size of Household	No.	4.9	4.9	5.3
Decadal Growth Rate (1981-91)	%	13.22	22.75	14.32
Sex-ratio (per 1000 male)	No.	1029	996	1036
Total Literacy Rate	%	79.66	57.22	89.81
Male Literacy Rate	%	85.22	63.28	93.62
Female Literacy Rate	%	74.31	51.07	86.17
W Participation Rate	%	41.21	46.04	31.43
Male WPR	%	50.96	55.14	47.58
Female WPR	%	31.73	36.90	15.85
Cultivators	%	3.10	16.66	12.24
Agricultural Labourers	%	53.78	55.47	25.54
Live stock, Forestry*	%	10.87	15.47	9.24
Mining and Quarrying**	%	2.44	0.47	2.58
Other than HH Industry	%	7.08	2.96	11.60
Construction	%	3.60	0.48	4.00
Trade and Commerce	%	2.83	1.38	12.64
Transport***	%	2.72	1.50	5.99
Other Services	%	10.70	5.28	15.18

Source: *Economic Review, 1996:172*

WPR: Work Participation Rate, HH: Households

\* includes Fishing, Hunting, Plantation etc.

\*\* includes Manufacturing and processing, servicing and Repairs in Household industry.

\*\*\* includes Storage and Communication

The condition of scheduled castes and tribes in Kerala is relatively better than their counter parts in the rest of India. But within the state they stand behind other social groups in terms of almost all the indicators of socio-economic development. The difference is quite striking in the case of scheduled tribes. Table 3.3 shows that nearly 90 per cent of the population in Kerala

*Kattunaikan, Kurumbar, Kadar, and Koragar, have been identified as primitive tribes in Kerala.*

are literate. But among the scheduled tribe literates accounts for only 57.2 percent. Though 79.7 per cent of the scheduled castes are literate, their levels of education are low. Their percentage come down as we move up in the educational hierarchy.<sup>9</sup> Kerala is known for its favourable sex-ratio (1036) to women as an indicator of social development, this is not so in the case of scheduled tribes whose ratio is only 996. Occupation of the workers would provide some indication of their level of living. For instance, almost half of the scheduled caste and tribal workers remain as agricultural labourers, while the state average is only 25.5 per cent. They get only around 100 days of work a year at the rate of around Rs.100 per day. They are obviously very much below the poverty line. 12.6 per cent of the total workers in the state are engaged in activities like Trade and Commerce, only 2.8 and 1.4 per cent of scheduled castes and tribes respectively are seen in these sectors. Likewise, while cultivators constitute 12.24 per cent of the general workers only 3.1 per cent of scheduled castes are cultivators, however, in the region where forest is the main source of livelihood only 16.7 per cent of the tribal workers are cultivators. Excessive dependance on wage labour necessitates a higher work participation rate for ensuring livelihood (income). The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have higher rates 41.2 and 46.0 per cent respectively while for the state as a whole it is

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<sup>9</sup>Normally, higher the level of education lower will be the strength of students. But as we move up in educational hierarchy we find that the representation of SC/ST students are increasing at a diminishing rate, and in some fields they rarely seen at all, however, nowadays there is no more legal or social barriers for education. It may happen due to the lack of favourable access which are lavishly enjoyed by the students belong to more advanced communities. It may also due to the intensity of issues and tensions experienced by the Dalit students both in and outside the campus. Refer Mohan (1993) for more details about the problems of Dalit students in Kerala.

only 31.43 per cent. Difference in female work participation rate is more striking, 31.7 and 36.9 per cent respectively for scheduled castes and tribes against the state average of 15.9 per cent.

### 3.4 After land reforms

Kerala's "land to the tiller" land reform (1969) is widely regarded as one of the most thorough and well implemented land reforms in South Asia [Franke, 1994]. But how far this reform has helped the weaker sections to become owners of the land they till is still an issue conveniently neglected by the government. Various studies have shown that the reform has benefited mostly the higher and the intermediary castes (tenants) than the traditional agricultural labour castes who got marginalised and secured only small bits of land for their *Kudikidappu* [Sivanandan, 1992; Mukundan, 1995].

Of course, land reform could make structural changes in the pattern of land holding in Kerala, however, it was not favourable to agricultural castes who were the real tillers of the soil. Through the mechanism of land reform only a transaction of ownership in the title of land has been performed from rich land lords<sup>10</sup> to higher and intermediary castes who were the tenants. In effect, land reform adversely affected the agricultural castes.<sup>11</sup> They have been compelled to shift from their homesteads to more remote places to get the uneconomic pieces of land. Though many of the new 'masters' had less interest in paddy cultivation they have been

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<sup>10</sup>The rich land lords who lost land due to the effect of land reform are eligible to get compensation from the government.

<sup>11</sup>Before the effect of land reform Kudikidappukars could enjoy at least some of the perishable goods belonging to the estate.



deprived from their traditional labour and skills. It has been further strengthened by the wide use of machines in cultivation as a result of green revolution.

Table 3.4

Distribution of surplus land to SCs, STs and others

Category	As on 30-11-95			As on 30-11-96		
	X	Y	Y/X	X	Y	Y/X
SCs	62,020	25,174	41	62,442	25,247	40
STs	7,433	5,163	69	7,505	5,174	69
Others	75,383	33,900	45	75,916	33,979	45
Total	1,44,836	64,237	44	1,45,863	64,400	44

Source: *Economic Review*

*X: Number of beneficiaries, Y: Area in acres, Y/X: area in cents per beneficiary.*

Coming to the present situation it is observed that so far 1,45,863 persons, have been given surplus land under this programme. The scheduled caste beneficiaries constitute 43 per cent and the scheduled tribes 5 per cent. More than half of the beneficiaries belong to intermediary or higher castes. It is found that the small pieces of land given to the scheduled castes are generally unproductive and located in remote places. Lack of ownership of the basic means of production, land, is still the major reason for backwardness of the scheduled castes and tribes in Kerala even after more than two decades of implementation of the land reform.

## SECTION II

### 3.5 Profile of Kurichi Panchayat

The village of Kurichi is situated on the eastern outskirts of the Kuttanad region in central Kerala: the Main Central road and the railway line pass through it and is located between the two prominent midland towns, Kottayam and Changanassery. The total area of Kurichi Panchayat is 16.22 sq.km and it is divided into 12 wards. According to 1991 census the total population of the Panchayat is 29,577 consisting of 14,868 males and 14,709 females. Scheduled caste population of the Panchayat is 3769, (12.7 per cent of the total population). Only 197 persons belong to scheduled tribe in the Panchayat, they constitute 0.56 per cent of the total population.

Table 3.5

Total houses, population and SC/ST population  
In Kurichi Panchayat from 1951 to 1991.

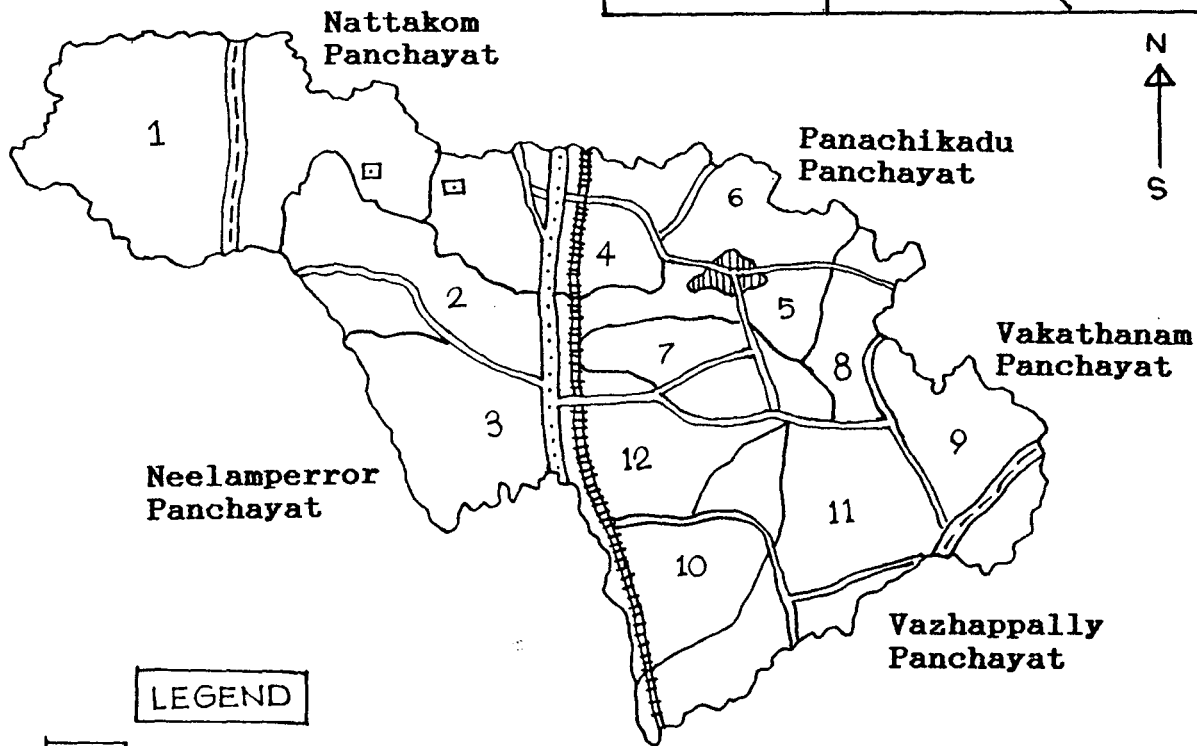
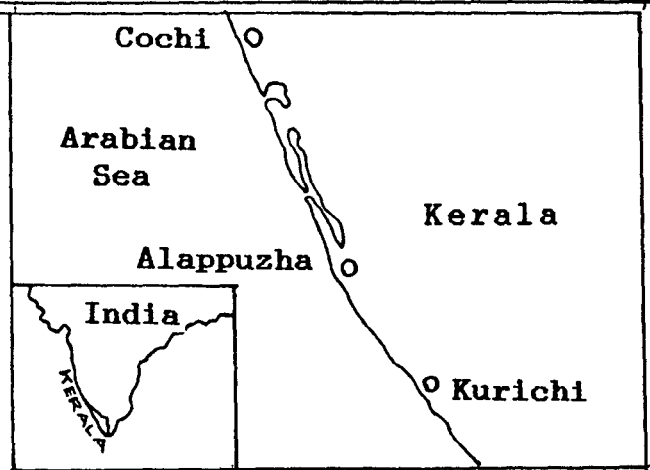
Year	Total Houses	Population			SC	ST	Percentage	
		Male	Female	Person			ST	SC
1951	2151	6801	6437	13,238	NA	NA	-	-
1961	2769	8884	8777	17,661	1506	4	8.5	0.02
1971	3427	11,018	10,767	21,785	2385	10	10.9	0.04
1981	4371	12,738	12,619	25,357	3014	113	11.9	0.40
1991	5962	14,868	14,709	29,577	3769	167	12.7	0.56

*Source: District Census Handbook, various issues.*








Over a period of 4 decades the total population of the Panchayat has increased by 2.2 times and the number of houses by 2.8 times. Moreover the growth rate of scheduled caste and tribal population

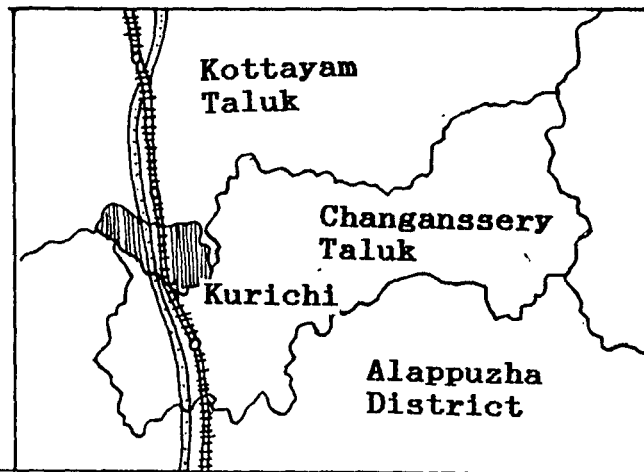
MAP. 1

Kurichi Village



LEGEND

-  Surveyed Area
-  Railway
-  M C Road
-  Canal
-  Village Road
-  Control Group
-  1-12 Panchayat Wards



is higher than that of general population. In 1961, 8.9 per cent of the population was scheduled castes and in 1991 it became 12.7 per cent in the Panchayat while the state average increased from 8.5 to 9.9 per cent during the period. A major reason for this increase in scheduled caste population in the Panchayat is due to their migration in connection with the colonization scheme.<sup>12</sup> Almost all the scheduled caste households in the Panchayat were once bonded labourers<sup>13</sup> of Landlords in the Kuttanad region [Monograph, 1961]. Over the same period scheduled tribe population has increased from 0.02 to 0.56 per cent against the state average of 1.1 per cent. In addition to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the Panchayat has a good number of Dalit Christians who are converted from the scheduled castes. They constitute 6.8 per cent of the total population. Though they are followers of Christian faith they still experience social and economic backwardness similar to their Hindu brethren, and are marginalised by the dominant Syrian christian section. Corresponding to the increase in population, the number of houses in the Panchayat also has increased over time. In 1951, number of houses per sq.km was 133,

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<sup>12</sup>Colonization refers to a welfare scheme of the government which provide house sites to the landless households particularly belong to scheduled castes and tribes. As a massive programme it has been started in Kerala during early seventies. Now there are 476 scheduled caste colonies in the state [Economic Review, 1996]. There were colonies in Kerala even before the independence and programme has become a major step towards further well being. Among them Sachivothamapuram model colony is the pioneer in Kerala which was established in 1938. Chengalchoola colony in Thiruvananthaouram and Marthandavarma colony in Ernakulam are few examples of old colonies in Kerala.

<sup>13</sup>Under bonded labour system labourers were not free including their family members. Even small children had special duties to perform. It seems that when Dalit children began to attend school in large numbers in the 1940s and 1950s they faced the open displeasure of the land lords [Tharamangalam, 1981]. See foot note 7 for the historical antecedents of agricultural labour castes.

but in 1991 it became 365, and in 1995-96 the Panchayat Vikasanarekha [1996] reports a further increase to 434 per sq.km. Density of population in Kurichi has therefore increased significantly. In 1951 the density was 816 and in 1991 it became 1823 against the state average of 749. Sex-ratio in the Panchayat is however unfavourable to women, 989, against the state average of 1036. Female sex-ratio below the age of 6 is only 911 in the Panchayat, it is lower than both the state and national averages [Vikasanarekha 1996]. Even at birth, the ratio is lower for females in this Panchayat. A demographic enquiry into this specific situation is highly essential.

Kurichi is classified as a low-land region, though it has both low land and midland terrains. Till the mid sixties, Kurichi was very much an agricultural village; majority of the labourers were engaged in paddy cultivation; they were all landless agricultural labourers. However, since the seventies, a gradual shift to other occupations is discernible especially by the new entrance to the labour market. In fact there is a reduction of the number of female agricultural labourers in 1991 from their 1981 figure.

Table 3.6

## Agricultural labourers among total workers since 1961

Year	Total Workers			Agricultural Labourers			AL/TW
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1961	3874	1130	5004	1297	886	2183	43.63
1971	4875	1549	6424	2172	1307	3479	54.16
1981	5427	1775	7202	2353	1394	3747	52.03
1991	6701	1838	8539	2430	1251	3682	43.12

Source: District Census Handbook, various issues.  
AL/TW: Agricultural labourers as proportion to total workers.

The following table shows that female workers constitute only 21.5 per cent of the total workers. Moreover there is significant difference in the proportion of male and female agricultural labourers; while female agricultural labourers constitute 68 per cent of the total female workers, the male agricultural labourers constitute only 36.3 percent of their total strength.

Table 3.7

## Distribution of main workers in the Panchayat

Occupation	Male	%	FM	%	Total	%
Cultivators	778	11.6	31	1.7	809	9.5
Agri. Labourers	2430	36.3	1252	68.1	3682	43.1
Agri. Related	162	2.4	17	0.9	179	2.1
Mining/Quarrying	72	1.1	7	0.4	79	0.9
Industrial Workers	746	11.1	48	2.6	794	9.3
Construction Workers	363	5.4	4	0.2	367	4.3
Traders	851	12.7	64	3.5	915	10.7
Transport/Storage	529	7.9	15	0.8	544	6.4
Other Workers	770	11.5	400	21.8	1170	13.7
Total	6701	100.0	1838	100.0	8539	100.0

Source: Panchayat Vikasanarekha

Whatever be the level of social development in Kerala, still it contains gender inequalities at various levels. There is, for instance, difference in the rates of wages entitled for male and female labourers.

Table 3.8

Difference in wage rate between male and female			
Occupation	Male	Female	Difference
Agricultural Labour	100	50	100 Per cent
Construction Labour	110	75	40 Per cent

Source: Panchayat Vikasanarekha

In agriculture the female wage rate is just half of the male wage rate. In construction the female wage rate is slightly high, they get nearly 70 per cent of the male wage rate.

### 3.6 Educational institutions in the Panchayat

There are 14 schools in the Panchayat comprising 5 high schools, one upper primary and 8 lower primary schools. Of the total schools 6 are managed by the government and the rest by private managements. 4,614 students are studying in these schools, of which 2,238 are girls and 2,376 are boys. 17.34 per cent of the students belong to scheduled castes and tribes. Of the total number of teachers 58.7 per cent are working under private managements. Including a nursery school established by the Scheduled Caste Development Department, 28 Anganwadis are functioning in the Panchayat, two of them are English medium nurseries under private management. A total of 912 children get pre school training in these nurseries.

Another important educational institution in the Panchayat is the Athurashramam Homoeo Medical College, which was founded in 1955 by Swami Athuradas.<sup>14</sup> A Government Homoeo Hospital is also attached to the college. An Industrial Training Centre (ITC) established in 1975 by the Scheduled Caste Development Department, imparting instruction in electrician trade, is another one. A maximum of 16 students can get admission here at a time, of which 2 seats are reserved for non-SC/ST candidates.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.7 Distribution social welfare programmes in the Panchayat

IRDP survey reports that since 1991, 1302 persons in the Panchayat have been given assistance under various schemes. Under the DWCRA scheme three units have been set up with government assistance. Public Distribution System (PDS) in the Panchayat is organized through 14 ration shops, one *Maveli*<sup>16</sup> store, and 3 consumer stores set up by Co-operative Banks. Through TRYSM 64 persons have been trained so far in different trades and it is reported that two-third of them have got jobs after completing this training [Vikasanarekha, 1996]. The following table gives details about the various assistance given to the people of the Panchayat under different schemes during 1991-96.

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<sup>14</sup>A follower of Sreenarayana Guru, the great social reformer of Kerala.

<sup>15</sup>In Kerala, there is reservation for employment and education to non-SC/STs; Among them prominent are Other Backward Castes (OBC), Socially and Educationally Backward Castes (SEBC) etc.

<sup>16</sup>It is a kind of ration shop that functions in all the centres of Kerala especially during festival seasons like Onam. *Maveli* is short name of King Mahabali; it is believed that during his rule there prevailed perfect equality among the people.



Table 3.9

## Distribution of social welfare assistance during 1991-96

Pensions for	1991-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96
Widows	-	15	19	16	16
Handicapped	-	16	14	14	14
Old Age	-	1	3	6	6
Weaker Artists	-	-	-	-	4
TB Patients	9	14	5	7	6
Cancer Patients	-	1	3	-	4
Agri. Labourers	-	401	456	442	437
Unemployment Relief	62	66	-	-	524

Source: Revenue Department, Employment Exchange, Labour Department, [Vikasanarekha, 1996].

### 3.8 Colonies in the Panchayat

Apart from Sachivothamapuram there are 11 colonies in Kurichi Panchayat, in which 8 are established exclusively for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and 3 are for the weaker sections in general including scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In fact, 50 per cent of the scheduled caste and tribe population in the Panchayat are living in colonies. Table 3.10 give details about the number of households in various colonies in the Panchayat. Apart from Sachivothamapuram colony, there are three type of colonies, Lakshamveedu (One lakh housing scheme), Naalucent (Four cent) and settlement colonies. Majority (77.9 Per cent) of the households in the colonies belong to scheduled castes and tribes. Others (Non-scheduled caste and tribe) are settled only in the settlement colonies, they constitute 22.1 per cent of the total colony-households. The table given above shows only the official distribution of households in the colonies, but over time the

composition has changed unfavourable to scheduled castes as in the case of Sachivothamapuram colony (see Chapter 4).

Table 3.10

Number of households in various Colonies in the Panchayat

Name of the colony	SC/ST	Others	Type of Habitation
1. Ithithanam colony	20	-	Lakshamveedu
2. Pulikkuzhi colony	14	-	Lakshamveedu
3. Kumaramkulam colony	20	-	Lakshamveedu
4. Attachira colony	12	-	Lakshamveedu
5. Kumaramkulam colony	20	-	Naalucent
6. Chelachira colony	84	-	Naalucent
7. Papanchira colony	40	-	Naalucent
8. Chiravumuttam colony	20	-	Naalucent
9. Ennackachira colony	80	50	Settlement
10. Kumaramkulam colony	52	43	Settlement
11. Ambedkar colony	125	45	Settlement
Total households	362	138	

Source: Panchayat Vikasanarekha

The living condition in the colonies is obviously different from the rest of the region, especially in the case of the scheduled caste and tribe households. For instance, in the Papanchira naalucent colony, out of the total 40 houses, 38 are not yet electrified and majority of them do not have separate latrine facilities. In Chiravumuttam naalucent Colony more than half of the houses are badly built and unsuitable for living. Almost 60 per cent of the scheduled caste and tribe households in the settlement colonies do not have electricity and latrine facility. Thus normal life in these colonies is definitely at stake. Development schemes do not seem to focus attention to redeem these

colonies from the perpetuation of squalor, poverty and disease. Though this provide a very pathetic profile of the Panchayat, the rest of the scene is qualitatively different.

### 3.9 Type of housing

Panchayat records reveal that, there are 7045 houses in the Panchayat out of which 23 (0.3 Per cent) are multi storied. Most of the houses in the Panchayat have permanent structures with tiles, concrete and other modern devices.

Table 3.11

#### Distribution of houses according to the type of roof

Type of Roof	No. of Houses	Per cent
Concrete	221	3.14
Tiled	4729	67.12
Thatched	1778	25.24
Others	317	4.50
Total	7045	100.00

Source: Panchayat records

Others: 'Modern' roofs, Tin sheets etc.

However one fourth of the houses still remain with thatched roof. An IRDP survey during 1995-96 has found that 858 households in the Panchayat needed assistance for repair and renovation of their houses but the scheme could provide assistance to 215 households only [Vikasanarekha, 1996].

## SECTION III

### 3.10 Sachivothamapuram Colony- the study area

This colony was established in the Kurichi village in 1938 by the Government of Travancore, and was given the name *Sachivothamapuram* to commemorate the name of the then Dewan of Travancore, *Sachivothama* Dr.C.P Ramaswami Iyer, who 'founded' the colony. It was started as a model colony for the rehabilitation of the landless labourers belonging to scheduled castes. It was expected to make a change in the attitude of both the upper caste land owners and the landless lower caste labourers by rehabilitating the latter in a new surrounding with some amount of economic independence and without the fear of social sanctions resulting from the violation of caste rules [Census of India, 1961]. During the colonization certain village artisans like Carpenters<sup>17</sup> and a few households of other communities like Vilakithala Nayar (Barbers) and Ezhavas were also settled in the colony [Ibid]. The census survey in 1961 found three Nayar households also, one was that of the watcher of the colony and another a temple servant. The establishment of the colony, was a follow-up action of the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936.<sup>18</sup>

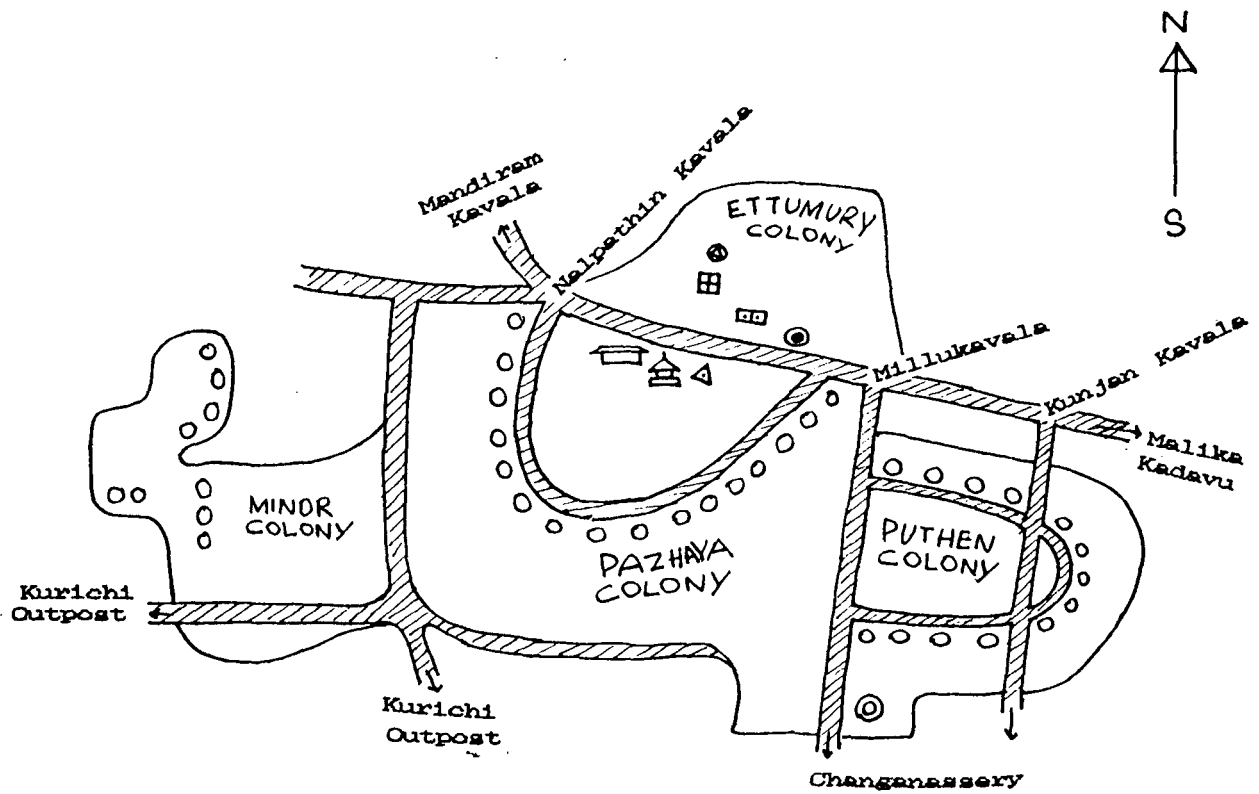
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<sup>17</sup>*Carpenter: is one among the Kammala or Viswakarma group of artisans in the traditional social structure. We use the term Viswakarma in our analysis to represent this section.*











<sup>18</sup>*Lower caste 'Hindus' were not permitted to enter in the Temples until it has been opened to all Hindus irrespective of castes and community by the Maharajah of Travancore princely state. The Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation was indeed a land mark in the socio-political development of the state. However, it was not the zeal for religious reform, but the anxiety to prevent the erosion of the strength of Hinduism [Somarajan 1994]. Many of the development programmes implemented exclusively for the lower caste 'Hindus' immediately after the temple proclamation indicates this.*

MAP. 2

Sachivothampuram Colony



LEGEND

	Sree Rama Temple
	Community Hall
	Industrial Training Centre
	Pre Matric Hostel
	Co-operative Society
	Cremation Ground
	Nursery School
	House
	Upper Primary School
	Colony Roads

### 3.11 Phases of Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of the labourer households was made at different phases. Majority of the beneficiaries were landless labourers belonging to Pulaya community who lived as permanent agricultural labourers under the rich land lords in different part of the Kuttanad region.

In 1938 (the first phase), the Government of Travancore has selected 40 households to settle in an area of 112 acres. During the second phase of rehabilitation, in 1950, the Travancore-Cochin Government extended the programme to settle 40 more households in the same area. Later a third batch of eight households were also brought to the colony and accommodated in the Ettumuri cattle-shed area.<sup>19</sup> Each settler was given 25 cents of land and a two roomed house. This house constructed with laterite stones has two rooms and a small veranda in front barely sufficient to accommodate a small family. The larger room was intended as the bed room while the other one served both as a kitchen and a dining-cum-store room [Monograph, 1961]. The houses constructed in the first phase were tiled but in the second phase they were thatched. This colony was conceived as a model collective farm unit, where each household contributed its labour in various agricultural activity, like crop production, dairying etc. However, in due course, the management failed, the households were left to earn for themselves. The farm land was divided and distributed to them. The survey in 1983 (by P.Sivanandan) reveals that, when the collective farm effort failed

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<sup>19</sup>The region where the eight families were accommodated is now known as Ettumuri. In fact, this area which was set apart for cattle shed in the early phase of colonization was divided into eight rooms and allotted to eight families.

a complete land survey of the settlement was made and an additional 50 cents of waste land per household were distributed to 88 families. All these land were given to the settlers by the government on a special condition which prohibited sale or sublease [Monograph, 1961]. The waste land around the settlement was gradually occupied by other landless labourers especially after 1957 when the communist government came to power. Thirty two households were subsequently identified and they were given 25 cents of land each [Sivananadan, 1995].

On Sachivothamapuram colony we have three studies, a village monograph study by the Census of India in 1961, a feminist-anthropological study by Marion den Uyl in 1979, and a study by P. Sivanandan who did a resurvey of the colony in connection with his doctoral thesis.

### **3.12 Survey in 1961**

The village monograph survey of Census of India 1961, illustrates the history, population, economy, at the social and cultural life of the Kurichi village. The study area covered all households in the first three blocks. This survey provides a detailed description of the people living both in the colony and in the rest of the village. In 1961 total population in the surveyed area was 587 comprising of 310 male and 277 females. Workers comprised 40.33 per cent. Agricultural labourers constituted 86 per cent of the workers and nearly half of them were females. 29 per cent of the population were students and the people employed in government service were only three per cent.

It also reveals that, though 75 cents of land had been allotted to most of the households<sup>20</sup>, consequent on the process of family partition, several of the original households had only much smaller holdings by 1961, the average land held by a household had come down to 50 cents.

### 3.13 Survey in 1979

Marion's study in 1979 was confined within the first block (Pazhaya colony) of the colony. It was published in 1995 under the title "Invisible Barriers: Gender caste and kinship in a southern Indian village" by the International Books, The Netherlands. The focus of the study is on gender and development in Kerala- from a feminist anthropological perspective. According to Marion most of the dividing lines between men and women are not visible. These dividing lines are linked with the organization of kinship of labour and sexuality. And, the kinship-based structure of labour and sexuality is a continuation of the caste system which is based on endogamy and occupational specification. The author perceived that the colonists have little contact with people from higher castes. It is as though an invisible wall surrounds the colony. She further adds that, as a result of the so called Green revolution, jobs have been lost in rice cultivation, which was their most important, traditional source of livelihood [Uyl, 1995].

Marion has surveyed 108 households (in 1979) situated on the site of the original 40 households settled in the colony in 1938. It also provides the process of changes in social composition between

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<sup>20</sup>Among the 120 households 88 were given 75 cents of land each, the rest 32 households settled in the Minor colony were given only 25 cents each.



1961-79. In 1961 71.5 per cent of the households belonged to Pulaya community, but this proportion has get reduced to 59.3 in 1979. On the other hand the Ezhava households have increased from 7.1 to 17.6 per cent during the same period. Further details of the study are given in table 4.21.

### 3.14 Survey in 1983

The survey in 1983 throws light on different socio-economic problems in the settlement. This is published in a malayalam journal *Kerala Padanangal* in 1993. In fact this study is critical of the different development programmes of the government introduced in the colony. The study tries to assess the socio-economic changes during the period 1961 to 1983, and it is found that the colony has ceased to be an independent social and economic unit except perhaps in it's settlement pattern.

Though according to the village records, there were altogether 120 households settled in the area as per the colonization programme, only 99 households could be identified in 1983. They included households of the original settlers, the present heirs of the original settlers and the present occupants of the property of the original settlers. There were six communities living in the colony namely, Pulaya, Paraya, Nayadi, Ezhava, Artisans (Viswakarma) and Syrian Christian. Among them the Pulayas continue to form the majority. The new entrants to the settlement were all non-Scheduled Castes, except in two cases in which they were Pulayas. The arrival of these households was during the late 1960's or thereafter [Sivanandan 1995].

According to this study, the major source of income of most of the Scheduled Caste households (64 out of 82) was casual wage labour; only 18 households among them had more dependable and regular sources, such as salaried employment, skilled labour and cultivation. The total number of members of the households came to 601: 325 males and 276 females. The sex ratio came down from 894 in 1961 to 849 in 1983. But, the average household strength went up from 5.2 to 6.1. One of the important findings of 1983 study is that, the major reasons for the sale disposal of property by households were medical treatment, marriage of the female members of the households and even household consumption. The study further reveals that this colony has lost more assets to other villages than it has received from them through the mechanism of marriage.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.15 Institutions in the Colony

During the inception of the colony there were a number of public institutions within the colony, like temple, school, weaving centre, library, watchers quarters etc. But over time some have disappeared and others have changed in form. For instance, the weaving centre became an Industrial Training Centre, the watcher's quarters became Anganwadi, the rural-library has been displaced by Scheduled Caste Co-operative Society.

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<sup>21</sup>Though one can interpret this as due to the better economic position of households in the colony, the present study observes that, it may be because girls belonging to the colony have to pay more dowry to get married outside. The presence of a 'dividing line' is felt still, as Marion explains between colonists and outsiders. Even within the same social group one belonging to the colony region is discriminated, and if it is a girl her status has again gone down, and there no other way to get married outside except by giving more dowry.

The most important educational institution within the colony is Harijan Welfare Upper Primary School established in 1944. Till 1980 it was only a primary school. The school was started as a 'nisapadasala' (night school) by the educated scheduled castes themselves and functioned under the Harijan Welfare Department until it has been taken over by the government in 1963. 47.8 per cent of the students in this school are scheduled castes comprising of 117 boys and 111 girls.

Apart from two Anganwadis, one Nursery School (established in 1968) also functions in the colony under Scheduled Caste Development Corporation. An Industrial Training Centre (ITC) established in 1975 by the same department, and providing specialized training in electrician trade, is another important educational institution in the colony. A Maximum of 16 students can get admission here at a time, of which 2 seats are reserved for non-SC/ST candidates. A pre-matric hostel for scheduled caste girls also functions within the colony, it was started in the year 1987. A Maximum of 30 coming within a distance of 4 km from the colony studying in classes V to X are admitted in this hostel, and one seat is given to a non-scheduled poor girl student also. They study at the Athurasramam Vidyamandiram High School located close to the colony. The colony has a few other public institutions. The Scheduled Caste Cooperative Society established in 1950 undertakes activities like receiving deposits, giving short term loan for educational and agricultural purposes etc. A Sree Rama temple was built along with the colonization scheme obviously in devotion to the glory of its founder (Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer). However, the income generated from it has never been used for the welfare of the colony by the

Devaswam management. The community hall built for the use of the colony people was later demolished due to lack of proper maintenance. The cremation ground in an area of 75 cents, is, however, retained for the purpose. A total of around seven acres of land was set apart for all these public institutions.

## Chapter 4

### Impact of Development Programmes on the Rehabilitated

In addition to general development policies designed to benefit the entire society, the government have framed specific programmes for the upliftment of weaker sections of the society by creating employment opportunities and developing basic infra-structural facilities. Among the programmes, rehabilitation of landless labourers was a major effort to help the most vulnerable group, namely, the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Moreover, Rural Development Department has initiated a number of programmes for alleviation of poverty and creation of employment.

In this chapter, we intend to examine the impact of some of these development programmes on the weaker sections. This is done with special reference to a rehabilitation colony in the vicinity of the Kuttanad rice growing area in Kerala. The analysis is based on a survey conducted towards the end of the year 1996 and on earlier studies in 1961, 1979 and 1983 which provide useful insights into the process of changes in the settlement.

#### 4.1 Population and social groups in the Colony

At present (1996) there are 384 households in the colony which comprise an area of 112 acres. 228 households belong to scheduled castes and the rest to various Hindu, Christian and Muslim communities. Table 4.1 gives the changing social composition of the settlers. This settlement was established in 1938 as a model colony exclusively for the benefit of the landless scheduled caste households. Earlier studies show the various phases of

rehabilitation. A total of 120 households have been settled there at various periods: namely 40 households in 1938, 40 households in 1950, 8 households in 1952 and 32 households in 1960. In the place of these 120 households there are now 384 households- a more than three fold increase by 1996. Significant changes have taken place in the social composition of the households over time.

Table 4.1

Social composition of households in the colony over time

Castes	Name of Blocks								Total HH		Per cent	
	Pazhaya Colony		Puthen Colony		Ettumury Colony		Minor Colony		A	B	A	B
	1938	1996	1950	1996	1952	1996	1960	1996				
Pulaya	34	83	32	71	6	19	22	39	94	212	83.2	55.8
Ezhava	2	35	4	25	-	33	-	7	6	100	5.3	26.3
Paraya	3	5	2	4	-	2	2	-	7	11	6.2	2.9
V Karma	1	7	1	5	-	2	-	-	2	14	1.8	3.7
Nayadi	-	1	-	-	2	4	1	-	3	5	2.7	1.3
Syrian	-	11	-	5	-	5	-	6	-	27	-	7.1
Muslim	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	0.5
V Nayar	-	-	1	2	-	5	-	-	1	7	0.9	1.8
Nayar	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

HH: Households, OH: Original households, A: Original settler households, B: Latest position.

Note: In 1960 32 households were resettled, only 27 could be identified by this investigator in 1996.

Even though, it was designed almost exclusively for the rehabilitation of the weakest section among the scheduled castes, it has now become a multi-community settlement. The proportion of the officially settled scheduled caste households was 86.6 per cent, but now their proportion is only 59. More specifically, the proportion of the Pulaya households among them reduced from 78 to

55 per cent. Similar reduction was experienced by other scheduled castes like Paraya and Nayadi also, from 6 and 2.7 per cent at the beginning to 2.9 and 1.3 per cent respectively in 1996. It is significant to note in this context that during this period, the percentage of the intermediary castes<sup>1</sup> in the colony has increased over time. For instance, the proportion of Ezhava households increased from 6 to 26 per cent. Similarly the percentages of Viswakarma households increased from 1.8 to 3.6 per cent and the Vilakithala Nayar from 0.9 to 1.8 per cent during the same period. Another notable change in the social composition of colony is the entry of Syrian Christians; at present, they constitute 7 per cent of the total households in the colony. More over, 2 Nayar (an upper caste) and 2 Muslim households have also come to settle in this colony providing a multi-caste/community social profile.

Let us analyze the various factors which led to the socio-economic differentiation of the rehabilitated scheduled caste households in our survey area. The surveyed households are classified into three categories according to their status of habitation in the colony. First, the original settler-households, where a member of the first generation settled in the colony is the still present in the household, second the successor of the original settlers, and third, the migrant settlers- who purchased land from the original settlers and become a permanent householder.

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<sup>1</sup>*Ezhava, Syrian Christians, Viswakarma and Vilakithala Nayar are the intermediary castes caste/communities in the colony.*

Table 4.2

Distribution of households and population  
according to caste/communities

Castes	Households				Population			
	O	S	M	T	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Pulaya	28	50	12	90	221	199	420	77.6
Ezhava	2	2	7	11	31	30	61	11.3
Paraya	1	2	-	3	5	6	11	2.0
Nayadi	2	-	-	2	8	5	13	2.4
V karma	1	2	2	5	15	11	26	4.8
Syrian	-	-	2	2	4	5	9	1.7
Total	34	56	22	113	254	257	541	100.0

Note: O-original, S-successor, M-migrants, T-total

It is found that 20.4 per cent of the surveyed households are migrants, almost half of them are non-scheduled castes comprising Ezhava, Viswakarma and Syrian Christian households.<sup>2</sup> Though the Ezhava households are few in the surveyed area they constitute a significant proportion of households around the colony. The entry of Syrian Christians into the colony is significant, though their number is small in the surveyed area, they constitute a dominant section in the region. Being the most enterprising class in agricultural and industrial activities, they seem to virtually control the labour market in the area. In terms of population the Pulaya community is still the largest group (77.6 per cent) in the surveyed area. Sex-ratio (900) is very unfavorable to their females and this number is even less than the colony average of 905. Among the Ezhava community the number of males and females

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<sup>2</sup>Of course, the situation of scheduled castes in the colony is poorer than that of the intermediary castes. But it does not mean that there is glaring economic disparity between these two groups. So one can interpret that their immigration to the colony is due to a downward shift in their economic status.



are almost equal. Regarding the size of the household also we see significant difference between these two castes, 4.7 for Pulaya and 5.5 for Ezhava.

#### **4.2 Change towards multi-caste/community structure**

The extent of land owned by a household is a significant factor in ensuring economic safety and a precondition for land based development. The land ownership pattern in the colony suggests that the title of ownership has been gradually moving in favour of migrant households from the original settlers and their successors. There are several compelling-factors that necessitate this dispossession of land held by the weaker sections. Most importantly, marriage of daughters, medical treatment and unemployment lead to this dispossession. The scheduled caste households get marginalised and stay at the periphery of the colony or even get pushed out of it. It is quite an obvious scene that most of the houses on either side of the tarred roads in the colony are now occupied by non-scheduled caste households. The scheduled caste households sell their assets and move away. This is not an exclusive phenomenon seen in this colony alone but almost a common feature in areas where the hierarchy of social groups competes for economic opportunities.

#### **4.3 Religion and Caste**

Majority of households in the colony belong to Hindu Religion. The establishment of the colony itself is said to be associated with the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936 [Monograph, 1961]. However many people still hold that this proclamation and the subsequent welfare measures were deliberate strategies of the Hindu

dominated ruling class to discourage the conversion of the lower caste 'Hindus' to Christianity. Interestingly however, among the scheduled caste Hindu households around 6 per cent are followers of Christianity. They however, retain their official identity as Hindus. Among the scheduled castes, the Pulaya forms the majority and among others the Ezhava.

#### 4.4 Demographic features.

There are 541 people in the surveyed households with 284 males and 257 females. The female sex-ratio in the colony is very low (905) compared to the State and Panchayat averages of 1036 and 989 respectively. It is a sign of backwardness, because a favourable female sex-ratio is generally considered as a feature of better social development. However, in this colony the female sex-ratio even at birth is lower. For instance, female babies constituted only 39.7 per cent of the total children borne during the period 1986-96. In fact sex-ratio for central Kerala as a whole (Ernakulam, Idukki and Kottayam) is unfavourable to females, 993 according to 1991 census. Even historically the sex-ratio in this Panchayat has been more or less male dominated. In 1951 the ratio was 946 and by 1991 it increased only to 989. However, it is seen that the sex-ratio among the scheduled castes in the Panchayat is relatively better than that of the general population. In 1991 their ratio was 997 as against 989 for the general population in the Panchayat. The size of the household in the colony is 4.8 which is less than the state average of 5.3 and the Panchayat average of 4.9. Following table depicts the age composition in the colony.

Table 4.3

## Age-wise distribution of population in the colony

Age group	Male	Female	Total	Percent
0-4	19	13	32	5.9
5-14	40	29	69	12.7
15-24	67	60	127	23.5
25-59	123	116	239	44.2
60+	35	39	74	13.7
Total	284	257	541	100.0

Note: 0-4: infants, 5-14: school going age, 15-25: higher education stage, 25-59: work force participation, and 60+: old and sick.

Even though, the sex-ratio for the whole population in the colony is unfavourable to women, in the 60 plus age group, women outnumber men. These elders constitute 13.7 percent of the total population in the colony.

Table 4.4

## Distribution of total workers and non-workers 15 years and above

Age group	Total workers			Total Population			Proportion of workers in each age group
	M	FM	T	M	FM	T	
<15	-	-	-	59	42	101	-
15-24	24	32	56	67	60	127	44.1
25-59	118	76	194	123	116	239	81.2
60+	17	27	44	35	39	74	59.5
Total	159	135	294	225	215	440	66.8

Note- M: Male, FM: Female, T: Total

19 per cent of the total workers in this colony belonged to the age group 15-24. Though during this period the young people generally try to build up their career through higher education, only 24.4 per cent of them continue their studies; others join the labour

market, 44 per cent find some job and the rest remain unemployed. However, it is not a phenomenon peculiar to this colony alone, but seem to be a general problem in most of the settlements of the scheduled castes and tribes. Another notable feature is the high work participation (62.8 per cent) among the females. But, unfortunately more than half of the female workers are engaged in household work.<sup>3</sup> If we exclude household workers from the female work-force their work participation rate would come down to 28.4 per cent.

#### 4.5 Educational status

The effective literacy rate among the people (5 years and above) in the colony is 93 per cent. While male literacy rate is very near to cent per cent (97) the females lag behind with 88 per cent only. Nevertheless, majority, 77 per cent of the persons have only below matriculate level education. 9 per cent are matriculates and among the remaining 6.6 per cent, having higher education, only one third have acquired university degree. The number of graduates in the colony is only 13 and they constitute 2.6 per cent of the total literates. However, it is significant to note that only 1.2 per cent of the population could attain some technical training and only 0.8 per cent gained professional degree. Thus in terms of educational attainment, very few in the colony have acquired higher education levels. This obviously hampers the prospects of better employment opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup>Conventionally, domestic duties like cooking, cleaning, nurturing etc. are excluded from economic activity. Apart from this, most of the rural womenfolk have to perform other activities like, rearing cattle, collecting fodder, gathering firewood, drawing water, etc.

Table 4.5

## Educational status of persons aged 5 and above

Category	Per cent		
	Male	Female	Total
Illiterates	2.6	11.9	7.1
Lower primary	27.8	25.1	26.5
Upper primary	22.9	20.2	21.6
High school	28.6	29.6	29.1
Matriculation	9.8	8.6	9.1
ITI Certificates	2.3	-	1.2
Pre-Degree	2.6	2.9	2.8
Degree	1.1	0.8	1.0
Post Graduation	1.5	-	0.8
Professional Degree	0.8	0.8	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

## 4.6. Activity and occupation

The activity status of the population shows that workers constitute 39.4 per cent, the children below 5 years 5.9 per cent, the old and sick persons 11.1 per cent, and unemployed 10.2 per cent. Interestingly, in all these categories the gender difference is practically very low. 15 per cent of the population is engaged in household work and naturally majority of them are females. The activity status shows, certain characteristic features especially of the workers. Unskilled labourers including agricultural and casual labourers form 50 per cent of the workers. Skilled labourers, including masons, carpenters, and fishermen constitute 21.6 per cent and they are mostly men.

Table 4.6

## Activity status of the population

Category	Per cent		
	Male	Female	Total
Aged <5	6.7	5.1	5.9
Students	17.3	19.8	18.4
Unemployed	9.8	10.5	10.2
Workers	53.5	23.7	39.4
HH workers	2.5	28.8	15.0
Old and Sick	10.2	12.1	11.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

However, in the agricultural labour category, there is a clear predominance of female labourers, in fact male labourer gets displaced from paddy cultivation as a result of the introduction of mechanization. They are therefore, forced to seek wage labour in other activities. 12.2 per cent of the workers in the colony are fortunate enough to get employed in government service, though mostly in the lower grade categories. Out of the 26 such persons, 6 are females and this achievement is of course encouraging to their sisters in the colony. Similarly, a chance to get employed abroad, especially in the Gulf countries is seen to be a life ambition of many of the unemployed. The prospect of getting better economic status, drives them to do any sacrifice. Three people in the colony have succeeded in getting this opportunity. There is greater mobility of people for better prospects outside the village.

Table 4.7

## Occupational classification of workers according to sex

Occupation	Total workers			Per cent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Cultivators	7	1	8	4.6	1.6	3.8
Agri- Labour	6	32	38	3.9	52.5	17.8
wage Labour	54	16	70	35.5	26.3	32.9
Skilled Labour*	46	-	46	30.3	-	21.6
Govt. Service	20	6	26	13.2	9.8	12.2
Other Workers**	16	6	22	10.5	9.8	10.3
Employed Abroad	3	-	3	2.0	-	1.4
Total	152	61	213	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Note: In this table we exclude the population below the age of 15 considering them as students who constitute 18.7 per cent of the total population. We also exclude 31 persons (19 males and 12 females) who are students in the age group 15-24, they constitute 5.7 per cent of the population.*

\* *Skilled labour: They include carpenters, masons, fishermen and brick makers.*

\*\* *Other Workers: Female workers are employed in printing press, stitching, binding, foot wear and housekeeping, the male workers are bus cleaners, helpers and assistants in small bunk and cycle shop services.*

26 persons in the colony (4.8 per cent) are reported to be non-residents, 18 males and 8 females. 20 persons stay outside the colony for employment purposes and 6 for educational. 14 persons have gone outside the district and 3 have gone outside the state and another 3 are working abroad.

#### 4.7 Poverty and physical condition of life

45 per cent of the households in the colony come under the poverty line<sup>4</sup>, their average annual household income is less than

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<sup>4</sup>*With reference to the price level of 1991-92, a family with an annual income of Rs.11,000 or less is considered to be below*

Rs.11,000. Another 40 per cent of the households have average monthly income between Rs.1000 and 2000. Only 5 households (4.4 per cent) have income above Rs.5000 per month. Thus majority of the households in the colony earn only very low income so that they are unable to meet even their food requirement.

Table 4.8

Classification of households according to monthly income

Income in (Rs)	No. of HH	Per cent
<1000	51	45.1
1000-1999	35	40.0
2000-2999	13	11.5
3000-4999	9	8.0
5000+	5	4.4
Total	113	100.0

#### 4.8 Housing

The houses in the colony comprise old, new and renovated buildings. It reflects, more or less the social and economic background of the occupants. It is found that 64.6 per cent of the building are newly constructed, 8 per cent remain as the original old houses and the rest 27 per cent are in partially renovated condition. 72 per cent of the houses are electrified and 62 per cent have separate latrine facilities.

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*poverty line.*



Table 4.9

## Classification of houses according to caste/communities

Caste/Communities	Original	Renovated	Constructed	Total
Pulaya	7	24	59	90
Ezhava	-	3	8	11
Paraya	-	2	1	3
Nayadi	2	-	-	2
Viswakarma	-	2	3	5
Syrian Christians	-	-	2	2
Total	9	31	73	113

Table 4.10

## Classification of houses according to plinth area and no. of rooms

Plinth area (in sq. feet)			Number of Rooms		
Area	No. of HH	Cum. Percent	Rooms	No. of HH	Cum. Percent
100-199	10	8.8	2	22	19.5
200-299	37	41.6	3	35	50.4
300-399	25	63.7	4	28	75.2
400-499	15	76.9	5	17	90.3
500-699	14	89.4	6	8	97.4
700-899	12	100.0	7	3	100.0
Total	113			113	

Similarly classification of the houses according to plinth area, number of rooms, type of floor, wall and roof also reveal that most of the houses are very small in size with a few rooms, mud plastered floor and walls with tiled roofs. The table shows that 63.7 per cent of houses have plinth area less than 400 sq. feet, only 10.6 per cent have it above 700 sq. feet.

Table 4.11

Classification of houses according to the type of wall, floor and roof

Type	Wall		Floor		Roof	
	HH	%	HH	%	HH	%
Mud	10	8.8	52	46.0		
Laterite Stone	42	37.2				
Partially cemented	18	15.9	23	20.4		
Fully cemented	43	38.1	38	33.6		
Thatched					6	5.3
Tiled					106	93.8
Concrete					1	0.9
Total	113	100.0	113	100.0	113	100.0

50.4 per cent of the houses in the colony are very small, having up to three rooms each and with a plinth area of below 300 square feet. Only a few houses (9.7 per cent) are big having more than 6 rooms. Majority of the houses in the colony are built up of laterite stones, floor being plastered with mud and roofing with tiles.

Table 4.12

Sources of drinking water

Source	No. of Houses	Per cent
Own-tap	2	1.77
Pub-tap	-	0.00
Own-well	44	38.94
Pub-well	36	31.86
Neighbour's Well	31	27.43
Total	113	100.00

For drinking water many of the households have their own wells and others have either public well or they draw from neighbour's well.

During summer there is severe water shortage in the colony. The public water supply facility in the colony is not properly maintained, it remains dry almost through out the year, there are separate pipe lines for agricultural purposes running through the colony.<sup>5</sup> But the colonists seldom make use of it for cultivation mainly because of the very small size of their holdings. It is a classic example of lack of awareness of planners about the requirements of the targeted people. While the drinking water pipe lines through the colony are dry, water is available for cultivation through the other lines but there is no more land to cultivate.

#### 4.9 Caste-wise difference in status of houses

The general condition of houses of the different social groups do give insights into their social and economic condition. For instance, it is seen that none of the Ezhava settlers in the colony retains dilapidated old houses, instead, each one has renovated or constructed new house. At the same time some of the Pulayas are forced to retain their old constructions due to economic compulsions. The facilities available and the quality of construction are better in the case of houses owned by Ezhava settlers.

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<sup>5</sup>There are 15 water taps in the colony. Though the scheme was introduced for irrigation purposes nobody in the colony has used it for cultivation.

Table 4.13

Houses of Pulaya and Ezhava

Particulars	Pulaya	Ezhava
Households surveyed (No)	90	11
Plinth area above 500 sq.ft (% of Hs)	23.33	54.54
No. of rooms above 5 (% of Hs)	18.88	54.54
Plastered Wall (% of Hs)	28.88	90.91
Cemented Floor (% of Hs)	23.33	81.81
Tiled Roof (% of Hs)	93.37	100.00
Electrified Houses (% of Hs)	68.88	81.81
Latrine (% of Hs)	58.88	81.81
Own-well (% of Hs)	34.44	54.54

We have already seen that 45 per cent of the households in the colony are below poverty line. It is higher than the state average of 36 per cent. According to the IRDP survey in 1994, 2.4 lakh scheduled caste and tribe households are found below the poverty line [Economic survey, 1996]. Generally the physical living condition of the scheduled castes and the tribes is very poor compared to the condition of other social groups in Kerala. Almost 28.6 per cent of the scheduled tribe families in the state are houseless [Ibid]. In our study region also their condition is not different. For instance 25 per cent of the houses in the Panchayat are thatched, and most of them belonged to scheduled castes.

**4.10 Land holding**

Rights to use or have control over land, forest, and other natural resources are central to the lives of rural population [ILO, 1996]. But in many societies access to land and other infrastructure facilities are unequally distributed. In the traditional Indian context, social position of the household had been the crucial

factor enabling eligibility to possess property. The lowest social groups in the hierarchy were not allowed to possess land. However, in this resettlement colony a group of such landless households were rehabilitated by the government during the last two decades before independence. They were given land and infra structural facilities for their livelihood. A few other communities in the same economic conditions were also resettled along with them. Later, however communities belonging to higher social hierarchy have also come to this settlement by purchasing land from the original settlers.

**Table 4.14**

**Distribution of land holding according to castes/communities**

Caste/ Communities	Land in cents				Total
	0-9	10-19	20-49	50+	
Pulaya	16	33	34	7	90
Ezhahva	3	4	4	-	11
Paraya	-	1	1	-	3
Nayadi	2	-	-	-	2
ViswaKarma	2	-	3	-	5
Syrian Christian	-	2	-	-	2
Total	23	40	43	7	113

The present land holding pattern of the households in the colony is given in table 4.14. 20.4 per cent of the households have land size below 10 cents each, and 35 per cent have between 10 and 20 cents and 38 per cent have 20 to 50 cents each. Only 7 households (6.2 per cent) have land over half an acre and all of them are descendants of the original Pulaya settlers. One of these household has more than one acre. Only three household could

however, retain the area of their original allotment entitled at the time of colonization. During the 1961 survey the average land holding in the colony was 50 cents, in 1983 it came down to 33 cents and in 1996 it further decreased to 21 cents per household. In 1983, only 6 households had land less than 10 cents but in 1996 the number of this smallest size holders has increased to 23, similarly 16 households had 50 cents per head in 1983, but at present there are only 7 households with 50 cents or more per head.

Table 4.15

Land owned by the settlers outside the colony

Land Size in cents	Number of households		Total Households
	Paddy land	Garden land	
4	-	1	1
8	-	1	1
100	6	1 (Rubber)	7
125	1	-	1
137	1	-	1
250	1	-	1
Total (624)	9	3	12

It is also found that 12 household have land outside the colony, the area varying from 4 cents to 2.5 acres per owner. Most of these households have acquired paddy land for cultivation. All except one have made use of the assistance provided by the Scheduled Caste Development Corporation for purchasing agricultural land. One family possessed 2.5 acres of paddy land. Another household has acquired one acre of land with rubber cultivation outside the colony. While majority of the original households in the colony experienced considerable reduction in their land

possession, a few households could improve their position by making use of the government sponsored development schemes.

#### 4.11 Land lost after 1982

A total of 22 households have lost land after 1982; except one Paraya family, all of them belong to Pulaya community. The extend of land lost amount to 243 cents. During the period 1982-96 21 Pulaya households in the colony have lost land, the extend varying from one cent one acre.

**Table 4.16**  
**Dispossession of land among the Pulaya since 1982**

Area lost (in cents)	Number of households	Total area lost
1-10	17	97
11-20	3	46
21-50	-	-
51-100	1	100
Total	21	243

The major reasons for the loss of property are repayment of debt, marriage of females, construction or maintenance of houses and medical treatment. 47.8 per cent of land were sold to repay borrowings. 30.4 per cent to meet the expenses of marriage of females, land sold for construction purposes amounted to 13 per cent and the remaining 9 per cent was sold to meet the expenses of medical treatment.

#### **4.12 Acquisition of land after 1982**

Only 6 households could acquire land after 1982, 4 of them belong to Pulaya and one each to Ezhava and Viswakarma communities. All these communities could purchase only very small pieces of land ranging from 4 cents to a maximum of 23 cents in one case, and a total of 57 cents by all the 6 households together. They generated the purchase price through saving from employment and in one case the buyer invested his dowry amount. It is found that 14 households have leased out their house compounds for cutting laterite stones used for house construction. A total of 165 cents of land owned by the surveyed households is now used dug for this purpose. This land become completely unproductive after the excavation.

#### **4.13 Assistance from the government**

Developmental assistance distributed by the government in the colony include concessional loan for house construction, buying cattle and purchasing paddy land, free supply of fertilizer, seedings, electric connection etc. It is found that 75 per of the households in the colony have received at least one such assistance each. However, it is important to note that only a few households have received tangible help like, house, paddy land, cattle and electrification. Other schemes could only make marginal improvements in their living conditions. It is therefore necessary to extent them much more assistance to acquire permanent assets so that all the poor households in the colony could get out of the poverty level.



Table 4.17

## Number of households assisted under different programmes

Assistance	HH	Development scheme
Housing	29	RLEGP, NREP, JRY (loan)
Well	15	Million Well Scheme (full subsidy)
Paddy Land	8	SC/ST Development Corporation (loan)
Cattle	15	IRDP (50 per cent subsidy)
Electrification	30	Panchayat Scheme (free)
latrine	30	Panchayat Scheme (free)
Credit*	13	IRDP (loan)
Fertilizer	80	Through Krishi Bhavan (Free)
Plants	78	Through Krishi Bhavan (Free)
Implements	18	Through Krishi Bhavan (Free)

\* for self employment

#### 4.14 Other social welfare payments

About 13.7 per cent of the people in the colony (comprising of 39 females and 35 males) are aged above 60 but only 33.8 per cent of them are beneficiaries of any pension scheme, like agricultural pension(13), family pension(9) widow pension(3) etc. Given their very poor economic background and extreme physical inability, all of them would require financial support and old age rehabilitation.

#### 4.15 Debt

As high as 41 per cent of the households (46) in the colony are indebted either to the government or to private agencies. Their liabilities vary from Rs.500 to 50,000. The major reasons for incurring these liabilities are female-marriage, construction or maintenance of houses, repayment of credit and medical treatment. Expenses associated with pilgrimage to holy places also make a major drain on their meagre income.

#### 4.16 Possession of other assets and consumer durable

Though by and large the people in the colony are poor, and indebted some households have acquired consumer durables to enhance entertainment and transport facilities. The items include electric and electronic equipments, two and three wheeler vehicles etc. The ownership of these items could be seen more as a result of demonstration effect rather than a mark of affluence.

#### 4.17 Marital status

Half of the people in the colony are married and 6.7 per cent are widowed persons and 1.7 per cent are separated. Among the females the widowed and separated persons constitute 14 per cent while among the males such persons constitute only 3 per cent. This only shows the most precarious and unfortunate condition of the widowed or separated females who lost support of their husbands in earning income, bringing up the children, and shouldering the household affairs.

Table 4.18

Marital status of the population

Marital Status	Per cent		
	Male	Female	Total
Married	25.51	24.58	50.09
Single	25.32	16.28	41.59
Widowed	1.29	5.36	6.65
Separated	0.37	1.29	1.67
Total	52.49	47.51	100.00

#### 4.18 Incidence of marriages after 1982

During the period 1982-96 114 marriages took place in the colony. Of this 62.23 per cent were taken place before the age of 25. An important feature to be noted is that about 42.6 per cent of the married girls were very young in the age group 15 to 19. Most of the marriage were arranged ones and a few inter caste marriage are also reported. Customary payment of dowry, in the form of cash, gold and land was reported in most of the cases.

Table 4.19

#### Age at marriage

Age	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Per cent
15-19	4	6.0	20	42.6	24	21.1
20-24	29	43.3	18	38.3	47	41.2
25-29	23	34.3	8	17.0	31	17.2
30-34	11	16.4	1	2.1	12	11.5
Total	67	100.0	47	100.0	114	100.0

While in 80 cases gold was paid as dowry, cash and land were given in 75 and 9 cases respectively. If we compare inflow and outflow of wealth during 1982-96 in the form of dowry, we find that the trade off is unfavourable to this colony. The colony has given out 1648 grams of gold and Rs 4.74 lakh as dowry to the married daughters the daughters-in-law could bring only 1400 grams of gold and Rs 3.47 lakh. Inflow of wealth is lesser than the outflow, though the number of daughters-in law is more than the sons-in law. Sivanandan's (1983) study also supports this phenomenon; the colony has lost more wealth to other villages than it has received from them through the mechanism of marriage.

Table 4.20

Gift of gold as wedding present

Gold (grams)	Received by daughter in-law	Given to daughters	Total	Percent
No dowry	22	12	34	29.82
08-40	36	25	61	53.41
48-80	8	7	15	13.33
88-160	1	1	2	1.75
168-240	-	2	2	1.75
Total	67	47	114	100.0

Compared to gold and cash, only in a few cases (9) land has been transferred as dowry amount, in all these cases the extend of land given per head was below 12 cents.

4.19 Details about crops and other trees

Coconut is the main tree crop in the colony, the yield is, however, very poor. Most of the households have a few trees in their compounds. 5 households in the colony have rubber cultivation and all of them are small holders having less than 100 plants per holding. 31 households undertake vegetable cultivation for domestic use.

4.20 Comparison with the earlier studies

We have already discussed about the various socio-economic studies on the colony. Here we would make a comparison of the major features of these studies to ascertain the change over time. The studies reveal that over time the percentage of population below the age of 15 and above 60 have changed significantly. In 1961, 44.6 per cent of the population were below 15 years and 6.3 per cent were above 60. In 1996 the proportion of children came down

to 18.7 and the proportion of old people increased to 13.7 per cent. This structural changes have taken place through out the state mainly because of the impact of family planning and better health facilities.<sup>6</sup> According to 1991 Census 8.8 per cent (highest in India) of the population in Kerala are above 60 years.

**Table 4.21**  
**Changes in the colony during 1961-1991**

Particulars	1961	1979	1983	1996
Households surveyed (No)	112	108	99	113
Total population(No)	587	565	601	541
Sex-ratio (No)	894	909	849	905
Size of the household	5.2	5.2	6.1	4.8
SC households (No)	95	80.0	82	95
SC population (%)	81.3	65.8	76.8	79.7
Work participation rate	82.3	63.0	39.4	66.8
Male WPR (%)	92.5	66.9	50.2	54.1
Female WPR (%)	71.8	59.1	28.6	62.8
Population <15 years (%)	44.6	39.8	-	18.7
Population above 60 years (%)	6.3	5.5	-	13.7
Cultivators (%)	-	-	1.7	2.7
Agricultural labourers (%)	86.1	38.5	26.0	17.8
Male Agri-labourers (%)	45.1	9.7	-	2.8
Female Agri-labourers (%)	40.9	28.7	-	15.0
Wage labour	-	-	35.4	32.9
Skilled labour	-	-	8.2	21.6
Government service (%)	5.5	6.6	12.2	12.2
Literacy rate (%)	75.0	85.9	87.4	92.9
Above matriculation (%)	0.3	2.5	5.7	15.8
Average land holding(cents)	50.0	41.1	33.0	21.0

*[Source: Village Monograph Census Survey in 1961, Marion's survey in 1979, Resurvey of the village by P.Sivanandan in 1983 and Resurvey of the village in 1996 by the present author.]*

During the period 1961-96 the percentage of agricultural labourers among total workers has reduced from 86.1 to 17.8 per cent. This is a very significant change. The rate of decline was higher for males, from 45 to 3 per cent, while for females the decrease was from 40.9 to 15 per cent. In 1961, 5.5 per cent of the workers

<sup>6</sup>See Sooryamoorthy, 1996.

were government employees, in 1983 it increased to 12.2, and remains the same in 1996. On the other hand, skilled labourers have increased from 8.2 per cent in 1983 to 21.6 percent in 1996. However, the proportion of other wage labour has reduced only marginally, from 35.4 in 1983 to 32 per cent in 1996.

The table also shows that during the period 1961-96 the literacy rate in the colony increased from 75 to 93 per cent, but regarding the possession of higher education this colony is still backward, only 16 per cent population have levels of education above matriculation. Another important feature is the change in the size of land holding. According to the 1961 survey, the average land holding per household in the colony was 50 cents, but in 1996 the average area has come down to 21 cents. The rate of decline of land holding during the period 1961-83 was 34 per cent, and the decline has further accentuated to 36 percent during the 1983-96 period.

#### **4.21 Study on Control Group**

So far we have been analyzing the impact of the various development programmes on the weaker sections settled in the rehabilitation colony. But there are quite a large number of people living in other parts of the Panchayat who are as vulnerable as those in the colony. They are mostly the Dalit Christians converted from scheduled castes. As followers of Christianity they are not eligible for benefits under scheduled caste welfare schemes. Both in social and economic condition they occupy a position almost similar to those of the scheduled castes. Unfortunately, however, conversion to Christianity has not helped them to redeem their

ignominious past.<sup>7</sup> They get marginalised in their new religious assemblage also. In effect, they get alienated from both Hinduism and Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

We may compare the socio-economic status of those living in the colony with that of a control group living outside the colony in the Panchayat area. We have conducted a field survey of 25 households living in the nearby localities- *Muttathukadavu* and *Panthukalam*. Dalit Christian households are concentrated in these places. The surveyed households belonged to Dalit Christians converted from Pulaya community. We may also refer the findings of an earlier socio-economic survey done in 1992 on 100 Dalit families in the Panchayat by the Dalit Womens Society- a local voluntary organization. In this study 79 per cent of the surveyed households belonged to Dalit Christians.

The rehabilitated households in the colony have been given continuous assistance by the government through various development programmes to raise their socio-economic levels. However, the experience has been quite dismal. We hardly find much difference between this target group and the others who had to fend for themselves.

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<sup>7</sup>See, *Alexander, 1972; Tharamangalam, 1981.*

<sup>8</sup>See, *Wilson, K. 1982.*

Table 4.22

## Comparison of two studies

Particulars	Colony	Group	DWS
Households surveyed(No)	113	25	100
Total population(No)	541	126	520
Population below 15 years (%)	18.7	24.6	-
Population above 60 years (%)	13.7	14.3	-
Sex-ratio (female per 1000 males)	905	969.0	962.0
Size of the household(No)	4.8	5.0	5.2
Total literacy Rate (%)	92.9	93.1	94.0
Male literacy rate (%)	97.3	96.5	95.5
Female literacy Rate(%)	88.0	89.8	92.5
Education above matriculation (%)	15.8	21.7	11.7
Graduates (%)	2.6	0.0	1.5
Work Participation Rate (%)	66.8	66.1	57.5
Male Work Participation Rate (%)	54.1	65.5	-
Female Work Participation (%)	62.8	66.7	-
Cultivators (% of workers)	2.7	4.0	-
Agri. Labourers (% of workers)	17.8	26.0	12.2
Government Service (% of workers)	12.2	6.0	1.4
Skilled Labour (% of workers)	21.6	20.0	-
Wage Labour (% of workers)	32.9	28.0	31.8
House hold work (% of population)	15.0	17.5	-
Latrine Facilities (% of houses)	62.0	68.0	32.0
Electrification (% of houses)	72.0	40.0	22.0
Agri-Pension Holders (% of 60 plus)	17.6	38.9	-
Average land holding(in cents)	21.0	8.7	8.6
Plinth area <300 sq.feet (% of houses)	41.6	76.0	-
Mud-floor (% of houses)	46.0	52.0	-
Tiled roof(% of houses)	93.8	88.0	70.0
Plastered wall (% of houses)	38.1	28.0	-
Number of rooms < or =3 (% of houses)	50.4	56.0	82.0
Own-well users (% of houses)	38.9	52.0	-

*Source: DWS survey in 1992, surveys in 1996.*

The average area of land owned by the control group households is very small (8.7 cents) compared to the free allotment possession of 21 cents by the colony households. Moreover, no household among these Dalit Christians has either lost or could acquire more land during the last one decade. Nevertheless, the Dalit Christians have relatively spacious houses though electrification is poor. In other respects, however, both the situation are almost similar. Socio-economic survey conducted by DWS in 1992 also shows that 77 per cent households have land less than 15 cents. While sex-ratio



(905) in the colony is very low and unfavorable to women, it is 969 among the control group. The 1992 DWS study in the Panchayat also shows a sex-ratio (962) much better than the sex-ratio in the colony. It is also found that female sex-ratio even at birth is lower in the colony area.

More than half of the total workers both in the colony and among the control group are either agricultural labourers or other wage labourers. Among the control group agricultural labourers constitute 26 per cent of the total workers while in the colony they constitute 17.8 per cent. 33 percent of the workers in the colony are engaged in other wage labour activities where as only 28 per cent are engaged in similar work among the control group. The 1992 study shows that both these together form 44 per cent of the total workers. In both these groups the percentages of government employees are very small; 12 per cent in the colony and 6 per cent in the other area. However, it was only 1.4 per cent according the 1992 survey. The percentage of old people getting agricultural pension is significantly more among the control group. 40 per cent of the persons aged 60 years and over get this assistance there, while in the colony only 17.6 per cent of the people were getting it. This difference is quite striking. It shows the better awareness among control group about the welfare measures and knowledge to make use of it.

Both these enquiries show that the educational status of the people is very poor. Even though total literacy rates both among the colony people and among the control group are above 93 per cent only 21.7 per cent in the colony and 15.8 per cent in the other

group have attained education levels above matriculation. Moreover very few have become graduates; just 2.6 per cent in the colony, and none among the control group. The 1992 study also reported that only 11.7 per cent of the Dalit populations in the Panchayat had education level above matriculation; among them was 1.5 per cent were graduates. The total literacy rate among them was, however, reported to be 96.7 per cent.

### **Conclusion**

The foregoing analysis shows that the socio-economic experience of a rehabilitated community has been rather dismal. Neither their initial endowments nor the subsequent assistance could make much qualitative improvements in their living conditions. In fact a comparison of their conditions with that of the non-targeted sections outside the colony does prove this striking experience.

Though during the period of colonization a reasonable amount of land was given to each settler household, except a few, all of them have experienced loss of property and became tiny holders over time due to socio-economic and demographic factors. Poor educational level and wage labour status of the colonists have accentuated the process of differentiation. A high literacy rate has not promoted a higher educational level. Therefore, only a very small group among the workers could get employed in government service. On the other hand in the agriculture labour category, however, there is a clear predominance of female labourers; in fact male labourers get displaced from the traditional paddy cultivation as a result of the introduction of mechanization. As a result of all these factors

including dehumanization of labour almost half of the households in the colony come under the poverty line.

Another striking feature of the colony is its very low female sex-ratio. All the previous studies on the colony reveals this. Studies conducted in other parts of the Panchayat also shows a sex-ratio unfavourable to female. In other parts of Kerala, however, women outnumber men. The present study has revealed that female sex-ratio even at birth is lower in the colony area. But, this alone does not give answer to the glaring disparity in sex-ratio, particularly while it is considered as a hall-mark of underdevelopment.

Most of the houses in the colony are very small in size with a few rooms, mud plastered floor and walls and with tiled roof. The facilities available and the quality of construction are better in the case of houses owned by the migrants than the houses of original settlers. Besides, though the settlement was established as a model colony almost exclusively for the landless scheduled caste households, it has become a multi-community settlement over time. The proportion of the officially settled scheduled caste households came down from 86.6 per cent to 59 over time. On the other hand the percentage of the intermediary castes in the colony increased during the period. As result the land ownership pattern in the colony suggests that the title of ownership has been gradually moving in favour of migrant households from the original settlers and their successors. In short, the scheduled caste households get marginalised and stay at the periphery of the colony or get pushed out of it. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to this

colony but a common feature in areas where caste status and economic compulsions continue to influence social position and economic opportunities. Dispossession of the depressed communities from their places of origin and centres of development has been a common phenomenon. Alienation of their assets by the exploitative settlers has led them to peril and poverty. The aborigines throughout the world had been uprooted from their original abodes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The experience of the scheduled tribes in the Western Ghat region in Kerala is yet another example in recent times. In the wake of large scale alienation of tribal lands by encroachers, government promulgated a law in 1975, ensuring restoration of the alienated land to the tribals. The government never implemented this law, instead allowed further encroachments to take place. In 1996 the government brought out another law validating all encroachments and totally depriving the tribals of the legitimate claim for ownership of their ancestral properties.

## Chapter 5

### Summary and Conclusions

The scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and other differentiated weaker sections comprise broadly the poor in India. Traditionally, they are placed at the lowest position of social as well as economic order due to rigid caste relations. A vast majority of this sections still remain as agricultural labourers, casual labourers or unemployed living under severe impoverished conditions. Different kinds of development programmes and social security measures are under-taken to ensure the upliftment of these vulnerable sections. However, the impact of such efforts has been quite dismal the target groups continue to remain as the most economically and socially oppressed sections in India. Most of the welfare measures are found to be organized without having a proper perspective of the dynamics of problems of the targeted population.

In Kerala most of the 'indicators' of backwardness are by and large insufficient to capture the intensity and complexity of the situations faced by the weaker sections. They still remain at the periphery of the 'development model' in Kerala. In fact it seems that none of the development policies including 'land reforms' could create significant improvements among them, instead they continue to share only subsistence level of living. In order to analyze the impact of development programmes on the socio-economic status of the weaker sections in Kerala we narrow down our enquiry to a model rehabilitation colony situated in the vicinity of the Kuttanad rice growing region.

hardly observe much difference in the socio-economic status between the targeted group (colony) and the non-targeted (control group).

Though during the period of colonization a reasonable amount of land was given to each settler household, most of them became tiny holders over time due to socio-economic and demographic factors. Poor educational level and wage labour status of the colonists have accentuated the process of differentiation. There are several compelling-factors that necessitate the dispossession of land held by the weaker sections. Most importantly, marriage of daughters, medical treatment and unemployment led to this dispossession. Now almost half of the households in the colony come under the poverty line.

Most of the houses in the colony are very small in size with a few rooms. The facilities available and the quality of construction are relatively better in the case of houses owned by the migrants than the houses of original settlers. Besides, though it was a model colony for the landless scheduled castes, later it became a multi-community settlement by the arrival of others especially the intermediary castes in to the colony. This has led to a change in the ownership pattern of land in favour of the migrants from the original settlers and their successors. In this process, many of scheduled caste households have get marginalised to stay at the periphery of the colony or got eventually pushed out of the settlement.

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phenomenon. The present study discloses that female sex-ratio even at birth is lower in the colony area. But, this alone does not give answer to the glaring disparity in sex-ratio, particularly while it is considered as a hallmark of underdevelopment. Therefore it is necessary to undertake a demographic enquiry to probe more into this peculiar situation.

Earlier studies have shown that many of the follow-up programmes could not make much impact on the targeted group. For instance, government had started a weaving centre in the colony to create employment opportunities, but now the Centre no longer functions. Studies have found that, it was an unsuitable programme, because the ex-trainees could hardly get jobs anywhere in the region. Likewise, during the early phase, the colony was organized as a model collective farm unit, where each household could contribute its labour in various agricultural activity, like crop production, dairying etc. However, in due course, the management failed, and the households were left to earn for themselves.

On the whole what the study finds is that, almost all the development programmes designed for the upliftment of the weaker sections could make only marginal achievements. In fact the policy of 'protective discrimination' does not seem to guarantee a minimum level of living for the beneficiaries. A simultaneous process of fundamental socio-economic transformation to the benefit of all socially and economically weaker sections of the population is, therefore, essential. Of course, it is easier said than done.



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