

Slavery, Colonial Rule and Tribal History: Analyzing the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' of Kerala through the Colonial Archives

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to critique the categorical conceptualizations of the tribes in colonial archives, particularly the 'Adiya' and 'Paniya' communities of the North-East Kerala. The 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' identify themselves to be predominantly agricultural communities. However, they are defined and debated in the social history of Kerala in multiple ways in terms of their labour practice. The existing colonial narratives and ethnographic histories argue that the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' shared a history of slavery on the agricultural fields of Malabar district in the erstwhile Madras presidency. For the Marxist historians of Kerala, the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' were bonded labourers on the agricultural fields. The contemporary ethnographic documentary narratives on these tribal communities show that the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' are employed as free wage labourers on the ginger plantations, where they are exploited.

However, collective memories and lived experiences of the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' reveal that they form an integral part of the agricultural economy of Kerala. The cultural history of the

‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ is closely linked with their agricultural festivals. The complexities involved in the history and identity of the ‘Adiyas and ‘Paniyas’ are the result of their changing relations with colonial and post-colonial administrative bodies in Malabar. ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ as slaves/bonded labourers became foundational for the colonial and post-colonial narratives on these adivasi communities. The paper attempts at a reading of the provincial colonial documents on slavery in Malabar of the nineteenth century to understand the complexities involved in consolidating the social history of the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ as slaves. Evidence from the provincial colonial documents are inconsistent with the stereotyping of the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ as slaves/bonded labourers. These documents suggest that the tribal communities of ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ experienced diverse ways of living. They were food gatherers and independent agriculturalists. The paper thus attempts at historicizing the knowledge production around the tribes of Kerala and presents the adivasi viewpoint that the stereotype of the tribe as a slave subsumes the complexity and richness of their cultural history.

Keywords: Adiya, Paniya, colonialism, slavery, tribe.

Introduction

The ‘tribe’ has always been a category that defied strict categorical definitions in the Indian context. The category ‘tribe’, in colonial India was introduced as an administrative category; for the ease of colonial rulers to bring the people under administrative policies. Post-colonial studies that came out on the tribes of India had taken efforts to assert their existence as a community of independent cultivators who lost their identity as agriculturalists by the migrant settlers on their lands. Subaltern historians like Archana Prasad¹ had argued that the ‘tribes’ of India were those plain agriculturalists who were pushed farther into the hilly areas as a result of their lands being usurped by the foreign invaders. The tribes, from a subaltern perspective, are considered an autonomous community of agriculturalists who practiced communitarian means of food production. Imposition of colonial rule in the erstwhile colonies had adversely affected the tribal culture, polity and economy and had

impacted the tribal customary forms of living as well.² Shifting cultivation practices and the food gathering practices of the tribes were strictly restricted by the implementation of colonial forest policies as well as the land revenue practices. The tribes, thus devoid of access to any independent, communitarian means of food production practices were pushed into modern, capitalist labour systems in the agricultural sector.

The tribal history and culture has thus been undermined by the colonial policies that often attempted to primitivise the tribes and categorise them as agricultural slaves. As a reaction to the loss of autonomous forms of cultivation, the tribes began to resort to tribal narrations of history that dignified their culture, along with an emphasis on their political rights. Most often, such claims that were based on the reclamation of tribal rights for land, water and forests were defined as an appeal to 'indigeneity' by the subaltern historians of South Asia. Thus it can be argued that the tribes who were once actively a part of the cultivation practices in pre-colonial India were alienated from their lands and cultivation practices by the colonial administrative policies. An appeal to 'indigeneity' and tribal cultural history seems to be the coping strategy for the tribal communities in India so that they would be a part of the political domain and electoral democracy of the nation.³

The 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' of Wayanad

The 'Adiya' and 'Paniya' tribal communities inhabit the hilly district of Northeast Kerala called Wayanad. Wayanad is set atop the Western Ghats. The western and southern parts of Wayanad are surrounded by the plains of Malabar. To its east is the Nilgiri mountains, to the north-east is the Mysore plateau and to its north west, the Western Ghats stretches to Coorg, in Karnataka. Wayanad holds the largest population of tribes in Kerala. It is home to 1,51,443 tribes according to the 2011 census.⁴ Wayanad came under the British rule by the beginning of the 1800's. The colonial rule introduced modern forms of politics, economy and law into Wayanad and its tribal inhabitants. Renewed land revenue policies, forest protection measures and the introduction of plantation economy in Wayanad during the nineteenth century affected the symbiotic relationship that the tribals shared with the land and forests of Wayanad. Moreover,

the vast availability of lands for cultivation in the hills brought people from the central Travancore during the 1920's to Wayanad. All these developments pushed the tribal communities of Wayanad into agricultural labour on the lands of 'jenmis' or landlords. The tribal communities, particularly the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' of Wayanad had no option but to work as agricultural labourers as they were deprived of independent means of living.

'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' claim themselves to be agriculturalists both historically and culturally. 'Paniyas' form the largest population of Scheduled Tribes in Kerala, forming 22.5% of the total tribal population in Kerala. Though a majority of their population is found in Wayanad, they also inhabit the neighbouring districts of Kannur, Kozhikkode, Palakkad and Malappuram. Rachel Santhosh in her article on the 'Paniyas' of Kerala notes that the term 'Paniya' indicated that they earn their livelihood from work as the term 'pani' in Malayalam meant 'work' (63). They are mainly a landless community and their traditional occupation include hunting, fishing, food gathering, horticulture and trapping of birds and animals (63). 'Adiya' hamlets are mostly found in the taluks of Mananthavady, to the north east of Wayanad. A limited population of the 'Adiya' community also inhabit the neighbouring district of Kannur and the state of Karnataka. Their total population in Wayanad as per the 2011 census is 10, 996. 'Adiyas' claim that they, as a community, had migrated from Karnataka to the hills of Wayanad. Both these communities claim that they were independent agriculturalists who practiced shifting cultivation in the hills of Wayanad. When the lands of Wayanad began to be colonised by the plantation economy and the forests came under the Conservator of Forests for the British administration during the nineteenth century, the tribes found it difficult to continue their independent cultivation practices. It was then that the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' began to be employed by the local landlords as agricultural labourers on the rice fields.

2.1. 'Vallippani': A Tribal Form of Labour

Local labour system between the landlords and tribes was vernacularly known as 'vallippani' or 'kundalppani'. 'Vallippani' is a form of agrestic labour in which the tribes were hired by the jenmis to do labour on their

fields for an entire year. Tribal labourers in the ‘valli’ system were made to forcefully agree to the demands set up by the landlords in return for the money that had been advanced from the landlords to meet their needs. ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ claim that ‘vallippani’ involved a patron-client relationship, based on mutual trust. An elderly ‘Paniya’⁵ from Mananthavady revealed that the system of ‘vallippani’ existed for quite a long time and that he was a ‘valli’ labourer when he was fifteen or sixteen. He revealed that the landlords; who were usually ‘Nairs’, ‘Nambiaris’, and ‘Nambuthiris’; used to call the tribes to work on the fields: “We, the ‘poor’ used to work for them and we got some five rupees or so in a year. For the women, it was two and a half rupees. There were other tasks too. At the time of harvest, we were given one ‘pothi’ (packet) of paddy and were given clothes during Onam and Vishu”. It is believed that the Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ used to gather for the annual festival at Valliyoorkkavu temple near Mananthavady in the month of *Meenom*.⁶ It was at Valliyoorkkavu temple that the tribes were given advances for working on the jenmis’ fields, till the next temple festival. Both the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ agreed that no one could escape from this bondage once the advance was accepted and that the tribes never thought of cheating the landlords. They were free to either work under another landlord once the agreement was over or could renew their older agreement. This system turned to be exploitative when the tribes were denied proper wages. They were given only a small amount of rice daily. The labourers were occasionally given clothes, oil and soap on festive days. Kariyan mooppa⁷ from the Kaithavally ‘Adiya’ colony notes: “It was customary for the jenmis to give us ‘Karikkan’ (a mundu) and some oil and soap after the harvest and on the festive days like ‘Onam’ and ‘Vishu’. Holidays were also given to us as a bonus, after long months of restless labour”.

Conceptualization of the ‘Adiyas’ and Paniyas’ as Slave Communities

The history of the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ of Wayanad have always been linked with agricultural slavery in the ethnographic, administrative and anthropological works on these communities. However, oral histories, folk songs, rituals and personal accounts of these communities often talk

about an independent and dignified past. The works that touched upon the ethnographic and cultural aspects of these tribes had failed to capture the complexity of their culture and labour practices. Without adequate examination into the ways in which these tribal communities adapted to the changing power relations that they were subjected to, most of the works that have tried to create a discourse around the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ categorised them as slaves. Before analysing the ways in which the colonial archival materials captured the tribes of Wayanad in their administrative discourses, it would be important to look at the different ways in which the ‘Adiya’ and the ‘Paniya’ culture was understood by the popular Malayali conscience. For the same, the paper attempts to review some important works, both ethnographic and administrative that contributed in creating an image of the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ as slaves.

While discussing the system of slavery in Kerala, it is important to look at the discourses around bondage in India as well as systems of slavery across the globe, especially in the colonial plantations of the Caribbeans. Scholars have termed the slave experiences of the African Americans in the plantations as part of colonial modernity. Paul Gilroy argued that the slaves on the Caribbean plantations were very much a part of the modern systems of surveillance and labour situations. Gilroy in his *The Black Atlantic* notes that “Colonial experience was used broadly so as to include slavery; colonialism, racial discrimination, and the rise of nationalist consciousness charged with colonialism’s negation” (195). As far as the Indian situation is concerned, scholar like Sanal Mohan opined that the system of slavery in India was graded. Slave systems in India held a direct relation to the caste hierarchies, in which most often the lowest caste hierarchies contributed a steady supply of slave labour. Sanal Mohan in his *Modernity of Slavery: Struggles against Caste Inequality in Colonial Kerala* made it clear that the systems of agrestic exploitations largely experienced in Kerala were related to the caste hierarchies as opposed to the plantation slavery (40).

C. Gopalan Nair’s *Wynaad: Its People and Traditions* was one of the earliest administrative documents that brought to light the political history of Wayanad, one of the remotest divisions of the Malabar district then. Nair was the then Deputy collector of the Malabar district who was then

posted at Mananthavady. The book was administratively important as it helped the colonial administrators in gaining a preliminary understanding of the tribes of Wayanad. Nair in this book also took up the project of documenting the hill tribes of Wayanad, their customs and rituals. With an honest intention to document the local history and the myths associated with Wayanad and its people, Nair drew largely from the reports collected by Colin Mackenzie, dated 1810 to deal with the aporias regarding the history of the place. Moreover, he is indebted to the *Madras Manual of Administration*, *Malabar Manual* by William Logan and *Malabar Gazetteer* to deal with the political history of the place. The local history of Wayanad projected through the book is largely influenced by the colonial documents. Nair had borrowed from the *Malabar Gazetteer* to throw light into the fact that Wayanad had been a tribal kingdom, also called as the ‘Vedar’ kingdom which was later sabotaged by the non-tribal outsiders: “Though the Malabar Gazetteer points to a time of the reign of the Vedar kings, the exact time period and the occasion specific to the Vedar kingdom is not to be found. The two tribal rulers, Vedan and Arippan ruled over the tribes of the area and they were preys to elite subordination. It is said that Vedan was the ruler of the land lying South of the Panamaram river, Wayanad and Arippan ruled over the tract lying north of Panamaram and Arippatta Kunnu in Thavinjal amsoms (division)” (13).

Nair’s book that attempts at a detailed history of the people of Wayanad lacks adequate resources to do it. The book was based on the colonial documents that were available when it was written. The author completely glossed over the tribal nomads of the region as his category of ‘citizen’ included only those who paid taxes. Nair in this book attempted a detailed survey of the people of Wayanad hills and plains. As far as the tribes of Wayanad were concerned, Nair categorised them as hill tribes, predial slaves and food gatherers. Nair had neatly categorised the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ as ‘predial’ or ‘agricultural slaves’. It is interesting to note that the descriptions of the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ are framed in their relationship with a jenmi. ‘Adiyas’ are described as agricultural labourers under the patronage of a jenmi who provided them paddy every year during the Vishu and the Onam festivals.

Unlike the ‘Adiyas’, ‘Paniyas’ are found in all the ‘amsoms’ of Wayanad. They also constitute agricultural labourers under the jenmis. The jenmi provides them with yearly supplies of paddy and clothing that ensure their bondage to him for a year. Even the honorary titles like the ‘mooppan’ and ‘kuttan’ are given by the jenmis. Nair gives a short description of their origin related with the mythical Ippimala. They are believed to be wooed by the plainsmen to come down from the hills to work on the plains and have subsequently become captives of the jenmis (102). The jenmi thus had an important role to play in the lives of these agricultural labourers who remained bound to them as slaves. The ‘Adiya’ and ‘Paniya’ cultural history in the book is constructed around this assumed slave status of these communities.

K. Panoor is another important administrator who dealt with the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ of Wayanad. His book *Keralathile Africa* (1963) had been a tremendous influence among the mainstream Malayali audience with regard to the discussion on the conditions of the tribes of North-East Kerala. Panoor looks at the everyday life and culture of the tribes like the ‘Adiyas’, ‘Kurichyas’, ‘Koragas’, ‘Paniyas’, ‘Kattunaickas’ and ‘Kurumas’. All these tribal communities inhabit the hills of Wayanad and the neighbouring plains of Malabar. Discussions in this book jumped into hasty conclusions regarding the tribal labour patterns in Wayanad.

Panoor hastily drew comparisons between the ‘Adiya’ and ‘Paniya’ agricultural labour with the systems of slavery among the African Americans in the Caribbean plantations. ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ are described as a community that still carry the stigma of an ex-slave community. Panoor described that locally, the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ entered into a patron client relationship wherein the tribes pledged in front of the local deity called ‘Valliyooramma’⁸; their labour to a particular landlord for one year.

The ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ whom I met during the fieldwork in Wayanad however talk of ‘vallippani’ as a necessary arrangement between the labourer and the jenmi for the purpose of cultivation. The late Kariyan mooppan in one of his interviews⁹ made it clear that there were no written bonds between the masters and labourers. The tribal labourers took an oath in front of the local deity called ‘Valliyooramma’ pledging their labour

for a period of one year for one particular jenmi and that they considered it blasphemous to break the oath. Panoor in his book had unmistakably thrown light into the fact that the tribes like the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' of Wayanad used to be subservient to the jenmis of Wayanad, yet he had overlooked the fact that such systems of tribal labour that were based on oral agreements could not be simply paralleled with modern forms of plantation slavery.

P.R.G. Mathur's *Tribal Situation in Kerala* looked at the issue of the 'Adiya' and 'Paniya' labour from a Marxian point of view. Mathur categorised the 'Adiya' and 'Paniya' labour as 'bonded labour'. Mathur borrowed the definition for bonded labour from the report of the select committee on the bonded labour system. This report had included the system of 'Vallippani' or 'kunalppani', the labour system of the tribes as bonded labour:

Bonded labour system consists in the payment of cash called "Vallurkkavu panam" or "nilpu panam" or by whatever name it may locally be known or the payment in kind, by one person (hereafter called the creditor) to a person belonging to a scheduled tribe (hereinafter called the debtor), whether evidenced by writing or otherwise on any one of the following terms namely:

"that in consideration of the payment of cash or the payment in kind made by the creditor to the debtor, the debtor shall by himself or through members of his family, render labour or personal service to the creditor for a specified period, either without wages or on payment of nominal wages".

"that on failure to render the labour or personal service referred to in clause (a), the debtor shall be bound to repay the cash or the value of the things received by him and vacate the hut, if any, occupied by him and situated in the land belonging to the creditor" (95).

Mathur in the book thus attempted to categorise 'kunalppani' or 'vallippani' as a form of bonded labour. The agreement was made in the Valliyoorkkavu temple premises where the loan was given to the debtor and the debtor would forfeit the service of his entire family members to the jenmi for an entire year. The wages that they got for this bonded labour is simply some paddy and clothes. These agreements bound the tribes to a

jenmi for a complete lifetime. They also used to get fringe benefits from the jenmis during the festival seasons like ‘Onam’ and ‘Vishu’. Mathur argues that the reason for ‘Adiya’ and ‘Paniya’ servitude is tribal land alienation. The tribes had entered into oral agreements with the ‘Nairs’ and ‘Chettis’ of the area, lending them the lands that originally belonged to the tribes. Since there were no adequate documents to prove their ownership on these lands, the agriculturalists like the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ got alienated from their lands and had to depend on the landlords for subsistence.

A. Aiyappan’s work called *The Paniyas: An Ex-Slave Tribe of South India* (1992) is an important anthropological work that discusses in detail the culture, practices and the orality of the ‘Paniya’ community. This work systematically analyzed the ‘Paniyas’ as an agricultural community. The book also discussed various reasons for the loss of ‘Paniya’ cultural identity and the role that mainstream history played in depicting the ‘Paniyas’ as slaves, thieves and criminals. Aiyappan went as far as to comment that there was no sociological cause for the ‘Paniyas’ to be treated as tribes as they had always lived in close contact with the landlords of Wayanad (viii). The reason for this assumption could be the fact that the tribes were always categorised as those communities who lived independently in remote areas. Moreover, Aiyappan argues that the ‘Paniyas’ resembled the ‘Cherumas’, the Dalit agricultural slaves of Malabar. In contrast to Panoor’s treatment of the ‘Paniyas’ as slaves, Aiyappan did not categorise the ‘Paniyas’ simply as slaves. He argues through this study that the ‘Paniyas’ along with the ‘Adiyas’ were agricultural labourers, food gatherers and seasonal labourers. He also notes that some of them were hereditary slaves of the jenmis. Nevertheless, Aiyappan made it clear that there was no evidence for slave trade from the Valliyoorkkavu temple (45). Aiyappan also notes that the landlords often used ‘Paniyas’ for crimes. ‘Paniyas’ were hence branded coffee thieves and murderers (9-10).

Thus, Aiyappan’s book gives a detailed description of the adversities that the ‘Paniyas’ had to face with the changing administrative structures in Malabar like the feudal rule and the British rule from the 1790’s to 1947. If the ‘Paniyas’ were hereditary slaves under the feudal landlords, they were plantation labourers on the coffee estates set up by the British.

In the post-independence era, the Christian migrations from the central Travancore had affected the 'Paniya' subsistence as they were not summoned for agricultural purposes often.

What makes Aiyappan's work different is that it tried to understand the 'Paniya' history from the 'Paniya' perspective. Aiyappan did not simply borrow from the colonial documents that were available during the time to write a social history of the 'Paniyas', rather he tried to collect and translate some of the ritual and cultural songs that are important to the Paniyas.

O.K. Johny's *Wayanad Rekhakal* (2010) is another book that claims to be an important explication on the history of Wayanad and the tribes of Wayanad. In the section titled 'Adimakkachavadavum Adimappaniyum' ('Slave Trade and Slave Labour'), Johny deals with the 'Adiya' and 'Paniya' labour that contributed to the wetland cultivation of Wayanad and concludes that their labour system was nothing but slavery. Johny, like Nair and Mathur had retold the mythical story of the slave trade at the Valliyoorkkavu shrine in Mananthavady and had agreed upon the narrative that the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' were a tribal community who were bought and sold by the landlords. According to him, the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' used to go to the annual market at the Valliyoorkkavu temple during the temple festival in March to buy agricultural tools and other products for a year. However, they had to take advance money from the jenmis for the same. As they were unable to repay the amount in cash, they used to enter into an agreement with the jenmis for another one year, pledging to work for them. Since this agreement was made on behalf of the deity, Valliyooramma, none of the tribes dared to walk out of the agreement. (160-61). Such an argument would suffice the curiosity of an uninformed reader on the complexities that are inherent in a power relation wherein even the consciousness of the subaltern had been overridden with the feudal hegemony.

Finally, an important book that needs to be discussed regarding the categorisation of the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' of Wayanad is Mundakkayam Gopi's *Kurumpurai* (2011). Gopi's book is an attempt to trace the history of Wayanad from the neolithic age up to the post-independence era. He had looked into the long process of metamorphosis that the area had

undergone before it became a district of the modern Kerala state in 1980. In the chapter on ‘Slavery in Wayanad’, Gopi elaborated on the contexts under which the system of ‘slavery’ took roots in Wayanad. He argued that the necessary condition for the sustenance of a feudal system required the existence of tenants and subalterns. However, the situation that existed in Wayanad was somewhat different from the landlord – tenant feudal system across the state. Tribes like ‘Kurumas’ and ‘Kurichyas’, were independent agriculturalists who never used to work for the landlords. Other tribes like the ‘Kadars’ and ‘Kattunaickas’ were food gatherers and they lived deep in the forests and rarely held contact with the landlords. However, groups like the ‘Paniyas’ and ‘Adiyas’ came to be seen as the agricultural slaves to the jenmis and they were bonded to these lands for a long period of time.

Gopi notes that ‘Adiyas’ had a history of slavery in Karnataka and they used to work only for Gowders who migrated to Wayanad from Karnataka. As far as the ‘Paniyas’ were concerned, Gopi notes that they would have come under this system some three centuries back. These groups, who were predominantly food gatherers, lost their way of sustenance with increased migrations and the reduction of forest areas due to natural disasters and were forced to work under the landlords (184).

Gopi also describes the way in which the jenmis and their men used to tame the ‘Paniyas’ who were forced to come out of the forests. ‘Paniyas’ who happened to come out of the forests were tied to a long pole and were beaten till the fear of the jenmi gripped them. Paniyas were from then on forced to work on the fields. This process of taming was called ‘mettiyil kettal’. They were also not allowed to keep any private properties and even if they happened to come across anything valuable, they had to forfeit it to the landlord, failure of which they were subjected to harsh punishments.

Gopi’s work looked at the diverse ways in which the ‘Adiya’ and the ‘Paniya’ labour was to be examined. Gopi makes it clear that these tribes were once independent cultivators and then they were subjugated by the non-tribal outsiders. Their labour system according to Gopi was a mixture of hereditary slavery as well as bonded labour, wherein the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ were forcefully brought into the plains cultivation. Gopi’s book is constructed more around a Marxian perspective of production relations

wherein he attributed the land dispossession as the sole reason for the bonded labour that existed among the adivasis. Gopi did not gloss over the local specificity of the existence of the agrestic labour as he pointed to the fact that there could be documents related to the exchanges of the 'valli' labourers as early as the nineteenth century.

3.1. Inquiring Slavery among the Tribes in Colonial Archives

Conceptualisation of the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' as slaves has been largely dependent on the historical and ethnographic works that were discussed in the previous section. Most of these works attributed the knowledge regarding tribal communities based on the colonial administrative reports and travelogues. This section tries to analyze such provincial colonial documents as well as travelogues of colonial officers to build a discourse around the 'Adiya' and 'Paniya' labour practices. Such an analysis is important to question the stereotyping of the tribes as slaves both in the colonial and the post-colonial documents. In his *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Ramnarayan. S. Rawat argued that the Chamars of Uttar Pradesh were stereotyped as leather workers and most of the colonial and post-colonial studies that came out on them assumed their dirty traditional business with the hides of animals as a reason for them being marginalised as untouchables (6). Rawat argued that most of these studies tried to establish leather work as a traditional occupation of the Chamars, which in turn had made their bodies polluting and hence untouchable. However, it was the provincial documents that helped Rawat to establish the fact that the Chamars of UP were not simply leather workers, but that they were also agriculturalists (19-20).

Similarly, with the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' of Wayanad, constant stereotyping of these communities as slaves resulted in the erasure of a possible dignified cultural history for them. Even the post-colonial works that came out on the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' based their arguments on a few colonial records that were framed for administrative purposes. Thus the discourses created by these documents around the tribes as slaves were hasty and denied the roles for 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' as independent cultivators, food gatherers and seasonal labourers. It is also interesting

to note that the provincial documents and reports that were prepared for purposes other than enumeration and administration by the colonial rulers provided insights that are often different and contradictory to the accepted discourse around the tribes. The reports that I tried to analyse in this section are mostly colonial reports on slavery in the Madras presidency and the Malabar district. These documents cover the periods between 1800s and 1900s. Along with these reports, travelogues, early anthropological works on the tribes and commentaries by district administrators on the people of Malabar district are analysed.

Francis Buchanan in his *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* (1807) talked about the slave population of the Southern Canara regions adjacent to the Malabar district. Buchanan made some remarks on the slaves of the area. He notes that the cultivation was mainly done by ‘culialu’ or hired servants and by ‘muladalu’ or bought men/ slaves. He describes that a male slave received one and half ‘hany’ of rice and a woman received one ‘hany’. The male servant also received a piece of cloth worth one and half rupees and two rupees, whereas the woman is allowed only the cloth. They would also receive an allowance of “oil, salt and other seasonings” on festival occasions (36). Buchanan however made no comments regarding the tribes of Wayanad as he had not visited the place.

One of the earliest documents that talked about the aboriginals of the Malabar district is the *Malabar Gazetteer* (1915) by C.A. Innes. In the section that is dedicated to the people of Malabar, it is noted that those depressed classes of aboriginals who occupied the plains were agricultural serfs and those in the hills and forests were genuine “jungle tribes” (133). Innes notes, “It is extremely difficult to determine their relative positions, or to investigate their subdivisions, or customs, since they are entirely illiterate, while the more intelligent amongst them are apt to draw on their imagination and borrow from the manners of their superiors” (133). Regarding the ‘Paniyans’, observation made by Innes was that they contributed the chief agricultural coolies in the foothills of Wayanad. They were shifting cultivators who used to cultivate hill rice. They were simultaneously employed as woodcutters and mahouts. They were excellent

'shikaris' or hunters. They are classified by Innes as animists who used to worship 'kuli' on a raised platform called 'kulithara' (135-136). Innes thus makes it clear that the plain aboriginals like the 'Cherumars' and 'Pulayans' were agricultural serfs whereas the hill tribes like the 'Paniyans' could not be classified as agrestic serfs alone. These communities were never simply dependent on jennis for subsistence, but they had independent forms of shifting cultivation practices as well. It is also noted that aboriginals like the 'Paniyans' were driven up the hill from the plains of Wayanad when more civilized people overtook the plains.

Another important report on the Malabar District is William Logan's *Malabar Manual* (1887) in two volumes. Logan had done detailed analysis of the district of Malabar, its people and customs. It is in Logan's account that we find a detailed description on the system of slavery in Malabar. It is worth mentioning that according to Logan, the servile classes included 'Palli', 'Parayan', 'Ambattan', 'Oddar', 'Upparavan' and 'Vannan'. The slave population of Malabar according to the census of 1857 was 16, 561 and the total slave population of Malabar was 159,000. Of these servile classes, he categorised the 'Parayans' as slaves (115). On the other hand, he specifically described the 'Cherumars' as agrestic slaves. Logan noted that 'Cherumas' of Malabar had always been living in serfdom and was always dependent on the master. They were a community who were considered polluting when in contact with higher castes. The 'Cherumas' were often bought and sold and Logan notes that the price that an average young 'Cheruma' man under ten years old fetched Rs 3-8-0 and of a female somewhat less. An infant ten months old once fetched Rs 1-10-6 (150). 'Cherumas' used to cultivate nearly all the rice lands of Malabar. But Logan observes that even the proclamation of the 'Abolition of Slavery' by Act V of 1843 could not assure complete independence for the 'Cherumars' from their masters as they continued to work under these masters if they wished to.

'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' were outside the purview of Logan. His definition of 'Adiyas' was generic and did not relate directly to the tribes of Wayanad. His discussions on the Wayanad taluk did not include a description of the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' as slaves. For Logan, 'Adiyan'

derived from a Dravidian word ‘adi’ which meant base, bottom or foot. The word ‘Adiyan’ thus meant a ‘slave’. Logan also makes it clear that in North Malabar, the word meant slave and in South Malabar, the word generally meant ‘vassal’. Logan says, “Under the old system, where every Tiyan was under a kind of vassalage to some superior, to some patron, to a Tamburan as he is commonly called, the patron was bound to protect him and to redress any petty wrongs he might sustain, and the client or vassal acknowledged his dependent state by yearly presents, and was to be ready with his personal services upon any private quarrel of his patron. This kind of dependency gave the patron no right of disposal of the person of his vassal as a slave, nor did it acquit the dependent individual of a superior obligation to the Raja or his representatives, the Desavali, and Naduvili, upon a public emergency” (clxviii-clxix). Thus, the usage of the word ‘Adiyan’ did not strictly encompass the ‘Adiya’ and ‘Paniya’ tribes of Wayanad. It should be assumed that these tribal communities escaped the classificatory discourses that the colonial administrators like William Logan resorted to. In fact even in the descriptions on the caste and occupation of the people of Malabar, Logan had identified ‘Kurumbers’ as the only jungle men who were involved in agriculture (114).

Herbert Wigram’s *A Commentary on Malabar Law and Customs* (1882) discussed ‘Kurumbers’, ‘Paniyers’ and ‘Kurichyas’ as the jungle tribes who represented “the pastoral, agricultural and hunting tribes respectively” (i). Wigram comments that these tribes have disappeared from the low countries, yet the representatives of each of these communities are to be found among the forests of Wayanad.

Edgar Thurston’s *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (1909) is an important anthropological work on the different castes and tribes of South India. Thurston in his work had been able to cover slave castes as well as the tribes of Malabar district including the parts of Wayanad. There is a detailed description regarding the ‘Paniyas’ of Wayanad in volume six of Thurston’s work. Thurston observes that the population of the ‘Paniyas’ during the 1891 census was 33, 282. The word ‘Paniya’ meant ‘labourer’. Regarding their status, he observed that “their position was a little removed from that of a slave, for every ‘Paniya’ is some landlord’s ‘man’; and,

though he is, of course, free to leave his master, he is at once traced, and good care is taken that he does not get employment elsewhere” (58). It is also noted by Thurston that when the lands of Wayanad were brought by the plantation owners in the nineteenth century, the ‘Paniyas’ were also sold by the landlords along with these lands. As far as the traditional occupation of the ‘Paniyas’ were concerned, Thurston makes it clear that the ‘Paniyas’ themselves claimed to be agriculturalists, but they were also employed by the plantation owners. It is interesting here to note that some of the observations that A. Aiyappan made in his work on the ‘Paniyas’ were borrowed from Thurston. The stigmatization of the ‘Paniyas’ as a community of criminals has been put forward by Thurston. He claims that the ‘Paniyas’ were employed as coffee thieves by rich receivers at nights. The ‘Paniyas’, it is observed that were not afraid of night trips and they would not “hesitate to commit nocturnal depredations” (59). The ‘Paniya’ men were also employed as night watchmen. In addition to being agriculturalists, they were cattle herders as well. They were often employed to clear the forest areas for cultivation purposes.

Thurston makes it clear that the ‘Paniyas’ did the majority of the rice cultivation of Wayanad on the lands owned by the ‘jenmis’. It is noted that the ‘Paniyas’ were often attached to the edoms or places of the jenmi or to the Devaswoms or temple properties of the great Nair landlords (60). Nevertheless, ‘Paniyas’ are portrayed as a savage community by Thurston who murdered men, changed shapes and lured women.

Thurston notes that the implementation of the colonial policies had seriously affected the livelihood patterns of the tribes like ‘Paniyas’. Acts like the Indian Fisheries Act IV of 1897, which restricted the capture of fishes from the ponds in Wayanad affected the food habits of the ‘Paniyas’. Thurston notes, “These rules referred to the erection and use of fixed engines, the construction of weirs, and the use of nets, the meshes of which are less than one and a half inches square for the capture or destruction of fish, and the prohibition of fishing between the 15th March and 15th September annually”(62). Similarly, the implementation of the forest reservation policies and the land taxes must have equally affected such communities who were not just predial slaves, but were also hunters and

shifting cultivators.

Thurston has also made observations on the cultural practices of the 'Paniyas' in brief. He says that though the 'Paniyas' used to worship the deities of the Hindu pantheon in general, they had specific deities for worship like 'Kadubhagavathi' or the 'goddess of the forest' and 'kuli'. These gods were worshipped on a raw, raised platform usually. He also makes comments on the birth, death, shamanistic practices and marriage ceremonies of the 'Paniyas'¹⁰

Definitions regarding 'Adiyan' in Thurston's work are similar to that made by Logan. Thurston made it clear that the word was usually applied to the vassals of Thampurans and other powerful patrons. The word 'Adiyan' generally meant 'feudal dependency on a patron' (4).

3.2. Representation of Tribal Labour in Slavery Papers

Provincial reports related to slavery that had come out from various districts of the Madras presidency provide important source of information for the description on the labouring classes. These documents offer a slightly different perspective on the matters of agricultural labour and the condition of the 'Adiyas' and the 'Paniyas' of Malabar. In fact in these documents, we see the complexity in capturing the labour practices of the agricultural labourers like the 'Cherumars' of Malabar and the tribes of Wayanad. These documents truly reflect the viewpoints of the provincial administrators and their reports and when compared to each other reveal slight inconsistencies and irregularities with regard to the system of slavery that existed among the lower castes of Malabar. Such inconsistencies could be due to two main reasons, first due to the subjective nature of these reports and the other due to the fact that the information that are recorded in these correspondences are mainly drawn from the elite classes of the area and not from the labouring classes themselves. Nevertheless, these documents offer a sympathetic view on the agricultural labourers like the 'Cherumars' and the tribes of Malabar unlike other administrative documents of enumeration and anthropometric reports that had classified the 'tribes' simply as 'slaves' and savages.

One of the earliest documents on the abolition of slavery is found among the Mackenzie manuscript dated 13 November, 1682. This order

from William Gyfford, Governor of Fort. St. George is regarding the prevention of the sale of the countrymen of Malabar by sea and making them slaves in other countries. The order states that the office of the governor in council found that the countrymen of Malabar were shipped to distant and strange countries as slaves. This order declared the prevention of transporting labourers by all the residents in the province of Fort. St. George. This report reveals that slave trade has been a regular practice from the ports of Malabar since the seventeenth century and it was the British administration that initiated the process of regulating the practices of slave trade of the natives from Malabar.

Another important report on the slaves of Malabar is J. Vaughan's report on the slaves of Malabar dated 20 July, 1819. However, traditional agricultural labourers of Wayanad like the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' were out of the purview of Vaughan's report. Vaughan reports that the condition of the slaves in Malabar had improved with the establishment of the British administration. He observed that the extent of the system of slavery in North Malabar was comparatively lesser than in the Southern and the Eastern provinces. Vaughan clearly stated that "in this estimate I have not included those in Wynaad". The slaves of Malabar were attached to the soil of their proprietors, nevertheless they were frequently transferred, hired or sold to other lands. Vaughan also mentioned the prices that the slave castes like the 'Cherumars' fetched their masters. A man was sold for 48 fanams, a woman for 36 fanams, a boy for 20 fanams and a girl for 15 fanams. The status of the masters in Malabar depended on the number of slaves they possessed and once born a slave in Malabar, the emancipation was close to impossible. With regard to the treatment of the slaves during colonial rule, he notes that even though the proprietors had the power to take the lives of slaves as forms of punishment, it is found that the masters most often treated their slaves with kindness. Vaughan could not find slaves coming before the courts wanting justice.

An important observation that Vaughan made regarding the cultivation of North Malabar is that unlike the South Malabar fields; which were cultivated largely by the 'Cherumars'; the fields of North Malabar were cultivated by hired labourers, who were not slaves. Vaughan

called these labourers free labourers, and it could be assumed that the tribes of Malabar could form these free labourers. Nevertheless, he stated that the condition of these free labourers were worse than that of the slave communities like the ‘Cherumas’ as the ‘Cherumas’ were under the proprietorship of a master who provided subsistence for the slaves even during the off seasons.

Thomas Warden’s report on the emancipation of slaves dated 17 Aug, 1838 was important because it has initiated the process towards the abolition of slavery in Malabar. The report noted that the slaves of Malabar were relinquished of Rs. 927.13, according to the annual jumabandi records. This amount was the revenue derived from them annually. However, the report also says that such a measure should not affect the domestic relations of the native subjects. In the correspondences transmitted regarding the condition of the ‘cherumars’ or rustic slaves of Malabar, during the period between 1839-1841, colonial administrators like P. B. Smollet, P. Clementson and H.T. Prinsep simultaneously proposed for the emancipation of the rustic slaves of Malabar. These reports again mentioned the fact that although not much progress was made with regard to the food and clothing of the rustic slaves of Malabar since 1822; the treatment of slaves by their masters and their condition on the fields were not worse than the free field labourers in North Malabar. Though the landlords exercised their power over the slaves to sell them along with or without land and children, this proceeding is seldom or never adopted. The result of these correspondences was that the Principal Collector of Malabar announced the remission of the land revenues of the slave owners on the condition that they treated their slaves with kindness. Clementson’s report among this set of correspondences is interesting as he observed that the slaves possessed the right to hold land and other property as was possible for any other free man. The letter says, “There are about 377 slaves who at present hold land, on different tenures, paying revenue directly to the government, the sum payable by each varying from 1 to 92 Rs. per annum”. However, these correspondences did not mention the tribes of Wayanad as agricultural slaves wanting an improvement of their situation.

It is true that the slaves who did the majority of cultivation on the lands of Malabar were sold. It was a common practice in Malabar to sell and distraint the slaves of revenue defaulters. An important observation that is made regarding the wretched state of the slaves of Malabar is by P.B. Thomas, the zilla judge of Malabar. Unlike the administrators like Vaughan, Smollett and Clementson, Thomas says that the condition of the rustic slaves of Malabar was wretched in a report dated 11 October, 1842. Thomas notes that in the district of Madras, the predial slaves were mainly kept to increase the profit of the slave holder. ‘Cheruma’ slaves are exploited to the maximum. They are also sold for the maximum price that the owner can get for them. The Cherumas are found to be in the same wretched situation as they were fifty years back. ‘Cherumas’ were not adequately fed, lodged or clothed though their population grew from 14,4000 to 1,59000 as reflected in the census of 1842. The continuous British rule for over some period in the district of Malabar brought down the physical outrages and tortures on the slave population such as mutilation, but it had not brought any considerable change to the wretched condition of the ‘Cherumas’ of Malabar.

Thomas here makes a comment regarding the hill tribe communities of Malabar whom the administrators found difficult to be categorised as slaves. Thomas notes that though the situation of those people living in the hills was solitary, their life was one of choice and not of compulsion. The task for the administration, according to Thomas, was to bring them into “the circle of civilization” since these people were inaccessible for neither the administration nor the land owners (17). Thomas concluded in his observations that the abolition of slavery in Malabar in 1843 was only in theory and was not practically achieved.

It is not completely true that the tribes were never part of the slave system of Malabar. One of the vernacular documents on bamboo plates dated 1846 AD preserved at the Madras Government Museum mentions the sale of a Paniyan. The bamboo inscription mentions the sale of a ‘Paniyan’ named Kuppan with his children to a Nair by a Chetty. There was no land sold with this ‘Paniyan’.

Slavery papers related to India among the ‘Anti-Slavery Collections’

published in 1834 gives a detailed provincial report on the condition of agricultural labourers and slaves of Malabar. Observations regarding the system of slavery in Malabar has been made by administrators like T. H. Baber, A. D. Campbell and Henry Bevan. Baber notes that agrestic slavery or predial slavery was a custom or 'Deshachary' since time immemorial in Malabar and that the introduction of the colonial rule had made its observance relaxed. Baber notes that the system of separating the slaves from their lands and families and selling them off to the plantations began with the Bombay government's decree allowing Murdoch Brown, the then overseer of the company's plantation in Malabar to procure as many slaves as he liked from the Southern regions of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore during the 1800s. Baber's observation regarding the payment of the slaves is quoted from the reports of H.S. Graeme dated 14 January, 1822. Graeme had observed that the slaves were paid in kind and this system of daily allowance was called the 'wallee' system. 'Walle' system allowed "one and a half to one and three quarters seers of paddy (rice in the husk) to the male ; and one to one and a quarter to the female slave; nothing is there stated as allowed to young or aged." (8)

Baber categorised the hill tribes of Wayanad like 'Koorcher', 'Kooramer', 'Kadder' and 'Pannier' (Paniar) as agrestic labourers or conditional labourers. The tribes were employed in specific cultivation practices. 'Koorcher' and 'Kadder' were engaged in cardamom cultivation and a variety of other hill products. The 'Kooramer' cultivated both hills and lowlands and were also employed in the gold mines in Wayanad. Though the hill proprietors laid claims to these tribal communities, they were never sold. Seldom did these tribes pay obedience to their masters. Baber clearly classified 'Panniers' as agriculturalists who were engaged in rice cultivation. Though the 'Panniers' were sold at times, they were not sold out of their country of birth. These tribal communities often ran away from their masters when they were beaten or ill-treated. It is also noted that the tribes like the 'Paniyars', 'Koorcher' and 'Kadder' were mostly employed in the 'poonam' cultivation or shifting cultivation on the hills. Baber's accounts of the hill tribes thus present them not simply as slaves, but as independent cultivators on whom the hill proprietors often depended

upon for the cultivation of spices and cereals.

Unlike the anthropological findings of Edgar Thurston, which characterised the tribes as savages, Baber distinguishes the ‘Paniyas’ and ‘Adiyas’ as communities that showed less “profligacy and depravity” when compared to their more civilized countrymen (19). Except for the pilfering in plantations at night, the tribal and slave communities were never involved in crimes of higher order like murder or highway robbery. Moreover, Baber finds the tribes like ‘Panniers’ as lenient to the colonial officers. ‘Paniyas’ were recruited as guides to serve the colonial army in their search for Pazhassi raja, the ruler of Cotiote and were 15 pagodas each for their service. This observation is brought to the fore in Baber’s report on the death of the Pazhassi Raja of Cotiote, dated 31 December, 1805. Baber had written that it was ‘Paniyars’; the agricultural labourers of Wayanad and close allies of the Pazhassi raja; who helped them to gather information regarding the raja. The ‘Paniyas’ were brainwashed to betray the ‘Raja’ and they were made to swear allegiance to Baber and the British government. Baber’s report might have led to the stereotyping of the ‘Paniyas’ in particular and hill tribes in general, as traitors, but a close reading of the report itself makes it clear that the tribes were simply manipulated and were used as tools for colonial interests.

A.D. Campbell in his observations regarding the system of slavery in the districts under the Madras presidency made it clear that the agrestic labourers were hereditary slaves and their status as slaves depended on the castes to which they were born. According to Campbell’s report, agricultural labourers of the Madras presidency were not necessarily transferable with the lands. Campbell also reports that all the slaves of India were clearly under the protection of law and that the masters could not take their slaves’ lives without incurring the penalty of murder (34).

Henry Bevan’s reports revealed the situation of the slaves of Wayanad. Bevan notes that it was uncommon to employ domestic slaves in the areas of Wayanad as the employers suffered pollution if done so. Rather, the slave castes like ‘Cherumars’, ‘Curumbers’, Nayaidas’ and ‘Paniyars’ were employed in cultivation, herding cattle and chores like carrying grain (37). This report stated that the number of slaves in the district of Wayanad

came around 10,00011. These slaves are not usually worked in gangs or by drivers and the length of the time devoted to their labour was six to eight hours a day. On an average the number of days a labourer had to work in a year was 200, excepting the festival days when there was no employment. The labourers were not coerced or lashed as it would make them run away from the masters. Bevan made it clear that under the British provinces, the slaves and freemen enjoyed equal protection of law with regard to life and property. Nevertheless, the assurance of equal protection of law for the slaves depended on certain factors including “distance and difficulty of immediate European interference”; “the venality of the native local civil servants”; “the want of energy and of a spirit of inquiry for the redress of grievances on the part of persons in authority, who often leave the investigation of complaints to their cutcherry native servants” (38). The slaves of Malabar and Wayanad were found to be usually attached to the lands as serfs and Bevan found an increase in the number of slaves migrating from Wayanad to the neighbouring states of Mysore and Coorg.

With respect to defining the characteristics of the slaves, Bevan had uncritically resorted to the colonial depiction of the slaves as barbarous. Tribal character is described as pusillanimous, ignorant, superstitious and listless. The tone of their speech is guttural and disagreeable and their actions guided by natural instincts. The slaves were not allowed to own property and their sale separately from the lands was not practiced in Wayanad: “The law does not sanction the sale of slaves, nor are they liable to be sold for the debts of their masters, except with the estate. Slaves are never divided from their families” (39). Bevan notes that there was no law that prohibited or promoted the manumission of slaves. Since the colonial administrators were aware of the disturbances that would be caused among the proprietors if slavery was to be abolished on a short notice, there were no measures taken for the immediate amelioration of the state of slaves.

As with the amelioration of the condition of the slaves and the subsequent implementation of the abolition of slavery, Bevan; like the previous commentators; opined that the owners and proprietors of the slaves must be induced to better the condition of their slaves so that the masters would also be able to raise their standards of humanity.

4. Conclusion

Though there are discrepancies and complexities regarding the strict categorisations of the tribal agricultural labourers of Wayanad, almost all the district collectors and judges of the Malabar district had agreed that amelioration of the condition of slaves and the abolition of slavery henceforth could not be achieved instantaneously. Almost all the papers on slavery that were discussed opined that abolition of slavery in Malabar should be done gradually by making the slave population properly educated and helping them acquire ownership titles of property. Moreover, the administrators took utmost care not to offend the customary practices of the slave proprietors of Malabar by stripping off their privileges of slave ownership. Rather the colonial administration wanted the landowners to be generous enough to treat their slaves with compassion and kindness so that it would add to betterment of the slave owners as humans. Thus, the colonial treatment of the issues of slavery and the agricultural castes of Malabar was double edged.

Provincial archival materials on the tribal communities problematized the occupational stereotyping of the tribal communities as slaves in the post-colonial works from Kerala. These documents revealed that the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' could not be easily categorised as slaves and savages. Categorising the 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' simply as slaves is tantamount to denying them a dignified history. Most of the reports on slavery revealed that these communities were pushed into agricultural bondage due to the alienation of land and loss of their customary rights. 'Adiyas' and 'Paniyas' were independent agriculturalists, shifting cultivators, hunters and food gatherers. Instances of slave labour were also found among the communities like the 'Paniyas' as revealed by the vernacular documents. Their existence was thus not simply dependent on 'vallippani', the customary bondage between the landowner and the slave labourers. In the provincial documents that were discussed, we see that the colonial administration had struggled to capture the existence of the tribes as they were beyond their administrative bandwidth. Moreover, none of these documents had single handedly concluded that the tribes were slaves, but observed that their labour practice was to be analysed, dealt with and its

complexity acknowledged. It is important that the dignified history of the tribal communities should be found among the ‘Adiya’ and ‘Paniya’ oralities. Most of the colonial and post-colonial reports on the ‘Adiyas’ and ‘Paniyas’ have failed to incorporate the tribal viewpoints on their history even though some of these works claimed to be partially based on fieldworks among the tribes. Songs, dance forms and shamanistic practices of the tribal communities are the discourses that preserved their history of agricultural labour. However such inquiries are beyond the scope of this paper.¹¹

Notes

1. See Prasad, *Against Ecological Romanticism: Verrier Elwin and the Making of an Anti-Modern Identity* (2003).
2. Scholars like Nandini Sundar, Bhangya Bhukya and David Hardiman have looked at the impact of colonial intervention among the tribal economies.
3. ‘Indigeneity’ as a coping strategy has been discussed by subaltern scholars like Archana Prasad, Virginius Xaxa, and Luisa Steur.
4. The total population of Kerala is around 3.48 crores. 2011 census has registered a slight increase in the tribal population from 3, 64,189 to 4, and 84,839, whereas the total population of Wayanad is 8, 17,420 of which 1, 51,443 are tribals and they constitute 18.5 percent of the total tribal population in the district.
5. Interview with Chala during May 2018.
6. ‘Meenom’ is the Malayalam month that falls in conjunction with the month of March in the English calendar.
7. Interview with ‘Kariyan Mooppan’ during May 2018.
8. ‘Valliyooramma’ is the deity of ‘Valliyoorakkavu’ temple near Mananthavady in Wayanad.
9. Interview with Kariyan Mooppan, at Kaithavally Adiya colony, Thrissilery in May 2019.
10. See pgs. 62-69.
11. Warden noted that the number of slaves in Malabar was 94,786 in 1815-16. Vaughan noted that the slave population was around 100,000 during 1819 and Sheffield in 1827 noted their population to be 95,696. However all these numbers were exclusive of the slave population/labourers in Wayanad.

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