

## Demographic Profile of Tribal Population of Kodagu District, Karnataka

Doreraj ML<sup>1</sup>, Gangadhar MR<sup>2</sup>

**Author Affiliation:** <sup>1</sup>Post-Doctoral Fellow, <sup>2</sup>Professor and Chairman, Department of Studies in Anthropology, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysuru, Karnataka 570006, India.

**Corresponding Author:** Doreraj ML, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Department of Studies in Anthropology, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysuru, Karnataka 570006, India.

**E-mail:** [doreraj77@rediffmail.com](mailto:doreraj77@rediffmail.com)

### Abstract

India has several socially disadvantaged communities and Scheduled Tribes are the most deprived ones. In Census 2011 the Government of India identified 10,42,81,034 citizens as Scheduled Tribes constituting 8.6% of the total population of the India (As per 2001 Census, it was 8.2% of the total population of India). In India, each state is practically equivalent to a country with its own specific socio-economic level, different ethnic groups, food habits, health infrastructures and communication facilities. Kodagu is one such district located on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats in Karnataka and is home to many communities with diverse ethnic origins, and tribes such as the Yeravas, Kurubas and Kudiyas, who are of hunter-gatherers of forest origin. The present study focuses on the socio demographic and economic conditions of the Yerava, Jenu Kuruba and Malekudiya tribes. There have been changes especially in the social and economic life of these tribal people though, differences were found in their social, demographic and economic conditions.

**Keywords:** Jenukurubas; Kodagu; Malekudiyas; Tribes; Yeravas.

### Introduction

India has several socially disadvantaged communities and Scheduled Tribes are the most deprived ones (Manis Kumar Tiwari et al., 2007). According to 2011 Census the Government of India identified 10,42,81,034 citizens as Scheduled Tribes constituting 8.6% of the total population of the India. As per 2001 Census The tribes of India constitute 8.2% of the total population of the country with varying proportions in different states (Rao et al. 2006). It shows that increasing of tribal population. Tribal communities are isolated from general population and are socially and economically vulnerable (Laxmaiah et al. 2007). They are 'at risk' due to geographical isolation, primitive agricultural practices, socio-cultural taboos, lack of formal education, poor infrastructure facilities, improper health seeking behavior, malnutrition, lack of safe drinking water and hygienic conditions, poverty and the like (Sudip Datta Banik 2009). In India, each state is practically equivalent to a country with its own specific socio-

economic level, different ethnic groups, food habits, health infrastructures and communication facilities. Tribal people are acknowledged to have very close association with the ecosystem and the environment because of their fulfillment of daily nutritional requirements with food foraged from nature.

The tribal societies in India are considered as the weakest sections of the population in terms of common socio-economic and demographic factors such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of developmental facilities and adequate primary health facilities (Thakur et al. 1991 and Basu 1994). For many decades, 'growth with equity and social justice' has remained on the development agenda of developing countries, but from the historical past, Indian society suffers from substantial disparity in education, employment, and income based on caste and ethnicity (Desai and Kulkarni 2008). According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, over 84 million people belonging to 698 communities are identified as members of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India (Agarwal 2013).

India has one of the largest tribal concentrations in the world. Prior to the adoption of Indian constitution the tribes were variously termed as aboriginals, adivasis, forest tribes, hill tribes, primitive tribes etc. Up to 1919, the tribes were included under the head of depressed classes, the Indian Franchise Committee in 1919 accorded a separate nomenclature for the census reports in 1931 primitive tribes; 1941 tribes and 1951 scheduled tribes (Verma 1996).

As per the 2001 census, the tribals inhabit in almost all the states and union territories. The government has identified more than 630 tribal communities in the country. Scheduled tribes have been divided into three major groups based on their distribution in three well-defined zones viz., the southern, the central and the northeastern zones (Ashok Kumar and Mohan Kumari 2014)

#### *The Scheduled Tribes*

The word 'tribe' has been defined clearly in the Constitution of India. Article 342 of the Constitution of India empowers the President to draw up a list of scheduled tribes in consultation with the Governor of each State subject to the revision by the Parliament. Accordingly the President has made orders, specifying the scheduled tribes in the different states of India. In post-independence period, the decision as to which community is a tribe and which one is not taken by the administration and not by the social scientists. Thus any community, which is listed in the schedule of the Constitution as a tribe is known as the scheduled tribes in India (Kumar 1998).

According to Majumdar "A tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation (Dash 2007) A tribe is ordinarily an endogenous unit, is a political unit in the sense that the tribal society owning a political organization of its own.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1911 defines tribe as a "collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so" (Nithya 2014).

### **Materials and Methods**

#### *Study Area*

Kodagu is located on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats in Karnataka. It has a geographical

area of 4,102km<sup>2</sup> (kodagu.nic.in 2018) The principal town, and district capital, is Madikeri, or Mercara. Other significant towns include Virajpet, Kushalanagara, Somwarpet and Gonikoppal. The district is divided into the three administrative talukas: Madikeri, Virajpet and Somwarpet. Virajpet is the largest Taluk and comprises the towns viz., Virajpet, Gonikoppal, Siddapura, Ponnampet, Ammathi, Thithimathi etc. Much of Kodagu is used for agriculture. Characteristically and historically, paddy fields are found on the valley floors, with Coffee and pepper agroforestry in the surrounding hills. Kodagu is considered rich with wildlife and has three wildlife sanctuaries and one national park: the Bramhmagiri, Talakaveri and Pusphagiri Wildlife Sancturines, and the Nagarhole National Park, also known as the Rajiv Gandhi National Park.

Kodagu is home to many communities with diverse ethnic origins, with Kodavas being the main ethnic group. Other communities are the Kodagu Gowda and Muslims. Kodava and Are Bhashe are the spoken languages native to Kodagu; however, both use the Kannada script for literature. Airi, Male-Kudiyia, Meda, Kembatti, Kapal, Maringi, Heggade, Kavadi, Kolla, Thatta, Koleya, Koyava, Banna, Golla, Kanya, Ganiga, and Malaya are other castes native to Kodagu who speak Kodava. Many of these communities had migrated into Kodagu from the Malabar Coast region during the Haleri dynasty. There are also a number of tribes such as the Yeravas, Kurubas and Kudiyas, who are of hunter-gatherer forest origin. The Yerava also live in adjacent Kerala, where they are known as the Adiya, and are primarily fishermen and Hindu farm-labourers. They speak their own Yerava dialect. The Kurbas were forest hunter-gatherers who are now farm-labourers. They speak their own dialect and belong to two subcastes - Jenu, who are honey-gatherers, and Betta, who are hill-dwellers and good elephant captors, trainers and mahouts. The Kudiyas are of Malabarese tribe origin, they were toddy-makers. All these groups speak the Kodava language and conform generally to Kodava customs and dress (Kodagu district Profile 2018).

#### *Study Population*

##### *Jenu Kuruba Tribe*

Jenu Kuruba tribes of Karnataka are the original residents of the forests regions of the western ghats of south India. In the kannada language, the term "Jenu" signifies honey and "Kuruba" stands for caste. Therefore their name suggests that Jenu Kuruba. These Jenu Kuruba Tribes have adapted

the profession of honey gathering (Singh et al. 2003). According to anthropologists, after the downfall of the Pallava dynasty several Jenu Kuruba tribes have taken refuge in different places of the southern state of Indian subcontinent. Jenu Kuruba tribes also have settled down in several forests hide outs, quite naturally these tribal people embraced the natural habitat of the forest region. Due to elongated alienation these Jenu Kuruba tribes have developed their own culture and ethnicity. The Jenu Kuruba tribes lead a carefree life style of a typical nomad adapting to various occupations like conventional food collectors and shifting cultivators. The Jenu Kuruba tribals inhabit the forest area that forms a conclave of the three states: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Jenu Kuruba tribe is distinct in its appearance and cultural practices. They have negroid features. They are of short stature, have curly hair and are dark complexioned. They are shy and timid by nature. The Kuruba is the name of the large Shepard community of the Karnataka plateau. They speak Kannada. In Mysore, they are divided into Uru Kuruba and Kadu Kuruba. Kadu Kuruba further divided Betta Kuruba and Jenu Kuruba (Aiyappan 1948).

#### *Yerava Tribe*

The Yerava are divided into four subgroups, viz., Pani Yerava, Panjari Yerava, Badaga Yerava and Kage Yerava. They are distributed in the border area of the three southern states, viz., Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The numerically preponderant sub-groups of the Yerava viz., Pani and Panjari are considered to be two distinctive communities spread over the adjoining area of the three southern states. The word Pani means 'work' in Malayalam. The term Panjari means a 'basket to protect to chicks.' The term Kage means 'crow', a scavenger bird. According to Yerava oral tradition, once upon a time, the Yerva were pastoral nomads in the Wayanad area of the Kerala and also cultivated lands there. After some time, a few of them migrated in northerly direction in search of pasture and settled in Virajpet taluk of Kodagu district where there was abundant forest and pastures. The four sub groups of Yerva have their legends about their origin, the Pani Yerava claim that they are the descendents of a couple called Anjilath Appemuthi and Papalath Ammemuthi Panjari Yerava trace their origin to a mythical couple who were created by god out of mud. They are known by the names Melarachai and Keejarathi. In the beginning, they settled down near Tirunelly, a pilgrim center near Kerala. The Kage Yerava trace their origin

from an excommunicated group of Yerava. Once upon a time the entire Yerava community was a homogenous one without any subgroups. During that period, the Yeravas performed a ritual to please their deity. So they cooked food to offer the deity and for self-consumption. Before offering food to deity, a crow had touched the food and taken a pinch of it. Some of the yerava saw a crow taking a pinch of cooked food abstained themselves from eating the food, while a few of them unknowingly ate the same food. Since then, these people were excommunicated by their fellowmen and they were known as Kage Yerava. Later on, Kage Yerava become a subgroup among the Yerava.

Yeravas speak their own dialect known as Pani and Panjari. These dialects are mixture of Malayalam and Kannada, while the Badaga speak Kannada. They use the Kannada script. The Yerava women wear the Sari in a distinctive fashion, which is very specific to the Yerava and similar to the Coorg women wearing the Sari along with blouse. The Yeravas have oral tradition of folk-songs and folk-tales. Percussion musical instruments accompany during their singing and dancing. Both men and women participate in dances. Most of the upper castes such as the Brahman and Kodava do not accept food or water from the Yeravas.

#### *Malekudiya Tribe*

Malekudiya tribes are origin of Malabarees. Malai means 'Hill' or 'Hill top' and Kudi means family thus people living on hilltops known as Malikudi locally pronounced as Malekudiya. Malekudiya is their spoken dialect which is akin to Tulu. With others they speak Tulu and Kannada (Singh et al. 2003). Endogamy is practiced at the community level among Malekudiya. They are inhabited in the high hilly regions of Western Ghats of Karnataka and Kerala. They live on the peak of the hills. They are originally toddy makers and grow elaichi (Cardamom) with their own traditional way of planting. They speak the Kodava language and adopt to Kodava customs and dress, but not as developed and benefited as Kodavas. Malekudiya tribes have settled down in several hilly forests areas and encompass the natural environment of the forest region. They have voiced custom of folk-songs and folk-tales, thumping musical instruments complement during their singing and dancing.

The present study was conducted in Kodagu district. The three tribal groups namely Yerava, Jenu kuruba and Malekudiya were selected. Interview schedule method was chiefly adopted

to elicit the information from tribal families. All the three tribal population distributed in all the three talukas of Kodagu district. A self framed schedule was prepared to gather information on the social, demographic and economic conditions. The schedule included questions regarding the personnel information of the respondent such as age, gender, education, occupation, income, marriage consanguinity, etc. family background such as family size, type of family, marriage details, living conditions etc. economic conditions such as education, occupation, income, saving, source of income, possessions etc. along with cultural practices and food habits. The collected data was consolidated and a report was prepared.

## Results

### Population Growth

*Population growth* measures the rate of *population increase* as determined solely by births and deaths

Table 1 shows the details of ST population in Coorg district. According to the census reports of 1991, 2001 and 2011 it is observed that the ST population contributes up to 8.25% in 1991 to 8.40% and 10.46% in 2001 and 2011 respectively. It shows that there is significant decadal population growth among ST's in all the taluks of Kodagu district. ST populations are more concentrated in Virajpet taluk when compared to other two taluks viz. Madikeri and Somwarpet.

Table 2 and figure 1 shows the sex wise distribution of ST population in Kodagu district. The taluk wise sex distribution of ST population shows that an almost equal male and female sex ratio. Decadal growth in the population of the scheduled tribes can be noted among both sexes.

The Table 3 gives information about area wise distribution of ST population in taluks of Kodagu district as a whole. According to this table the distribution of ST population was found to be higher in Virajpet taluk. Further, it can be noted

**Table 1:** Details of ST Population in Coorg district

Taluk Name	Year	Total population	Total ST	Percentage
Madikeri	1991	127418	5551	4.35
	2001	142012	6908	4.86
	2011	146583	8024	5.46
Virajpet	1991	178511	27507	15.40
	2001	200628	30006	14.95
	2011	201431	39493	19.60
Somwarpet	1991	182526	7254	3.97
	2001	205921	9201	4.46
	2011	206505	10537	5.10
Total District	1991	488455	40312	8.25
	2001	548561	46115	8.40
	2011	554519	58054	10.46

Source: - Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

**Table 2:** Sex wise distribution of ST population

Taluk Name	Year	Total		ST			
		Male	Female	Male	%	Female	%
Madikeri	1991	64235	63183	2811	4.37	2740	4.33
	2001	70987	71025	3454	4.86	3454	4.86
	2011	72966	73617	3991	5.46	4033	5.47
Virajpet	1991	90904	87607	14081	15.48	13426	15.32
	2001	101105	99523	15040	14.87	14966	15.03
	2011	99754	101677	19348	19.39	20145	19.81
Somwarpet	1991	91730	90796	3660	3.98	3594	3.95
	2001	102739	103182	4615	4.49	4586	4.44
	2011	101888	104617	5171	5.07	5366	5.12
Total District	1991	246869	241586	20552	8.32	19760	8.17
	2001	274831	273730	23109	8.40	23006	8.40
	2011	274608	279911	28510	10.38	29544	10.55

Source: - Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

the concentration of ST population was higher in rural area than in urban areas. According to census reports 1991, 2001 and 2011 an increasing trend consistently can be observed in the distribution of tribal population.

The three tribal groups namely Jenukuruba, Yerava and Malekudiya were selected to study the socio demographic factors. The three tribal groups were selected from all the taluks of Kodagu district viz Ayarasuli and Katte haadi of Somwarpet taluk, Cheenihaadlu of Virajpet taluk and Yavakappadi of Madikeri taluk with a aim to know the differences in their demographic aspects.

Table 4 shows age, sex and marital status composition of the selected tribal population. The table shows that more number of the people

among all the three tribal groups were found to be in the age group of 20-34 years followed by 5 -14 years age group. It can also be noted that among Jenu kurba tribal people married individuals can be seen from the age groups of 15-19 years, but among Yerava and Malekudiya tribe it was seen from 20-24 years of age. It can be understood that among Jenu Kuruba tribal group marriage before 19 years exist.

Table 5 shows the age, sex and marital status composition of Jenu kuruba tribe. The data shows that higher percentage of both males and females were in the age group of 20-24 years (21.8% and 14.8%) and 5-9 years (14.4% and 14.8%) and 45-49 years (14.4% and 13.6%) respectively. The fertile group population was found higher in this tribal group.

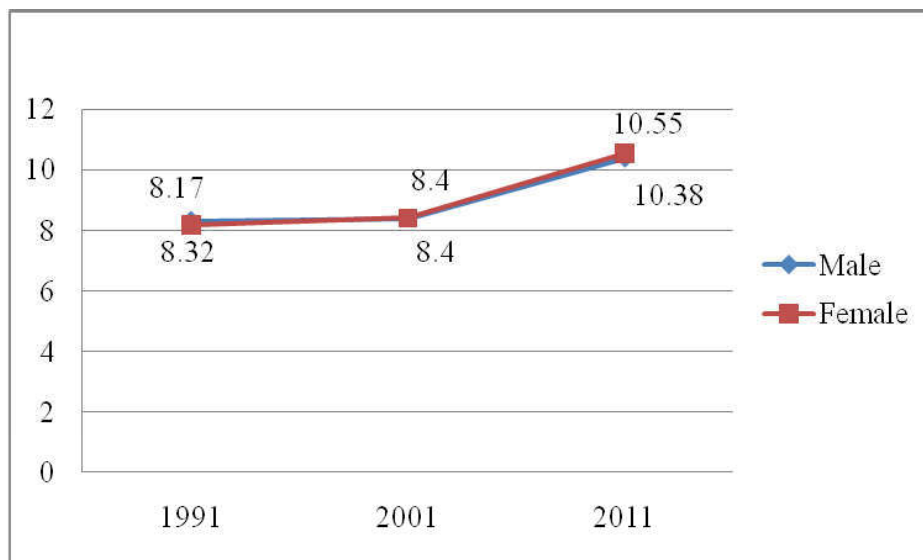


Fig. 1: Sex wise distribution of ST population (total district) in Kodagu District

Table 3: Area wise distribution of ST population

Taluk	Year	Total		ST	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Madikeri	1991	98668	28750	5038 (5.10)	513 (1.78)
	2001	109516	32496	6358 (5.80)	550 (1.69)
	2011	113202	33381	7391 (6.52)	633 (1.89)
Virajpet	1991	154501	24010	26915 (17.42)	1392 (5.79)
	2001	178148	22480	29660 (16.64)	346 (1.53)
	2011	175879	25552	38896 (22.11)	597 (2.33)
Somwarpet	1991	157345	25181	6946 (4.41)	308 (1.22)
	2001	185515	20406	8878 (4.78)	323 (1.58)
	2011	184450	22055	10011 (5.42)	526 (2.38)
Total District	1991	410514	77941	38899 (9.47)	1413 (1.81)
	2001	473179	75382	44896 (9.48)	1219 (1.61)
	2011	473531	80988	56298 (11.88)	1756 (2.16)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage, Source: - Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

Table 6 shows the age, sex and marital status composition of Yerava tribe. Among the Yerava tribe higher percentages of individuals were in the age group of 30-34 years in both male (15.5%) and female (17.5%). Among the female higher percentage

were found in the age group of 20-24 years (15.7%), while among male higher percentage was found in 35-39 years (13.6%) and 5-9 years (13.5%). Almost equal percentage of male and female (11.5% and 11.8%) were seen in the age group of 15-19 years.

**Table 4:** Age, Sex and Marital Status composition of the selected tribal population

Age Group	Jenu Kuruba					Yerava					MaleKudiya				
	UM	M	D	W	T	UM	M	D	W	T	UM	M	D	W	T
0-4	09	-	-	-	09	06	-	-	-	06	07	-	-	-	07
5-9	22	-	-	-	22	12	-	-	-	12	09	-	-	-	09
10-14	14	-	-	-	14	07	-	-	-	07	11	-	-	-	11
15-19	07	04	01	-	12	12	-	-	-	12	07	-	-	-	07
20-24	12	15	-	-	27	05	03	04	-	12	08	02	-	-	10
25-29	-	02	02	-	01	02	05	-	02	09	11	11	-	-	22
30-34	-	02	01	05	06	03	07	03	04	17	05	14	03	-	22
35-39	-	09	-	-	09	-	09	02	-	11	-	-	05	-	05
40-44	-	-	-	07	07	-	-	-	-	-	-	04	-	02	06
45-49	-	18	01	02	21	-	04	-	-	04	-	02	-	-	02
50-54	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	-	02	-	03	-	04	07
55-59	-	-	-	03	03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60+	-	09	-	05	19	-	05	-	06	11	-	05	-	05	10
Total	64	59	05	22	150	47	35	09	12	103	58	41	08	11	118

**Table 5:** Age, Sex and Marital status composition of Jenu kuruba Tribe

Age Group	Un married		Married		Divorced		Widowed		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	05	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	05	04	7.3	4.9
5-9	10	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	12	14.4	14.8
10-14	08	06	-	-	-	-	-	-	08	06	11.7	7.4
15-19	03	04	01	03	-	01	-	-	04	08	5.8	9.9
20-24	07	05	08	07	-	-	-	-	15	12	21.8	14.8
25-29	-	-	01	01	01	01	-	-	01	03	1.4	3.7
30-34	-	-	01	01	-	01	02	03	04	04	5.8	4.9
35-39	-	-	04	05	-	-	-	-	04	05	5.8	6.2
40-44	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	05	02	05	2.9	6.2
45-49	-	-	10	08	01	-	-	02	10	11	14.4	13.6
50-54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	02	01	02	1.4	2.5
60+	-	-	04	05	-	-	01	04	05	09	7.3	11.1
Total	33	31	29	30	02	03	06	16	69	81	100	100

**Table 6:** Age, Sex and Marital status composition of Yerava tribe

Age Group	Un married		Married		Divorced		Widowed		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	02	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	04	3.8	7.8
5-9	07	05	-	-	-	-	-	-	07	05	13.5	9.8
10-14	04	03	-	-	-	-	-	-	04	03	7.6	5.9
15-19	06	06	-	-	-	-	-	-	06	06	11.5	11.8
20-24	02	03	01	02	01	03	-	-	04	08	7.6	15.7
25-29	02	-	02	03	-	-	-	02	04	05	7.6	9.8
30-34	03	-	02	05	02	01	01	03	08	09	15.5	17.5
35-39	-	-	05	04	02	-	-	-	07	04	13.6	7.8
40-44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45-49	-	-	03	01	-	-	-	-	03	01	5.8	2.0
50-54	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	3.8	-
55-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60+	-	-	03	02	-	-	02	04	05	06	9.7	11.9
Total	26	21	18	17	05	04	03	09	52	51	100	100

**Table 7:** Age, Sex and Marital status composition of Malekudiya tribe

Age Group	Un married		Married		Divorced		Widowed		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	04	03	-	-	-	-	-	-	04	03	7.0	4.9
5-9	04	05	-	-	-	-	-	-	04	05	7.0	8.2
10-14	07	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	07	04	12.2	6.6
15-19	02	05	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	05	3.5	8.2
20-24	05	03	-	02	-	-	-	-	05	05	8.8	8.2
25-29	07	04	05	06	-	-	-	-	12	10	21.1	16.4
30-34	05	-	06	08	01	02	-	-	12	10	21.1	16.4
35-39	-	-	-	-	02	03	-	-	02	03	3.5	4.9
40-44	-	-	03	01	-	-	-	02	03	03	5.3	4.9
45-49	-	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	3.3
50-54	-	-	01	02	-	-	01	03	02	05	3.5	8.2
55-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60+	-	-	02	03	-	-	02	03	04	06	7.0	9.8
Total	34	24	17	24	03	05	03	08	57	61	100	100

It was also observed that among the individuals from the age group of 20-24 years and above years were found to be married.

Table 7 shows the age, sex and marital status composition of Malekudiya tribe. Among Malekudiya tribe equal majority of the people both male and female were found in the age group of 25-29 years and 30-34 years of age (21.1% and 16.4%) respectively. 12.2% of the male were in the age group of 10-14 years. Among Malekudiya tribe majority of the people were in the fertile population group and were married.

The age, sex and marital status composition of all the three tribes' shows that majority of the population are fertile age group that is 20-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-34 years and young people 5-14 years. Majority of the people in the fertile age group of 20-34 years were found to be married.

## Discussion

Demographic background of the selected tribes indicates that they follow patrilocal society and follow patrilineal decent. Monogamy is the norm. Both consanguineous and non consanguineous marriages are practiced. In consanguineous type marriage with one's father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter are performed. Endogamy is the marriage rule at group level. Early marriage prevails among Jenukurubas but Yeravas and Malekudiyas do not prefer early marriage; they usually get their girls married at or after 25 years and men around 28 years of age. The age at menarche among girls is found to be between 12-14 years. Majority nuclear and also some extended families

are found among all the tribes. Family size extends from 4 - 8 members. They are aware of family planning and they follow tubectomy as family planning method. Infant and child mortality rate has also been reported among the tribes.

## Socio-economic Conditions

Socio-economic conditions of an individual play a vital role as it exemplifies the social life and behavior. In Indian society, socio economic condition is wholly determined by facets like caste, religion, occupation, education, rural-urban background, family size and holdings etc. Therefore, it is important to explore the socio economic background of the tribal people to know the pattern of their relationship with the environment and the society at large.

There have been changes in all walks of life like social, cultural, economic, education and health. Specially, in the social and economic life of the tribes, many of these tribes have undergone serious transition in their life style. Earlier their economy was based on fishing for Yeravas, honey collection, hunting and gathering of minor forest produces for Jenukurubas and toddy making and agriculture for Malekudiyas. Today all Yeravas and Jenukurubas are working as coolies, daily wage labourers in estates, forests and horticulture departments. Though, Malekudiyas are daily wage labourers they still cultivate in their agricultural lands. It is well understood that the main source of income for Yeravas and Jenukurubas is daily wage and Malekudiyas earn daily wage and also through their cultivation. Malekudiyas have the concept of savings, they are aware about banking

and have saved their income in banks but Yeravas and Jenukurubas do not save any money as they are completely depended on daily wage which is a hand and mouth condition. Finding secured wage labour has been very difficulty these days for many reasons such as seasonal availability of work because plantations do not give employment throughout the year, it is only seasonal like cultivating seasons, harvesting seasons, climatic changes like rain etc. along with major difficulties like ill health, unhealthy condition of a family members, festivals in their habitations etc. Hence, tribal people make only few bucks during the seasons, which make their economic life very difficult.

India advocates inclusive growth, but owing to lack of education and skill development, the marginalized sections are not becoming part of the inclusive growth. To ensure inclusive growth, the Constitution has empowered the backward classes with reservations in education and jobs. For this purpose, the Constitution of India has earmarked certain special provisions to enable the SCs and STs to access education. These special provisions were adopted through the amendment to the Constitution in 1951, and a special clause was added to article 15 (4). This clause empowers the state to make special provisions for the educational development of the SCs and STs (Sahoo 2009).

Majority of the households in all the three tribes had 4-6 members in the family. Joint families were found to be less prevalent, while vast majority of the families were found to be nuclear. These tribal people were born and brought up in the same habitations as they are in now. Especially Malekudiya tribal people, they have not migrated to any other places much when compared to other two tribes namely Jenu Kuruba and Yerava. Jenu Kuruba and Yerava have migrated to other places in search of employment. Though, Malekudiyas have migrated, it is occasionally for seasonal employment. Malekudiyas have lived in those habitations for more than 90 years, as their habitation is hilly and forest bound. They do not migrate or have been relocated as the other two tribes. Jenu Kurubas and Yeravas have been relocated by the Government for various reasons such as forest conservations, construction of dam etc. and have been started living in hamlets provided by the government, which have made them to migrate from one place to another in search of employment.

#### *Educational Status of ST*

Tribal populations were deprived of formal educational opportunities, because of geographical

isolation, lack of transportation etc. To develop the interest of these communities education plays a vital part in empowering them, in this connection Government of India and the State Government have implemented many programmes like establishments of hostels, residential schools, scholarships, free books and bags, special training programs for youth etc. to bring STs to the conventional education system.

The educational attainment of these tribal people indicates that majority of them have primary level of education, followed by middle school level and a very meager number of them have education till PUC and graduation. It may be noted that nearly more than one fourth of the tribal people in all the three tribes were non literates, older people of the tribe who had no access to school education years ago.

#### *Housing Pattern*

The appearance of the living conditions of these tribes indicates that they do not enjoy a good settlement specially with regard to Yeravas and Jenukurubas. Yeravas live in huts constructed with hay, Jenukurubas have huts, as well as tarpal roofs and Malekudiyas have tiled houses especially Mangalore tiled houses. Tribal households with country tiles are living in remote forest areas and some tribes who are in isolated areas are still living in huts. Many tribal people do not know about government facilities and schemes hence they have not availed them; they still remain backward and ignorant. The Malekudiya tribal people own garden lands in the forests around them and their settlements, like vegetables garden etc, which the other two tribes cannot afford for as they live in hamlets with very little spaces surrounding their households. Malekudiyas do own irrigated lands. They have made separate kitchen in their houses. All of them depend of fire wood for cooking only a few countable numbers of families use LPG. For drinking water they depend on well and rivers/streams. There is no toilet and drainage facility for Yeravas and Jenukurubas they use open field, but few families of Malekudiyas have toilet facility but no drainage facility. They do not have electric facility they use oil lamps and some families have solar lamps. They do not possess household gadgets or furniture's except for some Malekudiya families who possess television and chairs/sofa, tables etc. They possess agricultural lands like Malekudiyas grow coffee and Elaichie, Yeravas have paddy fields and Jenukurubas have lands but do not use it and they rare hens.

All the three tribal people avail health schemes, many women are availing widow pension and all tribal families have BPL cards and some of them have Anthyodaya.

### *Health Condition*

All the three tribes have normal health conditions. They do not have the awareness of regular health checkups. They use neem twigs or other roots to clean the teeth and some of them use tooth brush and paste. Yeravas keep their surroundings clean as compared to Jenukurubas and Malekudiyas maintain cleanliness when compared to Yeravas and Jenukurubas. All most all Jenukurubas and Yeravas consume alcohol and have the habit of smoking. Malekudiyas also consume alcohol but are not addicted as the other two tribes and smoking is uncommon among them. These days they very rarely follow their traditional medicine they depend on allopathic medicine. Only for jaundice they use ayurvedic specially Malekudiyas. For a nearest health center they have to go 10-15 kilometers from their settlements, Malekudiyas use auto for transportation and the other two tribes have to walk all the way to reach the health center.

Breast feeding is given normally for 12 to 18 months among all the tribes, they start weaning at 3 to 6 months and are aware of primary immunization.

### *Food and Diet Pattern*

Their food pattern included mainly roots and tubers, fruits like mangoes, cherries, jackfruit etc, are consumed that are available in the forests. The non vegetarian foods they consume included wild bore, forest cat and birds only. They never consume beef. They consume cereals and pulses. Turdal is used very frequently than other pulses. They also consume rice and cowpea to a large extent. The meal pattern of include rice and ragi with dhal along with commonly available vegetables and green leaves. The common pulses that are used are cowpea, horse gram, green gram and occasionally Bengal gram. Chapathi, roti, idly and dosa are consumed. Coconut is not used frequently for the preparation, the nature of food preparation is medium (neither bland nor spicy).

Eggs are also distributed by the government along with rice, ragi, and dhal. Hence, they consume eggs once a week. The consumption of non vegetarian food is once in a week or fortnight which depends on the wages what they get and save for that week. Chicken is preferred as it is cheaper than mutton.

Fish is also consumed based on availability. Milk and milk products are occasionally used since they are not available and also expensive. They usually drink black coffee and black tea twice a day. They use jaggery rather than sugar. Refined oil is used if it is distributed by the government; the commonly used oils are palm oil and groundnut oil for cooking. Nuts and oil seeds are never consumed by them.

They eat two meals a day and have irregular meal timings. They are heavy workers since they work as agricultural laborers in the estates. They do not consume any supplementary foods or tablets. Both male and females among specially Jenukurubas are addicted to liquor, toddy and locally available drug like pan parag, hans etc and also minor vice like beetel chewing, smoking etc.

### *Religious Practices*

They perform all the lifecycle ceremonies, like birth, puberty, marriage and death. Post-delivery pollution is observed for four days. At the onset of menstruation, the girl is scheduled for 11 days. She is not allowed to enter the house or touch any household articles, but is provided with nutritious food. Ganga puja marks the end of pollution. They follow funeral rites, practice burial. They perform elaborate ceremonies from the seventh to the twelfth day.

They consider nature and forest as their God as they have close association with the ecosystem for their daily fulfillment and food. They celebrate all the festivals of Kodagu like Uttari, Kailpoudh etc. they do not practice any of their own traditional festivals. The one common practice among all the three tribes is worshipping a God called Pashanamurthy, where they place a stone under a tree in the forest and worship. They believe in black magic.

Tribal women enjoy good status as they are involved in all the activities on par with men like earn and contribute towards the family income by doing agriculture wage labour. Both men and women have the right to divorce on grounds of adultery, barrenness or maladjustment. Widow, widower and divorcee both male and female are all allowed to remarry. Inter caste marriage is allowed among the entire tribe group these days. Marriage ceremony takes place either at bride or grooms place among Malekudiyas and Jenukurubas and at brides place among Yeravas. They use kinship terminologies like appa to father, avva to mother, mama for father-in-law, maami for mother-in-law, leyya for younger brother, anna for elder brother, llevo for younger sister and akka for elder sister.

## Conclusion

The present study reveals that early marriage prevails among Jenukurubas. Malekudiyas do not prefer early marriage; they usually get their girls married at or after 25 years and men around 28 years of age. Yeravas and Jenukurubas are working as coolies, daily wage labourers in estates, forests and horticulture departments. Though, Malekudiyas are daily wage labourers they still cultivate in their agricultural lands. The main source of income for Yeravas and Jenukurubas is daily wage. Malekudiyas have the concept of savings, they are aware about banking and have saved their income in banks but Yeravas and Jenukurubas do not save any money as they are completely depended on daily wage which is a hand and mouth condition. When compared to Yeravas and Jenukurubas, Malekudiyas have better living condition with toilet facility, furniture and gadgets and they use auto rickshaw for transportation while Yeravas and Jenukurubas walk to reach their destinations. There are a host of related changes in the tribal situation, nevertheless the tribes have been now settled down closer to commercial life, since they have no access to the forests they have been unable to survive well and are influenced by the urban life style. It is very well understood that Tribal people are acknowledged to have very close association with the environment, because of their fulfillment of daily requirements from nature. The inter-mixing of clans and has brought disintegration of the social life. The whole of the tribal social cultural milieu has undergone a tremendous change. The tribals are now struggling to survive – the end of living.

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