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[www.keralataxes.gov.in](http://www.keralataxes.gov.in)

**KERALA GST**

May 2018



The Calling....





The Calling....



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## Foreword

I was informed in 2015 that around 100 direct recruited officers will be joining the department after completing the selection formalities. From that day onward the discussions regarding training to the newly recruited officers gain momentum. In order to get some idea we tried to take a look at previous modules, curriculum, methodology and any documentation on the conduct of similar such training in the past. I conducted discussions with senior officers too. But I could not get my hands on any such documents or structured information. That means the task was very clear, right from the scratch one needs to start.

We have put the structures and processes in place quickly by having capacity building unit and capacity building steering committee. The frame work of capacity building was prepared. I appreciate the contribution of officers.

Subsequently, the recruitment process got over, officers joined and on the inauguration day in the key note address Shri S M Vijayanand IAS, Chief Secretary (Rtd) expressed the view of immersion visit to Attapadi. The Department took the suggestion seriously and training division worked on the immersion visit. Shri Harikumar Asst Commissioner Training, Shri Kiranlal Dy Commissioner & Registrar of GIFT and Shri Harindranath Dy Commissioner Internal Audit took efforts to ensure smooth conduct of the visit. Director KILA, District Collector Palghat, BDO and other officers facilitated the visit.

All the trainee officers visited Attapadi. The visit was done with the objective of giving the officers experience of way of life of tribal people as well as to see the response of Government and agencies for doing development and welfare activities there. It was also our effort to make each one understand that all people pay indirect tax including poorest of poor like the tribal people seen in Attapadi and It is our, 'the tax officers', duty to ensure that tax so paid to dealers, businesses etc remitted back to Treasury. This forms the revenue of the Government and from there one gets salary, from there all the welfare activities are funded and from there all the development activities are financed!

There were other objectives such as to train every officer in writing reports, working on presentation in a team and doing presentation to get the stage courage and also practice in public speaking.



It is with pleasure I can say that the officers have taken the visit very seriously. They worked hard to draft the reports. Out of all the reports, the fifteen best reports are included in this book 'The calling ...'. The teams presented the reports before Shri Subrata Biswas IAS Addl Chief Secretary. I congratulate all the officers.

*The immersion visit to Attapaïd was conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The objective of the visit was to understand the way of life of a common man and to realize the duties and responsibilities of a 'public servant' to deliver the services to people.*

*I hope that these 15 Reports will always remind all of us 'the calling...' and will motivate to excel while performing as the Public servant.*

**Dr Rajan Khobragade**

**Pri Secretary & Commissioner**





**ARUN. S**

## **INTRODUCTION**

There was an inherent dubiousness in the minds of all the trainees when the announcement was on the air that we, as per the suggestion put forth by our honorable chief guest of the inaugural session, Shri. S.M. Vijayanand sir IAS (retd.) former Chief Secretary, are conducting the immersion visit to Attappady. “what is the role of a tax officer in an area famous for its natural abundance, but is still outside the scope of tax”? Or, “what is there to learn from the tribal people at Attappady villages for our tax administration?” are some of the questions that arose in the minds of the trainees.

To answer the above misapprehensions of the newly recruited trainees, we have to get acquainted with the meaning of the term “*immersion*”. It is an action or immersing someone or something in a liquid (like Baptism); It is a deep mental involvement in something; [Oxford English Dictionary] and the reason our chief guest on the other day suggested this programme is really thought provoking. Destined to be the servants of the public, we should get connected to the weaker sections of the society in some way or the other to understand the real plight of a common man and his expectations from the government. Each file brought before an officer has a lifeline to common man's livelihood. To preserve and uphold their self esteem, empathy should be practiced by the government officials. It is our duty to serve the citizens in the most efficient manner and their right to get required public service with due quality in a timely manner.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT**

At first, it is programmed to familiarize the trainees about the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappady for estimating their livelihood status. We are expected to gain knowledge and to form a vision that how much we can contribute to the development agenda by doing our job as per the responsibility entrusted upon us by the statute. It also helps to understand how resources mobilized by our department are spent through various govt. schemes of line departments and to understand its pros and cons.

Apart from above, we also tried to get an idea of Human Development Index of these people, not on pure statistical and quantifiable means; but on a non-quantifiable lucid manner. Human Development Index (HDI) shows the overall development. Human Development Index measure the average achievement of region in basic human capabilities. The HDI indicates whether people lead a long and healthy life, whether they are

educated and knowledgeable and enjoy a decent standard of living. The HDI examines the average condition of all people in a region. (*HDI is a measure of health, education and income. It measures the average achievements in a region in these three basic dimensions of human development, calculated into an index. The Human Development Index (HDI) was first published in 1990, under the guidance of Mahbub ul Haq, a former finance minister of Pakistan, with technical assistance from the Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen.*)

## PLANNING STAGE: PRE-VISIT

The hand book containing all the details of the visit including the schedule of the visit programme, transport arrangements, food arrangements, accommodation, contact details and even the dress code etc. was distributed well in advance by the training team to make the necessary preparations for the trainees.

For me, it is for the first time visiting tribal villages. My idea about tribal people was like the epic movie of Mel Gibson, *Apocalypto*, in which those who are fighting for their survival and finally the survival is for the fittest among them. I came to know that unlike the movie, these people are not fighting against other tribes, but against the less dangerous wild animals, and the more untamed officials in the govt. system (not all, but a few) for getting and protecting their rights.

## FIRST DAY (10-01-2018)

The journey starts on 10<sup>th</sup> January, (Wednesday) morning from GIFT campus. As usual, before starting any important trip, I went to the Ganesha temple early morning for offering of coconut smashing to propitiate the almighty for ensuring a safe and secure, hassle free trip for us. This whole day was taken for travelling from Trivandrum to Attappady and by night 9 pm, reached at the AHADS (now KILA) and had our food from here. The staffs were waiting for us and they provided food without any delay. The rooms were clean and tidy and the accommodation arrangements were great for the trainees.

Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) has been registered under Societies Registration Act of 1860. According to the directions issued by the State Government, the AHADS has been considered as the Project Implementation Agency (PIA) for the implementation of Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project.

## SECOND DAY (11-01-2018)

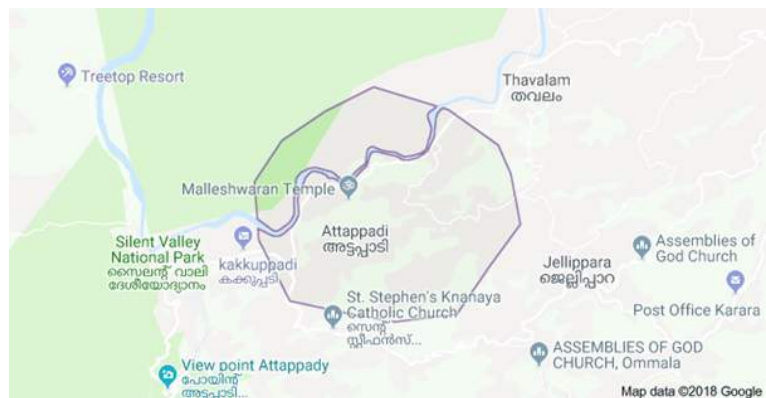
Morning by 9 am, we reached at the Attappady Block Office. The day started with an awareness session about Attappady landscape, the tribal people and their behaviour, their livelihood, cultural differences, interaction with others etc., which is handled by Shri. Krishna Prakash, DDC, Project Officer. He addressed us in a very friendly manner and explained about the



characteristic features about the three tribal groups living in Attappady tribal 'Oorus'. There is a very active farming society working in a very efficient manner produces coffee, cardamom, pepper etc. in an organic way under the guidance of Krishna Prakash sir.

## ABOUT ATTAPPADY

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani River nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the Western Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, on the north by the Nilgiris, south by the Palghat taluk and on the west by Karimba-I and II, Pottassery-I and II, and Mannarghat revenue villages of Mannarghat taluk of the Palghat District and Ernad taluk of the Malappuram district. There are three panchayats in Attappady Block. They are Agaly, Pudur and Sholayur.



The 249 km<sup>2</sup> Attappadi Reserve Forest is an informal buffer zone bordering the Silent Valley National Park to the West. 81 km<sup>2</sup> of this forest was separated to become most of the new 94 km<sup>2</sup> *Bhavani Forest Range*

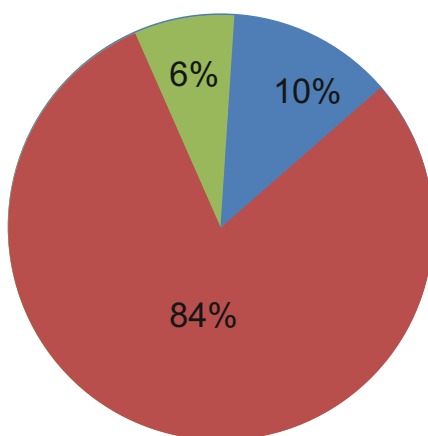
which is part of the 147.22 km<sup>2</sup> Silent Valley Buffer Zone formally approved by the Kerala Cabinet on 6 June 2007. The zone is aimed at checking the illicit cultivation of ganja, poaching and illicit brewing in areas adjacent to Silent Valley and help long-term sustainability of the protected area.

### **ATTAPPADY TRIBES- *Muduga, Irula and Kurumba***

Tribal people are known by various names such as jungle people, Girijans, aboriginals, adivasis etc. The constitution of India has referred to them as the Scheduled Tribes. The three major tribal groups in Attapady are Muduga (10%), Irula (84%) and Kurumba (6%). *Irula* is the largest group in Attappadi tribal area. They came from the Tamil Nadu region mostly. *Mudugas* are the second largest group and *Kurumbas* are a small group in Attappady tribal area. The *Mudugas* have the highest literacy. *Kurumabas* are the most primitive tribal group and they are still residing in the interior forest area. The name of *Muduga* was derived from the primitive custom of carrying children on Muthuk meaning back. The name of *Irula* is derived from their physical appearance, pitch black complexion.

## Population of the Tribes

■ Muduga ■ Irula ■ Kurumba





Tribes have traditional occupation. The traditional occupation of *Irula* tribe is shifting cultivation, occasionally they engaged in hunting and fishing. *Kurumbas* are traditionally engaged in food gathering and hunting. But in present day society *Muduga* and *Irula* are working as an agricultural laborer in the land of non-tribal land owners. *Kurumbas* are working as labourers in coffee plantations. In early times nuclear family is the unit of production. The speaking languages of these three tribal groups are belonging to the south Dravidian family (elements of Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada). The land ownership of the tribes is collective, in the sense that descendents of a common ancestor are joint owners of the hamlet and its territory. Regarding right to land, it is not the absolute freedom of the individual or the family that matters, but he consents of the council members especially the headman of the hamlet. Nuclear family is the primary unit of economic production and a new unit will be set up on the marriage of each young man. The three tribes were reluctant to marry from other tribes in the past, but nowadays marriages between them are quite common, as per our findings.

### **TO THE 'OORU'**

From the block office, we have separated into groups and went to the ooru. My team went to Chindakki (first site) in the Agaly first ward panchayat. The population in this area is only below 500 living in 75 houses. The houses are constructed by the govt and given to them based on a scheme. Their major source of income is farming in the society maintained lands and allied agricultural activities. They are having a better living conditions, as per my point of view. They have all basic necessities there including phone connection, electricity and TV channels. There is a school, Attapadi Adivasi High School, having classes in lower and upper primary. The school is having 13 teachers and around 250 students. We spent quality time with students and teachers in the school to get a clear idea about the school, habits of the students, their dreams and aspirations etc. the teachers in the school is working hard to get good results. The school is providing mid day meals and hostel facilities for the students. The school is also having computer labs, smart class rooms but little playground. From them, I came to know that many tribal students who secured high marks in the public exams are now doing their higher studies in other places with governmental aid. The students are so happy to be in school, and they really enjoy the bliss of learning. The higher secondary classes are only at Agaly. The major issue at Chindakki is the damaged road. The people living there was so angry with the poor condition of the roads.

The political parties are having good presence at this ooru. The kudumbasree is also very strong in this place for empowering womenhood. The most important quality of the tribal people which I noticed in this place is that they are ensuring education for their kids. Source of drinking water is provided through *JALANIDHI* project.

The forenoon programme ended at the Chindakki site and we gathered for lunch at the place arranged by the training team. The trainees shared their experiences from the different Oorus during the lunch time and we honestly felt that it is a great opportunity to meet these people and know them in a deeper manner. Health and nutrition are the two fundamental dimensions of the social development process; without having intake of nutritious food on continues basic sound health status is a distant dream. So I personally believe that the need of good nutritious food and intakes have to be inculcated on these people. Here

the promoters are playing a great role to bridge the gap of unawareness. These promoters are appointed under the guidance of scheduled Tribe Extension Officers. Promoters are supposed to act as the motivators for the students from the



tribes; identify the problems of the students and provide solutions. I strongly believe and suggest that well trained promoters and extension officers who are interested in the welfare and education of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students should be appointed in the schools in Attappady. Departments for the development of scheduled castes and tribes should be ready for arranging guidance to the newly appointed promoters and officers for understanding the socio cultural and familial problems of these students connected with their education and especially in learning English language.

After having a sumptuous heavy meal, we moved to our next destination. An adventurous jeep journey which took around 45 minutes to the next remote Ooru, Mele Anavayi, a Kurumba Colony. One Mr. Padmakumar sir, who is from our dept., accompanied us. Since, he is one who born and brought up in



this region, knows plenty about these people and explained us about them. Here, at Anavayi, we saw the well maintained clean and tidy houses constructed by AHADS which looks simple and useful for the inhabitants. The colony is surrounded by beautiful mountains and the picturesque scenery is great. Solar energy is the only source of energy in this Ooru.

The main income from agriculture, which they call as Pancha Krishi,i.e., farming of 5 different things simultaneously. All produces are acquired and marketed by the co-operative society. There is only one Public Health Centre(PHC) at Chindakki. As per the words of the inhabitants, there is no doctor at PHC on this date. ASHA workers are doing a great job in these areas.

## **CUSTOM AND TRADITION**

These Oorus (hamlets) are having a headman called 'Mooppan'. At Anavayi, we met the Ooru Mooppan with his wife. His name is *Kakki Mooppan*. He is the official spokesman of the Ooru. He explained us about the custom and tradition followed by them. There is no individual ownership for their houses. In Anavayi, female population is higher than male. They are having their own indigenous medical practitioner (Ooru Vaidyan) who takes care of all the health issues of Ooru members. There is no dowry system prevailing in these places. The male has to give some valuables to marry a girl in this Ooru. The cremation is done by burial. They are having a separate place for this to be done called, “Chudukadu”.

They visit the Melleswaran mudi (hill), which is the abode of *sami*, once in a year on *sivarathri* night and light lamp and offer lengthy pooja. The mannukaran of Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet situated at the foot of this Malleswaran-mudi is having the right to perform the ritual, and hence he is also known as malapoojari.

The elder members play a dominant role both within the community and in its relation with other hamlets. It is they who arrange the marriage of their 'sons' and 'daughters' through discussions and negotiations. Very often one or more of the elderly men in the hamlet will be specialist in herbal medicine who cures illness, and a diviner or exorcist who identify the cause of disease with the help of magical spells. Most elderly men know something about the curing of minor ailments, but very few know how to cure serious illness.



Way back to our place, we got an opportunity to see Kadukumanna hanging bridge, which is an excellent piece of architecture in this remote area.

After completing one day's programme, we returned to our rooms at AHADS by 6 pm. At dinner time, trainees gathered at the canteen and discussed about their experiences at that day. I personally felt that most of the trainees got surprised with the living conditions of these tribal people. These are something new to us.

### **THIRD DAY (12-01-2018)**

Being the last day of our programme at Attappady, we started our day so early. We moved to the remote Oorus by 8 am and reached at Chindaki 2<sup>nd</sup> site called Veeranoor, which is having 30 houses. The area is having many stray dogs. But they are not disturbing anyone. The inhabitants here are indulged in agriculture, which is organised by the co-operative society. One Mr. Pramod, from this place accompanied us to the Ooru. Surprisingly this place is having a resort over there. Some indigenous medical practitioners are also there having their clinics. People from Kerala and Tamil Nadu are regular visitors in these clinics, said Pramod.



While talking with the people in this area, came to know that they have severe threat from elephants. The young ones here usually go to deep forest for collecting honey and other forest products from there and stay there for 1 or 2 weeks. They are financially weak and do not have any savings. The young ones here are inclined to sports activities. They are having a sports club there. They are educated but not doing anything for further studies and for getting a job.

The third day programme were completed by 2 pm at Veeranoor, the 2<sup>nd</sup> site Chindakky and returned to KILA cottage. We left Attappady by 7pm



on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Before leaving the place, on behalf of our department, our senior officials handed over a sports kit containing footballs for the young talented boys in these Oorus.

### **WHAT I LEARNED FROM THERE**

While analyzing the people and the places, I personally feel that problems are almost common in all Oorus. Some of the points are summarised below:

- 1) Most concerns pertain to the fact that farmers have not been benefited from Agriculture Dept. This clearly indicates that there is not much publicity and transparency. Planting materials supplied were of doubtful quality. Lack of decentralization is also a hindrance.
- 2) Attappady's weather and soil properties were not given due attention, no concerted attempt is made to popularizing crops and agriculture practices. There are plenty of coconut trees but harvesting these coconuts are not up to the mark.
- 3) Animal husbandry schemes are not functioning properly. Many veterinary hospitals are also working in the area. But the activities and functions of these hospitals are not beneficial to the people.
- 4) Non availability of drinking water is the main problem faced by the tribals in Attappady. Because of the hilly nature of Attappady it is not possible for digging wells in many of the places. Bore wells and hand pumps are the main alternatives for solving water problem.
- 5) Lack of sensitivity to tribal interests and lack of tribal involvement are the primitive problem of this region. The project authorities were functioning without any supervision or monitoring or check by any official bodies since its inception.
- 6) Distance of difference Oorus from the township limit is also an issue and poor roads are also a challenge.
- 7) Education facilities are not adequate in these Oorus. After passing 10<sup>th</sup>, they have to go to other places. Tribal language, culture, believes etc. is different from the non-tribal culture, so they cannot cope up with modern education. Educational backwardness also leading to economic backwardness. Due to non pursuance of modern education they cannot compete in good jobs in private and government sector.
- 8) Feeling of isolation: peculiar tribal culture and tribal language extract tribes from mainstream society.

- 9) Lack of nutritious food: it is the basic problem of tribal people. Due economic and educational backwardness leading to the lack of nutritious food. This also leading a diseased society.
- 10) Low availability of the hospital facilities.
- 11) Protection of tribal medicinal knowledge of these tribes is also another concern. Patenting, licensing and benefit-sharing will improve the life of the tribal people and it is a value addition to their efforts.
- 12) Many other legal issues and lack of proper legal aid also a concern.

## **WHAT WE CAN DO?**

Poverty and Ignorance continue to keep them poor and less dignified. Education can bring changes and development gradually for the next generation. There are primary schools in several tribal settlements, mostly far away for most of the villages. Moreover, quality education which is available to the majority is not available to the poor tribes. Tribal children can be encouraged to send to towns and cities for better education and higher studies. Distribution of old clothes and some ration is not the solution. Most of the tribal people live for a day and do not plan much for future. Education will bring in change in their world view and give them hopes for a better tomorrow.

Most of the tribes were originally food gatherers and all of them made a living from the forest. Tribals are placed in colonies where they are forced to live. Tribals normally do not destroy forest or its resources. Cutting a tree trunk for building a hut has become an offence. Tribals should be protected with the right to labour and resources of the forest. Assistance should be given to develop better infrastructure in their settlements. Harassments from government servants especially of the forest department need to be solved state wide. Tribals should have complete ownership of a piece of land they stay.

During this visit, it is realized that they are having great ethnographic features and are unique in many respects. The harmony within that society is also deserves much attention. In our opinion, before doing any developmental programmes on them we have to consider the Economy, Demography, Law, Environment, Ethnicity, etc are to be considered and if any of these has not taken into consideration then any government projects

can lead to problems and the results will be in vein. We could find that everything in their environment are closely interrelated, so very much care and efficiency is highly expected before apprehending any project to the tribal society.

Social exclusion happens among the tribal communities in the state in various ways. There are numerous factors, both inherent and extraneous, including social, economic, cultural and psychological that brings about exclusion of these communities. These factors result in low enrolment and high dropout among the tribal students which in turn results in their lower educational attainment or in other words, low human capital acquisition. This situation eventually leads them to a state of perpetual social exclusion.

In the Oorus, we found *kudumbasree* units which are working in a very good manner. The members in these units, exclusively women, are doing their best to get good results and to improve their standard of living. Another important factor we noticed that the literacy programs are being carried on in a very informal manner between the inmates of the colony. Those who are literate shall make all the necessary things to feed others the power of knowledge.

Normal indicators of standard of living are type of house, ownership, landholding, availability of toilets and drinking water, possession of different type of durable assets, fuel used for cooking, energy used for lighting, etc., to have an idea about their general living conditions. From these indicators, we could conclude that the standard of living is very poor even in these times. The Governmental intervention is not quite sufficient to improve their standard of living.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

In a broad sense, the socio-economic and cultural factors among tribals can be outlined as poverty and poor economic conditions, social customs, cultural ethos, lack of awareness and understanding of the value of formal education, conflict and gap between the home and school, etc. Studies on educational deprivation of tribals have inevitably linked it to their poor economic condition and poverty. The following are the suggestions by us to improve the livelihood status of tribal people living in the Attapady region and it is also may be considered in all tribal areas:

1. Since land alienation is the main cause of the backwardness of the tribals, legislation should be enacted for the restriction on transfer of lands belonging to the tribal and restoration of alienated lands.
2. The migration of the non- tribals to the tribal areas should be restricted. It is high time that protective measures are taken to avoid further migration to the tribal lands.
3. Tribal culture and traditions should be protected. Priority should be given to the field of education, both formal and job oriented for the empowerment of the tribals. In order to provide and enhance their income, employment opportunities should be created
4. Emphasis should be on quality and equity rather than quantity as has been the case in the past. The prime focus should be on provision of quality education that makes tribal communities economically effective and independent. In order to make education effective and sustainable, building partnership between the community and the government is important.
5. Skill development, competency building, and teacher's motivation also need to be strengthened for sustaining educational development. The teacher should be made the centre of educational transformation, and therefore, must remain the primary facilitator.
6. In connection with agriculture and organic farming, proper guidance and classes should be given.
7. Patenting of medicinal knowledge should be taken care of.
8. Animal husbandry and importance of 'Panchagavya' should be inculcated among them. The new central govt project for research on 'Panchagavya' can be undertaken with these tribal participation.
9. Good library facility should be provided for the people and students at these regions. NGOs should think about providing this facility in Atappady.
10. Sports related training activities such as archery, football etc. can be initiated. We can produce good sports persons from these region.

Incentives are to be given to the efficient and dedicated government servants who are engaged in the tribal development programmes.



Another objective of the govt. authorities should be to establish a biodiversity register to document the knowledge base of these people must be pursued with the intellectual property implications of such a register in min

## CONCLUSION

Scheduled tribes are considered as the most vulnerable community in the State. The studying communities in Attapadi Ooru are vested as most backward group. Tribal communities delay behind other communities with respect to attainment of income, occupation, schooling and other basics for good community nutrition. Education, isolation from mainstream society, low economic status and health issues are the contributing factors of socio-economic issues. Socio-economic problems leading the tribal groups in Attapadi region are vested as most backward group. To sum up, the tribals deserve a better treatment by the government, non-government organisations and by the mainstream people. Sustained efforts have to be made and policies initiated in order to empower the tribals to lead a better



life which is at least comparable to that of the mainstream population.

I hereby extend my deep sense of gratitude towards our department for giving us such a great opportunity to get acquainted with one of the weaker sections of the

society which will help us to perform our duties in a more empathetic manner.



**Pratheesh. A. K**

## INTRODUCTION

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## **ABOUT ATTAPPADY**

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani



River nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the Western Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, on the north by the Nilgiris, south by the Palakkad taluk and on the west by Karimnagar-I and II, Pottassery-I and II, and Mannarkkad revenue villages of Mannarkkad taluk of the Palghat District and Ernad taluk of the Malappuram district. There are three panchayats in Attappady Block. They are Agaly, Pudur and Sholayur. The 249 km<sup>2</sup> Attappadi Reserve Forest is an informal buffer zone bordering the Silent Valley National Park to the West. 8.1 km of this forest was separated to become most of the new 94 km<sup>2</sup> Bhavani Forest Range which is part of the 147.22 km<sup>2</sup> Silent Valley Buffer Zone formally approved by the Kerala Cabinet on 6 June 2007. The zone is aimed at checking the illicit cultivation of ganja, poaching and illicit brewing in areas adjacent to Silent Valley and help long-term sustainability of the protected area.

### **ATTAPPADY TRIBES-**

Muduga, Irulu and Kurumba 'tribal people are known by various names such as jungle people, Girijans, aboriginals, adivasis etc. The constitution of India has referred to them as the Scheduled Tribes. The three major tribal groups in Attappady are Muduga (10%), Irula (84%) and Kurumba (6%). Irula is the largest group in Attappadi tribal area. They came from the Tamil Nadu region mostly. Mudugas are the second largest group and Kurumbas are a small group in Attappady tribal area. The Mudugas have the highest literacy. Irulans are the most primitive tribal group and they are still residing in the interior forest area. The name of Muduga was derived from the primitive custom of carrying children on Muthufr meaning back. The name of Irula is derived from their physical appearance, pitch black complexion. Tribes have traditional occupation. The traditional occupation of Irula tribe is shifting cultivation, occasionally they engaged in hunting and fishing. Kurumbas are traditionally engaged in food gathering and hunting. But in present day society Muduga and Irula are working as agricultural labourers in the land of non-tribal land owners. Kurumbas are working as labourers in coffee plantations. In early times nuclear family is the unit of production. The speaking languages of these three tribal groups are belonging to the south Dravidian family (elements of Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada). The land ownership of the tribes is collective, in the sense that descendants of a common ancestor are joint owners of the hamlet and its territory. Regarding right to land, it is not the absolute freedom of the individual or the family that matters, but the consent of the council members especially the headman of the hamlet. Nuclear family is the primary unit of

economic production and a new unit will be set up on the marriage of each young Jnan. The three tribes were reluctant to marry from other tribes in the past, but nowadays marriages between them are quite common, as per our findings.

### **TO THE ‘OORU’**

From the block office, we have separated into groups and went to the ooru. My team went to Chindakki (first site) in the Agaly first ward panchayat. The population in this area is only below 500 living in 75 houses. The houses are constructed by the govt and given to them based on a scheme. Their major source of income is farming in the society maintained lands and allied agricultural activities. They are having a better living conditions, as per my



point of view. They have all basic necessities there including phone connection, electricity and TV channels. There is a school, Attapadi Adivasi High School, having classes in lower and upper primary. The school is having 13 teachers and around

250 students. We spent quality time with students and teachers in the school to get a clear idea about the school, habits of the students, their dreams and aspirations etc. the teachers in the school is working hard to get good results. The school is providing mid day meals and hostel facilities for the students. The school is also having computer labs, smart class rooms but little playground. From them, I came to know that many tribal students who secured high marks in the public exams are now doing their higher studies in other places with governmental aid. The students are so happy to be in school, and they really enjoy the bliss of learning. The higher secondary classes are only at Agaly. The major issue at Chindakki is the damaged road. The people living there was so angry with the poor condition of the roads. The political parties are having good presence at this ooru. The kudumbasree is also very strong in this place for empowering womenhood. The most important quality of the tribal people which I noticed in this place is that they

are ensuring education for their kids. Source of drinking water is provided through JALANIDHI project. The forenoon programme ended at the Chindakki site and we gathered for lunch at the place arranged by the training team. The trainees shared their experiences from the different Oorus during the lunch time and we honestly felt that it is a great opportunity to meet these people and know them in a deeper manner.

Health and nutrition are the two fundamental dimensions of the social development process; without having intake of nutritious food on continuous basic sound health status is a distant dream. So I personally believe that the



need of good nutritious food and intakes have to be inculcated on these people. Here the promoters are playing a great role to bridge the gap of unawareness. These promoters are appointed under the guidance of scheduled Tribe Extension Officers.

Promoters are supposed to act as the motivators for the students from the tribes; identify the problems of the students and provide solutions. I strongly believe and suggest that well trained promoters and extension officers who are interested in the welfare and education of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students should be appointed in the schools in Attappady. Departments for the development of scheduled castes and tribes should be ready for arranging guidance to the newly appointed promoters and officers for understanding the socio cultural and familial problems of these students connected with their education and especially in learning English language. After having a sumptuous heavy meal, we moved to our next destination. An adventurous jeep journey which took around 45 minutes to the next remote Ooru, Mele Anavayi, a Kurumba Colony. One Mr. Padmakumar sir, who is from our dept., accompanied us. Since, he is one who born and brought up in this region, knows plenty about these people and explained us about them. Here at Anavayi, we saw the well maintained clean and tidy houses constructed by AHADS which looks simple and useful for the inhabitants.



The colony is surrounded by beautiful mountains and the picturesque scenery is great. Solar energy is the only source of energy in this Ooru. The main income from agriculture, which they call as Pancha Krishore., farming of 5 different things simultaneously. All produces are acquired and marketed by the co-operative society. There is only one Public Health Centre(PHC) at Chindakki. As per the words of the inhabitants, there is no doctor at PHC on this date. ASHA workers are doing a great job in these areas.

## **CUSTOM AND TRADITION**

These Oorus (hamlets) are having a headman called 'Mooppan'. At Anavayi, we met the Ooru Mooppan with his wife. His name is Kakki Mooppan. He is the official spokesman of the Ooru. He explained us about the custom and tradition followed by them. There is no individual ownership for their houses. In Anavayi, female population is higher than male. They are having their own indigenous medical practitioner (Ooru Vaidyan) who takes care of all the health issues of Ooru members. There is no dowry system prevailing in these places. The male has to give some valuables to marry a girl in this Ooru. The cremation is done by burial. They are having a separate place for this to be done called, "Chudukadu".

They visit the Melleswaran mudi (hill), which is the abode of sami, once in a year on sivarathri night and light lamp and offer lengthy pooja. The mannukaran of Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet situated at the foot of this Malleswaran-mudi is having the right to perform the ritual, and hence he is also known as malapoojari.

The elder members play a dominant role both within the community and in its relation with other hamlets. It is they who arrange the marriage of their 'sons' and 'daughters' through discussions and negotiations. Very often one or more of the elderly men in the hamlet will be specialist in herbal medicine who cures illness, and a diviner or exorcist who identify the cause of disease with the help of magical spells. Most elderly men know something about the curing of minor ailments, but very few know how to cure serious illness.

Way back to our place, we got an opportunity to see Kadukumanna hanging bridge, which is an excellent piece of architecture in this remote area.

After completing one day's programme, we returned to our rooms at AHADS by 6 pm. At dinner time, trainees gathered at the canteen and discussed about their experiences at that day. I personally felt that most of the trainees got surprised with the living conditions of these tribal people. These are something new to us.

### **THIRD DAY ( 12-01-2018)**

Being the last day of our programme at Attappady, we started our day so early. We moved to the remote Oorus by 8 am and reached at Chindaki 2no site called

Veeranoor, which is having 30 houses. The area is having many stray dogs. But they are not disturbing anyone. 'the inhabitants here are indulged in agriculture, which is organised by the co-operative society. One Mr. Pramod, from this place accompanied us to the Ooru. Surprisingly this place is having a resoft over there. Some indigenous medical practitioners are also there having their clinics. People' from Kerala and Tamil Nadu are regular visitors in these clinics, said Pramod.

While talking with the people in this area, came to know that they have severe threat from elephants. The young ones here usually go to deep forest for collecting honey and other forest products from there and stay there for 1 or 2 weeks. They are financially week and do not have any savings. The young ones here are inclined to sports activities. They are having a sports club there. They are educated but not doing anything for further studies and for getting a job.

The third day programme were completed by 2 pm at Veeranoor, the 2 site Chindakky and returned to KILA cottage. We left Attappady by 7pm on 12th January 2018. Before leaving the place, on behalf of our department, our senior officials handed over a sports kit containing footballs for the young talented boys in these Oorus.

### **WHAT I LEARNED FROM THERE**

While analyzing the people and the places, I personally feel that problems are almost common in all Oorus. Some of the points are summarised below:

- 1) Most concerns pertain to the fact that farmers have not been benefited from Agriculture Dept. This clearly indicates that there is not much publicity and transparency. Planting materials supplied were of doubtful quality. Lack of decentralization is also a hindrance.
- 2) Attappady's weather and soil properties were not given due attention, no concerted attempt is made to popularizing crops and agriculture practices. There are plenty of coconut trees but harvesting these coconuts are not up to the mark.
- 3) Animal husbandry schemes are not functioning properly. Many veterinary hospitals are also working in the area. But the activities and

functions of these hospitals are not beneficial to the people.

- 4) Non availability of drinking water is the main problem faced by the tribals in Attappady. Because of the hilly nature of Attappady it is not possible for digging wells in many of the places. Bore wells and hand pumps are the main alternatives for solving water problem.
- 5) Lack of sensitivity to tribal interests and lack of tribal involvement are the primitive problem of this region. The project authorities were functioning without any supervision or monitoring or check by any official bodies since its inception.
- 6) Distance of difference Oorus from the township limit is also an issue and poor roads are also a challenge.
- 7) Education facilities are not adequate in these Oorus. After passing 10th they have to go to other places. Tribal language, culture, believes etc. is different from the non-tribal culture, so they cannot cope up with modern education. Educational backwardness also leading to economic backwardness. Due to non pursuance of modern education they cannot complete in good jobs in private and government sector.
- 8) Feeling of isolation: peculiar tribal culture and tribal language extract tribes from mainstream society.
- 9) Lack of nutritious food: it is the basic problem of tribal people. Due economic and educational backwardness leading to the lack of nutritious food. This also leading a diseased society.
- 10) Low availability of the hospital facilities.
- 11) Prgtction of tribal medicinal knowledge of these tribes is also another concern. Patenting, licensing and benefit-sharing will improve the life of the tribal people and it is a value addition to their efforts.
- 12) Many other legal issues and lack of proper legal aid also a concern.

## **WHAT WE CAN DO?**

Poverty and Ignorance continue to keep them poor and less dignified. Education

can bring changes and development gradually for the next generation. There are

primary schools in several tribal settlements, mostly far away for most of the villages. Moreover, quality education which is available to the majority is not available to the poor tribes. Tribal children can be encouraged to send to

towns and cities for better education and higher studies. Distribution of old clothes and some ration is not the solution. Most of the tribal people live for a day and do not plan much for future. Education will bring in change in their world view and give them hopes for a better tomorrow.

Most of the tribes were originally food gatherers and all of them made a living from the forest. Tribals are placed in colonies where they are forced to live. Tribals normally do not destroy forest or its resources. Cutting a tree trunk for building a hut has become an offence. Tribals should be protected with the right to labour and resources of the forest. Assistance should be given to develop better infrastructure in their settlements. Harassments from government servants especially of the forest department need to be solved state wide. Tribals should have complete ownership of a piece of land they stay. During this visit, it is realized that they are having great ethnographic features and are unique in many respects. The harmony within that society is also deserves much attention.

In our opinion, before doing any developmental programmes on them we have to consider the Economy, Demography, Law, Environment, Ethnicity, etc are to be considered and if any of these has not taken into consideration then any government projects can lead to problems and the results will be in vain. We could find that everything in their environment are closely interrelated, so very much care and efficiency is highly expected before apprehending any project to the tribal society.



Social exclusion happens among the tribal communities in the state in various ways. There are numerous factors, both inherent and extraneous, including social, economic, cultural and psychological that brings about exclusion of these communities. These factors result in low enrolment and high dropout among the tribal students which in turn results in their lower educational attainment or in other words, low human capital acquisition. This situation eventually leads them to a state of perpetual social exclusion. In the Oorus, we found kudumbasree units which are working in a very good manner. The

members in these units, exclusively women, are doing their best to get good results and to improve their standard of living. Another important factor we noticed that the literacy programs are being carried on in a very informal manner between the inmates of the colony. Those who are literate shall make all the necessary things to feed others the power of knowledge.

Normal indicators of 'standard of living' are type of house, ownership, landholding, availability of toilets and drinking water, possession of different type of durable assets, fuel used for cooking, energy used for lighting, etc., to have an idea about their general living conditions. From these indicators, we could conclude that the standard of living is very poor even in these times. The Governmental intervention is not quite sufficient to improve their standard of living.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

In a broad sense, the socio-economic and cultural factors among tribals can be outlined as poverty and poor economic conditions, social customs, cultural ethos, lack of awareness and understanding of the value of formal education, conflict and gap between the home and school, etc. Studies on educational deprivation of tribals have inevitably linked it to their poor economic condition and poverty. The following are the suggestions by us to improve the livelihood status of tribal people living in the Attapady region and it is also may be considered in all tribal areas:

1. Since land alienation is the main cause of the legislation should be enacted for the restriction on the tribal and restoration of alienated lands.
2. The migration of the non-tribals to the tribal areas should be restricted. It is high time that protective measures are taken to avoid further migration to the tribal lands.
3. Tribal culture and traditions should be protected. Priority should be given to the field of education, both formal and job oriented for the empowerment of the tribals. In order to provide and enhance their income, employment opportunities should be created.
4. Emphasis should be on quality and equity rather than quantity as has been the case in the past. The prime focus should be on provision of quality education that makes tribal communities economically effective and independent. In order to make education effective and sustainable, building partnership between the community and the government is important.

5. Skill development, competency building, and teacher's motivation also need to be strengthened for sustaining educational development. The teacher should be made the centre of educational transformation, and therefore, must remain the primary facilitator.
6. In connection with agriculture and organic farming, proper guidance and classes should be given.
7. Patenting of medicinal knowledge should be taken care of
8. Animal husbandry and importance of 'Panchagavya' should be inculcated among them. The new central govt project for research on Panchagavya' can be undertaken with these tribal participation.
9. Good library facility should be provided for the people and students at these regions. NGOs should think about providing this facility in Atappady.
10. Sports related training activities such as archery, football etc. can be initiated. We can produce good sports persons from these region.
11. Incentives are to be given to the efficient and dedicated government servants who are engaged in the tribal development programmes. Another objective of the govt. authorities should be to establish a biodiversity register to document the knowledge base of these people must be pursued with the intellectual property implications of such a register in mind.

## CONCLUSION

Scheduled tribes are considered as the most vulnerable community in the State.

The studying communities in Attapadi Ooru are vested as most backward group.

Tribal communities delay behind other communities with respect to attainment of income, occupation, schooling and other basics for good community nutrition. Education, isolation from mainstream society, low economic status and health issues are the contributing factors of socio-economic issues. Socio-economic problems leading the tribal groups in Attapadi region are vested as most backward group. To sum up, the tribals deserve a better treatment by the government, non-government organisations and by the mainstream people.

Sustained efforts have to be made and policies initiated in order to empower the tribals to lead a better life which is at least comparable to that of the

mainstream population.

I hereby extend my deep sense of gratitude towards our department for giving us such a great opportunity to get acquainted with one of the weaker sections of the society which will help us to perform our duties in a more empathetic manner.





**MANEESH. V.**

## **RURAL IMMERSION PROGRAMME - A STUDY OF LIVING CONDITIONS OF ADIVASIS IN ATTAPPADY**

Attapady is an east sloping sub plateau in Kerala nextling below the South Western corner of the Nilgiri segment of the Western ghats. The Coimbatore plains are along its eastern flank and the Mannarkad - Palakkad are to its South and West. Administratively Attapady is a part of Palakkad district, Mannarkadu taluk in Kerala. It has 3 Panchayat namely Pudur, Agali and Sholayar all falling within the Attapady community development block.

The geographical unit Attapady extends over 745 sq. km. It is the part of the western ghats falling within Kerala. It is located exclusively within the catchment area of the Bhavani river and her contributories, Siruvani nad Kodungarapallam. A significant long extent of the western ghat main water shed line passes through Attapady is specifically very important from the point of view of canvery basis with important far the Bharathapuzha. Basin which is a water defect area in Kerala.

### **Adivasis and non-adivasis**

The population of Attapady consist of adivasis and non-adivasis. The three adivasi communities being.

#### **Kurumbas**

Who constitute less than 5% of total population lies in the interior part of the northern area of Attapady. They were the first group of Adivasis settle in the place known as forest communities and have been categorised as a "Primitive tribe".

#### **Mudugas**

Who believed to have immigrated from Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. They had lived in the north eastern part of Attapady under the leadership of Kovai Mooppan.

#### **Irulas**

Irulas is dravidien tribe spread over the three states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. The term Irula is derived from the word Irul meaning darkness. Irulas are very strict followers of their customs and manners.

There are 187 hamlets known as "Oorus" in Attappadi, which are habituated by both the adivasis and the non-adivasis. The non-adivasi population

referred to locally as “Vandavasis” consist of migrants from Tamil Nadu residing mainly in the eastern low-lying region of Attappadi, and migrants from the rest of Kerala, who live mainly in the western region.

The language of tribes is known as “Adivasibhasur”. It remains only in spoken form without a written script. For the tribes, the transmission of oral literature from one generation to the next lies at the heart of cultural practise. The local language acts as a vehicle for the transmission of unique cultural knowledge.

### **The society working**

The key figure in the adivasi communities of each ooru include the “Moopen” who is the chief of Ooru, and his wife the “Moopathi”, the “Kurutal” who takes care of relations between the Oorus, taking a leadership in resolving inter-Ooru conflicts, if any: the ‘Bhendasi’ who is responsible for ensuring food security in the hamlet, particularly in making sure that nobody in the hamlet goes hungry and the “Mannykanan” who is responsible for conducting agricultural operations on time, as well as for the distribution of agricultural land within the hamlet.

### **Socio - Cultural Structure**

The adivasis lack written language of their own, but it has not prevented them from passing on their rich culture and customs from generation to generation. They speak their own languages. Children should be given names on the 7th day after birth and is usually named in accordance with family tradition. Tribes bury the dead in areas set apart as burial ground. Dance and songs accompany funeral ceremonies. The people have strong belief in the spirit of dead ancestors in the hamlet, there is a special house for worshipping the Kara Deivam. Whenever, there is some incidence of diseases they perform pooja. On Shivarathri day, they observe abstinence and take food only after seeing the light on “Malleswarem Mount”.

“They always lived collectively in a hamlet that have been a part of this social structure since time immemorial”. Back in the day, they only married within the tribe and treated each other as untouchables. It was a taboo to consider a mate from another tribal lineage. However these days they are free to marry whoever they like as social constraints evolved over time and people are not so careful in these beliefs anymore.

### **Attappadi Co-operative farming society**

The Attappadi co-operative farming society (ACFS) has approximately

816 registered members and all of these belong to the scheduled tribe community. The board of directors comprise District level officers and four elected scheduled tribe members (non-official) who represent the four farms. The society's primary role lies in maintaining unorganised tribes as organised labour bank.

It also administers all kinds of emoluments packages throughout the year as a part of their welfare measure. They provide benefits in accordance to the Provident Fund Act and the Plantation and Labour Act of Kerala. The main objective of ACFS has always been engaged in the production of cash crops like cardamom and coffee, pepper, arecanut, nutmeg and cloves. They take immense pride in cultivating farming practices without the use of pesticides and other toxic ingredients.

According to the records, the Attappadi co-operative farming society manifests its social commitment in education sectors by maintaining two institutions namely "Attappadi Adivasi High School" and Gurukulam Vidya Kendram - a holistic programme designed to impact residential coaching to failed students of higher secondary course.

"The Attappadi Adivasi High School" has been struggling to meet funding gaps and as a result infrastructural development has taken a massive beating. However with the support of scheduled tribe development department and Kerala state council for science, technology and environment, science labs and computer labs were set up in school.

### **Attappadi tribal development programme**

The ATDP is a pilot project of national rural livelihood mission (NRLM), ministry of rural development was initiated in Attappadi in 2013. The project aims to uplift the social and economic status of Irula, Muduga and Kurumba tribal communities of Attappadi.

Sustainable livelihoods like agriculture and allied activities need to be developed where the community can be self-reliant and self-sufficient in food. Women institutions would be built up for financial inclusion leading towards poverty alleviation and social development. The institution would enable the women to access credit, engage in sustainable livelihood, build up entrepreneurship, marketing and negotiation capacities and capacity to assert their agency in all three realms from the domestic front to the various forums like the area of work, Panchayat and various departments. The social, economic and political status to be enhanced and they should be able to assert their cultural identity as "Adivasis".

## **Government sponsored development in Attappadi :**

### **Anti-malaria programme**

In 1950 the anti-malaria programme was carried out successfully in Attappadi under the national malaria eradication programme. During this period, 5 welfare schools were started with the aim of attracting tribal children to school.

### **Tribal development block :**

In 1962 Attappadi was declared as a tribal development block and a senior block development officer was posted. Infrastructure development was given prime importance. In 1971 the private forests were nationalized.

### **Integrated tribal development programme**

In 1975, the tribal development block was upgraded into integrated tribal development programme (TDP); with much higher inflow of funds particularly for housing and economic



development. Along with this western ghat development programme (WGDP) was introduced primarily in the form of two co-operative farms covering an extent of 2000 vectors intended to rehabilitate and settle landless tribal families.

In 1985 IRDP, NREP and RLEGP were started and that marked another watershed in the development history of Attappadi. In 1989 NREP and RLEGP were converted into IRY. In 1993 employment assurance scheme became operative, giving a guaranteed employment of 100 days a year for two members from unemployed rural families falling under poverty line.

In 1996 Attappadi waste land comprehensive environment conservation project was a scheme implemented with Japanese Overseas Economic co-



operation fund. The project was implemented by an autonomous organization viz the Attappadi hill area development society(AHADS).

### **Additional measures taken for tribal development**

#### **a. Agriculture**

The function of Krishi Bhavan started in 1976. During the past 10 years the agriculture department spent crores of rupees in Attappadi. The main objective was to provide different types of facilities and assistance.

#### **b. Soil protection schemes**

This scheme was started functioning in 1973. The soil protection activities carried out in Attappadi were extremely scientific and well planned.

#### **c. Animal Husbandary schemes**

Numerous developmental measures were introduced in the field of animal husbandary in 1980. Many veterinary hospitals are also working in the area farmers must be instructed to rear the cattle in scientific manner.

#### **e. Dairy development schemes**

It was introduced in 1982. Cows given to the tribals are not living longer. They are not familiar with protection of cattle.

#### **d. Fish cultivation schemes**

The fish cultivation schemes were introduced in 1986. Even though the climate and demorphic features are not suitable to these practises; lot of money has been spent by this scheme. The agencies are acting without any connection to the practical purpose.

#### **e. Sericulture**

Serifed has been functioning very well in Attappadi since 1986. People of Attappadi can very well engage themselves in this field and make profit from this. The climate and nature of the soil are suitable for these in Attappadi.

### **8. Availability of drinking water**

People depend on streams, rivers and bore wells water needs. But these sources are highly polluted. Many of the bore well are dry. This forces tribal women to walk long distances to draw water.

## Findings

- a. The living conditions of adivasis of Attappadi are very pathetic and their cultures are at the end of existence.
- b. Higher infant mortality rate.
- c. Malnutrition deaths of infants / children.
- d. Most of adivasis are educated upto metric level of education.
- e. Agriculture is the main source of Income but collection of forest product also a source of income.
- f. Implementation of the forest right act and restriction of transfer of land and restoration of alienated land act was resulted re-gain their land.
- g. About 50% of tribal house holders are poor.
- h. lack of sufficient infrastructures for schools in Attappadi.
- i. Untimely payment of national rural employment generation schemes.
- j. Attack and destruction of agriculture land by wild animals.
- k. Solar power is the main source of power in some of the Oorus in Attappadi.
- l. Roads are not good means of transportation accept jeeps.
- m. They are labors in their own land.
- n. lack of hospital facilities.
- o. lack of anganwadis in inner areas of Attappadi.
- p. Alcoholism, excess use of chemicals etc. are important health issue of Adivasis.
- q. They are feeling isolation because of low educational and economic status.
- r. Lack of toilet and other sanitation facilities.
- s. Houses are mainly constructed through EMS Bhaven project, Integrated Tribal Development programme but no adequate facilities in such houses.
- t. Unawareness of higher employment opportunities through

education.

u. People mainly depend water for streems, rivers and bore wells.

## Conclusion

The objective of the programme is to familiarize the STO trainees about the actual living conditions of the forest tribal people living in forest area at



Attappadi. And also to understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department is spend through understand its effectiveness on ineffectiveness. By visiting this places it is understand that the socio-economic problem faced by the tribal communities is very high.

The are deprived from all the sets of development, lack of highly education, stagnatin in all aspects

of their growht, malnutrition and related health problems are some of the major issues facing the Attappadi, the socially marginalised group, women and children in particular.

In order to increase livelihood opportunities and ensure health of tribal group in Attappadi the following suggestions may be useful. A method of allocation of common property resources on needs to be implemented. It should meet long-term livelihood and health security of the tribes. Primary health centres should be established in different Oorus in Attappadi for health related problems. For the effective implementation of national rural employment guarantee schemes, the each tribal group should be given the powers to plan, execute, moniter and evalute the rural employment guarantee schemes in tribal area. Formation of tribal sabhas and tribal self help groups should be encourages, Engineering, Medical and Higher educational institutions with special provisions for tribal students should be

opened in this area. Investment in the transportational sector should be encouraged to improve the accessibility and connectivity of tribal groups. The quality and quantity of health services provided by both public and private sector in Attappadi should be upgraded.



**Smitha. P. R**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a part of Immersion visit to Attappadi, group of including STO trainees, superior officers and other staffs of department, state goods and service tax, Kerala started journey from GIFT campus on 10th January 2018 at 7.00 am. We reached the destination, Attappadi, around 9.00 pm.

The authorities have made all arrangements for the stay in the Hostels of AHARDS, now operated by KILA, Kerala Institute of Local Administration. Meals for the morning and night arranged at Canteen of the AHARDS which is conducted by Kudumbasree.

On 11th January 2018, firstly visited Block Panchayat Office where, Mr. Krishna Prakash, DDC Project Office gave us a brief idea about the tribe their nature, belief, culture and their livelihood etc. This gave us an idea about the tribal people.

Before the visit, all of us have been provided a handbook by the SGST department which depicts dos and don'ts through act the visit to the Hamlets. All of us all the instructions given.

First day we visited some Hamlets, Mele Aanaway, Thaze Anaway, chindakki and conducted a friendly talk with the people. Department also made arrangement of tribal promoters for our guidance. They cleared our doubts and gave us valuable information about tribal culture, customs etc.

On 12th, we conducted a detailed study about the tribes and their culture. It gave us a new knowledge about the people who live in dackside. We never think before such livings and it give us a new insight. We took a vow that we do all the efforts for the development of society, especially weaker sections in through out our carrier.

Our team presented a gift of sports accessories to youth with a view to promote sports, arts and other cultural activities and abstain them from anti social behaviour.

By the evening our team from Attappadi. it is very sure that the immersion visit to Attappadi is successful in reaching the objectives.

## 2. Rationale behind the Study

The rationale behind the immersion visit to Attappadi, which was conducted on January 10th, 11th, 12th, 2018, is the inaugural session of training programme of directly recruited state tax officers, conducted on 12th December 2017. During the session, Shri. S M Vijanand IAS, former chief secretary has suggested that in order to understand about the real

plight of a common man and his expectation from the government, a government servant needs to involve and get connected to the weaker sections in the society.

On the basis of suggestion department organized such a study to enrich knowledge about the weaker sections among us.

### **3.Objective of the study**

1. To familiarize about the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappadi.
2. To understand how resources mobilized by taxation department is spent through various schemes.
3. To understand effectiveness or ineffectiveness of various schemes implemented by Government with a view to uplift the tribal community.

### **4. Nature and scope of the study**

1. Study conducted as a part of training programme.
2. Study was organized as a field visit in tribal hamlets.
3. Study conducted with the permission of forest department and with the consent of tribal promoters and project officers.
4. Study was conducted without any way hurting the cultural and habitual life of tribal people in the area.
5. Study conducted in hamlets is selected Oorus, Chindakki, Mele Chindakki, Mele anavay, Thazhe Anavay
6. The methodology used for the study was simple interaction with the family members of the hamlet.

### **5. Limitation of the study**

1. Study limited to a few Hamlet only.
2. Most of the inhabitants were at farm for pancha cultivation and their house was found locked.
3. Some people hesitate to interact with us because of fear.
4. Lack of education and social interaction of tribal people is another limitation.
5. Time barrier is another limitation that two days are insufficient to cover all aspects such as visit tribal extension offices agricultural

officers, veterinary department, health centre etc.

## **6. Attappadi reserve forest.**

Attappadi reserve forest is a protected area comprising 249 sq km of land covering the western most part of the 745 sq. km Attappadi of Kerala. Attappadi is an extensive Mountain valley at the headwater of the Bhavani river nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the western ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamilnadu on the north by the Nilgiri Hills of the western ghats, south by the Palakkad taluk and on the west by Karimba I and II pottassery-I and II and Mannarkkad taluk.

The 249 sq.km Attappadi reserve forest is an informal buffer zone. The elevation of Attappadi valley ranges from 750 meters to the Malleswaram Peak which rises to 1664 meters from the centre of the Valley. The Bhavani River flows from the North west around the mountain in a tight bend past Attappadi village and continues to the south east.

## **7. Attappadi Tribes**

Attappadi is a backward revenue block of Palakkad district has an area 745 sq.km. and encompasses three panchayats. Angali, Puthur and sholayar. Here tribes form almost half of the population and are represented in three sects called.

- i) Irula
- ii) Muduga
- iii) Kurumba

They live in a group around the hills of Attappadi. Irula, hamlets dominate in all three panchayats. Kurumba resides in Puthur and sholayoor is an exclusively Irula panchayat.

Out of this Irula tribe is the largest family group compared to others. These people live in better conditions and are forward than

other two groups. Kurumba tribal group is seemed aborigines of Attappadi



and are of backward than other two groups.

### **Demographic profile of tribes in Attappadi**

Tribe	Number of families	Men	Women	Total
<b>Irula</b>	<b>7616</b>	<b>13160</b>	<b>13361</b>	<b>26521</b>
<b>Muduga</b>	<b>1274</b>	<b>2225</b>	<b>2443</b>	<b>4668</b>
<b>Kurumba</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1128</b>	<b>1123</b>	<b>2251</b>

### **8. Living Culture of Tribes**

Tribes of Attappadi mainly depends on farming for their lively hood. River Bhavani whi;e flowing through Attappadi is their life line. They mainly cultivate cereals, Vegetables, Pulses etc. They also extracty Honey from the forest medicinal plants roots and sell them in the market.

There are three tribes in the Attappadi village Irula, Muduga, Kurumba. Irula tribe is the largest group of these tribes. In each tribe has its own vernacular language for communication. But they have slight differences in their languages. But there is no association or closeness between tribes Kurumbas are the most primitive and they still in the interior forests. Eachh tribes has their an worship which different from that of others. Basically they are not promoted inter tribal marriages. But now the conditions are changing.

Each tribes living as group . They have their own rules and norms. Every body is supported to obey the instructions of 'Moopan' has a right to charge the punishment if any violate the rules and regulations.

Cattle breeding is the main source of income of tribal people. They rear goats, cows for the purpose of milk. meat, etc. They also engaged in poultry farming. Dog is the domestic animal which can see in every home.

As a part of the study we visited Male anavay, Thaze Anaway, Chindakki, Melel Chindakhi, Kadumanna, Mukkali, hamlets. We talked with many tribal people especially women from this we came to know most of them are illeterate. Some of them are not interested to taking with us we understood that they fear of those coming from cities. But we tried to reduce their fear by our friendly taking.

Some of the house were seen looked we came to know that they went inner forest for cultivation, they say 'pancha' for taking pancha they go as a group including their childtrens. pancha cultivation include cereal;s, pulses, Ragi ets. The kept them for off seasons especially rainy seasons.

Attappadi tribals living as group they lives in very small huts which are very adjececent each other. We came to know that political believes also a liase of this grouping. This knowledge was very shocking to us that there were quarrels among them on this baris also.

## **9. Educational System**

In Attappadi most of the respondents are still remainign illiterate out of these most majority are women. But there children aquirei education at least secondary.

As a part of study we visited some schools of Attappadi. There is one lower primary school at 'Mele Anavay' and one at 'Thaze chindaki' . For secondary level children is required to come. Attappadi adivasi High school Chindakki. It is difficult fer students to reach school because of bad conditions of roads, lacking of transportations facility etc. So many of the students drop out after their primary education. But here at chindakki there is Hostal facility for the students cloth for girls and Boys.

In the Attappadi Adivasi high school children are providing Mid day meals for the students those who are coming by foor. They not provide Mid day meals for hostlers. Nearly 200 students are studing facilities in the school. In the school compained there is no ground facility for playing purpose. But authority of sanctioned a playing ground for the students some far from the school.

Teachers said that the learning level of the students are not bad. In the last years they bagged ten percentage pars in the twenth level examinations.

For the heighes secondary level education they have to depend up on ther districts like Thrissur, Palakkad, Ernakulam, etc ispite of there is a higher secondary school at 'Agali' government is prauding residential education for the students of scheduled Tribe in each districts. We met some parents there use these facility for the education their children.

But in reality only very small percentage of the total members had schoolings above 10th level. Since the educational institutions are very limited and fart away for their hamlets, the children have to depend upon



hostel facilities. The government is providing them all the expenses like, food, tuition fees, text book charges, uniform charges.

But majority of the students are not taking higher education due to various reasons like lack of interest in students, financial problem, followed by family responsibility, early marriage, ignorance of parents. One of the most evil among the tribe is drug and alcohol abuse of the youth. All the reasons are the root cause of the alienation of tribals in education and dropout.

## **10. Health and Child Care**

There are three government primary health centres (PHCs), one community health centre and 28 subcentres in the 745 km block. All hamlets are reached by an effective government health extension programme using trained tribal health volunteers. There is a tribal super speciality Hospital in Agali for the health care of the people.

There is a number of indigenous medicine centres which are popularly known as 'Adivasi chikitsa'. They offer medical treatments for chronic diseases like cancer, blood sugar etc. One of the ways to the tribal Ooru, we saw a cancer treatment Adivasi Chikitsalayam.

While talking with the tribal people, they came to know that there is a 'Vaidyan' in each colony.

But an important problem faced by the tribal people is that to reach the Hospital especially at the time of emergency. It is already talked about the infrastructure facility is very poor. Roads to the hospitals are in very bad condition. They face very difficulty to get vehicles to go to hospitals at night. Pregnant women, infants, children, may find it difficult to reach the hospitals and the death rate is rising.

### **Child Care**

As part of the study, we visited an Anganwadi which is working under the KDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme). The purpose of the KDS is to meet the health, nutritional and educational needs of the poor and vulnerable infants, pre-school aged children and women in pregnant stages. From the visit, we understood the authorities provide all facilities for meeting these objectives. From the Anganwadi, children are provided nutritional food, Amritan Powder. It also conducted vaccination through the Anganwadi in regular batches for the children and pregnant women. It also provides medical facilities and health check-ups through the Anganwadi.

When they reached there, for the visit, there were only 3 children.

They teacher told us their parents went for taking 'pancha' the cultivation .



When they go they also carry their children to inner forest. So the illeterate parents not gave to their childrens food health.

Govt. is ready to provide all facilities for the tribal people but they same times to gave importance to such facilities. It is one of the problem of Attappadi people.

## **11. Infrastructural Facilities**

As a part of the study we visited many 'Ooru'. Without thinking we can say infrastructure facilities in the Attappadi is very poor. The road up to the 'Mukkali' which is the entrance to the silent valley is good. From Mukkali it is required to depend Jeep for the traffic. The roads are not suitable for journey. People required to come Adivaram for purchasing, buying provisions, for hospital facilities. The pathetic state of roads make very difficulty for students as they required to take cause to reach schools. It may be one of the cause of school dropping of children.

Majority of the houses are electrified and constructed by the AHADS (Attappadi Hill Area Development Society) with the aid of Japan. For electricity purpose they are using battery and solar lamps. Most of the dwelling units are mere huts, some houses are build in brick walls and thatched roof with sheets and bomboos. Only a small number is residing in house with concrete roof. One of the cause of it is difficulty of reaching building materials in the upper high range area.

Shortage of drinking water is another problem. In spite of drinking water facility provided by Janani with the aid of Japan, the drinking water problem still remaining. They mainly depend Bhavani river for drinking purpose and irrigation purpose.

## **12. Tribal Festival and Ceremony**

The important festival celebrated by the tribes in Attappadi is 'Sivarathri'. It is celebrated at the Chennur Malleswaram Temple during the period of February/March. The Malleswaram Peak is the highest peak in the Attappadi mountain area. There is a gigantic shivalinga where they kindle the lamp on the evening of Maha Sivarathri. It is the occasion that

they wear new dresses, and climb the mountain, Malleswaram Peak and get down after two days. This is the only occasion they celebrate as well.

Another important ceremony of the tribal is their death ceremony. They bury the dead body after one day. One day they stay the deadbody for their custom. Their customary practice of dancing according to the singing at the courtyards of death persons. Neighbours and relatives participate in these ceremony.

In our visit, at Mukkali, we saw such a death ceremony. Woman, Men and children stepping the dance with the sang. But they do not allow us seeing and take photographs of such function.

### **13. Government Initiative Projects in Attappadi**

Attappadi Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) considered as the project implementation agency for the implementation of Attappadi waste land comprehensive environmental conservation project, according to the directions issued by the state government.

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) Ministry of Rural development, Attappadi comprehensive tribal development. The initiative aimed at capacity building and providing funds for the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba tribals communities.

Attappadi Social service organization (ASSO) is one of the major social services organisation functioning in Attappadi. It successfully implemented world bank aided Jalanidhi project to provide drinking water facility.

Attappadi special project initiated by Kudumba sree which is an exclusive adivasi women's collectives for regenerating agriculture for food security, economic sustainability and self-reliance is started with a view to uplift the women of Attappadi.

### **14. Attappadi Co-operative Farming Society**

Attappadi co-operative farming society is the back bone of the Attappadi which provide employment opportunity to the tribes. Tribes mainly depend the society for the livelihood. Society acts as interface between the producers and the consumers.

Attappadi co-operative farming society was formed in 1975 under western ghat project aiming at reform landless schedule tribes families in Attappadi.

The important crops in farm are coffee, pepper, cardamom, clove, nutmeg, arecanut, coconut, ginger, turmeric etc. Products from the above crops sell through auction procedure. Besides the farm products Honey, Kankilyam etc which collects from scheduled tribes are being sold through society's sales outlet.

Areas covered by the Attappadi co-operative farming society, karuvara, chinidakki, pothupadi and varadimala. This land could also be made cultivable under MGNREGS. Any way the society plays a vital role in the poverty eradication in Attappadi area.

### **15. Constitutional Provisions for Development of Scheduled Tribes**

Several provisions have been incorporated in the constitution for safeguarding and promoting the interest and rights of the scheduled tribes so as to enable them to join the national mainstream.

Article 46 of the constitution provides that the state shall promote with special care. The educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society and in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all form of exploitation.

Article 15(4), Reservation in educational institution has been provided.

Article 16(4), 16(4)A and 16(4)B, Reservation in posts and services has been provided.

Article 23, prohibits traffic in human being and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour has special significance for scheduled tribes. In pursuance of this Article, parliament has enacted the Bonded Labour system (Abolition) Act 1976.

Article 243D provides reservation of seats for scheduled tribes in Panchayats.

Article 330 provides reservation of seats for scheduled tribes in legislative assemblies of the states.

Article 334 provides that reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Lok Sabha and state vidhan sabha would continue up to January 2020.

On the 89th amendment of the constitution coming in to force on 19 February 2004, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has been

setup under Article 338A. Commission is setup with a view to protect the interest of scheduled tribes and implement various plans accordingly.

## 16. Findings

Findings of the study conducted in Attappadi tribal hamlets, from 10th January to 13th January 2018 are

1. Attappadi is one of the most backward blocks in Kerala. They live in very pathetic situation. There are so many problems that faced by tribal people. viz.
2. Education is the most important instrument for human resource development. Schools provide not only education to children but also keep them away from social evils. The main problem in school is stagnation and drop out.

Some of the reasons are

- a) Ignorance of parents
  - b) lack of interest from the part of students
  - c) Insufficient educational facilities
  - d) Inadequate transportation facilities.
2. Lack of adequate infrastructure facility is another problem. All the roads to reach the 'Ooru' are not suitable for journey. People required to reach Adivasam for buying provisions, for hospitals, facilities for students it is very difficult to reach schools.
  3. Poverty foremost problem faced by Attappadi tribes. Insecurity of job is the cause for poverty. Their job at an extent is seasonal. In the off-season they lead to jobless. Heavy raining in the rainy season is the feature of Attappadi forest which adversely affect their job.
  4. Ignorance is another problem. Most of the people in Attappadi especially women, are illiterate. This affecting their social interaction. So they are not in a position to raise voice against exploitation.
  5. There are so many government schemes and activities which extend to uplift the tribals. But in actual practical implementation of these programmes become ad-hoc and stereotyped in the absence of proper planning. Unfortunately,



depending of tribals on such development programs become were distribution of benefit rather they capacity building.

6. Another dangerous problem is attitude of young generation. There is a fast increasing tendency of youth slipping to social evils like illicit distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, drug abuse. We say many young men belong 30 yrs, who are not going for any job.
7. Poor Medical facilities is one of the important problem faced by tribal people. Primary health centers are far away from their hamlets. Advanced checkups and services are not available. For advanced checkup they have to go Agali which is far away from the Ooru as the transportation facility is poor.
8. Shortage of drinking water is another crucial problem. Even though there is a project organised by Jananidhi, it is not sufficient to meet the increasing water requirement of the people. For water, they have to depend Bhavani river without even purification.
9. Early child marriage is prevailing among the tribes. Ignorance of the parents is one of the reason. People are heritate to change. They highly tied on their custom.
10. It is a positive sign that some of the parents are sending their children for higher education to Palakkad, Thrissure, Ernakulam etc.

There are promoters appointed in each colony for Providing assistance in the fields like health, education, woman and child care etc. They conduct many programs for enhancing the development of tribes.

## **17. Suggestions**

1. Government suggests to provide better educational facilities, school with good infrastructure, smart class rooms, efficient teachers, hostel facility for the students. It is required to conduct periodical reviews and take remedial measures if any required.
2. Conduct awareness programmes among the parents regarding the need of education and compel them for sending their children to schools.
3. Construct better roads for easy travelling of people.

4. Provide better medical facility near to each hamlet and ensure easy access for tribes. Conduct regular checkup, home checkup for pregnant women, children, elder people, sick people etc.
5. Eventhough government initiates a number of projects for eradicating the proverty, the question si have far these objectives are achieved? The poverty is the answer. So the government, should conduct periodical review regarding the implementation of these projects and whether it attains the ultimate objective of poverty eradication.
6. One of the problems faced is negetive behaviour of youth, ie.e, lack of interest for going jobs, liquir consumption, drug abuse etc. This can be changed by way of conducting awarenss programmes; Promoting sports, Arts other cultural activities, at an extent, helpful for changing the negetive attitude of youth.
7. Drinking water surity is another problems. Even though there is a project of Jalanidhi it is not sufficient to meet the increasing water needs of the community. Government should take action to resolve this problem at immediate effect.
8. To empower tribal woman, it is required to ensure the active participation of Neighbourhood groups, Kudumbasree, Sthree Sakthi etc. Also ensure effective implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MGNREGS), NREGS, in rpovidng atleast 100 days of Guaranteed wage employment.
9. Ensure the effective participation of Anganwadi in providing child care, regular medical checkup, providing nutrions food, vaccination awareness campaing, to the pregnant womn, gidls below the age of 18, new born babies, infant etc. Ensure reduction in infant mortality rate.

## **18. Conclusion**

The immersion visit at Attappadi conducted on 10th January to 12th January is really an eye opener to us, STO Trainees, batch December 2017. it is a golden opportunity that providd to us by the department to known the exact picture of those who still lives in very bad condition. It came to understand the need for effective utilization of resources in proper manner

which is useful to the society especially the weaker sections.

The tribals should be aware of their right and obligations as the citizens a democratic nation. This will heps to increase their bargaining power. Tribes, say Kadinte Makkal also the assets of one nation so it is required to ensure thir development without hurting their customs, culture, fath and belief. People are very sensitive in nature and heritate to intract with the rest society. This make a gap between tribes and society. We have to bridge the gap and put them forward. Education is only the w a y f o r t h e development.



It is also need to protect the forest, the assets of every nation and there by doing good for the earth, the ultimate mother.



**Sunil James**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the Inaugural session of training Programme of Directly recruited State Tax Officers, Shri. S.M. Vijayanand IAS, Former Chief Secretary has suggested that in order to understand about the real plight of a common man and his expectations from the government, a government servant needs to involve and get connected to the weaker sections in the society in some manner. Then only he/she would understand the real treatment a common receives from government officers. He suggested an idea of Immersion training for the directly recruited officers.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE IMMERSION VISIT**

Immersion training is the process in which the officer works in a student –simulated environment to gain better experience from the student perspective. It is aimed to sensitize the officers towards the various schemes undertaken by the government in villages and to study and analyse their execution and effectiveness. Main objective is to be an eye opener as it provides insights on the various dimensions of district level administration, focusing primarily on the policy administration and the execution gaps, while dispelling several stereo types associated with the rural population at large.

As a public servant, its duty of each and every individual to deliver services in the most efficient manner to all the citizens. The immersion visit will help the officers to familiarize about the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attapadi and also to understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department is spend through various schemes of line departments and to understand its effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

## **SCOPE AND AIM OF THE VISIT**

The immersion programme was suggested to give trainee officers a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience, live and learn about the finer aspects of life in the rural areas of attapadi and also to have a perception about how things should be done once a trainee joins his office. The main idea was to push trainee officers into real life environment and explore the learning perspectives by themselves.

The main aim of this programme was to give the trainee officers an exposure to the tribal areas as many of the trainee officers come from urban background and might not have seen or experienced a tribal area. The Immersion visit helps the officers to get sensitized towards social issues

prevalent in those region, which will broaden their perspective and also to get a chance to observe the economy at grass roots, understand the challenges and opportunities for business and develop an overall understanding of the tribal society.

## **TRIBES**

The tribal people were the earliest among the present inhabitants of India. They are still in primitive stage and are far from the impact of modern civilization. They live in the forest areas, hilly regions, mountainous regions and deep valleys. They are known by various names such as jungle people, Girijans, aboriginals, adivasis etc. The constitution of India has referred to them as the Scheduled Tribes. A tribe is development of or outside. A tribe is a distend people, dependent on their land for their livelihood, who are not integrated into the national society. There are an estimated one hundred and fifty million tribal individuals worldwide, constituting around forty percent of indigenous individuals. The tribal people in Kerala are residing in Wayanad, Palakkad, Idukki, Malappuram, Kozhikode etc. The immersion visit was conducted at Attappadi, a tribal area situated in Palakkad district in Kerala.

## **ABOUT ATTAPADY**

Attappady is an east sloping sub-plateau in Kerala nestling below the southwestern corner of the Nilgiri segment of the Western Ghats. The Coimbatore plains are along its eastern flank and the Mannarkad-Palakkad plains are to its south and west. Administratively Attappady is part of the Palakkad District, Mannarkad Taluk in Kerala. It is subdivided into 6 revenue villages namely, Padavayal, Pudur, Kottathara, Agali, Sholayur and Kallamala. It has three Panchayats namely Pudur, Agali and Sholayur, all falling within the Attappady Community Development Block. Attappady has a long inter-State border. To its north is the Nilgiri District, Udagamandalam Taluk and to its east is the Coimbatore District, Mettupalayam, Coimbatore North and South taluks. The Nilambur Taluk of Malappuram District is along the northwest corner of Attappady beyond the Silent Valley National Park. Mannarkad town, the Taluk headquarters is 37 km west of Agali and Coimbatore city is 45 km to the east. The geographical unit Attappady extends over approximately 750 sq.km. It is a part of the Western Ghats falling within Kerala. It is located exclusively within the catchment area of the Bhavani River and her tributaries, Siruvani and Kodungarapallam. A significantly long extent of the Western Ghat main watershed line passes through Attappady. The watershed line passing



through Attappady is specifically very important from the point of view of Cauvery Basin with inter-State implications. It is equally important for the Bharathapuzha Basin which is a water deficit area in Kerala.

At the time of the formation of Kerala State, Attappady was a healthy rich land. This was hardly three generations' life time ago. Many people with clear memories and experiences of those days are still alive in Attappady. Then ninety percent of the population was Adivasis; 10,200 people in 1951. Forest covered more than 75 percent of the land providing environmental security. Agriculture of extraordinary crop diversity, productivity and sustainability provided food security. The less than 80 Adivasi settlements scattered across the land provided social as well as cultural security. Monetary requirements were minimal and resource flow outward almost non-existent. There was no government. But this whole scenario underwent a radical change within the next half a century. 3 Waves of immigration first from the eastern Tamil Nadu and later from the western Kerala side resulted in the Adivasi population becoming a minority (around 35 per cent). Their self-sufficient subsistence economy, life support natural systems as well as ecologically harmonious lifestyle were destroyed in a very short time. They lost their collectively owned land and became dispossessed and disempowered. Their cultural as well as unique agricultural foundations were totally destroyed and devalued. A number of development programs from malaria eradication programs (spraying DDT) to the Kunda Soil Conservation Plan to the Integrated Tribal Development Plans and later the Japanese aided eco restoration program in the name of Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) were brought in to the area.

In short, within a limited period an enormous amount of public funds were invested in Attappady for a population of less than one lakh of which hardly 35 percent constituted the tribal community. Every conceivable government programme was tried out in Attappady. In spite of it all Attappady came to represent sloth, tardy implementation of schemes, widespread corruption along with increasing marginalization of the tribal community, exclusion of tribal people from decision-making, extensive land alienation and social disintegration.

## Demographic Profile of Adivasis in Attappady

Name of the tribe	Number of families	Men	Women	Total
<b>Irula</b>	<b>7616</b>	<b>13160</b>	<b>13361</b>	<b>26521</b>
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People's Plan Programmes, Gram Sabhas, OoruKootams, Ayalkootams, Vana Samrakshana Samithies (VSS) and a plethora of social institutions under AHADS were all built up for inclusive participatory, just and sustainable development. Yet Attappady still retains its prime position in the media for environmental destruction, poverty, tribal right violations of every conceivable kind and so on. In addition to poverty, starvation and every sort of exploitation, malnutrition of pregnant women, infant mortality, especially death of newborn babies plague this once rich land. Perhaps the single-most important contributory factor to the child malnutrition deaths, and the cause for the overwhelming poverty of the Adivasis, which fails to be addressed to date, is the alienation and loss of most of their fertile agriculturally suitable land, total destruction of their indigenous mixed cropping system, change in diet and lifestyle, and loss of hope.

Though liquor has been banned in Attappady, men consume large amounts of spurious and lethal brew from the bar connected with TASMAL (Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation is a company owned by the Government of Tamil Nadu, which has a monopoly over wholesale and retail vending of alcoholic beverages in the State of Tamil Nadu), from the liquor shops in Mannarkad and also illicit brew being distilled rampantly in the hamlets. There are several women who are single, either deserted or widowed and have to fend for themselves. Women are the worst affected by the male consumption of alcoholism. The men die very early in life due to alcoholism and women have to look after families on their own. Women are the main providers for the family through the income earned by NREGP. The other main source of income for women is work in the Tribal Co-operative Farming Societies. The Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) by the Kudumbashree program hardly existed in the tribal areas.

## DAY 1 : THE JOURNEY

The journey to Attappadi started on 10/01/2018 morning 6 AM from GIFT campus.



The entire day was taken for travelling from Trivandrum to Attappady and around 10 PM, we reached AHADS now known as KILA where our accommodation was arranged and we had our dinner from here. The staffs waited for us and they provided homemade dinner without any delay.

Each of us were divided into small groups and we were allotted cottages/rooms. The climate was very cool and the cottages were eco-friendly constructed ones.

## DAY 2 : FIRST VISIT TO OORUS

On 11/08/2018, we started at 9.30 AM, we were asked to assemble at the Attappady Block Office for a meeting. The day started with an awareness session about Attappady landscape, the tribal people and their behaviour, their livelihood, cultural differences, interaction with others etc., which is handled by Shri. Krishna Prakash, DDC, Project Officer. He explained about the characteristic features about the three tribal groups living in Attappady tribal 'Oorus'.

From the block office, we were divided into groups. Our group had selected Mele Anavay Ooru. The population in this area is only below 500 living in 87 houses. The houses are constructed by the govt and given to them based on a scheme. Their major source of income is farming in the society maintained lands and allied agricultural activities. They are having all basic amenities including phone connection, electricity and TV. There is a school located in the Ooru.

After lunch, we moved to our next destination, Thazhe Anavayi, a Kurumba Colony. Here, there was well maintained clean and tidy houses constructed by AHADS which looks simple and useful for the inhabitants. The colony is surrounded by beautiful mountains. Solar energy is the only source of energy in this Ooru. The main income from agriculture, which they call as Pancha Krishi, i.e., farming of 5 different things simultaneously. All produces are acquired and marketed by the co-operative society. There was no doctor at Public Health Center as on this date. ASHA workers are doing a great job in these areas

supporting the tribal families.

## **CUSTOM AND TRADITIONS**

These Oorus (hamlets) are having a headman called 'Mooppan'. At Thazhe Anavayi, we met the Ooru Mooppan and his wife. His name is *Kakki-Mooppan*. He is the official spokesman of the Ooru. He explained us about the custom and tradition followed by them. There is no individual ownership for their houses. In Anavayi, female population is higher than male. They are having their own indigenous medical practitioner (Ooru Vaidyan) who takes care of all the health issues of Ooru members. There is no dowry system prevailing in these places. The male has to give some valuables to marry a girl in this Ooru. The cremation is done by burial. They are having a separate place for this to be done called, "Chudukadu"



. The elder members play a dominant role both within the community and in its relation with other hamlets. It is they who arrange the marriage of their 'sons' and 'daughters' through discussions and negotiations. Very often one or more of the elderly men in the hamlet will be specialist in herbal medicine who cures illness, and a diviner or exorcist who identify the cause of disease with the help of magical spells. Most elderly men know something about the

curing of minor ailments, but very few know how to cure serious illness.

## **DAY 3 : SECOND VISIT TO OORUS AND RETURN**

We started our day early being the last day of our programme at Attappady. We reached the Oorus by 9.30 am and reached at Chindaki 2nd site called Veeranoor, consisting of 30 houses. The area is having many stray dogs. But they are very friendly. The inhabitants here are indulged in agriculture, which is organised by the co-operative society. This place is having a resort also. People from Kerala and Tamil Nadu are regular visitors in local clinics established here and there by small local people calling themselves as "Vaidyars". The clinics or treatment centres are called 'Gurukulams' and main treatment is for Cancer as claimed by them. They are having a sports club there. The main sports event followed by almost all the tribes in



Attappadi is Football. Some of the youths from these Oorus have been playing in District level Team. They are very healthy and follow a professional touch even when practising sports events.

The third day programme ended by 4 pm and we returned to KILA cottage after small purchases from the local stores. We left Attappady by 7pm on 12th January 2018. Before leaving attappadi, on behalf of our department, our senior officials handed over sports kits containing footballs for the young talented boys of the Oorus.

## FINDINGS

Attappady is a backward tribal block in Kerala State. Large number of tribal people are engaged in agriculture, they are the agricultural laborers in the land of land owners. Their economic activities and collection of forest product is not sufficient to their lives, which are leading to nutrition deficiency. Besides that alcoholism, excess use of chemical etc. are other important health issues suffered by them. Due to the low educational status and economic status are leading to the feeling of isolation and health issues. Low educational status, economic status, being of isolation and health issues are the leading factors of socio-



economic problems. For improving their living condition government effectively conduct the welfare programs and assure that programs reach to the tribes.

Health and nutrition are the two fundamental dimensions of the social development process without having intake of nutritious food on continues basic sound health status is a distant dream. But nutritious food is a necessity and not a condition for a good health status. Status of health has both positive and negative impacts on the process of development at the levels of individual, community and

society. If the health status of population, irrespective of their social background, is good as per the observation of health experts, it has positive socio-economic impact at all levels. Such population is considered physically fit to participate in the developmental process. But if the population is sick and suffering from various diseases and is also deprived of nutritious food, they have to suffer all levels, process going on the rest of the non-tribal areas of the country. Malnutrition and mortality have a positive co-relation among themselves. Other variables affecting the above health indicators are poverty or poor economic conditions, illiteracy and low literacy, unavailable / inadequate / inaccessible health care services resulting in high mortality, socio-cultural barriers preventing utilization of available health care service etc.

Factors that are leading to socio-economic problems are given below:

**1. Educational backwardness:**

it is an important and a common problem suffering from tribes for centuries. Tribal language, culture, believes etc. is different from the non-tribal culture, so they cannot cope up with modern education. Educational backwardness also leading to economic backwardness. Due to non-pursuance of modern education they cannot compete in good jobs in private and government sector.

**2. Feeling of isolation:**

peculiar tribal culture and tribal language extract tribes from mainstream society.

**3. Lack of nutritious food:** it is the basic problem of tribal people. Due economic and educational backwardness leading to the lack of nutritious food. This also leading a diseased society.

**4. Low availability of the hospital facilities:**

it is an important problem commonly found in tribal inhabiting areas. Commonly tribal lands are situated in interior forest areas, their life is also closely related with forest. The availability of the hospital facilities is very low in that area. Besides governmental welfare programs related health is not reach among the tribal group. Even if the hospitals are situated in that are the doctors and other officers are not in there.



5. **Language problem:** is a basic problem suffering from tribes. Tribal culture is totally different from non-tribal culture. Their belief is closely related with forest and they are following a traditional occupation. Owing to intrusion of modern culture tribal culture is on the edge of extinction, but they could not extract from their own culture. So they could not accept modern culture and remain in their own culture, which leads them to isolation from modern society. Besides, those leading an identity crises.

Tribal culture is very different from the non-tribal culture. Above explained factors are the important factors coming up in tribal culture. Culture is underlying in their life, so these problems leading to serious socio-economic problems.

## CONCLUSION

The tribes in Kerala form an important part of the total population and it represents an element in society which is incorporated with the culture mixture of our nation. Scheduled tribes are considered as the most vulnerable community of the Kerala State. Tribal communities lag behind other communities with respect to attainment of income, occupation, schooling and other basics for good community nutrition. Education, isolation from mainstream society, low economic status and health issues are the contributing factors of socio-economic issues. Socio-economic problems leading the tribal groups in Attapadi region are vested as most backward group.

★ The possible suggestions for improvement of tribal's are :

- ★ Tribals should be enabled to cultivate the land they own with their traditional crops. In order to achieve this, an approach which combine the plus points of their traditional method of cultivation and modern agricultural technique which is acceptable to the natives need to be adopted.
- ★ AHAD should be provided with necessary funds and its activities should be restarted for carrying out the developmental activities in the region
- ★ Attapady should be made into a taluk to improve the administration efficiency.

To sum up, the tribal's in Attapady deserve a better treatment by the government, non-government organisations and by the mainstream people. Sustained efforts have to be made and policies initiated in order to empower the tribal's to lead a

better life which is at least comparable to that of the mainstream population.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

As an Individual and a Government servant , I express my sincere thanks to the State Goods and Service Tax Department , all the Officials and staff involved , Attappady Hill Area Development Society (AHADS) of Attappady, for providing all necessary support for conducting this Immersion Visit.



**VIJEESH M.V.**

## IMMERSION VISIT TO ATTAPPADY

### INTRODUCTION

During the inaugural session of training programme of Directly recruited officers Shri S.M. Vijayanand IAS, Former Chief Secretary has suggested that in order to understand about the real plight of a common man and his expectations from the government, a government servant needs to involve and get connected to the weaker sections in the society in some manner. The only She/he would understand the real treatment a common man receives from government officers.

Giving due respect to the words of Former Chief Secretary Shri S.M. Vijayanand IAS, our department made his words into action before completing one month from the date he made his speech at inaugural session. Our respected commissioner and Assistant commissioner (Training) were the officials behind the scene of planning and implementing the successful visit to Attappady Tribal area. They planned to conduct a three day programme from 10.01.2018 to 12.01.2018 at various Oorus near the Mukkali in Attapadi.

During the visit, the trainees covered the Oorus namely Chindaki I, Chindaki II, Thadikund, Marikala, Kinattukara, Mele Aanavay and Thazhe Aanavay in two days. It was a trip to understand the economic and social background of tribals living in these Oorus.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT

To gain basic knowledge through experience required to support the development agenda of the state by doing our job as State Tax Officer as per the responsibility entrusted upon us by the statute.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE VISIT

As a public servant it is our duty to deliver services in the most efficient manner to all citizens. The objective of the programme is to familiarise the trainees about the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappadi. And also to understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department is spent through various schemes of line depts and to understand its effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

### SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

The scope of this programme is to give trainee officers a once-in-lifetime opportunity to experience, learn and about the finer aspect of life in the rural areas of Attappadi and also to have a perception about how

things should be done once are unscene the office. The idea behind immersion is to get the trainee officers dive into real life environment and explore the learning perspective themselves.

## CHAPTERISATION

Chapter 1	:	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	:	BRIEF NOTE ON ATTAPPADY
Chapter 3	:	BRIEFING ON DAY ACTIVITIES
Chapter 4	:	WHAT WE LEARNED FROM VISIT
Chapter 5	:	CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER 2

### **BRIEF NOTE ON ATTAPPADY**

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani river rested below the Nilgiri Hills of the Wester Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore districts, on the north by the Nilgiris, South by the Palghat taluk and on the west by Mannarghat revenue villages of Mannarghat Taluk and Eranad taluk of Malappuram district.

Attappadi is a block panchayath in Mannarghad taluk in Palakkad districts. It is 745 km<sup>2</sup> area. Which is larger than Alappuzha district. The local government of Attappadi are the Agali, Puthur and Sholayur grama panchayath.

### **HEALTH**

There are three government primary health center and 28 sub-centers. All hamlets are serviced by an effective government health extension programme using trained tribal health volunteers.

### **EDUCATION**

Only one government school in Agali is having the facility of a full equipped education center. A college of Applied sciences is started in Agali in 2010 in 2012 one new govt college started at Agali. It is the first government Arts and and Science college in Attappadi.

### **HAMLETS IN ATTAPPADI**

There are 192 hamlets in Attappadi. The population of the Valley is mostly Muduga, Irula, Kurumba tribal people, a few Badagas and a section

of settlers from Tamilnadu and other districts of Kerala. This valley falls under the Kannada speaking region as per the linguistic survey and history of colonial wilks.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

There are frequent local buses from Anakkatti village in Attappadi to the nearest town of Nellippathi and Mannarghat.

## **GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO ATTAPPADI**

First integrated tribal development project in Kerala was initiated in Attappadi. Special development project like Attappadi Co-operative farming society, the western ghats development programme, the Attappadi valley irrigation programme and the peoples planning programme over implemented in Attappadi in 1997-2002.

'Bharath Yatra Center' at Agali provide employment training in weaving, pattery, embroidery and food processing to the women of this rural area. But employment training never happened yet.

Attappadi social service organisation (ASSO) is one of the major social service organisation functioning in Attappadi. It successfully implemented World Bank aided 'Jalanidhi' project to provide drinking water facility for the tribal community.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **BRIEFING ON DAY ACTIVITIES**

#### **DAY 1 (10.01.2018)**

As a part of 3 day immersion visit, we direct recruitees of STO's started over journey to Attappadi from GIFT campus at morning 7 'O' clock on 10th January 2018 in two batches in two buses. Our respected A.C. Training Harikumar Sir, D.C. Kiranlal Sir and D.C. Hareendranath Sir were accompanied us with two clerical staff. It was journey in first day and reached at Agali at 10 'O' clock night. Our accomodation were arranged at AHADS Agali.

#### **DAY 2 (11.02.2018)**

At morning 10 'O' clock, we started our journey to various hamlets near Mukkali after having a meeting with Block development officer at block panchayath Agali. In his interaction with us, he gave us useful information about Attappadi in all, tribal areas and various tribes living there.

After splitting our collate team into 7 team, we ascent to various



hamlets in 7 jeeps. On the first day of our visit to hamlets, we visited three hamlets namely Mele Anavay, Thazhe Anavay and Chindaki I. It was a very difficult journey to these hamlets. Because, the condition of road was very pathetic. Most of us may have didn't see such a road in our life.

In the first day, we collected so many information about their life from tribal promoters, tribes and other officials from state tax dept who were accompanying us.

DAY 3 (12.01.2018)

In the second day of visit, we all team split into two batches and went to remaining hamlets in Forenoon session. In the afternoon session the two team interchanged their place of visit. In the second day we covered the hamlets namely Thadikund, Murikala, kiniatukara an chindati 2.

## CHAPTER 4

### WHAT WE LEARNED FROM VISIT

After completing two day visit to various hamlets in Agali Panchayath in Attappadi. We learned and experienced so many things which were very touching and were first time in our life we are seeing such things. As a tax official, on behalf of government, we are collecting taxes from the public and these funds are utilised by the government for conducting development activities in the state. But we are surprised why these people are living in such a pathetic situation in our state cover, there is so many welfare activities conducting by government and other non government organisations.

Even though enough development programmes have implemented in these areas, the tribals socio-economic conditions is not at all good yet. Following are the brief discription about the facts we have experienced from the hamlets we visited.

#### **Educational Backwardness**

It is an important and common problem among tribes. The scope for higher studies after 10th is very less in Attappadi. Only one govt college and IHRD college is there in Attappadi. Lack of income is the main problem for the tribal childrens to go for higher studies in for distance. Due to financial problem childrens, after schooling, are going to coolli works. So that they stops their studies even they are eligible to higher studies.

## **Lack of nutritious food**

It is the basic problem of tribal people. Lack of income leading to lack of nutritious food. Even though there is Anganvadi in some areas, nutritious products are not supplied through it. Only antibiotic tablets are available there. Majority of childrens below 5 years are lacking nutritious food. As we know some childrens die due to lack of nutritious products.

## **Low availability of hospital facility**

It is an important problem commonly found in tribal inhabiting areas. As these people are mostly inhabited in forest area, the availability of hospital facility is very low. Besides governmental welfare programmes related. Health not reached among tribal group. In the area we visited, there is only a public health center (PHC), but where health inspector or more is not always available. For better treatment they have to go to Palakkad which is 50 km away from their places and also only road transport is available. The conditions of road is very dangerous. So it takes more time to reach nearest hospital.

## **Source of Income**

Majority of the tribes find their livelihood from going to coolie works. Majority of the coolie works are from employment guarantee scheme under MGNREGS. The wages from these employment are not enough for meeting their daily livelihood. Only few of the tribes working in government sector, that too in forest department as watchman on a daily basis not permanent staff.

Due to lack of employment opportunity, some tribes are engaged in antisocial activities i.e. buying liquor from villages situated far away and reselling it to local people. Some make local liquor illegally which causes health problems.

## **Drugs and Alcoholic Consumption**

Drugs and alcoholic addiction among youngsters is the major problem in the tribal areas in Attappadi. The main reason for this addiction is lack of educational facility and unemployment. As tribes are living in forest area, drugs like Gunja are easily available.



## **Sexual misuse of women**



One horribel information are received from promoters in tribal department is that around 3500 womens from 192 hamlets in Attappadi gives birth to babies before they going to marry. It shows some sexual misuse is happening in warse manner. When I asked why these womens are going to such situation, the promotor replied that some womens subject to sex to have one day meal. That is warst form of poverty we can see there. Finally I found that these womens are not being sexually harrassed, they are willingly get to sex due to poverty.

## **Agriculture Activities**

Good portion of tribes in Attappadi finds their livelyhood from agricultural activities. Due to wildlife attack, crops are not able to utilise for their benefit. Due to malpractices among intermediaries, they will not set fair price for their agricultural produce. Bad road condition and transport facility causes uneasy for selling produce.

## **Road and other transport facilities**

As it is a forest area, road transport is very worse. Just 20 km away Manarghat from Agali will take one and half hour journey. This is due to the bad condition of road. 3 km from mukali to chindaki I will take 20 minute journey. That too jeep service even walking is difficult to these roads.

## **Housing facility**

Many of the families in these hamlets have houses constructed by local self government. These houses are constructed by contractors who actually misuse them. Even good toilet facility is not available there.

## **CHAPTER 5**

## **CONCLUSION**

Scheduled tribes are considered as the most vulnerable community in the state. The hamlets visited in Attappadi are vested as most backward group. The tribes in Kerala form an important part of the total population and it represents an element in society which is incorporated with the culture mixture of of our nation. Tribal communities delay behind other communities with respect to attainment of income, occupation, schooling

and other basics for good community nutrition. Education, isolation from main stream society, low economic status and health issues are the contributing factors of socio economic issues. Socio-economic problems leading the tribal groups in Attappadi region are rested as most backward group.

As a tax official, do not directly interact with common people. But we can do our duties responsibly keeping in mind that we are a part of state government for providing welfare of these people.



**Deepamol Isac**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As part of the training programme of State Tax Officers the GST Department conducted a visit to Attappadi tribal area in Palakkad district in order to study the real life of the tribal people, their family relations, how money is earned and spend. Differences in social status and base. Facilities like schools, hostels, anganwadis, health centres, veterinary department, Tribal Extension Offices, Agricultural Offices, Banks, Post Offices, Village Offices, societies etc and facilities like television, Radios, mobile phones etc. Also to understand about the real plight of a common man and his expectations from the government, a government servant needs to involve and get connected to the weaker sections in the society in some manner. We had the opportunity to closely observe all these things mentioned above.

### **1. OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the immersion visit to Attapaddi are;

- To get insight into the socio-economics and cultural realities of tribal people.

- To understand the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappadi.

- To understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department is spend through various schemes of line departments and to understand its effectiveness or Ineffectiveness.

- To understand the effectiveness of education system to change their living conditions.

- To understand the way they survive in different situations.

### **2. METHODOLOGY**

The data collected are on demography, social structure, infrastructure facilities, educational facilities, way of life and issues of development. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data were on population, literacy rate, educational institution, hospital facilities. The qualitative data were quality of drinking water, quality of road, housing pattern, sanitation and their food habits.



## **2.1 SOURCE OF DATA**

The required data were collected from both primary source and secondary source.

The primary data were collected from direct interaction with tribal people's ooru visit.

The secondary data were collected from Block Panchayat office, Aganwadi, Primary Schools, Tribal Promoters and internet.

## **2.2 SAMPLE DESIGN**

For collecting data 7 Oorus ie, Mele Anavayi, Thazhe Anvaye, Thadi Kundu, Chindakku Pazhayzooru, Chindakku Ooru, Veerannur, Chindakku were selected purposively ; efforts were made to collect information regarding cultural, social and economic status of the tribal people.

## **2.3 LIMITATIONS OF DATA COLLECTION**

- a). Some people hesitate to tell about the details regarding social culture.
- b). Most of the people are working for coolie and some of them went to forest for Cultivation and collection of seeds therefore they are available only in the evening.

## **3. ABOUT ATTAPPADI**

Attappadi is an extension mountain valley of 731 Sq. Km in area lying at Western Ghats ranges. It is located in the mid eastern part of Kerala on the north east of Palakkad district adjoining Coimbatore and Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu. Attappadi tribal area constituted by Agali, Pudur and Sholayur tribal villages. Though there are three Panchayaths its area is 745 Sq. Km. Over 10,000 adivasi families in which 27,000 nos of people were live in 187 Ooru (hamlets) scattered all over Attappadi. The three major tribal group in Attappadi are Muduga (10%), Irula (84%) and Kurumba (6%). Irula is the largest group in Attappadi tribal area. Mudugas are the second largest group and Kurumbas are a small group in Attappadi tribal area. The Mudugas have the highest literacy. Kurumbas are the most primitive tribal group and they are still residing in the interior forest area. The name of Muduga was derived from the primitive custom of carrying children on Muthuk meaning back. The name of Irula is derived from their physical appearance, pitch black complexion. Tribes have traditional occupation. The traditional occupation of Irula tribe is shifting cultivation, occasionally they engaged in hunting and fishing. Kurumbas are traditionally engaged in food gathering and hunting. But in present day society Muduga and Irula are working as an agricultural

labourer in the land of non-tribal land owners and also they are employed in National Rural and Employment Guarantee Scheme. Kurumbas are working as laborers in coffee plantations. The speaking languages of these three tribal groups are belonging to the south Dravidian family (elements of Malayalam, T a m i l a n d K a n n a d a ) . A H A D S a n d F a r m i n g C o r p o r a t i v e S o c i e t y c o n s t r u c t h o u s e f o r t h e t r i a l p e o p l e a n d n o w t h e y a r e l i v e d i n t h a t h o u s e .



The population of Attappady consists of adivasis and non-adivasis. The key figures in the adivasi communities for each ooru include the 'Moopan' who is the chief of the ooru , and his wife the 'Moopati' who takes care of relations between the oorus , taking a leadership in resolving inter- ooru conflicts, and ensuring food security in the hamlet.

### **Major Tribes in Attappadi:**

Attappadi is the land of tribal people in Kerala. Agali, Pudur and Sholayur are the tribal villages in Attappady. Kurumbas, Mudugas and Irula are the tribes living in Attappady.

#### **1. Irula Tribe**

Irula tribe is the largest group tribes in Attappadi and they are traditionally engaged in cultivation, mainly cotton and indigenous grains. There are 144 oorus for Irula tribes in Attappadi. These tribes have the right for doing pooja in the Temple. Most of them are artist and they enjoy all the important days of their life like birth, death and other festivals with their own traditional programmes.

#### **2. Mudugas Tribe**

The Mudugas have the highest rate of literacy. They are shivites, worshipping Lord Shiva. Mudugas consider themselves superior to Kurumbas and Irulas, though they have marriage relationship with the Kurumbas. There are 24 oorus for muduga tribes in Attappadi. These people have the right to light lamp in the Temple. The Irulas are considered

lower caste and are not allowed to enter their huts. The caste system is still slightly prevalent among the tribes.

### 3. Kurumba Tribe

Kurumbas are the most primitive and they are still in the interior forest area. Kurumbas are shifting cultivators. They are collecting food grains and honey from the forest and sell it to the Service Co operative Society. They are the smallest tribal group. They are educationally and financially backward as compared to other tribal people. There are 19 oorus for Kurumba tribal people in Attappadi. They mainly depend upon forest for their food and cultivation. They lived at Meleanavayil. There is no electricity and solar system is used by each family.

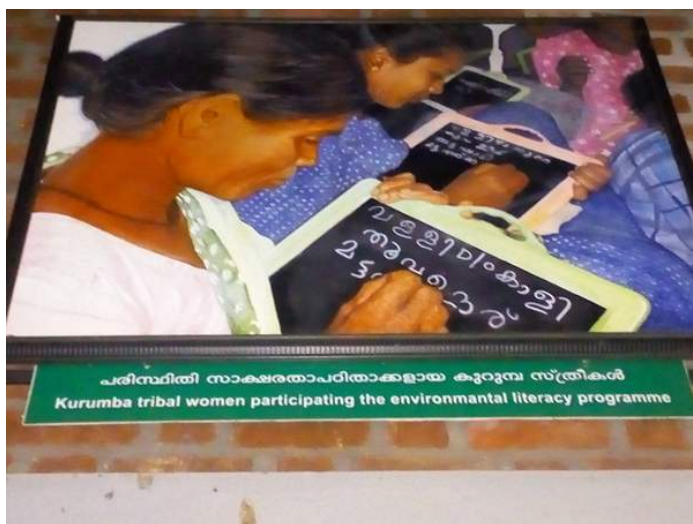


The languages used by each category of tribal people are different from each other's. The Block Panchayat and Grama Panchayat provide financial assistance to these tribal people for the construction of house. The Kudumbasree and farming society provide employment to the tribal people.



### Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS)

Attappadi Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) has been registered under Societies Registration Act of 1860 with a Memorandum of Association and a Bye-law (vide Number 390 dated 31.10.95 before the District Registrar, Palakkad). According to the directions issued by the State Government, the AHADS has been considered as the Project Implementation Agency (PIA) for the implementation of Attappadi Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project. The Society has a Project Directorate with minimum Technical and Ministerial Support Systems under the Project Director. The society has a Governing Body with due representation of the Panchayats, MLA, MP, Scientific Organizations, selected experts, other peoples representatives etc. Policy making at the project level, issuing of directions for implementation of activities, monitoring of activities etc, are the responsibilities of this committee. There is a High Power Committee with the Honorable Chief Minister as the Chairman and the Ministers of developmental departments, MLA, MP and Government nominees as members. The Principal Secretary to Government, Rural Development Department is the Secretary to the committee. The Committee upholds the principles and obligations of bilateral agreement between the Government of India and the O E C F (Government of Japan). The committee envisages the activities of the project with in the broad format of the eco-restoration principles. The Project Directorate (Attappadi Hills Area Development Society) has been considered as a subordinate mechanism of operation to the Executing Agency of the project viz, The Rural Development Department. This agency gets associated with the Wasteland Development Department and the Department of Economic Affairs (Government of India).







## Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDS)



**Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** is a programme which provides food, preschool education, and primary Health Care to children under 6 years of age and their mothers. The scheme was however launched in 1975 but Morarji Desai Government discontinued it in 1978 but however from Tenth five year plan the central government started focussing more on its objective and relaunched it.

Tenth five year plan also linked ICDS to Anganwadi centres established mainly in rural areas and staffed with frontline workers. In

addition to fighting malnutrition and ill health, the programme is also intended to combat gender inequality by providing girls the same resources as boys.

### **Kurumba Scheduled Tribe Service Co Operative Society**

This society provides better market for the product of tribal people. The society gives reasonable price for their products. Most of these products are collected from forest.



**The total number of important Facilities in Attappadi are given below:-**

<b>Name of Facilities</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Panchayat	3
Aganwadis	175
Schools :	
LP School	24
UP School	8
High School	9
Plus Two	4
VHSE	2
College	1
IHRD College	1
ITI	1
Veterinary Department	1
Super Speciality Hospital	1
Agricultural Office	3
Tribal Extension Office	3
Village Office	6

**Factors that are leading to socio-economic problems in Attappadi are given below.**

- 1. Educational backwardness:** it is an important and a common problem suffering from tribes for centuries. Tribal language, culture, believes etc. is different from the non-tribal culture, so they cannot cope up with modern education. Educational backwardness also leading to economic backwardness. Due to non-pursuance of modern education they cannot compete in good jobs in private and government sector.
- 2. Feeling of isolation:** peculiar tribal culture and tribal language extract tribes from mainstream society.
- 3. Lack of nutritious food:** it is the basic problem of tribal people. Due economic and educational backwardness leading to the lack of nutritious food. This also leading a diseased society.
- 4. Low availability of the hospital facilities:** it is an important problem commonly found in tribal inhabiting areas. Commonly tribal lands are situated in interior forest areas, their life is also closely related with forest. The availability of the hospital facilities is very low in that area. Besides governmental welfare programs related health is not reach among the tribal group. Even if the hospitals are situated in that area the doctors and other officers are not in there.



**5. Inadequate Transportation Facility:** The tribal people in Attappadi mainly depend on Jeep for their transportation, because roads in Attappadi are in very critical condition. All the hospital, educational and other basic facilities are available only in Mukkali or Agaly. There is a large distance between the place where the people who lived and the place where all facilities are available. This is one of the main problem for the development of tribal area.

**6. Increased use of Alcoholic Products:** Most of the people in the Attappadi uses Alcoholic and other Tobacco products. Major portion of their earnings were used for the same. So they have no saving habits. This is the main hindrance for their socio economic development.

**7. Language problem:** is a basic problem suffering from tribes. Tribal culture is totally different from non-tribal culture. Their belief is closely related with forest and they are following a traditional occupation. Owing to intrusion of modern culture tribal culture in the edge of extinct, but they could not extract from their own culture. So they could not accept modern culture and remain in their own culture, which leads them to isolation from modern society. Besides, those leading an identity crises Tribal culture are very different from the non-tribal culture.



Natural beauty in Attapadi



Natural beauty in Attapadi

## **Malleswaram Mudi - Peak Worshipped by Tribes**

Malleswaram Mudi is the highest peak in Attappadi Hills, Kerala. Tribes worship this peak and Sivarathri is the major celebration here. Malleswara Mudi is visible from Chemmanur Shiva temple.

### **Malleswaram Peak**

Malleswaram Mudi is a peak itself that is worshipped as a gigantic 'Shivalinga' by the tribes. Attappady is largely inhabited by the tribes of the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba community. Malleswaram Peak has a significant role in Adivasi lives. Sivarathri Festival at Malleswaram temple.

The main festival is celebrated at the Malleswaram temple during Sivaratri. Festival comes in the month of February or March on Sivarathri Day. Only tribal people are allowed to climb the Malleswara Mudi during Shivarathi day.

The elevation of Attappadi valley ranges from 750 meters (2,460 ft) to the Malleswaram peak at 11°6'32"N 76°33'8"E which rises to 1,664 meters (5,459 ft) from the centre of the valley. The Bhavani River flows from the Northwest around the mountain in a tight bend past Attappadi village and continues to the Southeast.



Malleswaram peak

## **River in Attappadi**

Bhavani River is the only river flows through Attappady, Palakkad district, Kerala. Bhavani flows East towards Tamilnadu. Kunthipuzha River flows West through Silent Valley National Park

## **Bhavani River in Attappadi**

The Bhavani is a 217-kilometre long perennial river flows through Attappadi in Kerala. Bhavani is the second largest river in Tamilnadu. All Rivers in Kerala (except Bhavani, Paampar & Kabani) flows in West direction while Bhavani River flows in East direction. Paampar is the only other East flowing rivers in Kerala towards Tamilnadu. Kabani River flows in East direction towards Karnataka. At Mukkali in Attappady Bhavani River takes an abrupt 120-degree turn towards the northeast and flows for another 25 kilometres through Attappadi plateau. Bhavani River plays a significant role in the lives of tribes living in Attappadi region. Siruvani River a tributary of Bhavani River is a major tourist attraction because of Siruvani Dam and the Siruvani Waterfalls.











## **CONCLUSION**

Attappadi is a backward tribal block in Kerala State. Irular is the majority tribal group in Pudur Panchayath of Palakkad district. Large number of tribal people are engaged in agriculture, they are the agricultural laborers in the land of land owners. Their economic activities and collection of forest product is not sufficient to their lives, which are leading to nutrition deficiency. Besides that alcoholism is other important health issues suffered by them. The basic facility for transportation like road is not in a better condition. This is the main hindrance for the development of tribal society. Due to the low educational status and economic status are leading to the feeling of isolation and health issues, and these issues leads to socio-economic problems. For improving their living condition government effectively conduct the welfare programmes and assure that programmes reach to the tribes.



**Devi Ajayan**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indian tribal people play a key role in constructing the cultural heritage of India. They occupy a considerable role in the history of India as they are considered as the true inhabitants of India. They are still in primitive stage and are far away from the impact of modern civilization. They live in the forest areas, hilly areas, mountain regions etc. They are known by different names such as jungle people, Girjans, adivasis etc. The Constitution of India has referred to them as 'Schedule Tribes'. Tribal people in Kerala are residing in Wayanad, Palakkad, Idukki, Malappuram etc. 'An immersion visit to Attapady, is a study on the socio economic condition of tribal people living in Attapay, Palakkad district.

### **Objectives of Study**

The idea of immersion visit to Attapadi arises as a result of suggestion by Shri. S.M. Vijayanand IAS, Former Chief Secretary. According to his great view, a Government servant shall involve and get connected to the weaker sections in the society only after understanding the real life situation of a common man. Moreover it is the responsibility of the public servant to delivers services in the most efficient manner to all citizen.

In short the objectives are

1. To identify and understand the socio-economic conditions of rural people living in Attappadi.
2. To understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department is spend through various schemes of line departments and its effectiveness.

### **Methodology of Study**

The study is confined to Agali Panchayat of Attappadi. Places visit for immersion study is meleanavay, thazhe anavay, Thadigundu veerannur and Thindakkal first sight. The main tribes living in these areas are Irula, Muduga and Kurumba. However we visit to Irula Kurumba and Muduga tribes only. As the Kurumba tribes are found in the innermost / interior forest area.

The data is collected by direct interviewing and observing the local people in these areas. Data is collected from local facilitators, Block Panchayat Secretary also. We visit around 25 houses and on the basis of it data is collected.

## **Scope of the Study**

The immersion visit to Attappadi aims to experience, live and learn about the fine aspect of life in the rural area of Attappadi tribes. Socio-economic condition of the people, facilities of schools, hostels, anganwadis, health centres, Bank, Post Office, Agricultural offices constitute the scope of study. In addition to it, the effectiveness of various schemes implemented through various Government departments covers the scope of the study.

## **Limitation of study**

1. Time is the most limiting factor as the visit is confined to two days only.
2. Some of the information given by the tribal people may be biased.

## **Background of Attappadi Tribes**

Attappadi is a backward revenue block of Palakkad district has an area of 745 sq.km. and encompasses 3 panchayats - Agali, Puthur and Sholayar. Tribes form almost half the population in Palakkad. Over 10,000 adivasi families are live in 187 Ooru (hamlets) scattered all over Attappadi. Each Ooru contains over average of 50 houses densely constructed rows. The three major tribal group in Attappadi are Muduga (10%) Irula (84%) and Kurumba (6%). Irula is the largest group in Attappadi tribal area Kurumba are the most primitive and they are still in the interior forest area.

## **Tribes in Attappadi**

The tribal communities in the area are Irula, Mudugas and Kurumbas. All the tribal communities are listed in its scheduled tribes and mostly forest are the important natural resources and are under different uses ranging from shifting cultivation to sedentary agriculture.

## **The main tribes are as follows**

### **1. Irula**

Irula is the second largest tribe in Kerala and the largest group in Attappadi tribal area. Irulas derive their name from their pitch black complexion. They are of Tamil origin. They are mainly agriculturalists. They used to cultivate Paddy, ragi, chillis, turmeric, maize, chama, pulses like thuvara or red grams. Both men and women take an active part in agriculture. The Irulas worship Maleswaram Swami (Lord Shiva). They speak their own indigenous language with differing degrees of Malayalam,

Tamil and Telugu.

## **2. Mudugas**

Mudugas are the second largest tribal community in attappady. The name 'Muduga' is said to have originated from the primitive custom of carrying children on their Muthuku (back) which is not the practice with other tribes of the valley. They worship lord Shiva. They consider themselves superior to Kurumbas and Irulas. They also use different language like Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. They farmed grains, vegetables, grew traditional medicine and herbs. They collect honey from mountains. Their principal agricultural products are chama, ragi, rice, cotton, red gram, horse gram, tapioca, ginger etc.

## **3. Kurumba :**

Kurumbas are the most primitive and they are still in the interior forest area. They are the smallest tribal group in Attappadi. They cultivate a variety of crops such as chama, thuvara, jowar, ragi, black gram. The term Kurumba is said to have originated from the occupation of tending Kuru (Sheep) or possibly from the Tamil word Kurumba (msicheif) because in ancient times they were believed to be arrogant and mischievous. They speak a district language similar to Mudugan. Now Kurumbas are working as agricultural labourers in the land of non-tribal land owners. They are working as labourers in coffee plantation.

Role of ACFS, AHADS in Attappadi

Attappadi Co-operative Farming Society (ACFS)

Attappadi Co-operative Farming Society was formed in 1975 under Western Ghat project aiming for reform 420 landless. Scheduled tribes are famous in Attappadi. The important crops in the farm are coffee, pepper, cardamom, clove, arecanut, ginger, turmeric etc. The society adopts organic cultivation certified by INDOCERT and do not use any chemical fertilizer and pesticide. Products from the above crops sell through auction procedure. Besides the farm products honey, kunkilyam which collects from scheduled tribes are being sold through society's outlet. Also this has been sold in India and International trade.

The society provides employment opportunity to local tribes. Most of them are employed here on daily wages basis. The society provides PF schemes to employees.

## Attappadi Hills Area Development Society (AHADS)

AHADS has been registered under societies Registration Act of 1860. As per the directions issued by the State Government, the AHADS has been considered as the Project Implementation agency for the implementation of Attappadi. Wasteland comprehensive environmental conservation project. The society has a governing body with representation of Panchayats, MLAs, MP, Scientific organisation, selected experts etc. Policy making at the project level, issuing of directions for implementation of activities monitoring of activities etc. Activities of AHADS includes Hamlet based development (Housing and landscaping, drinking water supply, environment hygiene and sanitation) social development of weaker sections (Human Resource Development, Improving hostel facilities, General educational measures)

### Field Visit to different places in Attappadi

The study is confined to Agali Panchayat of Attappadi. The places of 'Oorus' under study are meleanavay, thazhe anavay, Thadikkundu, Veerannur and Chindakkal. The detailed description of socio-economic conditions of tribes living in these places are as follow.

On 1st day (11th January 2018)

We visit three places Chindakkal, Mele anavay and thadikkundu.

#### a. Chindakkal first sight

The first place we visit is in Chindakkal. First sight this area is mainly consist of Irula tribes. This area consist of 75 families. They cultivate millets such as makka cholam, ragi, chama or little millet, pulses like red gram, raggi, bamboo rice from the innermost forest and sold in the open market or to Attappadi Co-operative Farming Society (ACFS).

Some of the tribes are employed in ACFS on daily wage basis. The wages per day is fixed at Rs. 300. Their main festivals are onam and Sivaratri. The society grants festival advance to them during such occasion an amount varying from 2000 to 5000. The important crops in the farm are coffee, pepper, cardamom, ginger etc. The society provide provident fund schemes to these labourer. Both male and female tribes are employed in the society.

Government provide 50 acre of land to each family. The land ownership of the tribes is collective, as they have the right to possession only. Houses were constructed by Government through various schemes like



Indira Vikas Yojana, EMS house construction scheme. Majority of the houses are electrified and constructed by Attappadi Hill Area Development Society (AHADS) with the aid of Japan. For electricity purposes they are using battery and solar lamps. Water supply is through tribe wells connected from Bhavani River.

Most of them have ration card and they get the ration subsidy through public distribution system. Most of them have bank account, aadhar card. Schools (Lower Primary and High school) in this area. Primary health centre and a Govt. Homeo hospital is found here. Only a few number is engaged in Govt. job (10%).

Some of the respondents illustrate their problems. Shortage of drinking water during summer season. No sufficient support from Krishi Bhavan. Middlemen as well as politicians exploited them. Drugs, Kanjav etc. brought from outside the place and is used by people regardless of age.

Nutritious foods is made available to pregnant ladies and children below the age of children through anganwadis, here the anganwadi is function effectively.

#### b. Anavay Mele Ooru

This area consist of 45 families. Kurumba tribes are commonly seen in these area. They mainly depends on forest. They collect honey, bamboo from mountains and sold in open market or to the society. They cultivate a variety of crops such as chama, tuvara, jower, black gram and ragi. Commonly known as (Panjakrishi). Their main festivals are shivaratri and Onam.

Some of the tribes are employed in society (only very few). Government provide land to these tribes having no ownership. Houses were constructed through AHADS with the aid of Japan. For electricity purposes they are using solar panels Most of the houses built in thick walls and thatched roof with sheets and bamboo. Only some are residing in houses with concrete roof. Water supply is through tubewells connected from Bhavani River.

Ration subsidy is made available through public distribution system. However the ration shop is far away from here. Hospitals, Primary Health centres, Schools, banks etc are not in a reachable distance. It is less developed when compared to tribes in Chindakkal.

Literacy rate is low in these place. Lack of nutritious food is a remarkable feature. They mainly use rice, vegetables (leafy vegetables), Chama, thuvara etc. These people are in danger of attack of wild animals like elephant, tiger etc.

Here we ment a Muppan named 'Kakki' muppan. He is the head of that tribes.

Frequent power failure and shortage of water during summer seasons makes their life difficult. Poor infrastructure of road is an added problem. Use of drugs among youth is another problem cited by a few peoples.

#### c. Tadikudu

This area lonsest of 42 families. Majority of the tribes belongs to Kurumba. Here female members are housewives and male members mainly depends an agriculture. They mainly depends on forest. They cultivate crops such as thuvara, ragi, chama etc. Majority of the houses are conconstructed by AHADS. For electricity purpose they are using solar power. Most of the houses are bult using truck wall and bamboo. There are some area where solar power is not available.

The total population in these area is lower when compared to other place. Most of the houses are isolated from each other. Here also only a few people have bank account, no mobile network access, schools, hospitals, colleges, primary health centres are not there. They may either go to Chendakkal is Agali to avail these facility. A mobile unit of Primary health centre visity occassionally in these areas.

Lack of transportation, poor road non availability of nutritious food, non availability of power and water is the main problems facing in these areas.

Politians comes in these area only during election campaigns.

On 2nd day (12th January 2018)

Visit to tow place Veerannur and Chindakkal 2nd sight

#### a. Veerannur

It is in Agaly Panchayat. Majority of the tribes belongs to Muduga. It consist of 32 families. They farmed grains, vegetables grew traditional medicines, herbs. They cultivate mellets such as cholam, ragi, chama, oil

seeds like ground nut, castor seed, vegetables etc.

Houses were built by the Govt. through AHADS but they were completely ill-suited for the environmental conditions of the area. Majority of the houses are electrified using solar power. Water supply is through tubewells connected from Bhavani River.

Cattle breeding is an important source of income among females. Male members are employed in the Co-operative society on a daily wage basis. Females also engaged in Ayalkootam. Male members once in 6 months collect honey from mountains and sold to society.

Majority of people have ration card and get the ration subsidy. Bank, schools, hospitals are beyond their places.

There we met a muppan named 'Keetan'. He tells a story of Muduga tribe. The main festival of all tribes is Sivaratri. This is the festival where all the different tribes come together. During the festival selected people from Mudugar tribe take a difficult journey to the peak of Malleshwara and light a big plate of fire as an offering to the Lord of the Mountain along with other rituals. These rituals are specifically the job of Mudugas because they believe that the mountain was originally their home and it is their right. But now it belongs to Kurumba tribe. 40 years ago the Mudugars sold the peak to Kurumba for Rs. 1. That was an interesting story.

The problem put forward by these tribes are non availability of power and water. Sometimes they have acute shortage of water. During that time they depend on rivers, streams. Unstructured roads, transportation problems, poor medical facilities, distance from home to school. Attack of wild animals, unemployment etc.

#### b. Chindakkal II sight

This place has a majority of Muduga tribes and a few Irula tribes. They cultivate vegetables, cholan, chana, ragi, coffee, cattle farming and poultry farming are important sources of income among these tribes. Similar to other places houses were built by Government through AHADS. Some of the houses are electrified using solar power.

Society provides employment to tribal people on a daily wages basis. However the society is far away from this place.

Problems dictated by these tribes are same as other tribes i.e. non availability of power and water, unstructured and poor roads, lack of transportation facility, Non availability of banks, schools, primary health

centres. Poor infrastructure of Anganwadis etc.

They are mostly exploited by the promoters as many government incentive/ welfare schemes are measured by them or not reachable in the right hands.

## **Findings**

The major findings of the study are as follows.

1. Shortage of drinking water especially during summer season is one of the major problem in Attappadi. During that time most of the family depends on tanker lorries which was filled from Bhavani river without even proper purification. Others depends on nearby streams or rivers.
2. Majority of the people depends on jeep for travels, as the roads are very narrow, very steep. Moreover jeep is not available all the time. Thus they face the problem of transportation.
3. They also face isolation problem due to inaccessibility of tarred roads, public health centres, banks, market, post office. Most of the tribes may travel 3km to 8km even to reach faced road. Moreover the path leading to tarred roads are very narrow, rocky through the interior forest.
4. As far as medical facilities are concerned, hospitals and primary health centres are located at Agali and Chindakkal area. The tribes located in other places especially those residing in Anay, Tadikundu, Chindakkal need to travel to these places to avail medical facility. Some respondents are poor response about the availability of doctors in these places as well as medicines.
5. There still prevails superstition and myth among tribals related to diseases and its treatment especially there who reside in the inner forest. They rely on locally available natural treatment. As a last resort they prefer to go to hospitals. Infant mortality rate is high in such places.
6. Most of the tribes have the feeling that everything will be provided

by the Government to then can hunts they are silent on the feeding that it is the responsibility of Government to repair their homes. Here the self confidence and self documentation have been evaded. Unproductive Government help in the form of Grants and aids made the tribal people good for nothing.

7. Some of the tribes have the tendency to not repay the loans, taken from banks and Co-operative society. They have the feeling that in the near future loans will be written off by the Government. As a result NPA of banks increases.
8. Non availability of nutritious food in certain places also aggravate the problem of tribe especially there who live in innerforest. Public distribution system is not effective there. They are really exploited by the middleman as well as promoters.
9. Non availability of electricity especially in inner forest area another problem. Electricity using solar power is not available there.
10. Through Government provides grants, through various schemes for the department of people in Attappadi. But whether it reaches in the hands of right person is questionable.

### **Suggestions**

The following are some of recommendation / suggestions to the Government to overcome their problems and for the upliftment of people.

- a. Rainwater harvesting technique can be utilized to harvest rainwater from roofs and other surfaces to be stored for the later use.
- b. Banks have to take the initiative to organise campaigns in local places and to introduce the new schemes launched as a part of financial inclusion. As the common people are not much aware of the new schemes introduced by Government. They solely depends as

promoters. And if needed ATM lounless are installed even at main centres.

3. Skill development training to Youth, and unemployment women like making of basket, craft, bamboo products etc.
4. Social audit should be conducted to ensure whether the benefits o various schemes reaches the targetted person and also to evaluate the effectiveness of various programmes.
5. Kindly arrange medical camps or mobile medical unit to visit very house and to conduct medical check up.
6. The works of anganwadi need to be strengthened. The vacancy supervisory post need to be filled and supervisors should be provided vehicles for field inspection. Such inspection evaluate the efficiency of anganwadi. New anganwadis should be started where it is required.
7. The common food of tribal people like ragi, maze, pulses should be distributed through ration shop.
8. Nutritional survey should be carried out to access the nutritional status of children, adolescent girls, pregnant women etc.
9. Primary health centres should be opened at appropriate place convenient to the tribes. Tribal speciality hospital should be provided all innovative medical equipments.
10. Tribal speciality hospital, if possible, should be developed into a Tribal Medical College with the aim to train docters to work in tribal areas across Kerala. A fixed number of seat should be reserved to tribal students in that institute and Government should bear the lost of their education.



## Conclusion

The immersion visit to Attappadi definitely helps to understand the actual living condition of the poorest tribal people living in the forest area. It also helps to understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department is spend through various schemes of line departments and its effectiveness. It si indeed a great opportunity for us to know the duties and responsibility as a public servant. It is the duty of all public servants to ensure that public money is spent as efficiently as possible without discrimination, waste of money and with transparency. Moreover it is our responsibility to serve the society with integrity, transparency honey for the socio-economic welfare of the people.



**Jijo Mathew**

## **Immersion Programme overview**

The immersion programme was propagated during the inaugural session of training programs of directly recruited officers by Shri S M Vijayanand IAS, former chief secretary. The chief secretary has suggested that in order to understand about the real plight of a common man and his expectation's from the government, a government servant needs to involve and get connected to the weaker sections in the society in some manner. Then only he would understand the real treatment a common man receives from the government officers. Shri S M Vijayanand sir reminded us about Mahatma Gandhi, that as a public servant whenever you take a decision you should remember the face of the poorest of the poor known to you and in which way, how the decision can be interpreted in favor of him without violating any of the provisions of the law but by understanding the intent. The tax officials whose primary role is to mobilize funds for developmental activities of the government whose role is to improve the life of its citizens including the weakest among the society the trainee officers are to play an important role in their official life for the next two to three decades and is expected to carry forward the goodwill of the department for that period. The state GST department contributes almost 70 percent of the revenue to the government. As a public servant, it is the duty to deliver services in the most efficient manner to all citizens. The important objective of the programme is to familiarize the trainees about the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappadi. And to understand its effectiveness in application of the development projects of the Govt. As tax official trainees are expected to gain first hand knowledge and to form a vision that how much one contribute to development outline by doing our job according to the responsibility delegated to us by the order.

The selected site Attappadi area which remains as one of the under developed area in the state even after major initiatives of developmental activities conducted by the government. Attappadi area is a part of Mannarkkad taluk in northeast part of Palakkad district having an area about 745 sq km bordering Tamil Nadu. Silent valley national park forms part of this area and the total forest area is known as Nilgiri biosphere reserve. The settlement's of tribals are spread all over the area in Attappadi. Under Attappadi block there are three panchayats Sholayur, Agali and Puthur. The immersion programme was conducted from 10.01.2018 to 13.01.2018 in such a manner that two nights stay helped the trainees to get first hand knowledge of tribal life and return to office after completion of the

successful training. Transportation was arranged to transport the entire trainees and staff from Trivandrum to Agali. Accommodation and food arrangement were made at Agali , team of 70 trainees with entrusted officials were given sufficient itinerary at hostel facility of AHADS[Attappadi Hill Area Development Society] maintained by KILA [Kerala Institute of Local Administration].



The immersion training aimed to sensitize the officers towards the various schemes undertaken by the government in villages and to study and analyze their execution and effectiveness. Main objective is to be an eye opener as it provides insights on the various dimensions of district level administration , focusing primarily on the policy administration and the execution gaps, while dispelling several stereotypes associated with the rural population at large. The major places of oorus where trainees are put up are as follows ,

- ★ 1)Mele Anavay
- ★ 2)Thazhe Anavay
- ★ 3)Thadi Gundu
- ★ 4)Chindakku Pazhayooru
- ★ 5)Chindakku Ooru
- ★ 6)Veerannur
- ★ 7)Chindakku First Sight

## **Report on Immersion Training at Attappadi**

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani River nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the Western Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, on the north by the Nilgiris, south by the Palghat taluk and on the west by Karimba-I and II, Pottassery-I and II, and Mannarghat revenue villages of Mannarghat taluk of the Palghat District and Ernad taluk of the Malappuram district.

The 249 km Attappadi Reserve Forest is an informal buffer zone bordering the Silent Valley National Park to the West. 81 km of this forest was separated to become most of the new 94 km Bhavani Forest Range which is part of the 147.22 km Silent Valley Buffer Zone formally approved by the Kerala Cabinet on 6 June 2007. The Cabinet also sanctioned 35 staff to protect the area and two new forest stations in Bhavani range at Anavai and Thudukki. The zone is aimed at checking the illicit cultivation of ganja, poaching and illicit brewing in areas adjacent to Silent Valley and help long-term sustainability of the protected area.

There are 192 hamlets in Attappadi. The population of the valley is mostly Muduga, Irula, Kurumba tribal people, a few Badagas and a section of settlers from Tamil Nadu and Other Districts of Kerala. This valley falls under the Kannada speaking region as per the linguistic survey and history.

There are three government primary health centers (PHC), one community health centre (CHC) and 28 subcentres in this block. All hamlets are serviced by an effective government health extension program using trained tribal health volunteers.[The tribal women of 80 Attappadi are conducting a vocal campaign against liquor and ganja which has received public support .There is a Tribal Super Specialty Hospital in Agali for the health care of the people with some operation theatres and facilities.

In 1970 the State Planning Board assessed Attappadi as the most backward block in the state and the first Integrated Tribal Development Project in Kerala was initiated there. Since then, the state government has implemented several special development projects including the Attappadi Co-operative Farming Society, the Western Ghats Development Programme, the Attappadi Valley Irrigation Programme and the People's Planning Programme implemented in Attappadi in 1997–2002. Attappadi demonstrates how difficult it is for a modern government development process to succeed in a traditional self-sustaining indigenous peoples (adivasi) community. Tribal people are a majority of the Attappadi



population but have a high illiteracy rate of 49.5 per cent and a lack of political and administrative awareness. The majority of project managers and new land owners are from other parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other states.

- ★ Immersive learning places individuals in an interactive learning environment, either physically or virtually, to replicate possible scenarios or to teach particular skills or techniques. Simulations, role play, and virtual learning environments can be considered immersive



learning. Why are Immersive training so effective for learning? Here are some possible answers. These environments allow:

- ★ Practice of real world skills with rich feedback in a safe environment that does not impact real processes or customers.
- ★ Mastery of a technique, behavior or method through guided rehearsals again and again as many times as is needed.
- ★ An emotional connection of the learning event to the learner because of the realistic and immersive nature of the environment.
- ★ The learning to be embedded in the proper context by providing a simulation of the actual environment in which the employee or learner will be working.
- ★ Ability for geographically dispersed learners to meet together in a training environment to conduct meetings, and exchange information



### **Objectives of the Immersion training at Attappadi**

STO Trainees get a chance to explore the village community and identify its social, political and economic aspects.

- ★ sensitized towards village social issues to broaden their perspective.
- ★ to interact with and observe the rural community and understand its challenges and opportunities.
- ★ to identify if the government schemes in the village are facilitated appropriately
- ★ exposed to the resilience and integration aspects of the village community.

The group with department officials started the journey from GIFT sreekaryam at 6.00 AM on 10.01.2018 and reached the destination Agali at approximately 10.30 PM. The trainees were provided with food and requested all to report for briefing at morning 9.00 am for starting the immersion training. After breakfast and initial briefing the team left to Mukkali. From Mukkali junction trainees boarded jeeps and left for Mele Anavay Ooru.

The trainees reached the ooru after half an hour journey in the jeep accompanied by the department officials and tribal promoters of the concerned area. Mele anavay ooru is the most remote tribal settlement compared to others. Though the tribal hamlet is away from other settlements

roads accessibility is found more convenient. This tribal hamlet has almost 87 families living with their local king and queen in a hierarchical manner.

The general anticipation was that people live in small huts made with coconut and palm leaves with floors done with cow dung etc., but to the astonishment of most of the trainees it was quite the opposite. The settlement is under the supervision of AHADS , most of the small cottages



were constructed by them. Each cottage has one kitchen , one or more bed rooms , small work area , and a verandah. Basic amenities like water, electricity were available sufficiently. Most of the cottages had solar panels and televisions which were run by the solar energy.

The tribal hamlet had approximately 87 families. Almost all cottages built by AHADS is seen occupied by at least one family. The settlement had a small hall built with bamboo , and roof done with aluminum sheets to conduct general meetings and receptions of weddings. The community mainly speak three types of languages Native language which they speak among the group is not clear to outsiders and no manuscript is yet made/ available other two languages being Tamil and Malayalam. The people of the settlement were much friendly and interactive. The youngsters were particularly seen efficient in all tech upgrades with new gadgets including 3g phones , DTH set top boxes. Almost all house had DTH connection's and are seen updated in latest soap operas , sports particularly football , movies except politics which they had no particular interest.

The ooruu has LP school which offer preliminary education. For higher studies the community depends on Agali or Mannarkkad. Infact there are many youngsters going for higher studies, who opt for hostel facilities offered by the concerned institutions. Two youngsters were present at that time studying MA Economics at a college located in Kochi. The youngsters in the society are more literate compared to the elder members.

Income generation is mainly from agricultural produce. The community also engaged in animal husbandry. The female members are actively

participating in rural employment generation programme of the government of India. Almost every individual in the family is engaged any kind of income generating activity. Every household is covered in the public distribution



scheme and regularly collects their ration.

Attack of wild animals are prevalent in the region of settlement. Most of the habitants complained about losing their cows , especially lambs and goats. People complain that the cattle's once lost in the jungle are attacked by the leopards and are

eaten. Residents usually will not venture into jungle to track their animals.

Though there is penetration of the government exists in the society by various departments , administration in the settlement is done by the village assembly (oorukoottm) headed by ooru mooppan. There is segregation in each settlement as per their administrative positions. After the head of settlement there is a person called 'Pandari' who looks after the financial matters and acts as a treasurer. Another important person is called 'Mannukaran' who deals matters relating to farming , harvesting , cultivation, storage and other land related issues. Another important person is called 'Kuruthala' who acts as the secretary to oorukoottam. In previous decades the decision made by the oorukoottam were considered final but nowadays the people also approach government departments.

With the help of our tribal promoter Mr Ramesh the trainees were able to meet personally oorumooppan and his wife who holds the title mooppathi. Both of them were humble and modest. The title of the mooppan is ancestral , preferably from the same family. The particular family holds the title of mooppan and no one from another family is considered eligible for the



title.No preference is given to women in any administrative positions of the oorukoottam . Though visibly no gender difference seen in the community now.

The immersion camp was completed for the first day and the trainees were transported back to the camp at KILA. Dinner and itinerary were arranged and the trainees were requested to appear for briefing the next day morning .

The next day training was organized in a manner that trainees need to cover all other ooruu's in a systematic manner. The trainees were divided into small groups and instructed to cover different ooruu's.

Settlement of Chindakki first sight and chindakki ooruu were covered by our group. Compared to Mele Anavay these settlement's were near to Mukkali and accessible easily by public transportation. There were anganwadis and co-operative societies present at the location.

Aanganwadi at chindakki first sight is equipped with basic amenities , it is maintained by ICDS under the department of social justice. The number of children's at the aanganwadi were fairly high but there is enough staff to attend them.

Members of chindakki first sight greeted us with sweet porridge made of traditional rice. There were large number of families located at these settlements compared to mele anavay. Fair population of youngsters were present at these tribal hamlet. All of them done their basic education and waiting for any job that is offering daily wages. There is similarity in all these tribal settlements in the case of administration and segregation.Like 'mele anavay' this settlement also had a hierarchical system dominant among them. There is segregation in each settlement as per their administrative positions. After the head of settlement there is a person called 'Pandari' who looks after the financial matters and acts as a treasurer. Another important person is called 'Mannukaran' who deals matters relating to farming , harvesting , cultivation, storage and other land related issues. Another important person is called 'Kuruthala' who acts as the secretary to oorukoottam. In previous decades the decision made by the oorukoottam were considered final but nowadays the people also approach government departments.

## **Conclusions**

The training programme ended on 12.01.2018 and the trainees departed from KILA approximately at 8.30 pm. The programme was a first hand experience for all the trainees. The training programme did helped the

trainees to realize the value of their significance in the department. It conveyed a basic idea in all the trainees to perform as a good public servant. Certain conclusions were derived from the training programme and it is discussed below

### **Population**

There is fair population in each hamlets consisting of many families Three ethnic groups viz. Kurumba, Irula and Muduga constitute the tribal population, which are sprinkled over 142 hamlets. As a rule, the Kurumbas occupy high, the Mudugas medium and the Irulas low rainfall areas. Irulas are the numerically dominant community and Kurumbas form the smallest group. The tribal population which constituted 90% of the total population of Attappady in 1951 has been reduced to 33% by 1981, because of high influx of settlers.. Almost 100 families were settled in each oorus headed by their respective mooppan. settlement also had a hierarchical system dominant among them. There is segregation in each settlement as per their administrative positions. After the head of settlement there is a person called 'Pandari' who looks after the financial matters and acts as a treasurer. Another important person is called 'Mannukaran' who deals matters relating to farming , harvesting , cultivation, storage and other land related issues. Another important person is called 'Kuruthala' who acts as the secretary to oorukoottam.

### **Education**

The tribals of Kerala in general and of Attappady in particular are educationally backward sections in the society. The literacy rate of tribals at state level was estimated to be 35 % as against 84 % in the case of general population. Large scale investments have been made in the education sector in Attappady, especially since the establishment of ITDP there is a positive effect on the education of the tribal people. Attappadi Adivasi High school , Chindakki has a 100% passing out of students from matriculation since 2016. Hence there is a shift in the total literacy rate among the tribal population recently. Though only one government school in Agali is having the facilities of a full equipped education centre. A college of applied sciences (IHRD College) is started in Agali, in the year 2010 for the higher education.on 2012 there is another college has started at Agali. Govt. College Attappady is the first Arts and science College in the Attappady region established under the Govt. sector in 2012. Most of the youngsters expressed their intention to continue the education and there are facilities provided by



the government to avail that free of cost. There is no sufficient awareness among the younger population about the educational development programmes introduced by the government. The availability of reservation in education as well as government jobs is not known to the majority. There should be an awareness among the general tribal population to educate them about their rights and reservations.

## **Health**

There are three government primary health centres (PHC), one community health centre (CHC) and 28 subcentres in this block. All hamlets are serviced by an effective government health extension program using trained tribal health volunteers. The tribal women of 80 Attapadi hamlets are conducting a vocal campaign against liquor and ganja which has received public support from the Governor. The tribals are entitled to get free medical treatment from government hospitals and dispensaries that are located in the ITDP limit. The existing medical facilities are quite inadequate. Since most of the hospitals and dispensaries are located in certain important localities, the tribals living in remote areas are not able to get the benefit from this. Consequently, a significant number of tribals still depend upon unqualified indigenous doctors and Moopans for treating the diseases. But during the interaction many members admitted that they no longer depend on the indigenous treatment but prefer going to government hospitals either at Agali or at any hospitals located in Tamil Nadu. Problems of high liquor consumption and ganja is rampant in the community. The younger population is more prone to this problems. There is an urgent need for a de-addiction centre at Attappady for treating the tribals as drinking habits are also high among the female and younger members also.

## **Economy**

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in the hamlet and is followed by collection of minor forest products. Since area under cultivation is less, income received from agriculture is quite inadequate to meet their livelihood. Thus, majority of the adults depend on wage labour either in settler farms or co-operative farms, located near the hamlet to supplement their income. The tribals who are self-reliant till some decades back depend heavily on settler population and government dole for livelihood. The per capita monthly income of the tribals reveals that they live below the poverty line. Side by side with the tribal economy, there exists a peripheral economy developed by the settlers, and the government agencies in the study area. The tribal economy, which interacts with the peripheral economy, is being

destabilised at the hands of latter. Further, the tribals who were mainly cultivators have been transformed to agricultural labourers due to large scale land alienation.

Attappady Co-operative Farming Society (ATCOFARMS) :- In terms of magnitude and significance, the formation of Attappady Co-operative Farming Society was the second largest event in the history of the tribal welfare programme. More than a welfare programme, it was treated as an alternative path of development and thus it evoked much interest among the public. The society has been allotted about 1080 ha which are uncontiguous and spread over four different places in Attappady viz. Chindakki (230 ha). Of the total area, about 1040 ha have been planted up with cash crops such as cardamom, pepper and coffee and 0.50 cent each has 65 been allotted to each family for cultivation of crops of their own interest within the farm. In addition, each farm provided employment to its members. The success of agricultural crops, especially cash crops, to a great extent, depends upon favourable weather condition. Extensive felling in farms for different agricultural operations coupled with massive deforestation outside the farms are said to have altered the microclimate in the farms, which affected the performance of the crops. Undertaking an evaluation study on ATCOFARMS by KIRTADS stated that the society had not fulfilled its objectives and the benefits had not trickled down to the members. The involvement of tribals in this type of cooperative farming did not transform to real participation. They were given the status of wage labourers and were constantly at the mercy of supervisors and Director Board members for day to day existence.

Two rivers control the drainage of Attappady. The Bhavani river originating from the Nilgiris flows due south up to Mukkali and takes a turn to east. Further, it flows in the west-east direction draining into Tamil Nadu. The Siruvani river descends from the southern portion of the Attappady at Muthikulam and flows south-south west to north east and join with Bhavani in the valley itself. Thus Attappady forms the drainage basin of one (Bhavani) of the three east flowing rivers in Kerala.

### **Final Conclusion**

The immersion training conducted by the State GST department was educational and much enlightening. The training were conducted only on some selected tribal settlements. The image that propagated by the media about the Attappadi is totally different from our personal experience. The government is providing sufficient funds and other projects to this area. But

the achievement of the objectives are not taken up sufficiently. The number of outside settlers increased in a sizeable manner, either they hold the control of these resources or by some of the prominent tribal members. The settlement's of irulas who are considered as the poorest were not included in the immersion training. There is gradual development among the tribal settlements due to some concentrated efforts by the government authorities. Red tapism and corruption are part and parcel of many government departments and even the tribal promoters are not fully free from these. These malpractices should be checked in order to strengthen the achievement. The problems of poverty and malnutrition were not that relevant in the tribal settlements. But there are major effects on the community due to alcoholism and drug addiction. The exploitation by the minor group of settlers also acts as a deterrent to the tribals. Usually these settlers hold support from the political as well as local government departments.



**Neethu. P. N**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the in...session of training programme of directly state Tax officers Shri S.M. Vijayanand IAS, former chief secretary has suggested that in order to understand about the real plight of a common man and his expectations from the government, a government servant needs to invite and get connected to the weaker sections in the society in some manner. The only one who would understand the real treatment is common man receives from government officers. According to his suggestion an immersion visit was arranged to various tribal colonies known as 'ooru' in Attappady in Palakkad district from 10th January 2018 to 13th January 2018. We spend two days and two nights at Attappady so as to get first information about the Ooru and the tribal life there.

The day since our respected commissioner indicated about the visit to Attappady as a part of our training programme, all the STO trainees were eager to experience the once in life time opportunity to get acquainted with the vulnerable sections of the society.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Immersion visit to various 'Ooru' in Attappady was arranged to attain the following objectives.

1. To identify the challenges of rural life in various 'Ooru'
2. To get an understanding of the local administration prevailing there
3. To understand various schemes and its effectiveness.
4. To get an insight into their health issues, education and livelihood drives.
5. To form a vision that how much we contribute to development agenda by doing our job as per the responsibility entrusted upon us by the statute.

## **METHODOLOGY OF COLLECTING INFORMATION**

As a part of preparation for the visit some informations regarding various Ooru in Attappadi, their life, problems, language etc were collected from secondary sources like magazines, websites etc.



In order to collect information from tribals and tribal promoters issued conversations were made bearing some questions in mind.

## **PERIOD OF VISIT**

From 10th January 2018 to 13th January 2018. Two rights and two days study at Attappady.

## **REPORT ON IMMERSION VISIT**

### **Day 1, 10-01-2018**

We started our journey from GIT campus on 10th January 2018 as two batches in two buses. Batch 'A' under the leadership of Mr. Shiju and batch 'B' under the leadership of Mr. Vimal Kumar PB. There were sixty four STO trainees and six staffs from department. We reached Attappady on 10th January at 9.45 pm stayed at AHADS hostel.

Attappady is one of the largest tribal settlements in Kerala and is located at Mannarkad in Palakkad district. It encompasses three panchayaths Agali, Puthur and Sholayoor.

### **Day 2, 11-01-2018**

We reached Block office Agali at 10.45 am. Mr. Krishnaprakash DDC project officer addressed the trainees and introduced about the Attappady tribals, their homelets, life style culture, situations, traditions, occupations attitude towards government and civil servants more over about their innocence. This small introduction was just enough to raise various questions in everyone's mind. Because while gathering information from secondary sources, I come across with some shocking news regarding drug addition, child marriage, malnutrition, premature delivery etc. in tribal homelets of Attappady.

### **Chindakki 1<sup>st</sup>**

The first homlet team visited at Attappadi was Chindakki 1st. Chindakki is near Mukkali. All of us got opportunity to speak with the families there. Besides that Tribal promoter Sri. Ramesh was along with us to provide information and sometimes to translate informations. They were very cooperative. While talking with the people of Chindakki 1st we realised that, what Mr. Krishnaprakash told us was absolutely right. They provide us with handful of informations. Most of them are satisfied with their living conditions, but still they feel some problems and we are happy to say that those people were ready to disclose it with us.

There are around seventy five families at Chindakki first. Most of the tribes are irulas. There are three kinds of tribals in Attappady. Kurumba, Muduga and Irula. Among them Irulas are the most civilised reactions. The Irulas we found at Chindakki 1<sup>st</sup> were living there for a long time. Now the family members are workers at the from and mill near. Besides the income from from, they do cultivation of coffee, raggi etc.

From our experience with tribals and ST promoter we realised the fact that 'Kudumbasree' has a major role there. Most of the ladies are qualified tenth or even have elementary education. Almost all the houses are concrete houses and are electrified. People use mobile phone. Bhavani river is the main source of water. Besides Bhavani river, for drinking water purposes they depend Jalanidhi. Almost all the houses have cooking gas connection.

Most of the family members above the 30 years have only elementary education. But they all give due importance to the education of their children. There is Lower Primary School, Upper Primary School and High School in Chindakki. Among them Attappady Adivasi High School was formed in 1984. It has around 250 students and thirteen teachers. It gives hostel facility to students from remote homlets. Day Scholars are given free food and the hostlers get food from their hostel. All facilities like computer lab, science lab, smart classroom and other infrastructure facilities are there in the school. After passing tenth level, students have to travel long distance to Agali to study at the vocational higher secondary shcool there. Besides VHSS, there is a Govt. College & Polytechnic located at Agali. Tribals of this homlet includes Govt. Servants. Most of them are in classical cadre. Besides clerks there are forest wonders teachers and even doctors from this homlet. They speak irula language between them. But they are good in speaking Malayalam & Tamil.

### **Problems they face**

The most important problem they face is the lack of good playground and equipments. Children of the Ooru, youth and the students use nearby playground, which is very limited in space.

Elders of this ooru complain that they cannot depend Bhavani river completely for drinking purposes, because it is not as pure as they felt during their good old days. Even if they depend upon Jalanidhi, they are not satisfied with it.

As far as irula tribes of Attappady are concerned they get regular ration, they have adequate representation in local parties, they have access to nearby town Agali and Mukkali, have primary health centre here, have transportation facility, schools, all the houses have remutation facilities, last but not the least a strong kudumbasree.

When we moved on to Meleanavay - a remote homlet after a good and mindful meal from Chindakki. We realised that the real face of tribals of Attappady is yet to face.

#### Afternoon - Meleanavay Kurumba Colony

On our way to Kurumba colony we realised the fact that the major problem faced by them would be transportation problem. Some portion of the road to the colony is not tarred. Our jeep driver told us that their vehicles would get complaint frequently because of the pathetic condition of the road.

Meleanavay Kurumba colony is in a beautiful location surrounded with mountains on three sides. Among them 'Malkeswarommudi' is the highest; where their costumes, traditions and culture resides. A very peaceful atmosphere.

Here at Meleanavay, we found similar houses constructed and over by AHADS. All the houses are made of bricks and roofed with roofing sheets. Solar is the main source of power. They have television a small ground to play. Finally Kurumbas are very backward. Their main source of income is forest resources like honey, medicinal plants etc. Their main cultivatin is 'ponchakrishi'. It includes raggi, bajree, horsegram, maize, millets, pulses and vegetables. They get regular ration but still they don't stick with rice and allied food, they always prefer their agriculture products. They proudly say that these food habit is the secret behind their health. Besides cultivation they engage in cattle breeding, poultry farming etc.



Earlier Kurumbas get married only from their own community. But now they can marry Muduga also. Kurumbas are closely connected to forest. That is why they don't move away from forest. They consider forest as a part of their life. They don't fear wild animals. They give equal

importance to animals too. If wild elephants destroy their cultivation one year, they strongly believe that, these wild elephants are like gods and they would get double yield from the cultivation next year. This shows their innocence. They don't want to hurt animals or anyone among them. They all live in harmony with each other.

Their main festival is Sivarathri. During Sivarathri they would be on fasting. On the day of Sivarathri they go to the peak of Malkeswarmmudi and light big lamp there which would be visible from any part of Attappady.



While seeing this light in Malkeswarmmudi, all the hindus in Attappadi light comps at their homes. A very strong custom followed over many years.

Kurumba Homlets is under the guidance of 'Mooppan'. We

went to the house of mooppan and saw him. Kakki Mooppan and his wife. In this ooru majority of the population comprise of female. Every colony will have one indigenous medical practitioner. This agrucultured products are mainly acquired by forming co-operative society. This reduces the risk of under pricing of their products in the markets. They don't use chemical fertilisers. While discussing with mooppan and family, they told us that marriages are conducted under the guidance of mooppan and no dowry is permitted here. No family here has ownership for their houses or property, so when they due their cremation will be at the 'Chudulakkad' near colony in accordance with their tradition and culture.

### **Problem they face**

The main primary health center is at Chindakki. They may have to travel long distance to reach here. This induces them to stick on indigenous medical practices if they are caught with any disease. They have a PHC subcenter near, but have no doctor. AASHA workers are there. Immunization, treatment and awareness classes for pregnant ladies are

available at this subcentre.

Day 2 12-01-2018 Chindakki 2nd

This is a small homlet, moreover we can say a colony because, we can see, mudugas and irula at this colony. They are more civilised than kurumbas. Most of them have elementary education. They engage in farming, cattle breeding, daily wage labours driving etc. Daily wage they get for female labourers is Rs. 350/- day with food and for male Rs. 500/- day with food. But still they are financially weak, they don't have any savings. Here also kudumbasree is very strong. A new concept called 'Nyaysamithi' is in its budding stage here. Its an initiative of Kudumbasree to solve family problems. This samithi is led by educated ladies among the tribes. This colony also has persons who are financially sound because, they are government servants. Such persons send their children to schools in town. But this colony also accommodates most poor among them also. There is a 'Bridge School' on Agali, where orphans and children of weaker sections are brought and taught. They provide accommodation for them also. The elder students of Bridge school teach the younger students and they will be paid for that.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Elders in hamlets who are around sentences strongly stick to their customs and traditions. Even if they are brought out of the forest and provided with well secured houses and other facilities, they strongly believe that it is in forest where they can live a peaceful life. Now they feel that they lost all their freedom and control over forest and its resources.

When governments take initiative to rehabilitate these vulnerable sections of society, it should ensure that their feelings are well considered and customs, traditions and their food habits are maintained and protected.

Whenever we ask them about what would they do if anyone among them fell sick they tell us that it is very rare here and all of the people are healthy here. They told that it is because of their food habits. They receive wheat, rice and the like from ration dealers through public distribution system which are quite different from what they were used to eat in the earlier days. The secret behind their health. So before spending huge amount for supplying these things through PDS, measures should be taken to encourage cultivation of their own crops. When we ask about the harvesting festival of punchakrishi and Sivarathri, they all remember their

good old days. They feel that the new generation feels that they are self sufficient and receive monetary and non-monetary assistance from government so that they don't need to spend time in cultivation and allied areas. The initiatives taken by government should lead to sustainable development.

The flora and fauna of Attappadi is to be protected, their agricultural practices are to be encouraged, their feelings, customs and traditions etc are to be protected, because the tribals of Attappadi are also a part of the society where you and me live. Once they were guardians of these forests where all the animals, plants and tribals lived in harmony with each other.





**Prasun. K**

## Prelude

Every experience is an opportunity to learn and grow. Every new experience brings its own maturity and a greater vision. A few days visit and time spent in the tribal villages of Attappady as a part of the immersion training has brought a plethora of new experience to a person like me who has spent my life in the cosy comfortable urban world. It was indeed a life time opportunity to learn and live the



finer aspects of life in the Oorus of Attappady. The programme provided an insight in to the nature of challenges in the tribal life and the efficacy of existing system to ameliorate the challenges faced by the tribals. The two day interaction with the local administration, inhabitants in the Oorus and promoters provided an overall understanding about the real life of tribal people, their family relations, economy, social status, religion, festivals, various government and nongovernmental bodies and machineries involved in the promotion of tribals, development programmes initiated and facilities provided to them by the government.

In the key note address at the inauguration of the training programme of the State Tax Officers (Directly Recruited) Shri S.M. Vijayanand IAS, former Chief Secretary had set out the concept that the trainee officers need to involve and get connected to the weaker section in the society in some manner to understand the real plight of common man and their expectation from the government. He apprised the trainee officers that then only a public servant will be able to perform his duty conscientiously. The immersion training programme at Attappady seems to have served this purpose in its entirety. The trainees were induced to the life of tribals, various government schemes undertaken by the government in Attappady, various dimensions of lower level administration and effectiveness of the implementation of the

schemes for tribals.

The immersion programme was an eye opener to me as to how the resources mobilized by the taxation department as well as other revenue earning department is spend hrough various schemes of the government and to understand the pros and cons of its execution. The plight of the common and poor man of Attapadi and his actual living conditions has helped me to understand the relevance of my job as a State Tax Officer and the implication of the revenue earned by the government through my department. Every penny earned through me and my department has its effect on the life of the common and the poorest man living in the country. The immersion training programme has augmented the meaningfulness of my work as a State Tax Officer, In this report I have tried to portray the information and wisdom that I have gained in my short stint with the tribal people of Attapadi.

## **PLANNINGS FOR THE JOURNEY**

The journey to Attappadi was an eagerly awaited one. When the idea of an immersion training to Attappady was first mooted in the training session all the trainees had accepted the idea with great fervor and enthusiasm. Being so spirited about the whole idea each trainee also understood the importance of being prepared for the immersion training camp. As it is rightly said it is important to spend time sharpening the axe before chopping down a tree. I had also done my homework on the details of Attappady and prepared some questionnaire on the information's to be collected. In addition I had prepared myself to meet the chilly climate of Attappady, was ready with some medicines to meet up any contingencies that may arise and also had in possession a small back pack to carry book, paper, pen, water and food on our trekking to the oorus in Attappady.

The hand book on Immersion visit to Attappady issued to the trainees by the State Goods and Service Tax Department, Kerala before the Immersion visit read aloud the staunch preparation and hard work from the side of the Department and made a resolute statement as to the seriousness with which the department was eyeing the Immersion visit. The hand book was meticulously prepared with details ranged from the objectives of the visit to transportation, food arrangement, accommodation, medical facilities available, details and contact number of authorities who may be approached in the time of need and with the necessary information for the rainees. The Department authorities had divided the rainees into two groups with a leader for each group selected from ourselves for the easy monitoring and convenience. The Department had made arrangement for certain Staffs of Kerala Goods and Service Tax Department in Palakkad and nearby areas in Attapadi to accompany in trainees. The steps taken from the Department gave an impetus to us to use the opportunity to our maximum benefit.

## **ABRIEF MEMOIR OF THE TWO DAY TRAVEL**

The immersion programme as per the hand book was planned on 10.01.2018 (Wednesday) with completion of the visit on 13.01.2018

(Saturday). The trainees were to be accompanied by AC training team consisting of Shri Harindranath (DC Internal Audit), Shri Kiran Lal P.S. (Registrar GIFT) and Shri Harikumar S. (AC Training). As planned we started our travel on the early morning of 10.01.2018 from Thiruvananthapuram in two groups in the two luxury buses arranged for transportation. The team consisted of 70 persons divided into two groups (except for a few who couldn't make up due to medical condition). The travel from Thiruvananthapuram to Agali (402.3 km) was filled with fun, dance coupled with individual performance of the trainees of the floor of the luxury buses (Buses provided with mike and other accessories). On the night of 10.01.2018 we reached at accommodation provided by KILA (formerly AHARDS main office Complex) at Agali. The Accommodation was arranged with 5-6 person in a quarters. The accommodation provided was safe, secure and comfortable one in the lush greenery environment of Agali. Local and ethnic food was provided by the Kudumbashree Units in the Agali area.

The very next day morning we started our long awaited journey to the Oorus in Attappadi. Before our visit to the Oorus we made a short visit to the Block Panchayath Office, Attappady, Agali. The Integrated Tribal Development Project Office was also stationed in this premises. Here we were briefed about the history, culture, behavior, as well as social, economic life of tribals and development programmes initiated in attappady Oorus by Mr. Krishna Prakash, Project Office. He also gave us instruction regarding the Do's and Dont's in the Oorus of Attappady.

Jeeps were arranged to take the trainees to the different Oorus. The roads to the oorus were rudimentary and the journey in the jeeps were very bumpy. But the uncomfortable journey was negated by the natural beauty outside which was a treat to the eyes.

On the first half of the day we were able to visit Chindaki - Ist site. From our conversation with the people of Chinddaki we were able to understand that there were three Chinddaki sites namely Chindaki I, II and III. The people living in these sites were from the Irular Tribe. They have come and started

staying here from different parts of the forest with the infrastructure provided to them by the Government including land for stay and farming. The people of the Chindakki sites were working in Attappadi Cooperative Farming Society. The Society was formed 42 years ago to help the tribal families. It was formed with 420 tribal families in 1092 hectares of land. The society farm is spread over the Karuvara, Chindakki, Pothuppadi and Varadimala areas. When the society was formed it was promised that after five years of operation, every tribal family would be given five acres of land to make them self-sufficient but the same has not been implemented. These farms mainly cultivate cardamom, pepper and Coffee. Through our normal and plain conversation with them we were able to collect a lot of information from them including their family life, marriage, education, health, occupation, festival etc.

On the same day we continued our journey to Anvayi we visited Mele Annavayi (Anvayi upper hamlet) in the second half of the day. At Mele-Anvayi trainees interacted with the Tribals, promoters and gathered information regarding their life and made an insight into the different aspect of life of the tribals. The people living in Mele-Anvayi were from the Kurumba Tribe. Here the trainees were able to meet the Moopen of the tribe and could enjoy the pleasure of having conversation with the leader. I could gain the information regarding different social strata/ Social posts held in the tribal society from here. Here we could meet a section of people who goes to the forest to collect various forest resources and sell it through the cooperative society. After the tiring visit to different oorus in Attapadi in the evening the trainees were given a sumptuous and delicious Mulayari Payasam by the tribal people.

On the second day we continued our visit to Oorus in Veerannur and the tribal people living in this area. The people living in these sites were mainly from the Mudugra Tribel. There were also some people from the Kurumba tribe. These people were also making their living through the farming activities under the Coperative Farming Society. As in the earlier day we collected information from the tribal people relating to their life.



On the evening of 2nd day we returned to Trivandrum. Before we started off from Agali as token of appreciation we handed over to the romoters and representatives of the Tribals of Attappady some sports products mainly relating to the game of Football.

### **ATTAPPADY - INFORMATION FROM THE IMMERSION TRIP**

The two day immersion camp in Attapadi gave a through insight into the different aspects of life in the Oorus of Attappady. In the headings below. I have summarized certain findings and information gathered by me in the immersion visit as well as some of the details home worked before my visit to Attappady. Attappady got its name from atta, the blood leach and pad, the habitation. The three major tribal communities of the region, namely, Irulas, Mudugas and Kurumbas, belong to the broad group of Dravidians. Tribal settlements in Attappady are known as Ooru (hamlet). Each Ooru contains, on an average of 50 houses, denslely constructed in rows. Tribesfolk of Attappady is the most backward among the vulnerabre groups of Kerala. Their economy is traditionar in nature, depending mainly on land and forest.

### **Attappady - History and Demography**

According to the known history, Attappady was the province of Zamorin of Caricut (Kozhikode) who in turn vested the right of control to various princely families. It is widely referred to that the area was under control of Moopil Nayar's family and Elarpad Raja. During the British rule, Attappady area was a village,' listed in Malabar district under Valluvanad Taruk. During the formation of the state of Kerara in 1956, Attappady was listed under Perinthalmanna taluk in parakkad District. After formation of Malappuram district and Mannarkad taluk (in parakkad district), Attappady was riste, uncler Mannarkad taluk. During the formation of panchayats Attappady was representer as a single panchayat. In 1968 Attappady, Panchayath was divided into three panchayats, namely, Agali, Pudur and Sholayoor.

### **Attappady - Tribes**

The Kurumbas, Mudugas and Rulas were the early inhabitants of Attapacri. since they are earry (Adi) inhabitants (Vasi), they are catled Adivasis. It is believed that, among them the Kurumbas are the earliest inhabitants

followed by The Mudugas and Rulas. The Rulas are believed to be the latest among the Adivasis of Attappady moved into the area in the 17th century. The Rulas are mostly present in the eastern part and Mudugas in the western parts and the Kurumbas in the deep forest. The features of each of the tribes are as given below:

\* **IRULARS** means "dark people" in Tamil and Malayalam, from the root word, *irur*, meaning "darkness" in reference to their dark skin complexion. Irura is a Dravidian tribe spread over the three states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala, whom are also known as Eruvara, Iruliga, Illiga, Kasovan Kandi, Kadupujari and Velliga. Irulars are inhabitants of the Palghat District. They are seen at pothupara, Mayamudi, palakapandy and Kunaparam of the Nelliampathi hills, Chittoor Taluk, Koravan Kandi, Kavundikkar and Mattathukad of Agali Amsom, Attappady valley, Perinthalmanna Taluk and in the wayarar forests of the palghat Taluk. The dialect of those in Kerala include quite a lot of Malayalam phrases and a visitor with knowledge of Malayalam or Tamil can fare well. Irulars are preserving and clever agriculturists. A few are still Ponam cultivators. What is cultivated depends on the soil and environment. Paddy, raggi, dhal, plantains, chillies and turmeric are grown in large quantities. Both men and women take an active part in agricultural operations, hunting, rearing and vending goats and poultry. A small number of Irulars continue their animistic practices, treat the tiger as their visible god, and worship its footprints. The majority worship Vishnu under the name of Rangaswami and Siva without differentiation. According to the 2011 census, their population is estimated to be 23,721.

\* **KURUMBA** live in the dense forests of Attappady Valley, Palakkad District. Kurumbas who constitute less than five percent of the total population live in the interior of the northern area of Attappady. They were the first group of Adivasis to settle in the place. They are popularly known as Kurumba Pulayans, Mala Pulayans, Hill Pulayans and Pamba Pulayans. The Kurumba have a dialect of their own, locally called Kurumba Basha. The dialect seems to be a debased form of Kannada. Except a very few who can converse in Malayalam. The Kurumba are foragers and shifting cultivators.

At present also their economy is mainly revolving around their traditional occupation of collecting forest produces like honey, wax, soapnut, turmeric, ginger and wild cardamoms. The Kurumba know the art of body tattooing. Skill in the manufacture of baskets and mats reveals their craftsmanship. Kurumbas are animists and totemists and there has not been much change in their early forms of worship. According to the 2011 census, their population can be estimated to be 2,586.

\* **MUDUGARS** are habitants of the Palghat District. Mudugas are believed to have immigrated from the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. They had lived in the northeastern part of Attappady under the leadership of Kovai (Coimbatore) Moopen. They are seen at Agali and Pudur Amsoms, Attappady Valley, Perinthalmanna Taluk and in the Walayar forests of the Palghat Taluk. They speak muduga bhasha which is a dialect of Malayalam and Tamil. The Mudugar have social divisions at kal(clan) level. Cheppila kal, Maniyam kal, Puliya kal and Dechyam kal are some of these clans. Mudugars of the Attappady valley are still food gatherers and hunters.. They collect hill produce for sale or barter. The mudugar profess Hinduism. Their god is Siva of the Malleswaran peak and Sivaratri is observed by fast and arduous trek up the 2,000 metre high peak to light lamp, visible throughout Attappady. According to the 2011 census, their population can be estimated to be 23,746.

### **Attappady - Topography**

Attappady is one of the many reserved forests and protected forests of India. Attappady is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani river nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the Western Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu; on the north by the Nilgiris; south by the Palghat Taluk on the west by Karimba-I and II, Pottassery-I and II and Mannarghat revenue villages of Mannarghat Taluk of the Palghat District and Ernie taluk of the Malappuram district. Attappady Reserve Forest comprises of 249 km<sup>2</sup> of land covering the westernmost part of the 745km<sup>2</sup> Attappady block of Mannarghat Taluk in Palakkad district of Kerala. The elevation of Attappati valley ranges from 750 meters (2,460 ft) to the Malleswaran peak which rises to 1,664 meters (5,459 ft) from the

center of the valley.

### **Attappady - Climate**

Attappady has essentially a humid tropical climate. The Crestline of the Nilgiris and peaks else where reaching above 1800m have a sub-temperate climate with winter night temperatures going below 12°C. Attapadi Reserve Forest is in the southwest portion of Mannarghat Forest Division receives a high rainfall of 4740 mm (185 in). In winter, there is much less rainfall than in summer. The average annual temperature in Attappady is 24.8 °C. Precipitation here averages 1731 mm.

### **Attappady - Family**

From the information gathered during the immersion visit to Attappady we could find that the people maintained their family and the family relation and bond were very strong. The head of the family was the male member and the female members supplemented them. We could also find families where the female members had taken up the responsibility of the family when the male members had died or were ill. **Attappady - Social Strata** Indulging with the people of the tribes gave an idea about the different social positions held by members of the tribe. Mainly there were seven categories of position in the tribes.

\* **Moopan** - Every ooru had a council of moopans (elders) or Moopan (Chieftan) who were vested with the responsibility of guiding the members of the hamlets with reference to their livelihood activities such as cultivation, hunting, food gathering and fishing, inter and intra community amity, family relationships, and also liaisioning between the Jenmi (land lord) and the community. The Ooru Moopan is the chief of the Ooru and he is assisted by the other members of the council of moopans designated as Vandari, Kuruthala, and Mannookaran. Mannookaran -The person of mud. Mannookaran is the ritual head of agricultural practices of hamlets. Mannookaran is also revered as an expert in soil and agricultural practices. It was believed with the loss of sacredness of mannookaran the land would stop yielding. Mannookaran decides the cultivability of a land, sows the first

seeds, and initiates the first harvest. Mannookaran's wife is responsible for the food preparation from the first yield. The mannookaran loses his sacredness when he gives up ethical way of life (neethi and neru) as it is conventionally followed. The mannookaran never attends death rituals, as it was believed that participating in death rituals pollutes him.

\* Vandai - He is the treasurer of the tribe

\* Jathiyar - He is the person who introduces tribal folks to one another usually in the case of marriage

\* Kurathala - This person is in charge of taking any outsider to the Moopan

\* Kolkaran - He is the person who is dealing with boundaries of the tribes

\* Aatakkaran - He is the person related to cultural activities like the folk song and dances - 'natakams' & 'koothus'

### **Attappady - Occupation**

They engaged in activities like collecting forest resources like honey, food and other minor forest resources. Slowly they also started to engage in agricultural activities and animal breeding. Ragi, Cholan, Thina, Mustard, Kambu, Varagu, Pandi, Thuvara etc were the food products that the Adivasis are fond of cultivating. Nowadays they also cultivate Cotton, Ground nut, Rice, Plantain, Tapioca, Coconut, Arecanut, Tea, Coffee, Pepper, Ginger etc. The formation of Attapadi farming Society, Kurumba Scheduled Tribe Service Cooperative Society have given impetus to the farming activities and marketing of agricultural products produced or collected from the forest.

### **Attappady - Marriage**

We were astonished to find a special form of ritual before marriage to be performed by male members of the adivasi tribe termed 'Penvela'. The term Penvela literally means, "girl-work." It is the labour performed to get a girl as spouse. With the performance of Penvela, the boy convinced the parents of the girl and the girl herself that he is capable of providing her a secured life. This custom is fast fading away and some boys started demanding dowry.

### **Attappady -Local Governments**

The local governments of Attappady are the Agali, Puthur and Sholayur Grama Panchayaths.

### **Attappady -Transportation**

KSRTC buses are plying to Agali from the nearby cities. The travel to Oorus are restricted by the Forest Department due to sensitivity of the forest area. The mode of transportation available to people in the Oorus is by the jeeps plying in this area with limited access.

### **Attappady - Health**

There are three government Primary Health Centres (PHC), one Community Health Centre (CHC) and 28 subcentres in Attapadi block. All hamlets are serviced by an effective government health extension program using trained tribal health volunteers. There is a Tribal Super Specialty Hospital in Agali for the health care of the people with some operation theatres and facilities.

### **Attappady - Education**

Government school have been established in Attapadi. School named G.T.W. Lower Primary School is established in Chindakki. The School has classes from Std. I to VI and is an L.P. School. It is also a mixed School. The school Attappady Adivasi HS Chindakki is located in Agali. Attappady Adivasi HS Chindakki Agali was established in the year 1984.. A college of applied sciences (IHRD College) started in Agali, in the year 2010 for the higher education. In 2012 Govt. College Attappady started at Agali which is the first Arts and Science College in the Attappady region established under the Govt. sector in 2012" The youth with whom we interacted have mostly studied in these schools and colleges. We were,glad to find that some people from the tribal communities whom we visited have also secured Government jobs"

### **Attappadi - Festival**

The Sivarathri festival is celebrated at the Chemmannur Malleswaran temple by the tribals during the month of February/March. The Malleswaran peak is worshipped as a gigantic Shivalinga by the adivasis who celebrate



the Sivarathri festival there with great fervour. The Onam festival is also celebrated.

### **Attappady - Politics**

The tribes of Attappadi have political inclinations" The major political parties in this area include the Communist Party of India and the Indian National Congress party. Certain maoist infiltration and propagation has also been confirmed in the Attappady area. The main election booth in Attappady area is Tribal HS Chindakki

### **Attappady - Sports & Entertainment**

The main sport in Attappady is Football and apart from the haditional and cultural entertainment programmes. Television has emerged to have a great influence in the Oorus of Attapadi having electricity connection. It is also found that the Radio is also having a good number of listeners.

### **Attappady - Development Projects**

In 1970 the State Planning Board assessed Attappati as the most backward block in the state and the first Integrated Tribal Development Project in Kerala was initiated there. Since then, the state government has implemented several special development projects including ' The Attappady Co-operative Farming Society - Attappady Co-operative Farming Society was formed Ir.1975 under Western Ghat Project aiming for reform 420 landless Scheduled Tribes families in Attappady. It has been registered society. Area covered by the Attappady Cooperative Farming Society are Kamvara. Chindakki, Pothupadi & Varadimala. The important crops in farm are Coffee, Pepper, Cardamom, Clove, Nutmeg, Arecanut, Coconut, Ginger, Turmeric. The society adopts organic cultivation Certified by INDOCERT and do not use any chemical fertilizer.and pesticides. Products from the above crops sell through auction procedure" Besides the farm products Honey, Kunkilyam etc; which collects from Scheduled Tribes are being sold through Society's sales outlet. And also this has been sold in India International Trade fare and Trade fares conducted by various departments.

\* The Western Ghats Development Programrne - Western Ghats

Development was launched in 1974-75 as a part of the programme for the development of the country. The objective of the programme was the development of western in harmony with the environment & conservation of its fragile ecosystem.

\* The Aftappady Valley Irrigation Programme - It was a multipurpose project for irrigation, water supply and power generation. But the implementation of the Programme hill areas of ghats region intended for were failed.

\* The People's Planning Programme - Implemented in Attappady in 1997-2002 it includes Attappady valley irrigation Project.

\* Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) - The Attappady Comprehensive Environmental Conservation and Wasteland Development Project was established in 1995, with local operations managed from their Agali Headquarters. This project has Rs. 2.19 billion (\$5,000,000) development assistance loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and is implemented by the Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS), a state government agency. AHADS has made good quantified achievements that will bring long term benefit to the valley.

\* Other projects in a glance - In pre 1962 days the government initiative in development was limited in the form of interventions in the area of health and education. In the 1950's the anti- Malaria education programme was carried out in Attappady under the National Malaria Education Programme. During this period, five welfare schools were started with the aim of attracting children to schools. An office of the Deputy Tahasildar was opened in Attappady to lend back up support to these government programmes. In 1962, Attappady was declared as a Tribal development Block and a senior Block Development Officer was posted. Infrastructure development was given prime importance. In 1961, the process of recording of the land right of the tribals was taken up as part of

land reform measures. In 1971, the private forests were nationalized. In 1975 the Tribal development Blocks was upgraded into integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) with much higher inflow of funds particularly for housing and economic development. Along with this Western Ghat development Programme (WGDP) was introduced primarily in the form of two co-operative farms covering an extent of about 2000 hectares intended to rehabilitate and settle landless tribal families. In the first seven years of this scheme about Rs. 3 crore was spent. In 1980s, the allotment of funds to ITDP under various rural development programmes started. IRDP, NREP, and RLEGP were started in 1985 and that marked a watershed in the development history of Attappady. During 1980's and 1990's there were phenomenal increases in expenditure on the construction of roads. Investments in tribal housing also increased. In 1989 NREP and RLEGP were converted into JRY. In 1993, Attappady became one among the 20 blocks in Kerala where employment Assurance Scheme became operative, giving guaranteed employment of 100 days a year for two members from unemployed rural families falling under poverty line. Attappady Wasteland comprehensive environmental conservation Project was a scheme implemented with Japanese overseas Economic co-operation Fund. The project was aimed at restoring the environmental ambience of Attappady. Financial agreement in this regard was signed on 25th January 1996. The Project was conceptualized by Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM). The Project was implemented by an autonomous organization viz, the Attappady Hill Area Development Society (AHADS).

### **TAKE AWAY FROM THE IMMERSION TRIP**

The immersion trip to Attappady was a memorable one it provided a whole lot of experience and knowledge to trainees. A few take away that were personally received by me has been enumerated below:

- \* The immersion trip reminded me the need for forest conservation and the need to preserve these forest wealth for the future generation.
- \* The trip gave a firsthand information of the life of the people living in the forest area. A life that has been blended with the nature and has to be protected with its purity and nuances.

\* The way the tribals treat the animals, the harmonious life led with them, and the reverence towards certain animals was a new fact learned in the trip. The treatment of a dangerous elephant named as Peelandi and reverence towards it even after it creating threat to the life and agriculture of tribals is a learning experience about the character of a tribal man.

\* The need for the formulation of policies and their importance in the governance of a country and its impact on the common peoptr was evident from the development measures that have taken up in Attappady and from the interaction with the people.

\* The importance of the proper impiementafion of the policies formulated by the government is the need of the day. A proper infrastructure should be there for the implementation. Proper check and measures should be kept to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the implementation. From Attappady I could learn that a number of schemes and measures were brought for the betterment of their life but the effectiveness of some of the schemes were halved due to lack of proper implementation"

\* A drive as to how I can through my life contribute for the upliftment of life of another person received a new stimulus.

\* An idea as to future generation should grow knowing the life and plight of the commonest of the common man registered in my mind. If only then they would understand the real meaning of life and will develop an attitude of service in their life.

\* The significance of my job as an STO increased manifold. I could confirm that I am a contributor to the society and the people by doing my job effectively.

The harsh reality of the divide between the rich and the poor was made open to me through this trip increasing the importance of collection of revenue by the government that is essential as to bridge the divide between the rich and the poor.

The thought of how blessed I am to enjoy the amenities of modern world and live a life of security, freedom, amenities, reputation compared to the life of the tribals was another aspect of my thought"

\* The speed at which I, the present generation and the future generation were moving away from nature to the world of technology, machines, malls and building was a thought provoking feedback received.

\* Another feature that I found very interesting is the payment of dowry by the bridegroom to the bride's family and the system of Penvela. The system shows the status the ladies enjoyed among the tribes is worth learning when we the so called developed people are fighting the evil practice of dowry.

\* The success stories of certain tribals who succeeded in gaining government job and obtaining educational qualifications fighting all odds of life was a motivating factor.

### **OTHER GENERAL POINTS FROM THE IMMERSION VISIT**

I have enumerated below certain points about the adivasi settlement and their life which I have realized as a part of the immersion visit to Attappady:

\* Attappady demonstrates how difficult it is for a modern government development process to succeed in a traditional self-sustaining indigenous peoples (adivasi) community.

\* As a result of the inflow of the settler population and the establishment of government institutions they have become less self-reliant as they depend upon the settlers for their livelihood. As a part of the government's forest conservation measures their freedom in depending on forest for their life has greatly come to a stall.

\* Among the Adivasis of Attappady where we visited we could realise that the social relations and economic conditions and health status are better off among than still forest dwelling Kurumbas.

\* The dwellings of Adivasis earlier consisted of small thatched huts, with walls covered with mud and cow dung" The roofs consisted of grass and bamboos. Now they have better dwelling place due to various projects including that of AHADS, and projects initiated from the Block.

\* An increased use of alcohol, Ganja etc are still prevailing in the Adivasi Oor of Attappady.

\* Though liquor has been banned in Attappady, men consume large amounts of spurious and lethal brew from the bar connected with TASMAL, from the liquor shops in Mannarkad and also illicit brew being distilled rampantly in the hamlets. The same is also resulting in the abuse of ladies in the household. Measures have been taken to ameliorate these situation but still they are prevalent.

- \* The personal acquaintance with the people revealed the severity of life situation of the adivasis of Attappady like their poor income, dependency to farming through the society and the meagre income that they receive from it, lack of easy accessibility to minimum needs such as food, water, and other basic amenities. On our visit to Mele-Anvayi we could see that the electricity connection has not still reached them. There was no mode of transportation they had to depend on limited jeeps plying and had to walk for long hours"

- \* The maoist infiltrations are still happening in the Mele -Anvayi areas this is a peiln of concern for the governmental authorities.

- \* The infiltration of the settlers and the building of resorts inside the forest and the passage of the people through the Oorus of Attappady has been a threat to the Tribal People.

- \* The production of organic farm products in Attappady has a huge potential. The full potential of production and marketing is yet to be utilized.

- \* Though Schools have been established in Attappady a good library for the youths and educated class was not present.

### **POINTS NEEDED ATTENTION IN ATTAPPADY**

- \* Effective, implementable and innovative policies has to be taken to meet the needs of people of Attappady. There are in existence schemes and policies that have been successful and createtl an impact. There have been policies which need more bureaucratic and political will for effective implementation. I have listed out certain points that which I feel should stand in the minds of the people who formulates these policies & schemes. Steps should be taken to ameliorate

- \* Poverty, deprivation and vulnerability that is still prevalent in the Oorus of Attappady.

- \* High ievels of exclusion both developrnental and social.

- \* Rapid marginalization due to unfair, unequal and exploitative relations of production and exchange between tribal communities and others.

- \* Low level of access to entitlements

- \* Practically zero participation in development matters with no



autonomy in any form of decision-making.

- \* Abnormally huge siphoning off of developmental resources and benefits meant for tribal people by middlemen.

- \* Poor human development with low levels of literacy and access to health care.

- \* Rapid alienation of assets like land

" Alarming depletion of social capital especially traditional forms of organisation and leadership.

- \* Quick deterioration of traditional knowledge systems and cultural attainments.

- \* Fast increasing tendency to use tribal people as cat's-paws in criminal activities like distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, stealing of forest wealth etc.

- \* High levels of exploitation of women by outsiders.

- \* Weak delivery system of public services

- \* Dependency - inducing developmental programmes relying on distribution of benefits rather than building up of capabilities.

- \* Implementation of ad hoc and stereotyped developmental programmes in the absence of proper planning.

## CONCLUSION

Life is a continuous chain of experiences. These experiences good or bad help us live a more educated and productive life. Experience is a key ingredient to success in any job. One of the ultimate meanings of life is to learn. No one can live life without learning something. What you learn and experience can often determine your success or failure in life. Effortful learning combined with real life experience and job experience is a winning formula for success. Our choices and our experiences help create the person that we are. As a public servant we ought to have a real experience as to the life of common and the poor people of our country. A realization of their life can alone help us to serve them properly understanding their needs. Such realisation helps us to be proactive, personalized and responsive in our service to the public" The Immersion visit to Attappady has served its purpose as mentioned in the prelude. The experience at Attappady was one

which gave an insight to the ultimate meaning of life. The information gained from this immersion trip is worth a life time. The Immersion trip will indeed be a winning formula for all the trainees in their service as a public servant.



**SREEKALA. S. L.**

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our respected commissioner Sri. Rajan N Khobragade, IAS for giving me an opportunity to visit Attappadi to realise the actual life situation of tribals.

I sincerely thanks to Sri. S.M. Vijayanand, IAS (Retd) for giving this idea. Also thanks to Mr. Kiranlal P.S. (DC), Sri. Hareendranadh (DC), Sri. Harikumar (AC, training) for their initiative and guidance in this project. I also wish to express my gratitude to the officials other staff members and my colleagues who rendered their help during the period of visit to Attappadi.

## **Introduction**

For the systematic analysis of socio, economic, educational and cultural aspect of Attappadi tribal settlement divide the topic in to 4 parts:

1. About the visit
2. Geography of Attappadi and about its tribes.
3. Schemes adopted for the inclusive development of Attappadi and its impact.
4. Suggestions for further development.

## **About our visit**

The Immersion programme to make insight about the nature of challenges in rural life is the suggestion of Shri. S.M. Vijayanand, IAS (Retd) chairman of Centre for Management Development during the inaugural session of our training programme. He said that the immersion programme will help the government servant to understand what they expect from us and to analyse the execution gap of various government schemes.

As part of his vision our Department (SGST) commissioner Sri. Dr. Rajan N Khobragade gave an opportunity to visit Attappadi. For this a Handbook 'Immersion visit to Attappadi' was supplied, this contains guidelines to us. We visited Attappadi on January 10 to 13, 2018. A list of two groups are made to visit. Each group has a leader. Harikumar. S (AC, training) other officials of our department and ST promoters accompanied with us. On 1st day (11-01-18) we had a class about tribes in Attappadi at Agali Block panchayath office. Our accommodation is at AHARDS (KILA). We visited the two hamlets (oorus) of each tribe.



### **Tribes Place of visit**

Irula Chindakki Ist site

Muduga Mukkali, Chindakki IInd site

Kurumba Anavai , Thadikkund

### **Objectives of this programme**

- ★ To familiarise the challenges faces by tribal people.
- ★ Create a vision that our effectiveness in work contribute to the welfare of people.
- ★ Make us more responsible government servants.
- ★ Observe the economy at grass root level

### **Limitations of study**

- ★ Only two days for observing tribal areas.
- ★ Made a generalisation of tribes based on place we visit.

## About Attappadi and tribes

Attappadi is the largest tribal settlement in Kerala. It is situated at Mannarkad Taluk in Palakkad District and it includes silent valley forest reserve. Attappadi area constituted by 3 panchayaths namely Agali, Puthoor and Sholayar. Its area is opportunity 745 sqkm. It is a part of western Ghat. Major part of this land is vested forest. The Bhavani river flows through this area. Attappadi has rich source of minerals. Very recently gold deposits have also been founded there. However the proximity of economic exploitation of these has not yet been studied.

Irula, Muduga and Kurumba are the 3 major tribal groups in Attappadi. Irula is the largest tribal group in Attappadi. Muduga is the second and Kurumba is the smallest tribal group. The tribal people are residing always as a group. Each settlement of the tribal community is formed as Ooru (Hamlets). Over 1000 adivasi families lives in 188 Ooru contains an average of 50 houses densely constructed rows. We visited one or two hamlets in each tribe, chindakki Ist site, chindakki IInd site, Anavai, Thadikkund and veeranoor.

Chindakki Ist site is one of the Ooru where irula tribe settled. The name Irula is derived from their physical appearance, pitch black complexion. They have their own language may called 'Irula language', it is a combination of 3 languages Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada. The ownership of land is collective, in the sense that descendents of a common ancestor are joint owners of the hamlet and its territory. Government grant 50 cent land to each family. Nuclear family is the primary unit of economic production and a new unit will be set up on the marriage of each young man. Chindakki Ist site is a plain land of Attappadi and this place is easily accessible and they have better contact with the main stream.

They are traditionally cultivators 70% of people working in chindakki farming society. Also they cultivate vegetables in their own land. Around 7 government employees are there, it indicate the upliftment of that area 20% are go outside for job. Their main agricultural products are coffee, cardamom, pepper, aracanut etc. Their products are mainly to the customers. Seasonally they go forest to collect honey and for some ayurvedic products.

Their educational status is good compared to other Oorus. Even post graduate students are there in Chindakki. GDW LP School, Attappadi



Adivasi H S are in Chindakki for higher education, there are 2 collages in Agali, IHRD collage and a Govt. Collage at Agali for consulting their health condition primary Health Centre (PHC) is there and for major cases they go to Govt. Tribal super speciality Hospital at Kottathara. There is a Government home Hospital at Chindakki.

Sivarathri festival at Malleswaram temple is the major celebration of this tribe. Traditionally they have no dowry system. Here is an interesting fact about their marriage. In this tribe bachelor in that area interested to marry a girl, if the family of that girls are also interested, an engagement is fixed. After the engagement the man live with the girls family, the girls family observe the person his ability to do the work given and his character. If the family satisfied with him, marriage will happen otherwise not. They have no more idea about the facilities provided by banks. Almost all persons have Aadhar. They get water facility from Bhavani river through pipe.

Chindakki IInd site, Mukkali and Veeranoor are the place we visit to observe muduga tribe. These place are not as developed as chindakki IInd site. In Veeranoor 2 families are there. Here 2 persons only have government job. There is an Anganavadi, it provide nutritious food to childrens, pregnant womens and lactatins women. Large number at 'Nattuvaidyans' are there for cancer, skin diseases, alergy herbal treatment etc. Wild animals attack, scarcity of water at summer season are the main problem faced by them. Transportation facility to Veeranoor is not well. Four wheeler vehicles are not able to reach there.

Majority of people are working in co operative farming society. Also they work under NREGS scheme. They conduct Panchakkadu krishi under shift cultivation method. It involves the cultivation at Ragi, chama, thomara, maizo and millets. Here we visit Ooru mooppan Sri. Keenan, GDW Lp school at chindakki. Midday meal is provided in school regularly class teacher has charge on Midday meal childrens are more interested in arts and sports. Customs and festivals of mudnga tribe is almost equal to irula tribe.

Thadikkund and Anavai are the places were kurumba tribe settles. It is located in the north west part of Attappadi. They are situated mainly in interior forest. Attacks from wild animals are common. They practice shifting cultivation. They collect honey from forest. Different types of honey are there called 'cheruthen' pot then' and valiya then. They also collect leaf roots, stems etc from forest for ayurvedic production. They conduct panchakkad krishi in cultivation of ragi chama, thumara, thina and mittes in shifting cultivation method. They depend only on solar for electricity but

40% of this Kurumba tribe has no electricity. Road transportation is not available in Kudukuman area and peoples living in interior forest. They get rice and kerosine from PDS.

Government adopted enormous number of projects for the physical, cultural, educational and economic upgration of tribes in Attappadi. Through Anganavadi government distribute nutritious food to childrens, pregnant and locating women. Government adopt special development projects including Attappadi farming society, Kurumba scheduled Tribe farming society, Attappadi valley irrigation programme, Attappadi Hill area development society (AHARDS) etc. AHARDS made good qualified achievements that will bring long term benefits to the tribes. AHARDS has been considered as the project inplementation agency for the intensive development of tribal peoples in Attappadi. The society has a Governing body with due representation of the panchayat MLA, MP and peoples representatives majority of the houses in Attappadi are constructed by AHARDS and others on Indira Avas Yojana and EMS scheme.

The Tribal co operative societies provide agricultural loans and marketing facilities to their products. Here the society ensure works for 52 weeks for 400 people in Attappadi. The important crops marketed by farm are coffee, pepper, cardamon, arecanut, ginger, turmeric etc. Besides the farm markets products like honey, Kunkilyam etc.

Kudumbasree and Neighbourhood group play an important role for the upliftment of woman and food safty.

Yet so many schemes adopted for the inclusive development of Attappadi there are so many probles exists. Water scarcity is th main problems, they only depend Bhavani river. During summer they dont get water from this natural resources. Secondly they are not aware of various schemes adopted by Government for their development. They get informations from ST promoter, here middle man play an important role. Political parties have great influence on this area. This makes a hurdle for the successful implementation of various schemes. Even though Government issue grains and cereals through public Distribution system, they have no healthy food habit. Rate of abortion and instant death are more in East Attappadi. Majority of woman facing urinary infection due to poor hygiene. In school pink toilets are arranged for adolescent girls. The pilot comprise two parts incenerator. But the incinerator is not working well. Road transportation and electricity are the majot problems in upper Anavai

and Kudukuman area. Attacks from elephant and pig in their farm is another problems faced by them. Eventhough so many skill development training is conducted it is not effectively implemented Banking facility is available only in Agali and only one milk society at Mukkali.

- \* Conduct social audit to test the effective implementation of schemes.
- \* Rain water harvesting unit in each Ooru may reduce the water scarcity.
- \* Awareness about the schemes for their welfare in Oorukottam, it will ensure the benefit of schemes to the right hands.
- \* Make awareness about the importance of hygiene through Asha Workers.
- \* For the drop out students, arrangement of Bridge school at Attappadi itself may help to a great extent for increasing literacy also computer literacy.
- \* Tourism development may make a drastic change.
- \* The quality search of soil will help them to identify which pulses or creates are suitable for their agricultural field and distribution of high yield variety seeds and organic fertilizers helps for large scale cultivation.
- \* Provision of construction of houses as per their requirements with financial assistance may increase their satisfaction level.
- \* Library facility will make them a drastic change.

The above said suggestions helps to increase their Human Development index. Also most of the youngsters are interest in sports especially football. Focusing on sports will make them a good direction, this also make them capable to say no to drugs and liquor. Promotion of cattle farm will help them to earn an additional income. And if the products from Attappadi marketed under a Brand Name it will get more market out of Attappadi and get more income to the tribes, thereby they become self sufficient.

## CONCLUSION

In short, with a limited period an enormous amount of public fund were invested in Attappadi. In spite of it Attappadi came to represent sloth tardy implementation of schemes wide spread corruption and extensive land alienation. But if the schemes are effectively implemented Attappadi becomes a model tribal village. As a tax officer, we get a vision that how much we contribute to development by doing our jobs as per the responsibility entrusted upon us by statute.



**Vipulesh. U**

## INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi rightly pointed out that 'India's heart lives in Villages. He found this fact about India by travelling all over India and visited the villages throughout India, in order to take the leadership of Indian freedom movement. This gave an enlightenment to him about the people of India in his thought and made him as a visionary leader. I think this was one of the first and best immersion programmes I have ever seen.

Patti Adler had used this method first time while studying the world of illicit drug trafficking. Adler wanted to study the world of illicit drug trafficking, she immersed herself in the sub-culture of drug traffickers. It took her a great deal of gaining trust from her subjects, but once she did, she became part of the group and lived among them for several years. As a result of living with, befriending, and participating in activities of the drug traffickers, she was able to get a real life account of what the drug trafficking world is really like and how it works

The term "immersion" is derived from the word "immerse", which means "involve yourself in something or put something or yourself under liquid completely". Therefore, the literal meaning of the word "immersion" is "putting something or somebody under liquid completely". The metaphoric meaning of Social Immersion is involving yourself in something, Say society. Social immersion refers to involving yourself in a society.

Immersion is a concept used in sociology and which is very similar to the Ethno methodology and Ethnography which study the people and culture where the researcher observe society from the point of view of the subject of the study. Immersion is borrowed by Public Administration and Management. Immersion means to study the deep culture, values and day to day activities of a particular group. Why Social Immersion programme in Public Administration because to inculcate the values and empathy in the mind of Public Servant, which help them to develop more social commitment and visionary leadership. The respectable chief guest of the inaugural session in the Training Programme of newly recruited 'State Tax Officers, Shri. S.M. Vijayanand sir IAS (retd.) former Chief Secretary, suggested to conduct a Social Immersion programme in a tribal community or in fishermen community, the marginalised sector of the society to

understand the living standards and how government framing policies for the inclusive development. There are so many apprehension in the mind of trainees like what is the role of State Tax Officers in Tribal village or fishermen community', the rationale behind this is very simple they are not tax payers. What we have to learn from tribes? Because we deals with tax matters and we have the facility to learn these entire things, so it is a mere waste of time to visit tribe village. All the above trepidation I was happy in our immersion programme because it will give some relaxation from boring classroom teaching.

Really the programme was a memorable event in my life and which was a thought provoking once. While taking any decision as a Public Servant definitely I will think of whether it is good or beneficial to the common men of the state or vulnerable sector of the society.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE VISIT**

At first, it is programmed to familiarize the trainees about the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappadi for estimating their livelihood status. We are expected to gain knowledge and to form a vision that how much we can contribute to the development agenda by doing our job as per the responsibility entrusted upon us by the statute. It also helps to understand how resources mobilized by our department are spent through various govt. schemes of line departments and to understand its pros and cons.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STORY: ATTAPPADY**

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani River nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the Western Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, on the north by the Nilgiris, south by the Palghat taluk and on the west by Karimba- I and II, Pottassery-I and II, and Mannarghat revenue villages of Mannarghat taluk of the Palghat District and Ernad taluk of the Malappuram district. There are three panchayats in Attappady Block. They are Agaly, Pudur and Sholayur.

The 249 km<sup>2</sup> Attappadi Reserve Forest is an informal buffer zone bordering the Silent Valley National Park to the West. 81 km<sup>2</sup> of this forest was separated to become most of the new 94 km<sup>2</sup> Bhatani Forest Range which is part of the 47.22 km<sup>2</sup> Silent Valley Buffer Zone formally approved by the Kerala Cabinet on 6 June 2007. The zone is aimed at checking the illicit cultivation of ganja, poaching and illicit brewing in areas adjacent to Silent Valley and help long-term sustainability of the protected area.



## ATTAPPADY TRIBES - Muduga, Irula and Kurumba

Tribal people are known by various names such as jungle people, Girijans, aboriginals, adivasis etc. The constitution of India has referred to them as the Scheduled Tribes. The three major tribal groups in Attappady are Muduga (10%), Irula (84%) and Kurumbu (6%). Irula is the largest group in Attappadi tribal area. They came from the Tamil Nadu region mostly. Mudugas are the second largest group and Kurumbas are a small group in Attappady tribal area. The Mudugas have the highest literacy. Kurumbas are the most primitive tribal group and they are still residing in the interior forest area. The name of Muduga was derived from the primitive custom of carrying children on Muthuk meaning back. The name of Irula is derived from their physical appearance, pitch black complexion.

Tribes have traditional occupation. The traditional occupation of Irula tribe is shifting cultivation, occasionally they engaged in hunting and fishing. Kurumbas are traditionally engaged in food gathering and hunting. But in present day society Muduga and Irula are working as an agricultural laborer in the land of non-tribal land owners. Kurumbas are working as laborers in coffee plantations. In early times nuclear family is the unit of production. The speaking languages of these three tribal groups are belonging to the south Dravidian family (elements of Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada). The land ownership of the tribes is collective, in the sense that descendents of a common ancestor are joint owners of the hamlet and its territory. Regarding right to land, it is not the absolute freedom of the individual or the family that matters, but the consents of the council members especially the headman of the hamlet. Nuclear family is the primary unit of economic production and a new unit will be set up on the marriage of each young man. The three tribes were reluctant to marry from other tribes in the past, but nowadays marriages between them are quite common.

### The Programme: Social Immersion Day 1 (10/01/2018)

We have started the programme from GIFT at 7.00AM by two bus from Trivandrum to Attappadi. This whole day was taken for travelling from Trivandrum to Attappadi and by night 9 pm reached at the AHADS (now KILA) and had our food from here. The staffs were waiting for us and they provided food without any delay. The rooms were clean and tidy and the

accommodation arrangement were great for the trainees.

Attappadi Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) has been registered under

Societies Registration Act of 1860. According to the directions issued by the State Government, the AHADS has been considered as the Project Implementation Agency (PIA) for the implementation of Attappadi Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project. :

Morning by 9 am, we reached at the Attappady Block Office. The day started with an awareness session about Attappady landscape, the tribal people and their behaviour, their livelihood, cultural differences, interaction with others etc., which is handled by Shri. Krishna Prakash, DDC, Project Officer. He addressed us in a very friendly manner and explained about the characteristic features about the three tribal groups living in Attappady tribal 'Oorus'. There is a very active farming society working in a very efficient manner produces coffee, cardamom, pepper etc. The farming society have Organic Farming Certificate, may it is the one of the biggest farming society got organic farming in kerala. There are so many projects and developmental programmes are going on in Attappadi, still it is in media because of the poverty and child death.

From the block office, we have separated into groups and went to the ooru. My team went to Chindakki (first site) in the Agaly first ward panchayat. The population in this area is only below 500 living in 75 houses. The houses are constructed by the govt and given to them based on a scheme. Their major source of income is farming in the society maintained lands and allied agricultural activities. They are having a better living conditions, as per my point of view. They have all basic necessities there including phone connection, electricity and TV channels. There is a school, Attapadi Adivasi High School, having classes in lower and upper primary. The school is having 13 teachers and around 250 students. We spent quality time with students and teachers in the school to get a clear idea about the school, habits of the students, their dreams and aspirations etc. the teachers in the school is working hard to get good results. The school is providing mid day meals and hostel facilities for the students. The school is also having computer labs, smart class rooms but little playground. From them, I came to know that

many tribal students who secured high marks in the public exams are now doing their higher studies in other places with governmental aid. The students are so happy to be in school, and they really enjoy the bliss of learning. The higher secondary classes are only at Agaly. The major issue at Chindakki is the damaged road. The people living there was so angry with the poor condition of the roads.

The political parties are having good presence at this ooru. The kudumbasree is

also very strong in this place for empowering womenhood. The most important quality of the tribal people which I noticed in this place is that they are ensuring

education for their kids. Source of drinking water is provided through JALANIDHI project.

The forenoon programme ended at the Chindakki site and we gathered for lunch at the place arranged by the training team. The trainees shared their experiences

from the different Oorus during the lunch time and we honestly felt that it is a great opportunity to meet these people and know them in a deeper manner. Health and nutrition are the two fundamental dimensions of the social development process; without having intake of nutritious food on continues basic sound health status is a distant dream. So I personally believe that the need of good nutritious food and intakes have to be inculcated on these people. Here the promoters are playing a great role to bridge the gap of unawareness. These promoters are appointed under the guidance of scheduled Tribe Extension Officers. Promoters are supposed to act as the motivators for the students from the tribes; identify the problems of the students and provide solutions. I strongly believe and suggest that well trained promoters and extension officers who are interested in the welfare and education of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students should be appointed in the schools in Attappady. Departments for the development of scheduled castes and tribes should be ready for arranging guidance to the newly appointed promoters and officers for understanding the socio cultural and familial problems of these students connected with their education and especially in learning English language.

After having a sumptuous heavy meal, we moved to our next destination. An adventurous jeep journey which took around 45 minutes to the next remote Ooru, Mele Anavayi, a Kurumba Colony. One Mr. Padmakumar sir, who is from our dept., accompanied us. Since, he is one who born and brought up in this region, knows plenty about these people and explained us about them. Here, at Anavayi, we saw the well maintained clean and tidy houses constructed by AHADS which looks simple and useful for the inhabitants. The colony is surrounded by beautiful mountains and the picturesque scenery is great. Solar energy is the only source of energy in this Ooru.

The main income from agriculture, which they call as Pancha Krishi, i.e., farming of 5 different things simultaneously. All produces are acquired and marketed by the co-operative society. There is only one Public Health Centre(PHC) at Chindakki. As per the words of the inhabitants, there is no doctor at PHC on this date. ASHA workers are doing a great job in these areas.

These Oorus (hamlets) are having a headman called 'Mooppan'. At Anavayi, we met the Ooru Mooppan with his wife. His name is Kukki Mooppan. He is the official spokesman of the Ooru. He explained us about the custom and tradition followed by them. There is no individual ownership for their houses. In



Anavayi, female population is higher than male. They are having their own indigenous medical practitioner (Ooru Vaidyan) who takes care of all the health issues of Ooru members. There is no dowry system prevailing in these places. The male has to give some valuables to marry a girl in this Ooru. The cremation is done by burial. They are having a separate place for this to be done called, "Chudukadu".

They visit the Melleswaran mudi (hill), which is the abode of sami, once in a year on sivarathri night and light lamp and offer lengthy pooja. The

mannukaran of Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet situated at the foot of this Malleswaran-mudi is having the right to perform the ritual, and hence he is also known as malapoojari.

The elder members play a dominant role both within the community and in its relation with other hamlets. It is they who arrange the marriage of their 'sons' and 'daughters' through discussions and negotiations. Very often one or more of the elderly men in the hamlet will be specialist in herbal medicine who cures illness and a diviner or exorcist who identify the cause of disease with the help of magical spells. Most elderly men know something about the curing of minor ailments, but very few know how to cure serious illnesses.

Way back to our place, we got an opportunity to see Kadukumanna hanging bridge, which is an excellent piece of architecture in this remote area. After completing one day's programme, we returned to our rooms at AHADS by 6 pm. At dinner time, trainees gathered at the canteen and discussed about their experiences at that day. I personally felt that most of the trainees got surprised with the living conditions of these tribal people. These are something new to us.

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Being the last day of our programme at Attappady, we started our day so early. We moved to the remote Oorus by 8 am and reached at Chindaki 2nd site called Veeranoor, which is having 30 houses. The area is having many stray dogs. But they are not disturbing anyone. The inhabitants here are indulged in agriculture, which is organised by the co-operative society. One Mr. Pramod, from this place accompanied us to the Ooru. Surprisingly this place is having a resort over there. Some indigenous medical practitioners are also there having their clinics. People from Kerala and Tamil Nadu are regular visitors in these clinics, said Pramod. While talking with the people in this area we came to know that they have severe threat from elephants. The young ones here usually go to deep forest for collecting honey and other forest products from there and stay there for 1 or 2 weeks. They are financially weak and do not have any savings. The young ones here are inclined to sports activities. They are having a sports club there. They are educated but not doing anything for further studies and for getting a job.

The third day programme were complete d by 2 pm at Veeranoor, the 2nd site Chindakky and returned to Mukkali. Before leaving the place, on behalf of our department, our senior officials handed over a sporls kit containing footballs for the young talented boys in these Oorus.

### The Analytical Views

As my personal opinion the programme was very good and we have gathered buddle of information about the tribes and their problems. But I have felt there is a gap between me and the tribes while talking to them, mostly we are just asking some questions on their cultures, belief and value systems etc. But in real sense we wanted to experience all these things then only the gap will fill and the ice will break. Every immersion programme aims to involve completely in the society but here complete involvement is not possible, in the sense that we have to stay with them and have to had food from them and have to engage the urctivities with them but most of these are not possible. Critically it's a field visit.

### My Findings:

In this programme what I felt the problems faced by the tribes in different oorus are same in nature, The important points are listed below:

- 1) Animal husbandry schemes are not functioning properiy. Many veterinary hospitals are also working in the area. But the activities and functions of these hospitals are not beneficial to the people.
- 2) Non avaiiability of drinking water is the main problem faced by the tribes in Attappadi. because of the hilly nature of Attappadi it is not possible for digging wells in many of the places. Bore wells and hand pumps are the main alternatives for solving water problem.
- 3) Lack of sensitivity to tribal interests and lack of tribal involvement are the primitive problemn of this region. The project authorities were functioning without any supervisor or monitoring or check by any official bodies since its inception.



- 4) Distance of difference Oorus from the township limit is also an issue and poor roads are also a challenge.
- 5) Most concerns pertain to the fact that farmers have not been benefited from Agriculture Dept. This clearly indicates that there is not much publicity and transparency. Planting materials supplied were of doubtful quality. Lack of decentralization is also a hindrance.
- 6) Attappadi's weather and soil properties were not given due attention, no concerted attempt is made to popularizing crops and agriculture practices. There are plenty of coconut trees but harvesting these coconuts are not up to the mark.
- 7) Low availability of the hospital facilities.
- 8) Protection of tribal medicinal knowledge of these tribes is also another concern. Patenting, licensing and benefit-sharing will improve the life of the tribal people and it is a value addition to their efforts.
- 9) Many other legal issues and lack of proper legal aid also a concern.

## SOLUTIONS

Poverty and Ignorance continue to keep them poor and less dignified. Education can bring changes and development gradually for the next generation. There are primary schools in several tribal settlements, mostly far away for most of the villages. Moreover, quality education which is available to the majority is not available to the poor tribes. Tribal children can be encouraged to send to towns and cities for better education and higher studies.

Distribution of old clothes and some ration is not the solution. Most of the tribal

people live for a day and do not plan much for future. Education will bring in change in their world view and give them hopes for a better tomorrow. Most of the tribes were originally food gatherers and all of them made a living from the forest. Tribes are placed in colonies where they are forced to live. Tribes normally do not destroy forest or its resources. Cutting a tree trunk for building a hut has become an offence. Tribes should be protected with the right to labour and resources of the forest. Assistance should be given to develop better infrastructure in their settlements. Harassments from

government servants especially of the forest department need to be solved state wide. Tribes should have complete ownership of a piece of land they stay.

During this visit, it is realized that they are having great ethnographic features and are unique in many respects. The harmony within that society is also deserves much attention. In our opinion, before doing any developmental programmes on them we have to consider the Economy, Demography, Law, Environment, Ethnicity, etc are to be considered and if any of these has not taken into consideration then any government projects can lead to problems and the results will be in vein. We could find that everything in their environment are closely interrelated, so very much care and efficiency is highly expected before apprehending any project to the tribal society.

Social exclusion happens among the tribal communities in the state in various ways. There are numerous factors, both inherent and extraneous, including social, economic, cultural and psychological that brings about exclusion of these communities. These factors result in low enrolment and high dropout among the tribal students which in turn results in their lower educational attainment or in other words, low human capital acquisition. This situation eventually leads them to a state of perpetual social exclusion.

Normal indicators of standard of living are type of house, ownership, landholding, availability of toilets and drinking water, possession of different type of durable assets, fuel used for cooking, energy used for lighting, etc., to have an idea about their general living conditions. From these indicators, we could conclude that the standard of living is very poor even in these times. The Governmental intervention is not quite sufficient to improve their standard of living.

## SUGGESTIONS

In a broad sense, the socio-economic and cultural factors among tribes can be outlined as poverty and poor economic conditions, social customs, cultural ethos, lack of awareness and understanding of the value of formal education, conflict and gap between the home and school, etc. Studies on educational deprivation of tribes have inevitably linked it to their poor economic

condition and poverty. The following are the suggestions by us to improve the livelihood status of tribal people living in the Attappadi region and it is also may be considered in all tribal areas:

1. Since land alienation is the main cause of the backwardness of the tribes, legislation should be enacted for the restriction on transfer of lands belonging to the tribal and restoration of alienated lands.
2. The migration of the non- tribes to the tribal areas should be restricted. It is high time that protective measures are taken to avoid further migration to the tribal lands.
3. Tribal culture and traditions should be protected. Priority should be given to the field of education, both formal and job oriented for the empowefinent of the tribes. In order to provide and enhance their income, empowerment opportunities should be created.
4. Emphasis should be on quality and equity rather than quantity as has been the case in the past. The prime focus should be on provision of quality education that makes tribal communities economically effective and indepenclent. In order to make education effective and sustainable, building partnership between the community and the government is important.
5. Good library facility should be provided for the people and students at these regions. NGOs should think about providing this facility in Atappadi.
- 6.Sports related training activities such as archery, football etc. can be initiated. We can produce good sports persons from this region.

Incentives are to be given to the efficient and dedicated government servants who are engaged in the tribal development programme. Another objective of the govt. authorities should be to establish a biodiversity register to document the knowledge base of these people must be pursued with the intellectual property implications of such a register in mind.

## Conclusion

As a participant of Social Immersion Programme in Attappadi is one of the important events in my career as a public servant. In this programme I have

strongly felt every decision of a public servant shall reflect the priority or benefit of the weaker sector of the society. Tribes are living in a satisfactory life above and beyond all their sorrows and problem, but Attappadi got attention in media for the poverty and child mortality, their developments and achievements never discussed in anywhere. Most of us have everything in our life still we are complaining for every small thing. This helps us to change our mind set from a complaining approach to a solution based approach.



**ARUN SREE VARMA. S.P**

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**Arun Sree Varma S.P.**



## **Concept of immersion visit and its objectives**

The immersion visit to Attappady was not a tour program. By this immersion

visit we were expected to observe, study and analyse how the tribals in Attappady live. By this immersion visit, the STO trainees became more aware of the Socioeconomic conditions of the poorest category of the society. After this immersion visit the

STO trainees are expected to become more empathetic to the needs of the public and to become more humane. We were expected to gain first hand knowledge and to

form a vision on how we can contribute to the development agenda by doing our job

as a state Tax Officer. So the immersion visit was taken in a very serious manner.

### **Details of the immersion visit**

#### **Day-1**

On Wednesday, 10th January 2018, we started from GIFT, Sreekaryam, Trivandrum to Attappadi in two buses. For Convenience, we were divided into two groups under two leaders selected from the STO trainees. The department officials also accompanied us. We reached Agali by 10pm and were accommodated at AHARDS (Attappady Hill Area Development Society) now under KILA (Kerala Institute of local Administration).

#### **Day-2**

On 11th January 2018, Thursday morning 10am we were taken to the Block Panchayath office at Agali. There were briefings about the tribals in Attappadi by Mr. Krishnaprakash, Project Development officer, Scheduled Tribe Development Department. He told us that Attappadi, which is located in north east of Palakkad District, has an area of 745 square kilometers. It is constituted by three panchayaths: Agali, Puthur and Sholayar. The three major tribal groups in Attappadi are Muduga (10%), Irula (84%) and Kurumba (6%). Mr. Krishnaprakash is also the secretary to the Attappadi Cooperative Farming Society. The Attappadi Cooperative Farming Society plays a major role in lowering poverty among the tribals. (How this was achieved is explained in detail in this report).

Jeeps were arranged to us as the road to the forest area is full of stones. The first Ooru that we visited was at Chindaki. It is located at Agali first ward. There are 75 houses there, built under Indira Awas Yojana. Pattayams or ownership document is given to all the families. All the inhabitants who stayed in this Ooru belonged to other tribes Irular tribe. It is said that when compared to other tribes Irulars are better in social stands. There is a post office in Chindakki. A high school named Attappadi Adivasi high school is there in Chindaki. It is a Government aided high school funding under the support of Attappadi Cooperative Farming Society. A home go hospital a Government Dispensary is there at Chindakki. From this ooru seven people are Government employees. Water is available in houses electricity is also available. Marriages take place outside the Ooru also. Football is the main sports item played by the youth in Chindakki. In most houses Television is there and mobile phone is used by youngsters. Bhavani river flows near by this Chindakki tribe ooru and the farm of Attappadi cooperative farming society. Almost all the inhabitants of this ooru vote in election.

We visited the farm under the Attappadi cooperative farming society. The crops cultivated were cumin, pepper, coffee, plantain and arecanut. A total of one hundred and twenty hectares of land is used for agriculture purpose. Irrigation facility is available and water from the Bhavani river that flows near by is used. A part from this fish is also grown. Cutla is the fish that is grown in the farm in Chindakki.

We visited the Attappadi Adivasi Highschool at Chindakki. The School is a Government aided school founded by Scheduled Tribe development. At the tenth standard, there were forty two students and one division. One division each of eighth and ninth standard were also present. Hostel facility is available for students. Fourteen teachers are working in the school. The employees are contract based. Total of 245 students study in this school. The employees are appointed on a contract basis. Buildings and infrastructure is limited in the school and there is a demand for a new building in the school.

### **Visit to Anavayi Mele Ooru**

After noon we went to this ooru it is around eight kilometers from

Chindaki.

Tribal promoter of this ooru. (Tribal promoter is appointed to help local, hear their complaints and greivences . He acts so their interface between the panchayath and the tribals. He need to be an SSLC pass and is a temporary appointed with a monthly pay to Rupees Ten Thousand )

Fifty two families live in the Aanavayi mele Ooru. AHARDS has constructed houses for them. Natural water from forest streams is made available in everyhouse in the Ooru. Solar panel is used to get electricity in the houses. Firewood is used as fuel for cooking purpose. Many houses have Television. Their main engagements include agricultural activities that include cultivation of chama, raggi, thuvara and pulses. Men go inside deep forest to gather honey and forest produce. When these tribal men go for collection of forest produce in the deep forest it may sometimes take two weeks for them to return home. These forest produce are sold to the Attappadi co operative farming society. Some of the tribala go as agricultural labourers with the Attappadi Co Operative farming society. They get a daily wage of Rs 325/- . Many also go for the mahatma Gandhi national rural employment programme. An LP School is there for the children nearest hospital is at Agali. National Rural Health Mission mobile units often visits these asdivasi oorus. Their ration shop under the public district dystem is at Chindakki.

These tribals belong to Hindu religion. Their diety include Lord Shia, Malleeswaran and other forest Gods. Shivarathri is their main festival. In the Ooru a stone idol of their God is kept in a shed made out of coconut leaves.

Among the tribals there is no dowry system. Every family have an average of three children vaccination is given to the children pregnant woman take iron and folic acid tablets. The tribals face the main threat from wild animals that include elephant and pig. These wild animals come to eat the agricultural produce of the tribals. The tribals defend their agricultural produce by spendign night there and making loudnoize when the wild animals come. They also use cr ackers and fire to drive away elephants.

The tribals started eating rice as their staple food only for the past fifteen years. before that it was raggi, chama, thuvara. Noqw also when cpmpared to other keralies, tribals consume less quantity of rice. Among the tribals in Attappadi, their tribal head or Moopan is a very imported person. He is the leader

of an Ooru. Moopan solves the conflicts that may arise among the tribals. The punished included bowing, falling to the feet and asking for pardon etc. We spend some time with Moopan & his wife. By evening we returned from Aanavayi in jeeps. On the wayback, we were provided 'Payasam' made of Chama rice at the Kurumba Scheduled Tribe Welfare Co Operative society premises at Asnavayi, Chindakki. P.O. By late evening we reached back our accomodation place at AHARDS (KILA) at Agali. We were provided food at the canteen by the Kudumbasree unit Attappadi. The food was homely and tasty.

### **Day-3**

On 12-01-2018, Thursday morning 8 'O' Clock we started our journey in bus from our accomodation place in Agali to Attappadi. Inside the forest area we were taken in jeep to Veerannor, a tribal colony in Attappadi. The inhabitants in this Ooru belong to the Muduga tribe. In Veerannor, there thirty five houses. There is an anganvadi under the integrated child development scheme. Four children were present in the anganvadi. The houses in this Ooru were constructed by AHARDS men engage in agricultural activities. They also have cow and goat in their house hold. The animals are taken to Vetenary hospitals at Mukkali in case of any illness to them. We had an opportunity to interact with the Moopan of the tribe Shri. Keenan. Among this tribe there is no dowry system. Instead the boy gives to the girls family Rs 150 and 1/4 Rupees. Inter tribe marriges are rare. Earlier in case of any disease, the tribals relied on their own medicines. But nowadays they go to hospital. Their main source of income is agriculture. But the youngsters use mobilephones and have motorbikes. They have tendency to disobey the Moopan. Earlier there was starvation in these Oorus but now the situation has changed. They have an elected ward member as their representative and most of the tribals vole in election. In this Ooru also a small shed made out of beefbut eat chicken. Woman are placed in an out house during their mens...period. For theis a common outhouse is built at the Ooru Attappadi is a place where sale of alcohol is totally prohibitted. But the prohibition is often misused by people who bring alcohol from outside and sell in this area at a very high rate. This is an area of concern.

During the afternoon we did some purchasing from the outlet of the Attappadi Co Operative farming society. The items included honey, mula rice,

chama rice, ragi powder, Tea powder, coffee powder etc.

In the evening we returned to our accomodation at Agali and we started our return journey by seven in evening.

### **Findings and suggestions**

- (1) The level of poverty in Attappadi has decreased to a great extent though we cannot say that poverty has been eradicated among the tribals. So then Governments poverty alleviation programme are showing good results.
- (2) The Attappadi Co Operative farming society palys a major role in providing employment to the tribals, giving good price for the forest produce collected by the tribals and provides an out let to sell the forest and agricultural produce.
- (3) There is an increasing tendency among the tribal youth to go outside Oorus for daily labour. They get better pay for this outside the Oorus. They buy new motorbikes and mobile phones. These youth tend to disobey the tribal chiefs or moopans. This deviation from traditional life can cause probles to the estructure and the very existance of tribal life.
- (4) Attappadi is an area where there is absolute of sale of alcohol. But this prohibition of sale of alcohol. But this prohibition is often misused by people who bring alcohol from outside and sell in this area at a very high rate. This is an area of concern.
- (5) There is an urgent need for a full fledge primary Health Centre (PHC) at Chindakki, so that the tribals can directly benefit from this. This primary Health Centre need inpatient facility and even a full fledge labour room could be considered.
- (6) The drop outs among the tribal youths in schools are very high. This happens because the tribals believe that education may not help them in their future living. The majority of the reservation benefits among the scheduled Tribe category go to forward tribes like mala arayans. These forward tribes are educated and financially well off when compared to backward tribes like mudugas, irulars of Kurumbas. So we can say that it is a clear case of injustice. Thus the real tribals who live in forest are robbed off their reservation benefits by forward tribes like mala arayans. This is how the son of a gazetted officer becomes a gazetted officer and son of an

agricultural labourer becomes an agricultural labourer. Government need to take urgent steps so that the real tribes get the reservation benefit for Government jobs.

- (7) Most of the children in Attappadi suffers from malnutrition and anemia. So they need to be provided with better food, vitamin tables & iron tablets.
- (8) Ambulance service to the Oorus inside forest need to be made more speedy and respopnsive.
- (9) Some portion of the road to the Oorus are put interlock tiles. The remaining portion also need to be ...or put onterlock tilels so that vehicles can freely go to the Oorus.
- (10) More focus need to be given to skill development training like candle making, soap making, umbrella making, etc. so that these people become more self reliant and less dependant on Government funds.
- (11) Formation of tribal self help groups need to be encouraged.
- (12) Higher education institutions including engineering and medical institutions with special provisions for admission of tribal students from Attappadi should be opened in the area.
- (13) While implementing development programmes in Attappadi, Governmenrt need to have a culturally sensitive approach is due respected to the traditional culture and beliefs need to be given.
- (14) Representatives of the tribals like tribal chief (Moopan) tribal promoters etc need to be involved when development projects are made for Attappadi. By involving them, the projects will become more effective and drawbacks could be easily identified.

## Conclusion

From this immersion visit to Attappadi, we understood about the poverty, mal nutrition, inadequate transport facilities, insufficient educational facilities, poor medical facilities and social exclusion faced by the tribal people. We as state Tax Office trainees got the knowledge of the need to contribute to development agenda of our Government. The immersion visit to Attappadi was a big success and it net its intended objectives.





**Jayarajan Poolakkal**

## INTRODUCTION

During the inaugural session of training programme of directly recruited State Tax Officer (Reserve Trainee), Shri S.M. Vijayanand IAS (Former Chief Secretary, Kerala State) has suggested that, in order to understand the real plight of a common man and his expectations from the government, a government servant needs to involve and get connected to the weaker section in the society in some manner. Then only She/he would understand the real treatment a common man receives from government officers.

On the basis of this valuable suggestion, Kerala State Goods and service tax department conducted an immersion visit to Attappadi from 10.01.2018 to 13.01.2018. This was a very nice trip and more helpful to understand the real life of the tribal people in Attappadi. The efforts taken by the officials from the Kerala State Goods and service tax department for the successful completion of the immersion visit was an appreciable one.

I will remember every moment that I spent with tribal people in Attappadi, I ensure that, As a Tax Official, I will contribute to the maximum for the development of the society.

## OBJECTIVES OF IMMERSION VISIT

1. To familiarize the actual living conditions of the poorest tribal people living in forest area at Attappadi.
2. To find the nature of challenge in the rural life of India and efficiency of existing efforts to address these.
3. To get a clear picture of real life environment and explore the learning prospective themselves.
4. To give an exposure to the tribal areas.
5. To sensitize the trainee officers towards the various schemes undertaken by the government in villages and to study and analyze their execution and effectiveness.
6. To understand how resources mobilized by the taxation department are spent through various schemes of line department.

## METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data are used for completing this assignment.

## LIMITATIONS

1. Lack of time : It is the main limitations of the study. Two days is not sufficient to collect all the information regarding the tribal peoples.
2. Distance : Distance between one Ooru to another Ooru is very high. So it is very difficult to reach among Oorus.
3. Tribal's are not ready to disclose all things.

## ABOUT ATTAPPADI

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani River rested below the Nilgiri Hills of the western ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, on the north by the Nilgiris, South by the Pala hat taluk and the west by Kerimba-I and II, Pottesseri-I and II and and Mannarkad revenue village of Mannarkad Taluk of the Palaghat district and Eranad Taluk of the Malappuram district.

The 249 km<sup>2</sup> Attappadi forest is an informal Buffer Zone bordering the Silent Valley National Park to the West. 81 km<sup>2</sup> of this forest was separated to become most of the new 94 km<sup>2</sup> Bhavani forest range which is part of the 147.22 km<sup>2</sup> Silent Valley Buffer Zone formally approved by the Kerala Cabinet on 6 June 2007. The cabinet also sanctioned 35 staff to protect the area and two new forest stations in Bhavani range at Anavai and Thudukki. The zone is aimed at checking the illicit cultivation of ganja, paching and illicit belong in areas adjustment to Silent Valley and help long term sustainability of the protected area.

## CLIMATE

Attappadi Reserve Forest in the South West portion of Mannarkad forest division receives a high rainfall of 4700 mm. Moving eastward along the Attappadi valley towards Agali, the rainfall steadily decreases to low of 900 mm.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The local government of Attappadi are the Agali, Pattur and Sholayar Grama Panchayats.

## EDUCATION

Only one government school in Agali is having the facilities of a full equipment education centre. A college of Applied Sciences (IHRD College) is started in Agali, in the year 2010 for the higher education. Government College Attappadi is the first Arts and Science College in the Attappadi region established under the government section in 2012.

## POWER AND TRANSPORT

Electricity is not reached in many Oorus, especially in Mele Anavay and Thazhe Anavay. These using solar. In raining season depends action solar is a problem. In these Oorus government provides only half litter keroscine. It is not sufficient to meet their needs, especially in rarely seasons.

Road facilities many Oorus is hon'ble in state. These kindly areas, they depends on Jeep service. One to the worst conditions of the roads, the journey was very hard. Jeep services started from Makkali. There are frequent local buses from Anakkatti village in Attappadi to the nearest town f Nelipatty and Mannarkad.

## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In 1970 the state planning board assessed Attappadi as the most backward block in the state and the first Integrated Tribal Development Project in Kerala was initiated there. Since thus, the state government has implemented several special development projects including the Attappadi Co-operative farming society, the western Ghats development programme the Attappadi valley irrigation programme and People's Planning Programme implemented in Attappadi is 1997-2002.

Government started many Anganvadies, lower primary schools, Upper primary schools and high schools in Attappadi area. Many of the childrens completed SSLC and Plus Two. Very few are going to higher studies. As far as their conceaned, higher education is difficult, because of

distance and economic problems (financial). Very few are completed degree courses. Nobody have government jobs.

## HEALTH

There are three government primary health centre. One community health centre and 28 sub-centres in this 745 km<sup>2</sup> block. All hamlets are serviced by an effective government health extension program using trained tribal health volunteers. The tribal women of 80 Attappadi hamlets are conducting a vocal campaign against liquor and ganja which has received public support from the governor. The society of the missionaries of St. Thomas operates the St. Thomas Ashram in Nellipathy for providing services to the tribal people Attappadi including a 15 bed Hospital and Health Clinic with Lab, X-ray, Dental X-ray, ECG, Pharmacy and Ambulance.

Before visiting Attappadi, I had a bad impression about the health of the tribal people. I heard many news against the state of health of tribal's, such a infant mortality rate was very high. The intervention.

Many of these projects were not well adapted to traditional Adivasi culture and beliefs about 80 percent of the tribal population is still living in abject poverty.

Attappadi comprehensive environmental conservation and wasteland development project was established in 1995 with local operations managed from their Agali headquarters. This project has Rs. 2.19 billion development assistance loan from Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) and is implemented by the Attappadi Hills Area Development Society (AHADS), a state government agency. AHADS has made good qualified achievements that will bring long term benefit to the valley.

Attappadi social service organization (ASSO) is one of the major social service organisation functioning in Attappadi. It successfully implemented World Bank aided "Jalanidhi" project to provide drainage water facility for the tribal community.

## FESTIVAL

The Sivarathri festival is celebrated at the Chemmannur

Malleswaram temple by the tribal's during the month of February/March. The Malleswaram peak is worshipped as a gigantic Shivalinga by the adivasis who celebrate the Sivarathri festival there with great favour.

At the Ayyappan temple in Agali, Ayyappan vilakku is celebrated in January. The Vishnu festival is celebrated at Pathinalam as Sree Vandikoth mariyamma thune temple.

## TRIBES IN ATTAPPADI

There are three different castes in Attappadi. They are Irulars, Mudugars, and Kurumbas.

### KURUMBAS

Who constitute less than five percent of the total population ties as the interview of the northern area of Attapady. They were the first group of Adivasis to settle in the place.

### MUDUGAS

They are believed to have immigrated from the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. Their had lived on the north eastern part of Attappadi.

### IRULAS

They are the Dravidian tribe spread over the three states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Whom are also known as Eravalla, Iraliza, Ithza, Kasova, Urali, Kadupujari and Velliza. The term trular is derived from the world Iral meaning dubness. Tralas are regid in their customs and manners.

The dialect of tribes is known as Aadivasi bhasha. It remain only in its spoken form without a writtern script. For the tribesfolk, the transmission of oral illerature from one generation to the next lies at the heact of cultural practives. The local conguard act as a vehicle for the transmission of unique cultural knowledge.

## PLACE OF OORUS

In Attappadi, there are seven Oorus, where tribal lives together. The names of the Oorus are as follows :

1. MeleAnavay



2. Thazhe Anavay
3. Thadi Gunder
4. Chindakku Pazhayooru
5. Chindakku Ooru
6. Veerannur
7. Chindakku First sight

## AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMIC PROFILE

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for most of the families in Attappadi before the entry of settlers, tribals depended on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. The major items produced by them are as follows :

1. Ragi
2. Charna
3. Thamara
4. Coffee
5. Paddy
6. Pepper etc.

The share of forest produce and hasting as a source of livelihood started devindling due to massive destruction of the forest and ansnotanable extraction of forest produce. Now, only a very meagre share of their family income comes from forest produce and, that too only to families living near forest and in remote forest areas. With the settlers occupying more and more land in the area tribals changed from cultivators of own land to castless agricultural labourses. Agriculture become a secondary occupation for the majority of tribal families. The extent of wage labour among this community sherply shot ap.

Tribal men activity engaged in several types of casual labour, generally carried out by females in the rest of Kerala. Low wages keep the demand for tribal men for work in agricultural and agricultural activities high. Name of families were it entire labour time for agriculture in own land.

## ATTAPPADI CO-OPERATIVE FARMING SOCIETY LTD

It was formed in 1975 under western ghat project aiming for reform 420 landless cheduled tribes families in Attappadi. The important crops is farm are Coffee, Pepper, Cardanoun, clove, nutmeg, arecanut, coconut,

ginger, turmeric. The society adopt organic cultivation certified by INDOCERT and not use among chemical fertilizer and pesticides. Products from the above crops sell through auction procedure. Besides the farm products Honey, Kimkilyam etc. which collects from schedule tribes are being sold in India international trade fare and trade fares conducted by various departments.

Attappadi co-operative farming society provides employment opportunities to tribes. Jobs in ACFS is the main income generating source to tribals. ACFS provides deaily jobs to tribals.

## FINDINGS

1. The constitution has formally designated all the tribal societies as scheduled tribes and it does not take is to account the fact that, the tribal societies are seperate and fifferent each other in many espect like tradition, health, communication and education, conventional practices and way of life.
2. Many childrens drop out higher education due to lack of accessibility or distance from school and poor health. Followed by family responsibility, fisical problems, lack of interest, lack of hostel facilities, ignornace of parents and early marriage.
3. Most of the harmlets lack basic facilities for maintaining sanitation and environment hygiene, this also a reason for the health problem is the harmlets.
4. Tribals depend on jeep and roads are very narrow and no other facilities are available here.
5. Majority had a poor openion about the supply of essential commodities through ration shops. What is more stocking is that some tribals do not even have ration cards.
6. Shortage of adequate drinking water.
7. Primary Health Centre are far away from the places and advanced checkups and services are very poor.
8. Electricity not get accessed by many Oorus like Mele Anavay. They uses only solar.
9. Telecommunication facilities are not available in Oorus.

10. If any disputes arises between the tribals, the final decisions are taken by Ooru Mooppan.

## SUGGESTIONS

1. As our constitution suggest that, we should consider and provide equal rights to all tribes and bring them into the mainstream of the society.
2. Provide school facilities near to Oorus, and provide better hostel facilities to required childrens. Educate them to the importance of education and give more stipends to overcome their financial problems.
3. Provide and ensure better basic facilities for maintaining sanitation and hygiene environment, it helps to reduce the health problems in Oorus.
4. To construct good road for better accessibility and give bus service to the Oorus.
5. Supply of enough essential commodities through rationshops and ensure that all tribals have ration cards.
6. More fund to be utilised for providing adequate drinking water.
7. Concentrate more on health matters. Medical team should visit all Oorus frequently. Improve the service of health centres.
8. Provide electricity to all Oorus.
9. Provide telecommunication facilities to all Oorus.

## CONCLUSION

During my immersion visit to Attappadi from 10.01.2018 to 13.01.2018, I could see directly the life of tribals. This was a very nice experience. Now I express my sincere thanks to Kerala State Goods and Services Tax department and the officials for providing such a chance to me.

Scheduled tribes are considered as the most vulnerable community in the state. The tribes in Kerala form an important part of the total population and it represents an element in society which is incorporated with the culture mixture of our nation. Tribal communities delay behind other community with respect to achievement of income, occupation, schooling and other basics for good community nutrition, education, isolation from mainstream of society, low economic status and health are contributing factors of socio economic issues. Socio economic problems leading the tribal groups in Attappadi region are vested as most backward group.