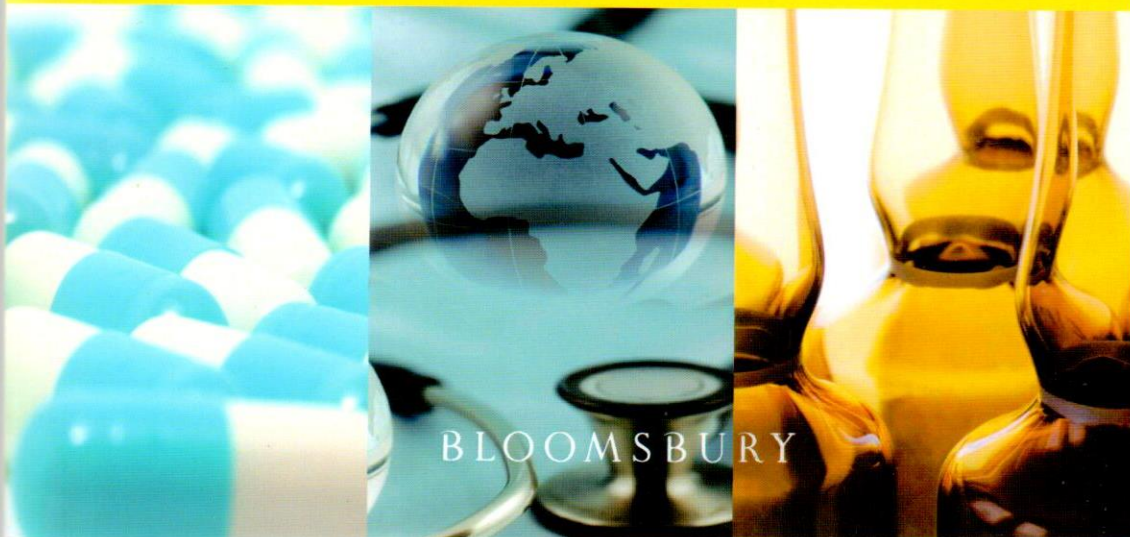


SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND HEALTHCARE PRACTICES

An Ethnographic Approach

Kathiresan Loganathan



BLOOMSBURY



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I

Social Transformation of the Malayalis

This book is an inquiry into the social transformation process of a tribal community called 'Malayali'¹, situated in Jawadhi hills, Kalrayan Hills and Servaroy hills of the southern state of Tamil Nadu in India. Social transformation is conceived as changes in all areas of society and culture; and the concept is construed free from any of the theoretical approaches and biases.

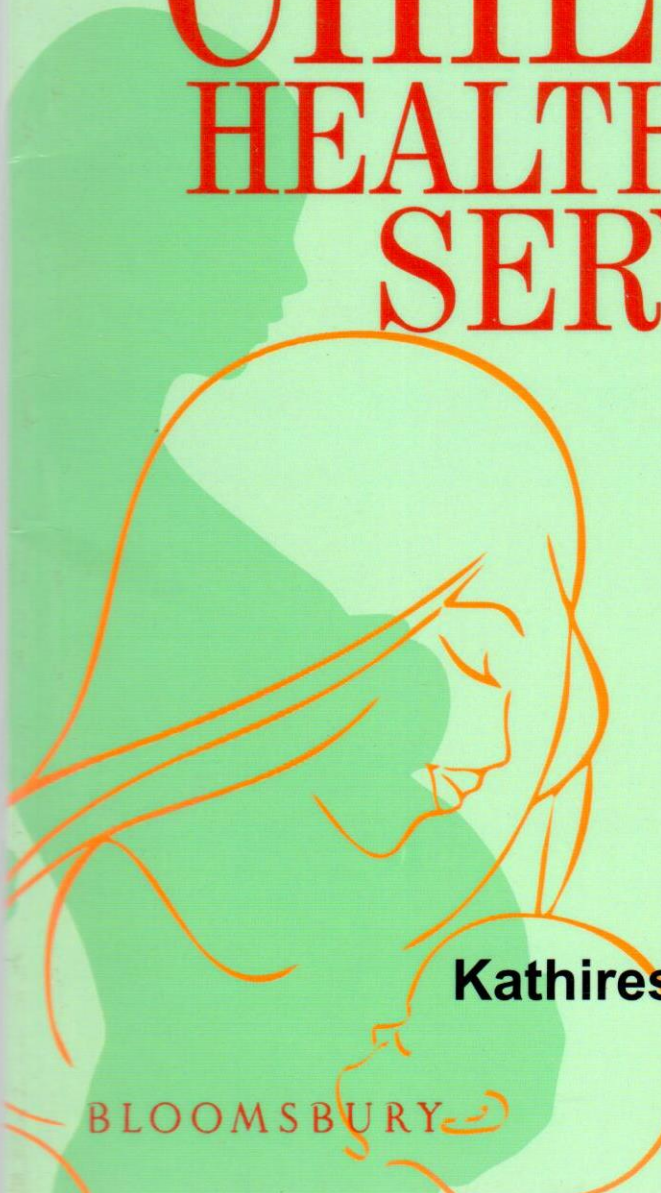
It is an attempt to investigate the qualitative impact of changes perceptible at the level of social, economic, political and cultural aspects of Malayalis and its implications on tribal life in general, and their healthcare practices in particular.

Malayalis had been enjoying complete autonomy in the forests. However, it was observed that consequent to commercialization of forests during the British period, their forest life was curtailed and they were forced to settle down. Hence, this community had undergone a lot of changes as a result of acculturation, which are reflected in the family structure, marriage systems, juridical conventions, dress code, life style, religious practices, rituals, community customs and healing practices as well. An elite group is emerging within the community with a new code of conduct, dietary habits, and educational values and so on. They consciously retain certain institutional practices for their identity.

The study therefore has two dimensions, namely, historical and ethnographic. This will facilitate in understanding the historical process of social transformation and its implications on traditional institutions and practices.

According to Gillin and Gillin (1954) social transformation means 'variation

¹ Malayalis are an ethnic group from Tamil Nadu constitutionally categorised as Scheduled Tribes. Malayali is a Tamil word to denote hill dwellers (malai=hill, aali=dweller) and it does not denote Malayalam speaking people from Kerala.



REPRODUCTIVE AND CHILD HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Examining its
Utilisation in
Northeast India

**Kathiresan Loganathan
Ratna Huiem**

BLOOMSBURY



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Introduction

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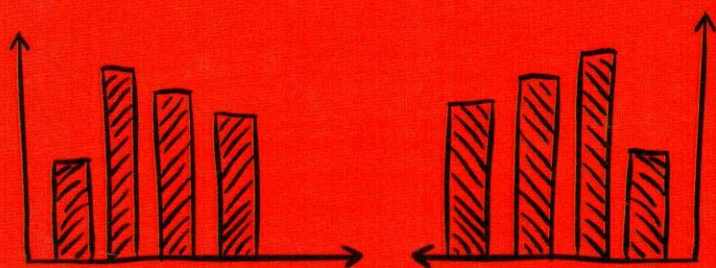
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook (CIA, 2014) reports Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in India at 43.19, while its neighbour China records it at 14.79. Both are developing nations. This contrasting figure should be adequate to serve as a wake-up call to our nation. If we compare the same figure with those of the two most developed nations, namely, United Kingdom and the United States, which records these figures at 4.44 and 6.17 respectively, it should shake our very core. In addition to this, in 2010, the above source records the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) at 200 in India, 37 in China, 12 in the U.K. and 21 in the U.S.

Looking at the All India picture, as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Report, 2011, advanced states like Delhi and Tamil Nadu record IMRs at 28 and 22. The same Report notes IMRs for the north-eastern states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Sikkim at 55, 11, 52, and 26 respectively. Regarding MMR, SRS 2007-09 notes these figures at 97 for Tamil Nadu and 390 for Assam. It is unavailable for Delhi as well as the other three states as on September 30, 2012.

It is in the backdrop of these very disturbing figures in India in general, and in the Northeast in particular, that this study was conceptualised. It is to be appreciated that reproductive health does not affect women alone; it is a family health and social issue as well. The International Conference on Population and Development, Programme of Action, 1994, had aptly defined Reproductive health as, 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes.'

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY



Modern Avatars of
Exclusion and
Discrimination



EDITOR
SIVASANKAR V

BLOOMSBURY PRIME



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Inclusive Governance and Social Democracy: Towards Equitable Development

KATHIRESAN LOGANATHAN¹

INTRODUCTION

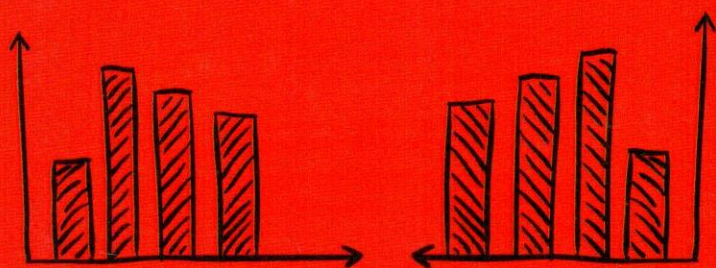
This paper begins by describing briefly the historical context of inequalities. Numerous socio-economic welfare programmes and policies in India have attempted to achieve economic growth and social development. However, widespread inequalities continued with the gap getting larger between the rich "haves" and "have-nots". The inclusive development paradigm comes all the more important in this new realm. Thus 'inclusive growth' 'distributive justice' or 'equitable development' has become the buzzword among the policy makers and planners. The paper, then looks at the emergent challenges, some of which are the eternal poverty trap, regional disparities, disparities amongst social groups, etc. Finally, an attempt is made to critically examine possible policy prescriptions that revolve not only around targets but rather aims at minimizing inequalities, reducing poverty, and promoting inclusive governance through inclusive politics and by upholding the principles of democracy.

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

The idea of equality is relatively a modern phenomenon. History reveals to us that even from the early civilization, 'little farmers with little fields' are poor, except kings and chieftains. Poverty is an interminable problem in

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Assam University, Silchar

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY



Modern Avatars of
Exclusion and
Discrimination



EDITOR
SIVASANKAR V

BLOOMSBURY PRIME



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Malayali Tribes in Tamil Nadu: Mythologies and Realities in their Development Paradigm

KATHIRESAN LOGANATHAN¹

INTRODUCTION

Theory has shown that no society is static. Societies are dynamic and changing due to different factors. Anthropologists who believe in unilinear evolution of human society have stated that all societies move from simple to complex, whereas multilineal evolutionists theorised that societies developed through different stages. A vast majority of societies have been advancing in socio-economic, cultural, political and technological spheres; while a small band of tribes are still living in the primitive stage of hunting and gathering. This paper attempts to understand the Malayali society, which is evolving from the early stage of development, and experiencing changes and challenges in all spheres of their lives.

Symbolic creation of reality is born out of historical necessities. Identities and mythical stories are constructed to establish superiority and distinction from other groups. These mythologies set up rituals not merely as manifestations of cultural creativity, but also to indicate and reaffirm social dignity. Such mythical stories that claim to trace the origin of Malayali tribes are described in the following paragraphs.

MALAYALI: THE ORIGIN

Malayali is an ethnic group from Tamil Nadu constitutionally categorised as Scheduled Tribe. Malayali is a Tamil word to denote hill dwellers (malai-hill,

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Assam University, Silchar.

Thoughts and Practices of Social Transformation



A. Thomas William

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Role of Elite on Social Transformation of Malayali Tribe in Shevaroy Hills, Tamil Nadu

L. Kathiresan

A large segment of tribal population was left to live in backward conditions during the colonial period. Even after Independence, the situation has not really improved although the new government introduced several schemes and programmes to uplift the weaker sections. But the tribal population could not easily access these services. Several pockets of tribal areas remain untouched by these development initiatives. Problems such as poverty, illiteracy, land alienation, indebtedness, poor infrastructure, poor healthcare services, etc. allowed the elites to emerge as influential sub-groups. This paper traces the historical process of elite formation and their struggle to maintain their dominance within the little known Malayali tribe of Shevaroy Hills, Tamil Nadu.

In every society a minority of people will emerge as a powerful group through some particular skill, knowledge and quality. This group of people does not necessarily rule the majority, but set agendas or influence the majority. Education is commonly viewed as a factor that gives opportunity to rise higher in a stratified community. Indian society is characterised as bipolar society. The upper caste groups dominate the lower caste group in the general population. Similarly, the tribal society also has differentiations and stratifications (Bose 1981).

After Independence, the role of elite was significant as an effective catalyst group in the process of modernisation and social transformation (Narain *et. al.* 1976). It is a common post-colonial experience that despite democracy, the political power was exercised by a minority of elites. It was not only found in the macro political arena, but also in the micro-political units like villages as well. The introduction of panchayati raj is not only responsible for the emergence of new elites in place of the traditional leaders, but also in granting power to the local elites (Madan 1979; Sharma 1979).

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