

# **A STUDY OF SOCIAL LIFE AND PROBLEMS OF PANIYA WOMEN DEPICTED IN PANIYA SONGS**

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**MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT**

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BY

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## SUMMARY

'Scheduled Tribes' are generally considered to be 'Adivasis', -the 'original inhabitants'. In India these people, accounting for 8.2% of India's population, are spread all over the states and union territories, having rich traditions and practices pervade all aspects of Indian culture and civilization.

India's regional languages such as Oriya, Marathi or Bengali developed as a result of the fusion of tribal languages with Sanskrit or Pali and virtually all the Indian languages have incorporated words from the vocabulary of Adivasi languages. Adivasis who developed an intimate knowledge of various plants and their medicinal uses played an invaluable role in the development of Ayurvedic medicines. They also played an important role in the development of agricultural practises - such as rotational cropping, fertility maintenance through alternating the cultivation of grains with leaving land fallow or using it for pasture. As the freedom movement widened, it drew Adivasis into all aspects of the struggle. In short, we can come to the conclusion that the role they play in India is unexplainable and of immense value.

Unfortunately, even 69 years after independence, Dalits and Adivasis have benefited least from the advent of freedom. Although independence has brought widespread gains for the vast majority of the Indian population, Dalits and Adivasis have often been left out. So for them, the fate is to remain always in the bottom of the society.

The social life of scheduled tribe and caste are really a textbook for the urban people. Before we go through that, we have to be very familiar with their origin, division, types, population and about their socio-economic activities. Special mention is given about their art forms.

Indian tribal songs with its closed-group form of ethnicity is remarkable in the sense that it can never be studied in isolation from the social and ritual contexts of the people concerned. Tribal songs possess a well-built community basis. The fact can be comprehended in the domains of musical-socialisation, kinds of ownership, levels of participation and nature of specialisation. Learning music in a typical tribal society forms a cardinal part of the entire process of association of its members.

The Paniya, also known as Paniyar and Paniyan, are one of such ethnic group of India. They primarily inhabit Kerala, and the Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kannur

and Malappuram districts. The Paniya speak the Paniya language, which belongs to the Dravidian family.

The Paniya have historically worked as agricultural labourers. They are believed to have been brought to Wayanad by the king of Malabar, and thereafter tilled the land as serfs. Following the abolishment of the slave-holding system, the Paniya were resettled in different areas established by the government.

There have been many studies done on Kerala Scheduled Tribe and Caste. But it is sad that rare are serious, gone to the core. Among these studies Paniya songs belong to the neglected category. Here, an attempt is made to bring out the problems of paniya women that they have expressed through their songs. There is no doubt that the study will definitely enhance the folklore study in India especially in Kerala and help to promote the life of paniya women folk.

As mentioned before, the authorities have been a failure in protecting the essence and original nature of scheduled Tribe and Caste. They are dangerously ignored or the term 'promoting them' is misunderstood and the result of any action taken by the authorities in this regard do not fetch the actual promotion. Even most of the studies carried out as part of uplifting them are market oriented. So The subject has to become a serious concern of the modern society and the due seriousness should be given.

Being the central concern of this study, paniya women with their all specialities should be understood. The main theme is the existential problems faced by the paniya women- the exploitation, especially sexual from the outsiders.

As with any other tribal society, Indian tribal songs scenario also possesses its aboriginal restrictions as well. Songs amongst tribals is not conceived as exclusive property of its individual members, but of the community as a whole. For this very reason, tribal songs even if framed by individual composers remains anonymous. The core of the study is Paniya songs, the life and songs of Paniya women. Some songs given in the chapter give the feeling that they Paniya women had no way out than expressing their particular problems through songs. So the problems like their hunger, helplessness, tempting situations etc.. become the main theme of their songs.

In short, the study emphasizes on the importance of preserving them-their culture- virgin. Shifting the life of scheduled tribe and caste in any form to the midst

of urban population would only harm them, which is foolishness and they should be protected and promoted as they are and where they are.

Bringing them to the mainstream is possible only by not disturbing them and enhancing their cottage art works and medicines etc. to an industry. This is the key point made in the conclusion. A society grown to the mainstream like this, only could eliminate the exploitation and other problems faced by them, especially by the Paniya women.

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