

**KERALA**  
**DATA HIGHLIGHTS : THE SCHEDULED CASTES**  
**Census of India 2001**

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The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of Kerala State is 3,123,941 as per 2001 census constituting 9.8 percent of the total population(31,841,374) of the State. The growth of SC population has been 8.2 per cent which is 1.2 percent lower than the growth of total population (9.4 percent) in 1991-2001. The State has a total of sixty eight (68) SCs and all have been enumerated at 2001 census.

2. The Scheduled Castes are overwhelmingly rural with 81.8 percent residing in rural areas. Among the districts, Palakkad district has the highest proportion of SCs (16.5 per cent) followed by Idukki (14.1 per cent), Pathanamthitta(13.1per cent) and Kollam districts (12.5 per cent). Kannur district has the lowest percentage of SC population ( 4.1 per cent), preceded by Wayanad ( 4.3 per cent) and Kozhikode ( 7per cent) districts.

#### **Population - Size & Distribution**

3. Out of sixty eight Scheduled Castes, Pulayan is the most populous caste with a population of 1,041,540 forming 33.3 percent of the total SC population of the State. Cheruman is the second largest SC numbering 316,518. Five other SCs namely, Kuravan, Paraiyan, Kannakan, Thandan and Vettuvan along with Pulayan and Cheruman constitute 77.7% of the total SC population. Seven remaining castes, namely, Vannan, Chakkiliyan, Paravan etc. with population ranging from 40,070 to 90,962 account for 12.8 per cent and the remaining 54 SCs along with the generic castes constitute the residual 9.5 per cent of the total SC population.

4. District wise distribution of the individual SC shows that Pulayan, numerically the largest caste, account for the highest proportion (75.8 per cent) of total SC population in Ernakulam district, followed by Alappuzha and Kottayam ( 56.3 per cent) whereas Cheruman and Kuravan have the highest proportion in Palakkad (38.2 per cent) and Pathanamthitta (35.5 per cent) districts respectively. Other four major groups Paraiyan, Kanakkan, Thandan & Vettuvan have their highest proportion in the districts of Idduki, Malappuram, Kollam and Thrissur respectively.

#### **Sex Ratio**

5. The sex ratio of the total SC population at 1048 shows preponderance of females and is significantly higher than the national average of 936 for the total Scheduled Caste population as per 2001 census.

6. At the individual caste level, all the major SCs have sex ratio above 1000. Kuravan have the highest sex ratio of 1081 among the larger groups.

7. The sex ratio among the SC children in the age group 0-6 years (955) is higher than that of the SCs at the national level. Among the major SCs, Kuravan have the preponderance of girl children with the child sex ratio of 1001 followed by Thandan, Paraiyan, Pulayan etc. whereas Kanakkan have registered the child sex ratio below the state and national averages.

**Statement-1 : Sex Ratio**

Age group	All SCs (India)	All SCs (Kerala)	Kuravan	Thandan	Pulayan	Cheruman	Kanakkan	Vettuvan	Paraiyan
All age	936	1048	1081	1067	1049	1048	1041	1037	1029
0 - 6	938	955	1001	975	949	946	936	941	959

### **Literacy & Educational Level**

8. The Scheduled Castes have shown an encouraging trend in the level of literacy. More than three fourth population in the 7 years and above age group is literate. The overall literacy rate of SCs which was 79.7 per cent at 1991 census, has increased to 82.7 per cent at 2001. This is significantly higher than the national average of 54.7 per cent overall of SCs. Male literacy has increased from 85.2 per cent to 88.1 per cent while female literacy has gone up from 74.3 per cent to 77.6 per cent during 1991-2001. Among the numerically larger castes, Thandan have the highest female literacy (83.5 per cent) followed by Pulayan (81.1 per cent) and Vettuvan (79.2 per cent). Notably, all the individual larger castes have registered 69 - 83.5 per cent female literacy.

9. Among the literates, 23.2 per cent are either without any educational level or have attained education below primary level. The proportion of literates who have attained education up to primary and middle levels constitute 26.3 per cent & 28.4 per cent respectively. As many as 18.5 per cent literates are educated up to matric/secondary/higher secondary etc. This implies that every fifth SC literate has attained education up to secondary level. Graduates & above are 2.1 per cent while non-technical & technical diploma holders constitute 1.5 per cent only.

**Statement - 2 : Levels of Education among the major Scheduled Castes**

Names of SCs	Literate without educational level	Below primary	Educational levels attained				
			Primary	Middle	Matric/Secondary Higher Secondary/ Intermediate etc.	Technical & Non-technical diploma etc.	Graduate and above
All SCs	1.5	21.7	26.3	28.4	18.5	1.5	2.1
Cheruman	2.2	24.9	29.4	29.6	12.7	0.5	0.8
Kanakkan	1.7	21.7	26.1	32.0	16.1	0.9	1.4
Thandan	1.1	19.4	24.7	31.4	19.1	2.1	2.2
Kuravan	1.5	23.4	29.2	32.0	12.1	0.9	0.9
Paraiyan	1.4	20.7	25.0	27.0	20.8	2.0	3.1
Pulayan	1.3	20.5	24.4	28.5	21.3	1.7	2.3
Vettuvan	1.3	24.7	30.6	23.6	17.2	0.9	1.7

10. Among Pulayan, every fifth literate person is a matriculate followed by Kanakkan and Vettuvan who have every 6<sup>th</sup> literate, a matriculate.

11. It may be discerned from the educational level attained by the SCs, that the drop-out rate is high after middle level as the percentage of matriculate is half of the middle level literates and declines sharply from the higher secondary level onwards.

12. As many as 88.4 per cent of the SC children in the age 5 -14 years attend school. Among the major groups, Pulayan, Kanakkan and Thandan have about 90 per cent children attending school.

**Statement - 3 : SC wise percentage of school going children in the age of 5 - 14 yrs.**

Age group	All SCs	Pulayan	Cheruman	Kuravan	Paraiyan	Kanakkan	Thandan	Vettuvan
5-14yrs.	88.4	89.8	88.8	87.4	87.1	89.9	89.6	87.8

**Work Participation Rate (WPR)**

13. The Work Participation Rate (WPR) of the Scheduled Caste population is 40.4 per cent which is same as that of all SCs at the national level but has shown a marginal decline from 1991(41.2 per cent). The work participation rate of males (54.1 per cent) is twice that of females (27.3 per cent) at 2001. There has been an increase in male WPR from 51 per cent to 54.1 per cent whereas female WPR has declined by 4 per cent at 2001. Among the total workers, 73.7 per cent are main workers and this proportion is almost at par with all SCs aggregated at the national level (73 per cent).

14. Among the major groups, Kuravan, Cheruman and Paraiyan have shown WPR higher than the state average recorded by all SCs. Kuravan also have the highest female WPR (33.5 per cent) followed by Cheruman and Paraiyan whereas Pulayan, Kanakkan, Thandan and Vettuvan have registered the overall as well as female WPR lower than those of all SCs at the state level.

### Category of Workers

16. 'Other Workers' constitute 61.9 per cent which is almost double if compared to the national average of 30.5 per cent for the total SCs in this category. 'Agricultural Labourers' account for 33.7 per cent implying that every third SC worker in Kerala is an 'Agricultural Labourer'. Workers in the Household Industry (HHI) have a share of 2.8 per cent whereas 'Cultivators' account for 1.7 per cent only.

Among the major castes, Vettuvan holds the top position in category of 'Other Workers' (81per cent) followed by Thandan, Pulayan and Paraiyan, whereas Cheruman have more than half (57.6 per cent) of the total workers work as 'Agricultural Labourers' followed by Kanakkan, Kuravan etc.

**Statement- 4 : Percentage Distribution of Workers in four Economic Categories**

Economic Category	All Scheduled Castes	Pulayan	Cheruman	Kuravan	Paraiyan	Kanakkan	Thandan	Vettuvan
Cultivators	1.7	1.6	1.2	2.1	1.7	1.4	3.6	0.9
Agricultural Labourers	33.7	32.6	57.6	43.5	27.9	44.9	21.9	14.3
HHI Workers	2.8	1.8	0.7	1.2	6.6	1.2	2.5	3.7
Other Workers	61.9	64.1	40.5	53.2	63.8	52.6	71.9	81.1

### Marital Status

18. It is significant to highlight that both 'never married' as well as 'married' persons have equal percentage share i.e. 46.2 per cent & 46.4 per cent respectively in the total SC population. 'Widowed' persons form 6.3 per cent while only one per cent persons are 'divorced and separated'.

19. The marriages of girls and boys below the stipulated age i.e. 18 years & 21 years respectively, are not common in Kerala. Proportion of married girls below 18 years (1.1 per cent) and married boys below 21 years (0.6 per cent) are significantly lower than those at the national level (2.8 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively).

20. The mean number of children ever born per ever married SC woman (45 – 49 years.) is 3 which is less than that of all SCs at national level (4).

**Religion**

21. Hinduism is the predominant religion of the Scheduled Castes (99.9 per cent) in Kerala. Negligible number (390) of SCs are the followers of Sikhism and Buddhism. Same trend has been noticed among all the major SCs.

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