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FOREWORD

The Constitution lays down that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

To assist States in fulfilling their responsibility in this regard, the 1961 Census provided series of special tabulations of the Social and Economic data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are notified by the President under the Constitution and the Parliament is empowered to include in or exclude from the lists, any caste or tribe. During the Census operations the enumerators frequently face the problem of identifying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the President's notification, though in some cases, the names of the Sub-castes and Sub-tribes and synonyms are given, there are many cases where such names have not been provided in the list. The Census enumerators therefore, require guidance about the acceptance or rejection of claims that they come across during the operations of some communities to be treated as Sub-castes or Sub-tribes of the notified Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose, the Census Organisation has thought it wise to undertake detailed ethnographic studies in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India. This is also in conformity with the past Census tradition of presenting authentic ethnographic account of Indian communities.

For conducting the ethnographic studies, a number of ancillary operations are undertaken by the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, India, as well as the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations in the various States. These ancillary operations include: (i) compilation of available information on each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and preparation of bibliography in respect of them; (ii) preparation and interpretation of maps showing distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes over time and space; (iii) special studies on cultural, technological and economic changes taking place among the various tribal communities.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, India, Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri A. M. Kurup and Shri N. G. Nag, Research Officers, is co-ordinating all these studies at the Central level.

Thandan is notified as a Scheduled Caste in certain areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala States. It is a community of traditional coconut pluckers and sawyers of wood. This being a purely Malayalam community, it continues to remain as a satellite functional group of the Malayalam speaking communities, of the region, particularly the Nayars, thus imbibing many of their customs and manners. The present monograph is to bring out the salient features of

the social and economic changes which are taking place among them. Educationally the Thandans are better off with a literacy rate of 32.61%. This shows a phenomenal rise in the literacy rate from 1931 when only 7.8% were returned as literates. With their sense of social solidarity, co-operation and enlightenment, the Thandan community is likely to make accelerated strides in their socio-economic development.

Shri T. B. Bharati, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras conducted the preliminary investigations and prepared the first draft. Shri A. S. Ramamurthy of the Registrar General's Office and Shri C. T. Rajan of the Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras, have done further field investigations and drafted the report. Shri A. M. Kurup and Dr. B. K. Roy Burman edited the report.

I avail of this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all of my colleagues who have undertaken various studies on different aspects of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR
Registrar General, India

P R E F A C E

As an adjunct of 1961 Census, preparation of ethnographic monographs on a number of selected Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status and ethnographic glossaries on all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been taken up by the Census Organisation.

In India the Census Organisation has a long tradition of undertaking ethnographic studies. Besides, there are certain reasons why, for its own operational purposes, it is necessary for the Census Organisation to take up such studies. During Census operation, the Census Organisation is required to make a complete enumeration of all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. The ethnographic studies are required to establish the identity of the various communities including their segments. The social boundaries of various communities are not always rigid, they are in a state of flux. Ethnographic studies are required to keep track of these changes as well, otherwise comparison of consecutive Census figures would give altogether wrong picture in respect of them. There is another aspect of study in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in which the Census Organisation, as well as the welfare and Planning agencies are interested—it is ethno-demography. In 1961 Census, separate tables were prepared in respect of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the following items:—

- (i) industrial classification of persons at work and non-workers by sex,
- (ii) age and marital status,
- (iii) education,
- (iv) religion,
- (v) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Caste,
- (vi) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Tribes,
- (vii) mother tongue and bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes.

The data available in these tables are to be analysed in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, so that the historical and cultural factors responsible for the demographic pattern can be identified and the impact of the emergent demographic pattern on the social structure can be determined.

The insight gained by the Census Organisation, through ethnographic studies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be useful for interpretation of the demographic pattern for the country as a whole. Recent studies show that in India even now, it is difficult to correctly appreciate the various social and economic processes without reference to caste. On the other hand, in the interest of ultimate national goal, caste is not being recorded in Census, except in case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The insight gained through ethno-demographic studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is, therefore, of invaluable help for Census.

At the same time, such study is very much useful for planning of development activities among the castes or tribes concerned. For instance, if the Census shows that great deal of diversification of occupation has taken place among the Parayans of Kerala, it is important for the planners to know whether the community consists of number of disconnected segments or whether it means that a great deal of individual mobility is taking place where the main focus of community is other than traditional occupation. Again, when among the Bauris of Orissa, it is found that a very high proportion of the population is engaged in agricultural labour and next to them a high proportion is found in cultivation and also that there is considerable diversification of occupation, the following questions of sociological and practical importance arise:—

(viii)

- (a) What is the historical relation between the agricultural labourers and the cultivators among the Bauris of Orissa? The Census data suggests one of the two possible developments, namely, (1) Bulk of the Bauris were cultivators and by a process of degeneration of their economy have become agricultural labourers, (2) on the other hand, it is also possible that the bulk of them were agricultural labourers and through a process of improvement of their economic condition, many of them have become cultivators.
- (b) The fact that a considerable diversification of occupation has taken place, suggests that the economy has not remained in a stagnant condition. Here, it is to be examined whether the diversification is the result of upward mobility, or downward mobility, or even horizontal mobility, and what is the actual process by which the diversification has taken place.
- (c) The Social dimensions corresponding to the diversification in economic life have to be examined. It is also to be examined whether in spite of diversification of occupation, for instance agriculture, continues to be dominant. In that case, diversification might have created problems of adjustment in values and attitudes.

Instances can be multiplied, but it is not necessary. What have been stated above, are enough to bring out the significance of ethno-demographic studies for planners.

The above dimensions of ethno-demographic studies have evolved through stages. In 1960 at the instance of Shri Mitra, Registrar General of India, a questionnaire for collection of ethnographic data was circulated among the Census Superintendents. In October, 1961, the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit was set up in the Office of the Registrar General of India, to co-ordinate the ethnographic studies and a few other ancillary studies, like village surveys, handicraft surveys, etc. In December 1961, a Study Camp was organised in Delhi, where the personnel engaged in ethnographic studies, handicrafts studies and other social investigations in the office of the Census Superintendents, participated. In the study camp, it was considered that the ethnographic notes would mainly aim at making an objective assessment of the State of development of the different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the changes taking place in technology, economic organisation and total culture pattern of the country. It was further suggested that the primary focus of the study should not be on the exotic elements of the cultures of the different castes and tribes. It should be on the efforts of the communities concerned, to adjust to the modern conditions of life. In the light of the above decisions of the Study Camp, rapid ethnographic studies have been carried on by the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations as well as by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, in different parts of the country. These rapid surveys have brought out a number of methodological and operational problems. In May and June, 1966, two Ethnographic Study Camps were held at Kurseong and Hyderabad, where personnel from the Office of the Registrar General of India as well as from the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the Study Camp held at Kurseong, the Secretary, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal and Director, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, also participated. In this Study Camp, an integrated frame for preparation of ethnographic notes was discussed and adopted. A copy of the same may be seen at 'Annexure'. In addition to the studies in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe separately, a number of subsidiary studies were undertaken by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, for gaining insight into a number of problems of general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows:—

1. Shifting cultivation in Santal Parganas of Bihar, Garo Hills of Assam.
2. Pattern of Rehabilitation of displaced tribals of Rourkela.
3. Socio-economic survey of the Scheduled areas of Rajasthan.
4. Socio-economic developments among the hillmen of North-East India.
5. Social structure and cultural orientation of Christians converted from Scheduled Castes.

6. Traditional rights of scavenging as claimed by scavengers in urban areas.
7. Grouping of castes and tribes with reference to occupation and inter-group and intra-group comparative study on the basis of the data available in earlier censuses.
8. Social mobility movements among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

On the basis of each of the subsidiary studies indicated above, a separate monograph is under preparation. It is also proposed to prepare separate monographs on a few Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status in each State. Besides, ethnographic glossaries are proposed to be prepared in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose about one lakh references have been indexed.

The present report on the Thandan is one of the monographs proposed to be brought out by the Census Organisation. A preliminary investigation on the community was undertaken by Shri T. B. Bharati, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras, who also prepared the first draft. A fuller investigation on the community was undertaken by Shri A. S. Ramamurthy of the Office of the Registrar General, India and Shri C. T. Rajan of the Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras under the guidance of Shri A. M. Kurup, Research Officer, Office of the Registrar General, India. The draft report prepared by Shri Ramamurthy was revised by Shri Kurup. It was finally edited by Shri Kurup and myself.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the colleagues who collaborated in the project.

Shri H. L. Harit, Investigator, who is looking after the compilation of information from published sources in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other special ethnic groups of India, deserves mention.

Shri A. Mitra, Registrar General of India for 1961 Census, whose farsighted initiative is responsible for social investigations in a large number of fields including ethnography, deserves thanks of all students of Indology. I have been benefited not only by his inspiration, but also by his valuable suggestion in connection with the ethnographic studies as well as the other studies, conducted by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit.

The tradition built by Shri Mitra, has been continued by Shri A. Chandra Sekhar, the present Registrar General of India. Under his guidance, the scope of the Social Studies by the Census Organisation has been further expanded. In spite of his other preoccupations, he has gone through the final drafts of the ethnographic notes and given a number of valuable suggestions. I avail of this opportunity to express my gratefulness to him.

B. K. ROY BURMAN

THANDAN/URALY

I. NAME, IDENTITY, ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Essentially a Malayalam speaking community of coconut pluckers, wood cutters and sawyers, the **Thandan** or **Uraly** are found sparcely distributed in the Kanyakumari district and Shenkottah taluk of Tamil Nadu (Madras State). This community is an extension into the Tamil country of the **Thandan** of **Uraly** of Kerala where it is known by the term **Thatchan**, **Velan** and **Mutalppattukar** in different areas. **Thandans** are also called **Velans**.

In Tamil Nadu, **Thandan** and **Uraly** are listed separately as Scheduled Castes in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Lists, Modification Order 1956, throughout the district of Kanyakumari and Shenkottah taluk of Tirunelveli district, the areas transferred to the State from Kerala as a result of reorganisation of States in 1956. In the same order they are also listed as Scheduled Castes throughout the State of Kerala except Malabar district. **Uraly** is also listed as a Scheduled Tribe in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the above mentioned areas according to the above said order. The **Uraly** listed as Scheduled Tribe are hill dwellers as distinct from the **Uraly** listed as Scheduled Castes who are plains dwellers.

Earlier in the different statutes and Censuses (Census of India 1961, Vol. I, V-B(ii), 110, 111, 114 and 115) these communities find their place with various spellings and status. In the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950, it is noted as a Scheduled Caste with the spelling **Thandan**. It is returned as **Thantan (Urali)** a "depressed caste" in the 1931 Census. Further as **Urali** it is enumerated as a "Primitive tribe" in the 1931 Census while with the spelling **Uraly** it is listed both as a Scheduled Caste and as a Scheduled Tribe in the 1950 Order. Thurston (1909, VII), uses the spelling **Tandan**.

It may be necessary, to indicate briefly the import of the various spellings and status. **Thandan**, **Tandan** and **Thantan** are only spelling variations of the same term as also **Urali** and **Uraly**. However, **Urali** or **Uraly** is both a Synonym of **Thandan** or **Thantan** or **Tandan** as well as a distinct community of hill dwellers as different from the plainsmen of coconut pluckers and wood sawyers. In this report, henceforth, the community would be referred to as **Thandan** or **Uraly**.

The present note is based on the emperical studies made in the villages of Kadiapatnam, Thengapatnam, Mangad and Vaikkalloor in Kuzhithura taluk of Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu State.

The community is commonly known as **Taandan** in this area. **Uraly** is another term used by them to denote this community though it has not received common acceptance. Synonyms like **Velan** and **Mutalppattukar** are not found used in the surveyed area. In the wake of social mobility movements, the members of the community have, however, started calling themselves as **Thatchan**, a term used in the Tamil country to denote carpenters. For the social uplift of the community, an organisation under the name of **Thatchar Samudayodharana Samajam** has been registered and are working in different areas. However, it has been reported by the local carpenter caste that there exists no social relationship between them and the community under study. **Aruppukaran** and **Kole thatchan** are two other terms used to denote a section of the community who are engaged in wood sawing. Etymologically **Aruppu** means sawing and therefore a person engaged in sawing is termed **Aruppukaran**. As the **Aruppukaran** uses a **Kole** (measuring rod) to assess the various measurements of the wood he is working upon, he is also known as **Kole thatchan**. In the court deeds, it has been found, that the caste name has been mentioned as **Ezhava-vathy** in some cases while in some others as **Thachar**. The former name is assumed as some of the **Thandans** working locally are known as **vathy**, in some **Bhadrakali** temples. In short, the three terms widely prevalent to denote the community are **Thandan**, **Uraly** and **Thatchan**.

In Kerala, where the community is found in large numbers, it is known by different names in various regions. "The caste men are known as Uralis to the south of Varkallay and Thandans to the north of it. In some places to the east of Kottarakkaray, they were popularly termed **Mutalppattukar**, or those who receive the first perquisite for assistance rendered to carpenters. In some places Tandans are also called Velans. Males and females have respectively the title Muppan and Muppatti, meaning elder" (Thurston, 1909, VII, pp. 9—12).

The etymological interpretation of the terms **Thandan**, **Uraly** and **Thatchan** is very interesting. The term

Thandan appears to have derived, says Thurston (1909, VII, 9) "from the Sanskrit term 'dandanam' or punishment, as in ancient times men of this caste were employed to carry out the punishments that were inflicted by the authorities upon the offenders. For the execution of such punishments, the **Thandans** were provided with swords, choppers and knives. As they are also told to guard the village (Ur) of which they happened to be inhabitants, they acquired the title of **Urali**. Further, in the days when there were no saws the rough instruments of the Thandan served their purpose. Hence some members of the caste were called **Tachan** (Carpenter)". The members of the community, however, are not aware of these interpretations. It is noted in Trivandrum, in Kerala State that a kind of social metamorphosis is taking place among a section of the community. As a first step in this process a **Thandan** calls himself as **Thachan**. In the second generation his family enters into marital alliance with **Asari** (carpenter) families outside the town.

Regarding the origin and history of the community, much is not known. In Kanyakumari district there is a prevalent tradition assigning their migration from Ceylon, known in Tamil as 'Ezhanadu'. According to them they belonged to a marshal race of Ceylon from where they were brought by the Chera kings and enrolled in their army. With the degeneration of the kingdom they took to the calling of coconut climbing. Change in occupation has also lowered their social status. They have thus become the slaves of Nair landlords who have provided them with rent free lands in coconut gardens in lieu of the services of protection of palms rendered by them. In support of this, they point out that many **Thandan** families still live in coconut gardens belonging to the Nairs. Historical evidence to support this tradition is lacking. However, Thurston (1909, VII, 10) informs that, "They must, in times gone by, have joined the military service of the various states in Malabar. They were in some places given rent free lands, called **Urali parambu**, in return for the duties they were expected to perform. With the return of peaceful times their occupation changed, and the climbing of palm trees, to extract the juice thereof, became their most important calling". Devassy (1964, 212) reports a legend prevalent among the **Thandans** of Thazhava on their origin. 'They were created by 'Viswakarma' to save the Kammalans from the public disgrace caused by the Kuravas. Once when a procession of Kammalans was proceeding for 'thirandukuli' (purificatory bath after puberty), a Kurava threw a fire brand at them and prevented

the procession. 'Viswakarma' the Special deity of Kammalans, was infuriated by this insult to his men and to avenge it he created a **Thandan** from his thighs. The **Thandan** appeared with a chopper, cut into pieces the fire-brand and removed it enabling the procession to proceed".

"The **Thandans** are said to have once belonged to the same caste as the **Izhavas**, but to have fallen away from that position". (Thurston, 1909, VII, 10). But for the similarity in name of a section of the **Izhavas** and common tradition of migration, there is no evidence to show the relationship between the two communities. In Central Kerala (Trichur and Ernakulam districts) **Thandan** is the honorific title of a section of a section of the **Izhavas**. By tradition **Izhavas** are toddy tappers and according to a legend prevalent among them they have migrated from Ceylon or Izhavanadu and hence the name **Izhava**.

Uraly, besides being the synonym of the **Thandan**, is also a forest tribe found in the high ranges of Kerala. In some parts of Kerala, as in Quilon, the **Kuravans** are also known as **Uraly**. It is reported in Census of India 1901, Madras that **Uraly** is the name of the caste of agricultural labourers found chiefly in the districts of Madurai and Tiruchirappally. These castes, however, should not be confused with the caste under study.

II. DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION TREND

Thandan or **Uraly**, being a Malayalam caste, are concentrated in the Vilavancode taluk of Kanyakumari district adjoining Trivandrum district of Kerala State. The other areas where the community is met with are Thovala and Kalkulam taluks of Kanyakumari district. In Kerala the community is concentrated in the southern districts of the state such as Quilon, Alleppey and Trivandrum which alone account for more than 90% of them. They are also found sparsely distributed in the districts of Kottayam, Ernakulam, Trichur and Paighat. The community depends mostly on coconut palms and therefore it is found concentrated in the coastal areas where the palms are found in plenty.

Much statistical information on the community is available in the data collected during the 1961 Census. During this Census separate figures were collected for **Thandan** and **Urali** as they are separately scheduled in the 1956 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Lists) Modification Order which formed the basis of enumeration for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country.

2 A



1 & 2 Frontal view of Thandan males



In Tamil Nadu, 1,105 **Thandan** and 385 **Urali** have been returned in 1961 under Scheduled Castes, all from the Kanyakumari district. In Kerala, on the other hand, 77,382 **Thandan** and 809 **Urali** have been returned as Scheduled Castes from the various districts. The combined strength of the **Thandan** and **Urali** thus works out to be 1,490 persons in Tamil Nadu and 78,191 persons in Kerala. In Tamil Nadu they form 3.69% of the Scheduled Castes of the district (Kanyakumari) from where they are returned and 0.15% of the general population. When compared to the total Scheduled Caste population of the state the combined strength of the **Thandan** and **Urali** is insignificant and works out to be only 0.0245%. In Kerala on the other hand, they form 5.45% of the Scheduled Caste population and 0.46% of the general population of the State.

Coming down to taluk level, the distribution* of **Thandan** and **Urali** is as follows:—

S. No.	Taluk	Thandan	Urali	Total
1.	Thovala	69	—	69
2.	Kalkulam	64	179	243
3.	Vilavancode	904	208	1112
		1037	387	1424

The above figures show that the concentration of the community, **Thandan** and **Urali**, is in the Vilavancode taluk which alone accounts for 78.08% while 17.06% is returned from Kalkulam taluk and 4.85% from Thovala taluk. **Thandan** is returned from all the three taluks whereas **Urali** is returned from Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks only. In both the cases, however, Vilavancode accounts for the maximum concentration.

Not much of comparative data are available to reconstruct the population variation of the community during the earlier censuses. Whatever information available is given below which, however, gives an idea of the population growth of the community for the last few decades.

In 1901 and 1911, separate returns on **Urali** and **Thantan** are not available. 626 **Urali** have been returned from Kanyakumari district in 1901 while 814 souls have been returned in 1911 from the same area. In the same year 2 **Urali** have also been returned

from Tirunelveli. In 1961 the number returned as **Urali** from Kanyakumari has reduced to 385.

Figures for **Thantan** is available in 1931 and 1941 Censuses. In the former decade, 1,170 persons have been returned from Kanyakumari while only 1 person has been returned from Tirunelveli. The figure has gone down to 989 in 1941 in the Kanyakumari district. In 1961 the number has increased to 1,105.

The 1961 Census data, also provide, information on sex-ratio, age groups and rural urban distribution of the community. The sex-ratio works out to be 1,073 and 1,238 females per thousand for the **Thandan** and the **Urali** respectively. The average thus comes to 1,113 females per thousand. This, when compared with that of the general population of the state or of the district, is much more. The sex-ratio of the general population of the state is 992 and that of the district is 979 females per thousand males. The sex-ratio of **Thandan/Urali** is much more than that of the average sex-ratio of the Scheduled Castes of the district. In Kerala, where the community is found in large numbers, the sex-ratio works out to be 1,015 females per thousand males which more or less agrees with the sex-ratio of the general population of the state, viz. 1,022.

The unusually high sex-ratio of the community in Tamil Nadu varies in different age groups. It is as low as 764 in the 30—34 age group while it is as high as 1,489 in the 25—29 age group.

Age group-wise population of the community shows that 41.14% belong to the 0-14 age group, 42.82% belong to the 15-44 age group and 16.04% belong to the 45 age group. A further break-up of the age group shows that 14.70% belong to the 0-4 age group 12.95% to the 5-9 and 13.49% in the 10-14 age group. Only 5.10% are found in the 60+ age group.

Thandan is essentially a rural community. Out of the 1,490 persons 1,421 live in the rural areas. In other words 95.37% are rural inhabitants and only 4.63% are urban dwellers.

III. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Published information on the Physical Characteristics of **Thandan** is not available. With a view to providing some idea to the reader as to "how these people look like", results of the sample Somatoscopic

*The figures pertain to rural population only. The Taluk-wise rural-urban total is not available.

observations made among 20 male individuals is summarised as follows:

Height vertex varies from 152.40 cms. to 167.64 cms. the mean being 162.56 cms. Complexion varies from dark brown to light brown. In the sample 11 individuals are dark brown, 4 are chocolate brown, 4 are brown and one light brown. Thus it is seen that in complexion dark brown predominates. Hair form ranges from straight to curly with medium waves preponderating. It has been observed that 12 persons have medium waves, 4 have straight hair, 3 have deep waves and 1 has curly hair out of the sample of 20. With regard to depression of the root of nose, majority of them fall under "medium". Thus it has been found that 15 have medium depression, 4 have deep depression and 1 has shallow depression. Wings of the nose have been found to be normal in the case of 15 individuals while 5 have flared nose wings. Eye slit is straight in all the 20 cases and no epicanthic fold is observed. They have mostly oval-shaped faces. In the sample, 17 of them have oval faces, 2 of them are found with round face and 1 has broad face. The chin is normally medium and the sample has 16 individuals with medium chin while 4 have receding chins. Medium lip seems to be the main element in the population. In the sample 16 have medium lips while only 4 have thick lips. Prognathism is almost absent. Only two cases have been found having slight prognathism. Cheek is found to be medium in 14 cases and 6 possess weak cheeks.

In the absence of proper anthropometric and serological data, it is hazardous to attempt an assessment of the racial affinity of the community. However, the somatoscopic observations, show that the Thandan are a predominantly below medium statured (as per Martins classification) dark brown complexioned people. They have mostly medium wavy hair, medium nose depression, normal nose wings, straight eye slits and oval faces. Traces of slight prognathism are found. Epicanthic fold is totally absent.

IV. FAMILY, CLAN, KINSHIP AND OTHER ANALOGOUS DIVISIONS

The minimal unit of social organisation among the **Thandan** is the family. Nuclear families consisting of the married couple and their unmarried children form the norm, though extended families are also met with frequently. The size and composition

of the family vary very much. The following information collected from 18 families from the Vaikalloor village provide some insight into the size and composition of the **Thandan** family.

Number of members in the 18 families varied from 1 to 8. One family each consisted of 1 member, 4 members, 7 members and 8 members. Two families had 2 members each; 3 families contained 6 members each; 4 families consisted of 3 members each and 5 families accounted for 5 members each. The average family size thus works out to be about 4.4. Type of family was found to be simple in 12 cases and 6 were found to be extended. The simple families consisted of spouses and their offsprings in 9 cases and in one case each of widowed mother and son, widower with daughter and son and a widowed woman alone. Extended families normally consisted of besides spouses and their offsprings, husband's parents and their children. Thus out of the 6 extended families, in two cases mothers of the husbands form the additional members whereas in one case parents of the husband as well as his brother reside together. In one family son's wife and in another husband's sister's son also stay along with the spouses. Wife's sister forms an additional member in one of the six extended families.

Thandans practise a type of mixed lineage, 'Misra Vazhi' as is called in local parlance. Both matrilineage and patrilineage are followed. On the **Thandans** of Travance (the **Thandan** of Kanyakumari included) Kunjen Pillai (C.I. 1931, XXVII, Part I, 386), writes. Makkathayam¹ is followed in Quilon and Karthigapally, Marumakka Thayam² in Karunajapally, and the mixed system in the other taluks. In the registration deeds kept with the land Registrar's Office at Kuzhithura it has been observed that the **Thandans** have been described as following **Misra Vazhi** or mixed lineage. However, in actual practice, it has been found that they now follow patrilineage. Gopalan, Secretary of the **Thachar Samudayodharana Samajam**, an institution meant for the Social uplift of the **Thandan** society, at Vaikalloor informs that in the past property used to be divided equally among the sons and the sisters' sons after the death of a person. Now, on the other hand, he says, the property is divided only among ones own children.

Descent is reckoned through the female line and the children assume the **Illam** (clan) of their mother. A girl after marriage usually joins her husband's family.

¹Patrilineage

²Matrilineage

At times the husband may establish an independent dwelling unit of his own, which may either be near that of his parents or away. The girl may, in some cases, continue to stay with her parents even after her marriage. This may happen normally when there are no male issues in the family.

Thandan society is divided into many exogamous* clans, known in their parlance **Illam** or **Kiriyam**. From Vaikalloor area five illams are reported. They are **Poovar Illam**, **Ilangi Illam**, **Pozhikkari Illam**, **Irunelli Illam** and **Plakkudi Illam**. (Besides the above, **Edachil Illam** has also been reported from Trivandrum). Some of the Illams take precedence over the others in their social status. Thus according to the social precedence **Poovar**, **Pozhikkari**, **Irunelli**, **Ilangi** and **Plakkudi** stand in that order of social precedence. In spite of the difference in social status intermarriage among the different illams are not tabooed, though the preferential alliance would be between the illams next to each other, either above or below. Thus the first marriage of Madu (ego) from Vaikalloor of **Pozhikkari illam** was with a woman belonging to the **Irunelli Illam** standing just below that of himself while after her death he brought a woman belonging to **Puvar Illam** which is above that of **Pozhikkari** in social precedence. Similarly Velayudhan of South Mankad has two wives. Velayudhan belongs to the **Ilangi illam** and his first and second wives belong to the **Irunelli** and **Plakkudi Illams** respectively.

Kinship structure among the Thandans seems to be in a process of transition from mother-right to father-right. Both the sides, paternal and maternal are equally important. An individual assumes his mother's clan while his inheritance is patrilineal. His mother's brothers play a prominent part in the social ceremonies connected with his life, such as marriage. Equally important is the presence of the father's brother in such ceremonies. As far as kinship terms are concerned, they follow the Malayalam terms used in the area.

V. DWELLING, DRESS, FOOD, ORNAMENTS AND OTHER MATERIAL OBJECTS. DISTINCTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY

The material culture of the **Thandan**, by and large, resembles that of the low caste Hindus of the

region. There is but little which could be described as distinctive of the community.

Being an extension of the Malayalam speaking area of Kerala, the settlement pattern in the villages under study is not different from the Kerala villages. Each house is constructed in a separate compound with enclosures on all sides leaving an entrance in the front. **Thandans**, in almost all cases, are found living in the coconut gardens, called **Thopes** in the local parlance, owned by wealthy landlords belonging to **Nairs**, **Vellalas**, **Muslims** etc. At one corner of the **Thope** may be constructed a **katcha** structure which form the dwelling unit of the **Thandan** family. The **Thope** may be usually enclosed on all sides with hedges or fencing to protect the compound from tress-pass of men and cattle. Before going into the details of the construction of huts it is useful to understand the principle underlying the tenancy rights of the hutment dwellers.

In former days, when a person had many coconut groves he might like to have somebody to stay in the grove for the purpose of protection. Thus people belonging to any community might be asked to stay in the grove, preference being given to the **Thandan**. This arrangement helped both the parties; the landlord got protection for his coconut palms while the tenant, often a landless person, got some space to live in. As both the parties were mutually benefited some assistance was also extended in construction of the hut. The landlord, besides providing land, also provided some material assistance, such as providing the necessary thatching materials, some wood etc. One can find many such hutment dwellers now staying in the coconut groves of well-to-do caste Hindus and Muslims in the area.

At present by virtue of the long period of their stay many have acquired permanent right of residence. The protection to Kudikidappukaran Act of 1953 of former Travancore-Cochin State as extended to the Kanyakumari area has further given protection to the hutment dwellers. These hutment dwellers, however, have to pay house tax to the Panchayat.

House construction is simple and is effected within a short time. Houses are invariably made of mud walls and thatched with coconut leaves. The ground plan is rectangular. On all four sides there are slanting

*Thurston's (1909, VII, 10) observation that the Tandans are divided into four endogamous sections called Ilangi, Puvar, Irunelli and Pilakkuti does not appear to be correct. These divisions are exogamous as seen from the geneologies given above. Devassy (village survey monograph, Quilon, C. 1. 1961, P. 211) reports the presence of four endogamous divisions viz., Illam, Swaroopam, Padamangalam and Edachillam. These are the names of the four endogamous divisions among the Nairs of this district with social precedence in that order. The last name however, is Edasseril illam among the Nairs. This appears to be a recent trend among the Thandans of this district to assume the names of the divisions of the Nairs who form a model for them.

roofs but the slope on the shorter sides cave into the edges of the lengthier slopes so as to form triangular ventilators at the two ends of the top ridge of the roofing. Normally, the houses are one roomed with an extension of a front verandah. Those better off may have an additional room. Outer walls are plastered with mud mixed with charcoal, so as to give a grey appearance. Flooring is also plastered with mud and smeared with cowdung paste. The roofing is generally low and the caves extend to a considerable length on all the four sides, so that the walls do not get damaged during heavy rains

Under the colonisation scheme sponsored by the government, a few colonies are opened for the Scheduled Castes including **Thandan**. One such colony is at Kalingarajapuram with about 16 houses owned by the **Thandans**. These houses are **pucca**, with granite stone wall and leaf or tile thatched roofs, the approximate cost of construction being about Rs. 1,000. These are two roomed structures including the kitchen.

Dress

The traditional dress of females is not different from that of the Malayalam speaking people of the area which consist of **Mundoo** (Dhothy) wrapped around the loin and extends upto the ankles and a jacket to cover the upper body. They do not generally put on any upper garment over the jacket. But when they go out of the settlement they use another **mundoo** as a second cloth thrown casually over the jacket. The normal dress of the males consist of a loin cloth extending up to the knees. This also forms their work-dress. However, on other occasions one may put on a shirt or a banyan, a loin cloth extending up to the ankles and sometimes a second cloth. The elderly men may wear a second cloth in place of the shirt.

Ornaments

The ornaments worn by females are simple and usually made of brass or any other cheap metal. Grown up women wear nose screws (**Mookkuthi**) and ear rings. Traditional ear ornament is the **Thanduvethi** which is worn, now-a-days by only a few old women. In the wrists, young women wear glass bangles and in the next some cheap chains or string of black beads. **Tali** (marriage badge), worn by married women is a small pendant often made of gold, is heart shaped and is strung in to a black string and tied on around the neck. Males normally do not wear ornaments. In a few cases, however, it has been

found that some elderly persons wear small ear ornaments known as '**Kadukkan**'.

Tattooing

Both men and women get their body tattooed, the latter more extensively than the former. The habit is, however, becoming less frequent among the younger generation. The usual designs tattooed are a dot on the forehead of the males and a vertical line in the case of females. The women may also get designs of flowers, conch shell, lotus, snakes etc. tattooed on their fore-arm. The job is undertaken by the nomadic **Kurava** women who receive as their wages both cash and kind.

Food and drinks

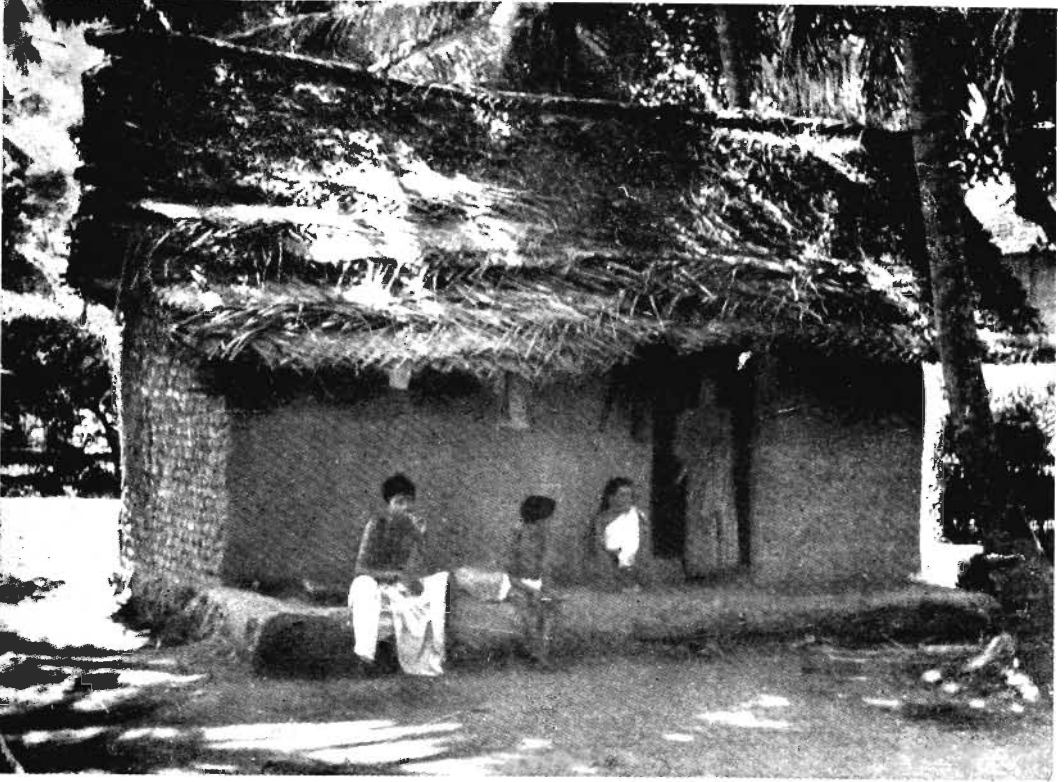
The staple diet of the people is, rice and tapioca. The latter is more common and is eaten either boiled or roasted along with fish curry. Occasionally they take rice. Another rice preparation, which is more common, is '**Kanji**' (gruel) which is prepared by boiling rice in a large quantity of water. **Kanji** is often taken along with tapioca and fish. Fish is taken in large quantity in the coastal villages due to its availability and cheaper price. Now, after the introduction of statutory rationing they take a little of wheat also. Wheat in the form of **doza**, **rotti** or at times grains cooked like rice may also be consumed.

Thandans are non-vegetarians and eat all kinds of meat including that of pork but abstain from eating beef. As many of them cannot afford, they have non-vegetarian food only at times.

They, particularly the male members, are addicted to beverages like tea and alcoholic drinks. Chewing betal nuts and tobacco are prevalent among the grown-ups.

Utensils

There is no utensil worth mentioning as distinctive of the community. **Thandans** use all those kitchen utensils commonly used by the local people belonging to the lower economic stratum. But for a few aluminium and enamel plates and tumblers used for serving food and water, the **Thandans** use earthen vessels for all the household purposes. Earthen pitchers, locally known as **Kalam**, are used for cooking rice, rice gruel and tapioca. The shallow ones are called **Chatti** which serve the purpose of cooking vegetables, fish etc. For carrying and storing water, earthen pitchers with comparatively narrower mouth,



3. A house of a poor Thandan



4. Another house of a poor Thandan



5. A house of a well-to-do Thandan



6. Houses constructed by the welfare department

locally known as **Kudam**, are used. In a couple of villages, it was found, a contrivance is used for carrying water. It consists of a bamboo lever with two palmyra leaf containers slung from either end. It is normally used by men to carry water from long distances.

Equipment connected with economic pursuits

Thandans, being a community pursuing a specialised occupation possess a number of equipments distinctive of their economic pursuits. These equipments fall under two categories: those connected with coconut plucking and those connected with sawing of wood.

Equipment connected with coconut plucking include **Vettukathy** (chopper), **thalappu** and **Eni** (ladder).

1. **Vettukathy** (Chopper): It is an one and a half foot long chopper with a wooden handle and a sharp edge iron blade. It has a hook at the end of the handle with which the chopper can be tucked on to the loin cloth while the Thandan climbs the coconut palm. The chopper may either be purchased from the market or got made by a skilled iron-smith. The price may range from seven to ten rupees.



The Thandan attaches much sanctity to the **Vettukathy** being the main equipment of his economic pursuit. It is kept, when not in use, in a place away from defilement from the menstruating women. It is venerated every day before use and worshipped once in a year during Onam.

2. **Thalappu**: It is a belt like contrivance made up of coconut sheath or coir and is used to put around the feet while the Thandan hops up the coconut palm. **Thalappu** is made by the user himself and is replaced as and when required.

3. **Eni** (Ladder): Two different types of **Eni** are used by the Thandans. One of them is made out of a long bamboo pole with its nodular branches cut short. The short branches serve the purpose of steps to climb up. Though the Thandans are experts in using this type of **Eni**, it is not fool-proof as it is likely to slip off the palm while at use. The second type is more useful, though inconvenient to carry when compared to the first type. It is made up of two long parallel bamboo poles fixed to each other with the

help of wooden or strong coir interconnecting straps fixed at regular intervals of, say, two feet. Both the types are normally made by the user himself with the help of the components purchased from the market. The two-pole ladder may sometimes be purchased from the market.

Equipment connected with sawing of wood are as follows:

Val (Hand saw): **Val** is a 7 or 8 feet long hand saw having a broad upper end tapering towards the lower end. Wooden handles are fixed at either ends which help the saw to pull upwards and pull downwards as the case may be. The teeth of the saw are constantly kept sharp with the help of files of different sizes and shapes. The Thachan (as Thandan is called when he works on wood) may also possess a few other implements such as hammer, chisel etc. to make minor mending of the saw, if necessary.



2. **Mazhu** (Axe): **Mazhu** is a special type of axe meant for blocking of wood meant for sawing. It has a long wooden handle and a detachable steel-edged sharp blade. The blade is inserted in the slit meant for the purpose at one end of the handle and tightened with the help of iron rings, as shown in the figure. The blade of the **Mazhu** is got made by a blacksmith while the handle is prepared and fixed by the Thachan himself. A **Mazhu** costs about Rs. 8 to 10.

3. **Charadu** (Lining String): This is a very long strong cotton string of two or four ply used for making lines on the block of wood to be sawed. The string is drenched in charcoal liquid to make it black. It is now held by two persons along the plane to be sawed. A third person pulls the thread up and suddenly releases it. Under the impact the required line is marked on the wood. The **Charadu** is spun out of thread purchased from the market by the user himself.

4. **Kutty** (Wooden Peg): Triangular shaped tapering wooden pegs are used by the Thachan while he saws wooden planks. These are pegged in between the split blocks of wood to allow easy movement of the hand-saw. Pegs are made by the Thachan himself.

Other material equipment used by the Thandans such as sleeping mat, wooden box, steel trunk etc., are all similar to those used by the local people.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION AND HYGIENIC HABITS DISEASES AND TREATMENT

Thandans keep their houses and premises neat and tidy. The surroundings are cleaned every morning by the women members. The inside of the house is also cleaned occasionally. In the Harijan colony at Kalingarajapuram the huts are kept more tidy. There, they have an additional facility of service latrines. In other areas the surrounding field is used for defecation. As far as personal cleanliness is concerned although they take bath every day, the soiled cloth worn by them, while at work, give a very dirty appearance. These clothes are washed rarely. When they go out they use neat and tidy dress.

Thandans believe in the efficacy of magic and sorcery in curing diseases. As such in case of ailments local Pulayan or Parayan sorcerers, known as Manthradis, are engaged to find out the causes of the disease and suggest suitable remedies. Simultaneously the patient may also be shown to a local Ayurvedic Vaidya. Should all these fail the patient is taken to the nearest hospital. In the case of those Thandans, who stay near the Taluk headquarters or Block headquarters, diseases are normally treated by the allopathic doctors although, at times, the patient may be subjected to magic and sorcery. A Talisman tied on to the upper arm in the case of males, and around the neck, in the case of females, is a common phenomenon met with among the Thandan. It is, they say, to ward off evil spirits and also to protect the wearer from evil eye.

VII. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The mother tongue of Thandans is Malayalam, the lingua franca of Kerala. They are equally proficient in Tamil which is the regional language. However, a few of them living in the adjoining areas of Kerala understand Tamil but find difficult to express themselves in that language.

Information collected during the 1961 Census provides much data to assess the present literacy rate of the community. According to this 32.61% of the Thandan are literate. This consists of 40.28% of the male population and 27.48% of the female population of the community. When compared to the average literacy rate of the Scheduled Castes of the State, which is 17.20% (27.54% male and 6.71% female), it is quite high. However, this is little below the average general literacy rate of the State which works

out to be 36.39% (51.59% of males and 21.06% of females).

The effective literacy rate of the Thandan, on the other hand, is 38.73% with 48.38% of the males and 29.48% of the females returned as literates.

Information on the levels of education achieved shows that 73.45% of the literate Thandans are literate without attaining any educational level. 24.07% are returned under Primary or Junior basic and 2.46% under Matriculation and above. This is more than the average achievements of the Scheduled Castes in the State which works out to be 77.13%, 20.79% and 2.08% respectively in the three categories mentioned above. The levels of education achieved by Thandans, however, compares favourably with that of the average for the Scheduled Castes of the Kanyakumari district the abode of the Thandan population, which works out to be 71.49%, 25.10% and 3.41% respectively in the three categories of education levels

There appears a gradual increase in the literacy rate of the Thandan population. In 1911, the average literacy rate was 4.4%. In 1921, it rose to 6.7% and in 1931 it further rose to 7.8%. Even in the female literacy rate there was a gradual increase from 2.0% in 1911 to 2.2% in 1931. In 1931 the effective (7 yrs. and over) literacy rate of the Thandan was 10.1% (C.I. 1931, 288 & 312). There has been a phenomenal rise in the literacy rate, particularly in the age group of 5—9 and 10—14 among the Thandan population during 1931 to 1961 signifying the interest of the community in literacy and education. In the former age group 54.92%, and in the latter 61.69% of the children are returned as literate. In the 15—19 age group 52.89% are literate.

VIII. ECONOMIC LIFE

Traditional occupations of the Thandan is coconut plucking and sawing of wood. Even to this day the men, by and large, stick to their traditional occupations. As they generally live in coconut 'Thopes' they also incidentally guard the coconut palms for which some remuneration, mostly in kind is accrued to them. Women folk strive to supplement the family income by taking to callings like coir making, coconut leaf plaiting and allied jobs.

There are a couple of other communities in the area who are also expert coconut climbers. They are the Nadar and the Ezhava. The former work, by and large, with the Tamilian Tope owners and are also

engaged in toddy tapping. The Ezhavas on the other hand are engaged only in toddy tapping.

Coconut plucking

Normally, by convention a Thandan may be attached to one, or at times more families having coconut 'Thopes'. In that case it is his duty to see that coconut fruits are plucked periodically, say once in 45 days. He has also to see that ripe coconut leaves are felled at the appropriate time. As remuneration for every hundred coconut plucked, he gets 6 coconuts. In some areas this includes remuneration for carrying the plucked coconuts to the owners' house. Excepting some marginal perquisites no remuneration is paid for felling leaves. When no Thandan is formally attached to a family, it has the option to engage anybody and for which the person concerned is paid either in cash or in kind.

It is interesting to observe a Thandan climbing up a coconut palm. He puts on the 'Thalappu' (a belt like contrivance made up of coconut sheath or coir) around the feet and jumps up by hopping on the trunk of the tree. Some of them use a ladder like apparatus made of bamboo pole to climb the palms.

Wood sawing

Wood sawing is another important occupation of the Thandan. Those who have taken wood sawing as their profession are locally called 'Thachan', which is also incidentally the term used for carpenter in the Tamil country.

This job is undertaken by a pair of persons. The log of wood to be sawed is mounted on the skeleton of a raised platform. Black lines, using a strong thread drenched in charcoal liquid, are made on the plank of wood according to the desired plan. One person seated below and the other on the plank saws the plank through the black line using a long handsaw.

Remuneration for this job is assessed on the basis of the area of the wood sawed. Thus, for sawing one 'Val' (unit measurement approximately 45 sq. ft.) the remuneration ranges from Rs. 5.50 to Rs. 6. (1 Val = 144 Perukkam; 1 Perukkam = sawing of 1 Kole (2½) long and 1 veethy (1½") broad plank). They say that a pair of sawers can saw about 1½ Val a day. In other words a person gets about Rs. 4.50 per day as remuneration. The rate is reported to be higher in other areas and hence many Thandans of Kanyakumari area, have

migrated in search of better jobs leaving their family behind. They are reported to be quite prosperous.

Coir yarn making

Coir industry is a thriving one in the western coast. As a cottage-industry, it is the most important source of income to many of the people including Thandan of coastal areas of Kanyakumari district. There appears to exist a caste co-relation between the owners of the coir industry and its workers. By and large, Nairs and Nadars form the employers and other castes like Thandan, Ezhava, Kanakkan etc. form the working force. Both men and women are engaged in this industry though there exists a sort of division of labour. Retting of coconut husk and such other comparatively hard tasks are done by the men folk, while, beating of retted husks to separate fibre, spinning of coir yarn, etc., are undertaken by the women.

Quite a number of Thandan women and a few men (both adults and children) are reported to be working in this industry. The wage rate varies from operation to operation. Men are engaged on daily wages at the rate of Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per day in operations like retting of husks and removing them to the work spot. For beating 100 retted husks to separate fibre an amount of Rs. 1.50 is paid. For spinning 100 **mudi** (one mudy is approximately 100 ft.) of coir yarn they are paid Rs. 10 to Rs. 12. A team of three persons are required in this process and each one gets approximately Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.

Coconut leaf plaiting

Yet another subsidiary occupation of the Thandan women is plaiting of coconut leaf. A few men may also resort to this job occasionally. Particularly during summer months, when re-thatching of houses is generally undertaken, this becomes a very important source of income. The dry splitted coconut leaves made in bundles and kept soaked overnight are given to the women folk for plaiting. Remuneration varies from Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3 for plaiting 100 half-leaves. A woman worker can normally plait 50 to 60 half leaves a day.

A micro study of the occupational pattern of the Thandan of Painkulam village provide some insight into the economic life of this community. There are 44 households of Thandan in this village with 77 workers, which includes 36 males and 41 females. The table on next page indicates the details of the occupations in which the workers are engaged.

'Val' is also the local term for a saw.

IX. LIFE CYCLE

S. No.	Occupation	Number engaged		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Coconut plucking	10	—	10
2.	Wood sawing	19	—	19
3.	Coir yarn making	2	3	5
4.	Coconut leaf plaiting	5	38	43
	All Occupations	36	41	77

Monthly income of the above workers as reported by them shows that 11 out of the 44 households fall under the Rs. 25 or less group, 27 households fall in the Rs. 26 to Rs. 50 group and 6 in the income group of Rs. 51—Rs. 75. In other words the Thandans of Painkulam village struggle hard to meet their both ends.

Information collected on the expenditure pattern shows that 65.28% of the total expenditure is on food, while 20.45% is on smoking and chewing and the rest (14.27%) is shared among clothing, education, travelling, etc. It was also reported that 41 out of the 44 households are indebted and the average debt per household worked out to Rs. 172.

Census of India 1961 provided data on the occupational pattern of the Thandan/Uraly of the State of Tamil Nadu. According to this, majority of them (57.75%) are returned under other occupations. It appears that those engaged in coconut plucking and sawing are also included in this category. The next major occupation in which they are returned as employed is manufacturing other than household industry in which, perhaps, those engaged in coconut leaf plaiting and coir yarn making are also included. The following table provides a clearer picture.

Occupational classification of workers among Thandans/Uralys

Occupation	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
Cultivators	11	1	12	1.82
Agricultural Labourers	43	16	59	8.97
Mining and Quarrying	7	..	7	1.07
Household Industry	11	20	31	4.71
Manufacturing other than Household Industry	112	52	164	24.92
Construction	1	..	1	0.15
Trade and Commerce	1	..	1	0.15
Transport, storage and communication	3	..	3	0.46
Other services	240	140	380	57.75

Birth

First delivery usually takes place, at the house of the woman's parents while the subsequent ones are undergone at her husband's house.

During pre-natal and post-natal periods no special restrictions are observed regarding diet. However, to the extent possible, tapioca and fish are avoided during the pre-natal period.

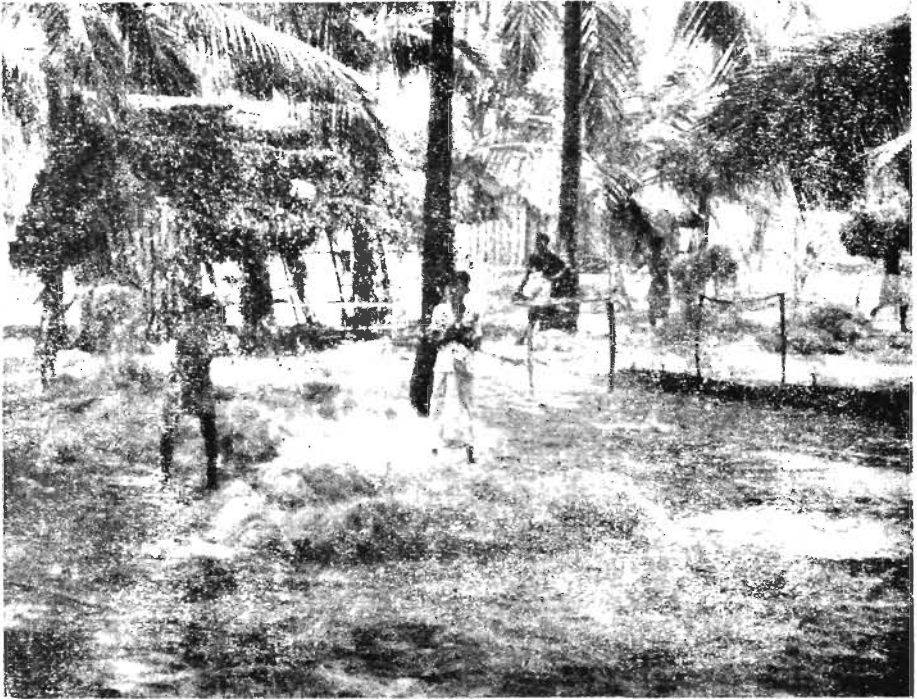
Delivery takes place in an inner room of the house and an elderly woman belonging to barber or shanar caste attends on child birth. Occasionally, wherever available, trained midwives of the Community Development Scheme may also be employed. The umbilical cord and the placenta are usually buried at the backyard of the house where the mother takes her bath during the period of ritual pollution. After delivery, the confined woman is allowed to starve for three days, during which period medicated decoction of ginger, etc., mixed with arrack or brandy, if available, is given. From the third day onwards, she is given ordinary diet. Pollution is observed for nine days and the mother and the child are given a bath on the ninth day and after that allowed to enter the other parts of the house.

Naming ceremony

Naming ceremony of a child usually takes place on the 28th day of its birth. On this day, the child is adorned with new clothes and taken to a temple nearby, which may be their own caste temple. The Thandans of Painkulam visit the Kumaran temple at Villukuri village, which is about 10 miles away from Painkulam, for this purpose. Ear-boring ceremony and tonsuring of the head are done simultaneously on a day convenient, somewhere in the third or fifth year.

Puberty

The girl who has attained puberty is kept confined in a room or in its absence an enclosure in the verandah for a period of nine days. Pollution is observed during this period and no male member is permitted to see her. On the 10th day, to remove pollution, the girl is given an oil-bath and she is sprinkled with turmeric water. She now puts on a new dress and adorn herself with ornaments presented to her by her maternal uncle. The relatives invited on the occasion may be treated to a feast. The period of pollution observed during periodic menstruation is four days.

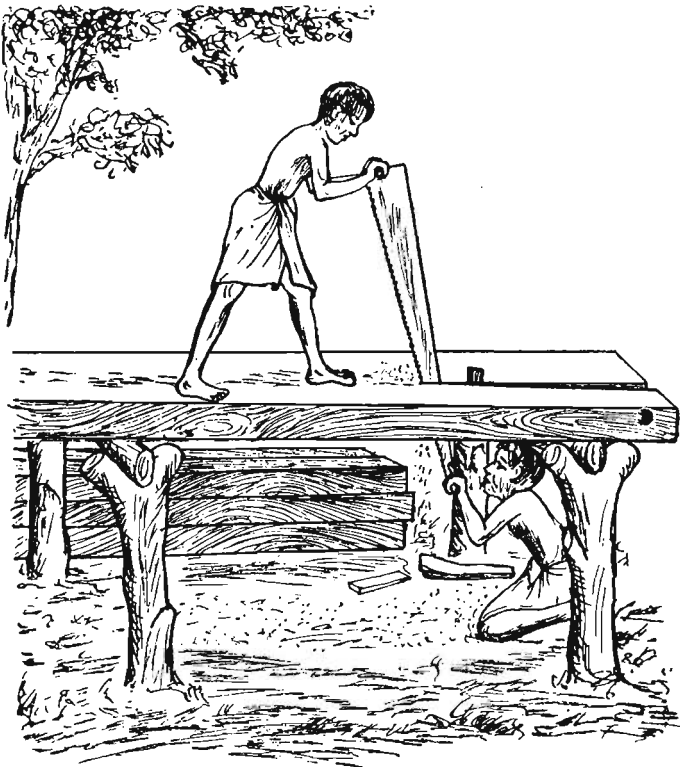


7 and 8. Coir making by Thandan





9. A Thandan climbing a coconut tree



10. Sawing of wood by Thandans

Marriage

Thandan is one of the communities very much influenced by the Nair Culture. In the former days, like the Nairs, the Thandans practised 'Thalikettu' and 'Sambandam' ceremonies. In Thalikettu ceremony, a girl before attaining maturity has to be formally invested with the marriage badge by a boy who stands on connubial relation with her. This, however, does not provide the "bride" and the "groom" any claim on each other. 'Sambandam' is the real marriage and the groom may or may not be the person who first invested 'Tali'.

Contact with the outside world has, in recent years, brought considerable change in the system. Now the girls are given away in marriage only after they attain puberty. 'Thalikettu' and 'Sambandam' as was practised in former days is no more in vogue. Preferential relations for marriage are one's mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter. Marrying of sister's daughters is prohibited. In former days, it was reported polygamy was widely prevalent but this is becoming rare. A person can marry from any one of the **Illam** (clan) except from his own.

Marriage is generally arranged and the proposals are initiated by the boy's parents. The boy may along with his sister's husband or a person standing in that relation, or in their absence, with a friend goes to see the girl. If he approves the girl then a formal proposal is mooted by the boy's parents followed by examination of the horoscopes, if any, of the boy and the girl by an astrologer to find out the suitability of the alliance. In the absence of a horoscope the astrologer may, with the aid of the stars in which they are born, find out whether the alliance is good. He may also suggest a suitable date for the marriage. Betrothal takes place after a few days of the settlement of the marriage. On the day of the marriage the groom's party consisting of his parents and other kiths and kins reach the bride's place where the party is received at the gate. Brother of the bride formally receives the groom by garlanding and sprinkling rose water on the latter. As a token of affection the groom presents the bride's brother with a ring.

The marriage ceremony is simple and is completed soon. At the auspicious time the bride and the groom are seated on a new mat, some times, spread on a newly constructed marriage booth. The **Vathy** (Poojari), who presides over the whole function, hands over a **Tali** (marriage badge) to the groom, which the latter invests on the neck of the bride. This is

followed by the exchange of flower garlands. The groom has also to present the bride with a pair of **mundu** (loin cloth)—now saree has replaced 'mundu'—along with betel leaves and nuts which she receives after touching his feet.

At the close of this the bridal couple goes round the marriage booth, in which are kept a lighted lamp, a tender coconut, a few plantain fruits and a measure of rice on a plantain leaf, three times.

At the end of the ceremony all the invitees are treated to a vegetarian feast, after which the groom's party returns with the bride.

Divorce is allowed on certain grounds such as incompatibility, adultery etc., when the elderly members meet and decide the case. Divorce has been found to be very rare. Normally, when agreed upon, the aggrieved party has to be paid part of the marriage expenses. Widow marriages are allowed. A man can marry the sister of his deceased wife.

1961 Census provides useful information on the marital status of the Thandan/Uraly. According to this 56.44% of them were returned as never married with 29.26% males and 27.18% females. Married accounted for 35.70% with 17.32% males and 18.38% females. This seems to suggest that there were a number of cases of polygynous marriage. 6.85% of the population were returned as widowed out of which 0.67% were males and 6.18% were females. The males, therefore, appeared to enter into marital relationship after widowhood more frequently than the females. A good number of widow women had not re-married. Incidence of divorce appeared to be insignificant with 1.01% of the population. In this category again, the females (0.94%) outnumbered the males (0.07%) indicating that the males more frequently liked to have connubial relations after separation when compared to the females. None of the members of either sex in the 0—14 age group was returned as married. This indicates the absence of child marriage in the community.

Death

Information of death is sent to the kith and kin, through some relative. On arrival of the near relatives the corpse is washed and covered with new clothes and carried to the burial ground. Both cremation and burial are resorted to. In case of death due to small pox, cholera and other contagious diseases the corpse is not cremated.

Eldest son is the chief mourner. He accompanies the corpse to the cremation ground where he is expected to perform certain rituals like **Vaikari**, (ritual feeding of the corpse) and lighting of the pyre.

From the third day onwards for 12 days the chief mourner has to offer **bali**, (ritual rice balls) to the departed soul. On the tenth day, the mortal remains are collected by the mourner, in the case of cremation, in a small earthen pot and rapped in a red cloth. It is taken to a water source, like a river or sea, and thrown in it. The ritual is known as **Parichumooduka** or **Sanjayanam**. On the 16th day ritual purification of death pollution is effected. On this day the barber (Tharavan) sprinkles some sea water over the defiled kiths and kins who later takes a bath, when they are considered ritually pure. The participants may also partake a feast. In rare cases death anniversary is observed.

X. RELIGION

Close association of the Thandans with the Nairs is reflected even in their religious life. Like the Nairs their important deity is Bhadrakali in whose honour they make periodic offerings. They also worship all other Hindu deities including Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Siva and their consorts and incarnations. Lord Ayyappan of Sabarimalai, a popular deity of Kerala, is venerated and many people of the Thandan caste go on pilgrimage to Sabarimalai.

Thandans of former South Travancore including those from Kanyakumari have a Bhadrakali temple at Nedumangad which they consider as the seat of their titular deity. Every Thandan is initiated into his traditional job of coconut plucking, in this temple.

Another deity of much importance to them is Attumadan. This deity is installed in many villages. He is represented by a pyramid shaped stone plastered with cement. Other minor deities of the temple are Mariamma, Sastha, Pillayar, etc., represented by rough hewn stones and pyramidal structures. The Thandans of Senguzhi village, where there is an Attumadan temple, celebrate the festival, called **Kodai**, in honour of Mariamma on the full moon day of the Tamil month of Panguni (April-May). Thandans from near about villages attend this festival.

Another centre of pilgrimage to the Thandan is Mandakkadu in Kanyakumari district, which is also an important centre of pilgrimage to the Hindus of South Kerala.

Thandans believe in magic and sorcery. Occasionally they resort to them particularly to ward off evil spirits and also to keep at bay contagious diseases like small pox and cholera. They also believe in omens. Facing a buffalo or widow, hearing of an owl's cry or that of a cat's mewing is believed to be bad omens while flying of a crow or running of a jackal from one's left to right are supposed to be good.

Tharavan is the priest of the Thandan, who is also the barber. In northern Travancore he is called Thanda Karuppu. (Thurston, 1906, VII, 10).

Important festivals

Onam and Vishu are the two important festivals of the Thandan which are also the important regional festivals of the Hindu castes.

Onam is celebrated in the Malayalam month of Chingom (August-September), in which month falls paddy harvest. It is, therefore, considered as a harvest festival. However to the Thandans, Onam is the commemoration of the golden age of Mahabali, a mythical Asura King, who ruled Kerala in the hoary past. Mahabali's reign, they believe, created jealousy among the Devas, who conspired to do away with him with the help of Vishnu. Vishnu in the guise of Vamana, a dwarf Brahmin, begged for three paces of land from Mahabali, to which the latter readily agreed. The dwarf turned into gigantic proportions and measured all the kingdom in two paces. For the third pace the king bowed his head and he was trampled to the bowels of earth. Before this the king asked for a boon, that he may be allowed to visit his subjects once a year, to which Vishnu readily agreed. Onam is considered as the day when Mahabali visits his erstwhile kingdom and people.

Thandans, like their Hindu neighbours adorned in new dress welcome the "King" and have feast in his honour. They may also exchange presents with their landlords. They do not work on the five days of Onam.

Vishu, which falls in March-April, and Diwali are the other two festivals the Thandans celebrate, besides the local Bhadrakali feasts.

XI. LEISURE, RECREATION AND CHILD PLAY

Thandans do not have any organised institution to promote recreation. In fact leisure and recreation are a luxury to these people as they are always anxious to



11. Muthamman, a deity of Thandan



12. Attumadan, the principal deity of Thandan



13. Badrakali, a deity of Thandan



14. Sastha, Ganapathy and other deities of Thandan

see that their bare requirements for existence are fulfilled by resorting to one economic activity or the other. Underemployment sometimes compels them to remain idle. One can often see a few such male members squatting somewhere around the hamlet engaged in card playing or some other local game.

Recently a few educated youngmen of the community, here and there, have been found taking some interest in organising caste associations aimed at the socio-economic development of the community through mass action. As a part of the association, to educate youngmen, newspapers and other reading materials are circulated. At Kalingarajapuram, the Secretary of their Association, an young educated man was beaming with optimism when he said, "Our goal of a bright future is looming in the horizon".

Children of all ages join their counterparts in the village and play all sorts of games extant in the locality.

XII. RELATION AMONG DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY

There is no well defined segments in the community based on territory, social prestige, religion, sect, education or other characteristics, except the presence of clans which has already been discussed earlier. The different clans, as indicated earlier, do not present any social hierarchy among themselves. In recent years, however, the educated section of the community harbour a feeling of superiority over the others. This feeling finds expression in their treatment with the uneducated and illiterate members. This, however, does not accrue any social precedence to the educated section.

Quarrels among the members of the community living in different villages are reported during the field investigation. Information to pin-point the reason for the factions was not collected. However, inter-generational gap seems to be the major problem. It was found that comparatively elderly people of the community do not want a change in the traditional social set up which, according to them, they "enjoy from time immemorial." On the other hand the younger generation strive for social capilarity through change of name, customs, etc. Thus, a move, started by some of the "enlightened" young members, is gaining momentum to re-designate the community as "Thachan". According to them Uraly and Thandan are derogatory terms and, therefore, should not find a place in the official documents including a list of Scheduled Castes in which the community is at present

included. Thachan is the term used for the carpenter caste. Those Thandan/Uraly whom have taken to wood-sawing as a calling are also known as Thachan.

A number of associations known as 'Thachar Mahasabha' or 'Thachar Samajam' are at present functioning in the Kanyakumari district without having any co-ordination among themselves. It appears that lack of leadership at the regional level is the main reason for the state of affairs.

XIII. INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

Thandan community, being a purely Malayalam community, continues to remain as a satellite functional group of the Malayalam speaking communities of the region. The transfer of political authority to the Tamil country has not materially affected the inter-community relationship which existed between the Malayalam speaking land owners, on the one hand, and the Thandan coconut pluckers on the other. Even today majority of the Thandans stay in the coconut Thopes owned by the Nair and other Malayalam speaking people. They continue to maintain, though in small measures, the ceremonial relationship which existed between the Malayalam speaking landlords, particularly the Nairs. The Thandans continue to render traditional functions such as collecting of firewood for marriage and for cremation, making of leaf cups, spoons and other contrivances used during ceremonial feasts and so on. He claims the traditional Onam gifts from his landlord and sends Onam presents to him.

In the social structure of the region the Thandans stand at a lower level. They are considered lower to, besides Brahmins and Nairs, the Nadars and Ezhavas. They, therefore, accept food and water from all the above communities. On the other hand they consider themselves to be superior to the Pulayas and Parayas from whom neither food nor water is accepted. The Thandans have their own barber and washerman.

Unlike in the past, when the Thandans were not allowed to approach a high caste Hindu, today much of the restrictions are lifted, thanks to the general social climate generated in the country. Still a few orthodox Hindus do not like the Thandans to enter their house, touch them or draw water from their wells. There is however no restriction as regards drawing water from the common well, entering public places, dining in a hotel or teashop or getting the services of a barber in a barber shop. They can freely worship at the public temples, though the Brahmin does not preside over their social ceremonies.

XIV. STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL CONTROL, PRESTIGE AND LEADERSHIP

The Thandan do not have a traditional headman to effect social control in their society. Their dependence on the Nair coconut Thope owners, appears to have reduced the necessity of a well knit leadership among them. In some areas, however, where the community is found in large numbers an elderly male member is treated as their social head. He is called the 'Mooppan', meaning elderly man. The 'Mooppan' commands much respect. He attends social ceremonies and tries to solve minor problems arising out of social delinquencies. The 'Mooppan' is selected on the basis of general consensus.

The institution of Mooppan, wherever they exist, is being fastly replaced by service Societies, organised after the Nair service Society and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, the caste organisations of the Nairs and the Ezhavas, respectively. These Societies are known as Thachar Mahasabha or Samajam in some areas while in some other areas they are known as the Thachar Service Society. The jurisdiction of the society may be either limited to one large village or a few surrounding villages, as the case may be. Thus Kalingarajapuram has one society while the Vaikalur Society caters to the needs of, besides, Vaikalur, villages like Pajinkulam and Thengapattanam. The office bearers of the society on behalf of the Association help the member families to conduct marriages and death ceremonies. They may also undertake to solve problems arising out of social delinquency among the member families.

As a result of the roles played by the office bearers of the Association with respect to the social problems of the Thandan community, particularly the President and the Secretary, they have become their social leaders. The President and the Secretary thus enjoy considerable respect and command over the Thandans of their jurisdiction. Recently an attempt is also made to co-ordinate the functions of different Societies working in the region and also to revive the Old Association functioning with its headquarters in Kerala State.

XV. SOCIAL REFORM AND WELFARE

Mention has already been made about the Social Service Societies and Associations working among the Thandan Community in Kanyakumari district. Taking cues from the Nair Service Society of the Nairs and S.N.D.P. Yogam of the Ezhavas, the Thandan com-

munity of Travancore organised a Thandar Mahasabha as early as in 1940's, for the socio-economic uplift of the community. Due to various reasons the organisation remained dormant till independence. After independence the Mahasabha made efforts to bring in social reforms in the Thandan Society. It exhorted its members to abstain from alcoholic drinking and polygynous marriages. It has also undertaken collective bargaining with the Coconut-Thope owners with respect of improvement in wages.

The association has recently taken up the problem of changing the name of the community from Thandan/Uraly to Thachan as a part of its social reform movement. It is considered that the terms Thandan and Uraly convey some derogatory sense and hence should be dispensed with. Instead, Thachan, a term usually applied to carpenter be used, as traditionally members of the community also work on wood. Representations to this effect have been sent to the authorities to make necessary amendments in the President's Order and other Government records. The movement is gaining momentum. Now the younger members of the society refer their community as Thachan and feel bad if referred to as Thandan or Uraly.

As a part of their desire for economic amelioration a few worker's co-operative societies have also been organised by the members of the Thandan community. Coir Workers Co-operative Society at Vaikkalur is one such society formed in 1954. It has a membership of 192 workers. It has been reported that recently the society has ran into certain difficulties and is now running on loss.

Besides the efforts made by the community itself for its socio-economic advancement, being a Scheduled Caste community, Government are extending certain privileges and implementing some programmes for their amelioration. Dwelling units are constructed for them in Harijan colonies, facilities for potable water are arranged, cultivable land is distributed and educational facilities provided as part of such ameliorative measures.

Being an enlightened community, the Thandan or Uraly is very likely to make accelerated strides in their socio-economic development.

BIOGRAPHIES

I

Fifty eight year old Madu, son of late Kochappi of South Mangad village in Kanyakumari district is a

victim of the occupational hazard and is at present supported by his wife and son. His father had seven children in his five wives. He is the only son of his mother, who died when he was thirteen. Since then he was brought up by his step mothers. Madu's father died when he was thirty five.

Madu belongs to the Pozhikkiri Illam. He married his first wife who belonged to the Irunelli Illam, at the age of 23 when she was just 16. He has three children in her, two daughters and one son. After the death of his first wife he married a widow woman belonging to Poovattillam. She has no issue either in the first or in the second marriage.

Recollecting his first marriage Madu says that during those days the custom of **Minnukettu** (investing Tali, the marriage badge) was very much in vogue. As per this custom a person, standing in connubial relation with a girl known as **Machambi** (cross cousin) is called upon to invest **minnu** or **tali** before the girl attains puberty. At a time he can invest **minnu** for more than one girl **Pudavakoda** (presenting of new cloth) is the real marriage. It is not obligatory that the person who invested **minnu** should marry the girl. However, if he is other than the person who invested **minnu** the former has to pay a token compensation to the latter.

Madu says that rapid changes in marriage customs are taking place for the last one or two decades. When he got his daughters married the custom of **minnukettu** was no longer in vogue. His first daughter was married to his sister's son about fifteen years back. His second daughter is married to an unrelated person from Nedumangad in Kerala State.

Lamenting on the unfortunate accident he had some thirty-five years back, Madu says that every Thandan who is following his traditional occupation is constantly under the threat of imminent danger to his life. About his own accident he says that while almost at the crown of a very high coconut palm belonging to an Ezhava, Madu slipped and fell down with the result his right hand had to be amputated. The owner of the palm did not render any material help nor did he pay any compensation. He says, "It is no wonder that we come under the influence of certain political parties and fight for our security."

On the occupational front lot of changes have taken place, says, Madu. In his childhood women were paid

12 Chakrams* (a coin of the erstwhile Travancore State) for plaiting 200 half leaves of coconut whereas today it is rupees six. Men were paid four Chakrams for a day's work or a few coconuts in lieu of the amount. Madu himself got two or three Chakrams when he started working at the age of sixteen. A Thandan had to, during those days, Madu recalls, attend to all the odd jobs at his master's place. During marriage at his master's place the Thandan has to assemble fuel wood, construct the marriage **pandal**, and arrange plaintain leaves and leaf cups for the bridal feast. At the death of a member of his master's family, the Thandan has to arrange fire-wood for the pyre. He has also to make a booth where **bali** (last offerings to the departed soul) is performed for fifteen days after death. Madu recollects how himself and his father used to hire the services of other Thandans during such occasions and also reciprocated when their colleagues need their help.

Madan is the principal deity of the Thandan, says Madu. Every year, on the 10th of **Medam** (March-April), this deity is propitiated by the Thandan. In recent years Madu finds a shift in the religious beliefs of the people of his community. Now all the Hindu deities are worshipped without any special emphasis on any one of them. As for, example he showed lithographs of Lord Krishna, Sabari Malai Ayyappan and Saraswathy among the many deities kept and worshipped in his own house.

Madu is happy over the social changes taking place in general and social status in particular. Unapproachability and untouchability practised by the higher castes in former days is no more a problem to them. Unlike the former days, now the members of his community are allowed to receive services of barbers and washermen who own saloons and laundries. Public worshiping places, water sources, public institutions, etc., are accessible to them. Madu considers the temple entry proclamation of 1936 promulgated by the then Maharaja of Travancore allowing all Hindus to worship in public temples, as a landmark in the social emancipation of the untouchables including his own community.

On the nomenclature of his community, Madu says that from time immemorial people call them Thandan or Urali. Those Thandan or Urali who take wood sawing as a calling are often referred to as Thachan. He further says that Urali as a Synonym is prevalent only in South Travancore.

*28½ Chakrams were equivalent to one rupee.
8-6 RGI/ND/70

Gopalan aged 32 is the Secretary of the Thachar Samudayodharana Samajam, No. 44 of Kalingarajapuram (Vaikalloor). This fair complexioned, energetic young man is one of the few educated members of Thandan community in and around Vaikalloor. Both young and old in that area praise Gopalan of his capabilities. Gopalan is the eldest of the four sons and 2 daughters of his father who is still a coconut plucker. On the death of his mother 15 years back he stopped his education when he was in 10th class because of the family's inability to support him. He was also called upon by his father to share the burden of the family.

Young Gopalan started accompanying his father in the beginning to learn his traditional occupation of coconut plucking and hedge making. Within a short time he picked up the trade and started earning daily wages. While engaged in daily wage earning one day he happened to hear a political leader talking about the exploitation of the landlords. Since then he started organising his people for effective collective bargaining. After having consolidated the people with his efforts, the present Association was formed and got it registered. During those days about forty families were staying in coconut Thopes owned by Nair and Ezhava landlords. Taking help from the local Member of the Legislative Assembly Gopalan got about fifteen houses out of 200 in the Kalingarajapuram Harijan Colony allotted to the Thandan landless families of the area. With his efforts a small library and reading room has also been established in a small building which is also the registered office of the Association. Now Gopalan is a full time social worker and besides organising his own community folk he is also engaged in political activities.

Gopalan is one of the strong supporters of the movement for changing their community name to Thachan. He has, in his area, organised several meetings and got resolutions passed to this effect and forwarded to the proper authorities. Gopalan feels that the change in name itself would bring in a shift in the attitude of the higher castes towards his community. Since a couple of decades, he says, with the growing awareness among the Thandan they are ambivalent towards the higher castes. Change in name, he feels, should, therefore complete the process. He also sees in this change, influence of a pressure group, namely, the younger generation, which is becoming more and more dominant in the social behaviour of the respective communities.

Gopalan is critical about the unnecessary expenditure incurred by his community in social ceremonies. When he married six years back he avoided all, according to him, "useless expenditure" including the bridal feast. Since the establishment of the Association, by giving about a week's notice the office-bearers of the Association make all arrangements connected with the marriage. His marriage was conducted at a nearby temple, a phenomenon gaining momentum in the Kerala coast among Hindu castes.

Traditionally the Thandans follow the **Marumakkathayam** system of inheritance in which one's sister's children inherit property, as was the case among Nairs. Now inheritance is through **Makkathayam** (inheritance by one's own children). Gopalan says, in practice, the change in the system does not make any difference as rarely any one will have property to be inherited.

Being a linguistic minority, Gopalan does not appear to be happy about the future prospects of the younger generation. There are instances, he says, when interests of the members of his community have not been properly protected.

III

Fifty-eight year old Velayudhan of South Mangad is a migrant from Neyyattinkara. He has four children, three males and one female, in his two wives. In his first wife, also hails from Neyyattinkara, he has two sons and one daughter. In his second wife, a woman from Quilon in Kerala, he has one son. This boy is now studying for the Matriculation Examination. The eldest son of the first alliance had ran away from home at the age of 12 and his whereabouts are not known. The second son is married and is living in Trivandrum. He is engaged in wood-work. Velayudhan's only daughter is married to a local Thandan boy who has just completed his Matriculation and is in search of a suitable job. His first wife stays at her place in Neyyattinkara while the second wife and her son stay with him.

Velayudhan is a police constable of Tamil Nadu. He joined this service after he was retrenched from Active Service. He joined military service some time during the Second World War. Before that he was following his traditional calling along with his father. He studied upto 4th class.

Recollecting his experience in the war he narrated his experiences at the Burma front when he narrowly escaped from a bullet. He speaks a little broken Hindi which he learned while in service.

Regarding the traditional occupation of Thandan Velayudhan says that they are coconut pluckers and hedge makers. In his village the Thandans are mostly engaged in wood sawing. Nadars, a Tamil speaking community, mainly do the job of coconut plucking. At various places Thandan follow different occupations. His father was engaged in coconut plucking. His first wife and her brothers are coarse cloth weavers while her father was engaged in sawing. His second wife hails from a family of wood workers. Thandan women do various types of work. They plait coconut leaves, spin coir yarn, beat coconut husk to make fibre and so on.

Velayudhan's contacts with the outside world is reflected in his material possession. He has furniture like cots, tables, chairs and benches. He lives in his own house which is tiled and laterite walled. Many of the kitchen utensils are substantial. Pottery plates are used for dining while brass vessels are used for keeping and carrying water. In short he is much better in his material possession when compared to many of his community men.

In virtue of his job in the Police he is respected both by the members of his community as well as by other caste Hindus of his village. He is at times invited to caste Hindu marriages. On such occasions he does not dine along with the other members of the community but is entertained separately. He stated that some caste Hindus attended the marriage of his son and daughter.

Inheritance of property in former days was **Marumakkathayam**, or in some areas **Misravazhi**, (in which both sister's children and own children inherit). He cited his own example. His father had twenty cents of landed property which was shared by two of his father's sister's children and himself, being the only child of his father. Children follow, even today, the clan names of their mother. Thus his children from

two different wives follow the clan names of their respective mothers.

Velayudhan is not aware of the origin of his caste name. But he states that Thandan, Urali and Thachan are synonymous. In and around Neyyattinkara, and also south of it, wherefrom he hails, people belonging to his community are called as Thandan or Urali. Here Thachan is a term, as elsewhere, denotes a Thandan or Urali engaged in wood sawing. In Quilon, from where his second wife comes, Thandan is the popular name. Urali, in this area, is the synonym for another community called Kuravan.

According to Velayudhan one of the causes of economic deterioration of his community is the excessive drinking habits of its members. After prohibition in Kanyakumari district the habit is by and by fading. Even now, Velayudhan bemoans, many cases of violation of prohibition orders have come to his notice.

Velayudhan narrated in detail the charges taking place in his community both in respect of traditional leadership as well as in customs and manners. In his childhood there was the institution of **Karyasthan** to lead the Thandan Society. Today politically influenced Samajams under the leadership of young people have almost taken control of the community. **Minukettu** and **Kappukettu**, the twin customs prevalent in former days are no more practised. Unapproachability and untouchability in its cruel form is no more extant today. Pointing out the extent of social emancipation achieved by his community, Velayudhan states that in his childhood he had to sit with other untouchable students away from the caste Hindu students, whereas today all can sit together.

Referring to the social reform movement to get the caste name changed to Thachan, Velayudhan feels that unless economic emancipation is achieved the community cannot claim social emancipation. He cites his own experience and says that he is respected by the caste Hindus because of his economic prosperity.

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ANNEXURE

FRAMEWORK FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

1. Name; synonym; sub-caste/sub-tribe as in President's Order and is in other published sources such as census reports, monographs, etc. grouping with other castes and tribes during various censuses. Affinity with other castes and tribes according to recognised authorities.
2. Etymological significance of the name; names by which the community is referred to by (a) others and (b) itself.
3. Identification of the community by occupation or any other way of life.
4. Myths and legends connected with the origin and history of the community and its segments; historical references and popular beliefs about history and migration of the community.

II. Distribution and Population Trend

1. Area where found; population and concentration in the State and outside; physical aspects of the areas of concentration.
2. Numerical strength in 1961 and population variations during 1901–1961; sex ratio; age-groups and rural-urban distribution in 1961.

III. Physical Characteristics

1. Racial stock; appearance and affinity with other known communities.

IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and Other Analogous Divisions

1. Family; size (observed & published), types, residence after marriage, descent, lineage and its economic and religious function and inheritance.
2. Clan/Gotra and sub-clans; names; etymological meaning, clustering of clans, belief and mythology about origin, status among clans, clan and regulation of marriage (preference & prohibition), occupation and clan, clan and rituals, clan and food (restrictions, prescriptions etc.)
3. Others: Phratry, Dual organisation, like moieties etc., as in 2 above.

V. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments and Other Material Objects Distinctive of the Community

1. Settlement: Village site, location, settlement pattern (agglomerated, nucleated, dispersed, sprinkled, isolated, amorphous, star-shaped, horse-shoe-shaped, linear, rectangular circular or ring-shaped, etc.) and variations; regional pattern *vis-a-vis* pattern of the community.
2. Neighbourhood pattern on the basis of religion, castes (Caste Hindus, untouchables) and tribes, etc. with segregations, if any, and the basis thereof.
3. Dwelling unit: Compound, entrance, source of water, the use of different parts of the house (latrine, cattle shed, isolation huts, etc.); shape (square, round, irregular, etc.); storeys; nature of floor, plinth wall; roofing; thatching; ventilations and doors: materials used; decorations and embellishments; temporary structures.
4. Dress, including head gear and foot wear—used ordinarily, on ceremonial occasions and special occasions, sex-wise and according to majority or minority; dress of priests and office bearers; variations.
5. Ornaments: use; material used; from whom obtained; variations according to sex and age.
6. Personal decoration: Tattooing; mutilation (Chipping of teeth etc.); hair cutting; how done, purpose, attitude and variations according to sex and age.

7. Food and drink: Materials (staple and other), prescriptions and prohibitions, fuel, utensils, and mode of preparation; practices connected with setting and taking of food; preservation of food and rituals, if any.
8. Equipments connected with economic pursuits, religion and ritual; how procured; material used, construction, manipulation and purpose.
9. Other household equipments. As above.
10. Equipments connected with recording of time, space and weight and their methods of use.

VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Disease and Treatment

1. Environmental sanitation, settlement, disposal of night soil, garbage, etc.
2. Hygienic habits: cleanliness of body, teeth, dress, houses, utensils, etc.
3. Diseases: Incidence; local names: interpretation of the causes; symptoms; diagnoses and cure—persons and methods involved.
4. Modern systems of medicine and attitude of the community towards it.

VII. Language and Literacy

1. Ancestral language: classification according to Grierson, persistence of ancestral language and literature.
2. Mother tongue: classification according to Grierson; bilingualism and multi-lingualism, regional language.
3. Information collected during 1961 on language and literature.
4. Education and literacy: Traditional and modern attitude, information collected during 1961 literacy and levels of education.

VIII. Economic Life

1. Economic resources: Land, community land, individual ownership and types of land possessed and land utilised.
2. Forest wealth: Flora and fauna; nature and extent of right in the forest, forest utilization.
3. Fishery, Livestock and others.
4. Working force: Sex wise, urban and rural variations and comparison of the same with the region.
5. Non-workers.
6. Industrial classifications: Details as collected in the field and comparison with that of the 1961 Census figures; traditional occupation and changes in the pattern; main and subsidiary occupations.
7. Forced labour, bonded labour, patron-client relationship (jajmani) mode of payment.
8. Seasonal migration connected with occupation: recruitment, formation of working groups.
9. Nomadic movement: Cycle and occupational pattern.
10. Shifting cultivation: method, implements and equipments, produce, participation, cycle of rotation measure to regulate shifting cultivation and its impact.
11. Terrace cultivation: As above.
12. Income and expenditure: Sources of income, expenditure on food, clothing, house, education, social functions and others.
13. Other aspects of economic life.

IX. Life Cycle

A. Birth

1. Beliefs and practices connected with conception, barrenness, still birth, miscarriage, abortion, child death, regulation of sex, etc.
2. Pre-natal and natal practices: Residence, diet, work, taboos, etc., delivery place, assistance, equipments used in delivery, position during delivery, severance of umbilical cord (who does and how done), disposal of placenta.
3. Post-natal practices: Confinement and segregation, ceremonial pollution, diet for mother and child, rituals.
4. Protection and care of child and training.
5. Attitude towards birth of child preference about sex, preference about number, segregation of sex, etc.

B. Initiation

1. Initiation ceremony; descriptions.
2. Pre-marital sex relations within the community, outside the community, sanctions and taboos.

C. Marriage

1. Age at marriage for both sex; prohibited degrees of relationship, preferences, widow remarriage (preferences & taboos).
2. Civil status and social status.
3. Types of marriage; monogamy, polygamy (Polyandry and polygamy).
4. Selection of spouse: Qualities valued (for bride and groom) mode of selection, procedure.
5. Modes of acquiring mate: By negotiation, force, intrusion, elopement, etc.
6. Terms of settlement: Payment of bride price, dowry, service, exchange, adoption, etc.
7. Ceremonies connected with marriage: details including who presides over the marriage and services of functional castes.
8. Statistical data as per 1961 Census.
9. Divorce: Reasons and procedure.

D. Death

1. Concept about death, measures to ensure future well being of the soul, measures to avert harm by the spirits.
2. Methods of disposal: Burial, cremation, exposure, floating on water, etc.
3. Preparations for disposal of dead, informing friends and relatives, treatment of the dead body, digging of pit, etc., for disposal; how carried, who carry, who accompany, place of disposal, methods of disposal, norms and taboos.
4. Ceremonies connected with disposal.
5. Death rites: Details.
6. Monuments: Tombs, megaliths, etc.
7. Pollution: duration, restrictions in work, food, dress, shaving, hair cropping, sex life, etc. removal of pollution.

8. Mourning: mourners and duration.

X. Religion

1. Deities: supreme deity, benevolent deities, malevolent spirits, presiding deities of village and other aspects of life including occupation, clans, *gotras* etc.
2. Place of the deities in the regional pattern and Brahmanical and other traditions.
3. Rituals and concepts associated with the pantheon.
4. Spots associated with the deities, pilgrim centres and methods of worship.
5. Religious functionaries.
6. Calendar of festivals and their observances.
7. Concept of soul, hell, heaven, rebirth, transmigration of soul, etc.
8. Sects and denominations: Name, distribution, belief and practices, etc.
9. Statistical information.

XI. Leisure, Recreation and Child Play

1. Use of leisure time: For male, female, children and adult; seasonal variation in leisure time.
2. Recreation their mode and extent, for males, females and children.
3. Leisure and recreation with reference to work.

XII. Relation Among Different Segments of the Community

Recognised segments—name, basis (territorial, ceremonial, social, prestige, religion, sect, education, age, etc.) Inter-relationship among various segments; status of the segment, status of women.

XIII. Inter-community Relationship

1. Ceremonial relationship: Service by Brahmins, traditional service by castes like barbers, washermen, etc.
2. Pollution by touch or proximity to high Caste Hindus, use of well, admission to temple.
3. Secular relationship: Model for other communities; dominance due to economic resources, political status, social status, etc.
4. Bridge role, buffer role, alliance and antagonism of the community.

XIV. Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

1. Social control: Levels of social control, community level, regional level, hereditary, special functionaries etc., social control by other agencies.
2. Mode of acquiring offices.
3. Control exercised by traditionally recognised leaders, functionaries of statutory bodies of the region, powerful individuals belonging to the community, etc., at the regional level, and local level.
4. Relationship between spheres of social control and agencies of social control.
5. Leadership: For social change, for technological change, for political action and for other organised activities at the community level, regional level and local level.

6. **Social prestige:** Method of gaining social prestige (by performing ritual, merit of feast, associating with historical association etc.), symbols of social prestige.

XV. Social Reform and Welfare

1. **Social reform movements:** Intensity; reasons (for raising social status, establishing traditional norms, for westernisation, etc.); History and import of the movements.
2. **Social Welfare:** Agency, religious organisation, community as a whole, Govt., Official and non-official, role of the social welfare measures and impact.

Biography

XVI. References cited and other bibliography