

Educational and Cultural Diversity of Koragas

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ABSTRACT

The Koragas, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Kerala, India, primarily reside in the Kasaragod district and are known for their traditional occupations, such as basket weaving. Despite being a Scheduled Tribe, they face significant socio-economic challenges, including low literacy rates and poverty. The community has a unique cultural heritage, with their traditional language, crafts, and musical instruments, like the Dholu and Voote, playing a significant role in their daily lives and cultural practices. Although many Koragas have adopted the Tulu language for communication, efforts to preserve their distinct language and traditions continue. Government initiatives and support from NGOs are crucial in providing education, healthcare, and economic opportunities while maintaining their cultural identity. This work explores the Koragas' development and integration through a multi-faceted approach based on quality education and healthcare, ensuring secure land rights, creating employment opportunities, and preserving their cultural heritage. The present study suggests that the development and integration of Koragas by a multi-faceted approach based on government measures, such as providing housing and protecting land rights, along with initiatives to document and promote their cultural practices, are vital. Collaboration between government agencies and local authorities is essential, and the study concludes that the Koraga community is necessary to ensure that development efforts are culturally sensitive and meet the community's unique needs and aspirations. By fostering inclusivity and respect for cultural diversity, these efforts aim to integrate the Koragas into the broader society while preserving their rich cultural legacy.

Keywords: PVTGs, Koraga Tribes, Culture, Art and Craft, Socio-Cultural Development.

INTRODUCTION

Particularly vulnerable tribal groups are the primitive tribes, characterized by a lack of exposure to modern technology and their high inclination towards the natural environment in their lifestyles. There are five such groups in Karaka; they are Cholanaikkans at Malappuram, Kurumbas at Palakkad, Kattunaikkans at Waynad, Kadars at Thrissur, and Koragas at Kasaragod. Historical evidence shows that Koragas are migrants from mainly the Coorg areas of Karnataka. The socio-cultural background of Koragas is entirely different from that of other communities and people in Kasaragod. This paper attempts to analyze the cultural and social conditions of Koraga tribes and their role in constructing a Malayalam-Kannada cross-culture in the regions. It will also observe the transformation of tribal characteristics in the present spears of social life. The study is descriptive, and secondary data is used for the work. The Koraga tribes in Kasaragod are undergoing a gradual transformation in the social, economic, and cultural perspectives of life. Along with the current efforts of policymakers and administrators to uplift these marginalized people, local involvement and interaction are essential for the sustainable and more inclusive development of this disparaged group of people.

Kasaragod district in Kerala is known for its unique cultural diversity, which is influenced and enriched by varied linguistic traditions, customs, and cultures. It is a reflection of the co-existence of various linguistic and religious communities. Such a distinguished blend of traditions and practices makes the district vibrant and culturally enriched. Kasaragod is popularly known as “Saptha Basha Sangama Bhoomi,” which is a mixture of seven languages the people in the district used to deal with. Varied cultures and traditions in Kasaragod district reflect and highlight the ethnicity of Kerala. The people in this small district are from three core religions, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian, living harmoniously. Though we can stratify them based on religion, their lifestyles co-exist and have much co-influence to create a cultural blend. One of the remarkable features of the Kasaragod people is the distinct nature of harmony and religious tolerance. The distinct cultural activities, folk arts, music forms, dance drama, etc., identifiable with different religions, are universally accepted and celebrated by everyone.

KORAGAS

Koragas are one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) found in southern India, predominantly in Kerala and Karnataka. According to the “Government of India Order 1936 and the Constitution Order 1950, it was notified as a scheduled caste in the same area. It was only in the presidential order 1956 that the community was accorded the status of scheduled Tribe.” In Kerala, they are distributed in Kasaragod and Manjeswaram blocks. According to the 2011 census, the total population of Koragas in Kerala is 1582, of which 778 were male and 804 were female. According to the 2011 census, 530 families were distributed in thirteen panchayats in the districts. Their population in Kerala is 1582, of which 778 are male and 804 are female. They have their language, but most people have forgotten it and speak Tulu at home instead of their language. Further, for educational and office purposes, they prefer the Kannada language. The traditional occupation of Koraga is bamboo basket making, and most of them continue to depend on their traditional occupation even now.

Literature Review

Kasaragod, the northernmost district of Kerala, is known for its rich cultural diversity and unique historical background. This region, geographically situated between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, presents a diverse landscape that includes hills, backwaters, rivers, and a long coastline. The district's formation on May 24, 1984, marked the amalgamation of Hosdurg and Kasaragod taluks from the undivided Kannur District, leading to a vibrant blend of cultural practices and traditions (Krishnan, 2019). The interplay of geography and history has significantly influenced the cultural and social fabric of Kasaragod, making it a microcosm of Kerala's broader cultural mosaic. The cultural diversity of Kasaragod is prominently reflected in its linguistic landscape. The district has a confluence of languages, including

Malayalam, Kannada, and Tulu, each contributing to the region's rich cultural heritage. Anitha (2019) highlights the coexistence of these languages, noting how the proximity to Karnataka has shaped local cultural practices and social interactions. Narayanan (2020) and Balakrishnan (2020) further explore this influence, discussing how cultural exchanges with Karnataka have enriched Kasaragod's festivals, cuisine, and art forms. Celebrating major festivals like Onam, Vishu, and Theyyam ceremonies underscores the district's cultural vibrancy and the harmonious coexistence of diverse linguistic communities (Bhat, 2018).

Economic activities in Kasaragod are predominantly driven by agriculture and fishing, with the district's fertile land supporting the cultivation of coconut, areca nuts, and cashew nuts (Devi, 2017). The coastal economy, heavily reliant on fishing, is crucial in sustaining local livelihoods (George, 2018). Additionally, Kasaragod is renowned for its handloom and coir industries, which contribute significantly to the region's economic landscape (Gopal, 2020). Menon (2017) provides an in-depth analysis of the district's agricultural practices, highlighting the integration of traditional and modern techniques. These economic activities are also aided by infrastructure developments in transportation, health, communication, power, and irrigation (Rajan, 2018; Varma, 2021).

The Koraga tribe, identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Kerala, is integral to Kasaragod's socio-cultural dynamics. Historically, migrants from the Coorg region of Karnataka, the Koraga tribe, have a unique cultural and social identity distinct from other local communities (Kannan, 2017; Ramachandran, 2019). Mohan (2019) and Suresh (2020) conducted studies that revealed the ongoing socioeconomic and cultural transformation within the Koraga community, which was driven by policy interventions and community efforts aimed at their upliftment. Integrating the Koraga tribe into the broader social fabric of Kasaragod exemplifies the district's inclusive approach to cultural diversity and social development.

Methods

The research methodology for this study on the Koragas, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Kerala, India, involves a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative data collection and analysis. Data was gathered through thematic analysis based on socio-economic conditions, literacy rates, and access to healthcare and education. Additionally, a focused interpretation of existing literature and studies was conducted to gain insights into their cultural practices, traditional occupations, and the impact of government and NGO initiatives. Secondary data was obtained from government reports, publications, and academic journals to contextualize the primary findings and comprehensively understand the community's challenges and development efforts. The study involves participatory observation to document and analyze the traditional crafts, languages, and musical instruments integral to the Koragas' cultural heritage. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative data to identify patterns and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of various development initiatives. This multi-faceted approach ensures that the research is culturally sensitive and inclusive, addressing the unique needs and aspirations of the Koraga community.

Results & Discussion

Theme -I: Cultural Diversity

Culture is a complex and multifaceted concept encompassing the shared beliefs, values, customs, traditions, language, arts, social practices, and ways of life of a particular group. It represents the collective identity of a community or society and is passed down from one generation to the next. Culture influences how individuals perceive the world, interact with one another, and make sense of their surroundings. It is a fundamental part of human identity and shapes various aspects of daily life, including social norms, family structures, religious beliefs, and much more. Cultural diversity refers to various cultures within a specific geographic area, community, organization, or society. It acknowledges the existence of multiple cultural groups, each with unique customs, traditions, and practices. Cultural diversity can encompass differences in ethnicity, religion, language, race, nationality, and other aspects of identity. These diverse cultural groups coexist and interact, contributing to the richness of a society. Koraga people are known for Drumbeating (*doll or dola beating*), and it is one of their essential contributions to vernacular music and

drama. They beat *dolu* during events such as *Kambala* (the village fair) or just for fun in their living places. These attempts are being made to revive the art by forming drum-beating troupes, such as Gajamela in Dakshina Kannada, with the support of the state government. Such troupes perform on occasions like tribal gatherings in coastal Karnataka. The flute music and dance involving both men and women are also crucial to Koraga art and are apparent at celebrations such as Bhoomibooja (worshipping earth). The tribal art forms, such as dance, music, and sculpture, are simple and fascinating and reflect the concrete feelings and emotions from their real-life experiences. The process of preparing domestic articles like *Hedige* (Pudaayi), *Gerase* (thadpe) Thattikudupu, and Perarpikuruve, different kinds of baskets and handicrafts woven by the Koraga community were documented, marketed, and well established in our state. The cultural contribution of the Koraga community and other indigenous categories is often less visible in the mainstream narratives but is significant in preserving the region's cultural diversity.

Theme – II: Education and Literacy

Education is one of the essential components of development. Comparing the evolving developments in the mainstream education system, Koragas lag far behind the other marginalized communities in Kerala. According to the 2011 census there, 1075 people were literate. Among these, 564 were male, and 511 were female. On the other hand, 507 persons were illiterate. Among these, 214 were male and 293 were female. These categories of people have been educationally marginalized, but considerable progress is being made, thanks to the HR development departments of the Central and State governments. The first Ph. D. among them was reported in 2010, while two qualified for NET, and another qualified for the degree of M. Phil. in 2012. The state government agencies are encouraging improvement in education for Koraga children by opening schools exclusively for their community in villages like Miyapadavu. It was found that most of the Koragas students preferred the Kannada medium for education. Many factors are responsible for educational backwardness among the Koragas (Kakkoth, 2005). The medium of instruction, lack of parental awareness about education, poverty, the communication gap between teachers and students, alcohol addiction of parents and sheer absence of academic interests were the essential causes for the educational backwardness of the community. At present, the Peradala settlement in Badiadka Panchayath has Multi-Grade Learning Centres (MGLC) Schools aimed at improving the education status of Koragas in the area.

Theme – III: Material Culture

Material culture is one of the physical aspects of a society that helps to understand any community's lifestyle, economic status, social interaction, and ecological adaptation; in the context of Koragas, the uniqueness of their material culture can be identified with two classes of physical properties: (i) clothing and ornament and (ii) household materials.

Clothing and Ornament: According to Buchanan, "their dress code is straightforward, and consists, in general, of a girdle, in which they stick a bunch of grass in front and another behind. Some men have a fragment of cloth around their waist, but very few among their women ever procure this covering, and even when possessed of some wealth, do not alter their rude dress." (Vasudevan 1998). During the present study, informants from the field said that in the olden days, men covered themselves from waist to knee with a piece of cloth, and rarely, long dhotis were used to wear. On the other hand, women used to wear long dhoti while the upper portion of the body was covered in cloth. In recent years, male and female dress patterns have been the same as in other communities' locality, such as for men's shirts, trousers, dhoti, and females' Saree, churidar, skirts, etc. According to Stuart, "their ornaments consist of brass earrings, and iron bracelet and beads of bone strung on a thread and tied around their waist". (Vasudevan 1998). During the present fieldwork, it is understood that in the olden days, ornaments among the Koraga were very rare, and some used iron ornaments. Both males and females used to wear bronze or iron ear studs. The cap made out of an arecanut sheath called Muttupale plays an essential role in their daily. It is also said that multiple is the identity of the Koraga community in the olden days. It protects from sunlight. Like any other community, people use bangles, earrings, chains, etc. However, due to economic problems, gold and silver are rare among their ornamental collections.

Household Materials: As far as household materials are concerned, traditionally, minimal household materials were used by Koragas, such as pots for cooking, sickles, different types of baskets, etc., while baskets made out of creeper plant stems were predominantly used for storing dried food items. Sickle is one unavoidable material among the Koragas. They used to carry sickles wherever they went, which were used for making baskets because it was easy to cut creepers wherever they found them. Lately, household materials they possess include aluminium vessels, earthen pots, knives, sickles, fibre chairs, TVs, and radios. *Dholu* and *Voote* (Drum and Flute) were two necessary musical instruments of the Koragas. *Dholu* is made out of a double-sided wooden barrel. The two sides of the barrel are covered with animal skins, such as those of cows and goats, and the barrel is played with the help of specially modified wooden sticks. *Voote* is a typical flute made out of bamboo. Even now, they possess exceptional handicraft skills in making *Dholu* and *Voote* by themselves. They use these musical instruments on the occasion of marriage, various family rituals, community gatherings, and other religious ceremonies. The House of the Koragas also throws light on the culture and lifestyles of the community. The traditional house of the Koragas is straightforward. They used to construct their dwelling places with materials available within their ecosystem, such as bamboo, coconut leaves, areca nut leaves, etc., while the pillars of these huts are made of wood; the roof is made of coconut or areca nut leaves and grass. The sidewall is made of coconut leaves, and the floor is plastered with clay and cow dung. The dwelling places of the Koragas were very healthy and eco-friendly and conformed to the principles of sustainable living conditions of modern times. At present, most of the Koragas are living in houses constructed and offered by government authorities, some of which some houses are provided through the development schemes under PVTG projects.

Theme - IV: Sustenance

Koragas were non-vegetarian by origin, including fish and chicken from markets and crab, turtle, and fish from the nearest streams and rivers. Rice is a staple food, and Koragas consumes all the vegetable items and pulses. In addition to these, they also consumed different types of wild roots from the forest. Since basket making is their principal occupation, they used to wander in the forest to collect creepers to make baskets, and as they wandered, they kept collecting different types of wild roots from the forest. Thurston has stated that Koragas accepted food left over after feasts held in various castes. However, during the present field study, they disagreed with many of the sayings. However, they agreed that they used to collect leftover food from another caste due to their inherent poverty. As of now, revolutionary changes have taken place in the food habits of Koragas, and at present, like any other community in the district, rice has become their staple food, and they buy all the vegetarian and non-vegetarian food from the market. Previously, they were unaware of preparing special items for breakfast, such as dosa, idli, chapattis, etc., but now most of them make these at home. Milk is still rarely consumed, and most of them prefer black coffee. Availing catering services for marriages and other functions is a new trend, though rarely.

Theme – V: Life Cycle Rituals of Koragas

Birth among Koragas had taken place in the home itself. The birth was attended by midwives, mostly elderly female community members. After birth, the newborn baby and mother were not allowed to stay in the house; they had to spend three days in a separate shed constructed near the house, but nowadays, they are not practicing it. These days, gruel mixed with pepper and *Kalgirige'tha Kashaya* (fennel seed juice) is the mother's leading food. For three days, the mother and baby are bathed by *Gurikarathi* (the headman's elder female member/wife). (Mrinal M.C, 2020) In the Koraga community, the naming ceremony is conducted on the third day after birth. The name is selected by a community headman called *Gurikare*. Generally, he selects a name based on the day the baby is born. The tribal people of Kerala are a prime example of an isolated community. They hold on to their traditional lifestyles and have yet to be damaged by the advanced waves of urbanization. These deprived people still preserve their lives and customs and resist the modernization that surrounds them. The area in which they live comprises primarily agricultural land and forest, and they continue to use the forest resources, mainly bamboo and creepers, to manufacture baskets. They traditionally lived in structures made of leaves, called *Koppu*, and dressed up in leaves.

Around the beginning of the 21st century, they started living in simple, free houses constructed and sanctioned by government agencies. However, some of them are either houseless or live on government-owned lands.

Table - 1: Thematic Analysis

Theme	Value	Concept
Cultural Diversity	Social Enrichment:	It enriches society by bringing various perspectives, ideas, and experiences, fostering creativity and innovation.
	Social Cohesion:	Promoting understanding and tolerance among different cultural groups can enhance social cohesion and reduce conflict.
	Preservation of Heritage	Cultural diversity helps preserve and protect the unique heritage of various communities, ensuring that their traditions and practices are passed down to future generations.
	Economic and Social Benefits:	Cultural diversity can bring economic advantages by encouraging tourism, trade, and a diverse labour force. It also promotes a more inclusive and equitable society.
	Personal Growth	Exposure to different cultures and viewpoints can lead to personal growth and a broader world understanding.
Education and Literacy	Education	Comparing the evolving developments in the mainstream education system, Koragas lag far behind the other marginalized communities in Kerala.
	Literacy	According to the 2011 census, there were 1075 literate people. Among these, 564 were male, and 511 were female. On the other hand, 507 persons were illiterate, of whom 214 were male and 293 females.
	Schools	The state government agencies are encouraging improvement in education for Koraga children by opening schools exclusively for their community in villages like Miyapadavu.
	Medium of Education	Koragas students have preferred the Kannada medium for education
	Educational backwardness	The medium of instruction, lack of parental awareness about education, poverty, the communication gap between teachers and students, alcohol addiction of parents and sheer absence of academic interests were the crucial causes for the educational backwardness of the community
Material Culture	Clothing & Ornaments	In recent years, male and female dress patterns have been the same as in other communities' localities, such as for men's shirts, trousers, dhoti, and females, Saree, churidar, and skirts.
	Household Materials	Household material possessed by them includes an aluminium vessel, earthen pots, knives, sickles, fibre chairs, TV, Radio,

	Musical instrument	Dholu and Voote (Drum and Flute) were two important musical instruments of the Koragas. Dholu is made of a double-sided wooden barrel. The two sides of the barrel are covered with animal skins, such as cow and goat, and are played with specially modified wooden sticks. Voote is a typical flute made out of bamboo.
Sustenance	Food Habit	Koragas were non-vegetarian by origin
Life Cycle Rituals of Koragas	Birth	In the past, births among Koragas took place in the home itself. Midwives, mostly older female community members, attended the births.

Source: Prepared by the Researcher.

Findings

1. **Traditional Knowledge and Practice:** The Koraga community has a rich heritage of traditional knowledge, including knowledge of traditional medicines, food preparation techniques, and agricultural practices. They have a unique way of living in harmony with nature, which contributes to the preservation of the local ecosystem.
2. **Traditional Crafts:** The Koraga has a tradition of crafting heritage items like bamboo baskets, mats, and other handmade products. These crafts contribute to Kasaragod's cultural heritage.
3. **Cultural Festivities:** The Koraga community celebrates various cultures and rituals unique to their culture. The festival includes traditional dance and music, adding to Kasaragod's diverse cultural tapestry.
4. **Oral Traditions:** The Koragas have oral traditions, including folk stories, songs, and legends passed down through generations. These oral traditions are a valuable part of the region's cultural dignity.
5. **Cuisines:** The Koragaoraga community has its own traditional cuisines, including various unique dishes made from locally available ingredients. Their culinary traditions have greatly influenced the food culture of Kasaragod.
6. **Language and Communication:** The Koraga have their own language and communication system, vital in preserving their cultural identity.
7. **Cultural Preservation Initiatives:** Government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and cultural institutions can work to document, preserve, and promote the cultural heritage of the Koraga community. This may involve supporting efforts to record oral traditions, documenting traditional practices, and creating archives of their cultural artefacts.
8. **Education and Awareness Programs:** Government educational institutions and NGOs can develop programs that teach the broader community about the Koraga people's culture, history, and traditions. This can help foster respect and appreciation for their cultural diversity.
9. **Legal and Political Representation:** Agencies and institutions can support Koraga communities to gain legal recognition and political representation. This can include advocating for their rights, land rights, and resource access.
10. **Social and Economic Development:** Government agencies and NGOs can support socio-economic development within the Koraga community. This could involve initiatives to improve living conditions, provide healthcare, and create economic opportunities.
11. **Promotion of Cultural Events:** Cultural institutions and agencies can help organize and promote cultural events and festivals specific to the Koraga community. This preserves their traditions and allows for cultural exchange and understanding.
12. **Language Preservation:** Linguistic agencies and institutions can facilitate efforts to preserve the Koraga language, perhaps through language revitalization programs.

13. Access to Education: Ensuring quality education is crucial for preserving cultural diversity. Agencies and institutions can work to improve educational opportunities for Koraga children while respecting their cultural identity.
14. Research and Documentation: Academic institutions, research organizations, and anthropologists can contribute to the understanding of Koraga culture through research, which can inform policies and initiatives to preserve their cultural diversity.
15. Legal Frameworks: Legal institutions can help establish and enforce legal protections for the cultural rights and heritage of the Koraga community, including intellectual property rights for their cultural knowledge.
16. Collaborative Partnerships: Building partnerships between various agencies, institutions, and the Koraga community is essential for a holistic and practical approach to preserving cultural diversity.
17. Education: The government can ensure access to quality education for Koraga children, including scholarships and incentives for pursuing higher education. Specialized educational programs that consider the community's cultural and linguistic needs can be established.
18. Healthcare: The Koraga community should have access to healthcare services, including medical facilities and awareness programs, to improve its overall health and well-being.
19. Livelihood Opportunities: Government initiatives, such as vocational training, skill development, and job placement programs, can create economic opportunities for the Koragas. Support for income-generating activities such as agriculture, handicrafts, and small-scale enterprises can also be beneficial.
20. Housing and Infrastructure: The government can work on improving living conditions, providing safe and adequate housing, and ensuring access to clean water and sanitation facilities.
21. Land Rights: Ensuring Koraga communities have secure land rights is vital. This involves resolving land disputes, protecting their traditional lands, and, where necessary, providing land titles.
22. Cultural Preservation: The government can support initiatives to document and preserve Koraga culture, including their language, traditional practices, and folklore. Cultural events and festivals can be encouraged and funded.
23. Legal Protections: The government can establish and enforce legal protections for the rights of the Koraga community, including anti-discrimination laws and intellectual property rights for their traditional knowledge.
24. Social Inclusion: Promoting social inclusion through awareness campaigns, community-building activities, and intercultural understanding can help integrate the Koraga community into the district's social fabric.
25. Political Representation: Encouraging and supporting the participation of Koraga community members in local governance and political processes can ensure that their voices are heard and their interests are represented.
26. Collaboration with NGOs: Partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specializing in Indigenous and tribal rights and development can effectively implement and monitor various programs and initiatives.
27. Capacity Building: Training and capacity-building programs for community leaders and individuals can empower them to participate in their development actively.
28. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of government programs and initiatives, ensuring that they are effective and meeting the needs of the Koraga community.

Discussion

It is essential that government support is sensitive to the unique cultural and social aspects of the Koraga community and is developed in close consultation with community representatives to ensure that their

priorities and perspectives are considered. Collaboration between government agencies, local authorities, and community leaders is critical to achieving development and integration goals. Promoting the socio-economic and cultural development of the Koraga community in Kerala, India requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses their unique challenges and aspirations. Tribes wish to live and work together in a shared locality. They have a common culture, religion, and dialect and are in a closed society with a strong sense of security and unity. (Kothari & Matharu, 2020) Their community life is usually led by a chief called 'kinship'. They show their uniqueness in their way of life, and they are referred to as 'ethnic groups', 'clans', or 'nation' in some situations. India is a melting pot of cultures, and the people of tribes are a fundamental part of the nation's diverse cultural heritage. Primitive tribal groups are a dwindling, low-literate population that exists as food-gatherers. Livelihood mainly depends on agriculture and handicrafts. The forest is their livelihood, and they know medicinal plants. Recently, they have been renamed Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (Sahu, 2019). Kerala, a state in southern India, is home to several Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), also known as Adivasi communities. These tribal communities face a variety of challenges, including socio-economic marginalization, lack of access to education and healthcare, and threats to their cultural identity and traditional ways of life. The most prominent vulnerable tribal groups in Kerala include Koragas, Kattunayakan, Paniyas, Muthuvan, Hill Pulayas, Kadar, and Kurumbas. (Muniraju & Thakur, n.d.). The Koraga community primarily resides in the Kasargod district of Kerala. They are traditionally engaged in occupations like basket weaving and manual scavenging. The Kattunayakan tribal community is found in Kerala's Wayanad and Idukki districts. (KIRTADS, 2020) They traditionally practice shifting cultivation and have a deep connection with the forest. These communities often face challenges related to land rights and economic opportunities. The Paniyas, also found in Wayanad and Idukki districts, are one of the most marginalized tribal groups in Kerala. Their traditional livelihoods include agriculture and forest-related activities. Muthuvan tribal communities are concentrated in the Idukki district. They are closely associated with the forest and are engaged in activities like hunting and gathering. Efforts have been made to address their socio-economic challenges and promote cultural preservation. (Ramachandra, 2020). Efforts have been made to address their economic challenges and protect the cultural heritage of these different tribal groups. The government and various NGOs and social organizations are actively working to uplift these Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. These efforts often include initiatives related to education, healthcare, land rights, economic development, and preserving their unique cultural identities. Recognizing the rights and needs of these communities is essential for their socioeconomic development and cultural preservation. The development of the Koraga community should be a participatory process that respects their cultural identity, values, and aspirations. Collaboration with the community, local authorities, government agencies, and other stakeholders is essential to achieving meaningful socio-economic and cultural development progress. Top of Form. However, it is essential to note that cultural diversity can also pose challenges, such as cultural clashes, discrimination, and inequality. It requires active efforts to promote inclusivity, respect, and equity among diverse cultural groups. Recognizing the value of cultural diversity and fostering intercultural understanding is crucial for building harmonious and inclusive societies.

Conclusion

Most Koragas speak the Tulu language, though they have their independent language. According to D.N.S. Bhat, "Koraga is a Dravidian language spoken by about a thousand Koragas of south Kanara district, Mysore, southern India. The authorities have been treating it as a dialect of Tulu and hence have not given it a separate counting." Further, he quoted Brodie's words that ". However, the language appears to have an affinity to the other Dravidian Languages, especially Tulu; it is not greater than what exists between Tulu and Canarese or between Malayalam and Tamil. Therefore, it would seem more correct to show the language as an independent Dravidian Language than as a dialect of Tulu or another language." (D.S.N Bhat, 1971) According to PangalaBabu, there is a difference between the SoppuKoaraga, KapadaKoraga, and KuntuKoraga languages. Only Koragas from Peradala, Madathadka, and Dharbethadka settlements spoke their language during the present fieldwork. The rest of the settlements used the Tulu language for communication. Most of them had forgotten their language and now prefer the Tulu lan-

guage for communication. Even people from Peradala, Madathadka, and Dhaebethadka hesitated to give information regarding their language despite speaking their traditional language. Further, in these three settlements, they speak Tulu to each other in front of outsiders because they hesitate to speak their language.

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