INTERPRETATION OF IDENTITY:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL REPORT OF SEVEN COMMUNITIESIN SOUTH INDIA

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Abstract

The challenges and hurdles for a collective identity in pluralistic societies are numerous and humungous. The present day rampant changes under the guise of development and progress lead to different interpretations of the age-old culture South India. The various invasions in the past centuries contributed further to the complexity, creating a crisis of Identity. The agrarian culture of South India was manipulated and various social changes were imposed by the alien rulers, creating a community far removed from their origins. The colonial rule brought another complication through its interpretations of the then prevailing religion. The post-independence period saw the bureaucracy following the footsteps of their colonial masters in framing policy frameworks which were totally disconnected from the ground reality. The various social movements in South India saw development from a political prism. Revival of the indigenous practices of the agrarian community to ensure an alternative income generation for community development is the aspiration of members of these seven communities. This paper is but a small attempt to document through ethnography the perceptions of the communities about identity and the impact through positive discrimination. The Governments of the state using the welfare tool of reservation has created a socialisation process thought as the 'quota or reservation system'

Keywords: Collective Identity, Community Participation, Community Development, Cultural Pluralism, Revivalism.

1.Introduction

All things are subject to interpretation:
Whichever interpretation prevails at a given time
is a function of power and not truth. (Friedrich Nietzche)

The role of caste in the socio cultural life of the Indians is very intrinsic. The seven decades since independence witnessed a different interpretation of caste being deeply entrenched in public discourse. The State of Tamil Nadu witnessed the process of social churn since the early 20th century. There has been a fusion of certain communities to consolidate their position in the social hierarchy. This has led the State to see tremendous social upliftment due to the various social movements and resource mobilisations to fulfill grievances and attain the goals. Anti-poverty policies have genealogies that can be traced back over centuries, these are not different from some of today's social protection policies.The new world has been constructed with the conjunction of development security, and Equality.

Gilbert (2008) observes the word development itself, has become a 'modern custom'. He goes on to say the very taken-for-granted quality of 'development' and many of the words that are used in development discourse – eliminates much of what is actually done in its name unquestioned. The work that these words do for development is to place the sanctity of its goals beyond reproach.

Poverty is, perhaps the most compelling in its normative appeal; 'the idea of poverty reduction itself has a luminous aura to it there by making it difficult to challenge its status as a moral imperative'. Especially when community participation becomes the main catalyst for the development process.

2. Research Problem

This was an intensive scientific study for the Adi Dravidar Welfare Department of Tamil Nadu vides its letter No: N.K. No.H4/37079/10-2 dt.04.12.2017 who had requested; for this in collaboration with the concerned district officials list attached in Annexure i. To conduct and ascertain the common cultural traits (way of life) of the seven communities who have come forward and claimed their identity as *Devendrakula Velalar*i in their representation to the Govt of Tamil Nadu. The above mentioned objectives have been looked at through the prism of certain concepts and theories which can be many however we have chosen the major four theories presented below.

3. Review of Literature & Theoretical Perspective

Over the years various terms have been used to describe community participation in natural resource management, i.e. "community based" "collaborative".What benefits (or challenges) communities may experience depend on their role and power in these 'participatory' processes. Hence, "participation" in and of itself does not necessarily benefit a community, and can potentially do harm. Appropriation of the use of "community participation" by government and international organizations can prevent its competing and refracted use as "a means of maintaining relations to the rules, for neutralizing political opposition and for taxing the poorest".

Communities introduce changes through the socialization process, which is used as a means to achieve the objectives, while unequal power dimensions continue to exist between communities and intervening actors in these interventions. Hence, we can define participation as the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions which enhance their well-being, e.g. their income, security or self-esteem". Central to this definition is inclusiveness—the inclusion of people in decision-making, formulating plans, controlling resources and implementing decisions over interventions affecting their own lives (Agarwal 2001).

According to Govinda and Diwan (2003), "Community" is obviously not a homogenous notion. It is either various communities unequally and differently placed with in a society, or various groups in a community unequally placed... Community could be viewed in two different perspective: Gilbert, (2014) local class-caste composition ...Bina, (n.d) elected representatives where their class composition influences the nature of involvement as well as the nature of conflict arising from such involvement ... By implication, community participation has to be viewed in a localized manner.

It is acutely important to note that often what is considered a community is composed of hierarchically placed unequal groups. Special provisions and safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been guaranteed constitutionally using the word "community" liberally in all its Articles. The identity document issued to the individuals who belong to these communities are also known as 'community certificate' in administrative records.

The process of social movement for identity by a community leads to the most generally acceptable theory of revivalism and other types of revitalization movement. Accordingly, the content of the movement, as expressed by the leaders, is determined by the cultural materials locally available at the time, including in particular the myth-dream, the traditional customs of the society, and the customs of the society that may be exerting the acculturation pressure.

The occurrence or non-occurrence and timing of a movement will be determined by the degree of disillusionment of a significant number of members of the society with the way of life now available to them. This disillusionment must be based on an awareness of extreme discrepancy

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between some available image of the good life and the prevailing image of life as it is. The good life will be conceived as the life of a happier past era if present circumstances contrast unfavorably with nostalgic memory, or it will be conceived as the life of another group (a higher class). The good life, however, generally is defined not only as a materially more comfortable existence but also as a life with self-respect and the respect of significant others. Paradoxically, individual variability in society thus plays a crucial role in determining the nature and timing of a movement whose motivation derives from widespread social and cultural conditions which can be called as cultural pluralism.

The concept "cultural pluralism" was first introduced to the analysis of change in underdeveloped areas by Furnivall et al, (1968), his description of India observed that different cultural groups of that area lived side by side but without much mingling. A fundamental issue is whether or not the plural model, when compared to the structural-functional model of the unitary society, offers any particular advantage. M. G. Smith rebooked at Furnivall's conception of pluralism and suggested that a rigorous analysis of certain types of societies is difficult, if not impossible, without making use of the plural model (Bryce-Laporte, 1967).Each institution comprises a mutually supportive set of values, rules, activities, and social relations. Institutions having to do with the same phases of life (e.g., marriage, family, extended kinship, etc.) form clusters or subsystems.

Any society has many levels of institutional structuring, and some are more inter-dependent than others. Culture is expressed through all of these different kinds of institutional structures, and the activities structured at one level need not be integrated with those structured at another level in the sense that they are interdependent. The most inclusive structures of a society are those that have to do with its political or governmental institutions.

Similarly, the theory of Collective identity is prominent in contemporary movements, this encouraged social scientists to assess its role in all movements, new and old (Bryce-Laporte, 1967). Focusing on identity seemed as a way to explain how interests emerged rather than taking them as a given. By examining the formation of collective identities, we would be able to shed light on the macro-historical context within which movements emerge.

A challenging question had to do with people's motivations to act. Even with an acknowledged interest in an issue, people often opt to a free ride. But those who do participate usually do so in the absence of selective incentives or coercion (Bryce-Laporte, 1967). Question neglected by mainstream models had to do with movements' strategic choices. If people choose to participate because by doing so, it synthesis with who they are, the forms of protest they choose are also influenced by collective identities.

Finally, collective identity has been a way to get at the cultural effects of social movements. Influential models of collective action ascertain movement outcomes like policy reform or expanded political representation than determining impacts outside the formal political sphere. But they also transform cultural representations, social norms—how groups see themselves and are seen by others. Changes in collective identity captured movement impacts beyond institutional reform.

Collective identities as cultural constructions determine interests, relations, and structures (Ernesto and Chantal, 2001). The best recent research avoids a presumption about causal mechanisms and allows for different relationships between cultural and discursive practices on the one hand, and legal, political, economic, and social structures on the other. Empirically, moreover, this new social movement has combined political goals with more culturally oriented efforts. The claim and efforts to define, celebrate, enact, and deconstruct identity are more important in recent movements than it has been in the past. Participants in these movements do not usually have an identity imposed on them by the political and legal systems; accordingly, they have more freedom to engage in creative reformulations of who they are.

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Mancur (1965) while talking about the logic of collective action highlighted and justified that it was always benefiting the people at large in terms of inclusive interest. But those who do participate usually do so in the even in the absence of selective incentives or coercion (Mancur, 1965). If people choose to participate in other than mainstream model, they do so in forms of protest and try to project their collective identities.

Therefore, collective identity can be taken as an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, caste, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity. Collective identities are expressed in cultural materials—names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on—but not all cultural materials express collective identities. Collective identity does not imply the rational calculus for evaluating choices that 'interest' does. And unlike ideology, collective identity carries with it positive feelings for other.

Similarly, the concept of identity politics has been used in political discourse since the 1970s as a part of collective identity. The aim of identity politics has been for those feeling oppressed to articulate their felt oppression in terms of their own experience by a process of consciousness-raising. Identity politics is closely connected to the idea that some social groups are oppressed (such as women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, etc.); that is, individuals belonging to those groups are, by virtue of their identity, more vulnerable to forms of oppression such as cultural imperialism, violence, exploitation of labour, marginalization, or powerlessness. It also refers to political positions based on the interests and perspectives of social groups with which people identify. It includes the ways in which people's politics are shaped by aspects of their identity through loosely correlated social organizations. Identity politics has always been used by minority and civil rights organizations to form a coalition with members of the majority.

Historically, identity politics grew out of the experience of identity-based oppression, the experience of inequalities in resources and opportunities that people encountered as members of particular identity groups. Therefore, identity politics is an attempt to address the lacuna of political representation or for that matter any form of politics that seeks to transform a mass of diverse preferences into policies by channeling them through institutions of representation without resorting to direct violence.

India being a pluralistic country, the above said theoretical perspectives may very well be applied and evidences substantiated historically. The scheduling of communities under different categories, both at National and State levels were always susceptible to interference and led to various forms of social movements. The present study tries to internalize the above theoretical perspective and empirically clarify the community claim following the scientific methods and resolve the government queries.

4. Methodology

The request from the Adi Dravidar Department was highly specific in nature due the various representations received from different leaders at different times. Hence, the methodology adhered to was a mixed method with social mapping techniques to quantify the families involved based on their economic, educational and social backdrop.

Qualitative methods like Focus group discussion, participant observation, case Study methods, and transect walk were used in generating primary data. Data do not "speak for them- selves." Data has to be processed, pored over and sorted out, to produce an analysis. The canons of science that govern data analysis and the development of explanations apply equally to qualitative and quantitative data.

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4.1. Justification of The Sample

The idea that people can be more or less competent in various areas of their culture has led to new methods for selecting focused ethnographic informants. Romney et al. (1986) developed a formal method, called the cultural consensus model, to understand informant competence without having an answer key. The theory behind the technique makes three assumptions:

1. Informants share a common culture and there is a culturally correct answer to any question you ask them. The culturally correct answer might be incorrect from an outsider's perspective Any differences found among informants is the result of individual differences in their knowledge, not the result of being members of subcultures.
2. Informants give their answers to test questions independently of one another.
3. All the questions come from the same cultural domain—that is, things that can be listed. People can be competent in one domain and incompetent in another. The cultural consensus method was used only for identifying people who are knowledgeable about a particular domain.

The cultural consensus model is an important contribution to social science methods. It means that, under conditions of the model (informants share a common culture and there is a cultural answer to each question; informants answer questions independently of one another; the questions come from a single cultural domain)

5.1. Analysis

Each major data-collection method—face-to-face interviews, Focus group discussion, participant observation, case Study methods—has its advantages and disadvantages. There is no conclusive evidence that one method is better, overall, than the others. Choice of a method will depend on, direct application and the knowledge produced—the kind that can move the levers of the society if it gets into the right hands.

5.2. Field Area

The Field work and site research was done extensively in most of the districts of Tamil Nadu which are Madurai, Virudhunagar, Thoothukudi, Ramanthapuram, Tirunelveli, Trichy, Thanjavur, Karur, Namakkal, Salem, Erode, Coimbatore and Tirupur. The Members of this community being Agriculturists have been habituating the banks of the rivers Thamirabharani, Vaigai, Cauvery, and Noiyal. The number of villages visited was forty one main villages across all districts. The complete list is attached in Annexure i.

The total population of Tamil Nadu as on 01.01.2015 is7,60,38,376 of this the Schedule caste population constitute 20% which is about 1.4 Crore approximately. The Community groups claiming they are Devendrakula Velalar are about 8% of the Scheduled Caste population which is approximately 60,83,070. The sampling population studied is in all the districts is about 45,72,946 which is about 72% of the universe of study. The Economic Status of this Universe was difficult to classify since the variable to be considered are land holding patterns, immovable assets owned like houses.

6. Ethnography of One Community

The fundamental concepts of social research are variables, measurement, validity, reliability, cause and effect, and finally theory. To understand the crucial role of measurement in science and the mutually supportive roles of data and ideas in the development of theory, the questions we ask about the human condition may differ across the social sciences, but methods belong to all social sciences. Anthropologists have been tremendous inventors, consumers, and adapters of research methods. Anthropology has developed some of the extensively used methods for finding patterns, for studying how people use their time, and for learning how people make decisions.

Each time a research project is completed, it brings more and more experience to the effort and abilities to gather and analyze data wherein the final paper and the results get better and better. Here the community groups are described in detail as observed during the empirical study.

6.1 Kudumban Distribution

This community is one of the seven major groups who claim the identity of Devendrakula Velalar. The members of this community reside mostly in Madurai, Virudhunagar, Ramanthapuram, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tiruchirappalli, and Thanjavur. The "Kudumban" is referred to as Devendra Kulathan in few places. They are listed as Scheduled Caste by the Govt of Tamil Nadu. They are distributed mainly in the plains. Their mother tongue is Tamil.

6.2 Origin

The origin of the Kudumban is associated with the origin of the Velalars (agriculturists) in Tamil Nadu the community claim their descent from Lord Devendra who is known as rain god (MazhaiKadavul). The major concentrations of the Kudumban were in the Pandya, Chola and Kongu regions of ancient Tamil Nadu. In the Pandiya region (NADU), the Kudumban were the repository of the indigenous and tradition of agriculture. Around the 12th Century, the different caste groups of Tamil Nadu were divided into two groups, the valankkai (right-hand) and idankkai (left-hand) communities. All the communities who did agriculture and agriculture-related jobs formed the left-hand division. The Pallan belonged to the left-hand (idankkai) division as they were agricultural laborers'. (Thangaraj, 1975) Those who belonged to the valankkai division were Pillamar, Chetiyar, Mudhaliyar, etc...

6.3 Social Organisation (Family)

The families of the Kudumban are usually joint or extended. Families   The head of the family is the husband or father. In the joint family system, the sons live with their father for a few years after marriage, the property is divided only after the death of the parents or after the marriages of all the sons and daughters. Parents in their old age are taken care of by their children. The Kudumban are a patrilineal and patrilocal society. Only sons inherit the father's property, but daughters have the right to claim shares in the mother's property and some of the ornaments. In case of the death of the father, the eldest son becomes head of the family. Divorcees are not permitted, widower, and widow remarriages are allowed with simple and unofficial functions. Both levirate and Sororate practices are accepted by Kudumban.

6.4 Marriage

Monogamy is the norm among the Kudumban, but polygamy is permitted. They prefer to marry mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, and niece. Marriages are arranged through negotiation. The Kudumban are endogamous they marry within the community. The marriage talks are usually initiated by the boy's parents. Once the confirmation is obtained from bride and groom's side, the (***Thai maaman***) Maternal Uncle along with ***OorKudumban*** (Nattamai) negotiate the betrothal ceremony. In recent days, the boy's parents visit the girl's house with a betrothal items like sari, blouse and cosmetics, betel leaves, are canut and an amount between 100/--5000/-rupees as betrothal money. This is handed over to the girl's father. This is a very interesting practice done during the engagement ceremony. The sari is (***alakarathu)*** is measured ceremoniously three times and for every three yards measured a folksong is sung to bless the girl.

The marriages take place at the bridegroom's residence. Traditionally, there is custom to pay bride price by bridegroom around Rs. 51/-, 101/-. The marriage sari and the Thali are presented by the bridegroom's parents. A pandal which is called the (*Muhurthakaal)* is erected in front of the house and the wedding takes place there. The Oor Kudumban is the main person who conducts the marriage he is the one who hands over the Thali to the bridegroom. The marriage ceremony is concluded with a good feast which is hosted by the bride's parent's. The couple consummates the

marriage at the grooms place. The next day, the couple visits the bride's house this is called the (*Maruveedu*). The bride carries the *Arisipetti* (a box of rice) which contains rice and other items considered auspicious. This is purchased and sent by the maternal uncle for her from her parents' house.

6.5 Kinship

The Kudumban have a strong Uravinmurai (kinship) between the Annan thambi groups and Maaman and Machan groups. In all lifecycle ceremonies, the maternal uncle plays a vital role. He has the major responsibility among the family members and is extremely respected for this position. Elder persons like grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, elder brother, & sister have a very responsible social standing in the community. This community has a social division known as Vagaiyaraah each have their own deities.

7. Economic Organisation

The **Kudumban** are agriculturalists. They are small and medium farmers, an agricultural laborer is known for his knowledge in **Vayal, Vayalsaarntha Velai.** Each of the community members has at least a minimum of 1 acre to maximum of 25 acres of lands. Land less **Kudumban**is very few. Those who are landless members work as farm coolies. This **Kudumban** also work as exchange laborer within the community. The major crop cultivated by **Kudumban**is Paddy. Both men and women work the land. Traditionally, the **Kudumban** share their grain with serving communities like Aasaari, Kuyavan, Goldsmith, Pandaram etc. Now,many of **Kudumban** have formal education and pursue various soft jobs like teachers, administrators, doctors, and engineers.

8. Life Cycle Ceremonies : Child Birth and Naming

During the seventh month of pregnancy a ***Kudumban*** woman's first pregnancy, her parents visit and serve ***kattuchoru*** (packed meal) to their relatives. They then take her formally back to their house for the child birth. If the new born is a male child the community do the ***kulavai*** (a rhythmic sound made by the women), the newborn is given ***cenai*** (palm jiggery water) soon after birth. The mother is given medicines made of local herbs. Pollution period is observed for *13 or 16 days*. On the 13th or 16th day, they celebrate the ***ilaikattuthal*** (yellow thread-tying ritual). The child's paternal grandmother ties a yellow thread around the waist of the child. The child's maternal grandparents serve a non-vegetarian (***NattuKozhi)*** feast to the mother. The mother and child go back to their home on that day or after three months. The child is named within the first month. If the child is not named formally, it is referred by the name of the Kula deivam.

8.1 Tonsuring and Ear Piercing

Before The End Of First Year, The Child Is Tonsured In The Kuladeivam temple. The Maternal Uncle Is The Most Important Person For All These Ceremonies.

If The Child Is A Girl, Her Ears Are Pierced On The Same Day, And The Maternal Uncle Gives Her Ear-Studs. For All These Three Life Cycle Ceremonies, The Maternal Uncle Is The Most Important Person As He Takes On The Role Of The Guardian.

8.2 Puberty

On attaining puberty, a *Kudumban* girl is given a ceremonial bath. The maternal uncle is the first to be informed, who builds a hut and the girl is secluded in it for 16 days during the pollution period it is called (pachaimattaikudisai) and he also brings the ***seervarisai*** like sari, flower, fruits, and sweets and arranges a feast for visiting relatives. The next person to be informed is the ***Vannan*** who provides the clothes for the girl for the next 16 days which is considered as the period of pollution. The occasion is a celebration and the women perform kulavai (a rhythmic joyful sound made by the women) while giving the girl her bath .The girl wears the sari brought

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by her maternal uncle. A ceremony is arranged on the 16th day, during which one of the children of the maternal uncle, either male or female, is dressed like a bridegroom, and is asked to sit by the side of the girl. The maternal uncle gives the **seer** and the other relative's present gifts to the girl. All relatives are served a non vegetarian feast. The girl is later taken in procession around the village. This was just to inform the community that the girl is ready for marriage Nowadays, this ceremony is not celebrated in a grand manner. The period of pollution is also reduced from 16 to maximum 6 or 7 days

8.3 Death

In the *Kudumban* community, the corpse is kept in a sitting or prone position. An oil lamp is placed near the head and a coconut is broken by the *Navidhan (barber)* traditionally a coin is kept on the corpse's forehead. The girl children of the deceased bring water from the well and bathe the corpse. Then, the body is covered with a white cloth and garlanded. The washer man (*Vannan)* makes a bier; the *Pandaram* blows the conch-shell (sanku) during the funeral procession. The eldest daughter performs the Kolli at the corner of the street by breaking a pot full of water if the deceased does not have male issue. The eldest in the family are cremated, while others are buried. On the second day, milk and nine varieties of cereals are offered to the departed soul. On the third day, the sons of the deceased take the ceremonial oil baths. On 16th day, prayers are offered for the deceased with offerings of food liked by him, and the relatives are given a non vegetarian feast. They have separate *Navidhan (barber) Vannan (washerman)* and *Chakkkiliyan*who serve the community during the death ceremony The death rituals are usually done by them. Each village has their own *Navidhan (barber)* and *Vannan (washerman)* who is specially respected for performing the rituals.

8.4 Belief SYSTEM

The **Kudumban** are Hindus and worship deities such as **Kaliyamman, Mariamman, Isakkiamman, Madasamy and Karuppasamy.** In some villages, they have separate temples for the deity M*uthumariyamman,* who is worshipped every year on the last Tuesday of the Tamil month Adi (July). Goats and cocks are sacrificed. They worship other Hindu deities, viz. Murugan, Siva, Pillayar, and Kamakshi/Meenakshi. Most of their festivals are associated with the seasonal planting of the saplings, harvesting etc. During the harvesting period the first harvested crops (Paddy) are offered to the gods for a plentiful harvest. Then, each of the functional members gets their share and finally they take home the grains. They are very closely connected with the land and water; hence most of their belief systems are identified with nature especially the land and water.

8.5 Political Organisation

The Kudumban have a strong traditional political system the leaders and are elected by heredity and voice vote. The **OorKudumban** is the leader of the community. To assist **Oor Kudumban**the community has **OorKaaladi and Variyan** (Messenger) and this is a heredity post. Both of them looks after the village deity's temple and organizes festivals. All disputes, including divorce, are settled by the traditional political system, cash fines are imposed for the grievance. Thispolitical system does not permit divorce. To organise village **thiruvizha**(festivals) the community head OorKudumban fixes the **Vari** (tax) which is compulsory for all households. There is a reduction only for widows and, who can pay half of the Vari (tax).

8.6 Their World View

The **Kudumban**are agriculturalists. They constitute the majority among the southern parts of Tamil Nadu, and have land documents (pattas) with name and caste for example, "**KarupsamyKudumban**". However, their community certificate is given as **Pallan**. This term **Pallan**is considered derogatory as it is not their caste name. The **Kudumban** are listed as

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Scheduled Caste (SC) by the Govt of Tamil Nadu but the community certificate issued to them is "***Pallan***". The young generation, especially secondary school going students, feel the term **"SC"**, **"Pallan"** as derogatory term. They feel extremely humiliated when educationists distribute their scholarship based on lower caste prejudice. The elders too feel extremely humiliated when other communities address them as ***Pallan***. They are highly industrious and strive to raise their living standards continuously. Most of the present generation have a clear self Identity which is ***Devendrakula Velalarnot Pallan.***

9. Analysis and Interpretations

The seven sub-communities (five groups excluding ***Devendrakulathan and Pallan***) have come together in a social movement for a collective identity, their cause being revivalistic in character with regard to their Identity. The analysis framework validates the data from the primary sources, done during the field work. The credibility of research results comes through applying scientific method, measurement and sampling.

9.1 Qualitative Analysis: Secondary Sources

Archival copper plates, Books in the vernacular, Land Documents and Govt. Gazettes.

Archival copper plates.

The Palani Cheppedu is archival evidence from the year 1528 available in the Madurai Museum about the how these seven communities have requested for a common name as DevendrakulaVelalar. The same has been further reaffirmed in the year 1749. through another copperplate.

Books.

The Tamizh book Mukkudarpallu edited by Puliyurkesikan in 2010 which is in vernacular is another source of information about their constant appeal for a common identity as DevendrakulaVelalar.

Land documents attached especially the landowning documents mention their community only as *Devendrakula, Pannadi, Kudumban, and Moopan.* Pallan was nonexistent till the early 1920s in these documents.

9.1.1. Primary Sources

The Quantitative primary data affirm the population count, the socio economic and educational status.
The comparative analysis of their socio, economic, is appended here for reference. The period of analysis is from 1940 to 2015.
The qualitative primary data is upheld through the discourse analysis, content analysis and narrative analysis which has been done for this particular study.

9.1.2. Narrative Analysis

Social: Their family, kinship pattern, marriage negotiation, belief system and death ceremonies are similar.

Economic: They are agricultural communities and all most every family possessed land. Vathiriyan are basically weavers and agricultural labours.

Education: The formal education has facilitated the community and the privileges of governmental schemes enabled them to raise their educational status.

Indigenous Knowledge System. Their skill in agriculture starts from their ability to identify the land in the traditional division of *Kurunji, Mullai, Maruda, Neidal* and *Palai*. The *Madai-Kudumban*is highly skilled in *NeerPasanam*for example the *Aarupasanam, KulathuPasanam*

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and KammaPasanam. Common water resource management especially during the draught is beyond par.

9.1.3. Discourse Analysis

The focus group discussions with the five sub communities illustrated that they have a single grievance, "The injustice of carrying wrong identity which is not ours. There no historical nor contemporary evidence."

9.1.4. Content Analysis

Highlighted the derogatory meaning of word "**Pallan**". In an hour discourses, the word "*Pallan*" *(147 times) has* revealed the distress caused by the word "*Pallan*".

The narrative analysis investigates how these communities have perceived themselves as agriculturists and as owners and custodians of indigenous knowledge. However, instead of this perception, other communities perceived them as just farm labourers (*cooliee).*

The community has been fighting for the *'correct'* nomenclaturecontinuously and felt "we would have worked without *Kothu*" (*cooliee),* if they had used *Kudumban,* instead of *Pallan.*

The identity **"Pallan" a term of reference than a community by itself** has created a sense of alienation and humiliation for the community groups validated by the theory identity politics.

This term has come into use only from the sixteenth century when there has been a concentrated effort to marginalize and peg them in the lowest rung of the social hierarchy.

The apex of this analysis validates the grand theory of social movement from the three major aspects of their community. The plural culture clearly shows commonality in their cultural, social and economic behaviour.

The claim for common identity has been the catalyst to bring them together and create fusion among them and voice their grievance.
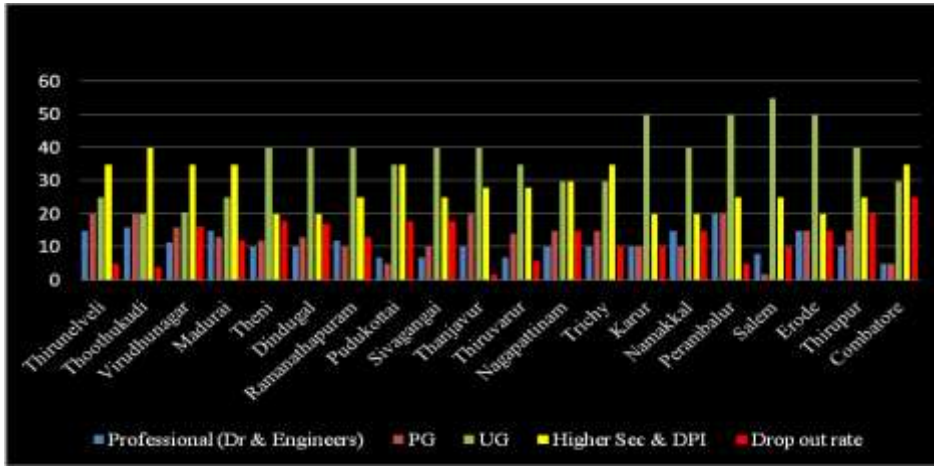
9.2.1. Quantitative Analysis

The Population count of the seven sub communities is 60,83,070. It constitutes only 8% of the Schedule caste Population in Tamil Nadu which stands at a7, 60, 38,376.They are evenly distributed across all the districts. The graph clearly indicates their migration is synchronic and validates the historical events which were the cause for the migration to these regions.

Demographic Population Distribution of the 7 Sub Communities

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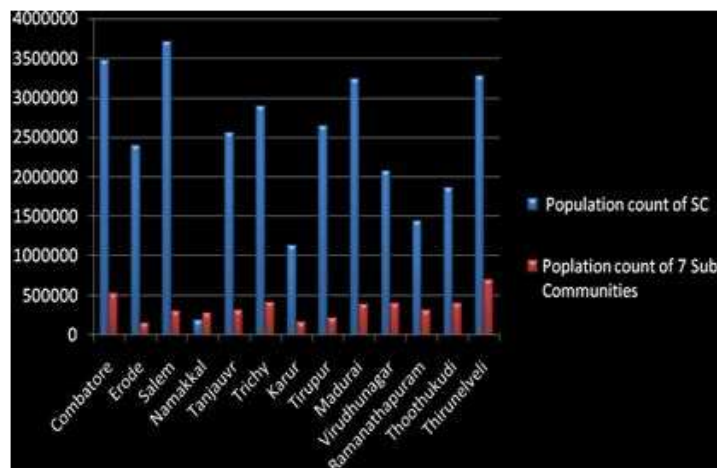
Educational Profile At Districts Level

An analysis of the educational profile establishes the progressive development of the communities in the field of education. Most of the present youth are either graduates or post graduates. The Tirunelvelli, Thoothukudi, Madurai, Trichy and Perambalur have the maximum Post graduates. All the Districts have a good educational grounding in school education and graduation. It is only in Tirupur and Coimbatore a high dropout rate is seen.

Women Empowerment
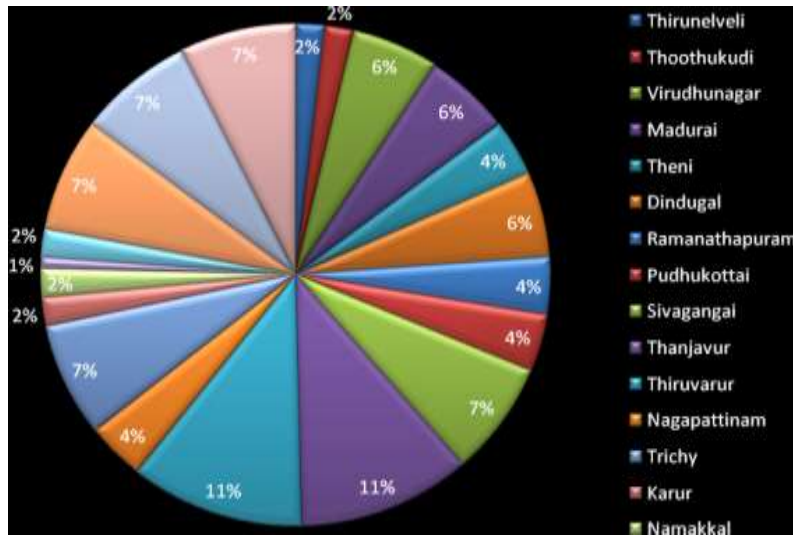
The above pie chart shows the percentage of deviation in women empowerment within the community They mostly have either a equal say or more say in the decision making process within the family. The progress of the community is fully attributed to the women who have taken the responsibility to ensure that development happens .

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Conclusion

The report has discussed the empirical study on the seven sub communities based on the following theories:

Theory of Collective Identity
Theory of Cultural Pluralism
Theory of Revivalism,
Theory of Fission and Fusion.

The objective of the report is that theories have been consistently validated through the field work. The findings of the empirical study of the seven Sub communities (in reality five) bring out the commonality of the cultural, social and economical traits.
All the sub communities have similar **cultural practices.**

The **Consanguineal and Affinial patterns of kinship are** strongly visible among the sub-communities.

These kinships determine the **roles and status** based on the **belief system and well established customs in everyday life.**

There are layered **social interrelations** that exist among the seven sub-communities.
All the sub-communities are **agriculturalist** and there is **no visible variation in their economic status**.

Their internal political system is **cohesive.**
Members of the sub communities were very resoundingly assertive about "***Pallan"*** not being their original identity and the word ***Pallan*** has an offensive meaning**.**

It was **thrust upon** them by the administrative institution and they have been continuously fighting against this injustice.
The study validated the above facts through **historical, archeological and empirical** evidences. The ethnographic documentation of the seven sub-communities has followed the scientific approach. Ethnologically the seven sub-communities were analyzed to establish the identity. The identity among the sub communities is ***Devendakula Velalar.***

In conclusion, this study recommends that the claim of the sub communities (*Kudumban, Pannadi, Kadayan, Kaladi, Vathiriyaan, Pallan and Devendra Kulathan*) for a singular identity of *Devendrakula Velalar* is FACTUAL AND JUSTIFED. There are no significant limitations in the present study as the study covered the required demographic distribution. The study could not factor the population who has migrated to other states.

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