

# ഇശൽ വൈതുകം

ത്രൈമാസിക ലക്കം: 40

## Ishal Paithrkam

Online issue 25    print issue 40    December 2024



**Mahakavi Moyinkutty Vaidyar**  
**Mappila Kala Akademi**  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
Government of Kerala-India  
December 2024

**ഇശൽ പൈത്യകം**

ത്രൈമാസിക

ലക്കം: 40

2024 ഡിസംബർ

പകർപ്പാവകാശം: പ്രസാധകർക്ക്

**ചീഫ് എഡിറ്റർ**

ഡോ. ഹുസൈൻ രണ്ടത്താണി

**എഡിറ്റർ**

ഡോ. ഷംഷാദ് ഹുസൈൻ. കെ.ടി.

**അസോസിയേറ്റ് എഡിറ്റർ**

ഡോ. അനീസ് ആലങ്ങാടൻ

**എഡിറ്റോറിയൽ ബോർഡ്**

ബഷീർ ചുങ്കത്തറ

ഡോ. പി.പി അബ്ദുൽ റസാഖ്

എം.എൻ. കാരശ്ശേരി

സൈദലവി ചീരങ്ങോട്ട്

**Ishal Paithrkam**

**ISSN: 2582-550X**

Peer-Reviewed

UGC CARE indexed

Quarterly

Bilingual

Issue: 40

Online issue: 25

December: 2024

all rights reserved

Individual Price : Rs.600/-

**Editor**

Dr. Shamshad hussain. KT

Printed @

LIPI Offset

Malappuram

**Publisher**

Mahakavi Moyinkutty

Vaidyar

Mappila Kala Akademi

Kondotty, 673638

Ph: 0483-2711432

**പ്രസാധകർ**

മഹാകവി മോയിൻകുട്ടി വൈദ്യർ

മാപ്പിള കലാ അക്കാദമി

കൊണ്ടോട്ടി: 673 638

ഫോൺ: 0483 2711432

[www.mappilakalaacademy.org](http://www.mappilakalaacademy.org)

[www.ishalpaithrkam.info](http://www.ishalpaithrkam.info)

ഇശൽ പൈത്യകത്തിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്ന രചനകളിലെ ആശയങ്ങൾ മാപ്പിളകലാ അക്കാദമിയുടേതോ, സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരിന്റേതോ, സാംസ്കാരിക വകുപ്പിന്റേതോ ആയിരിക്കണമെന്നില്ല. - എഡിറ്റർ

copyright rests with the publisher. the authors are responsible for the contents and views expressed.

# **From Tradition to Transformation: An Analytical Survey on Tribal Women's Empowerment in Wayanad**

**Dr. Bindhu.C.M  
Anjana.P**

The empowerment of tribal women is a pivotal part of social development. It is not just a matter of social justice, but also of improving the well-being and development of the historically marginalized community. This research aims to gain insights into female empowerment among tribal women in Wayanad districts by looking at how their employment status, educational qualifications, and marital status might make a difference in their empowerment. The participants for the study were 122 tribal women, and data was collected using the Women Empowerment Scale. The findings reveal that employment status and educational qualifications play a significant role in empowering tribal women, highlighting the major impact of employment opportunities and access to education on determining their social or economic positions. On the contrary, marriage does not affect their empowerment. This research highlights the significance of providing educational and job pathways for tribal females in Wayanad, thus arguing that these efforts can greatly promote their empowerment or well-being.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, Tribal women, Marital status, Employment status, Educational qualification

## **Introduction**

Across all over the world, tribes face a lot of struggle to cope with the standards of society. It is been proven from many studies

that, the livelihood of the tribal peoples is neither permanent nor fixed. Most of the tribes don't have permanent sources of income (Ramya, 2018). Women's empowerment throughout history is a story of struggle, endurance, and victory. It represents the journey of women gaining autonomy over their lives, bodies, and decisions, overcoming societal, economic, and political barriers. It also involves boosting the abilities and choices of an individual or group to accomplish their goals. Being empowered will help the women to live for themselves. Other than being a woman, tribal women face additional obstacles because of their unique features such as socio cultural positions and identities. These may include their limited access or awareness of the importance of education, healthcare and economic opportunities. In his study Manoj, (2020), revealed that, despite Kerala's notable accomplishments in several development metrics, including universal literacy and healthcare facilities, the state's tribal communities still endure hardship and precarious health conditions Tribal women are often more disadvantaged than others. Their family welfare depends on the mental and physical health of the women. Facing discrimination, they struggle with health problems that can lead to poverty and lack of food. Yet, they are important protectors of their family, culture, and their economy. In their study, Mohandas et.al, (2019) identified that, Paniya tribal women in Wayanad face nutritional and healthcare challenges like malnutrition etc. Despite some obesity cases, factors like age and the frequent use of tobacco contribute to undernutrition among them. The inaccessibility of medical services underscores the need for targeted healthcare policies and interventions to address their specific health conditions. In their study, Shrinivasa et al. (2014) found a high prevalence of anaemia among tribal women, where the majority of the tribal women are daily wagers, with a habit of chewing pan, and consume uncooked rice daily. According to a study conducted by Kuruvilla and Rajitha (2021) traditional practices, like, restricting women during the menstruation period, from entering public places, lead to the concept of impurity during this time, and lower self-respect and self-esteem among tribal women. Tribal women tend to accept differentiation as natural, emphasizing the need for creating awareness regarding their worth, inner strength, capacities, and economic roles.

According to the Report on Socio-economic Status 2013, the literacy rate of tribal females is much lower than the national average for females. The following tables show the literacy rate among females and males in the 5 scheduled tribe communities in the Wayanad district.

*Table 1 Literacy among the female population above the age of 5 years*

Community	Total number of females	Literates	Literacy Rate	Total number of male	Literates	Literacy rate
Paniyan	42349	25392	59.96	39725	28138	70.83
Kuruman	9966	8003	80.30	9812	9098	92.72
Kurichiyar	16414	12886	78.51	16670	14852	89.09
Kattunaikar	8827	4991	56.54	8643	5389	62.35
Adiyan	5272	3215	60.98	4825	3487	72.27

Source: scheduled tribes of Kerala, report on the socio-economic status 2013

Based on the data presented in the table, it can be concluded that within each tribal group, the educational status of females is consistently lower than that of their male counterparts. An article reported in *The Indian Express* (2021) that around 250 men, mostly from tribal communities, in Wayanad, Kerala, have been charged under the POCSO Act for impregnating their minor wives, with cases involving both minor boys and girls. Additionally, some recent newspaper reports highlighted other concerning trends, such as a rise in the number of unwed mothers and an increased rate of mortality among newborns and mothers, particularly within the tribal populations of Wayanad. Upon examining various news sources, it becomes clear that the sexual exploitation of Adivasi women by individuals from non-tribal communities has been a persistent issue for many generations. By analysing these critical aspects, the researchers recognized the importance of focusing on empowering tribal women and decided to conduct a study to know the empowerment status of tribal women in Wayanad

### **Objectives of the study**

The present study has the following objectives.

- 1 To find out the levels of women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district
- 2 To find out whether there is any significant difference in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample employment status, marital status and educational qualification

### **Hypothesis**

- 1 There is no significant difference in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample employment status
- 2 There is no significant difference in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample marital status
- 3 There is no significant difference in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample educational qualification

### **Methodology**

#### **Method**

Considering the nature of the problem under investigation and the nature of the data required for the study, the survey method was used

#### **Sample**

The present study consists of 122 different categories of tribal women from the Wayanad district who were selected based on a random sampling technique

#### **Tools**

The following tool was used for the study

- 1 Women empowerment scale (Anjana & Bindhu, 2024)

#### **Statistical technique used**

The major statistical techniques used for the analysis and interpretation of the data were the following

- 1 Percentage analysis
- 2 Test of significance of difference between means (t)

### 3 One way ANOVA

#### Analysis and Interpretation

#### Levels of women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district

For analysing the first objective, to find out the levels of women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district, the subjects were grouped into three levels- high, average and low. The mean and standard deviation of the total score were calculated. Mean  $\pm$  standard deviation was used. The details of levels of women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district given in Table 2

**Table 2**

*Result of percentage analysis of levels of women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district for the total sample*

Variable	Level of Women empowerment	Number of women	Percentage
Women empowerment	High	20	16.39
	Average	88	72.13
	Low	14	13.13

Table 2 shows that 16.39 percent of responders have a high level of women empowerment, 72.13 percent have an average level of women empowerment, and 13.13 percent have a low level of women empowerment. Thus, by exploring the level trend, it can be said that majority of the women are falling average level of women empowerment.

#### Investigation of group differences of women empowerment based on the subsample employment status

For analysing the first part of the second objective, to find out whether there is any significant difference of mean in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample employment status. Test of significance of difference between means was calculated. The data and results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Data and result of the tests of significance of difference between the mean scores of women empowerment based on subsample employment status*

Category	Subgroups	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Level of significance
Employment status	Yes	42	51.429	3.521	3.372	significant
	No	80	48.888	4.161		

From Table 3, it is evident that there is a significant difference between women based on the subsample, employment status, “t” value is significant at 0.05 levels. It might be because of women’s self-esteem increases when they work, and this confidence is important for both defending their rights as well as making informed decisions. Through employment, the women develop social contacts and encounter new ideas that contradict the traditional culture of gender responsiveness. Economic autonomy through employments enables women to determine their lives and families’ lives independently. Similar to this result, Mishra & Kumar (2019) examine how employment affects women’s empowerment, including aspects such as autonomy, economy, and gender bias. The findings revealed a significant positive effect of employment on women’s empowerment.

For analysing the second part of the second objective, to find out whether there is any significant difference of mean in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample marital status. Test of significance of difference between means was calculated. The data and results are shown in Table 4

**Table 4**

*Data and results of the tests of significance of difference between the mean scores of women empowerment based on subsample marital status*

Category	Subgroups	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Level of significance
Marital status	Yes	65	49.892	4.287	.371	Not significant
	No	57	49.614	3.954		



From table 4, it is evident that there is no significant difference between tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample marital status as “t” value is significant at 0.05 levels. This might be because marital status doesn’t make any negative or positive impact on their life. Contrary to this result, in their study, Biswas & Mukhopadhyay (2018). highlighted that married women are highly empowered than others, like unmarried, widows, divorcee, and separated

### **ANOVA of educational qualification of tribal women of Wayanad district**

For analysing the third part of the second objective, to find out whether there is any significant difference of mean in women empowerment among tribal women of Wayanad district based on the subsample educational qualification. For analysing this, one way ANOVA was employed. To find out if there exists any significant difference in tribal women of Wayanad district based on their educational qualification, one-way ANOVA was employed. The result was shown in the table 5

**Table 5**

*Result of one way ANOVA women empowerment of tribal women of Wayanad district based on the educational qualification*

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between Groups	271.73	2	135.86	9.071	.00
Within Groups	1782.38	119	14.98		
Total	2054.11	121			

The ‘F’ value obtained for educational qualification of tribal women is 9.07 and the significant value of it is .00, which is lesser than the p value .05. It means that there exists a significant difference between the educational qualifications of tribal women. It may be

because by learning, women can create supportive networks that lead to the rethinking of gendered norms. Education provides opportunities for access to information concerning human rights, health issues, and career advancement which are important in creating an informed society. Also, education helps one get good employment placements which offer economic independence hence elevating social status and thus becoming empowered individuals. Similarly, a study conducted in Karnataka, India, found that higher education plays a crucial role in the overall empowerment of women, influencing various aspects such as social, psychological, economic, political, and educational empowerment (Kulal et al., 2023)

To identify the existing significant difference between each category of educational qualification **Post hoc (Tukey)** test was employed.

**Table 6**

*Result of Post hoc (Tukey) test for the comparison of significance of each category of educational qualification of parents*

Edu. qualification	Comparison group	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Upto +2	Degree	-.65	1.54	.907
	Above degree	-3.64	1.57	.057
Degree	Upto +2	.65	1.54	.907
	Above degree	-2.99	.73	.000
Above degree	Upto +2	3.64	1.57	.057
	Degree	2.99	.7	.000

Table 6 revealed that there exists a significant difference between tribal women who have a qualification of degree and above degree qualification. This difference between degree holders and those

who have qualifications higher than a degree may be because higher education typically enhances awareness of rights and gender equality issues, fosters economic independence through improved employment opportunities, and builds confidence and self-efficacy.

## Conclusion

Employment and education have a major impact on women's empowerment. Having a job can make a woman feel more capable and empowered. When a woman has a job, her perspective on the world is expanded and she feels more capable of making important decisions for her family and herself. Getting higher education can make these benefits even stronger by making women more aware of their rights, giving them better employment chances, and empowering them to stand up against unfair treatment. Education also plays a crucial role in enhancing women's lives it helps them to connect with like-minded individuals, who want to change old ideas about men's and women's roles. This also gives them important information about rights, health, and finding good employment. This, in turn, cultivates a more informed and enlightened society. Assisting Wayanad's tribal women is particularly crucial because they deal with issues that mainstream programs don't address. As these women often invest in their children's futures, ensure their voices are heard in society and politics, and for making sure women and men have equal opportunities and rights, special efforts to help them can improve their employment prospects, health, and education. In short, supporting tribal women helps not just their community but also makes society fairer and more equal.

## Reference

- Biswas, S. C., & Mukhopadhyay, I. (2018). Marital status and women empowerment in India. *Sociology International Journal*, 2(1). <https://11nq.com/DgavO>
- Dr. Manoj. (2020). Empowering the Tribal Women in Kerala: Role of Community-Based Eco-Tourism Initiatives through Kudumbashree Mission. In *Women Empowerment*. Emyreal Publishing House. <https://shorturl.at/blCKQ>
- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Garrett, H. E. (1962). *Statistics in Psychology and education*. Paragon International Publishers
- Kulal, A., Nanjundaswamy, A., Kumar, S., & Gururaj, P. (2023). Does Higher Education Influence on Women Empowerment? - A Perceptual Study. *Research Square*. <https://encr.pw/zlkkD>

- Kuruvilla, M., & Rajitha. (2021). Unexplored Gender Dimensions of Ritual Practices: Study on Tribal communities in Wayanad, Kerala. *www.academia.edu*. <https://acesse.dev/OseOV>
- Mishra, A., & Kumar D, J. (2019). Effect of employment on women empowerment- A study on Sonepur District of Odisha, India. *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*, 7(5). <https://acesse.dev/mOlsM>
- Mohandas, S., Amrithesh, K., Lais, H., Vasudevan, S., & Ajithakumari, S. (2019b). Nutritional Assessment of tribal women in Kainatty, Wayanad: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*. [https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.IJCM\\_39\\_19](https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.IJCM_39_19)
- Ramya, S. (2018). A study on issues and challenges of Tribal women in present era. *www.academia.edu*, 9(1). <https://shorturl.at/wHMT9>
- Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Government of Kerala. (2013, November)
- Varma, V. (2021, October 14). With cases rising under POCSO, a film in Kerala aims to warn tribals about perils of underage marriages. *The Indian Express*. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kerala/kerala-wayanad-pocso-cases-film-awareness-7571399/>

**Dr.Bindhu.C M**

Professor

Department of Education

University of Calicut

Malappuram

Pin:673635

India

Ph: +91 9447636182

Email: drbindhucm@uoc.ac.in

ORCID: 0009-0005-8729-6282

**&**

**Anjana. P**

UGC Junior Research Fellow (JRF)

Department Education

University of Calicut

Malappuram

Pin:673635

India

Ph: +91 7560992372

Email: anjana.narayanan.524@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0002-7447-5415