
Migration and Social History of Anjunadu: Lessons from the Past for Sustainable Development – An Applied Study

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ABSTRACT

At the north east portion of Idukki district of Kerala there are a few locations that shows extreme geographical differences compared to the rest of the district. These locations include places namely Marayoor, Kanthalloor, Keezhanthoor and Karayoor and Kottagudi - collectively known as the 'Anjunadu' (Five places). We can experience a replication of Tamil culture on the valleys of this region. These gifted places are the abode of natural serenity, cluster of tribal settlements, a treasure of historical knowledge, a land of social formations and a can of cultural blending. Through this study the researcher tried to connect past and present for the future of the Anjunadus. Basic historical courses of this region are tried to be analyzed in order to prepare a comprehensive outline for the sustainable development of this region. Hence practicability has given more importance.

INTRODUCTION

The Anjunadu: the land of Mesolithic and Neolithic life in the present Idukki district of Kerala state. This is the area from where an early image of the prehistoric men reveals. The petrogrphs , dolmens and petrolyph survive in this area gives us an idea to reconstruct the glorious social history of the valleys.

Anjunadu shows extreme geographical differences compared to the rest of the Idukki district. These are rain shadow area where annual rain fall is below 50 cms. These lands are also known as the vegetable bowl of Kerala where land is extremely fertile and climate is apt and gifted. These locations include places namely Marayoor, Kanthalloor, Keezhanthoor , Karayoor in Kerala and Kottagudi in Tamilnadu collectively known as the 'Anjunadu' (Five places). We can experience a replication of Tamil culture on the valleys of this region. These gifted places are the abode of natural serenity, cluster of tribal settlements, a treasure of historical knowledge, a land of social formations and cultural blending.

Social History of Modern Anjunadu – A Nutshell

The modern Social history of the Anjunadu valleys begins with the advent of European commercial crop plantations in the present Devikulam Taluk. Labor shortage was the most severe problem that affected the Plantation sector of Kerala. Native people of Kerala were not sufficient to complete the day to day activities of the plantation both in executive level and administrative level. The reason for this labor scarcity seems not only law wages but also the lack of acquaintance with the newly introduced crops. For maintaining sufficient labors large scale importing of labors from Tamilnadu and Karnataka took place. Labor is not abundant and has to be called in from Mysore however: good and

just managers obtain a sufficiency at very reasonable rates. The cost of bringing Estates in to bearing and of maintaining them in a productive and cleanly state is there for considerably below that that of Ceylon , although’ it varies even in Wayanad . The value of an average estate in bearing may be taken at 100 to 200 Rupees per acreⁱ . The large scale labor mobilization to Kerala contributed to the Social History of the state. First of all this labor selection by the British planters later proved to be the best example for their hidden imperialist agenda. The profit motivated commercial farming concept of the British gained a new impetus through the arrival of the imported labors.

The imported labors later became the permanent settlers of the land. The planters were provided them with the facility to live a labor’s family in the plantation itself. Those quarters were named as ‘Layams’ⁱⁱ. They were also assisted with medical care and education facilities. This historical course led to the linguistic as well as cultural transfusion especially of Malayalam and Tamil. A selected section of the imported laborers were started to migrate into the eastern slope of the Western Ghats region ranging from Anamudi hills to the Palani hills. Familiar climate and culture that existed among the tamil inhabitants were the motives that prompted the labors in the plantation sector to be mobilized. Thus a replication of the tamil culture was experienced in the Anjunadu.

Table 1
Distribution of languages

Distribution by language of 10,000 of population			Distribution of residence of 10,000 speaking each language.		
Malayalam	Tamil	Other languages	Malayalam	Tamil	Other languages
1,942.7	7,487.6	569.7	17.3	328.4	308.8

Source: V. Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual Vol. II*, Gazetteers Department, Government of Kerala, 1999, P. 23.

The rapid development of Kacha roads to Pacca roads can be considered as another historical result of the plantations Kerala. In Idukki and Wayanadu ‘anatharas’ⁱⁱⁱ were mainly converted as roads. In the present Idukki district roads like Neriya Mangalam- Munnar, Munnar – Udumalpettu, Kumily- Mundakkayam, Kumbammettu – Cumbum, Bodimettu-Bodi, Kumily - Goodalloor were given final shape during the plantation era. Even after independence the Anjundu remained almost under similar conditions as they previously experienced. External influence was scarce as result agricultural as well as cultural specialties of the region remained unchanged.

Anjunadu in the Present Scenario

Present Anjunadu is a densely populated, tamil dominated, vegetable filled, floral diverse isolated land on the hillock of the Idukki district . Tribes primarily the Muduvans, Tamil migrants, business migrants, migrated keralites constitutes the population framework of the region. Cultivation especially vegetable cultivation is the primary source of income.

Besides Marayoor Jaggery which is famous for its' peculiar quality is also a pivotal source of the farmers of the Anjunadu. Government of Kerala is on its' way to get patent right to Marayoor Jaggery from Government of India^{iv}.

The Anjunadu area is surrounded by environmental preservation area including the Chinnar Wild Life Sanctuary, Mannavan Chola and Pampadum Chola. As a result of the forest belt the Anjunadu is facing severe wild life attacks both to men and crops. Introduction of nonindigenous trees especially grandis now had been crept into the glorious vegetable tradition of the region^v. Commercial farming nowadays getting predominant in this region which severely affects the ecological balance. Water availability of this area lowered adversely in recent days as a result of the spreading grandis plantations in the valleys. Water scarcity reduced the productivity of land tragically and thereby pave the way of climate change. If the intensity of climate change continue like at present what all that makes Anjunadu special may perish in the recent future. Hence adequate measures are to be adopted and implemented in these region that is expected to contribute to income generation as well as maintaining environmental equilibrium and there by finally to sustainable development. Responsible tourism thus comes to the scene as a solution to what all problems that arises from the vegetable hills.

Responsible Tourism/Picnic Possibilities for Sustainable Development

This is the time for a rethinking about the elaboration of tourism possibilities in the district especially of the picnic spots. Visitors' taste is to be satisfied with at most care. It is a generally accepted opinion that most of the domestic travelers from Kerala who opt occasional picnics select places with a harmonious blend of privacy, landscape, air, remoteness, panoramic view and accessibility. To maintain consistency of the arrival of travelers to Idukki district new picnic spots is to be identified. The spirit of travel has lived on down the ages. In recorded history there have been instances whereby one is able to know that man has been travelling throughout the ages. From the very early historic period, travel has had a fascination for man^{vi}. With the advent of mass tourism especially after the First World War, various attempts have been made to study as to why people wish to become tourists^{vii}.

The Anjunadu region; if carefully planned is a treasure of tourism possibilities. Responsible tourism is a new branch and school of tourism which promote tourism development with due consideration to the local people^{viii}. It aims at distributing profit of tourism to among the regional public and thereby reducing economic leakage. Responsible tourism ensures peoples' participation in tourism development. Peculiar knowledge, custom, tradition, industry etc. of a place can be upgraded to the level of a responsible tourism destination^{ix}.

The chances persist in the Anjunadu for Responsible tourism is expected to be revealed through SWOC analysis.

SWOC Analysis of Responsible Tourism Possibility in Anjunadu Area

Strength^x

- Anjunadu can be included as an end string in the Munnar – Ramackalmedu- Thekkady tourism chain.

- Gifted with a unique blend of innumerable varieties of flora especially of fruits and vegetables.
- Presence of quiet wind from the eastern border through the Chinnar Wild Life Sanctuary.
- An archaeological site where rock arts and dolmens are preserved..
- Calm, quiet and remote hill station with heavenly wind.
- Remote area with suitable temperature.
- Natural beauty with an attractive ariel view and landscape.
- High population of tribes.

Weakness^{xi}

- Presence of Munnar as an international tourism destination may diminish possibility of Anjunadu as another tourist spot.
- Diminishing cultivation of sugarcane because of climate change .
- Lack of water availability during summer.
- Unfavorable climate change occasionally affect ordinary life in the region.
- Chance of forest fire during summer.
- Lack of pucca roads to certain remote areas.

Opportunities^{xii}

- Possibility for an amusement park along with farm tourism.
- Possibility to construct cottages, rest places, trek paths and play area.
- Possibility of a well equipped hill viewpoint with telescopic facilities.
- Chance for a centre for experimenting tribal herbal medicines.

Challenges^{xiii}

- Madhav Gadgil – Kasthoori Rangan reports and its impacts.
- Difficulty in assuring people’s participation in tourism development.
- Strict forest laws and its implications.

CONCLUSION

In the socio historical analysis of the Anjunadu the pre independent era deserve special mention because most of the historical diversions like migration, cultural blending, formulation of a mixed socio- economic system etc. were flourished during this time.

Anjunadu witnessed pivotal changes in the land utilization pattern in the post independent era especially during the twenty first century. Growth and development of communication system, transportation system, agricultural system, land tenure system and finally the economic system of the region witnessed sea changes. In present days this region undergoes through critical conditions including climate change, un productivity of land, wild life attacks etc. As a solution to the existing problems the chances of responsible tourism can be adopted. Responsible tourism promotes tourism development with due consideration to

the local people. It aims at distributing profit of tourism to among the regional public and thereby reducing economic leakage. Responsible tourism ensures peoples' participation in tourism development. Peculiar knowledge, custom, tradition, industry etc. of a place can be upgraded to the level of a responsible tourism destination. Thus Marayoor Jaggery production, Vegetable production in the valleys, special knowledge of the tribes will get a place in the tourism map of the region and thereby by will contribute to the sustainable development of the hillocks.

End Notes

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- ⁱ *Selected Reports on Malabar Canara and Wynad*, Kerala State Archives Department, 2010, pp. 101-102.
- ⁱⁱ Layam is a cottage where a number of families live together in the same building but separated rooms to each family.
- ⁱⁱⁱ 'Anathara' means usual tract of Elephants through the forest.
- ^{iv} News report, Medianet News, 6th January 2018.
- ^v News report, *Malayala Manorama daily*, 24th December 2017, p. 02.
- ^{vi} A.K. Bhatia, *International Tourism – Fundamentals and Practices*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 1982, p. 1.
- ^{vii} A. K Bhatia....., pp 46-47.
- ^{viii} M. R Dileep, *Aadhunika Tourism Aadhinivesavum Vipathukalim*, Don Books, Kottayam, 2014, p.173.
- ^{ix} *Ibid.*, p. 175.
- ^x Data collected from direct visit to the place dated 21st May 2017.
- ^{xi} *Ibid.*
- ^{xii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xiii} *Ibid.*

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