

# Health Status of Tribal Population in Kalappara Colony of Thrissur District of Kerala, India

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Research Article

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## Abstract

Study was carried out in the Kalappara tribal colony under the panchayat of Chelakkara, Thrissur District in order to analyse the health status and to study effect of environment on health. The total population of the tribal colony is 108, 22 families. Survey was conducted in the colony focussing on their health issues. Our study revealed that rather than few common diseases like fever and cold no other major diseases were found in the population which can be attributed to the geographical factors. Primary health centre facility is utilised well by the people and health status is satisfactory in this colony.

**Keywords/Phrase:** Kalappara, Tribal colony, Health issues, Geographical factors.

## Introduction

Chelakara is located at 10.70°N 76.35°E. It has an average elevation of 6 m (20 ft). About half of the tribal population of the world resides in India [1]. Due to geographical, cultural and linguistic isolation the tribal populace remain the lower stratum of the society. As per the census 2011, the Total tribal population of India is 104,545,716 (Census, India 2011). Tribal population of Kerala is 484,839 [2]. In Thrissur district the population of Scheduled tribes is 31 lakhs. Thrissur District is the central part of Kerala State, India, across an area of about 3,032 km<sup>2</sup> having a tropical humid climate and plentiful seasonal rainfall. The climate Thrissur is moderate with low humidity and medium rainfall. The terrain is hilly with dense forest. The tribals in Kalappara colony belonged to Malayan group of tribes. Their language is close to Tamil, the Dravidian language. With others, they converse in Malayalam and Tamil. The writing script used is Malayalam [3].

Health is intimately linked to food and nutrition security, safe housing and availability of sanitation and clean drinking water [4]. The health status of India's tribal communities is in need of special attention. Being among the poorest and most marginalised groups in India, tribes experience extreme levels of health deprivation. The tribal community lags behind the national average on several public health indicators, with women and children the most affected. Man and environment relationship follow equilibrium. When this equilibrium is

disturbed by various activities the ultimate changes will be manifested by the appearance of new diseases [5]. The aim of the present study was to identify the common health problems faced by the tribal population in Kalappara colony of Chelakkara Panjayat in Thrissur, District of Kerala, India and to assess the availability of health care facility and the extend of utilisation of the facilities.

The health problems need special attention in the context of tribal communities of India. Research studies point out that tribal population has distinctive health problems which are mainly governed by their habitat, difficult terrains and ecologically variable Niches [Jonathan J, 2000]. Suitable solutions have to be found out by planning and evolving relevant research studies for solving this problem. Study in this area of tribal health issues is indeed need of the hour as data are not available.

## Materials and Methods

Study was conducted in the entire colony consisting of 108 people in 22 families. Pre-Structured questionnaires were used to collect information. The respondents were Head of the colony known as 'Moopan' or Promoter, the family members and functionaries at Primary Health Centre. Promoter is appointed by the government who will be reporting the colony details to the District tribal office.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Details

The total population was 108 with 48 males and 60 females. The tribes belonged to Malayan Community. They speak the language Malayalam. 6.4% of the population was between the age group of 50-80 yrs. 45% of the population was between the age group 25-50 yrs. 29.6% of the population was between 15-25 yrs. Below age of 15 was 22% of the population. The population had 4.7% literacy level. The entire population was dependent upon forestry for their livelihood. Collection of forest products was their main occupation (Table.1).

Character	No	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	60	55.5
Female	48	44.4
<b>Age</b>		
50-80	7	6.4
25-50	45	41.6
15-25	32	29.6
Below 15	24	22.2
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	80/84	95
Literate	4/84	4.7
<b>Occupation</b>		
Government service	Nil	Nil
Private	Nil	Nil
Forestry	Entire Population	100

**Table 1:** Demographic characters of tribal population in Girijan colony of Jharakura

### Common Health Problems Experienced by the Community.

The common health problems prevalent in the population is cold. Primary Health Centre was highest preferred health facility by them. The PHC was near to the colony. The PHC team visit the colony twice in a month and do free check up and provide medicines. The colony was situated in a hilly terrain. The source of water was a common Panjayat well for the entire colony known as Jalanidhi. The health status in this colony is good. The health status is due to many factors including geographical factors. Common factors influencing health are

1. Climatic factors
2. Reliefs altitude
3. Edaphic components
4. Physical environment
5. Geographical position
6. Climate change

The tribal population show variation in economic, social and cultural development together with natural and anthropogenic factors. The pattern of variation vary from region to region and from tribe to tribe [6]. Health and wealth disparities between

indigenous and non-indigenous population are universal [7,8]. Data about the health status of these indigenous population remain inadequate [7]. Our study was an attempt to start with the collection of systematic accounts of health of these population. The study reveals that the health status of the population in this colony is satisfactory which can be attributed to the favourable geographical conditions.

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