



## Opportunities and challenges: Animal husbandry practices among the Kurumba Tribe in Attappady special reference to Pudur Panchayat

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### Abstract

This paper mainly focused on the animal husbandry and its challenges of Kurumba tribe. It highlights the dairy farming, poultry and honey collection. Animal diseases also discussed. It discussed native breeds and its importance. Features of cow shed and goat pen also discussed. This paper discussed about the challenges they faced in animal husbandry in present scenario. Government subsidies, bank loans also discussed. The period of honey collection is mentioned. Its emphasis in the problem of illiteracy among the tribal communities. This paper concluded with suggestions to overcome the challenges in animal husbandry.

**Keywords:** Attappady, animal husbandry, cattle rearing, river, tribes, poultry, apiculture, honey, forest, pastoral land, market, price, milk, shelter, agriculture, dieses, doctor

### Introduction

Tribe is a group of people that all have common ancestry or a common ancestor, a common culture and live in their own enclosed society. The tribal people were the earliest among the present inhabitants of India. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the tribes are in primitive stage. These peoples are live in the interior part of the forest, hilly areas and mountain valleys. In Kerala tribes are known as "Adivasi". Tribal peoples are located in Palakkad, Wayanad, Kozhikkode, and Idukki districts of Kerala. This study focused on the tribes in Attappady.

The Kurumba peoples are located in the North-West corner of Attappady in Palakkad district. The area Attappady covered 731 sq.km. Attappady is a part of Western Ghats [1]. It is situated at the Northern end of the Palakkad district and form the South Western base of the Nilgiris. Silent valley is the national park situated in Attappady. Bhavani and Siruvani are the major rivers of Attappady. These rivers play an important role in the life of people in Attappady. Irulas, Mudugas and Kurumbas are the major tribes in Attappady [2]. The major tribe in Attappady is Irulas. Kurumba peoples are mostly located in Pudur Panchayat in Attappady. There are at about 192 hamlets in Attappady. In their style of living Kurumbas are the most primitive, they live in the interior part of the forest in 19 hamlets. The major Kurumba hamlets are Anavayi, Thadikundu, Palappada, Yedavani and Thazhe Thadukki etc [3]. The Kurumba and Muduga are the inter marrying groups.

The kurumbas are divided in to Alu Kurumba, Betta Kurumba, Jenu Kurumba, Kurumbas, Mullu Kurumbas, Urali Kurumbas and Palu Kurumbas [4]. The Kurumba people of Attappady are shifting cultivators and food gatherers. Agriculture and cattle rearing are the main occupation of the Kurumbas.

Animal husbandry is a large-scale business. The animals are bred, cared, reared and sheltered in a farm or region. Animal husbandry involves Poultry, milk farms, apiculture, aquaculture etc [5]. The Kurumba rear cattle for milk products. Curd, butter milk, butter and ghee are prepared for

home consumption. Most of the Kurumba hamlets have cows and goats [6].

### cows

Cow is one of the major husbandries in Attappady. There are different types cows. They rear their own traditional breeds as well as imported cross breed cows. The major breeds are Sindhi and Jersey. These varieties are imported from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka [7]. Milk products have good market in attappady. In every town Milma booths are available. These Milma booths collected milk from homes twice in a day [8]. In Attappady have lot of pastoral lands. These pastoral lands helped to rear cattle. Cows are sheltered in cowsheds. Cowsheds roofing is done with concrete and bamboo goods. Now a day's iron rods are used for roofing. These cowsheds flooring is done with polished stones and wooden poles. Now a day's rubber mats are used for flooring. The cow dung is collected in pits [9]. This cow dung is used for cultivation.

Government granted lot of loans and subsidies for diary farming. Government provide subsidies for Grass cultivation and Azolla cultivation. Different varieties of grass are cultivating. Milma booths provide cattle feeds in different types. The major one is Kerala Feed. It is a product of Government of Kerala [10].

### Goats

Goat rearing is very common in Attappady. Most of Kurumba people rearing goats. There are different varieties of goats. Attappady black is one of the native goat breeds of Kerala, which is found exclusively in the Attappady region of Palakkad district. This breed of goat has been developed and reared by the tribal people for meat purpose since long time. Malabari, jamunapari etc are the other important breeds of Attappady. Goats are reared for milk and meat. Some families reared sheep in Attappdy. Government granted financial support for buying goat. Goat pen is constructed with bamboo split walls and thatched with grass. Now a day's certain goat pens have tiled roof [11].

The milk of black goat is used as medicine for several diseases. Black goat milk is an important medicine for jaundice. The black goats are sacrificed for Mariyamman festival<sup>[12]</sup>. Now a day's goat farming is very profitable. Young peoples are come forward to large scale goat farming. Hybrid breeds are popular in Attappady also. These breeds are imported from other places.

### Poultry

Poultry is another important animal husbandry in Attappady. Kurumbas have their own breed of fowls. It is look like wild fowls. Kurumbas fowls get a higher price in the market. Because the native breed is well known for its nutrition, taste and medicinal value<sup>[13]</sup>. Chicken sacrifice is very important in festivals. Merchants collected eggs from these poultry farms. In every house have fowls for their own home use. Now a days it is a large-scale business. Government give loans and subsidies for poultry farming<sup>[14]</sup>.

### Apiculture

Now a days Migrated peoples in Attappady started apiculture. But Kurumbas and other tribal communities mostly depend on forest for honey collection. Honey collection is a major occupation of tribal peoples in Attappady. April to June is the honey collection season.<sup>15</sup> Wild honey have lot of importance in Ayurvedic medicines. There are many government outlets are opened for collecting honey from tribal peoples and selling. Attappady wild honey have very demand in all over Kerala.

### Challenges in Animal husbandry

Animal husbandry faced many challenges. Cattle diseases, unavailability of veterinary doctors, and financial insufficiency are the major challenges in this field. Illiteracy is another important barrier. Some merchants cheat uneducated farmers. These cheaters collected goods in very low price from farmers. Transportation facility is another challenge faced by the peoples of Attappady.

### The important animal diseases are following,

1. Kulambu rogam
2. Akitu veekkam
3. Chappu rogam
4. Raktham pokku
5. Diarrhea
6. Udampu rogam
7. Silanhi rogam
8. Puzhu arikkal
9. Anthrax
10. Pallaveerkal

(source: Bindhu.S, Ethnobiology of The Kurumbar of Attappady, pp.65-66)

### Suggestions

1. Provide good and efficient veterinary hospitals in near by areas.
2. Make aware the peoples about the importance of modern medicine instead of traditional medicine.
3. Government programs will be delivered directly to the people without fail.
4. transportation facilities should improve
5. To aware about the importance of vaccination.

6. Improve direct selling facilities.
7. Apply modern technologies in animal husbandry.

### Conclusion

Agriculture and cattle rearing are the main occupations of Kurumbas. Now a days it is developing one. But they faced many challenges in this field. They need financial support from Government. They need fair price for their goods. All tribes need scaffolding from common peoples. Eradication of illiteracy is the one of the solutions for their backwardness. Government should make many programs to upheld these tribes.

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