

Full Length Research Paper

# A Concise Elucidation on Speech Forms of Paniyas in Sociolinguistics Outlook

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**Abstract**

This paper tries to find out some of the changes occurred by the influence of socio-linguistic variables like Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Region and Religion in Paniya's (an ethnic community among 36 ethnic communities in Kerala) language (resides at Waynad District in Kerala) which causes social change in them, along with the social development they possess particularly due to their changed attitude and contact with rest of migrants and inhabitants around them. The data is collected during November 2016 to December 2016 mainly from Seven Paniya colonies named Chempannoor, Kaarakunnu, Kakkanakkunu, Vaishyam colony, Kurumbalakota, Mottakkunu & Vasthikkunnu in Vythiri Taluk of Kottathara panchayat in Kalpeta Block of Waynad District in Kerala state. The elicited data is collected through quantitative and qualitative method using pre-structured questionnaire from 10 km around distance to each Chempannoor, Kaarakunnu & Kurumbalakota colonies respectively. 22 informants of both gender consists with youngsters, middle aged and old aged of illiterate, educated non-labours and labours from different situation like their work place, with the conversation between local people, outside the settlements with acquaintances are taken into consideration. The analysis done with the speech forms of Paniyas result the drastic impact to their language attitude that is restricted to their home domain. The tendencies reflecting on their language on these days' shows the green signal towards the risk of endangerment of their own identity in accordance with their existence.

**Key words:** Sociolinguistics, ethnic society, multilingual, education, speech forms.

**Introduction**

History and tradition followed by ancestors to existing generation and will handover to gen- next is something in a cyclic motion that tag along from the beginning of this universe. The marginalization of barbarians and civilized group of people tied two different knots of traditional followers and modernization, which always paved the way for searching out traditional by modernization or civilized over ethnic communities. Ethnic communities all over the world is always a topic for studies not only in associated with history but also with science of language too. Sociolinguistics thus come under as a branch to the scientific study of language where specifically analysis the features of language with social variables that may lead to drastic changes in existing theories and attitude.

This paper tries to find out some of the changes occurred by the influence of socio-linguistic variables like Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Region and Religion in Paniya's (an ethnic community among 36 ethnic communities in Kerala) language (resides at Waynad District in Kerala) which causes social change in them, along with the social development they possess particularly due to their changed attitude and contact with rest of migrants and inhabitants around them. Previous studies like 'Paniyar : A Cultural description of the Paniyar, a hill tribe of Kerala, with a chapter on hill tribes of Kerala' and 'Paniyabhasha' exemplifies the detailed analysis of Paniyas and Paniya Language in linguistics perspectives (Somasekharan Nair, 1976 & 1977). Later studies concentrated on certain aspects of Paniyas and their language till date

**Materials and Methods**

The speech forms of Paniyas are collected through direct method. Interview method is used with the pre-structured questionnaire and observation is also done for the analysis and investigation of their language features. To identify the close variation in speech

forms, recorded data is carried out from the field.

**Area of the Study**

Paniyas who were settled in Waynad District of Kerala chiefly considering the Seven Paniya colonies named Chempannoor, Kaarakunnu, Kakkanakkunu, Vaishyam colony, Kurumbalakota, Mottakkunu & Vasthikkunnu belonging to Vythiri Taluk in Kottathara panchayat in Kalpetta Block. It is 35.1 km (nearly 49 min.) from Sulthan Bethery to reach Vythiri Taluk. The data is elicited from Chempannoor, Kurumbalakota & Karakkunu.

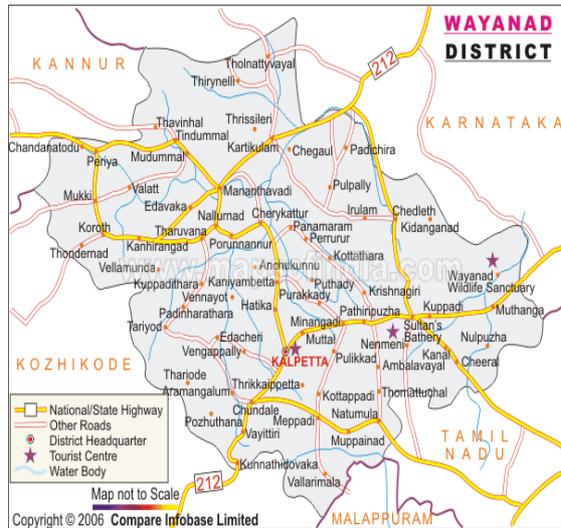


Fig.1 Map of Waynad.

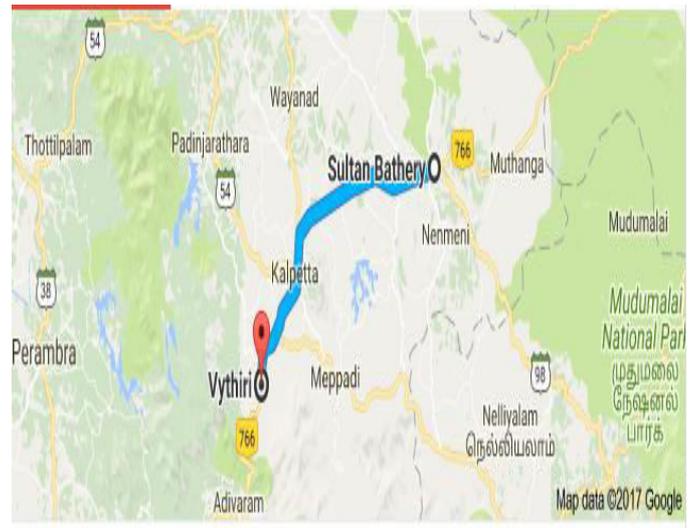


Fig.2 Map data of Vythiri from Sultan Bathery

**Sampling Size**

For this study, there are 22 informants’ represents from male and female gender consists with youngsters, middle aged and old aged of illiterate, educated non-labours and labours are taken into consideration particularly from three colonies Chempannoor, Kaarakkonam & Kurumbalakota due to identifiable speech variations recognised during data collection.

**Table1:** Statistics of Informant Categories and Variables

Approach to data	Sample size (age-wise)	Types of Linguistic interaction	Types of Variables taken	Informant Characteristics or category
Quantitative Qualitative	10-20	Informant observation	Age	Illiterate
	21-35	Sociolinguistics interview	Gender	Literate
	36-50	Formal interview	Education	Non-labour
	51-65	Questionnaire	Occupation	Labour
	66-80		Region	
			Religion	

**Data Analysing Method**

The data is analysed on the basis of linguistics point of view. The sociolinguistics variables are taken as to find out the variations caused in Paniya language. Geographical area is also considered while collecting data. The speech forms are identified with certain changes and are represented with grammatical categories as to find out the sentence structure of Paniya language. Not only the data but the behaviour and attitude of Paniya people are observed and analysed accordingly for the conclusion.

**Paniyas in Kerala**

Paniya community which is the numerically largest among the Scheduled Tribes found in Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palakkad Districts in Kerala is mainly distributed in the northern part of Western Ghats, Waynad District. Paniya community living in the Gundalur and Pandalur areas of Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu is recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group and in the Southern part of the Kodagu district of Karnataka respectively. Etymologically ‘Pani’ means ‘Labour’ and Paniya signifies ‘one who works’. According to their oral tradition, they lived freely in Ippimala, a mountain near Banesura Peak in Waynad and were established by the farming immigrants of the early countries. The ethnic community mostly engaged in manual labour. Among the notified ethnic communities in the state, Paniya (22.40%) who mainly inhabit Waynad district is the dominant tribal community. It is one of the poorest and most deprived communities in state. They speak ‘Paniyabhasha’. Now however, many Paniyas own land and produce crops like rice and ragi. The Paniya women and children dig for roots in the forest, or pot herbs. Apart from being employed in the agricultural domain, they are also engaged in tea, coffee estates, households & furnace (bricks making outlets).

**Statistics of Paniyas in Kerala**

According to census report in 2011, Paniyas are the largest, consists of 69116 in population in Waynad only. But they are the most backward and the poorest among Scheduled Tribe in the state. About 74.49% of Paniya population is settled in Waynad District followed by Kannur (13.55%), Malappuram (8.10%) and Kozhikode (3.07%) districts. In Palakkad also there is representative of Paniya community (0.70%) one family of Paniya each has been identified in Trivandrum and Ernakulam district there are 21605 families of Paniya community. They were numbered 56,952 in the 1981 census. According to the latest, their population is 92,787. They constitute 21.77 % of the ST in the state. The population constitutes of 45112 males and 47675 females. The family size of the community is 4.9 and the sex ratio works out to 1000:1057. Both these indices are positive

symbols of the demographic growth of the community. Paniya population is distributed in 82 Grama panchayat and three municipalities is 2266 and in Nilamboor municipality Paniyan 16. In Waynad district, all Grama Panchayat (25) and the Kalpetta municipality have the representation of Paniya community. Nearby 75 percent of the Paniya population is in Waynad district. In Kannur, district Paniya community is distributed is 22 Grama panchayat of Koothuparambu Municipality. Majority of the population in Kannur is in Aralam and Muzhakkum Grama panchayat. Chaliyar, Chungathara and Pothukallu are the Grama panchayat in Malappuram districts with sizable population of Paniya community. These are scattered population of Paniya community in 11 other Grama panchayat in Malappuram and 16 Grama panchayat in Kozhikode.

**Table 2:** District-wise Distribution of Paniyas in Kerala

Sl. No.	District	Families	Male	Female	Total	Percent
1.	Trivandrum	1	2	2	4	-
2.	Ernakulam	1	2	2	4	
3.	Palakkad	213	379	352	731	0.79
4.	Malappuram	1891	3563	3955	7518	8.10
5.	Kozhikode	716	1386	1471	2857	3.07
6.	Waynad	15876	33639	35477	69116	74.49
7.	Kannur	2907	6141	6416	12557	13.55
<b>Total</b>		21605	45112	47675	92787	100

#### *Language Identification of Paniyas*

The mother tongue of Paniya community is known as “Paniyabhasha” which is a blend of Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada. This language has no written form. Paniyas are not very much conscious about their existence. They widely use Malayalam for their communication.

#### *Sociolinguistic study of Paniya language*

The American linguistic William Labov is a central figure within this approach and with his work on linguistic variation in New York City. He has provided us with new insights into the occurrence of linguistic variables and its variants called Sociolinguistics (1982). Studies in the field of Sociolinguistics typically take a sample population and interview them, assessing the realisation of certain sociolinguistics variables.

#### *Domains of Use*

Different domains like Paniya’s work place, home situation, school, shop, ceremony etc were taken into consideration and it is categorized with sociolinguistics features, analyzed in accordance with the classification under educated v/s non-educated. The language is assessed in a way as to find out the variations caused due to sociolinguistics factors like, Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Region and Religion.

#### *Education and Occupation as a Social Factor*

In sociolinguistics, language is generally viewed as the dependent variable, but not always. In the case of distribution of linguistic variables by social class, even though the class does not directly cause the occurrence of a given variant, language is still viewed as the dependent variable.

The ability of individuals to communicate through languages is both a unique and a universal human quality. Educational sociolinguistics is the sub field of sociolinguistics deals with relationships between language and education. The education expands the opportunities for diverse language forms. Whereas occupation is an activity that serves as one’s regular source of live hood: a vocation.

In the case of Paniyas, the numbers of people educated in Paniyas are very few. But those who were educated, they have a tendency to use the standard language instead of their own language.

The changes can be spotted with the following conversation between:

1. Casual Talk with Educated Paniya
2. Casual Talk with illiterate Paniya,
3. Educated Paniya with illiterate Paniya &
4. Paniyas with the local people

## 1. Casual Talk with Educated Paniya

Eg:

1. Interviewer: Rethish innu panikku po:jile?  
 N Adv.T V+Dat VP+Neg+Intro  
 "Rethish, didn't you go for work today?"
- Rethish: innu panikku po:jila  
 Adv.T V+Dat VP+Neg  
 "Today I didn't"
- Interviewer: innu evida pani?  
 Adv.T Intro N  
 "Today where is (your) work?"
- Rethish: ka:akka|attila: pani  
 N+Loc N  
 "At brick making factory"
- Interviewer: a:ru:de ka|ama:?  
 Intro Gen N+Intro  
 "Whose factory is that?"
- Rethish: sanni sa:ri:nte ka|ama:  
 N N(Hon.)+ Gen. N  
 "Factory belongs to sunny sir"

In the reply of Rethish, the word /ka|ama:/ is used as a noun form which may be derived from /ka|am/ + /a:nu/ (N+ Coupler Verb)

The language used to communicate in between educated Paniya and interviewer is Malayalam. Paniya spontaneously speaking in the same way as the interviewer speaks as a native speaker.

## 2. Casual Talk with illiterate Paniya

Eg:

2. Interviewer: tʃandra: ninte vittil pasu undo?  
 N+Voc 2<sup>nd</sup> Per.PN+Gen N+Loc N be.V  
 "Candara, do you have a cow in your house?"
- Chandaran: enga perelu pai ulle  
 1<sup>st</sup> Per.PN+Gen N+Loc N be.V  
 "Cow is in my home"
- Interviewer: tʃandra: ra:vile entu kaliccu?  
 N Adv.T Intro F.V  
 "Candara, what do you had in the morning?"
- Chandaran: na:nu motta:  
 1<sup>st</sup> Per.Sg N  
 "Me, egg"

The Paniya in this conversation is not an educated one. He is a labourer. His language is not too much affected by the standard speech forms used by the local people. But he can understand the language and can give the proper answer to the question.

## 3. Educated Paniya with illiterate Paniya

Eg:

- Paniya 1: (edu): muttam ni:atʃu tʃappu  
 N Quant N  
 "Dried leaves spreaded over courtyard"
- Paniya 2: (illiterate): eaimba:? Ponne tʃulu e:de? mut amadikkingi  
 Intro.PN N+Voc N Intro N+V  
 "What? Girl, where is broom? Clean it"
- Paniya 1: (edu): ni:nga innu pa:dattu na:ru parikka:n pokunno?  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Per.Sg Adv.T N+Loc N V+Purpose V+Intro  
 "Are you going to paddy field today?"
- Paniya 2: (illiterate): na:nu ku:ta: perikin dʒaji pona:ni  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sg N+ V+Purpose V+Neg  
 "I am not going"

More or less the educated Paniyas are having a prestige issues in related to their language. They are more conscious about their language.

## 4. Paniyas with local people

Eg:

Revi: karuppa: na:le nije | varummo panikku?  
 N+Voc. Adv.T. 2<sup>nd</sup> Per.Sg. V+Intro. N+Dat.  
 "karuppa, will you come tomorrow for work?"

Karuppan: na:le sa:re enaku ambalattil ponam  
 Adv.T. N (Hon.) 1<sup>st</sup> Per.Sg+Dat. N+Loc. FV  
 "Sir, tomorrow I have to go to temple"

Revi: appo ni eppo varum?  
 Adv.T. 1<sup>st</sup> Per.Sg. Intro. FV  
 "So, when will you come?"

Karuppan: na:le antiku varam sa:re  
 Adv.T. N+Dat. FV N(Hon.)  
 "Tomorrow evening I will come"

When Paniyas talked with outsiders or local people, they try to use local language for speaking. Mingling with local people, Paniyas are able to survive. They are somehow multilingual in their language capability. Though they don't know many expressions to pronounce in Malayalam language, they can understand and can respond.

*Region as a Sociolinguistic Factor*

A commonly studied source of variation is regional dialects. Dialectology studies variations in language based primarily on geographic distribution and their associated features. Sociolinguistics concerned with grammatical and phonological features that correspond to regional areas are often called dialectologists. The examples are collected (Chempannoor, Karakkunnu & Kurumbalakota) especially from 3 colonies of Paniyas located all around 10 km.

Eg:

Q: what is your name?

Ans: ninte pe:ra entanu? [Regional lang:(Mala)]  
nina pe:ru entije ndju? [chemb:(paniya)]  
ninte pe:ru ennattei?[karakk:(paniya)]  
nina pe:ru ennatima:?[kurumb: (paniya)]

Q: How old are you?

Ans: nimaku ethra vajassi? [Regional lang:(Mala)]  
nimaku ettara vajast'u? [chemb:(paniya)]  
nimakke etara: vajast'u?[karakk:(paniya)]  
nikku ettara vajast'om?[kurumb:(paniya)]

Q: Bring a bottle of water

Ans: enika kurat'c vel | am tarumo? [Regional lang:(Mala)]  
enuku kurat'u bel | am koduppa?[chemb: (paniya)]  
enaku oru pattaram vel | am ta:?[karakk: (paniya)]  
ekku diggu pattaram bel | am koduppa?[kurumb: (paniya)]

## Q: Tell it in our language

Ans : nammude b<sup>h</sup>a:fajil paraṅju kodukka [Regional lang:(Mala)]  
namma b<sup>h</sup>a:fajil paraṅju koduppa: [chemb: (paniva)]  
namme b<sup>h</sup>a:ḷelu paraṅju koda[karakk: (paniva)]  
namma b<sup>h</sup>a:ḷelu paraṅju koduppe [kurumb: (paniva)]

The above showed examples are few. According to the data, the Paniyas from Chempannoor, seems like nor or less stick on to their own language. In the case of Kurumbalakota colony, they were comparatively trying to preserve the earlier forms even now without any interference of other regional languages rather than the rest. In Karakkunnu colony, their speech is blending with regional language. Structurally there is no change can be noted among their speech. When compared to earlier Paniya forms with present situation to these places, there is some sort of phonologically and morphologically changes can be noted with the examples taken for this study.

*Phonological changes occur in all positions as in the examples:*

/be|,am/ “Water” > /ve|,am/ /b/ > /v/  
 /ba.ɪf.a/ “Rain” > /va.ɪf.a/ /b/ > /v/  
 /pe.ɪelu/ “In house” > /pu.ɪelu/ /e/ > /u/  
 /vajasa:tʃom/ “aged” > /vajasa:tʃu/ /o/ > /u/

*Gradual change of front to back vowel*

/eppe/ > “when” /eppa/ > /eppo/  
 /namme/ “our” > /namma/

The front close-mid vowel /-e/ gradually changed to front open vowel /-a/ and later changed to back close-mid vowel /-o/ in /eppe/ > “when” /eppa/ > /eppo/. The front close-mid /-e/ changes to front open /-a/ in /namme/ “our” > /namma/.

*Gradual change from back to front vowel*

/vajasa:tʃu/ “aged” > /vajasa:tʃom/ > /vajas:ji/  
 /koduppa:/ “give” > /koduppe/ > /kod,a/

The back vowel /-u/ changed to back close- mid /-o/ and later changed to front close vowel /-i/ due to the influence of other regional people in /vajasa:tʃu/ “aged” > /vajasa:tʃom/ > /vajas:ji/. The front open central vowel /-a/ changed to front close-mid vowel /-e/ later the consonant germination /-pp/ in /koduppa:/ and /koduppe/ grounds elision to /kod,a/ due the influence of regional people.

*Morphological Changes*

/b<sup>h</sup>a:ḷelu/ > /b<sup>h</sup>a:ḷe.lu/ > /b<sup>h</sup>a:fajil/

Though their language identity basically uses /-b/ instead of /-v/ in their vocabulary most, existing regional pressure causes changes. The aspirated voiced bilabial /b<sup>h</sup>/ can be identified in their speech. Here the locative case marker /-lu-/ > /-il-/ as in Tamil and Malayalam. The addition assimilation and replacement can be detected here in /b<sup>h</sup>a:ḷelu/ > /b<sup>h</sup>a:ḷe.lu/ > /b<sup>h</sup>a:fajil/.

The other words observed in three colonies due to continuous contact with regional people are as follows:

/nintɛ/ [yours, Regional lang:(Mala)] - /ninnə/ [change]

/enta:ṇu?/ [what, Regional lang:(Mala)] - /entije:ṇju?/, /ennatei?/, /ennattima:?, /eimba?/  
 [change]

/ni:/ [you, Regional lang:(Mala)] - /ni:ju/, /ni:/[change]

/kodukku/ [give, Regional lang:(Mala)] - /koḍuppa:/, /koḍa/, /koḍuppe/ [change]

#### Religion As A Sociolinguistics Factor

Basically Paniyas are belongs to Hindu religion. They worshiped ,Maladaivam ‘but not the Gods, ‘Shiva‘and ,Vishnu‘. Due to influence of the regional Hindu people now a days they are praying to lord Shiva and Vishnu. And also some of them are converted to Christianity. The language expressions are changed adopted certain typical terms in relations too

Eg:

/appen/ [father, paniya lang.] – /atʃan/ [ Hindu influ.]

/umme/ [father’s elder brother’s wife/ mother’s sister, paniya lang.] – /peramma/ [christ.influ.] /atʃi/ [elder sister/ elder brother’s wife, paniya lang.] – /tʃedatti/ [christ.influ.] – /tʃetʃi/ [ Hindu influ.]

/tʃetʃan/ [father’s younger brother/mother’s younger sister] – /eʃeppan/ [ Hindu influ.] /munna:jikka:ʃan/ [son-i-law, paniya lang.] – /ma-rumakan/ [Hindu influ.]

The term itself is replaced by another that is totally changed their identity. They used these terms probably in communication with outsiders of their community. And this is widely seen with the women rather men. Closed contact with household activities in other community people, Paniya women having a tendency to imitate honorific terms compared with men in Paniya.

#### Age as a Social Factor

Age is a factor that cannot avoided in sociolinguistics study. According to the data collected, there is a drastic change occurred in between generations.

Eg:

Paniya language	Glossary	Changes with Age Group
ninnə pēru ennatēi?	What is your name?	ninnə/ninRe pēru ennatēi?/enttāṇu?(10-30) ninnə pēru ennatēi?/entānu?(31-56) ninnə pēru ennatēi?(57-80)
ninak ettara vayasāccu?	How old are you?	ninak ettara vayasāyi? (10-30) ninak etara/ ettara vayasāccu?(31-56) ninak ettara vayasāccu? (57-80)
nānu antikku barum	I’ll come at night	ñjān rātarī barum (10-30) nānu antikku barum(31-56) nānu antikku barum(57-80)

These examples gives emphasize to the changes occur in the speech forms among different generations. The word ‘entaanu?’, actually used by the age group 10-30 is borrowed from the outsiders who were migrated from low land for cultivation. ‘ennatēi?’ is the question word for ‘what?’ is used by Paniya people without considering the age variation. But a slight variation can be seen in the case of other words like vayasāyi -vayasāccu, barum- varum. ninne>niRe due to the frequent contact with the local people.

#### Result and Discussion

Paniya is one of the major ethnic groups in Waynad District. They are very famous for their reasonable population and their peculiar culture. The main social factors that affect their language attrition are age and education. The age based evaluation found that the tendency for use of Paniya language by younger generation is lesser than the eldest. They are more aware about their language and consider their verbal communication is somewhat a hard stone that interrupt them from main stream. Region and Religion as well as Education and Occupation are mutually connected while considering the data. Priority changes due to attitude and necessities. Paniyas are changing accordingly due to their mental approach towards their existence. Literate Paniyas are hesitated to be with their community. Three form of complexity in nature can be identified. The degree of inferiority complex from older to younger is higher. The tendency of language shift can be identifiable. Those of uneducated, least communication with outsiders, works only inside their community, beliefs in values and ethics of their own supports their culture and least bothered about themselves preserving their language. The educated or multilingual talents went for job considered themselves higher than that of the other community members. It causes to form a new group among them. Region and Religion is a secondary matter while considering their attitude and prestige towards language. While considering Age, it is factor where the changes can identifiable and concrete. Old generation having a great affinity towards their language and firmly believe that it should be maintained for well being of their community when compared with younger generation. The prestige is a factor to be

concerned regarding younger ones.

### Conclusion

Generally, as a result of new socio-linguistic contact there will be a change in the attitudes towards their mother tongue that will be restricted to home domain. The tendencies reflecting on these days' shows the green signal towards the risk of endangerment of Paniyas own identity in accordance with their existence and their language.

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