

## Chapter 5

### THE INPUT PROCESSES

Every political system consists of interacting roles, structures, and subsystems, and of underlying psychological inclinations, which affect these interactions. The *role* is a particular part of activity of an individual involved in the general political or social processes. There are various political roles such as a legislator, judge, party leader, etc. A particular set of *roles* constitutes structures like a legislative assembly, law court or political parties. So role is one of the basic units of a political system. Political systems consist of a set of interacting subsystems, which are made up of related and interacting roles.

The political processes in a political system consist of inputs from the environment or from within the system, and the production of outputs into the environment. According to David Easton, there are two types of inputs into political system *demands and supports*. The different classes of demands imposed on the political system are demands for allotting goods and services, demands for the regulation of behaviour (laws), demands for participation in political system, demands for communication and information.

The different classes of supports are material supports like payment of taxes, obedience to law and regulations, participatory supports such as voting and other forms of political activity, attention given to Governmental communication, and evidence of respect for public authority<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Bombay, 1966), Current Thought Series no 12, Indian edn, pp 15-16

The demands and supports are converted into authoritative decisions and are implemented by the method known as *conversion processes*. The *conversion-functions* may legitimately be regarded as the heart of a political system and thus it is reasonable to expect that the criteria of political development may be found there.<sup>2</sup> Almond divides conversion functions into six separate autonomous and at the same time interrelated functions. They are Interest Articulation, Interest Aggregation, Political Communication, Rule-Making, Rule-Application and Rule-Adjudication.<sup>3</sup>

The political "input" structures like trade unions and other interest groups, and political parties perform interest articulation and interest aggregation. The political "output" structures like legislatures, bureaucracies and courts perform rule-making, rule-application and rule-adjudication functions. Political communication is performed by various structures including input structures, output structures, mass media and other social structures.

### **Interest Articulation**

Almond defines interest articulation as "the process by which individuals and groups make demands upon the political decision makers".<sup>4</sup> Political decisions affect all individuals and groups. Demand inputs are the basis of the political choices of the decision makers. Articulation of interest by various groups through their interest groups is the first functional step in the political conversion process of transforming or converting inputs into outputs. The degree of specialization and autonomy in the structures that perform the interest articulation is a criterion of political development.

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<sup>2</sup> Daya Krishna, *Political Development: A Critical Perspective* (Delhi, 1979), p. 84

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84

<sup>4</sup> Almond and Powell, n. 1 p. 49

The interest articulation function is performed by structures known as interest groups. Every society has its own interest group, small or large, weak or strong to protect and promote their interest. Generally, the interest groups of the tribals in Kerala were very weak due to some inherent weaknesses.

The tribals in Kerala have never formed a vote bank. They constitute only 1.1 percentage of the total population of the state. They are spread into various districts and most of them are living in inaccessible places such as forests and hilly areas. The Wayanad District has the highest percentage of tribal population in Kerala. Of the total Scheduled Tribe population, 35.8 percentage are in Wayanad followed by Idukki (15.6%), and Palakkad (11%). The very low literacy level, economic backwardness, other social and cultural disadvantages prevent them from forming strong and well-organized interest groups to protect their interests.

In Kerala the tribals started organizing themselves and reacting against atrocities as early as in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They fought against the British together with Pazhassi Raja in Wayanad. The British hanged their courageous leader, Thalakkal Chandu. But after independence, they could not persist with well-organized interest groups to safeguard their interests; while all other communities developed their own well-organized structures to protect their interests.

All fundamental issues of the tribals of Kerala revolve around the land alienation issue and their right of using the forestland. Forests and tribals have always been the symbols of man's coexistence with nature. Forests have always belonged to the tribals. But a series of forest policies drafted by the Government from time-to-time since 1865 have preyed upon the hapless tribals.

Before 1865, there were no restrictions on the use of forests by the tribals. The Forest Act of 1865 empowered the Government to declare any land covered with trees or

bushes as Government forest, provided it did not abridge or affect any existing rights of individuals or communities<sup>5</sup>

The forest policy introduced by the British Government in India in 1894 permitted the conversion of the forestland into agricultural land if found suitable for agriculture. Basically this reform was for the purpose of helping the British planters to establish big estates in India. The planters from abroad and the landed rich from within the country under the guise of farming encroached in large scale the tribal domains all over Kerala. Forests which is the natural home of the tribals became a restricted area for them. Laws restricted even honey collection from the forest.

After independence, the new forest policy was introduced in 1952. The new policy restricted the release of forestland for cultivation, subject to certain regulations. The facilities enjoyed by the tribals for grazing their animals in the forest were restricted. The policy also laid stress on weakening the tribals by discouraging them from shifting cultivation. Thus, tribals, regarded as owners of forests were rendered serfs of the forest department<sup>6</sup>.

A demand to revise the forest policy culminated in the Indian Forest Bill 1980. In 1976 the 42<sup>nd</sup> amendment to the Constitution made forest a concurrent subject. This had partially reinforced the powers of the State Government on the forest. But the rights and privileges of the tribals on forest were not reinforced through these acts. However, some concessions like collection and gathering of non-wood forest produces and shifting cultivation in selected areas were allowed.

The *Wayanad Adivasi Sevak Sangh* was formed in 1967. One of their major demands was the restoration of the alienated tribal land. The *Sangh* forcibly occupied some land. But it became defunct by 1972. Some of the tribals joined the Agricultural

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<sup>5</sup> *The Hindu* (Kochi), 18 September 2001

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

Labour Union formed by the *Naxalites* under the leadership of Verghese in 1968. It was Verghese, fondly referred to as *Kerala's Che Guevara*- who had taught the Wayanad *Adivasi's* to challenge their oppressor's the feudal landlords.<sup>7</sup> One Brahmin landlord was murdered at Thirunelli, in Wayanad by the *Naxalites*. Naxalite leader Varghese was later shot dead by the police. Some of the tribals who took part in the *Naxalite* movement were also convicted

The *Wayanad Adivasi Sanghom* was formed in 1969 with the support of the Jana Sangh. In 1973, the former members of *Adivasi Sanghom* formed another organization, the *Kerala Girivarga Sangh*, with the former MLA, Mr K K Annan of the CPI (M), as its President. This was formed to terrorize the non-tribal settlers and force them to return the alienated tribal land. In 1973, *Kerala Adivasi Sanghom* was formed with the Congress support with an aim to forge unity and solidarity among different groups of the tribals. This was led by late Raghavan Master an MLA from Wayanad. They claim the credit for the Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act, 1975. But this Act was enacted during the Emergency period under the pressure of the Central Government.

The Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and restoration of Alienated Lands) Bill, 1999 was passed in the Kerala Legislative assembly unanimously with the support of all parties. This bill amended certain provisions, which were against the interest of the outside settlers of the tribal area, in the earlier Act of 1975. The Union Government and High Court of Kerala opined that these provisions are against the interest of the tribals. But all the political parties supported the settlers' interest and none of the parties were there to support the interest of the poor tribals.

However, the tribals were not totally silent to the injustice meted out to them. In Atappaddy, one of the most affected area of encroachment by non-tribal settlers (tribals of

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<sup>7</sup> K P M Basheer, "Land to *Adivasis*: A Display of Political Will", *ibid*, 4 January 2000

Attappady had lost 10,160,19 acres of land between 1960 and 1977 alone), the tribal youths mobilized an *Adivasi Sangamam* and a protest march to the Integrated Tribal development Project (ITDP) office at Agali. They also performed “*Kanjicheeru*” (performance of the funeral rites of the Bill) in their traditional way. There were also some feeble protests from some *Adivasi* Organizations controlled by CPI (ML) Red Flag in some other parts of the state.

However, this issue came into focus when four members of a little known extremist Maoist outfit, The “*Ayyankali Pada*”, held the Palakkad District Collector, W R Reddy, captive for an agonizing nine long hours in his chamber. The tribal land alienation issue gained a statewide attention only after this incident.

Since most of the tribals are spread in small groups at different settlements of different tribal communities, they could not form a strong pressure group. Even though there were many regional tribal associations, none of them could continuously mobilize the tribals effectively or articulate their interest and pressurize the Government.

But the year 2001, witnessed a revival of the tribal agitations for their rights under the leadership of the new Charismatic leader of *Adivasi Gotra Maha Sabha*, C.K Janu. On August 30<sup>th</sup> 2001, the tribals of Kerala started their agitation demanding employment and five acres of cultivable land to each of the landless tribal families. The agitation led by the *Adivasi-Dalit* Action Council (ADAC) put up huts and ‘relief camps’ in front of the secretariat at Thiruvananthapuram.

The Kerala Government yielded to the demands of the ADAC and on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2001 on the forty-seventh day, the strike was called off. As per the agreement with the *Adivasi-Dalit* Action Council (ADAC), the Government promised to allot five acres of land each to *Adivasis* where land is available, and in other areas one acre each. Another agreement was that they would start the disbursement of land on January 1, 2002.

On January 1, 2002, 383 landless *Adivasi* families of Idukki District of Kerala received ownership documents for land measuring one to five acres from the Chief Minister in the inaugural ceremony of land distribution at Marayur. The Chief Minister also launched a five-year '*Adivasi* Rehabilitation Scheme', the key component of which was the immediate assignment of 1,078 acres of land to members of two tribal communities. According to the scheme, the rest of the roughly 50,000 of the landless as well as marginal holders in the state, would be allotted Government lands in phases.<sup>8</sup>

But those who received the ownership documents of the land at the ceremony do not know yet, which is their plot. In each of the documents the number of the plot has been recorded, but the land has not yet been measured and handed over to them. The tribals are not happy with the conditions recorded in the ownership document handed over to them, regarding cultivating in the property. The tribals now accuse that the land distributed to them are steep, rocky and un-cultivable.<sup>9</sup>

According to the information from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the state Government's request to allot forestland for non-forest purposes, including distribution to tribals is not likely to be sanctioned by the central Government<sup>10</sup>. So the tribals at present feel that they are again taken for a ride. The same type of ceremonies were conducted and offers were made at Palakkad also, years back, during the term of the last Government. But these declarations remain only on paper and the tribals continued to face starvation and all sorts of exploitation.

According to the leader of *Adivasi Gotra Maha Sabha*, C.K.Janu, instead of spending the money from the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) for basic needs like food, medicine and education, it is spent for constructing roads and bridges. There is a lot of corruption

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> M R Ajayan, "Adivasikal Veendum Mottakunnil", *Keralasabdham Weekly* (Kochi), vol 40, 2002, p 42

<sup>10</sup> *The Hindu*, 18 February 2002

in the spending of these funds Things are moving in such a way that, the corrupt politician bureaucrat nexus is about to obliterate the entire tribal community.<sup>11</sup>

### **Interest Aggregation**

Aggregation of interest is the second functional step in the political conversion process of transforming or converting inputs into outputs. The interest aggregation is the function of converting demands into general policy alternatives Under a totalitarian party system, a single party may control interest articulation, as well as shape policy and control the making of decisions. On the other hand, in a modern democracy, associational interest groups may dominate interest articulation, a political party system may regulate interest aggregation through the formation of policy and recruitment, and a cabinet and legislature may engage in the final rule making choices<sup>12</sup>

Interest aggregation may be performed by various structures Many of the structures performing interest articulation may also perform interest aggregation The interest aggregation takes place in all sub-systems of the political system In sub-systems where articulation is limited, a small elite group from within that sub-system manages the process of aggregating the demands and this aggregated demands are articulated for a second stage aggregation in the general political system

In the case of interest aggregation, the development of specialized structures for the aggregation of a wide range of interests into a limited number of policy alternatives makes it easier for decision-makers to take account of all elements in the society and to respond to them Political development has, therefore, been defined as the increased differentiation and specialization of political structures and the increased secularization of political culture

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<sup>11</sup> C K Janu , " Parayathe Vairya", *Malayala Manorama* (Kochi ), 23 August 2001

<sup>12</sup> Almond and Powell, n 1, pp 68-69

For a highly developed political system, we require specialized structures to interact between the great range of articulated interests and the final making of authoritative rules. The political party and the Governmental bureaucracy are the two possible candidates for these specialized roles.<sup>13</sup> These structures provide direct links between interest groups and decision makers. Bureaucracy is established basically to perform the function of fulfilling the decisions of the decision-making agencies, i.e., the output functions, but they also perform input functions like interest aggregation. Political parties are the most specialized interest aggregation structures in modern developed societies

In the case of the tribals of the Palakkad district, political parties play a negative role in their interest aggregation. In the case of restoration of alienated tribal lands from the outside settlers all political parties in Kerala supported the interest of non-tribal settlers, in the tribal land. Political parties in Kerala are directly or indirectly supporting and helping the settlers because the settlers have strong backing of well-organized interest groups, who can influence the Government and the vote banks of the state. On the other hand, the tribals in the state have never formed a vote bank or never had a well-organized interest group to safeguard their interests. They have never been a bargaining force. A bottle of cheap liquor and some cajoling on the eve of the poll is all they need.<sup>14</sup>

### **Bureaucracy**

*The Bureaucracy* is another channel of access. In the case of the tribals, the Tribal Development Department is the specialized agency in charge of the tribal development measures. Since the tribals are economically and socially backward, this department has the responsibility of empowering the tribals, together with their function

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p 70

<sup>14</sup> *Indian Express* (Kochi), 9 November 1996

of implementing welfare programmes. They also have the responsibility of articulating and aggregating the interests of the tribals.

### **An Analysis of the Input Processes among The Tribals of Palakkad**

As discussed earlier, demands and supports are two types of inputs into the political system. The different classes of demands imposed on a political system are demands for allotting goods and services, demands for the regulation of behavior (laws), demands for participation in the political system, demands for communication and information. The various demands are articulated and aggregated by agencies like interest groups, political parties and in some cases by bureaucracy also.

By analyzing the case of the tribals of Palakkad, we can find answers to various questions related to the political processes of the tribals of Kerala. Why the interest of the settlers, related to alienate tribal lands, prevail over the interest of the tribals, even when the Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act of 1975 clearly directs the restoration of the alienated tribal lands? Why all parties and Government ignore the interest of the tribals, above the Tribal Act 1975 and High Court decisions in favour of them? Why their interest articulation and interest aggregation are not effective and consistent?

The data collected from 500 samples spread all over the district examines and analyzes the various factors affecting the political processes of the tribals of Palakkad. There are many organizations working among the tribals of Palakkad like the *Girijan Seva Samithi* (GSS) Attappady, *Nelliyampathy Adivasi Sabha*, etc, and recently the various tribal communities of Palakkad also formed an *Adivasi Gotra Maha Sabha* as in all other districts. In fact in Attappady area of Palakkad district, which is one of the largest tribal concentrations in Kerala, still the true representatives of the tribals are the *Uru Mupans* (Chieftains of Tribal hamlets). There is Grant Council of the Chieftains, which decide all important issues of the area.

As Table 5 1 shows 76 per cent of the respondents were not members in any of the tribal organizations 100 per cent of the Eravalars, Kadars and Paniyans, 94 per cent of Mudugars, 70 per cent of Kurumbas, 65 per cent of Irulars and 55 per cent of Malayans are not members of any of the tribal organizations. Among the 24 per cent of tribals who are members in some tribal organization, 13 per cent are passive members, and only 11 per cent are active members

TABLE- 5 1

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY TRIBAL ORGANIZATION? WHAT IS YOUR  
LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION?

Tribe Name	No/Don't know %	Passive %	Active %	Total %
Eravalalar	100	-	-	100
Irular	65	17	18	100
Kadar	100	-	-	100
Kurumba	70	30	-	100
Malayan	55	22	23	100
Mudugar	94	6	-	100
Paniyan	100	-	-	100
Total	76	13	11	100

Source -Survey data

34 per cent of the Tribals are members of Trade Unions 52 per cent of Eravalans, 29 per cent of Irulars, 10 per cent of Kurumbas, 55 per cent of Malayans, 29 per cent Mudugars and 50 per cent Paniyans are members of trade unions None of the Kadars have membership in trade unions. The office bearers of trade unions from among tribals are 1 per cent. They are from the Irular and Malayan tribal groups. 24 per cent of the tribals are active participants in trade union activities.

TABLE -5.2

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A TRADE UNION? WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION?

Tribe Name	No/ Don't know %	Passive %	Active %	Office bearer %	Total %
Eravalal	48	7	45	-	100
Irular	71	5	23	1	100
Kadar	100	-	-	-	100
Kurumba	90	10	-	-	100
Malayan	45	19	32	4	100
Mudugar	71	20	9	-	100
Paniyan	50	13	37	-	100
Total	66	9	24	1	100

Source -Survey data

As regards the tribals association with the political parties, Table 5 3 shows that, 50 per cent of the tribals are supporters some political party. 16 per cent are members of a party 34 per cent are supporters, but no one among the respondents is an office bearer 80 per cent of the Eravalal, 41 per cent of Irular, 30 per cent Kurumba, 89 per cent Malayan, 47 per cent Mudugar and 62 per cent of Paniyans are party members. 100 per cent of the Kadar are not members of any political party

TABLE 5 3

ARE YOU ASSOCIATED WITH SOME POLITICAL PARTIES?

Tribe Name	No/ Don't know %	Supporter %	Member %	Office Bearer %	Total %
Eravalal	20	63	7	-	100
Irular	59	22	19	-	100
Kadar	100	-	-	-	100
Kurumba	70	30	-	-	100
Malayan	11	66	23	-	100
Mudugar	53	35	12	-	100
Paniyan	38	24	38	-	100
Total	50	34	16	-	100

Source -Survey data

87 per cent of the tribals have gone for voting at least once in their life and 13 per cent never exercised their voting right 100 per cent of the Malayans, 87 per cent of Irulars and Mudugars, 82 per cent of Eravalans, 71 per cent of the Kadar, 80 per cent of the Kurumban and 83 per cent of Paniyans exercise their voting right. 48 per cent tribals go for voting due to party spirit, 24 per cent due to interest in political affairs, 8 per cent due to pressure by some influentials and 3 per cent since they get some incentives.

TABLE-5 4

HAVE YOU EVER GONE FOR VOTING? WHAT MADE YOU TO GO FOR VOTING?

Tribe Name	Not gone %	Some Incentive %	Pressure by some influential %	Party spirit %	Interest in political affairs %	Others %	Total %
Eravalan	18	-	3	59	20	-	100
Irular	13	1	8	55	23	-	100
Kadar	29	57	-	-	-	14	100
Kurumba	20	10	10	10	50	-	100
Malayan	-	-	12	33	45	10	100
Mudugar	13	-	9	43	26	9	100
Paniyan	25	12	25	25	12	-	100
Total	13	3	8	48	24	4	100

Source -Survey data

Among the total tribal respondents, 43 per cent never attended *Uru Sabha* meetings, 20 per cent even do not know about the *Uru Sabha* meetings and 37 per cent attend some times the *Uru Sabha* meetings No one attend the meeting regularly

TABLE 5 5

HOW OFTEN DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN *GRAM SABHA*/ *URU SABHA* MEETINGS?

Tribe Name	Don't know %	Never %	Some times %	Regular %	Total %
Eravalan	24	7	69	-	100
Irular	13	58	29	-	100

Kadar	100	-	-	-	100
Kurumba	30	70	-	-	100
Malayan	11	34	55	-	100
Mudugar	23	41	36	-	100
Paniyan	13	37	50	-	100
Total	20	43	37	-	100

Source survey data

42 per cent of the tribals do not attend political meetings. Among the 58 per cent of tribals, who attend the party meetings, 34 per cent go because of party spirit, 12 per cent go because of interest in political affairs and 7 per cent due to the pressure by some influentials 5 per cent of the tribals openly admitted that they went for party meetings by accepting some incentives like liquor or money

TABLE -5 6

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO ATTEND THE POLITICAL MEETINGS?

Tribe Name	Not gone %	Some incentives %	Pressure by some influential %	Party Spint %	Interest in political affairs %	Total %
Eravalal	17	3	3	74	3	100
Irular	49	2	9	21	14	100
Kadar	100	-	-	-	-	100
Kurumba	70	10	-	20	-	100
Malayan	21	-	-	56	23	100
Mudugar	39	6	12	34	9	100
Paniyan	12	-	12	38	38	100
Total	42	5	7	34	12	100

Source -Survey data

49 per cent of the Tribals have no interest in political and public affairs during non-election periods 100 per cent Kadaras, 70 per cent of Kurumbas, 56 per cent of Irulars, 54 per cent of Mudugars, 28 per cent of Eravalars, 17 per cent of Pantiyans and 16 per cent of Malayan have no interest in political and public affairs during non-election periods Only 15 per cent are very much interested in political affairs. 25 per cent have moderate and 11 per cent have only very little interest in political affairs

TABLE -5.7

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS DURING  
NON- ELECTION PERIODS?

Tribe Name	No interest %	Very little interest %	Moderate %	Very much interested %	Total %
Eravalar	28	10	38	24	100
Irular	56	10	21	13	100
Kadar	100	-	-	-	100
Kurumba	70	-	20	10	100
Malayan	16	17	32	35	100
Mudugar	54	14	26	6	100
Paniyan	12	12	25	50	100
Total	49	11	25	15	100

Source -Survey data

From the survey it was found that only 24 per cent of the tribals of Palakkad are members of some tribal organization (table-5-1) This data reveals that the associational interest groups do not have a wide base among the tribals However, 24 per cent are active members in trade unions (table 5-2) and 50 per cent are supporters of some political party (table 5-3) 58 per cent of tribals participate in political meetings (table5-6) and 15 per cent are very much interested in political affairs even during non-election periods ( table 5-7) 87 per cent of tribals have exercised their voting right at least once in their life (table 5-4). The above data suggests that tribals have high degree of participant political culture

A community having a high degree of participant political culture should also be very effective and consistent in interest articulation and interest aggregation For participant political culture very high level of cognitive orientation is required. When the cognitive level of the tribals of Palakkad was examined from the survey data, it was found that only 50 per cent of the tribals could answer correctly the name of our country (table 4-1), only 36 per cent of tribals know about all the four major political parties

(Congress, BJP, CPM and Janata Dal); 28 per cent know only about one party and another 35 per cent know about two or three parties ( table-4-3)

Another important finding of our survey data is that 97 per cent of the tribals are totally ignorant of the Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act ,1975 and the new bill passed in the Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously in 1999 (table 4 4) This was in fact the basic issue of the tribals, and for which the Adivasi-Dalit Action Council (ADAC) recently conducted the historic agitation leading to the promise of the Government to allot five to one acres of land each to tribals The above data reveals that the cognitive level of the tribals regarding the general political system and their own important issues are very low

The interest articulation channels and means of access are very important in the process of interest articulation. Interest articulation is not a mere conveying of information, it is articulating an interest in such a way that it is likely to gain a favourable response

### **Violence**

One of the means of articulating demands is through *violence* This is the method of anomic interest groups spontaneously articulating deeply felt interests. When a community lacks effective means, political knowledge, and the awareness to engage in influential interest articulation they may resort to violent or unconstitutional methods The incident of "*Ayyankali Pada*", Keeping the Palakkad District Collector, W.R Reddy, captive for an agonizing nine long hours in his chamber is an example of this illegal method

The *Nexalite* leader of the Seventies, Verghese, had a considerable number of followers among the tribals By traveling through various tribal settlements in the Palakkad district, this researcher could find that in many of the poverty stricken *uru's* people have inclinations even to some extremist groups, whom they feel as better choice than the regular political parties to protect their interests This shows that when people

are unable to articulate their interests and get a favorable decision through the normal channels of interest articulation they may turn to anomic interest groups.

### **Personal Connection**

*Personal connection* constitutes another channel of access to political elites. For personal connection, social status and ties with the elites are required. In the case of the tribals, who are in the extreme lower stratum of the social and economic system, this channel is inaccessible.

### **Elite Representation**

*Elite representation* is yet another channel of access which can be effectively utilized by interest groups. It may either be the presence of a group member or a strong supporter in the elite. In the case of the tribals of Kerala, North Waynad constituency is reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. The members representing this constituency were always been more a party representative than a representative of the tribals. What tribals require is the recruitment of a leader emerging from their interest group to the political elite. The recent rise of Janu as the undisputed leader of tribals is a good sign, but she has to travel a long distance to become a part of the ruling elite and protect the tribal interests.

### **Mass Media**

*Mass media* constitutes a very important channel of access in modern independent political systems. The mass media is made to articulate interests of some groups in a society in two ways: by influencing the mass media or running their own news papers or television channels by a particular interest group, and by articulating, interest of a particular interest group since their interest or demand is a just one or fulfillment of it is a moral responsibility of the society.

In the case of the tribals of Kerala, the independent mass media agencies are the major articulators of their interest since their demands are appealing to the moral conscience of the society. The Government explicitly yielded to the demands of the 2001 agitation led by Adivasi Dalit Action Council (ADAC), because of the same reason and

not because of the mere might of the agitation. There are reports of exploitation of the tribals in all newspapers, weeklies, magazines, etc., radio and television also report news of tribal exploitations. The stories of sexual exploitation of the tribal women in Attappady, the Ganja and Liquor Mafia employing tribals for production and sale of the same, the outsiders cheating the ignorant and innocent tribals of their lands etc, are all reported by the media. These reports appeal to the conscience of the public.

Mass media in the process of interest articulation plays two roles; one is articulation of interest and the other is helping in the formulation of interests to articulate. The second role is as important as the first, because it is on the basis the information from the newspapers or other media agencies that the individuals develop or formulate their choices.

It is interesting to recall, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that 75 per cent of the tribals of Palakkad never read newspapers. 6 per cent of the tribals read newspapers very often and 19 per cent read some times (table 4-13). 59 per cent of the tribals have never seen television, 35 per cent see television some times, 6 per cent very often (table 4-15). 32 per cent of the tribals do not hear radio, 54 per cent some times, 14 per cent very often (table 4-14). 80 per cent of the tribals never read magazines and periodicals, 14 per cent some times 6 per cent very often (table 4-16).

### **The Tribals and Support Inputs**

The second type of input is supports. The different classes of supports are; material supports like payment of taxes, obedience to law and regulations, participatory supports such as voting and other forms of political activity, attention given to Governmental communication, and evidence of respect for public authority etc. The support inputs from a community are also a scale of measurement of its political development.

The analysis of the data collected about the tribals of Palakkad shows that 87 per cent of the tribals have the experience of participated in voting in the past elections (table

5-4) 51 per cent of them have interest in political and public affairs during non-election periods also (table 5 7)

Helping the Government in maintaining law and order is a civic responsibility It is also a support input People can help the police and authorities to prevent the breach of law by giving information about the law breakers leading to their arrest There are many *arrack* and *ganja* mafia's operating in the tribal areas of Kerala. The longing for intoxicants is inherent to the tribals. By misusing this tendency and their poverty many outsiders cultivate *ganja* in the interior forest with the help of the tribals This researcher himself witnessed the processing of the *ganja* plants by the tribals in some of the tribal hamlets at Attappady There is wide spread production and distribution of *arrack* in the tribal areas (*Arrack* is prohibited in Kerala).

Only 24 per cent of the tribals were ready to inform the police if there was illegal production of *arrack* in there area. 41 per cent will never and 16 per cent may some times inform the police Among the different tribal communities no one from among the Kurumbas and Kadars were ready to inform the police if there is illegal production of *arrack* in their area This can be due to any one or both of the following reasons. Both the Kadars and Kurumbas are geographically more isolated from Police Station and other public offices Their feeling of civic responsibility may be very low or absent. However among the tribal communities of Palakkad Malayans constitute the highest number, (46%), who was ready to inform the police if there is illegal production of *arrack* in their area

TABLE 5 8

WILL YOU INFORM THE POLICE IF THERE IS ILLEGAL PRODUCTION AND SALE OF ARRACK IN YOUR AREA?

Tribe Name	Don't know %	Never %	Sometimes %	Yes %	Total %
Eravalar	17	45	7	31	100

Irular	20	38	23	19	100
Kadar	43	43	14	-	100
Kurumba	-	100	-	-	100
Malayan	10	21	23	46	100
Mudugar	16	49	6	29	100
Paniyan	38	38	12	12	100
Total	19	41	16	24	100

Source -Survey data

Regarding ganja 37 per cent were not willing to help the authorities to destroy an illegal ganja plantation. Only 26 per cent were willing to inform the authorities. 19 per cent told that sometimes they might help the authorities to destroy an illegal ganja plantation. Here also 100 per cent of the Kurumbas were not willing to help authorities, whereas 45 per cent of Malayans were willing to help the authorities.

TABLE 5 9

WILL YOU HELP THE AUTHORITIES TO DESTROY ILLEGAL GANJA PLANTATION IN YOUR AREA?

Tribe Name	Don't know %	Never %	Sometimes %	Yes %	Total %
Eravalar	17	48	7	28	100
Irular	20	31	28	21	100
Kadar	43	14	14	29	100
Kurumba	-	100	-	-	100
Malayan	11	22	22	45	100
Mudugar	11	54	6	29	100
Paniyan	38	38	12	12	100
Total	18	37	19	26	100

Source -Survey data

The data collected through the interview schedule discloses that 38 per cent of the tribals have more loyalty to their tribal community, 14 per cent to some tribal organization and 31 per cent to some political party. Only 17 per cent have more loyalty to their country.

TABLE 5 10  
LOYALTY OF THE TRIBALS

Tribe Name	Your tribal Community %	A tribal Organization %	A political Party %	Nation %	Total %
Eravalal	14	-	79	7	100
Irular	36	27	16	21	100
Kadar	86	-	14	-	100
Kurumba	80	10	10	-	100
Malayan	22	-	34	44	100
Mudugar	50	-	43	7	100
Paniyan	87	-	-	13	100
Total	38	14	31	17	100

Source -Survey data

Analysis of the input process of the tribals of Palakkad district discloses that the lower level of economic and social status and education adversely affect their political competence. The political culture, the communication structures, resources of the community, etc, are mixed in a complex pattern. Against the above background, the next chapter examines how far these weaknesses affect the output processes concerning the tribals of Palakkad.