

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE CHANGING LIFESTYLES OF  
BRAHMINS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NAMBOODIRIS OF  
TRISSUR.



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MARCH – 2015

*Kameel*  
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A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE CHANGING LIFESTYLES  
OF BRAHMINS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
NAMBODIRIS OF TRISSUR

A Thesis submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University in Partial Fulfillment of  
The requirements for the Degree of  
BACHELOR OF ARTS

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CERTIFICATE

*This is to certify that the dissertation "changing lifestyle of Brahmins with special reference to Namboodiris of Trissur district" submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of BA Degree in Sociology, ST. Teresa's College Ernakulum, is a bonafide record of the work done by the candidate under my supervision and guidance.*

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## DECLARATION

*We hereby declare that the dissertation titled “ Changing lifestyle of Brahmins with special reference to Namboodiris of Trissur district” submitted by me for the BA Degree in Sociology is my original work.*

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**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

## CASTE

The word caste comes from the Portuguese word *casta*, signifying breed, race or kind; *homem de boa casta* is 'a man of good family'. The first use of this word in the restricted sense of what we now understand by caste seems to date from 1563 when Garcia de Orta wrote that 'no one changes from his father's trade and all those of the same caste of shoemakers are the same'. To define a caste is harder than to give the derivation of the term. Risley defines it as 'a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community'. He goes on to add that the caste name is generally associated with a specific occupation and that a caste is almost invariably endogamous, but is further divided, as a rule, into a number of smaller circles each of which is endogamous, so that a Brahman is not only restricted to marrying another Brahman, but to marry a woman of the same subdivision of Brahmans. This definition is open to question on the ground that descent from a mythical ancestor is claimed rather by the *gotra*, the internal exogamous division of the endogamous caste, than by the caste as a whole; further, although the endogamous subdivision of a caste is a genuine and common feature of the institution, it is doubtful if the unqualified term Brahman can rightly be used as the name of a caste at all.

Ketkar defines caste as a social group having two characteristics: membership is confined to those who are born of members, and includes all persons so born; the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group. Each one of these groups has a special name by which it is called, several of such small aggregates are grouped together under a common name, while these large groups are but subdivisions of groups still larger which have independent

names. Thus we see that there are several stages of groups and that the word "caste" is applied to groups at any stage. The words "caste" and "sub-caste" are not absolute but comparative in signification. The larger groups will be called a caste while the smaller group will be called a sub-caste. A group is a caste or sub-caste in comparison with smaller or larger. When we talk of a Maratha Brahmin and Konkan Brahmin, the first one would be called a caste while the latter

would be called a sub-caste; but in a general way both of them might be called a caste. N. K. Dath refrains from defining caste, but describes its features: members of a caste cannot marry outside it ;their are similar but less rigid restrictions on eating and drinking with a member of another caste; there are fixed occupations for many caste ; their is some hierarchical gradation of caste ,the best recognised position being that of the Brahmins at that of the tops; birth determines a man's caste for life unless he be expelled for violation of its rules; otherwise transition from one caste to another caste is not possible; the whole system turns on the prestige of Brahmin. . The theory on the origin of caste says that Brahmins have been born out of the mouth of Brahma-the creator, Kshathriyas from the arms, Vaishyas from the thighs and Sudras from the feet.

### FUNCTIONS OF CASTE

From the point of view of the individual member of a caste the system provides him from birth from a fixed social milieu from which neither wealth nor poverty, success nor disaster can remove him , unless of course he so violate the standard of behavior laid down by his caste that it spews him forth –temporarily or permanently . He is provided in this way with a permanent body of associations which controls almost all his behaviors and contacts. His caste canalizes his choice in marriage, acts as his trade union,his friendly or benefit society, his slate club and his orphanage ; it takes the place for home of health insurance, and if need be provides for his funeral.It frequently determines his occupation,often positively, for in many caste the occupational tradition is very strong indeed, commonly negatively, since there are many pursuits, at any rate in the case of all but the lowest castes , which he cannot follow, or can follow only at the cost of ex communication from the society to which he belongs. It must often happen that membership of a caste will take the place of attachment to a political party since in such cases as disputes between caste of the right hand and of the left his views on the merits of the dispute and the side he is to support are pre determined for him by his caste membership. Thus the practice of his caste dictates to each member customs to be observed in the matter of diet,the observance of ceremonial uncleanness and whether he may ,or may or may not,marry or remarry a widow.

From the aspect of the caste community itself caste determines the membership of the community. It is true that in the case of some castes, particularly those of the sectarian origin, recruitment from outside may be possible, but generally speaking a caste cannot increase the membership of its body except by means of an increase in the number of births within the caste. Caste again determines to a very large extent the social status of each caste in regard to other castes. The caste system enables the caste to act corporately and to control the behavior of its component members. It is able in this way to raise the position in society. This may not be easy to achieve and may perhaps be accomplished only in the course of generations, but it certainly has been and can be done. By organization and propaganda a caste can change its name and in the course of time get a new one accepted, and by altering its canons of behavior in the matter of diet and marriage can increase the estimation in which it is held. Another important aspect of caste is regard to the state, to the society as a whole. The functions which caste performs for the individual may be and are performed for individuals by other institutions in other societies. Perhaps the most important of all its functions, and the one which above all others makes caste in India an unique institution, is, or has been, to integrate India society to weld into one community the various competing if not incompatible groups composing it. Some of these groups have been occupational or religious

### **BRAHMIN**

Brahmin is a priestly class of Hindu society. The word Brahmin appeared for the first time in Purush -Sukta, a section of Rigveda. According to the commentary of KesavaKasmiri 'Lord Krishna has elaborated on the duties of Brahmin according to their respective natures based on inherent quality of 'Sattvaguna' -the mode of goodness. Control of the mind and senses, engaging in austerities such as fasting and restrained as enjoined in Vedic scriptures, external purity by being physically clean and internal purity by free of desire and animosity. For giving those who have been ungrateful and hateful, devoid of duplicity having mutual concordance in body, speech and mind. Firm, unshakeable faith in Vedic scriptures. Knowledge of what is real and what is illusory. Realization of the essence of the Vedic scriptures by understanding the actual non-contradictory conclusions of the seemingly contradictory anomalies in various Vedic scriptures'.

A true Brahmin is a one who have attained Brahmin-hood not by birth but by his pure actions .He who have attained supreme self-knowledge is a Brahmin.Brahmins are those who have an inclination towards acquiring and disseminating sacred knowledge Abrahmin is a one who has realized Brahman; says RamanaMaharshi. Such an one has no sense of individuality in him. He cannot think that he acts as an intermediary. This definition of Brahminism is as ancient as the hills. When Bhishma was lying on his bed of arrows some thousands of years ago and thought dharma shastras to the Pandavas in the presence of Sri Krishna, he also, like Bhagavan, gave the true meaning of Brahminhood a follows:

“Acts alone determine who is a Brahmana and who isnot.Performing al rituals and sacrifices does not make Brahmana. There is only one bondage, namely, that caused by desire. He who is free from this bondage is a Brahmana: he is distinguished above all others, and derives his joy from Self-alone.”(Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata).In the traditional Indian society, Brahmins enjoyed a very high position. They enjoyed all rights and privileges in the society.They were economically sound and dominated Indian scholarship for centuries.

### **NAMBOOTHIRIS**

“Nam (vedam) poorayithiNamboothiri” is the commonly accepted etymology of the word Namboothiri.It means the person who completes vedam is Namboothiri. Namboothiri “completes” Vedam as he studies and practices vedam and performs the rituals, srouthakriyas (yagam) an other Kriyas (like Shodasakriyakal, Nithyakarmam, Cremation, etc)as prescribed in vedam. This definition carries the message as to how important the vedam to Namboothiri community. The Malayali Brahmins are called as Namboothiris. They always held their supremacy as the purest stock.Historical evidences as well as their own tradition suggest that they come from north India and settle down in Kerala, migrating along the west coast. It is clear that they constitute links in a long chain of migration along the west coast of India, carrying with them the tradition that Parasuraman created their land and donated it to them. The Namboothiri community of Kerala has witnessed a pathetic decline. Till just a few decades ago these top-running Brahmins remained at the apex of the social ladder and basked in the glory of centuries. Immense wealth coming from their vast land and unlimited leisure had made them connoisseurs. But like any culture that has reached the zenith the Namboothiris too started degeneration.

## NAMBOOTHIRI MARRIAGE, EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION

Marriages within the Namboothiri caste performed through rituals in the traditional style were only considered as marriage. Sambandham is not supported by blessing from individual gods through mantras and advice to the bride through 'veliothu' a part of Rigveda. Until 1933 only the eldest brother was entitled to marry within the Namboothiri caste. His younger brothers were supposed to keep up pure "brahmacharyam" by being unmarried and to dedicate themselves to preserve Vedas and rituals. The younger sons were meant for inheriting the Vedic tradition from the ancestors and passing it on their future generation. Apart from this those younger brothers who opted to marry within the caste were excommunicated (Bhrastu) from the family. By putting such pressures the elder in the community might have thought that the younger brother would concentrate on their traditional job of practicing teacher hood preserving and transmitting Vedas. Except for few intelligent and studied ones, younger brothers turned to be more lucrative and engaged in worldly affairs like Sambandham. Other communities especially Nairs and Kshatriyas, encourage Namboothiris to have Sambandam with girls in their community. The objective behind this encouragement was to purify their future generation with the Namboothiri blood and also elevate their families to higher level in the society due to Namboothiri relationship. It was a fact that Namboothiri could not resist such attractions in terms of money, sex and leisurely lifestyle. Namboothiris thus married Kshatriyas, Nairs, Warriors and Pisharoti girls and the children from such marriage alliance belonged to matrilineal [marumakkathayam] lineage of their mother. This interestingly led to situations like a Nair son of Namboothiri could not eat or drink with his Father or a Namboothiri could not eat food prepared by his Nair wife. Namboothiri spinsters remained abandoned in the community. Namboothiriyogakshema Mahasabha revolutionary group of Namboothiri founded in 1908, took a decision in 1919 and agitated for marriage of all Namboothiri within the community. Sabha declared the marriage of younger brothers within the community as official, irrespective of whether the elder brother were married or not. This revolutionary meeting was held in 'Bharathibhoshanam' at Trichur on 25<sup>th</sup> Medam 1094. The aim was embodied in the Madras Namboothiri act of 1933. In the same year, the Madras Marumakkathayam act was passed by which Sambandham was considered as a regular marriage, conferring on the children the same rights of inheritance property as held by children whose parents were both Namboothiris. The declaration of these acts led to a sudden decline in the number of Sambandham marriage and this

unethical practice ended shortly. Following these acts, Namboothiri land was increasingly partitioned and property disappeared. The stoppage of Sambandham led to aliberation of Namboothiri wives and girls. They were the major sufferers due to unavailability of Namboothiri boys for marriage because of the practice of Polygamy and parallel Sambandam by elder sons. Due to the dispersal of properties financially sound Namboothiri families became middle class while middle class families became poor. Financially poor families really struggled to cope with new environment. As a result most Namboothiri youth had to leave their Vedic education and practice and switch over to modern education and profession.

Intelligence and a simple life style were the only tools the youth inherited except a few from financially upper class families. The Trissur BrahmawomMaddam, which was originally founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century to teach Rigveda offered free food and stay to these studious boys. Most of these boys later became executives and professionals and took their families financially back to middle class while a minority of them miserably failed in formal education also some barely managed with income from priesthood in temples. The 1963 Kerala land reform act and 1970 Amendment of it add oil to flame. Under the original act, cultivating tenants were made eligible to purchase the right title and interest from the landlord. Except the properties of a few landlords who anticipated such an Act, the leased properties of Namboothiris were lost to tenants and this further reduced the income of Namboothiris. The 1970 act clarified that this procedure was applicable if land owner was a religious, charitable or educational institution. The net result was most of the temples also lost the income and did the poor and dependent Namboothiris. Due to such uncertainties and sudden decline of income from priesthood, most Namboothiri youngsters lost interest in Vedic culture and ritual performances.

### **FOOD HABITS**

True to the Upanishad mantram "AthithhiDevoBhava:" they honoured their guests. The simplicity in their lifestyle was reflected in their food habits too. Their scientifically systematized preparations used ingredients that were locally and seasonally available. Their eating habits were also scientifically evolved. Some of these are followed even now. Namboothiris were strict vegetarians. This low protein diet resulted in large food intake for which they were well known. Namboothiris were generally immune to many of these diseases. The current global thinking and conversion to vegetarianism and natural foods perhaps have a similar basis. Timeless and



avoidance of mid-meal snacking added to their dietary discipline. Traditionally they ate only two meals. Meals used to be served in and eaten in a calm atmosphere. Children were not allowed to make noise. These were practiced even during major feasts, to the extent feasible. Food was served on plantain leaves and eaten with the right hand while seated on the floor or on wood "palakaas". For males 'Keezhila' (two small strips of plantain leaves was placed under 'Naakkila' (unsplit, terminal portion of a leaf) and pointing outwards. For major feasts the leaf was withered ('vaatuka') over fire. Only after serving "Kutikuneer" and doing "Praanaahuthi" accompanied by chanting manthram other items were served.

### **STATUS OF NAMBOOTHIRI WOMEN**

The Namboothiri believed that the girl during infancy, childhood and youth is under the wings of gods Soman, Gandharvan and Agni respectively. God Vishvavasa protects her virginity. Hence the girl has to thank Vishvavasa for protecting her till marriage and get married in the presence of Agni.

### **SCOPE OF STUDY**

Namboothiris are a group of people who enjoyed the most important position, rights, privileges in traditional Indian society. Nobody had the rights to question their rights in the society. They led a quite enjoyable life but the situation has changed. The Namboothiris too started degenerating. This change started with the land reforms of 1960. Their privileges dwindled. The government is giving extensive preferences to the lower caste majority. A reverse discrimination has rooted in the society. As a result the traditional customs, practice, food habits, status and role of Brahmins has been on the path of change. Sociologists are deeply interested in the study of social change. Namboothiris were the dominant caste who enjoyed all rights and privileges. But today the scenario has changed. Their social status and lifestyle has undergone changes and hence the study has a great scope for the study.

**CHAPTER 2**

**REVIEW OF LITREATURE**

The ancient Indians nearly 3000 years ago were aware of the problem of permanence Vs changes and the specific problems of social change. The study of social change is the study .The Upanishads nearly 3000 years ago looked upon Brahman as the ultimate reality and asserted that the Atman, themself, was identical with the ultimate reality as briefly expressed in the great sayings[mahakavya] like Tatvamasithou art that], aham brahma asmi [I am a Brahmin].The self as well as the universe are real and permanent. The study of social change is the study of disruption of social persistence and the study of social persistence is the study of social process which inhibit or fail to produce change.No society is persistent without change, nor changing without being persistent.

As the consensus among the scholars of Kerala history, like Dr.MGS Narayanan and Dr.VeluthattKesavan is that Namboodiri Brahmins arrived in Kerala only after many centuries after they existence of Christaincommunitesthere it is quite possible that many of the customs and manners of the latter were imitated or borrowed by the former. In both communities women wear only white dress. Among the Brahmins of the East coast only widows use white dress.Otherwise dark reds, blues, green set care used by Brahmin women outside Kerala. Ceremonies connected with marriage like ceremonial baths, Manthrakodi or Pudava[bridal cloth or veli] Thali or Minnu are all to be found among the Brahmins and Christains in an identical style. Similarly death and funeral ceremonies like Pula, Shradam or the several feasts in memory of the dead were common to both communities.

There are 64 special rules of Kerala Brahmins, most of which dealing with the practice of "cleanliness".In addition to this there are ever so many other customs given sancity and sanction and sanction and the status of long and strict practice. Infact the very life of Kerala Brahmin is made hell by these rules, regulations and conventions regarding "clean and unclean".In addition to this there is strict observance of Ayitham which is much more than mere untouchablity. Ayitham or untouchability is a total segregation of a member of the lower caste. Seeing the extreme forms of Ayitham or untouchablity Swami Vivekananda was forced to call Kerala -a Lunatic Asylum.According to B. Kuppusswamy literary and historical reasearches have established beyond doubt that the women held a position of equality with men during the

vedic period. The girl as well as the boys were required to undergo upanayana ceremonies in order to be initiated to vedic studies. In fact the education of women was looked upon as so important that the Atharvaveda asserted that "The success of women in her married life depends upon her proper training during the Brahmacharya". Kuppuswamy says that the complex rituals needed a long training of over ten to twelve years which even the Aryan wife could obtain gradually upanayana of girls become a mere formality. Since girls were not educated early marriage become common, girls were married soon after puberty. By about AD 205 some of dharmashastra declared that marriage was upanayanas for girls.

The vedic women being grown up and educated had a voice in the selection of their husbands. Often there were also love marriages-Gandharvavivaha. Altckar writes "The reasons why daughter were not unpopular in ancient India during the early century are not difficult to understand. They could be initiated in vedic studies and were entitled to offer sacrifice to god". The discontinuance of upanayanam, the neglect of education and the dowry of the marriage age produced disastrous consequences upon the position and status of women.

Brihadaranayakaupanishad stated a seeking the self alone monks relenquish all rites and renounce their homes. Ancient followers of the self did not desire progeny as all rites meditation of condition Brahmin, the three mean respectively to the three external worlds.... They renounce their desire for sons for wealth and for the world and wandered about as mendicants.

Smriti writes preached that the wife should look upon her husband as a god. Some of them went to the extent of asserting that she would worship him even if he was a rake.

Neera Desai says ideologically women was considered completely inferior species, inferior to the male, having no significance, no personality, socially she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right suppressed and oppressed she was further branded as basically lacking the ethical filter. The patriarchal joint family, the custom polygamy, the property structure, early marriage or a state of permanent widowhood, all there contributed to the smothering of the free development of women. Swami Vivekananda gave a tremendous impetus to them anticipation of women for seclusion and bondage. He said "that country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great nor will ever be in the future."

Gandhiji in his dharmasatra says "it is sad to think that the smritis contain texts which could command to respect from men who cherish the liberty of women as their own and who regard her as the mother of race.

V.Jayarammasaya that Brahmins :- priestly class entitled to study vedas, perform rites and rituals for themselves and for other obliged to observe the scarments. They are the middle men between gods and men. They act as temple priests and invoke gods on behalf of others. They are expected to show exemplary behaviours and spend their lives in pursuit of divine knowledge and preservation of the tradition. According to Manu ,the lawmaker , a Brahmin was and incarnantion of dharma (sacred tradition) , born to serve and protect the dharma. He belonged to the excellent of the human race, endowed with the intelligence and knowledge to attain Brahman. He was the highest on the earth. The word of all created beings. Whatever that existed in the world was the property of a Brahmin.

The Britannica encyclopedia Brahman , also spelled Brahmin , Sanskritbrahman ("possesor of Brahman "). Highest ranking of the four varnas, or social classes, in Hindu India . The elevated position of the brahmanas goes back to the later vedic period, when the indo European speaking settlers in northern India were already divided in to brahmanas or priests , warriors ( of the Kshatriyas class), traders ( of the vaishyas class), and labourers ( of the shudra class) since then there has been no fundamental change in their relative study found 55% of Brahmins lived below poverty – below percapita income 650.

One of the best known theories with regard to change in the family structure is by William J.Goode who proposed that in the "world revolution "towards Industrialisation and Urbanisation. There is convergence of diverse types of extended family forms to some type of Congugal family system. He sees modernization represented by ideological value as being partially independent of Industrialization as having important impacts on both family and on Industrialisation itself. Goode also argues that the ideology of conjugal family system, which emphasise the relationship of husband and wife and their children and de- emphasises the obligatory relationship with extended kinship system best able to maximize the value of individualism and egalitarianism [Hutter 1988:55].

According to George H. Conklin Brahmins are starting to respond to the demands of the modern economy and thus intergrating themselves into the demands of high prestige government and industrial employment.

Robin Fox, in his book 'Kinship and marriage' says that for the Namboodiri the mode of Kinship was essentially patrilineal. The illam was a group consisting of all members through the side of Father. All the members had common interest in the illam property and common residence was correlated with the form of marriage practiced, marriage was allowed only for the eldest son of each illam. Though only the eldest son could have upto three wives at any time, but if one should die he could then take another to replace her. Post pubertal marriage was most frequent.

According to Kate Millet Simone De Beauvoir sexual colonialism is a relationship of dominance subservience between the sexes. [1972] The Namboodiri women are the colonized and the Namboodiri men the colonizers. The story 'The Goddess Of Revenge' projects the feiry spirit of the oppressed woman flaring up against the fanatic society. It describes an unusual Smarthavicharam, where an accused antharjanam not only confesses her crime of adultery but also cross examines her partners who are also cast out of the society. Brushte, the practice of caste excommunication that was a prevalent practice among the Namboodiris in the nineteenth century and twentieth century.

Logan in his manual on Malabar says "When a women is suspected by her own kinsmen or neighbouring Brahmins of having been guilty, under light conduct she is under the pain of excommunication"

*"Pale and thin with grief*

*The young bride wept*

*The compassionate wind*

*Sighed to hear*

*The Namboodiri child's*

*Sorrowing lament" [anatharjanam]*

**CHAPTER 3**  
**METHODOLOGY**

- There is no shortcuts to the truth-no way
- Given knowledge of the universe
- Except through the way of scientific method

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher tries to study the changing lifestyles of Brahmins with special reference to Namboodiris of Trissur which includes changes in family structure, food habits, economic status, customs and practices and status of Women.

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **General objective**

- ❖ To study the changing lifestyles of Brahmins with special reference to Namboodiris of Trissur.

#### **Specific objectives**

- ❖ To find out the socio-economic profile of the respondents
- ❖ To study the changes in the occupational pattern and economic status
- ❖ To study the changes in the family structure
- ❖ To study the changes in the customs and practices related to birth, death and marriage
- ❖ To study the changes in the dressing patterns
- ❖ To study the changes in the food habits
- ❖ To study the changes in the status of women

### **HYPOTHESIS**

- ❖ The youngsters in the community does not prefer traditional occupation.
- ❖ The status of the Namboodiri women have improved.
- ❖ Few Brahmins consume non-vegeterian food.
- ❖ Agraharam residential pattern has disintegrated
- ❖ Traditional customs and practices have undergone changes



## **CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### ***Theoretical definition-*** Namboodiris

The caste which is superior to all other caste and that caste which dominates the society.

**Namboodiris:** "Nam (vedam) poorayithiNamboothiri" is the commonly accepted etymology of the word Namboothiri. It means, the person who completes vedam is Namboothiri. Namboothiri "completes" vedam as he studies and practices vedam and performs the rituals, srouthakriyas (yagam) and other "Kriyas" (like Shodasakriyakal, Nithyakarmam, Cremation, etc.) as prescribed in vedam. This definition carries the message as to how important the vedam is to Namboothiri community.

### ***Operational definition***

The word **NamboodirisBrahmin** refers to all Namboodiris residing in Trissur district.

**Lifestyle:** A way of living of individual families and societies which they manifest in coping with their physical,psychological social and economic environments on day to day basis.

**Operational definition:** Life style in the present study refers to the patternsoffamilystructure, food habits, economic status, customs and practices and status of Women among the Brahmins of Trissur district.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES**

***Dependent variable:***occupation,income

***Independent variable:***age,sex,education

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

Descriptive research design is followed in this study.

## **UNIVERSE**

Namboodiris of Trissur district is the universe of study

### **SAMPLE SIZE**

The sample consists of 50 Namboodiris. Since the aim of the study was to account the changing lifestyle of Namboodiris the respondents included new generation as well as the old generation.

### **SAMPLING METHOD**

Simple random sampling is the method used. Using the lottery method 50 samples were chosen. The sample consist of 25 new generation and 25 old generation. The sample was again stratified on the basis of age and sex.

### **SAMPLE FRAME**

The sample frame is Ollur locality of Trissur district

### **PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study was conducted at Varikkasserimana of Trissur district. The investigator met 5 respondents at their residence.

### **TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION**

The data was collected using questionnaire containing questions.

### **PRETEST**

Once the questionnaire was constructed the researcher conducted a pretest and some more questions were added to the earlier one.

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

On the basis of tables analysis and interpretations were made. Percentages were found in the analysis to make description and comparison of data more meaningful.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study was based on the responses of 50 respondents only. Hence generalization based such a small sample has limited applicability.

2. Only simple tables are used for the purpose of analysis and conclusions are drawn on the basis averages and percentages. Due to lack of time and resources, inferential statistical techniques were not used in the present study.

### **THEORETICAL FRAME WORK**

The theory applied in this study is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "*Symbolic capital*". Symbolic capital is the capacity to use symbols to create or solidify physical and social realities. Bourdieu says that social groups don't exist simply because people decide to gather together. People must be able to communicate and meet with one another; there must be recognized leadership; and a group needs clearly articulated goals to organize. Symbolic interaction argues that human beings are oriented toward meaning, and meaning is the emergent result of ongoing symbolic interactions.

Bourdieu recognizes that all human relationships are created symbolically and not all people have symbolic power. Bourdieu characterizes the use of symbolic capital as both the power of the constitution and the power of revelation—it is the power of world making....the power to make groups... This power of world making is based on two elements. First, the person using symbolic capital must have sufficient status to impose recognition. The second element needed to world-make is some relation to a reality: "Symbolic efficacy depends on the degree to which the vision proposed is founded in reality".

The Namboodiris have an ascribed status. By birth they maintain a symbolic capital. But in the present society they are not able to maintain the symbolic capital for maintain their traditional status. Earlier Vedas were the primary factor of their socialization process. As they could not maintain their status through symbolic capital they started getting formal education, opted jobs other than traditional ones to attain more economic resources and moved to Economic capital.

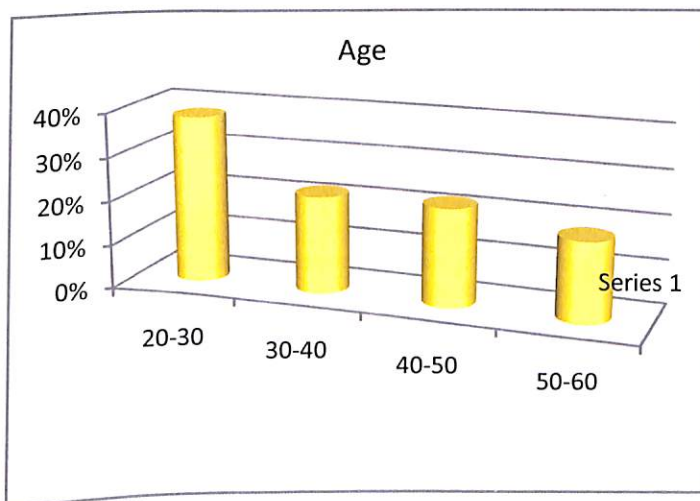
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**A Sociological study about changing lifestyle of Brahmins with special reference to Namboodiris of Trissur.**

The present study is conducted on a sample of fifty respondents. The following is the detailed analysis of the responses of the selected sample to the questionnaire, which was intended to study the changes in the social, religious, economic and customary aspects of the social life of Namboodiris in Trissur district.

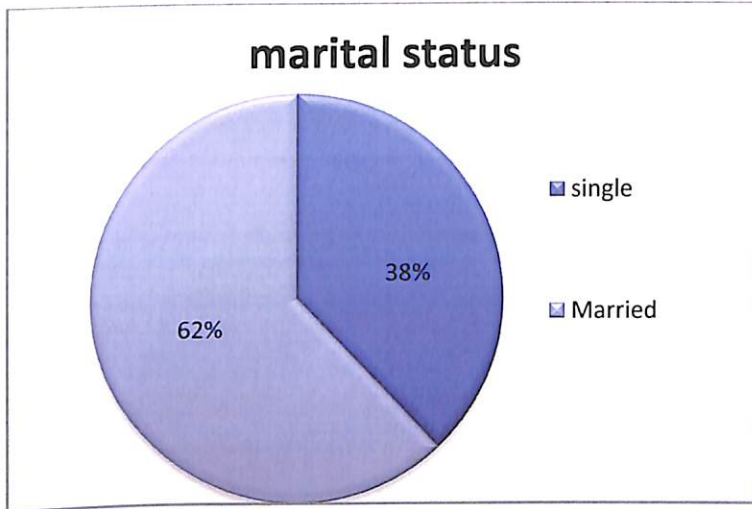
***Figure 1.Age***



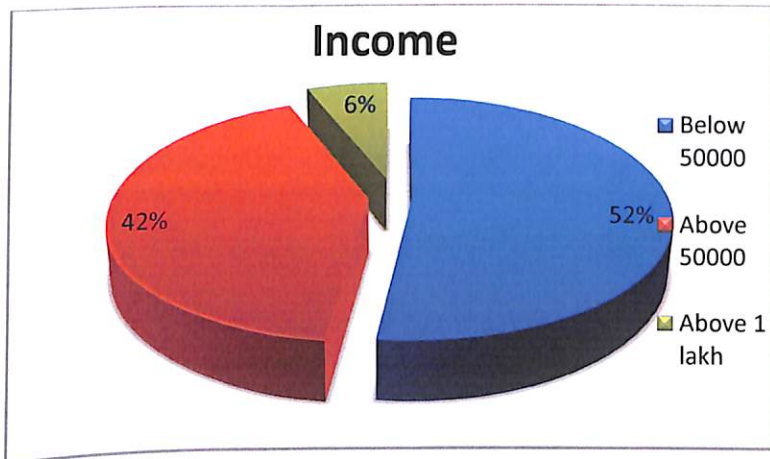
The below figure shows the age distribution of the respondents. 38% of the respondents fall in the 20-30 age group. 22% each comes under the 30-40 and 40-50 age group. Only 18% comes under the 50-60 category.

***Figure 2.Marital status***

The below figure shows the marital status of the respondents. The table indicates that 62% of the respondent are married and only 38% of the respondent are of single marital status.

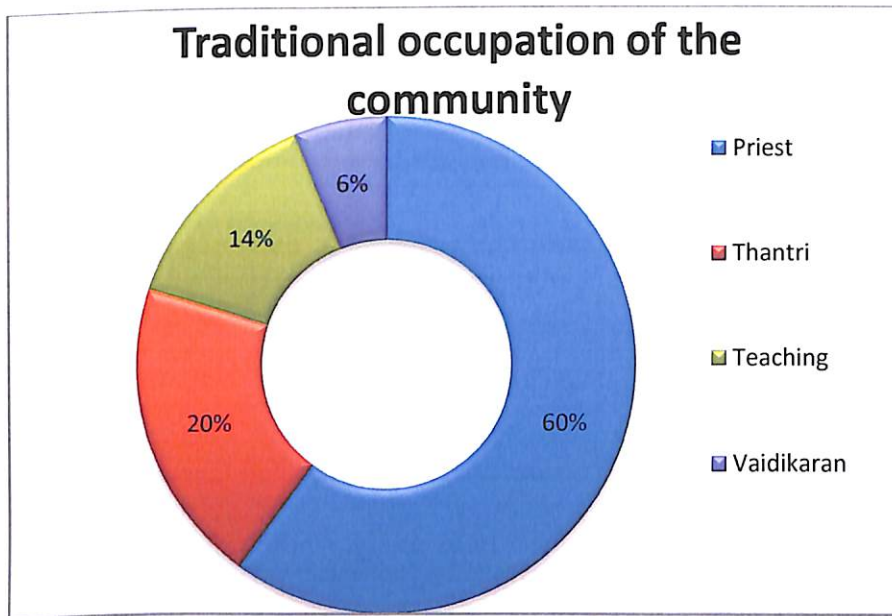


*Figure 3.Income*



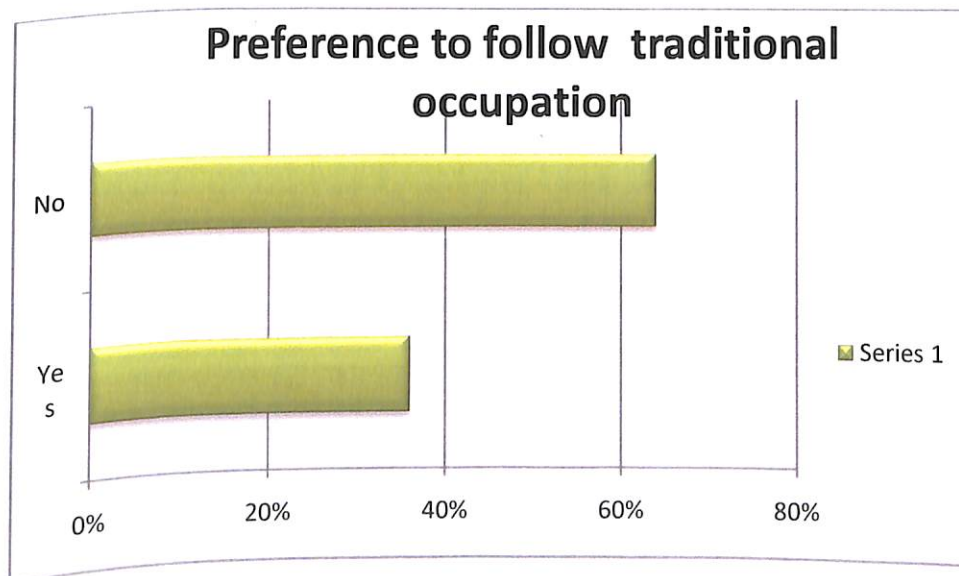
The figure shows the monthly income of the respondents. The table indicates that 52% of the respondents have monthly income below 50000. 42% of the respondents have the monthly income above 50000 and only 6% of the respondents have the monthly income above 1 lakh.

*Figure 4. Traditional occupations of the community*



The Figure indicates the Traditional occupational structure of the community. In the project area, the Priest are of 60%. Then comes Thantri 20%, followed by teaching 14% and last Vaidikaran 6%.

*Figure 5. Preference to follow traditional occupation rather than other occupations*



The figure shows the preference of the respondents to follow traditional occupation rather than other occupation. The table indicates that 64% of the respondents do not prefer to follow traditional occupation and only 36% of the respondents prefer to follow traditional occupation. Majority of the respondent does not prefer to follow traditional occupation because traditional occupation does not generate sufficient income.

**Table 4.1 Namboodiris following traditional occupation at present**

<i>Yes</i>	23	46%
<i>no</i>	27	54%

The above table illustrates the Namboodiris following traditional occupation at present. The table indicates that 54% of the respondents opined that Namboothiris still follow the traditional occupation. 46% responded that the Namboodiri community still follow their traditional occupation.

**Table 4.2 Preference of the new generation for traditional occupation.**

<i>Yes</i>	23	46%
<i>no</i>	27	54%

The table shows the preference for younger generation for traditional occupation. The table indicates that 54% of the respondents does not prefer traditional occupation and 46% of the respondents prefer traditional occupation. Majority does not prefer traditional occupation because of the low income and the choice for white color professional jobs.

**Table 4.3 Income satisfaction from traditional occupation**

<i>Yes</i>	19	38%
<i>no</i>	31	62%



This table illustrates the income satisfaction from traditional occupation. The table indicates that 62% of the respondent are satisfied with the income from traditional occupation and only 38% of the respondent are not satisfied with the income from traditional occupation.

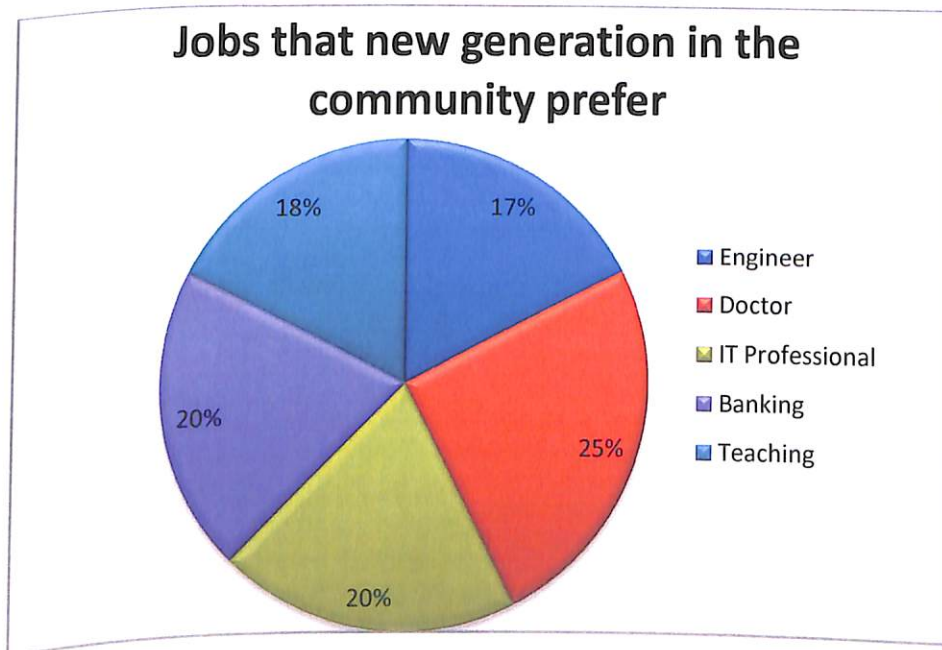
**Table 4.4 Impact of reservations on job opportunities.**

Yes	42	84%
no	8	16%

The table shows the impact of reservation on job opportunities of Namboodiris. The table indicates that 84% of the respondents have the impact of the reservations on job opportunities and only 16% said that reservations does not affect them.

**Figure 6. The jobs that new generation in the community prefer**

The figure shows the job preference of new generation in the community. The table indicates that 20% of the respondents prefer the profession of Doctors. 16% of the respondents are willing to take up IT profession and Banking. Only 14% of the respondents have an interest towards Engineering and in Teaching field. Medical field is chosen by majority of the new generation because the community have a tradition of Ayurvedam. This tradition has influenced the new generation also.



**Table 4.5 Employed women member in the family**

Yes	47	94%
No	3	6%

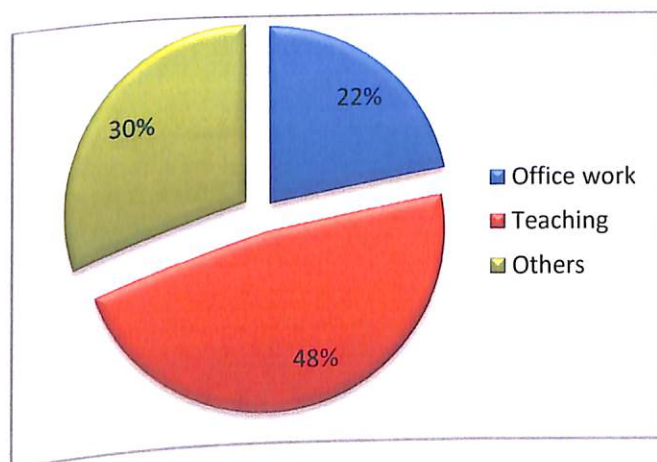
This table shows the employed women members in the family. The table indicates that 94% of the women are employed and 6% of the women are not employed. This shows a positive attitude of the Namboodiri community in employing their female members.

**Table 4.6 Preference of parents in getting daughters employed abroad.**

Yes	44	88%
no	6	12%

This table shows the preference of Parents for their daughters getting employed abroad . The table indicates that 88% of the respondents prefer for daughter working outside and only 12% of the respondents does not prefer for daughter working outside. A situation has arisen where most of the parents wants to get their daughters engaging in jobs abroad and explore more opportunities.

**Figure 7. Type of professions preferred for daughters**



This figure illustrates the type of profession preferred for daughters. The table indicates that 48% of the respondents prefer Teaching profession for their daughters. 30% of the respondents prefer other professions for their daughter and only 22% of the respondent prefer office work. They consider teaching as a safest profession for females.

**Table 4.7 Consultation with spouse in decision making.**

yes	41	82%
no	9	18%

This table shows the consultation with spouse in decision making. The table illustrates that 82% of the respondents agree that they consult their spouse in decision making and only 18% of the respondents disagree with this statement. An equal position for both male and female members in marital relation can be estimated from the response of about 82% agree that they consult their spouse in decision making.

**Table 4.8 Response for the statement "Women must be treated equal to men"**

Yes	49	98%
No	1	2%

The table shows the response for the statement "women must be treated equal to men". The table illustrates that 98% of the respondent agree with this statement and only 2% of the respondent disagree with this statement. Both male and female members of the community strongly agree that women and men should be treated equally.

**Table 4.9 Women's ownership of personal property**

Yes	43	86%
No	7	14%

This table shows womens ownership of personal property. The table indicates that 86% of the respondents agree that women owns personal property and only 14% of the

respondents does not own personal property. Majority of the women have an equal access to property because they are aware of their right to property, educated and employed. Only a few families stands behind in giving equal property right to women.

**Table 4.10 Perception of Freedom enjoyed by the female members**

Yes	42	84%
No	8	16%

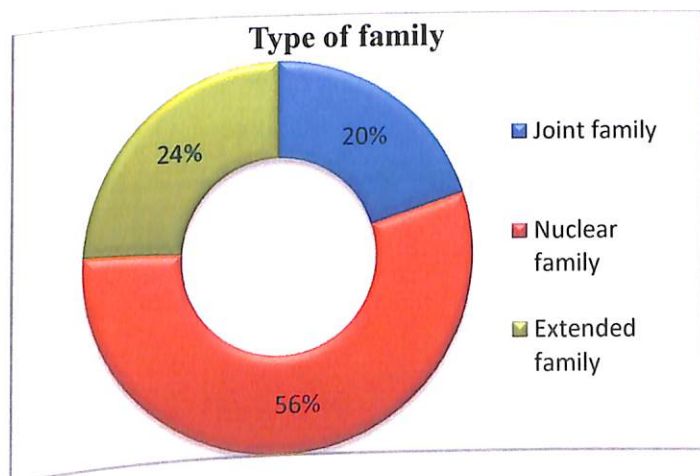
This table shows that perception of freedom enjoyed by the female members . The table indicates that 84% of the female members enjoy freedom and only 16% does not enjoy freedom. Female members in the community enjoy freedom because they are educated, employed and earns their living.

**Table 4.11 Residential pattern**

Agraharam	4	8%
Somewhere else	46	92%

This table shows the residential pattern of Namboodiris . The table indicates that 92% of the respondents live somewhere else and only 8% of respondents live in agraharam. A very small percent are still members of Agraharam.

**Figure 8. Type of family**



This table shows the type of family. The table indicates that 56% of the respondents prefer nuclear family. 24% of the respondent prefer extended family and only 20% of the respondent prefer Joint family.

**Table 4.12 Preference of new generation to live in agraharam**

yes	1	2%
no	49	98%

This table shows the preference of new generation living in agraharam. The table indicates that 98% of the respondents do not prefer to live in agraharam and only 2% prefer to live in agraharam. Agraharam life is not preferred by young generation because of the lack of space, Lack of Independency in Agraharam etc. New generation prefer to live in Independent house.

**Table 4.13 Change in traditional practices**

yes	47	94%
no	3	6%

The table indicates the change in traditional practices. The table indicates that 94% of the respondents agree that the traditional practices of the community has undergone changes and 6% of respondent disagree.

**Table 4.15 Changes in upanayana ceremony**

yes	38	76%
no	12	24%

The table shows the changes in the upanayana ceremony. The table indicates that 76% of the respondent agree that the ceremony of upanayana has undergone changes and only 24% of the respondents disagree.

**Table 4.16 Diminishing sacred value of religion**

Yes	44	88%
No	6	12%

The above table shows diminishing sacredness of religion. The table indicates that 88% of the respondents agree that the sacred value and 12% of the respondents disagree.

**Table 4.17 Support for inter-caste marriage**

Yes	10	20%
no	40	80%

This table shows the respondents support for inter-caste marriage. The table indicates that 80% of the respondent does not support the inter-caste marriage and only 20% of the respondent support it.

**Table 4.18 Instances of inter-caste, or inter-religious marriage in the family.**

Yes	33	66%
no	17	34%

The table shows the instance of inter-caste or inter-religious marriage in the family. The table indicates that 66% of the respondents pointed instances of inter-caste or inter-religious marriage in the family and only 34% disagree.

**Table 4.19 Following the traditional dressing pattern.**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>80%</i>

The table shows that 20% of the community strictly follow traditional dressing pattern. The table illustrates that 80% of the community does not strictly follow traditional dressing pattern and 20% of the community strictly follows it.

**Table 4.20 Preference for Traditional ornaments in marriage ceremony**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>74%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>26%</i>

The table shows the preference for traditional ornaments during marriage ceremony. The table indicates that 74% of the respondent prefer traditional ornaments during marriage ceremony and 26% of respondent does not prefer.

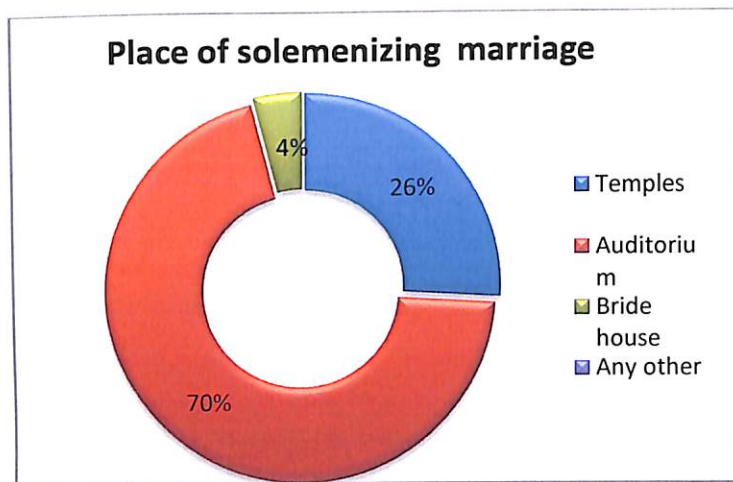
**Table 4.21 Existence of Dowry system**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>76%</i>

The table indicates the existence of dowry system among the Namboodiris. 76% said that there is no Dowry system existing today in the community and 24% said that dowry exists even today.

**Figure 9. Place of Solemnizing marriage**

The figure shows the place of solemnizing marriage among Namboodiris. 70% of the marriage takes place in auditoriums. 26% of the Namboodiri marriages takes place in temples and 2% in the Bride's house.

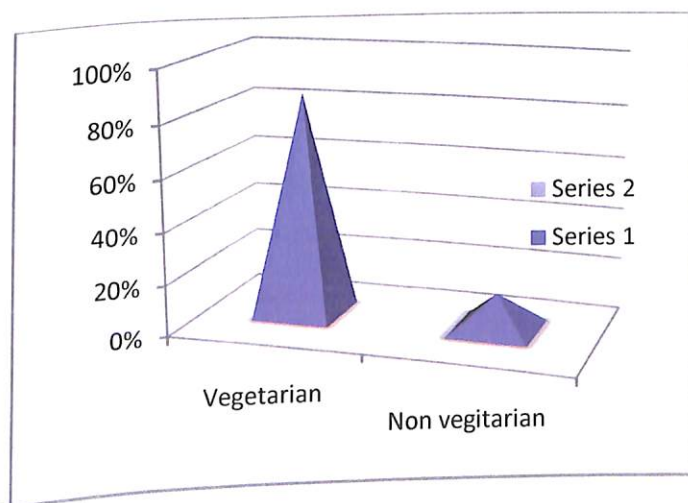


**Table 4.22 Changes in the birth & death related customs and practices**

Yes	30	60%
no	20	40%

The change in the birth and death related customs and practices are illustrated here. 60% responded that there are changes in the customs and practices related to birth and death. 40% does not agree that there are changes in the birth and death related customs and practices.

**Figure 10. Food Habits**



The figure shows the food habits of Namboodiris. 86% are vegetarians and 14% are non-vegetarians.



**Table 4.23 Preference for accepting food from other community.**

<i>Yes</i>	45	90%
<i>No</i>	5	10%

The table shows the readiness of Namboodiris in accepting food from other communities.90% accepts food from all other communities.

**Table 4.24 Preference for consuming food from restaurants.**

<i>Yes</i>	50	100%
<i>No</i>	-	

The table illustrates the preference for consuming food from restaurants.100% of the people like to have food from restaurants.

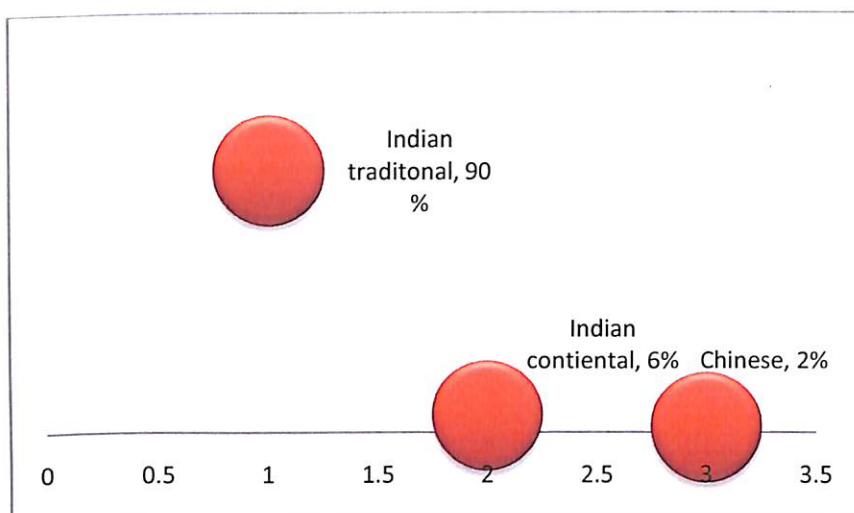
**Table 4.25 Type of restaurant preferred**

<i>Pure veg</i>	46	92%
<i>Non veg</i>	4	8%

The table shows the type of restaurant preferred by Namboodiris.92% have a preference for pure veg restaurants and only 8% prefer non-veg restaurants

**Figure 11. Type of food preferred**

The figure shows the type of food preferred.90% prefer Indian traditional food,,6% prefer Indian continental food and only 4% prefer Chinese food.



**Table 4.26 Role of traditional status in respectful treatment by the society**

<i>yes</i>	34	68%
<i>No</i>	16	32%

The table shows the opinion of Namboodiris regarding the respect they receive from society due to their traditional status. 68% opined that the traditional status gives them a respectful position in the society. 32% opined that the traditional status is not a criteria in getting respect from the society.

**Table 4. 27 Impact of reservation in educational & job opportunities and its impact on the community**

<i>yes</i>	44	88%
<i>No</i>	6	12%

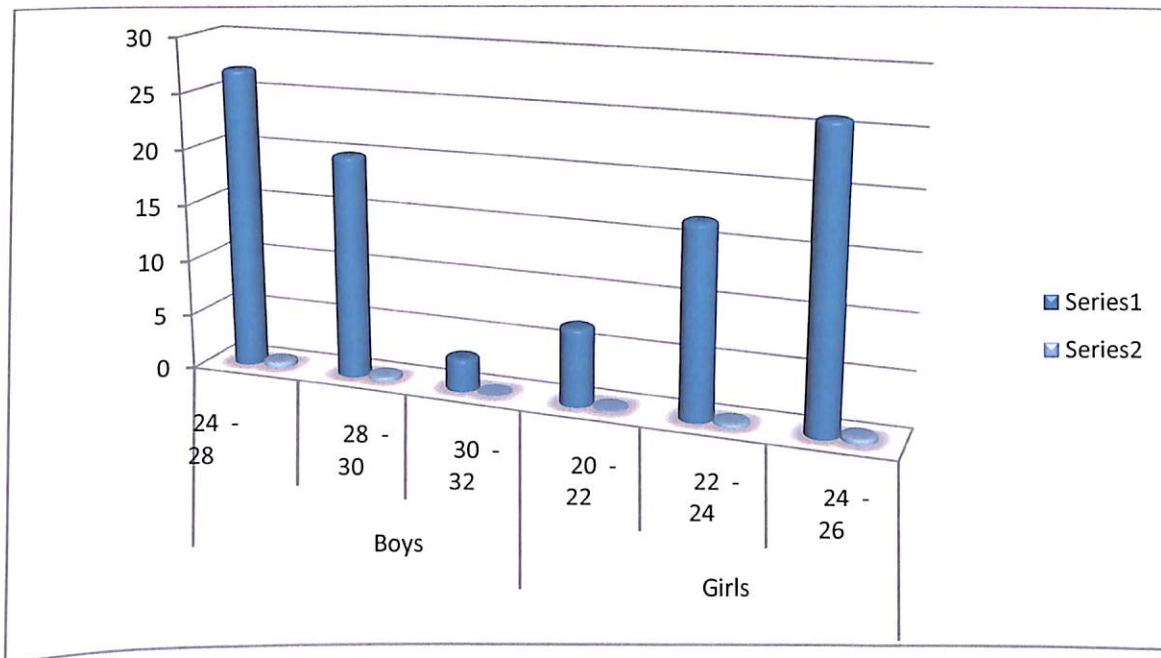
The impact of reservation in jobs and education for the lower caste and its effect on the Namboodiri community is illustrated here. 88% said that the reservation of oppurtunities for the lower caste has affected their oppurtunities and 12% does not stand for this opinion.

**Table 4.28 Opinion regarding the flexibility of accommodating other castes**

Yes	37	74%
No	13	26%

The table shows the flexibility of the Namboodiri community in accommodating all other religions at present. 74% has an opinion that the community is flexible enough to accommodate all other religions now and 26% stands against this saying that this religion is not completely ready to accommodate all other religions even now.

**Figure 12. The ideal age at marriage for boys & girls in the community**



The figure indicates the ideal age of marriage for boys and girls. The most preferred age for marriage for boys is 24 and 28 which is supported by 54%. 40% supports a marriage age between 28 and 30 and 6% supported an age between 30 and 32. 52% sees an age between 24 and 26 as ideal age for girls, 34% suggested an age between 22 and 24. 14% supported an age between 20 and 22.

***CHAPTER 5***

***FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION***

**"No society is persistent without change, Nor changing without being persistent"**

All societies are constantly changing. Social change has permeated in the field of religion also .In this study an attempt has been made to study the changing lifestyles of Namboodiris of Trissur district. A lot of changes have happened in the sphere of occupational patterns, family structure, dressing patterns, food habits, status of women etc.

**Opinion regarding preference for Traditional occupations**

***H1: "The youngsters in the Namboodiri community does not prefer traditional occupation".***

64% of the respondents do not prefer to follow traditional occupation and only 36% of the respondents prefer to follow traditional occupations. Majority of the respondents does not prefer to follow traditional occupation because traditional occupation does not generate sufficient income.62% has opined that there is no income satisfaction from the traditional occupations. 20% of the respondents prefer the profession of Doctors. 16% of the respondents are willing to take up IT profession and Banking. Only 14% of the respondents have an interest towards Engineering and in Teaching field. Medical field is chosen by majority of the new generation in the community. This tradition has influenced the new generation also. Neraly 54% of the respondents agree that the Namboodiris following their traditional occupation has decreased. Both the new generation and old generation strongly agree that the Reservation in jobs and education has affected their oppurtunties.84% respondents had the same opinion.

**Status of women**

***H2 : "the status of women has improved"***

The employed women members in the Namboodiri family have increased. 94% responded that the women in their family are employed and only 6% of the women are not employed. This shows that the community has a positive attitude towards women getting employed. 88% of the respondents are ready to send their daughters to work abroad and only 12% of the respondents does not agree . A situation has arose where most of the parents wants to get their

daughters engaging in jobs abroad and explore more opportunities. 48% prefer teaching profession for their daughters. 22% of the respondents prefer office work and 30% prefers other professions. Teaching is considered as the safest profession for girls .82% of the respondents agree that they consult their spouse in decision making and only 18% of the respondents disagree with this statement. An equal position for both male and female members in marital relation can be estimated from the response of about 82% agree that they consult their spouse in decision making. To the statement "women must be treated equal to men" 98% of the respondents agreed with this statement and only 2% of the respondent disagreed. Both male and female members of the community strongly agree that women and men should be treated equally .86% of the respondents agree that women owns personal property and only 14% of the respondents does not own personal property. 76% said that there is no system of dowry existing today in the community and 24% said that dowry exists even today. Majority of the women have an equal access to property because they are aware of their right to property, they are educated and employed. Only a few families lag behind in giving equal property right to women. The status of women has improved a lot.

### **Non vegetarianism among Namboodiris**

#### ***H3: " Few Brahmins consume non veg food"***

86% are vegeterians and 14% are non-vegeterians.100% of the people like to have food from restaurants. 92% have a preference for pure veg restaurants and only 8% prefer non-veg restaurants.90% prefer Indian traditional food,6% prefer Indian continental food and only 4% prefer chinese food. There is a total change in the food habits of the Namboodiri community. The community has become flexible and accept food from other communities. Therefore H3 has been justified.

### **Residential pattern**

#### ***H4: "Agraharam residential pattern has disintegrated".***

92% of the respondents live somewhere else and only 8% of respondents live in agraharam.A very small percent are still members of Agraharam. 56% of the respondents prefer nuclear family. 24% of the respondents prefer extended family and only 20% of the

respondents prefer Joint family. This table shows the type of family. There is a preference for independent houses and nuclear families. The number of Agraharas has decreased because of the lack of space, preference for independent houses, availability of opportunities etc.

### **Changes in the customs and practices**

#### ***H5 : "Traditional customs and practices has undergone changes"***

94% of the respondents agree that the traditional practices of the community has undergone changes and 6% of respondent disagree. The table shows the changes in the upanayana ceremony. 76% of the respondents agree that the ceremony of upanayana has undergone changes and only 24% of the responded that it has not changed. There are a few families that still stick on to the traditional practices. The sacred value of religion has diminished. The table indicates that 88% of the respondents agree that the sacred value has diminished and 12% of the respondents do not agree. 80% of the respondents does not support inter-caste marriage and only 20% of the respondent support it. There are instances of inter-caste or inter-religious marriage in some families. 66% of the respondents pointed instances of inter-caste or inter religious marriage in the family and only 34% disagreed. In the marriage ceremony 20% of the community strictly follow traditional dressing pattern. 80% does not strictly follow traditional dressing pattern and 20% of the respondents strictly follows it. But there is a preference for traditional ornaments during marriage ceremony. 74% of the respondent prefer traditional ornaments during marriage ceremony and 26% of respondents does not prefer it. The place of solemnizing marriage among Namboodiris has changed. 70% of the marriage takes place in auditoriums, 26% of the Namboodiri marriages takes place in temples. The most preferred age for marriage for boys is between 25 and 28 which is supported by 54%. 40% supports a marriage age between 28 and 30 and 6% supported an age between 30 and 32. 52% sees an age age between 24 and 26 as ideal age for girls, 34% suggested an age between 22 and 24. 14% supported an age between 20 and 22.

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***APPENDIX 1***

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**A Sociological study about changing lifestyle of Brahmins with special reference to Namboodiris of Trissur.**

Name :

Address :

Age :

Sex :

Marital status :

Occupation :

Income :

1. What are the traditional occupations of the community?

a. 1..... 2..... 3.....

2. Do you prefer to follow your traditional occupation rather than other occupations?

YES

NO

3. Do you think that the number of people who practice traditional occupations have decreased?

YES

NO

4. Do you prefer younger generation of your community engaging in the traditional occupation?

YES

NO

5. Will the traditional occupation provide satisfactory income?

YES

NO

6. Is your present occupation providing you satisfactory income?

YES

NO

7. Do you think that the reservation in jobs affects your job opportunities?

YES

NO

8. Can you list some of the jobs that new generations in your community prefer?

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

9. Are the women in your family employed ?

YES

NO

10. Do you prefer your daughter getting employed outside home?

YES

NO

11. What type of profession do you prefer for your daughter?

Teaching

Office work

Others

12. Do you consult your Husband/ Wife when taking important decision with regard to family matters?

YES

NO

13. Do you think women must be treated equal to men?

YES

NO

14. Does the women own personal property?

YES

NO

15. Do you think that both boys and girls should be treated equal?

YES

NO

16. Do the females members in your community enjoy freedom?

YES

NO

17. What type of a family that you have?

Joint family

Nuclear family

Extended family

18. Does the new generation prefer life in agraharam?

YES

NO

19. Do you think that the traditional practice of your community has undergone changes?

YES

NO

20. Are there been any changes in the upanayana ceremony?

YES

NO

21. Do your family practice the traditional way of upanayana ceremony?

YES

NO

22. Do you think that the sacred value of upanayanahas diminished?

YES

NO

23. Does the new generation practice all the customs, traditions etc related to upanayana in the traditional manner?

YES

NO

24. Do you support inter- caste marriage?

YES

NO

25. Have there been any instance of inter-caste or inter- religious marriage in your family?

YES

NO

26. Does your community strictly follow the traditional dressing pattern of the bride and the groom?

YES

NO

27. Does the new generation brides prefer the traditional ornaments for marriage?

YES

NO

28. Does the dowry system exist in your community?

YES

NO

29. Where do the present Brahmin marriage take place?

Temple

Auditoriums

Brides house

Any other

30. Have there been changes in the birth and death related customs, practices etc..?

YES

NO

31. If yes what are the changes?

32. Are you pure vegetarian?

YES

NO

33. Do you accept food from all the people belonging to other communities?

YES

NO

34. Do you eat food from restaurants?

YES

NO

35. If yes , which type of restaurant you prefer?

YES

NO

36. Which type of food do you prefer the most?

Indian traditional

Indian continental

Chinese

37. Which is the most important traditional food of your community?

38. Do you think that you get respect in the society because you are a Brahmin ?

YES

NO

39. Does the reservation affect your educational and job oppertunities?

YES

NO

40. Is your religion flexible in accommodating other castes and religion?

YES

NO

41. Have you got any preference in the society being a brahmim?

YES

NO

42. Most preferred jobs for in the community?

43. The ideal age at marriage for boys..... and girls..... In the community.