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Proposal
Forest Department Permission
Tribal Welfare Department Permission
Appreciation from World Education Fund
Acknowledgement

The subject of Anthropology is not introduced in the classroom until College. We were fortunate to have Dr. Thanuja to introduce the subject at the level of middle school in Deepanam School, Auroville. It helped students understand different cultures and the history of it from a different perspective. Being in Auroville, there is diversity within the classroom, with students from different parts of the world. It was wonderful to see them appreciating each other's culture through the subject.

It was under the expertise and able guidance of Dr. Thanuja and Dr. S. Ponnarasu, we could conceptualize and plan the project of this scale. I am extremely thankful to them for the support and encouragement to the students throughout the project though they had a busy schedule.

We owe deep gratitude to Mr. P.M. Prabhu, the Forest Range Officer and Asst. Wildlife Warden, Chinnar Division, for providing us the opportunity and necessary permission to meet Muthuvans. We also got the opportunity to listen to him when he talked about the work he has been doing for the Muthuvan. It was very inspirational for all the students.

I am thankful to the Forest and Wildlife Department of Chinnar for providing us with the necessary information. I heartily thank Foundation for World Education for providing the necessary financial support to go ahead with the project. I am extremely grateful to the Muthuvans for welcoming us and sharing their cultural experience with us. I also thank the three forest guides, Jemol, Ganesh, Nagaraj, and Mini, the Social Worker who provided local assistance.

I appreciate the students of Faith group (age 12 to 14) for maintaining the focus and curiosity to learn and to prepare this report with the help of Dr. Thanuja and Dr. S. Ponnarasu.

I thank Mr. Yesodharan, Rtd Superintendent of Police, Kerela Police for going out of his way in helping us get the required permission from the Government departments.

I also thank Dr. Thanuja's Students R.Y. Vishnupriya and Mohammad Rafi for their valuable assistance in fieldwork and translation.

Thanks to Kavya and Vyomini for the graphics setting of the report.

Mahavir
Coordinator, Deepanam School
Its been a great experience for the two of us to give a course on introductory Anthropology to the Faith group of Deepanam. Thanks to Mahavir and Deepanam school for this opportunity. But truly, Anthropology, to the best of our knowledge is not taught at the high school level. So, we wondered how! We settled to the logic that Anthropology is all about people; their past, present and future and the interrelation between these large time zones; its about every environment people are in, what they do in it? And how they relate to it? Together it makes their Culture, actually many different Cultures. We thought further and realised that people irrespective of age belong to some culture and if you belong to one, then you understand it and participate in it, in some way.

So in fact the students of Faith class cannot be too young for Anthropology. We got started. The course evolved organically with the participation of the students. The course was not titled Anthropology but more directly, 'People and Cultural Diversity'. Our first lecture or discussion was to explore what the students had in mind about 'culture'. We wrote the course title in the centre of the classroom writing board and asked them to give us related words and this is what we got at the end of the first class.
It was easy to conclude that culture is a whole lot of interrelated things that concern us. We then introduced two very important concepts of Anthropology in understanding culture, 'Cultural relativism' and 'Ethnocentrism'. The first assignment for the students was to partner amongst themselves and understand from each other a cultural aspect of the other. Auroville is perfect for this, as the small number of students in faith class came from very diverse cultures. It was great to hear their presentations, to note how they had spent time in each other’s homes and talked to the kin of their partner’s in understand a cultural festival.

As each friday morning lecture went by, we discussed varied topics as in relatedness-kinship and family, prehistory, history and archival information-epigraphy and oral history, greetings in different culture-language and gestures, geography and environment, understanding culture through fieldwork.

It was time now to move out of the classroom with the intrigue that fieldwork brought into students. The excitement developed into the planning of the study tour, where and when? Suggestions and discussions followed, we had to experience a culture different from any of ours, geographically it should also help us observe nature and its diversity, it should maybe also be feasible to see and learn something about people of the past, some archaeology. It was a long search but we found just the place, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, in the state of Kerala. It had everything we had discussed, it is a wildlife sanctuary and protected forest which means a diversity in flora and fauna, it was home to two indigenous groups, the Muthuvans and Hill Pulayas, it had important archaeological sites as in the dolmens and rock art.

We planned how to study all this. Through classroom discussion we agreed to a list of topics and grouped students accordingly. We planned for a four day trip with travel. We will spend one day in a Muthuvan settlement observing and talking to them on different aspects of their culture. Each group of students will focus on one aspect of the Muthuvan culture. For the next two days, we will understand the forest and wildlife sanctuary through discussion with the government officers in-charge and by trekking through the forest. We would also see the rock art and dolmens. We prepared a short question list for each of these topics.

All this planning was not enough to head for the study tour, we needed permission from three government departments of Kerala state. Back and forth letters from the school to these departments finally gave us the permission. In the annexures to this little booklet you will see the letters of permission from the forest and wildlife department and the tribal welfare department. It tells us what we can do and what we should not.

In the two chapters that follow, the faith class shares their learning experience -Thanuja and Ponnarasu.
We started at 6.58 am on the 25th of January from our school, Deepanam from Auroville on a bus ride that we did not know would last for 12 whole hours or even more! In the beginning the journey was fun, we sang songs on the top of our voices, talked with each other. But after about 3 hours of the ride we did not know what to do. Some of us slept but throughout the ride, most of the time, we talked to each other. Though we listened to music as the speakers were horrible and would randomly go all squeaky, it was useless to listen to music. I don’t really know how to explain. It took 463/458/485 kms from Auroville to reach our hotel in Marayoor, Kerala. We first had to stop at the Tamilnadu State boundary check post to sign that we were leaving Tamilnadu and going to another state. Later we had to stop at the Tamilnadu Forest check post and then at the Kerala Forest check post and sign in both offices. In Tamilnadu,
It is called the Anamalai Tiger Reserve and in Kerala, it is called Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. This office is around 500 msl (meters above sea level). Marayoor is around 2000 msl. The check post was 16 kms away from where we stayed in Marayoor. It took us about 45 minutes up the winding roads, from the check post to our accommodation in Marayoor. I still remember how scary it was to look down the mountain slope from my window or even up ahead while sitting on the front seat of the bus. There were many monkeys too! Which were cute. But also scary at the same time. The Muthuvan village that we went to visit was 7 km to the Chinnar check post.

Next page has a detailed map of our journey!

-Sana, Leah and Arav
The Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary started in August, 1984. It has many species of flora and fauna, with some flora that is indigenous to only this region like the sandal forests. The endangered fauna include the star tortoise and the giant squirrel. It therefore is recognised as a wildlife sanctuary and protected forest under the watchful eye of the Kerala Forest department and Wildlife Conservation Department.

We were lucky to see both the endangered giant squirrels, the grey grizzled giant squirrel and the brown Malabar giant squirrel. And we saw a whole lot of spotted deers, bonnet macaque and langurs. We didn't see any bison, but they were supposed to be somewhere around. We also saw a lot of elephant dung, but the elephants never appeared either. We were also told that there were leopards in the area. While on the trek, we were told to stay quiet. When we did, we could hear many birds chirping but we couldn't really identify which species it was.

In the documentary we watched made by the Forest department, it showed frogs and snakes and lizards and the Nilgiri tahr, but we didn't get the chance to spot any of them either. We did see some fish though, really small ones. They have found 28 species of mammals in this sanctuary.

-Gayatri and Eva
Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the rain shadow region of the Western Ghats (Eastern slope of the Western Ghats). Vegetation is broadly classified into Southern Tropical Thorn Forests (Scrub Jungle), Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forests (Dry Deciduous Forests), Southern Moist Mixed Deciduous Forests (Moist Deciduous Forests), Tropical Riparian Fringe Forests (Riparian Forests), Southern Montane Wet Temperate Forests (Hill Shola Forests) and Southern Montane Wet Grassland (Grasslands).

The Chinnar plains are generally hot but the higher altitudes are cool. Rainfall varies from 300mm-500mm. Altitude ranges from 400m – 2372m.

The Sanctuary is known for its floral and Faunal diversity and it is home for unique and endemic species like *Albezia lactamii*, Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Star Tortoise and Tufted Grey Langur. The major Ethnic groups are the Muduva and the Hill Puliya.
The Vegetation of Chinnar

While going up and down the mountain for our various activities, our eyes were stuck looking outside the window, noticing the obvious changes in the flora. At first glance, it was very obvious that the altitude brought a conspicuous change in the type of flora. At the lower altitude, there were mostly dry shrubs and very short height trees with a wide canopy. As we went higher and higher, the trees were taller and greener with a narrower canopy. We didn't manage to study the vegetation in detail since we just observed from the jeep and bus. Thus we could not sit and classify the forest correctly ourselves. But we eventually ended up learning that we cannot categorize the entire Chinnar sanctuary or even parts of it as a type of forest since for multiple reasons the vegetation is very scattered. But the vegetation of the Sanctuary can be broadly classified into the following types according to Champion and Seth (1968) and Chandrasekaran (1962). (taken from the Chinnar wildlife sanctuary website https://chinnar.org)

- Southern Tropical Thorn Forest (Scrub jungle)
- Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forest (Dry deciduous forest)
- Southern Moist Mixed Deciduous Forest (Moist deciduous forest)
- Tropical Riparian Fringing Forest (Riparian forest)
- Southern Montane Wet Temperate Forest (Hill Shola forest)
- Southern Montane Wet Grassland (Grasslands)
- The sanctuary has around 965 flora specimens. Some of which are medicinal herbs.

-Vyomini and Lamo
On the 27th of January we went to see the sandalwood forest in Marayoor. We went there at around 3 o’clock, it was cloudy and drizzling. We went there in two jeeps. When we were going through the forest road we saw a lot of deers, they did not get scared and run away they just looked up at us for a second, then went back to doing whatever they were doing. Over time they must have got used to people driving around. Before we went there our teacher told us that in the forest we would see a lot of animals which we don’t usually see around. Then we stopped to see the forest. The sandalwood trees were actually not much to look at. The trunk was tall and lean, the branches did not spread out and the leaves were quite small. The forest was fenced and we knew we could not just barge in. While we were looking around we saw this small hut, next to it we saw a man in uniform. He was a forest guard there. Then he saw us and came over. He asked us what we were there for. And our teachers explained to him and asked him if we could go in the forest and have someone to tell us about it. He told us that we should ask someone with a higher rank. Our teachers and this man went to the Forest Department office. There they got permission to go inside the sandal forest and to have someone explain about it. They came back with two forest officers who explained to us about sandalwood.

What is sandalwood? Santalum album commonly known as sandalwood is a semi-parasitic tree. It only grows along with the flora of the Fabaceae family (legume, lantana) which are nitrogen-fixing plants. It is also a semi-evergreen tree. Sandalwood is a self-generating tree which means, if you cut the root it will grow into a new tree. They shed their seeds from October to December. So what’s so special about sandalwood, why is it so expensive? Sandalwood is highly priced because the wood and oil of the tree is used by both the cosmetic and medicine industry. It is the second most expensive tree in the world. The sandalwood of Marayoor is special because it has the highest oil content making it the most expensive sandalwood in the world, one mille litre of sandalwood oil is priced at Rs. 2500/-. The particularity of the altitude, climate and soil are responsible for the quality of these trees. The Sandalwood forests are indigenous to Marayoor. The age of the forest is not known but it is for sure more than a hundred years old. They take twenty years to grow into adult trees. The Forest department monitors the growth of these trees and guards the forest. They do not harvest the trees. They only sell the trees when they fall down. The largest tree in Marayoor has a circumference of 210cm.

-Kavya, Dunia and Rudra
We went to the sandalwood forest towards the end of the trip. We examined the forest from outside for a while until we found an entry inside one of the parts that were cleaned of the weeds and parasitic plants for research purposes. When we entered there was no prominent smell or sight, it seemed like any other forest. The only thing eye-catching was the giant squirrels but then walked in two forest officers who were really knowledgeable about sandalwood. As they started to answer our questions, I got more and more interested. One question would provoke multiple others, there was so much more to this forest than what it had seemed.

The amount of effort that was put to safeguard it from people who steal this wood was astonishing. They also went above and beyond to ensure that they don’t interfere in the naturally existing ecosystem. They only use the trees that have naturally hit the ground. They manage to commercially sell even though they don’t allow any trees to be cut. One of the most prominent notes were that the sandalwood is not very easy to grow. It’s not very adaptive and the Marayoor climate, altitude, and soil are molded for the perfect environment for sandalwood. At first, I did not really understand why the trees here are considered so much better than any other around the world. I was expecting their reasons for it to be very vague, almost like a biased mother talking about her child. On the contrary, to my expectations, they had very valid answers and proof. It was surprising at first but after hearing about the effort they put into keeping the forest as natural as possible, it became believable. The two men communicate in Malyalam and not in English, so I was constantly asking for translations from my teachers. I had a lot of questions that he kindly gave answers to. I also really want to thank them since they took out the time to meet us and give very comprehensive and informative answers to all of our questions. We ended up staying there talking to them for a very long time even though it didn't feel so. And by the end, the giant squirrels became the least interesting thing there.

- Vyomini
The main site of rock painting in Kerala is located in the sandalwood forest of Marayoor in Idukki district. An archaeologist, S.P Thampi found this rock painting in 1976. We visited a rock painting in Alampetty village. After trekking for some time up the mountain and through the forest, we reached the rock painting that we were supposed to see. The rock painting we saw was in red color. The forest guide who came with us told us the painting was painted with animal blood and a leaf which grew there. The rock painting we saw was bit destroyed by the flow of water. The rock was also cracked and broken. At first sight it was not easy to tell what the painting was. It was only after the forest guide explained, we came to know it was a painting of an elephant and a forest goat. We were not satisfied with what we saw so we asked the forest guide if there were any more rock paintings to see, next to the same location. He told us there was one but it will be hard for children to climb as it was below a cliff and risky. But I (Viknesh) went with them, it was just Mahavir, Aran, Rafi and myself and the forest guide. It was very hard, but we somehow we managed to reach the cave. To be honest, there was no path. We were holding the grass which had grown tall, it was hard. But after reaching the cave we saw a small painting of lord Shiva

-Viknesh, Arati and Pallavi
**DO'S**

1. Preserve Munyaras (Dolmens)
2. Preserve Rocks / Mountain
3. Preserve our ecosystem
4. Please use waste bins
5. Obey instructions of the guide
6. Enter only after paying fee
7. Enjoy the beauty of Marayoor
8. Take care of your belongings
9. Park your vehicle in the allowed space
10. Help us to conserve forest

**DON'TS**

1. Don't enter without paying fee
2. Don't make sound or disturbance
3. Don't destroy the Dolmens (Munyara)
4. Don't destroy the rocks
5. Don't put waste / plastic inside the park
6. Don't disobey the guide
7. Don't go near the cliff
8. Don't use fire prone materials
9. Don't destroy the ecosystem
10. Don't garage vehicles inside the park

SE-1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MARAYOOR SANDAL DIVISION
Winding roads in Jeep and the Jaggery

First time in the jeep I felt very sick and was told to sit in front. The first day of the jeep was when we went to meet the Muthuvan. The second day, we went to see the sandalwood forest, deers, giant squirrels and monkeys. We also went to see the dolmens and the jaggery making unit.

The jaggery making place had a really huge iron pan filled with sugarcane juice and placed on an earthen furnace. They used firewood to boil the juice. A person regularly stirred this boiling juice. This made the water evaporate and the solid sugar of the cane remained in the pan which is the jaggery. We were given a taste of freshly made jaggery which I enjoyed.

- Arav
The settlement we visited is called Thayanakudi village. It is near Tamil-Nadu but in Kerala Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. There is a river which runs through Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The name of the river is Chinnar, and when it reaches Tamil Nadu it is called Amaravathi. There are two indigenous groups living in these hills, the Hill Pulayas and the Muthuvans. Muhuvan settlements are inside the forests whereas the Hill Pulaya settlements are closer to the urban spaces. Mr. P. M. Prabhu, Forest Range Forest Officer and Additional Wildlife Warden at Marayoor suggested that we visit the Muthuvans in Thayanakudi settlement. The forest settlements of the Muthuvans cannot be accessed without permission of the Forest department and the Tribal Welfare department. Please read the letters of permission given by them (in the end of this document) that state rules we need to follow. We read all of the rules before traveling to the settlement and discussed them to make sure we don’t cause trouble.

We tried studying about them before, in school, but learning about a tribe and their culture by directly speaking to them, in their village, is a better experience than studying them inside four walls. We found out that they speak three languages Malayalam, Tamil, and their own Muthuvan dialect. (We had Rafi and Vishnupriya, students of Thanuja aunty, helping us with the Malayalam language)
We imagined the Muthuvans to have painted faces and feathers and holding some weapons, as we have seen in some documentaries, about other tribes. But when we entered their settlement they looked more like any of us.

They had concrete houses, lighting, water, and other infrastructure. When we got down from the jeep we took our things and kept them inside one of the houses. Then we walked up to the center of the village and sat on the mats placed there. The settlement has cemented road and is on a hill slope with forest around and green cultivated fields. The people received us with smiles, they seemed very warm and welcoming. It was a very nice quiet place with a great view. There were goats freely roaming, and the houses were cheerfully painted. The vibe was very peaceful. The ladies of the village were standing in one corner with the children, they were dressed in festive clothes. One of our guides told us that they had just finished celebrating the last day of the poosam festival. We sat down and listened to one of the village elders Mr. Paalswami. Soon he was joined by another elder, Mr. Devasami, while a group of young men and women watched our interaction before moving on with their daily work.
The two elders were very patient and answered are many questions from morning till late afternoon without a break. We were in groups and each group had a topic. One after the other, each group went up to them and asked their questions.

Our topic was about nature and religion. We were supposed to prepare a few questions before we went to talk to them, but we only managed to prepare four questions and we did that on the spot. To be honest we had so many questions when we entered the village. Our team was the last so we had to wait for a long time. When it was our turn, we started by asking them which is the most common plant in the area. Our teacher translated the question in Tamil and they answered in Tamil, then our teacher translated it to us. There are three "layers of land" where they grow different varieties of plants and trees, on the first layer there are trees such as vengai, kudugai, naligakai and kurungalay. Kurungalay is a hardwood tree which they use to make tables and cots. The second layer has unamaram and navamaram. (We are not naming all the plants, just a few) The third layer contains palamaram and nagamaram. Another question we asked was on religion, we asked them if they did any prayers or ceremonies before they started their plantation and they told us they do a ritual before they start planting. They have a small shrine above the housing space of the settlement.

-Viknesh, Arati and pallavi
The settlement was positioned on a slope, thus the houses were on steps. Surrounding the hamlet were step farms, where they grew multiple types of beans. The hamlet is placed on one of the two hills, and the farm is on the other as the stream flows close to their valley. As we reach the settlement, on our left, right before the houses, there is a graveyard. One can also very clearly hear the sound of the stream that flows very close by the hamlet. It is their main source of water. They also have a functioning pipe system that uses gravity as its main force to transport water from the stream to near the houses. While walking along the boundary of the village we saw a small temple above all the houses, on the highest step. The school that the children attend has a facility in which they can stay. It is further away from the village and closer to the nearest town Marayoor. They also have solar panels on the roofs of some of the houses. All the houses are now made of cement and bricks because of the funds from the government housing projects, but there is still some mud houses built for the newlyweds. There are water pumps spread all around the settlement.

-Vyomini and Lamo
What is a Gravity pump? In a gravity pump the water is lifted by gravitational force and so called gravity pump. The hydraulic ram is also sometimes called a gravity pump. The hydraulic ram is sometimes used in remote areas, where there is both a source of low-head hydropower and a need for pumping water to a destination higher in elevation than the source. In this situation, the ram is often useful, since it requires no outside source of power other than the kinetic energy of flowing water.

-Vyomini
GPS, short for global positioning system is a network of satellites that work together to pinpoint your exact location through a GPS receiver, it is operated by the United States government and it is free to use for anyone with a GPS receiver. Before the study tour, we spent a couple of hours in school training on how to draw a settlement map using the Global Positioning System (GPS). We used the GPS and prepared a map of Deepanam school and learnt how to locate the coordinates of the school online in Google Earth map. When we visited the Mudhuvan settlement, our main task was to take a walk along the boundaries of the settlement in order to get an outline of it. Now that we are back in Deepanam we uploaded the outline from the GPS to Google Earth, later I sketched the map on a chart paper and designed a legend for that map. This is my first time using a GPS for something other than navigation, so this was quite a memorable opportunity for me.

-Lamo
Language and material culture - Sana, Leah & Arav

Language

Muthuvans speak Muthuvans Bhasha. It is a dialect, which sounds like a mix of Tamil and Malayalam. They are able to speak Tamil well as they live very close to the Tamil Nadu border. They are able to speak Tamil and Malayalam fluently and also because the origin story says that they originally came from Tamil Nadu to Kerala. Many Muthuvan settlements are in the Tamil Nadu territory. They use the Tamil script because they do not have their own script. Below is a little demonstration of the Muthuvan dialect with translation in both English and Tamil.

What is your name?-English
Un peru enna?-Tamil
Nindra peru enna?- Muthuvan

Dress

When we first entered the settlement, we saw a group of women and young girls dressed in festive clothes (colorful sarees and jewelry). Our team asked the women if it was a special occasion or if the way they were dressed was their daily wear. They answered that the weeklong “Poosam” festival had concluded only that morning. Later we asked two elders who we interviewed about the Muthuvan dress pattern. They told us that in the past Muthuvan wore a garment until it tore and even after that happening, they used tree barks as thread to stitch back torn pieces of cloth and continued to wear them. Now it has changed, they now own a few pairs of clothing. Another aspect of Muthuvan dress pattern is that it indicates the life stage of the individual. The Muthuvan women wear their saree in two styles. Women who have children wear the saree with the pleats in the front while unmarried women and those without children take two ends of a cloth and knot it on their left shoulder.
House-

Earlier they had houses built with natural materials, like mud and bamboo and the roof is made of millet grass. Now the Indian government has provided them with concrete buildings to live in. They still do have a few houses built with natural materials. The houses consist of two rooms, one is a kitchen and the other room is a hall which they also sleep in. They do not have big windows inside, so it is rather dark. The houses are built according to the needs of the family.

The Muthuvans get five litres of free kerosene a month and several other things but, gradually they are losing interest in agriculture. They eat over twenty-five different types of millet, there is also a millet website which explains the nutritional value of millet versus rice and how it is easy to grow.

Below we provide some details their house construction through the illustration.

-Sana, Leah and Arav
mud house
Kinship, Marriage, Family - Kavya, Dunia, Rudra

People all around the world have always lived as a group. How and why do people form this group? Maybe because it is easier to live as a group than living alone. Commonly people form groups based on a relationship. How are these relationships formed? Commonly again groups and their relationships are formed by kinship, marriage and family? This school year we have been learning a course on people and cultural diversity. During which we had a few sessions on kinship, marriage and family. What is kinship? It is the relationship between family members. There are two basic kinship ties. The first is consanguineal, the blood relatives. The second one is affinal, the relationship formed by marriage. A family is formed through marriage and in our classes, we learned about different types of marriages and families. To learn this better we went on a study tour to understand a different culture. We spent a day with the Muthuvans to understand some glimpses of their kinship, family and marriage. We first asked the two Muthuvan elders who spoke to us, to tell us something about how they address their relatives. This is called kinship terminology. The following was drawn on that information:

![Kinship Diagram]

It is largely similar to the Tamil language terminology which is grouped under the Dravidian language group. But the one thing that was particular to the Muthuvans is the way they address their father’s sister’s children. This is an affinal term and the two elders were giggling while saying this.

The next thing we asked them was their marriage pattern. Where they have explained the three types of marriage.
1. Preferential marriage partner

Preferential marriage partner is supposed to be your father's sister's daughter/son. Our teacher told us later that commonly in the Dravidian system both the cross-cousins (father's sister's children and the mother's brother's children) are the preferred partners.

Negotiating the marriage alliance- It is the fathers who negotiate, but they don't talk to each other directly. The family that decides to ask first will talk to the "kaani" (village head), or an elder from their village, and they will approach the other family, and ask for their opinion. If they disagree then everything stops there, and they will have to search for another alliance. If they do agree the fathers will meet up and discuss the marriage.

Ritual for marriage- The couple goes to the river and bathes in the water, then they go to the temple and do a small ritual. After that, they go to every house in their village to get blessings. And while people are giving them the blessings, as part of the ritual they will give them grains, fruits, or vegetables. Which will be cooked as a feast the same night, and will be eaten by the whole village. This marks the end of the ceremony, and the couple will start their own household.
2. Non-preferential marriage

If two people want to marry each other, but they do not have the consent of their parents, they have another ritual.

Negotiation of an alliance- The girl and her friends hide in the forest, and the boy and his friends are supposed to find them. The girls survive by eating fruits, berries, etc form the forest. But sometimes the supporters of the marriage leave some food for the girls in a special place. When the boys find them, their friends will come back to the village, to inform they found each other. The couple will continue living in the forest until their parents agree to the marriage.

Ritual for marriage-After the couple comes back to the village they will do the same ritual as discussed before.

Forbidden

To marry out of the Muthavan settlement is forbidden. If you do that you will be outcast from the village and can never come back.

-Kavya, Dunia and Rudra
The Muthuvans of the Thayanakudi settlements used to live in small groups of hamlets. They do shifting cultivation where they grow millets and beans since the beginning. They cultivate on both slopes and flat valley land. First, they clear out the area by cutting down the flora. Second, they wait until it dries and then burn that. The ash is used as an organic fertilizer for the seeds to sprout and grow. When the weeds come up, they abandon that land and leave it for about 4 years for the soil to regain its qualities. They don't use any sort of pesticides, so whatever they grow is a 100% organic. They were living happily until one day a landslide fell onto one of these hamlets and killed several people. This kept happening and their fear brought them all together and they created a larger settlement in Thayanankudi. In 1985 hunting was banned and they started to rely more on their crops and berries that they could gather and cultivate. Their crops consist of ragi, tinai, black varagu, big white varagu, small white varagu and sorgam and many varieties of beans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May to August</td>
<td>is the Millet harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to November</td>
<td>does not have any crops that are ready, so they collect honey, berries and go fishing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December to February</td>
<td>is the bean harvest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March to April</td>
<td>is a no harvest season again.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Their field work labour is shared equally between both genders and you can work in anyone's field. They also have a honey collecting season where they have a meeting and a man from each house is chosen to go collect honey for 10 days and not come back to the village until those 10 days pass. They collect the honey during the daytime and bring it back to their temporary camp. Whichever household participated in the honey collecting will get their share of honey. They eat it raw or they boil it for prolonged shelf life. The leftovers are sold in the Thursday weekly market with the help of EDC, which stands for Eco development committee. Any money that they earn is used for the houses. EDC started in 1998 but only in 2002 they started getting accommodated with the Muthuvans.

The forest department through a new project called 'Punarjeevanam' (which means rebirth) has adapted the Thayanakudi village and supports their farming. Through this project more millets and beans are cultivated organically and a seed bank is established. Through this project, they lease the land from the Muthuvans.

They only eat two meals a day. Their breakfast is usually kalli which is made out of ragi. They used to work as forest guards but they don't anymore. Their kids go to a boarding school specially made for them in Marayoor. They only come back to the village for functions and festivals. They eat chicken and goat and used to drink milk. They used to have many cows but milk wasn't really their thing and they eventually stopped drinking milk. They don't drink goat milk either. They use jaggery instead of white sugar. Men are the ones who cut and cook the fish. The women don't do that.

There are 2~4 men with medicinal knowledge who take care of small sicknesses. They only eat two meals a day. Their breakfast is usually kalli which is made out of ragi. They used to work as forest guards but they don't anymore. Their kids go to a boarding school specially made for them in Marayoor. They only come back to the village for functions and festivals. They eat chicken and goat and used to drink milk. They used to have many cows but milk wasn't really their thing and they eventually stopped drinking milk. They don't drink goat milk either. They use jaggery instead of white sugar. Men are the ones who cut and cook the fish. The women don't do that.

There are 2~4 men with medicinal knowledge who take care of small sicknesses. They have one vehicle in their village for emergencies. According to their custom, they don't cremate their dead and bury them instead. They do own land but as a village. Not as an individual.

-Gayatri and Eva

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 3:00am to around 5:00</td>
<td>they wake up and cook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around 8:00am</td>
<td>they start working in their fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 4:00pm</td>
<td>they return to their houses and start cooking their second meal. After eating they do their laundry and whatever needs to be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROPOSAL AND PERMISSIONS
Auroville Project Coordination Group  
GRANT PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. Project title: People and Cultural Diversity
3. Project duration: One academic year
4. Total cost of the project: - Rs 1,02,500.00/-
5. Funding amount requested - Rs 80000.00/-
6. Project holder's full name(s): – Mahavir & Thanuja & Ponnarasu
7. Address, phone and e-mail:  
   Mahavir : +91 75985 66800  
   mahavirbos@hotmail.com
   Thanuja: +91 9443494204  
   thanuja.mummidi@gmail.com 
   Ponnarasu: +91 9444176367  
   sponnarasu@gmail.com
8. Group, School, Service Deepanam school or Unit name
9. Group, School, Service or Deepanam school, Auroville. O413- 26222450  
   Unit address, phone and e-mail: deepanam@auroville.org.in

10. Background
   This is part of a new course, titled, 'People and Cultural Diversity' that aims to introduce the students to the subject of Anthropology. The course includes besides classroom lectures and assignments on understanding cultural diversity, a segment on fieldwork. For fieldwork, the class will travel to and meet a community whose culture and environment is different from all of them. Using different tools of observation, interview, map making, photography and video, the students will explore, understand and document culture along with the specificity of its biodiverse environment.

11. Problem statement
   Auroville is a brilliant amalgam of cultural diversity and "Faith" Class, the Teens of Deepanam (13 to 14 years of age) are a small representation of this. This project aims to create value and appreciation for this diversity. Understanding people and culture cannot take place in isolation of the lived environment, so the project directs students to focus from the entry point of a particular cultural group, their geography, history and biodiversity. For the above we have decided to meet and understand the cultural aspects of the indigenous people (Muthuvans/Hill Pulayas) living in the Chinnar Wildlife sanctuary.
13. Aim and Objectives (WHAT do you want to achieve?):
The project will allow students to think more carefully of their own culture as they reflect on the other.
It will set in a process of self reflection and develop their observation skills
It will give the students an opportunity to work collectively, demanding group coordination.
Travel and fieldwork takes students outside their comfort zones. They will have to be together away from home and work together in understanding a new culture and environment. Even if it is as short as four days, it is a lot for 13-14 year olds. This will give them the opportunity to develop tolerance and appreciation for views and styles different from themselves.
As the project involves writing a book based on fieldwork experience, it will be a challenge if no coordination and compromises are made. They will have to make a schedule of all that needs to done in the three days stay and divide topics amongst themselves, so the project objectives are shared and then consolidated.
The final aim of this project is to inculcate a sense of value and respect for humanity and the environment.

14. Description of Activities (WHAT will you do to achieve your aim and objectives?)
The students of Deepanam “Faith” Class are already carrying out a writing and publishing project. This ongoing project has taught them all aspects of content creation, page setting and editing. The result is visible in the monthly magazine, Kaleidoscope. This experience will compliment the writing of the book visualized in this project.
Before and after the scheduled fieldtrip in January 2018 (25th to 28th) we will continue with the regular lecture/discussions related to this project.
Specifically before the fieldtrip we will train in settlement map drawing, preparing question schedules for interview on understanding cultural aspects and environment
Post fieldwork we will discuss and debrief on the fieldwork, listing and sorting all that we have understood
Framing content of the book and writing. Finally publishing.
Project Team – Team of teachers at Deepanam, and the students of “Faith”
Beneficiaries- Students of Deepanam school and the Teachers
Evaluation
Involving them in free flow discussions about their experiences, difficulties and limitations.
Weekly evaluation on progress and changes needed by Mahavir, Thanuja and Ponnarasu
Organizing a book launch for the parents and the community
Full debriefing and report on the experience for the school, parents and the community

18. Other Sources of Funding - Audiovisual equipment
PROCEEDINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (WILDLIFE) AND CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN, KERALA

PRESENT: SURENDRA KUMAR IFS

Sub: KF&WLD - Permission to visit Thalibanankudi Tribal Settlement in Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary for a period of 2 days - request - reg.


With reference to the request made in the letter 1st read above, permission is hereby granted to 15 students of Deepanam School, Auroville and 7 Teachers / Teaching Arts to (List of students and teachers attached as Annexure) visit Thalibanankudi tribal settlements in Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary for a period of 4 days from (25.01.2019 to 28.01.2019) subject to the following conditions.

1. Conditions laid down in the letter cited as 2nd reference should be strictly observed.
2. The visit or study should not affect the emotions / cultural values of the tribal people.
3. The participants shall not collect any samples from the forest areas and course any destruction to the habitat.
4. The participants shall be bound to act in accordance with existing Acts, Rules and directions of the concerned officers in the forest areas.
5. The participants shall be held liable for any damage or loss caused due to the action of negligence. They shall make good to Government in Forest Department for any loss caused and for the destruction or damage to any Forest Produce, Wildlife, Forest or the Environment. The loss will be assessed by the Chief Wildlife Warden and his decision shall be final.
6. The visit of participants shall be intimated to the concerned officers having jurisdiction over the area in advance.
7. The participants should produce valid ID card as and when demanded by the officers concerned. A report on the details of programme conducted shall be submitted to the Chief Wildlife Warden on expiry of the period of the camp.

Encl: List of permitted Teachers & Students.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL)
& Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala

To
The Director, Sri. Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research
SAILER Secretariat, Administrative Area, Auroville-605101, Tamil Nadu
Copy to: The Wildlife Warden Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary for information and necessary action
# LIST OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mahavir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bhakti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M.Thanuja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S.Ponnarasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Arun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R.Y.Vishnupriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>P.Muhammed Rafi</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dunia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gayatri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pallavi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leah</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Sana</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Vyomini</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Kavya</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Kiril</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Rudra</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Viknesh</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Lamo</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Arav</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL)  
& Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala

A
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF SCHEDULED TRIBE DEV. DEPARTMENT  
4th Floor Vikas Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram Pin: 695033  
Ph: 0471-2303229, 0471-2304594. Fax: 0471-2302990. E-mail: keralatribes@gmail.com

D3-725/19  
19.01.2019

The Director

To

Director  
Deeapanam School  
Auroville 605101  
TamilNadu.

Sir,

Sub: - STDD- Permission to visit Thaiyanankudi tribal settlement.  
Ref:  Your Ltr. Dated 27/12/2019

With reference to above, consent of the Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Government of Kerala is granted to 7 teachers & 15 students to conduct visit Thaiyanankudi tribal settlement in Chinnar wildlife sanctuary for a period from 25th January 2019 to 28th January 2019 subject to the following conditions.

1. The proposed visit should only be conducted as a part of the Research work and thus obtained data, knowledge and reports should not in any way be used for other purposes other than the study of the scholar.
2. The visit should be conducted with the knowledge of the Project Officer, Idukki.
3. The visit should not in any way hurt the cultural and habitual life of the people lay in the settlement.
4. An agreement should be executed before the Project Officer, Idukki by you agreeing the above conditions.
6. Permission of the Forest Department Should be also to be obtained for entering in the tribal settlements amidst the forest.
7. Special instruction:- Objection if any from the concerned people should be duly considered; the research stopped and be reported to the Director
8. This sanction will cease at the written notice of the
   Project Officer, Idukki
9. The applicant should leave the settlement by 5 pm. You are not
   permitted to stay overnight in the colony

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

DIRECTOR

COPY: The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest
   Forest Office, Vazhuthacaud, TVM.
   Project Officer, Idukki

V. Saseendran
Deputy Director (Education)
For Director
From: Jean Eisele <jeisele@uw.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 5:20 PM
To: mahavirbos@hotmail.com; anuja.mummidi@gmail.com; ponnarasu@gmail.com
Cc: pcg.; fweboard@gmail.com
Subject: F W E grant

Dear Mahavir, Thanuja, and Ponnarasu,

It is with great pleasure that the Foundation for World Education fully funds your request for $ 1009 toward your project, People and Cultural Diversity. We applaud your blend of learning and humanity in this scholarly academic project. Your proposal was well-conceived and written, showing your dedication to building bridges with non-Aurovilians, which we’re seeing lately in a context of greater efforts toward compassion and human unity.

We understand the time crunch which necessitated your moving your trip ahead, and a project has to be exceptional for us to grant reimbursement. We feel yours qualifies. One of our Board members commented, “This project makes me want to go back to school!”

As you know, each funded project has a point-person – someone on the Board who will be available to follow your progress in detail, answer questions, and generally be especially well-informed about your project. I will be glad to be your point person, and I look forward to seeing your report.

Sincerely,
Jean Eisele, Secretary
Foundation for World Education

Thanuja Mummidi <thanuja.mummidi@gmail.com>  
To: mahavir@hotmail.com>  

Wow Mahavir. This is very encouraging

[Quoted text Hidden]

Thu, Mar 14, 2019 at 6:55 AM

Dear Jean Eisele,

We are very grateful for the support given by the Foundation of world education to the project. We will be sending you the report as soon as it is prepared by students.

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=45f76b7869&view=pl&search=all&permthid=thread-f%3A182784989364514691&simp=1#msg-f%3A182784989364514691
We have learnt a lot more than shared here, but then we are the faith group and only 12 to 14 year olds!