Language Use And Language Attitudes Among Kani Tribe In Tamil Nadu And Kerala

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Abstract

Language as a medium of communication is constantly acquired and mastered involuntarily by the users. Due to that, the complexity of language is to be explained using empirical tools. Tribal language is considered intricate due to its remoteness and scriptless nature. Language dynamics within tribal contexts are complex and diverse. It is influenced and modified by various factors such as historical, social, and cultural aspects. Understanding language dynamics can shed light on language maintenance, language shift, language attitudes and the implications for preserving linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Kanikkaran or Kani is a scheduled Tribal living in the forest and hilly regions of the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Kani speaks a language known as Malampasai, which means the lang[1]uage of the Hills. The paper discusses the usage and attitude of the tribal language Malampasai among the tribal community, Kanikkaran or Kani, residing in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The study sheds light on language attitudes, language use and patterns, language within families, language shift, language maintenance, and language adaptation. Kani Malampasai does not have a script of its own, and hence the oral description of the dialect cannot be compared with the scripted form of Tamil and Malayalam; hence, the researcher has considered the oral form of Kani dialect with the existing form of oral language that is used in the neighbourhood. The Kani oral communicative language has more similar words and context in common when compared to the Tamil and Malayalam prevailing in the districts of Kollam, Trivandrum, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli.

Keywords: Kani Malampasai, Tribal Language, Language attitudes of Tribe.

Introduction:

Expression of thoughts, ideas and information can be shared through different modes and means. Language, either spoken or written, is a complete and accurate form of sharing knowledge. Language as a medium of communication is constantly acquired and mastered involuntarily by the users. Due to that, the complexity of language is to be explained using empirical tools. Tribal language is considered intricate due to its remoteness and scriptless nature. Language dynamics within tribal contexts are complex and diverse. It is influenced and modified by various factors such as historical, social, and cultural aspects. Understanding language dynamics can shed light on language maintenance, language shift, language attitudes and the implications for preserving linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Kanikkaran or Kani is a scheduled Tribal living in the forest and hilly regions of the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Kani speaks a language known as

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Malampasai, which means the language of the Hills. People and their sociological factors contribute further to the development and enhancement of a language. Historical, social, economic and environmental factors modify the tribal language. Exploring the oral inscriptions of the tribal population would bring out the hidden culture, history, myths, social influences, and cultural heritage to the limelight.

The paper discusses the usage and attitude of the tribal language Malampasai among the tribal community, Kanikkaran or Kani, residing in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The study sheds light on language attitudes, language use and patterns, language within families, language shift, language maintenance, and language adaptation. Kani Malampasai does not have a script of its own, and hence the oral description of the dialect cannot be compared with the scripted form of Tamil and Malayalam; hence, the researcher has considered the oral form of Kani dialect with the existing form of oral language that is used in the neighbourhood. The Kani oral communicative language has more similar words and context in common when compared to the Tamil and Malayalam prevailing in the districts of Kollam, Trivandrum, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli.

Objectives of the Study:
The present study unwraps the linguistic nuance of the tribal language Malampasai among the tribal community Kanikkaran or Kani of the Western Ghats.
1. To analyse the language use and patterns of Malampasai as a predictable formation of a tribal language from Tamil and Malayalam.
2. Kani Malampasai derives from the Dravidian languages Tamil and Malayalam, the primary dialect of the Kani Tribal language.
3. To examine the specific usage of Malampasai in the domestic and social sphere.
4. To address the reasons for the impending extinction of the Malampasai among the tribal population.

Methodology:

Qualitative research has been done with the primary data collected from the Kani people residing in the Western Ghats regions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The secondary sources are collected from the libraries, research articles, PhD thesis and other resources from various centres.

Language and Communication:

Language is a communication system in the form of codes that can be verbal, non-verbal or combined. In the context of human capacities for communication, language can be a reciprocally difficult and quickly learned skill. Verbal, graphic, and sign languages are numerous methods individuals utilise to communicate. Human language is more complex and methodically documented than any other language system because of a scripting system that employs symbols and semiotics. Language, as well as its codes and scripts, are not a fixed phenomenon. It has been transforming itself and evolving each moment from times unknown. It relies on the human environment and the society for the development and enhancement. Language is varied and diverse depending on the geological location and surroundings.

Malampasai is a script-less oral description that the Kani has used. Malampasai is a famous Dravidian language family, namely Tamil and Malayalam. The Dravidian language family is one of the prominent language families in South Asia. It is primarily spoken in southern India, Sri Lanka, and certain regions of Pakistan and Nepal. In The Dravidian Languages, Sanford Steever states, "The Dravidian languages are a family of languages spoken by 250 million people, mainly in southern India, north-east Sri Lanka, and south-west Pakistan"(1). The two major Dravidian language subgroups are Northern Dravidian and Southern Dravidian. Two further subcategories of Northern Dravidian are

Brahui and Central Pahari. There are four subgroups of the Southern Dravidian language family: Tamil-Kannada, Telugu-Kui, Tulu-Gadaba, and Malayalam-Kodagu. Karma Phuntsho, in The History of Bhutan, states, "Malto and Kurukh are spoken in isolated pockets in eastern India. Kurukh is also spoken in parts of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh"(72). K.V. Soundara Rajan of the Archaeological Survey of India in "Archaeological Data & The Dravidian Speaking Tribes In India" states that "Dravidian" is also spoken by the palaeo- Mediterranean Tamils and Andhras, as well as the Australoid Chenchus, Malsers and Gonds, the Alpino-Dinaric groups of Karnataka (include- ing Coorg), the Negrito (?) Kaders and the Trulas"(53). The Encyclopaedia Of Dravidian Tribes, in the chapter "Tribal Languages" states,

> Even though the identification of Dravidian languages is not yet complete, the following are already in the list:
>
> "Scheduled Languages", viz., those included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India: 1. Kannada; 2. Malayalam; 3. Tamil and 4. Telugu
>
> Languages considered as "mother tongues", falling in the Dravidian family, which are not "scheduled", are: Gadaba; Gondi; Irula; Kodagu; Kolami; Konda (Kubi); Kota; Koraga; Koya; Kui; Kurukh (Oraon); Kuvi (Khond); Malto; Manda; Naiki; Ollari; Parji; Pengo; Toda; Tulu. Many of these show proto-typical characteristics which accord to them an antiquity at least equal to those of the "Scheduled" Dravidian languages. (45)

The simplified version, the relationships, and the classifications within the Dravidian language family are still undergoing research and analysis. It has its unique socio-cultural practices and words.

Kanikkaran lives on the Western Ghats mountain range, which is not only older than the Himalayas but also a UNESCO World Heritage site. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has also recognised the Western Ghats as a landmark or area with legal protection for its cultural, historical, scientific or other forms of significance. The "Decisions report – 36th session of the World Heritage Committee, Saint-Petersburg" states,

> The Western Ghats are internationally recognised as a region of immense global importance for the conservation of biological diversity, besides containing areas of high geological, cultural and aesthetic values. A chain of mountains running parallel to India's western coast, approximately 30-50 km inland, the Ghats traverse the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat. These mountains cover an area of around 140,000 km² in a 1,600 km long stretch that is interrupted only by the 30 km Palghat Gap at around 11°N. Older than the great Himalayan mountain chain, the Western Ghats of India are a geomorphic feature of immense global importance. . . . Criterion (ix): The Western Ghats region demonstrates speciation related to the breakup of the ancient landmass of Gondwanaland in the early Jurassic period; . . . The 39 component parts of this serial property fall under a number of protection regimes, ranging from Tiger Reserves, National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Reserved Forests. (161)

Kani's have inherited the Western Ghats regions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Their period of existence in the Western Ghats is not predicted. Shyam, in his research article "Aspects of Life and Language of Kanikkar Tribal Community of Kerala – A Study", addresses Kanikkars as Proto-Australoid. He claims,

> Ethnographically, Kanikkar belongs to Proto-Australoid group. Some of them live in the interior parts of the forest, especially in the Podiyam, Mukkothivayal, Chonampara, Erumbiyad, Pothod, Plath regions in the Agathiyar and Kottur Forest

ranges in the Nedumangad Taluk of Trivandrum district. Around 27 settlements are identified in these regions. (n.pag)

Although the precise period of the Kanikkarans' cohabitation could not be determined, it would be possible to say that the Kani people's existence in these mountain ranges was just as archaic as their linguistic practices.

Patterns of Language:

Language uses scientific patterns to make a spoken word meaningful. A word has grammatical and semantic relationships with each other. The language has patterns to indicate its relationships with other patterns and the language as a whole. Every language has unique words, sounds and meanings encrypted as patterns. Patterns of language use differ from other languages and their patterns. The term "pattern language" was coined by the architect Christopher Alexander, who popularised the ideology in his book, A Pattern Language, in 1977. He says,

> A pattern language can also be an attempt to express the deeper wisdom of what brings aliveness within a particular field of human endeavour, through a set of interconnected patterns. Aliveness is one place holder term for, "the quality that has no name": a sense of wholeness, spirit, or grace that while varying form, is precise and empirically verifiable. (1216)

He adds that the idea expressed in a pattern should be general enough to be applied in different systems within its context but still specific enough to give constructive guidance.

Linguistics is the scientific method applied to a language to discover the nature and function of language. Linguistic patterns are predictable formations in a language. It constructs its words and sounds and gives them meaning. Rules of grammar, syntax and semantics are linguistic patterns.

Kani Malampasai Language Pattern:

Kanikkaran speaks a South Dravidian tongue that combines Malayalam and Tamil. The influence of Tamil and Malayalam varies depending on the topography and the Kani people's access to their local area. People from Kanyakumari and those who live close to Tirunelveli tend to speak a more heavily accented form of Kani with Tamil dialect, but at the same time, Kani speakers in the Trivandrum and Kollam districts tend to speak Kani with greater Malayalam accents. According to Krishna Iyer, the Kani language of the people residing south of Neyattinkkara strongly influences Tamil, and the people residing in the north have a deep influence of Malayalam in their language. The blend of Tamil and Malayalam can be witnessed in their unique songs like Tthottam songs Totrm paadal (Tōrrappāṭal) or the genesis song and the Chattu Songs.

Kannikkaran's Malampasai describes their tradition, culture, medicine, mythical stories, songs, history, hunting practice and life skills are passed on from one generation to the next only through oral communication. A distinctive method of communication is valimudichil and vaporul. The Murukkam plant's vine is peeled off to detach its outer bark and clean it thoroughly so it can be dried and smoothed. Later, when communication is required, this vine is knotted and sent with a messenger to deliver the message to the intended group head, another community, another settlement or Kuppini. There are two different kinds of Vallimudichil; the first is called Pathayakettu and is used to spread happy, pleasant messages, while Mukambakett is used to spread hateful sentiments. The variety of socio-cultural words available in the language makes it stand unique apart from the neighbouring languages Tamil and Malayalam.

Vowels in Kani Language, Malampasai:

In Kani Language, Malampasai, there are two types of vowels: short and long. Shyam in his "Chetham" (Sound): Kani Bhasha Sahaie(Preparation of a Handbook for Kani Language of Kanikkar Community in Kerala State provides a linguistic description of Kani

language. In this, he divides the vowel sounds in the Kani dialect as short and long. He opines, "**a, e, i, o, u** - Short vowels and **ā, ē, ī, ō, ū**   -Long vowels"(45).

Consonants in Kani Language, Malampasai:
The consonant form of pronunciation is divided into relative, nasal, lateral, and palpable consonants. Shyam, in his "Chetham" (Sound): Kani Bhasha Sahaie(Preparation of a Handbook for Kani Language of Kanikkar Community in Kerala State provides a linguistic description of the Kani language. In this, he exposes the consonants sounds in Kani dialect and brings out the sound of consonants as, "Total consonant sounds – 24, /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /t/, /d/, /c/, /j/, /k/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /n/, /n/, /l/, /// /i/, /r/, /s/, /s/, /y/, /v/, /h/ /R/" (54). Dr. Shyam, with the help of the Kerala Institute for Research Training & Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS) has created a script or Kani language and presented it to the Government of Kerala, but the Kanis do not use it.

Domestic Language within Kani Families:
Various scenarios and circumstances explore how the Kani language is used inside a family. The Malampasai, or the Kani language, is recognised as a family language. Malampasai is a hereditary language only passed down orally from one generation to the next. Kani's Malampasai is not much known to the outer world because the Kani people use it within their community. Kani people are closely associated with Tamil and Malayalam-speaking natives based on their geological locations, and the purpose of the language use varies when it is spoken in the public domain. In the public domain, the language becomes more Lingua Franca, where the Kani people use a business or diplomatic language that the people of contact use. They adopt themselves to learn and communicate the language closely associated with them. This language shift is made more accessible due to their standard links and usage.

For instance,

To ask a question, where did you go? They say:

Kani language	- **Enku paiyia?**	**/ eṅku paiyia?/**
	/ Enku paiyathu?	**/eṅku paiyatu ?/**
Tamil language	- **Engu ponai?**	**eṅku ponāi?**
	Enga pona?	**eṅku ponā?**
Malayalam language	- **Evada pooiee?**	**evda pōī ?**
	Enku pooiee?	**/ eṅku pōī?/**

In the above-mentioned example, the speaker intends to ask, Where did you go? The same response in Kani Malampasai would be **(eṅku paiyia?)** / **(eṅku paiyatu ?)** the term **/eṅku/** stands for the question term where? and when it comes to Tamil dialect, it is used as **/eṅga/** or **/eṅgu/** but at the same time **/eṅku/ or /evada/** is used in Malayalam and the term gives similar sound to ask the question where?

In south Indian Dravidian languages, the term **po** stands as a root word to **go** in Tamil and Malayalam. It takes certain suffixes to represent different tenses, gender and persons. The term /**pōī**/ in Malayalam stands for past tense, and the term /**ponāi**/ or /**pona**/ in Tamil also stands for past tense. In Kani /**paiyia**/ or /**paiyatu**/ also stands for past tense. However, it takes a suffix -**yia**/or/**atu** with the root word to make it different from the neighbouring dialects of Tamil and Malayalam. The root word **po** takes a vowel shift in the second vowel sound in the Kani Malampasai. The sound /**o**/ has undergone a great vowel shift to take / **ai**/ in the pronunciation of the Kani dialect. Thus, the term /**po**/ changes to /**pai**/ to derive from the pronunciation of the sound /**paiyia**/or /**paiyatu**/ in the Kani dialect.

To say, I am going to the forest

Kani language	-	**Njaan kaattukku pokine (Ñā‌n kā‌t‌tukku pōki‌nē)**
		Nan kattuku ponie (Na‌n ka‌t‌tuku pō‌nē)

Tamil language	- **Naan kaattirkku pokiraen (Nā‌n kā‌t‌ti‌rku pōki‌rē‌n)**
	Naan kaattikku poraen (Nā‌n kā‌t‌tiku pō‌rē‌n)
Malayalam language	- - **Njaan kaattil pokunnu (Ñā‌n kā‌t‌til pōku‌n‌nu)**
	Njaan kaatti ponnu (Ñā‌n kā‌t‌tie pō‌n‌nu)

In the above example, the person says, "I am going to the forest" in the present continuous sentence form. In this, the subject 'I' or / Ñā‌n/ refers to the first person singular and uses a nasal sound in Malayalam and Kani Malampasai. The vocal tract is blocked, but airflow continues through the nose as in /**Ñ**/ and /**n**/ in Malayalam and Kani dialects. However, the Tamil dialect /**Nā‌n**/ has a plosive contrast with nasals and the occlusion is made when the vocal tract is blocked, but the airflow continues through the nose as in /N/ and /n/ with partial occlusion impedes.

The second term is developed from the root word /**kaad**/, which means forest in all three dialects. The Tamil dialect takes the additional sound /**‌ti‌rku** / or /**‌tuku** /, and the Kani Malampasai takes the sound /**‌tukku** / or /**‌tiku**/ along with the root words to give a plosive occlusion. When it comes to Malayalam, there is an elision or deletion of speech sounds has taken place to have an omission of the final sound and assimilation and elision has occurred together. Instead of the speech sounds /**‌tukku** / **‌tuku** / **‌ti‌rku** / **‌tiku**/,** the Malayalam dialect takes a /** il** / or /** ie**/ sound.

The third term has been derived from the root word /**po**/ meaning 'to go'. This verb takes certain additional sounds to indicate tense and person differently in all three dialects: Tamil, Malayalam and Kani. In Malayalam, it is referred to as /**pōku‌n‌nu**/. The root word /**po**/ is suffixed with a nasal construction with a back close vowel sound /**kunnu**/. Tamil, the term /**pōki‌rē‌n**/ articulates the root word /**po**/ along with /**ki‌rē‌n**/ to form a nasal plosive, whereas the Kani Malampasai takes a suffix/**ki‌nē**/ along with the root word /po/, where occlusive is nasal and long vowel shift gives the dialect a musical note.

To say, I am going to the field.

Kani language	- **Njaan vay pokine (Ñā‌n vēyi pōkinī)**
	Nan vay ponie (Na‌n vēyi pō‌nē)

Tamil language	- **Naan vayallukku pokiraen (Nā‌n vēyallkku pōki‌rē‌n)**
	Naan vayalku poraen (Nā‌n vēylku pō‌rē‌n)

Malayalam language	- **Njaan vayalthu pokunnu. (Ñā‌n vayllattu pōku‌n‌nu)**
	Njaan vayalie ponnu. (Ñā‌n vayli pō‌n‌nu)

In the above example, the speaker says, "I am going to the field". The sentence is constructed in a first-person singular present continuous tense. The example takes the same sentence construction of the previous sentence, but it is taken to show the omission of the final sound and assimilation and elision that has occurred in the root word for the word 'field' or /**vēyl**/. The Tamil dialect takes the suffixes /-**lkku**/ or /-**lku**/ but at the same time Malayalam dialect takes the suffixes /-**lattu**/ or /-**li**/ where there is an elision of the second sound /**lu**/ to /**la**/ has taken place. The sound /**u**/ has undergone a great vowel shift to take /i/ in the pronunciation of the Malayalam dialect.   As in the Kani dialect, the suffixes are omitted to pronounce as /** vēyi** /. **I**n this word even the root word for the word field**,** /**vēyal**/ is not pronounced ultimately.

The term / **vēyal/** is the root word to indicate a field or a spot used for cultivation. The term is a commonly used term and is interchangeable and pronounced differently with other terms in Tamil, Malayalam and Kani. The alternative terms for field or / **vēyal/** are as follows /**vilai/** ,/**pāṯam/**, /**candam/** and /**vilai/** in Malayalam and /**vilai/**, /**vəil/**, and /**candam/** in Tamil and /**vēyi/**, / **vela/**, /**edva/**, and /**cara/** in Kani dialect.

To say, Baby drank milk.

> Kani language - **pulla paalu kudicheni (Puḷḷa pālu kuṭicciṉi)**
>
> Tamil language- **pillai paal kuditthathu (Piḷḷai pāl kuṭittatu)**
>
> Malayalam language   - **pilla paalu kudichu. (Piḷḷa pālu kuṭiccu)**

In this example, the speaker says, "Baby drank milk". The sentence is constructed in the third person past tense. The term baby / **Piḷḷai** / of Tamil dialect have undergone the omission of the final sound and assimilation and elision that has occurred in the root word for the word baby or / **Piḷḷai /,** here a vowel shift in the final speech sound/**ai/** has reduced to /**a/** to sound /**Piḷḷa/** in the Malayalam, in Kani Malampasai, the second vowel speech sound /i/undergoes a great vowel shift sound / **u/** to sound as / **Puḷḷa /** and the final speech sound/**ai/** has reduced to /**a/**to be pronounce / **Puḷḷa/.**

The term /**pillai**/ has changed to sound /**pilla**/ in Malayalam and /**pulla**/ in Kani. The term is commonly used and identical to other Tamil, Malayalam and Kani terms. The alternative terms for babies are interchangeable in all three dialects. But as a general classification, the term /**pillai /** has different vocabularies that are as follows, /**Kuñcu** /, Vava (baby), Kutti (small one), Muttu (pearl), Chakkara (sweet one), Muttu Mani (pearl bell), Kannu Mani (eyeball), Chakkara Kutti (sweet small one), Ponai (gold) in Malayalam and Tamil adds the suffix /**pillai/** to a wide range of terms to denote the "young of the species,"/**Kuzhandhai/**, /**Kuḻantai** /, Papa (baby), Kutti (small one), Chellam (loved one) Kann Mani (eyeball), they use all the names of gems and precious metals to address their kids like, Thangam (gold), Vairam (diamond)   in Tamil and / **Puḷḷa** /, /**Kuñcu/**, Kuruma, Kutti, Cirriya, in Kani dialect.

This term describes the human child and expresses others such as trees, plants and animals, which is very common in all the three dialects of Tamil, Malayalam and Kani.

Example: **Tennam pillai** - coconut seedling.
Keeri pillai - Mangoose.

The second term,/**pālu/** or the milk, is derived from the root word /**pāl/.** This expression remains the same in all three languages with the assimilation of vowel sound from /**ā/** to /**u/** in the root word of Malayalam and Kani to sound /**pālu/**.
The third term to drink derives from the root word /**kudi**/. The sentence is in the past tense, and the Malayalam dialect takes the suffix /**iccu**/ and the Tamil dialect takes the suffix /**ittatu/**, /**iccu**/ or and the Kani dialect takes the suffix /**iccini**/ or /**iccu**/or /**iccā**/ which arrives to /**kuṭicciṉi/, /kuṭiccu/** or /**kuṭiccā/.**

To say, Elephant is trumpeting

> Kani language   - **aana viliccine   (āna viliccine)**
>   - **aana koovi vilicchine (Āṉa kūvi viḷicciṉi)**
>   - **aana amarane   (āna amaRəne)**
>   - **aana karayine (āna karayine)**

Tamil language	- **aanai villikuthu (Āṉai vilicuthu)**
	- **aanai villichie (Āṉai vilisie)**
	- **aanai pilirithu. (Āṉai piḷiṟutu)**

Malayalam language - **aana chinnam vilikkunnu (Āṉa ciṉam viḷikkuṉṉu)**

- **aana karienu (āna karaienu)**

In this example, the speaker says, 'Elephant is trumpeting'. The term /**Āṉa**/ is the root word for the animal elephant. However, small changes in the pronunciation are observed in all three languages. The Malayalam and Kani Malampasai use only the root word /**Āṉa**/, but at the same time, the Tamil dialect takes an additional suffix /**ai**/ to the root word and pronounces it as /**Āṉai/.**

The root word /**viḷi**/ is referred to call in Tamil, Malayalam and Kani. The Kani Malampasai takes the suffixes/- **ccine/, /-sie/,** the Tamil dialect takes the suffixes /-**kuthu/,** and /**- chie/,** the Malayalam dialect takes the suffixes /**-kkuṉṉu/.** The richness of the language can be understood through the strong vocabulary used in all three languages:/- **amaRəne/, /- karayine/,** /- **piḷiṟutu/, /- chinnam vilikkunnu/,** and /**- karienu/.** In this sentence, there is a complete blend of Tamil and Malayalam and a portrayal of particular cultural stereotypical characteristics of Kani Malampasai.

Kani Malampasai is more dominant within the community, and it is used for domestic purposes. Language, while used for education or social gatherings with other community people, becomes more formal, and they use the contact language more than the Malampasai for formal communication. In short, Kani people use their traditional Kani Malampasai more freely in informal contexts. They use Tamil or Malayalam with an involuntary tint of Malampasai or formal means of communication.

The language use of the people could understand the proficiency level of the language assessment. Kani people, those who are elderly and those who live deep in the woods away from modern civilisation, seem to use traditional Kani Malampasai more than those who associate with Tamil and Malayalam-speaking people of the inland. Parents with their children attending school or school-going children tend to use more Tamil or Malayalam than Kani Malampasai. The Governments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala have been taking various steps to educate these people. As a part of it, they establish schools within the settlements or provide schools with hostel facilities for the children so they can have free food, accommodation and education. These schools provide Tamil or Malayalam as the first or medium of instruction and English as the second language. Using Tamil or Malayalam as a medium of instruction for Kani people makes them learn more Tamil and Malayalam vocabulary. Within a time, they use Tamil and Malayalam words instead of Kani Malampasai.

Education and migration can be analysed as the external factors influencing a language. However, the lack of written scripts and less family time of the children with the community and the family not only paved the way for a language shift but also brought cultural change in the community. Hostel education and working among the natives of Tamil or Malayalam-speaking people for daily wages bring them close to those who don't use Malayalam, which would also serve as a means for the extinction of Kani Malampasai.

Replacing Tamil or Malayalam vocabulary instead of Kani Malampasai leads to a language shift or loss within the family. A language shift has happened within the family as Tamil or Malayalam replaces Kani Malampasai as the primary means of communication. The language shift can be due to the modern living style also. The traditional tools and vessels were also replaced by electrical motors, and steel and plastic containers also served as a tool for language loss. The terms used to address people have also undergone many changes, for example:

English word	Past Kani Word	Present Kani Word
Elder sister	Aachi (**Ācci**)	Akka (**Akkā**)/ Chachi(**Cēcci**)
Sister in law	Nathina (**Nāttiṉā**)	Mathenie (**Matiṉi**) / Nathun (**Nātuṉ**)
All places	Pillavilai (**Piḷḷaviḷai**)	Oor (**Ūr**)/Edvu (**Eṭavu**)/ Edava(**Eṭavā**)
Child	Kuruma (**Kuṟumā**)	Pillai (**Piḷḷai**)/ Kunju (**Kuññu**)
Grandmother	Appachi (**Appacci**)	Patti (**Pāṭṭi**)
Saree	Cheela (**Cīlā**)	Saree (**Cāri**)

Tamil, Malayalam, or English have replaced the Kani words used in the past. The researcher has found that middle-aged Kani people and young adolescent children use more foreign words and other usages than elderly people. Even older adults who have close interaction with the young school-going children have also started using English, Tamil and Malayalam words as they have learned them through the language of their grandchildren.

Language Shift and Maintenance:
Language shift could be understood as a transition of community from using one language to another as their primary means of communication. But at the same time, maintenance of a language could be learned as the steps and efforts made to preserve the continued usage of the language.

Michael Wizel refers to Ehret's model in the effect of cultural transmission. According to Ehret, ethnicity and language can shift relatively easily in small societies due to the cultural, economic and military choices made by the local population. The group bringing new traits may initially be small, contributing to features that can be fewer in number than those of the already local culture. The emerging combined group may then initiate a recurrent, expansionist process of ethnic language and shift (p.347).

Language attitude in a tribal environment refers to the individual feelings, beliefs and opinions towards their language. It encompasses the emotional, cognitive and evaluative aspects of one's perception of a language. Cultural and societal norms, education, media representation, and social interactions shape language attitudes. People may develop positive attitudes towards language if they associate it with their cultural identity, heritage or personal experiences of success and belonging. But at the same time, contrary to positive attitudes, tribal people may develop negative attitudes. Negative attitudes arise when a language is considered inferior due to its association with stigma or discrimination. The language can be considered inferior due to its lack of practical utility in specific contexts.

In a speech community where speakers use two or more varieties of the same language under different conditions, they tend to use their tribal language among their family and community. However, they use a standard dialect while speaking with speakers of other dialects or on public occasions. C.A. Ferguson in Diglossia claims,

> "Many speakers speak their local dialect at home or among family or friends of the same dialect area but use the standard language in communicating with speakers of other dialects or on public occasions (325).

Kanikkar people also speak their Malampasai among their community, family, and friends. Kanikkars speaking with the outsiders seem to speak Tamil or Malayalam according to their locality. They speak the language of the inland people with the slang of Malampasai and Tamil or Malampasai and Malayalam. The Kani people do not use their Malampasai among the inlanders as they feel insecure or inferior to other people.

Conclusion:
Tribal languages are thought to be complex since they are spoken in isolated areas and lack written language. Tribal environments have unique and intricate language dynamics. It is

shaped and altered by a number of elements, including social, cultural, and historical factors. The preservation, shift, attitudes, and consequences for maintaining linguistic variety and cultural legacy may all be better understood by having a solid understanding of language dynamics. A designated tribal group known as the Kani or Kanikkaran inhabits the steep and forested areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala's Western Ghats. The language spoken by Kani is referred to as Malampasai, or the language of the Hills.

The Kani have an oral description called Malampasai that does not follow a script. The Malampasai language family includes Tamil and Malayalam languages in the form of words, syllables and interpretations, which parallels with the Dravidian language family. The language use and patterns of Malampasai is a predictable formation of a tribal language from Tamil and Malayalam as its phonemes of Malampasai analogous with Tamil and Malayalam languages of the Dravidian language family.

The Kani's follow a specific usage of Malampasai, while used in the domestic and social sphere. When speaking in public, the Kani people adopt a business or diplomatic language that other people in their contact employ, making it more Lingua Franca. They take on the language that is intimately linked with them in order to learn and speak it. Their common usage and linkages make this linguistic change easier to understand.

The Kani's Malampasai is in a merge of extinction among the tribal population. There is a linguistic shift or loss within the family if Malayalam or Tamil terminology is substituted for Kani Malampasai. Within the family, there has been a linguistic shift with Tamil or Malayalam taking the place of Kani Malampasai as the predominant language of communication. The contemporary way of life, educational system adopted by the state governments, and the trade interactions are the reasons for the linguistic shift and linguistic change in the Kani Malampasai

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