

Analyzing the Livelihood Opportunities among the Tribes of the Western Ghats in Kerala

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ABSTRACT The livelihood opportunities among the tribes of western Attappady namely, Irula, Muduga and Kurumba were analyzed to develop an understanding about their socio-economic status. A pre-tested questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted in 150 randomly selected households from nine settlements. The Irula community who settled in the lower valley had frequent interactions with the settlers (outsiders) having the highest literacy rate (73%) followed by Kurumba (67%) and Muduga (56%). Daily wages work was the major occupation and source of income for the Irula and Muduga communities, whereas Kurumbas who settled in the interior forest depended on Non-timber forest products. All the tribal communities incurred maximum expenditure for the purchase of the food commodities. The better education opportunities provided to the younger generation could open up new occupational opportunities and economic status for the indigenous people.