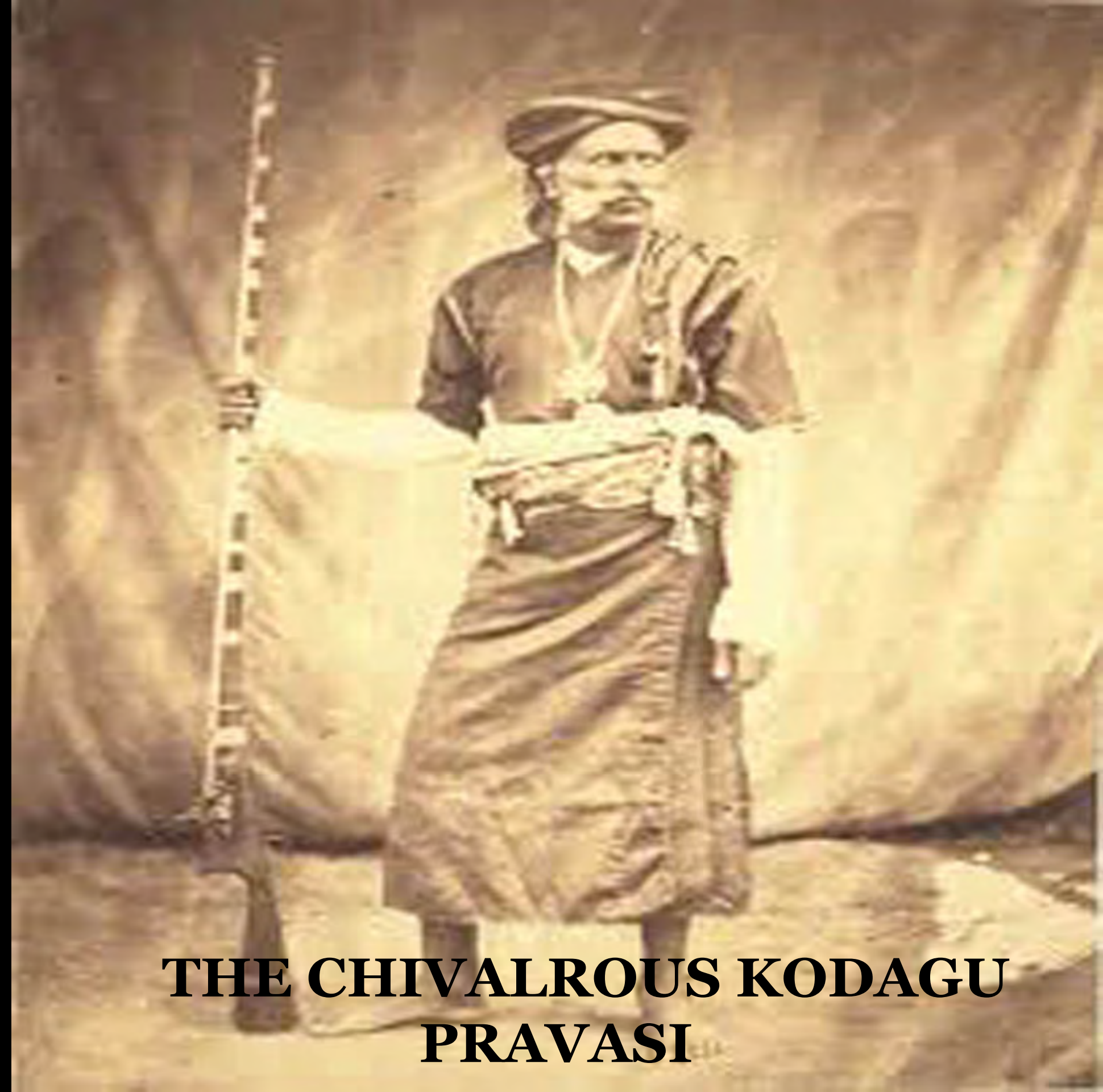


The Kodavas who natively speak the Kodava language. Traditionally they were land-owning agriculturists with martial traditions. Kodavas were called Kshatriyas based on their legendary descent, the rights they held to carry arms from the ancient times and their military traditions. They practice family exogamy and caste endogamy. By religion most of them are of the Hindu community. The Kodava Hindus are a non-Brahminical sect who believe more in reverence towards nature and their ancestors than in the strict following of the Vedic Hindu principles

This documentation covers the kodava people indigenous origin,culture,language,religion and their traditional attire and ornaments. And most importantly my experience on my journey,interaction with the kodava people and my outlook towards their rich culture.



THE CHIVALROUS KODAGU PRAVASI

THE CHIVALROUS KODAGU PRAVASI
TRADITIONAL ATTIRE AND ORNAMENTS

Gloriya mary.V

Guided by
Amit Sinha



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Thank you,
Gloriya Mary.V



Preface

The hardy and charming people who inhabit these lands are known as the Kodavas, and are renowned for their distinguished martial history. The earliest references to the Kodavas are found in Tamil Sangam literature dating back to the 2nd century AD. The origin of the Kodava people remains a mystery and there are a number of interesting theories that add to the romance and mystery of the region.

While the Coorgs or Kodavas are the majority race, there were many other groups that contributed to the melting pot. The second largest community of Coorg are the Gowdas. In the days of the Kodava kings, they supported agricultural activity, and turned into stealthy scouts in times of war. They lived near the border in order to sight the enemy and provide an advance warning. Today, they still tend to live close to the borders and are a prosperous farming community.

Legend has it that during the conquest of Alexander the Great, many of his Indo-Greek soldiers, migrated down south, married the natives and settled down in the hilly areas of the Western Ghats. The traditional kupya costume worn by the men resembles the Greek toga and their fair complexions and aquiline features are said to resemble the Grecian prototype.

The community i documented is the Kodavas.All the communities follow the similar traditional attire and ornaments. My insight over their tradition was the rich culture and tradition.Mens wear have been altered a bit to the present lifestyle but women follow their traditions.The bravery is not only felt in their appearance,culture,food but also in their traditional attire and ornaments.Their conservative and strict family culture makes their traditions,dressess and ornaments to be still in practice even after their community evolution.

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Documented, Designed and Edited by Gloriya Mary.V

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Karnataka parliament-Vidhana Soudha

Karnataka is a state in south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. The capital and largest city is Bangalore (Bengaluru). Karnataka is bordered by the Arabian Sea and the Laccadive Sea to the west, Goa to the north west, Maharashtra to the north, Telangana to the North east, Andhra Pradesh to the east, Tamil Nadu to the south east, and Kerala to the south west. The state covers an area of 191,976 square kilometres (74,122 sq mi), or 5.83 per cent of the total geographical area of India. It is the seventh largest Indian state by area. With 61,130,704 inhabitants at the 2011 census, Karnataka is the eighth largest state by population, comprising 30 districts. Kannada is the most widely spoken and official language of the state.

The two main river systems of the state are the Krishna and its tributaries, the Bhima, Ghataprabha, Vedavathi, Malaprabha, and Tungabhadra, in the north, and the Kaveri and its tributaries, the Hemavati, Shimsha, Arkavati, Lakshmana Thirtha and Kabini, in the south. Both these rivers flow out of Karnataka eastward into the Bay of Bengal.

History

Karnataka's pre-history goes back to a paleolithic hand-axe culture evidenced by discoveries of, among other things, hand axes and cleavers in the region. Evidence of neolithic and megalithic cultures have also been found in the state. Gold discovered in Harappa was found to be imported from mines in Karnataka, prompting scholars to hypothesize about contacts between ancient Karnataka and the Indus Valley Civilization ca. 3300 BCE.

Prior to the third century BCE, most of Karnataka formed part of the Nanda Empire before coming under the

Mauryan empire of Emperor Ashoka. Four centuries of Satavahana rule followed, allowing them to control large areas of Karnataka. The decline of Satavahana power led to the rise of the earliest native kingdoms, the Kadambas and the Western Gangas, marking the region's emergence as an independent political entity. The Kadamba Dynasty, founded by Mayurasharma, had its capital at Banavasi; the Western Ganga Dynasty was formed with Talakad as its capital. Relief sculpture of deity with 10 arms and people below

Hoysala Empire sculptural articulation in Belur.

Shilabalika sculpture at the Chennakeshva Temple in Belur. These were also the first kingdoms to use Kannada in administration, as evidenced by the Halmidi inscription and a fifth-century copper coin discovered at Banavasi. These dynasties were followed by imperial Kannada empires such as the Badami Chalukyas, the Rashtrakuta Empire of Manyakheta and the Western Chalukya Empire, which ruled over large parts of the Deccan and had their capitals in what is now Karnataka. The Western Chalukyas patronised a unique style of architecture and Kannada literature which became a precursor to the Hoysala art of 12th century. Parts of modern-day Southern Karnataka (Gangavadi) were occupied by the Chola Empire at the turn of 11th century. The Cholas and the Hoysalas fought over the region in the early 12th century before it eventually came under

Hoysala rule.

Brown stone statue of smiling deity sitting cross-legged under arch Statue of Ugranarasimha at Hampi (a World Heritage Site), located within the ruins of Vijayanagara, the former capital of the Vijayanagara Empire.

At the turn of the first millennium, the Hoysalas gained power in the region. Literature flourished during this time, which led to the emergence of distinctive Kannada literary metres, and the construction of temples and sculptures adhering to the Vesara style of architecture. The expansion of the Hoysala Empire

brought minor parts of modern Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu under its rule. In the early 14th century, Harihara and Bukka Raya established the Vijayanagara empire with its capital, Hosapattana (later named Vijayanagara), on the banks of the Tungabhadra River in the modern Bellary district. The empire rose as a bulwark against Muslim advances into South India, which it completely controlled for over two centuries.

In 1565, Karnataka and the rest of South India experienced a major geopolitical shift when the Vijayanagara empire fell to a confederation of Islamic sultanates in the Battle of Talikota. The Bijapur Sultanate, which had risen after the demise of the Bahmani Sultanate of Bidar, soon took control of the Deccan; it was defeated by the Moghuls in the late 17th century. The Bahamani and Bijapur rulers encouraged Urdu and Persian literature and Indo-Saracenic architecture, the Gol Gumbaz being one of the high points of this style. During the sixteenth century, Konkani Hindus migrated to Karnataka, mostly from Salcette, Goa, while during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Goan Catholics migrated to South Canara, especially from Bardes, Goa, as a result of food shortages, epidemics and heavy taxation imposed by the Portuguese.



The mythical creature of Gandaberunda - the two headed bird!
Karnataka emblem.



History of Coorg

Puranic association

The Hindu Puranas (Kaveri Purana of Skanda Purana) claim that Chandra Varma, a Chandravanshi Kshatriya (lunar dynasty warrior) and son of Emperor of Matsya Desha, was the ancestor of this 'fierce' race, the Kodavas. An ardent devotee of Goddess Parvati, he had gone on pilgrimage to several holy places all over India. Chandra Varma had a privy army who escorted him on his campaigns until he came into Kodagu(Coorg). Coorg, the source of the River Kaveri, was uninhabited jungle land when he arrived to settle here. Thereafter he became the first Raja of the Coorg principality. He had 11 sons, the eldest among them was Devakantha who later succeeded him as Raja. They were married to the daughters of the Raja of Vidarbha. These sons and their descendants cultivated and populated the land of Kodagu, they came to be called the Kodava race.

Skanda Purana, one of the major eighteen Puranas, a Hindu religious text, is the largest Purana and is devoted mainly to the life and deed of Skanda(also called Subramani, Karthik or Muruga), a son of Shiva and Parvati. It also contains a number of legends about

by Skanda, and it also describes the Shaiva tradition in Hemakuta region (near Vijayanagar) of Karnataka, Kashi part describes the Shaiva tradition of Varanasi, and the Utkal part states about Shaiva tradition of Orissa.

Rajas

The Kadamba ruled North Karnataka along with Goa and parts of Maharashtra while the Gangas ruled South Karnataka **and parts** of Andhra and Tamil Nadu prior to 1000AD. The regions of Hassan, Kodagu (Coorg), Tulunad and Waynad were ruled between them. Later the Tamil Chola Rajas ruled Southern Karnataka (including Tulunad and Coorg), Tamil Nadu, Kerala and parts of Andhra. The Hoysalas succeeded them and ruled Southern Karnataka (including Tulunad and Coorg) and parts of Tamil Nadu. In the aftermath of the Delhi Sultanate invasion of South India (around 1319) the Vijaynagar Hindu Empire arose to rule South India until their downfall in the 16th century. The Kodavas served in the armies of the dynasties of Karnataka and Kerala. They not only served in the armies of the Kadambas

and the Gangas but also as mercenary soldiers under the Chera (Kolathiri) Rajas. From around 1600 until 1834 the Haleri Rajas ruled over Coorg. Under the Paleri (Haleri) dynasty Kodagu attained a status as an independent kingdom. When Linga Raja I died, Hyder Ali imprisoned the royal family and took direct control of Kodagu. This enraged the Kodavas and they started heckling the Muslim garrison in Madikeri. In 1782 the Kodavas took power back from Hyder Ali. In the same year, Hyder Ali died and his son Tippu Sultan started his ambitious expansion of the Mysore kingdom. In 1784, Tippu attacked Kodagu, while returning from Mangalore to Srirangapattana, his capital city retained control of Kodagu for sometime by very repressive means. Both Hyder Ali and Tippu were interested in Kodagu because of its abundant rice crop which brought much revenue to the state treasury. Tippu never could continuously hold power in Kodagu. As soon as he turned his back on Kodagu, the local heroes revolted and took power back from the Muslim rulers. Tippu returned to reclaim control though he found the Kodavas very hostile. During his campaigns in Kodagu, Tipu Sultan captured many Kodava men, women and children and took them as prisoners with him to Srirangapattana. The captured Kodavas were asked to embrace Islam or die with their families, those who resisted were put to death while the few who remained were converted. The economy stopped completely and no agricultural work was done. Many fled to live in the hiding in the jungles unable to resist the large regular Mysore army. 80,000 Kodavas died during that war, they were either killed by violence or due to diseases

Kodavas into Muslims, they are the Jamma Mappillas. Many farm lands lay abandoned as entire Kodava families were wiped out. In around 1800, the Rajas gave some of these empty lands away to Tulu Gowdas from Sulya, their descendants became the Kodagu Gowdas.

Modern era

The Haleri Rajas continued to rule until 1834, when the British exiled the last of the rajas Chikka Vira Raja. Chikka Vira Raja was a tyrant and was an exceptionally cruel individual who inflicted numerous atrocities on his subjects, the Kodavas in particular. This led the British to intervene and send him into exile. A short but bloody campaign occurred in which a number of British men and officers were killed. Near Somwarpet, where the Coorgs were led by Mathanda Appachu the resistance was most furious. But this Coorg campaign came to a quick end when the Raja himself cowardly surrendered to the British. The British recognised the exceptional martial abilities of the Kodavas and used them in their army. Apparanda Bopu and Cheppudira Ponnappa were retained as the Dewans of Coorg in 1834. Chinnappa, Chokira Madappa, Pandikanda Madappa, Kotera Accavva, Balyatanda Muddavva, Mukkatira Bojamma, Machimanda Medakka, Appanderanda Kamma and others. It is noteworthy that there was an army of freedom fighters from the Kodava community such as Puliyaanda Subbaiah from Maggula village.

During British rule, Coorgs entered politics, government service, medicine, education, and law. Under British



Portrait of Moodsa Maji, daughter of Dodda Vira Rajendra

protection, Kodagu became a State with nominal independence (Coorg State). The Kodavas in turn earned a name as valiant soldiers and officers in the army. Many Kodavas fought in the two World Wars. They earned a reputation as able commanders and brave fighters both under the British rule as well as post independent India. Eventually, famous sons of Kodagu became prominent members of the armed forces of India. General K.S. Thimayya DSO and Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa OBE are among the notables. Dewan Bahadur Ketolira Chengappa was the last Chief Commissioner of Coorg in 1947. In 1950 Coorg was recognised as one of 27 different states of the Indian Union but in 1956 the state of Coorg was merged into Mysore (now Karnataka). The so-called Coorg rebellion of 1837 led by Guddemane Appaiah Gowda was

not due to Gowdas alone nor opposed by all Kodavas, this was a 'divide-and-rule' propaganda of the British Raj. "A large number of people from Coorg settled in Lower Coorg also participated in the revolt... There are no reliable sources which prove such a bitter hatred among the Coorgs and the Gowdas of Sullia." In fact, Kodavas from Nalkunadu actively participated in the revolt.

There were many freedom fighters among the Kodavas like Mandira Uthaiyah, Subedar Pandyaanda Belliappa, Kollimeda C. Carumbiah, Chekkera Monnaiah, Mallengada Chengappa, Ajjikuttira Chinnappa, Ponnimada Machaiah, Kalengada

Though several etymologies have been suggested for the name Karnataka, the generally accepted one is that Karnataka is derived from the Kannada words *karu* and *nādu*, meaning "elevated land". *Karu nadu* may also be read as *karu*, meaning "black", and *nadu*, meaning "region", as a reference to the black cotton soil found in the Bayalu Seeme region of the state. The British used the word *Carnatic*, sometimes *Karnatak*, to describe both sides of peninsular India, south of the Krishna.

With an antiquity that dates to the paleolithic, Karnataka has been home to some of the most powerful empires of ancient and medieval India. The philosophers and musical bards patronised by these empires launched socio-religious and literary movements which have endured to the present day. Karnataka has contributed significantly to both forms of Indian classical music, the Carnatic and Hindustani traditions. Writers in the Kannada language have received the most number of Jnanpith awards in India.

Titled Kshatriyas based on their legendary descent, the rights they held to carry arms from the ancient times and their military traditions. They practice family exogamy and caste endogamy. By religion most of them are of the Hindu community. The Kodava Hindus are a non-Brahminical sect who believe more in reverence towards nature and their ancestors than in the strict following of the Vedic Hindu principles. The words *Kodava* (the indigenous people, language and culture) and

Kodagu (the land) come from the same root word 'Koda' of unknown meaning. Some claim it means 'hills', others say it means 'west' but both relate to the Western Ghats' location.

Kodagu is called '*Kodavu*' in the native Kodava language. The Kodava were called *Kodaga* by Kannada speakers, *Kodakar* by Malayalis and *Coorgs* (or *Coorgis*) by the British. However, the word *Kodava* is preferred instead. They are ethnically and culturally distinct from the other people of South India. For thousands of years, the Kodavas have lived in *Kodagu* cultivating paddy fields, maintaining cattle herds and carrying arms during war.

Indigenous origin

There are a variety of theories as to the origin of the Kodava, including theories of them being either the indigenous inhabitants of their region, or of foreign origins before two thousand years ago. However the foreign theories are mere speculations because they have found no concrete evidences.

As per the indigenous theory, Kodavas are the native inhabitants of *Kodagu* who learnt and practised agriculture. Hence they were

an ancient warlike tribe which got civilised over the centuries to become prosperous and very well-cultured. *Kodavas* (*Coorgs*) may be the descendants of the broad headed (*brachycephalic*) stock who entered into the Indus Valley during the Mohenjodaro period before the Aryans and later migrated to the *Coorg* region (Hutton, as quoted by Balakrishnan in 1976). Others claim that their ancestors were originally either from North Malabar, Punjab, North Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kashmir or North India.



Coorg community people-original tradition costume, olden days.

Other origin speculations

One view is that the Kodava culture resembles the culture of the ancient trading stock of Arabia (Moeling 1855). Another view is that the Kodavas are descendants of Scythians (Connor 1870, Rice 1878). According to yet another but similar view, the Kodavas belong to the Indo-Scythian race like the Sakas, the Western Kshatrapas and the Nagavamshi Nairs. There is also a modern-day speculation that during the conquest



Beautiful morning glimpse-Coorg oarder

How to reach Co-org?

Bangalore to Coorg distance of about 260 km by road, that's if your destination in Coorg is the Madikeri town. Coorg region is located in a southwest direction from Bangalore. Coorg is in the same direction as Mysore, but beyond Mysore and closer to the Kerala border.

Bangalore to Coorg by bus

KSRTC operates many daily services (both a/c and regular) to towns in Coorg. The most frequent connection is to Madikeri. You can also get direct bus connection from Bangalore to other town in the Coorg region like Virajpete, Gonikoppalu, Polibetta and Somvarpet. Bangalore to Madikeri is about 6 hours journey by the a/c Volvo bus service (Airavata service) by KSRTC. You can book the tickets directly online at www.ksrtc.in

Drive to Coorg from Bangalore

This is a popular option, especially among those traveling from Bangalore on an extended weekend trip to Coorg. There are two popular routes, one via Mysore the second via Channarayapatna . You can find a comparison on which route to select to drive. See Bangalore to Coorg by road. If you are sure of your route see Bangalore to Coorg via Mysore or Bangalore to Coorg via Channarayapatna for detailed driving directions, distances , tips , route maps and more . Typically one can drive from Bangalore to Madikeri in about 6 hours time.

Airports near Coorg

Madikeri does not have an airport. The nearest airports in the region are Mysore, Bangalore , Mangalore and Calicut airports. Again, only limited number of flights operate to Mysore. So the practical options are Bangalore , Mangalore and Calicut airports, depending on from which direction you travel to Coorg. See Airport for Coorg for more details...

Mysore is about 120 km from Madikeri. Distance from Bangalore airport to Madikeri is about 280 km (174 miles). From Mangalore to Madikeri the road distance is about 140km (87 km).

Bangalore to Coorg by Train

Coorg doesn't have a railway station. The best bet is Mysore. There are over 20 trains, many are daily trains , between Bangalore and Mysore. From Mysore travel to Coorg by road. There are frequent bus services from Mysore (go the Mysore KSRTC bus station) to towns in Coorg like Madikeri, Virajpet, Somwarpet. Mangalore is another option. Also you may want to check Hassan, if your destination is north Coorg.

2 Road routes from Bangalore to Coorg with distances

2 Road Routes from Bangalore to Coorg with Distances

Bangalore to Coorg by NH48 (via Hassan, distance 275km): Bangalore City --30km-->Nelamangala--44km-->Kunigal--30km-->Bellur Cross (Nelligere)--45km--> Channarayapatna --22km-->Holenarsipur--22km-->Arkalgud--22km-->Sanivarasante--20km-->Somwarpet--40km-->Madikeri Town Bangalore to Coorg by SH17 & SH88 (via Mysore City, distance 253km): SH17 stretch (Bangalore to Mysore distance 135 km): Bangalore – 50km –> Ramnagara – 30km –> Maddur – 20km –> Mandya – 22km –> Srirangapatna – 13km –> Mysore City. SH88 stretch (Mysore to Madikeri distance 118 km): Mysore –45km--> Hunsur – 43km --> Kushalnagar – 30km -->Madikeri



Main township area in Coorg

Coorg Map



Geographical location

Kodagu district is situated in the southern part of the Karnataka State. The district lies between North latitude 11°56' to 12°56' and east longitude 75°22' to 76°11'. Kodagu district has an area of 4102 Sq:kms. Kodagu is located on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats. It has a geographical area of 4,102 km² (1,584 sq mi). The district is bordered by Dakshina Kannada district to the northwest, Hassan district to the north, Mysore district to the east, Kannur district of Kerala to the southwest, and Wayanad district of Kerala to the south.

It is a hilly district, the lowest elevation of which is 900 metres (3,000 ft) above sea-level. The highest peak, Tadiandamol, rises to 1,750 metres (5,740 ft), with Pushpagiri, the second highest, at 1,715 metres (5,627 ft). The main river in Kodagu is the Kaveri (Cauvery), which originates at Talakaveri, located on the eastern side of the Western Ghats, and with its tributaries, drains the greater part of Kodagu.

In July and August, rainfall is intense, and there are often showers into November. Yearly rainfall may exceed 4,000 millimetres (160 in) in some areas. In dense jungle tracts, rainfall reaches 3,000 to 3,800 millimetres (120 to 150 in) and 1,500 to 2,500 millimetres (59 to 98 in) in the bamboo district to the west. Kodagu has an average temperature of 15 °C (59 °F), ranging from 11 to 28 °C (52 to 82 °F), with the highest temperatures occurring in April and May. The principal town, and district capital, is Madikeri,

or Mercara, with a population of around 30,000. Other significant towns include Virajpet (Virarajendrapet), Kushalanagara, Somwarpet and Gonikoppal. The district is divided into the three administrative talukas: Madikeri, Virajpet and Somwarpet.

Topography

The district is characterized by red and gravel soil along the North and Southern parts. A rich track of black soil is found in the eastern Part of the district. The nature of the soil available in the district is suitable for crops like cardamom, coffee, pepper coconut and paddy



Coffee bean

Flora and Fauna

Coorg has four main types of vegetation. The Evergreen forests of the west and the Moist deciduous and Dry deciduous forests in the central and southern parts of the district. Isolated evergreen or shola forests are found nestled between the folds of the mountain slopes which are covered by grasslands.

It is no surprise that this green and verdant place has a bouquet of wild life sanctuaries. It has three wildlife sanctuaries, Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Talakaveri Wildlife Sanctuary and Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary and one national park, Nagarahole or Rajiv Gandhi National Park. Among these Pushpagiri is located in

the northern part of Kodagu and has rare and endangered flora and fauna. In fact it has been designated as one of the important bird areas of the world. The rich Kadamakkal reserve forest is a part of the sanctuary. The name of the sanctuary, Pushpagiri, has been derived from the highest peak in the region. Kumaraparvat is another smaller peak. The sanctuary is surrounded by Bisle reserve forest and Kukke Subramanya forest ranges.

yellow ruffled daylily



copihue flower



Marshmallow flower



Dahlia flower





Wildlife Sanctuaries in Coorg
Sanctuary Name Area (Sq kms)
Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary
92.65 km²

Evergreen and Semi-Evergreen
Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary
181.29 km²

Evergreen, Semi-Evergreen and Shola
Talacauvery Wildlife Sanctuary
105.01 km²

Tropical Evergreen

Source: Unesco World Heritage Center

National Park in Coorg

Sanctuary Name Area (Sq kms)

Vegetation

Nagarhole (Rajiv Gandhi) National Park

644 km²

Lotens-Sunbird

The more popular and well known wild life reserve is Nagarhole or Rajiv Gandhi National Park. It is home to the majestic Asiatic elephant and the fierce Indian tiger. Nagarhole is a part of the Nilgiri biosphere reserve. Once upon a time it used to be the hunting place for the Maharajas of Mysore & the Coorg Kings alike. A portion of the sanctuary lies in Mysore district. Now it is home to two of the most prestigious and important wildlife schemes – Project Elephant and Project Tiger. The Nagarhole National Park gets its name from the Nagara Hole, which in the native language means Serpent River. The Nagar Hole winds through the lush greenery of the wilderness until it finally reaches the Kabini, which is the biggest river that drains the forest. A splendid lake was created to the south of Nagarhole National Park with the building of a dam, which also creates the boundary with the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

Swampy areas known as hadlus are mixed together with the forests. These areas are dominated by green grass and are favorite grazing grounds to the several herbivores, such as the big herds of chital deer. The grass that spouts in the meadow attracts large numbers of gaur and elephants. Herds of elephants make their way down to the park in the warmer months during the summer, which is a great time to see them inside of their element. In addition to the elephants, more than three hundred different species of birds have been spotted in the park, including rare species such as the Nilgiri Flycatcher, the White-cheeked Barbet and the Blue Face Malkhoa.

A visit to the Nagarhole national park is a must for any wildlife enthusiast. It is home to some of the wildest beasts

like Tiger, Leopard, Wild Dog (Dhole), Jungle Cat, Striped Hyena and countless Jackals. Herbivores include Gaur, Axis Deer, Sambar, Mouse Deer, Four-horned Antelope, Wild Boar, Crested Porcupine and the Black-naped Hare. One can also witness primates trooping around while engaged in their monkey business. Common Langur and Bonnet Macaque are aplenty here. Other animals which can be spotted here are the Sloth Bear, Pangolin, Giant Squirrel, Flying Squirrel, Giant Fruit Bat and the elusive Slender Loris.

Bird lovers need not go away disappointed. One can find a large number of birds including some rare species in and around Nagarhole. The Yellow Browed Bulbul, Pacific Swallow, Grasshopper Warbler, Orphean Warbler and the Yellow Billed Babbler can all be seen in their magnificent and resplendent form. Many species of owls can be found here. The Short Eared and Oriental Scops Owl can be often seen after nightfall 25 % of species found in India are present in Coorg. The ecology of Coorg is varied and encompasses a wide variety of plant and animal species. Large timber trees such as teak, rosewood and Mathi (*Terminalia tomentosa*) can be found in dense and moist undergrowth. The drier areas have shorter trees like Dindalu (*Anogeissus Latifolia*), Flame of the Forest, Indian Laburnum and bamboo.

Whitebreasted-Munia



Places to visit



Tadiandamol Trek

Located in Coorg, Tadiandamol is the sixth highest peak in Karnataka. A combination of scenic beauty yet being not too strenuous, Tadiandamol is the perfect introduction for anyone who wants to take up trekking.

We start from Bangalore on Friday night and reach Coorg between 5 and 6 AM on Saturday morning. At about 8 AM after freshening up, and a quick breakfast, we will proceed to the trailhead, a short drive away. A quick

introduction and briefing and we begin our trek to Tadiandamol from where the vehicle trail ends. The trail is quite well defined and is more or less level for the first four odd kilometers until we reach the big boulder for a brief rest. The incline of the trail from here on gradually increases as we cut left past a hillock on the right and get onto a ridge that leads to the Tadiandamol peak. 10 minutes from here we enter into the shola jungle. The trail from here on becomes very steep.



Mallalli Falls

Located at the base of Pushpagiri Hill Ranges, Mallalli Falls are an exuberant place. This is the location where the Kumaradhara River takes a steep plunge. The falls descend for over 200 feet making it a tall waterfall. This is yet again one of those beautiful sights of waters forcing down and thrashing against rocks and boulders. The sight is exhilarating. The constant sound of thrashing water reverberates in your mind. The best time to visit the falls is during the monsoon. There is an impressive swell of water during this time.

The brilliant combination of water and beauty will feel like it is a slice of heaven. Whether you view these falls from near or far – the effect is the same. You can just relax and listen to the orchestra of waters, the many sounds they create as waters force through rocks and crevices into giant pools.

Omkareshwara Temple

This temple was constructed in 1820. The architectural design is based on the Mumammadan method. Turrets flank the corners of the temple. The centre of the structure is dominated by a dome. Lingarajendra II built this temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. The Omkareshwara Temple is built incorporating Islamic and Gothic styles. As per legend there is an interesting story behind the building of this temple. A Brahmin was killed by the king. So this temple was built to console the spirit of this Brahmin.

It is said that in order to banish the spirit, the king installed a linga in the temple. The linga was brought specially for this purpose from Kashi. A water body exists in front of the temple. There are plenty of fish in them. On first impressions, this temple could look like a Muslim dargah. To know more about the history of the temple, read the copper plate installed at the front of the temple. On this copper plate is inscribed a chronological history of the temple.

The Shivalinga is worshipped fervently in the temple. Given that this religious idol has its origins in Kashi makes it all the more holy. Kashi is considered to be a holy place. In between the bars of the temple windows the alphabet 'lim' is positioned. This is an interesting piece of design that exists here.





Madikeri Fort

Built in the 17th century, the Madikeri Fort was restructured by Tipu Sultan. During the second reconstruction the fort was augmented with granite. So from a mud fort it became a granite fort. The fort is situated atop a hill. When Muddu Raja built the fort initially, the king also built a palace inside the fort. Also called Jaffarabad, the fort has changed hands. It was administered by many prominent kings and administrators throughout its illustrious history. Although the fort is not, the palace inside it is built using European architecture.

The palace is said to house clandestine underground

routes, and is one of the intriguing places to visit in Coorg. Visiting this palace is like visiting a European palace. Horse statues flank the entrance to the palace. Some parts of the fort were reserved for prisons. You can visit these forbidden places that once housed trespassers, traitors and enemies. There is a small museum here. The British built a chapel here in 1834. The museum is located in this chapel. The museum displays weaponry used during the era of Tipu Sultan. On display are various artifacts that could give you an insight into what elapsed during the time of Muddu Raja and Tipu Sultan.

Culture & Traditions

A Coorg Elder invoking Spirits of the Ancestors & Kaveri during a Coorg WeddingThe Coorg customs are quite different from those of the other people of India. The people of Coorg are well known for being hospitable. A delicacy that is served at community feasts is pork, prepared in vinegar that has been made from a fruit. Pork is the staple meat at any traditional Coorg function. Weapons form an intergral part of Coorg traditions and religious beliefs. They have a festival completely dedicated to weapons called Keil Podh.

The Puttari(Huttari) harvest festival is opened up with the firing of gunsWhen a family is blessed with a son, a single gunshot is fired into the sky to welcome the little one.Likewise, when a Coorg passes away, two or more consecutive gunshots are fired into the sky to mark the departure of the deceased

These customs are still followed in Coorg. Coorgs follow Animism and Hinduism. Primarily, the people of Coorg worship ancestors. In their houses, they have idols or images of their ancestors to whom the offer obedience and prayer. The idols are traditionally made from wood or clay, covered with metal, and placed in a shrine called a kaimada that is built close to the ain-mane(ancestors home) entrance.

Coorgs worship nature and they hold the river Cauvery in the highest regards. To them, the holy river is their mother. It is mentioned in the Puranas that the Coorgs were summoned by Lord Brahma when the River was going

to take birth. All the Coorgs gathered at Talacauvery and took the first dip when the Goddess appeared and turned into the river. The people of Coorg are blessed by touching their elders' feet. A mother is held in the highest regard within the Coorg society. The mother is the first to bless a journeyman or young married couple. A Coorg widow may still participate in joyous occasions such as her children's weddings. She is seen as the principal figure for conducting wedding ceremonies that are conducted traditionally by elders without the participation of a priest.It may come as a surprise to many that the Kodava(Coorg) language has no word for dowry and prostitution, both of which are absent among the Coorgs. The general level of culture and education among women of Coorg has always been higher, women know their rights and are treated well in the family. A widow may remarry, which is quite common and has always been acceptable in the Coorg culture.

Even though Coorgs are Hindus, their marriage rights are not performed by a priest. Weddings in Coorg are like something from another planet. The groom claims a bride once a member of his clan has killed mock banana trunk soldiers. Following a feast, the men and women of Coorg get down to dancing, to the tribal beats which have not have changed since time immemorial. The Coorg family unit is known as the okka. This is a patrilineal tribe made up of males with common ancestry. The male members of the okka(clan) all share a unique okka name. Presently, there are nearly 1000 okka families and family names in Coorg.The okka members worship each okka founder, known as the Guru Karona.



Coorg wedding custom-Bridegroom uncle cutting banana tree.



Marriage-Bride relative taking rice to symbolize their life should prosper.

In the central hall of every home in Coorg, you will find a Nellakki Bolucha, a lamp that is lit to honor the Guru Karona (the first patriarch of the clan). The eldest member of an Okka is traditionally treated as the deity. The Coorgs are also worshipers of nature and revere the earth, moon, fire and sun. The cultures and traditions of the Coorgs embrace Hinduism, but are unique and immensely different. Usually a priest oversees none of their births, deaths, marriages or festivals. Meat and libations are served at most of their feasts.

Religion

The Kodavas of Kodagu are Hindus; they are polytheists who believe in reincarnation, revere the cow and originally worshipped the natural elements and their ancestors. Their chief deities are Bhagwathi (Parvati), Mahadeva (Shiva), Bhadrakali (a form of Parvati as Kali or Durga), Subramani (Subramanya, Karthik or Muruga), Aiyappa and Muthappa. Igguthappa, the most important local God, is an incarnation of Lord Subramani, the God of snakes, rain, harvest and rice (Incidentally, the famous Kukke Subramani temple located near Kodagu is dedicated to snakes, hence Subramani is the God of snakes despite the misconception that his carrier, the peacock, which eats grains and insects, is wrongly believed to kill and eat snakes). The reverence of various spirits in addition to the established gods of Hinduism is also part of their religion. This is similar to the bhuta aradhana of Tulunad. There are many spirits worshipped in Kodagu. The Kodavas also practised snake worship. While consumption of soma (liquor) and pork is permitted, that of beef is strictly prohibited. They maintained sacred groves on their public village lands from ancient times, hunting and cutting trees was prohibited in these woods called the Devakadu. However these days the government and private speculative land buyers have acquired these sacred groves and converted them into farms for monetary gains and with disrespect towards native religious feelings. The Kodavas believe in astrology as well. Generally they don't follow idol worship but believe in nature worship. The temple tank of Omkareshwara Temple of Madikeri, the town is in

Were prominent figures in the community had done good deeds while they were alive were worshipped. These spirit gods do not have a set form of physical representation. Symbolically a piece of rock is sanctified and considered as such a spirit deity. A number of weapons, made of wood or metal, are kept in the Kaimadas. The shrine is usually made of clay or wood or covered with sheet metal, and housed within a roofed structure built near the entrance to the ain-mane. The founder of each clan (Okka), the Guru Karana, is worshipped by the members of that particular clan. Sometimes it is simply kept on a platform under a sap-exuding tree near the entrance of ainemane. Some clans conduct a karana kola, a dance of the ancestral spirit during which a Malayalee migrant dresses in elaborate colourful clothing and dances in a trance and acts as an oracle. During this ceremony he is symbolically possessed by the karana, the original founder of the particular clan.

Thirra (Theyyam)

The word Kodakar was the Malayalam word for a Kodava, and it comes from the word "Kodag-kara". The ancient Kodavas of Kodagu had land trade with Northern Malabar, especially with Thalassery (Tellicherry) port on the coast, and would also go on regular pilgrimage to the temples of the region. Devotees from Kodagu were, and still are, frequent visitors to the temples of Kannur and Waynad (districts of North Kerala). These temples are in places like Baithur or Bythoor (Vayathur and Ulikkal), Payyavoor, Parassinikkadavu, Thirunelli, Kanjirath, Nileshwar and Payyanur. Also the Nambima (Namboothiri) priests of North Malabar traditionally served as the temple priests in the temples of Kodagu. The folk songs of the Kodavas speak of the temple deities having originated in North Malabar. These folk songs while talking of Kodagu and

its people also mention the temple regions as well as the thiyya ,Nambiya (Nambiar), the Nambima (Namboothiri) and the Nayamma (Nair - in Malayalam Nayanmmar means Nairs) people of Northern Malabar.

Baithurappa (Bythoorappa) is a chief deity of the Kodavas. The Puggera family of Kodavas were hereditary temple managers at the Bythoor (Vayathur, in Kerala and near Karnataka's Kodagu border) temple which was in the dominion of the Kalliat Nambiar, who like the Kolathiri (Chera Raja) was an ally of the Kodavas. Every year Kodavas from Southern Kodagu pilgrimage to this place. Likewise the Boverianda and the Mundiolanda families of Kodavas were the hereditary temple managers at the Payyavur temple which was under the Kolathiri (Chera) kings. This is because a few of the Kodavas lived in North Malabar in the Taliparamba (ancient capital of the Cheras) region in the ancient past and fought on their side as mercenary soldiers.

A dungeon at Seringapatam. Hindu Kodavas, Nairs and Mangalorean Catholics who refused to embrace Islam were imprisoned into such dungeons.



Festivals

The cultural life of the people of Coorg centers on the village and the family. Religious festivals, marriages, births and the three major festivals of Kailpodh, Kaveri sankramana and Puttari(Huttari) are the main events of the lives of the people of the town of Coorg. There are just a few festivals that the people of Coorg observe with great dedication. Over the years, as more and more influence from Hinduism has become present in the lives of the people of Coorg, there has also been an incursion of the Hindu religion as well.

Here is a list of the main festivals and when the Coorg community celebrates them:

- Ugadi – February
- Shivarati – March
- Kailpold – September
- Kaveri Shankaramana – October
- Puttari – November/December

The Shivaratri and the Ugadi festivals are both primarily of Hindu origin and do not require much of an introduction. However, all of the other festivals are unique in purpose and celebration.

Kailpodh

When the end of the paddy sowing has come to pass and the close of the agricultural working season is near, it is time for the Kailpold festival. This occasion is celebrated with festivities, a great feast and the gathering for games and sports on the village green. The Coorgs set up Coconut Shies, conduct races, and hold marksman competitions.

In the past, a time and date would be set and men of the tribe would set out on the hunt for game. Nowadays hunting does not form a part of the celebrations; instead shooting competitions are organized in the villages to satisfy the urge to take the target out.

*“On Kailmurth feast my work is done
Then to the woods with knife and gun
I hunt the bison, tiger, deer
I am a fearless mountaineer”*



Kaveri Sankramana

Kaveri Sankramana festival normally takes place in mid-October and is one of the prominent and sacred festivals of the Coorg. On a predetermined date and time of Tulasankranthi every year the spring from Gundige overflows called Thirthodbhava. This holy water is carried home by all pilgrims when they go back after paying the last rituals to their parent or spouse departed during the preceding year. Kaveri Sankramana is celebrated at Talakaveri the birth place of river Kaveri. On Kaveri Sankramana day a fountain from a small tank fills the holy tank at Talakaveri. People from all over the state gather at this place to dip in this holy water or Theertha. The Kaveri Theertha is collected in bottles and reaches every home throughout Coorg. This Theertha is preserved in all Kodava homes. A spoonful of this water is fed to the dying, in the belief that they will attain moksha and gain entry to heaven.



Puttari(Huttari)

The traditional harvest festival of the Coorgs is called Puttari. Late in the month of November or early in December just a few day before it is time for the festival, when the crops are ready for harvest and the moon is full, every village and every family come together and pray to the gods, thanking them for another plentiful year. Then the lady of the house takes a lamp and leads everyone to the fields and the first of the ripe paddy are cut. The sheaves that are cut are tied in little bunches and passed out to the attendants of the festival. The bunches are hung over the threshold or other significant place to ensure prosperity. The people of Coorg have strong believes and celebrate each of these festivals with passion and commitment just as their ancestors would prefer it.

Language and literature

The Kodava language, called Kodava takk, itself is related to, and borrows heavily from the neighbouring languages of Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil; a point which has led ethnologists to speculate that their female ancestry is from the surrounding regions of Kodagu. Kodava takk has a lot of similarity in accent and pronunciation with that of Beary bashe, a dialect spoken by Bearys of Tulunadu.

Family histories, rituals and other records were scripted on palm leaves by astrologers. These ancient, scripted leaves called Pattole (patt=palm, ole=leaf) are still preserved at Kodava Ainmanes. Appaneravanda Hardas Appachcha Kavi and Nadikerianda Chinnappa are the two important poets and writers of Kodava language. The Pattole Palame, a collection of Kodava folksongs and traditions compiled in the early 1900s by Nadikerianda Chinnappa, was first published in 1924. The most important Kodava literature, it is said to be one of the earliest, if not the earliest, collection of the folklore of a community in an Indian language. The fourth edition of the Pattole Palame was published in 2002 by the Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy. Nearly two thirds of the book consists of folksongs that were handed down orally through generations. Many of these songs are sung even today during marriage and death ceremonies, during our festivals relating to the seasons and during festivals in honour of local deities and heroes. Traditionally known as Balo Pat, these songs are sung by four men who beat dudis (drums) as they sing. The songs have haunting melodies and evoke memories of times long past. Kodava folk dances are performed to the beat of many of these songs.

The Pattole Palame was written using the Kannada script originally; it has been translated into English by Boverianda Nanjamma and Chinnappa, grandchildren of Nadikerianda Chinnappa, and has been published by Rupa & Co., New Delhi. Kodava people are the native speakers of Kodava language are mainly settled in the district of Kodagu. As per 1991 census, the speakers of Kodava Takk make up to 0.25% of the total population of the Karnataka state. According to Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, apart from Kodavas, 18 other ethnic groups speak Kodava Takk in and outside the district including Amma Kodavas, Kodava Heggade, Iri, Koyava, Banna, Madivala, Hajama, Kembatti, and Meda. Though the language has no script, recently a German linguist by name Gregg M. Cox developed a new writing system for the language known as the Coorgi-Cox alphabet, used by a number of individuals within Kodagu. Some films are also produced in this language portraying the tradition, culture and nativity of the Kodavas. Kodava Cinema industry is very small and in the year 1972 first Kodava film was produced named 'Nada Mann Nada Kool' directed by S.R.Rajan (1972).

The Coorgi-Cox alphabet

A	í	Dh	᳚	M	᳞	V	᳞
E	ĩ	F	᳚	N	᳞	W	᳞
I	ï	G	᳚	P	᳞	Y	᳚
O	o	Gh	᳚	R	᳚	Z	᳞
U	ü	H	᳚	Rh	᳚	ae	ö
B	᳚	J	᳚	S	᳚	ai	ö
Bh	᳚	K	᳞	Sh	᳚	oi	o
Ch	᳚	Kh	᳞	T	᳚		
D	᳚	L	᳞	Th	᳚	¢	(double vowel)

Traditional Cuisines

The Coorgs' (Kodavas) fondness for good food (kadi) and liquor (Kudi) is legendary. Go to their festivals and their weddings to see them enjoy their Kadi and Kudi while they regale themselves with their dance (Aat) and song (Paat). As in any cuisine, Coorg food is influenced by the geography (hills and forests), history (shrouded in mystery) and culture (unique) of its people. Coorgs are essentially rice eaters. Rice, which grows in abundance in the fertile valleys of Coorg (Kodagu), is their staple diet. They are fond of their "sannakki", a fragrant variety of rice that they consider to be superior to the famous "basmathi" of the North. At harvest time, Sannakki paddy fields exude the delicious fragrance of melting ghee.

Coorgs use rice in a wide variety of traditional dishes that come in many shapes and forms. These range from their favourite breakfast dish, Akki Otti (rice chapathis made like phulkas from a dough of cooked rice and rice flour) to a large variety of Puttus (steam-cooked dishes). You can have Kadambuttu (ball shaped puttus), Thaliya puttus (flat puttus steamed in plates), Paaputtu (cooked with milk and shredded coconut), Nooputtu (thread puttus, pressed into noodle like threads with a mould), Od puttus (baked on a flat mud pan), Nuch puttus (made of broken rice), Madd puttus (made of a medicinal leaf called Madd Thopp : *Justicia Wynaadensis* Heyne of the *Acanthaceae* family), Koovale puttus made with ripe bananas or jackfruit and steamed in folded Koovale leaves or banana leaves), Thambuttu (roasted and powdered rice flour mixed

with mashed ripe bananas) and Berambuttu (puttu made with jaggery). And then there are a variety of rice Pulavs – from the simple, dainty Nei Kool (ghee rice garnished with raisins and nuts) to the more elaborate and spicy vegetable, chicken and mutton pulavs.

Coorgs are "pure" or "strict" non-vegetarians, as some of them like to call themselves. This obviously goes back to the times when they hunted the wild boar, deer and birds that populated their dense forests. Hunting, both for sport and food, was a popular pastime of the Coorgs. It is not as common now because of the depletion of the forests that have been cut down to plant profitable crops such as coffee, cardamom and pepper. Besides, current wildlife laws prohibit game hunting. Fish and crabs are caught in the paddy fields, ponds and streams that are found everywhere in Coorg. No Coorg meal is complete without at least one non-vegetarian dish. Pork is an all-time favourite, cooked as Pandi curry and served with Kadambuttu for breakfast, or with rice at other meals. Meat, chicken and fish, whether raised at home, bought from the market or hunted in the forest are cooked in a variety of ways with different combinations of spices. They may be fried, roasted, grilled or cooked as a curry with gravy. Meat and fish are also preserved by pickling or by salting, smoking and drying. A reed basket hung over the fireplace in the traditional Coorg kitchen held the salted meat or fish that was being smoke-dried. Dried meat and fish are used during the long monsoon season when stepping out of the house is nearly impossible. Dried fish and crab meat are also used to make spicy chutneys.

Meat features in many traditions of the Coorgs – in the "meedi" offerings made to ancestors before a feast, in the "koopadi" taken by close relatives to an expectant mother, and in all festivals and ceremonies related to birth, dishes. Pickles made in Coorg traditionally do not use oil as a preservative. Spices and salt brine are used instead. Besides the common lime and mango pickles, Coorgs make pickles using pork, fish, Kumm (mushrooms), Baimbale (tender bamboo), Ambate (hog plums), Nellikai (goose-berries), Kaipuli (bitter orange), and Badava Puli (a large citrus fruit used only for pickling).

Coorg house-wives take pride in their ability to make jams, jellies, marmalades and juices. Some unusual varieties are made from tomato, papaya, Gummate (a small wild tomato sheathed in loose Chinese lantern like cover), and guava. Juices of Nellikai, Kaipuli, and Passion fruit are particular favourites with the Coorgs. The abundance of fruits in Coorg has led to a number of cottage and small scale industries for preserving and processing fruit. No feast or ceremony in Coorg is considered complete unless liquor is served. Coorg men who once swore by the heady Kall, toddy made from rice, have now switched to fashionable hard liquors – whiskey, rum, gin etc. Drinking is socially acceptable for both men and women. Coorg women who also like their Kudi, generally prefer sweet wines which they make at home. They are experts at making wine from a variety of locally grown fruit, such as orange, orange peel, gooseberry, sapota, grape, plum, peach as well as from paddy (rice with its husk). A curiously named wine which is a favourite is OT wine, which – guess? – stands for "Other Things".

As in all cuisines, a Coorg meal finishes with a dessert. Their desserts are similar to those of their neighbours – although some Coorgs claim, tongue in cheek, that their sweets are so good that it is their neighbours who have aped them! The Coorgs' ego?! They make burfis, hulvas, chirotis, laddus, payasa and holige. Old favourites are Kajjaya (made from rice flour and jaggery), potato hulva, banana hulva, Baale muruku (fritters made of ripe bananas mashed with flour) and chikkulunde (balls of powdered puffed rice, jaggery and coconut, dipped in a batter and fried). The only distinctive Coorg sweets are perhaps Koovale Puttu and Thambuttu. I'm sure many Coorgs will jump up in indignation and correct me on this! Being Westernized in many respects, Coorg women are also good at cakes, pastries and even marshmallows! After a heavy Coorg meal, chewing Kodiyale-Adike (paan) is a must, they say, to aid digestion. And why not? Betel leaves and areca nuts are also used in many of their ceremonies.

Different dishes are made at different times of the year and at different festivals, dictated by the availability of the ingredients in that season and their medicinal properties. For example, Madd leaf (Madd means medicine) is used in a variety of dishes in the Kakkada (monsoon) season. Thambuttu and Puthari Kalanji (a kind of yam available around harvest time) are special for Puthari, while Kadambuttu and Pandi curry are a must for Keil Poludu, the festival of weapons.



Rice balls,All types of pork curry

Left

Rice flour puttu,Wheat flour puttu

Kaiappam,Noolputtu



Land and agriculture Devarakadu Coorg woods beside the Cauvery

The Kodavas revered nature and their ancestors they formerly hunted for sport, the Kodavas would even conduct ceremonies symbolically uniting in marriage the spirits of killed tigers with the spirit of the hunter, highlighting the intimate relationship between Kodava culture and the wildlife living in their forest realm. Sacred groves, known as devarakadu (devara = God's and kadu = forest), continue to be maintained in their natural state amongst the coffee plantations since the time of the Rajas. Each village has at least one devarakadu, which is believed to be an abode of the gods, with strict laws and taboos against poaching and felling of trees. These groves are also an important storehouse of biodiversity in the district.

Jamma

A system of land tenure, known as Jamma (privileged tenureship), was formerly instituted in Kodagu during the pre-colonial Paleri Dynasty of the Lingayat Rajas. Jamma agricultural lands were held almost exclusively by Kodavas as a hereditary right, and were both indivisible and inalienable. Importantly, rights over the adjacent uncultivated woods (bane) were also attached to Jamma tenure, such that relatively expansive agricultural-forestry estates have remained intact across Kodagu. The exclusion of plantation crops, such as coffee, from India's Land Ceiling Act has further insulated these holdings from post independence land reform efforts across India. Importantly, rights over the adjacent

forests (bane) were also attached to Jamma tenure, such that relatively expansive agricultural-forestry estates have remained intact across Kodagu. A unique feature of Jamma tenure is that tree rights remained with the Rajas, and were subsequently transferred to the colonial and post-independence governments and remains an import determinant of land use practices in the district.

Coffee cultivation

Coffee cultivation is widely believed to have been introduced in the western ghats from the Yemeni port of Mocha by the Muslim saint, Baba Budan, in the 16th century and some time after its introduction, coffee cultivation was embraced by the Kodavas in western Karnataka. Following the British annexation of Kodagu in 1834, large numbers of European planters began settling in the forested mountains to cultivate coffee, dramatically changing the economic and environmental management structures of Kodava society. Today, more than one third of India's coffee is grown in Kodagu district, making it the most important coffee growing district in India, the world's fifth largest coffee-producing country.



Left to right
Tea cultivation, Jackfruit, Orange, Lychee, coffee
bean, Yellow rambutan

Society

Organizational structure

Kodava settlements in Coorg are in the form of Okka family groups that are scattered across agricultural and forested holdings, where traditional Ainmane houses form focal meeting points in the rural landscape. It is a joint patrilineal clan with males of common ancestry. The male members of an okka share an okka name. Currently there are about 1000 okka names and families in Kodagu. Traditionally all the members of an okka lived in a large ancestral Ainemane house (ayyangada mane – House of the Elders). The emergence of townships, as such, has been a relatively recent phenomenon and many of the main towns in Kodagu are inhabited by recent migrants and non-Kodavas. This cluster of homes and property form the nucleus of a village called ur. A group of ur or villages is called the nad. A number of nads make a sime. Traditionally there were eight simes in Kodagu. The land belonging to the okka is cultivated jointly by the family members and cannot be partitioned or sold. The oldest member of the family is the head of the okka and is called pattedara or koravukara. It is a hierarchy that is passed on to the eldest member of the clan by right. Similarly each ur (or ooru), nad and sime has a headman called as takka. The takkas settled disputes and imparted justice after consultation with other elders.

Marriage

Girls and boys from one okka cannot marry within the same okka. However, cousin marriage between children of brother and sister is accepted (but not between children of two brothers or two sisters). Once

married, a girl assumes the okka name of her husband. Unlike many other Hindu communities, a widow is still allowed to participate in happy occasions like marriages of her children. She is the principal figure to conduct the marriage ceremony that traditionally is conducted without a Brahmin priest. A widow is allowed to remarry and this is a common practice as it is fully accepted. The customs of Coorgs are different from that of other south Indians. When a son is born in a family, a single shot is fired in the air to greet the newcomer. Similarly, when a Coorg dies, two simultaneous shots are fired in the air to alert the neighbours. Coorgs are legendary for their hospitality. Pork, cooked with vinegar derived from wild berries, is a delicacy served at important feasts.



Demographics and distribution

Kodavas Proper

The Kodava community numbers about one-fifth out of a total population of over 500,000, in Kodagu. They are the indigenous people of Kodagu, the land to which they gave their name. Many Kodava people have migrated to areas outside Kodagu, to other Indian cities and regions, predominantly to Bangalore, Mysore, Mangalore, Ooty, Chennai, Mumbai, Kerala, Hyderabad and Delhi for better job prospects. A few of them have now migrated outside India to foreign countries, like North America (the US and Canada), the Middle East (especially Dubai in UAE and Muscat in Oman), the UK and Australia (especially to Sydney where they are prominent members in the financial industry as well as contributing to the health industry).

Amma Kodavas

Amma Kodava (Kaveri Brahmin) family, Coorg, 1875
Besides the Kodavas there were other indigenous people who followed the same culture and spoke the same Kodava language. One of them, the Amma Kodavas, were believed to be the original priests' at all important temples in Coorg including temples of Talakaveri, Igguthappa and Irupu. However, with the coming of the Brahmins into Coorg, it appears that the priestly functions gradually slipped out of the Amma Kodavas and fell into the hands of the Brahmins. The religious customs and practices of the hill people of Coorg gradually and subtly began to be influenced by the Brahmin practises and rituals. The role of the Coorg priest, via: Amma Kodavas declined and that of might have been related to them in the ancient past.

the Brahmin priest increased. In due course, the Amma Kodavas had no role to play in the religious aspects of the people of Coorg.

The loss of this important role earned some powerful Brahmin sympathisers, one of whom was a Havyaka Brahmin Thimmapaya, who had a large following of Amma Kodavas. During the later part of the 19th century, it appears that an attempt was made for assimilating the Amma Kodavas into the Brahmin fold. One batch of Amma Kodavas performed the rites to wear the sacred thread. Another batch is reported to have done so early in the 20th Century. Both these batches were assigned the Gothra names of their Brahmin patrons. The process of assimilation did not move any further. Today, many of the Amma Kodavas wear the sacred thread, a large number of them performing the rites a day before marriage (not after puberty, as done by the mainstream Brahmins). There are as many, who do not wear the sacred thread. Some of the Amma Kodavas do not have gotras assigned to them. They are vegetarians and endogamous. However, all other social activities such as marriage, dress and festivals are similar to the Kodavas.

Kodava Heggade

The Kodava Heggades (Peggades) are another of these indigenous castes of Coorg although originally they were believed to have come from North Malabar. They have around 100 Family names. They follow the Kodava habits and customs, dress like other Kodavas and speak Kodava Takk. The Kodava Heggades and the Amma Kodavas are similar to the Kodavas and hence

Kodava Maaples

‘Kodava maaple’ or Maaple is a Muslim community residing in Kodagu district of Karnataka State in southern India. In Coorg many Kodavas were converted into Islam during the rule of Tippu Sultan in Coorg. They are called the ‘Kodava Maaple’ or ‘Jamma Maaples’ (not to be confused with the Kerala Mappillas). However some of the Kodava Maaples have married with the Kerala Mappilas and Mangalore Bearys. They contract marriage alliances with the Muslims of Coorg, Mangalore and Kerala. The Kodava Maaples belong to Sunni Islam, refrain from alcohol and eat only Halal. They maintained their original Kodava clan names and dress habits and spoke Coorg language although now they do follow some Kerala Muslim and Beary customs .

Others

These include communities such as, Airi, Malekudiya, Meda, Kembatti, Kapala,Kavadi, Kolla, Koyava, Banna, Golla, Kanya, Maleya and others. Many of these communities had migrated into Kodagu from the Canara, Mysore and the Malabar regions during the period of Haleri Dynasty and to a certain extent culturally ingrained themselves in the Kodava Society. They speak Kodava takk and follow the Kodava customs and habits to some extent.

Kodagu Gowdas were Tulu origin Gowdas who came from Sulya in South Canara and were settled in Kodagu by the Kodagu Rajas in around 1800 AD. The Rajas of Kodagu had to bring in Tulu Gowdas from Sulya and others to settle down in some of the deserted farms of the dead

Kodava families to continue the economic activities of the region. These Tulu Gowdas from Sulya became the Kodagu Gowda. They speak Are Bhashe (Kodagu Gowda ‘half-tongue’, an admixture of Tulu, Kodava language and Kannada). The Brahmins from neighbouring North Malabar served as temple priests in Coorg but didn’t possess land in Coorg

Eminent Kodavas

Coorg sword, also called Oidekatti or Ayda Katti (Ayudha Katti).The Kodavas have contributed immensely towards the growth of the Indian nation, despite them being in small numbers. Their most significant contributions are in the armed forces and in sports. Originally being land-owning militiamen farmers from Kodagu, hence their traditional twin occupations were as agriculturists and as soldiers. The distinguished among them had been local chieftains, palace officials, officers of the Raja’s army and brave battle veterans, therefore invariably having attained fame in either government service or in the local army. The Kodava ancestors grew paddy and plantation crops like bananas and pepper, their descendants are now into coffee cultivation.

Army

Many Kodavas joined the Indian armed forces both as officers and servicemen. They distinguished themselves in times of war and peace, army-men are still shown the most respect in Kodagu (Coorg). Quite a number of Kodavas have been martyred on enemy frontiers. Many Kodavas participated in the two World Wars before Indian Independence and in the wars against China and Pakistan after 1947. There was a separate Coorg regiment (now forming a unit of the Indian Regiment of Artillery, this unit being called the 37 (Coorg) Anti-Tank Regiment RIA) which largely included people from non-Kodava backgrounds while the Kodavas themselves served in different other regiments; this is in keeping with the army’s non-bias policy according to National

which people were recruited in regiments other than those belonging to their region and community of birth. Hence Field Marshal Cariappa of the Rajput Regiment and General Thimayya of the Kumaon Regiment were the most distinguished army-men among the Kodavas. Many other Kodavas have been made Lt. Generals, Major Generals, Brigadiers and Air Marshals. Lt. General A. C. Iyappa (or Apparanda Aiyappa) is best remembered for his contributions towards the Corps of Signals and towards Bharat Electronics Limited. There were several war heroes as well such as Nadikerianda Bheemaiah, a JCO who was awarded the Vir Chakra for conspicuous bravery in J&K Operations in 1947, Air Marshal Cheppudira D Subbaia who was a fighter pilot during WW II and was awarded the Vir Chakra and the PVSM, Squadron Leader Ajjamada B Devaiah, (known as the ‘wings of fire’) another fighter pilot was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra after he shot down an enemy aircraft and died in Pakistan during the 1965 Indo Pak War, Major Ganapathi Puttichanda Somiah, (known as the ‘Major who kept his cool’) awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, during the Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka, Major Ranjan Chengappa, Shaurya Chakra Awardee who was in Congo for UN mission as part of a peace keeping force, Col Chembanda M Thimanna, awarded the Shaurya Chakra for bravery in counter insurgency operations, Major Chottangada Ganesh Madappa, was awarded Shaurya Chakra posthumously in 1996, Squadron Leader Mandepanda Appachu Ganapathy, awarded the Vir Chakra in 1972 (when as a Flight Lieutenant he shot down Pakistani Sabre Jets). The list is endless, in fact.

Hockey

Kodavas have a long history of association with the game of field hockey. The district of Kodagu is considered as the cradle of Indian hockey. More than 50 Kodavas have represented India in international hockey tournaments, M. P. Ganesh, M.M Somaiah, B. K. Subramani, A. B. Subbaiah, K. K. Poonacha, C. S. Poonacha, Jagadish Ponnappa, M.A.Bopanna, Len Ayyappa, Amar Aiyamma to name a few, out of whom 7 have also participated in the Olympics. The passion for hockey in Kodagu is so much that teams representing more than each of 200 families participate in an annual Kodava Hockey Festival. This festival is recognised as one of the largest field hockey tournaments in the world and has been referred to the Guinness Book of Records. However it has already found a mention in the Limca Book of Records, which is an Indian variant of the Guinness Book.

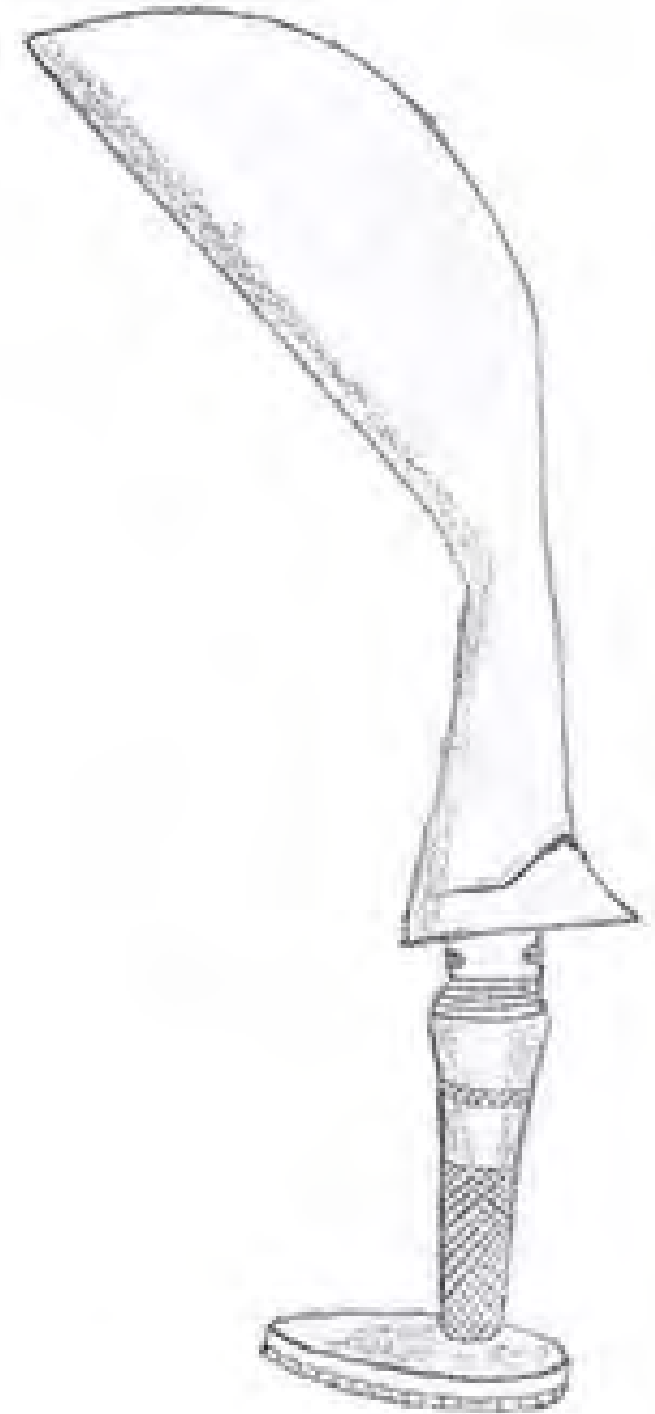
Other Sports

Kodavas have also been known in other individual sport events as well especially in athletics; Ashwini Nachappa, Champion in Athletics, Olympian and Arjuna Awardee, Rohan Bopanna, National Tennis Champion, Joshna Chinappa, Ace squash player, Jagat and Anita Nanjappa, motor racing champions, C.C. Machaiah, (Chenanda Machiah) National boxing Champion, Olympian and Arjuna Awardee, Reeth Abraham (née Devaiah; of Kodava parentage), National Athletics Champion, Arjuna Awardee and Olympian, Arjun Devaiah, National Athlete and Arjuna Award winner, Pramila Aiyappa (née Ganapathy), National Champion in Athletics and Olympian, P G Chengappa, Former National Badminton Player, M R Poovamma (Maachettira Poovamma),

National Champion in Athletics and Olympian and Ashwini Ponnappa, national badminton player. Of late Kodavas have begun to distinguish themselves in cricket. Robin Uthappa, K. P. Appanna, N. C. Aiyappa and Shyam Ponnappa have represented Karnataka state in national tournaments, like the Ranji trophy, and Bangalore city in the Indian Premier League.

Other fields

The Kodavas language was a spoken language and had no written literature until 1900. Appanervanda Haridasa Appachcha Kavi, Nadikerianda Chinnappa and Dr. I M Muthanna, have contributed immensely towards developing a literature for this language. The Kodavas are almost all Hindus a few of them had taken up monkhood and contributed towards the development of the religion, especially in Kodagu and Mysore regions, the most famous among them being Swami Shambhavananda, Sadguru Appayya Swami and Swami Narayanananda. In the government service as well there were many prominent Kodavas. One remembers Rao Bahadur IGP P.K.Monnappa, for his contributions towards the Indian Police in South India, be it in Hyderabad, Madras, Mysore or Coorg. Diwan Bahadur Ketoli Chengappa, was the last Chief Commissioner (the governor of a British province which had no elected assembly) of Coorg. There were others like Rai Saheb Muthanna who served in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Mesopotamia (Iraq) during WWII and Rao Saheb Pattamada Devaiah, SP of Coorg. Some were judges in the High Court, such as Palecanda Medappa for Mysore and Ajjikuttira S Bopantna for



Karnataka. C M Poonacha had been the Chief Minister of Coorg State (1952–'56), MP, Union Minister and later Governor of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Recent developments

Throughout the medieval period and until well into the 19th century, the Kodavas had a pre-eminent role in Kodagu. By the middle of the 19th century, however, this dominance started waning. British individuals bought large stretches of land in Coorg and founded plantations. Institutions like the joint family system began to disappear. A number of socio-religious reform movements in India took shape from the 1800s. The Kodavas also felt the need for reform in response to such changes. The sense of decline gave an impetus to the spirit of reform that expressed itself in the work of religious men like Sadguru Appayya Swami. Trouble arose for the community during the post-colonial years, after the Land Reform Act enacted in 1974. Many large land owners lost their lands to the tenants (land to the tiller) and the socio-economic structure of the prominent community of Kodavas changed irreversibly. These Land reforms led to massive loss of land-ownership by the Kodava gentry who were relegated to poverty overnight. The decline of Kodava dominance was however tempered by their conversion through the 20th century to the academic and professional classes and their dominance in Kodagu politics.

Coorg Knife-Peechakathi



Kaveri River in Kushal Nagar

Efforts by community leaders have brought together all Kodava groups the world over under an umbrella “ Federation of Kodava Samajas”. It is a federation of about 27 Kodava Samajas and is headquartered at Balagodu, Virajpet Taluk, Kodagu District.

The foundation of the Coorg Association (predecessor of the Bangalore Kodava Samaj) was laid in Bangalore, in 1912. The Kodava Samaja (R), Bangalore is an organisation created for the traditional and cultural conservation, social well-being and welfare of the Kodava community. It is headquartered at Vasanthnagar in the city of Bangalore in Karnataka State, India. Expatriate Kodavas both in other states of India as well as in countries other than India have formed Kodava Samajas (Kodava Associations) in their states and countries of domicile. Examples are the Bangalore Kodava Samaja (already mentioned) with 33 branches in Bangalore City, the Mysore Kodava Samaja, the Canadian Kodavas in North America and the Muscat Kodavas of Oman. These associations of non Kodagu origin retain the cultural uniqueness of the Kodavas at the same time adapting many practices to the times and country of their adoption. Lately, some organisations including the Codava National Council (CNC) and Kodava Rashtriya Samiti are demanding Kodava homeland status and autonomy to Kodagu district. The population of the Kodavas is around 1.5 lakh.

Caste Reservations

Around 2000, some of the Kodava language speakers were included in the Other Backward Classes list of Karnataka. The Kodavas were listed as Kodagaru (a derogatory term) [34] under the Category III A of the Other Backwards Caste (OBC) List of Karnataka State Government. The Coorg National Council had appealed to the State Government to correct this and mention them as Kodavas and to include them in the Central Government Other Backward Castes (OBC) List.

Among the other castes included in the Category III A of the State OBC List are the Gowda Vokkaliga. The Amma Kodava, the Kodagu Banna and the Kodagu Heggade have been included under the Category II A of the State OBC list. The Kodagu Kapala, who are related to the Siddi have been included under Category I A of the State OBC List.

Costumes, eating habits, beliefs, rituals, and body language are just some aspects which are largely influenced by a culture. Culture, indeed plays a huge role in shaping us, hence it won't hurt to say that culture defines us. It defines who we are and what we are supposed to be. It tells us what to believe in and the traditions we should follow, which in the long run is what makes us who we are.

One of the aspects of culture is the costume. The way we dress and how we dress are also highly culture specific. The simplest example of this is how we Indians have saris as the national costume for women. This style of dressing is deep rooted in our culture. Hence every country has a national costume or one would rather say, their own style of dressing/costume which is influenced by their culture.

India being a land of multiple ethnicities, every state in the country has its own set of traditions and values. Apart from this, they have their own style of dressing too. Very often, we even guess which part of the country the person belongs to by just looking at the costume they are wearing. Such is the importance of costume/dressing. Coorg, our very own Scotland, has its own style of dressing too. Their traditional costume is highly distinctive. Hence one look at the costume and we know that the individual is from the Kodava land.

There is very little information from the past available about the clothing and textile tradition of the Kodava Community. Even today there are very few items of apparel or accessories that are distinctive to Coorg. Unlike other regions in the country there is no special fabric woven in the district, or embellishment, or particular kind of embroidery which is specific to Coorg, though Richter mentions that Coorg women did seem to embroider their "vastras" and "the patterns of native design are often very elegant", and the work "shows the pattern equally on both sides". He also mentions the "peculiar and picturesque costume" of the Coorgs.

There is no doubt that both the male and female apparel in Coorg is distinctive. The male attire, the "Kupasa" is a long coat, which reaches below the knees. One side of the front ties to the opposite inside seam of the coat and one side overlaps and is joined together with fabric ties. It is basically a tailored version of a shepherd costume or blanket, thrown over. C M Kushalappa likens the "Kupasa" to the "Kufia", a similar coat worn by the Arabs. The latter who traded in the Malabar region, probably influenced the style, which later was adopted by the natives of the district. It is also similar to the "Angarkha" worn by royalty in the north, or as a court costume. The Kupasa is plain, whereas the "Angarkha" was heavily embellished. The Kupasa in the past was worn at all times, in cotton, in various colors with a high collared shirt inside. Today it is a ceremonial costume, in black. In earlier days it was made of wool, now made

of a cotton blend, to handle the weather pattern that has changed in Coorg. The bridegroom wears a white “Kupasa” at his wedding; strangely he is dressed in a white “Kupasa”, when he is laid to rest!! The “Kupasa” is held together by brocade “Chele” which is a long and narrow piece of silk fabric, wound round the waist and tied in an elegant knot in the front. It is usually red or deep pink, highlighted with gold brocade work and very striking because of the contrast to the stark black “Kupasa”. Traditionally the “Kupasa” is worn without pants, but on his head the man wears a white and gold silk stitched turban, an adaptation of the “peta”, which has been borrowed from the Kannadigas. With the “Peeche kathi”, the ceremonial sword, tucked in the chele, the Coorg male, looks every bit the Kshatriya , and the costume is impressive.

Kupya is a collarless, short-sleeved coat (wrap-around) that reaches below the knees and worn by Kodava men (Coorg men) on formal occasions. It is usually made of black cotton or wool and is secured at the waist by a chele, a red gold-embroidered silk sash. The white coloured kupya is ritually superior to the black one. Only a man who is in a position of honour wears a white kupya. During the marriage ceremony the bridegroom always wears a white kupya, with a chele (sash) and a brocaded white turban (pani mande tuni). Unlike the black one, this is long sleeved.

In the olden days, a short kupya, reaching above the knees, and a vastra, a short head kerchief was worn. The men's daily headgear consisted of a short head kerchief of a checked pattern. When a Kodava man dies,

his body is dressed in a white kupya, which is reversed with the back to the front or with the left end of the gown coming on top of the right end with a white brocaded turban and a red chele with gold coin on his forehead.

Red kupyas are worn at the festivals of the Goddess Bhagvati. This is of an entirely different design and fabric.

G. Richter, a British historian, has recorded the existence of a blue cotton kupya. The sash was also said to be of either red or blue cotton or silk. The kupya has shrunk drastically in length, to accommodate Western style trousers, chudidars, socks, and shoes. Ties and bows are often worn with a white shirt. These changes started appearing after the advent of the British rule.

The dress of men apparently evolved to offer protection from the cold winds and from the frequent rains. It was also functional to climb the hills during work or in the pursuit of game.

Coorg Mens costume Chele (waistband)

The chele is of deep red or crimson silk with gold brocade all along its length. It is a beautifully tasseled sash intricately woven with decorative motifs like flowers, peacocks and mangoes. It is 7 to 8 meters long. The chele is tied around the waist two or three times depending on the length keeping enough fabric at both ends to form a short loop resembling a bow in the Western attire. The ends of the chele have attractive tassels.

Coorg Mens vastra

Vastra (headgear)

Vastra is a red-checked cloth wound around the head with one corner hanging down to the small of the neck. This headgear was in vogue till recently. Very few old men wear the vastra these days and the men prefer to go bare head. This checkered cloth is available in both silk and cotton. It may vary in colour between various shades of red.



Coorg men's costume

The best man at a wedding wears the checkered cloth not on the head but on the shoulder probably to create a separate identity. It is also worn by the bridegroom in a similar fashion. This check vastra is also placed on the lap of the bridegroom during the wedding ceremony. In this case the checked vastra is usually of cotton fabric.

Mande tuni (headdress)

In the olden days, a simple white length of cloth, tied around the head was worn as a headdress, or mande tuni as referred to in the Coorg dialect. On ceremonial occasions, this was replaced by a cream and gold mande tuni. This has now given way to “ready made” ones, which are convenient, but lack the grace and character of the hand-tied ones.



Chele is a readymade waistband made folding a single cloth using velcro as fastner



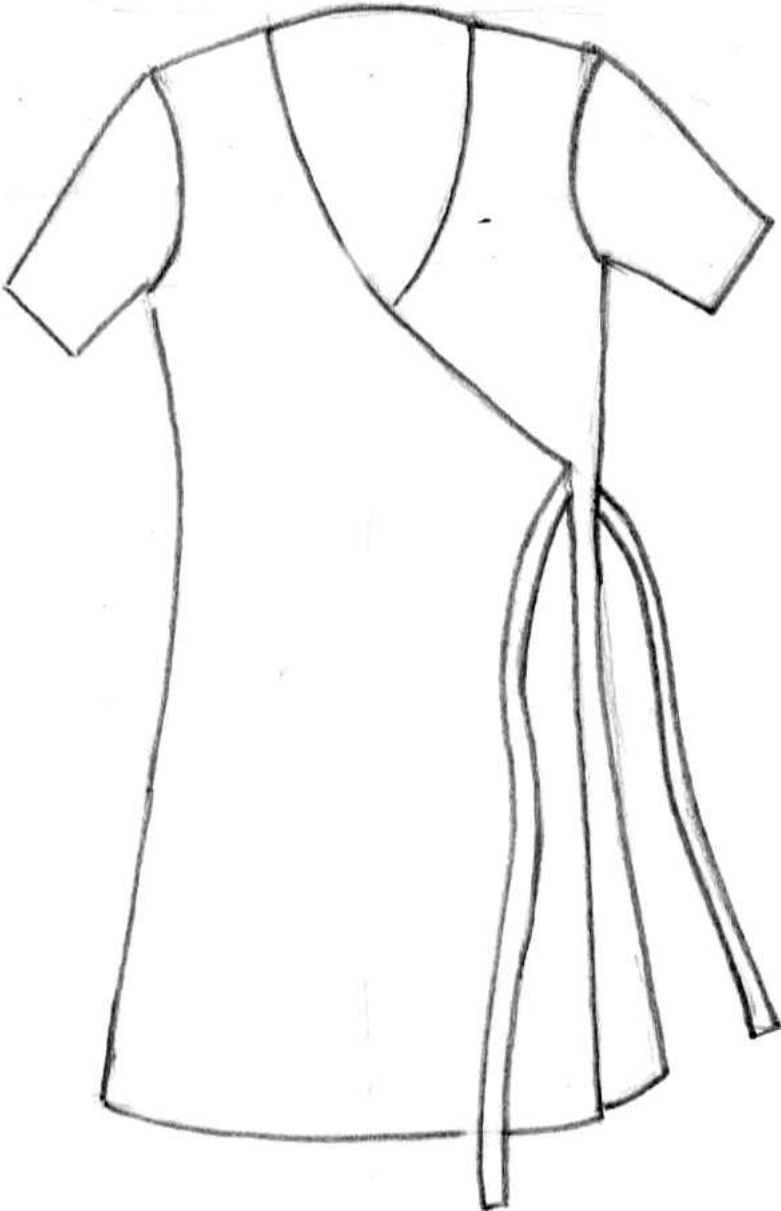


Coorg bridegroom wear vastra for the head before wearing the turan during the wedding. They do wear the mande tuni just like women. And the overcoat is white in collar, which is considered as pure and rich.

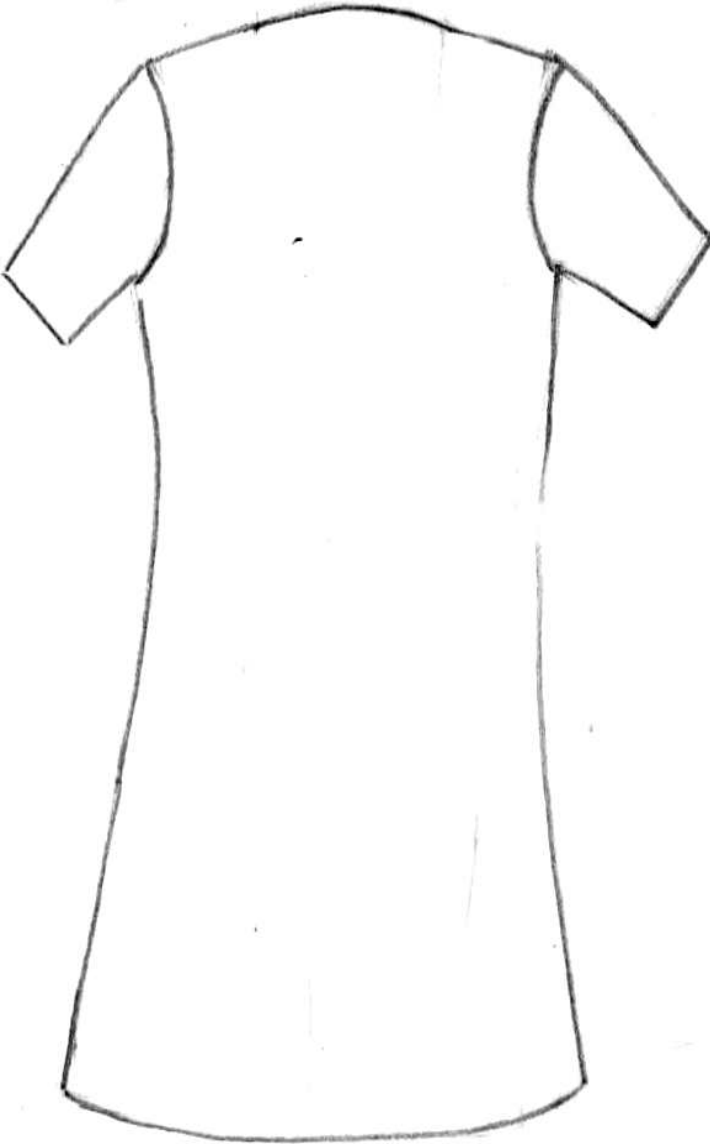


Flat sketches of men's overcoat

Front



Back

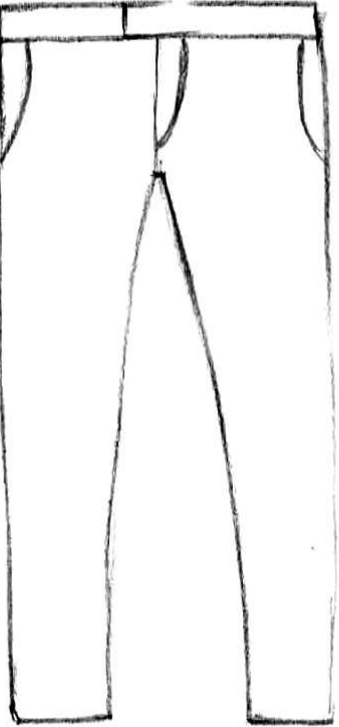


Chinese collar shirt and trouser

Front



Back



Material Used

Cotton:

Of course cotton would be one choice — it’s lightweight and comfortable. However, if it’s an extra-humid day and you’re going to be sweating a lot there’s better options. Cotton likes to absorb water so your sundress will become heavy and cling to your skin as the day wears on.

Linen:

It’s also lightweight and has a porous weave that allows heat to escape away from your body. Plus, it’s highly absorbent so it removes moisture from your skin quickly. While it can be stiff, especially if pressed and starched, it won’t cling to your body.

Lawn cloth:

lawn is a plain weave textile, originally of linen but now chiefly cotton. Lawn is designed using fine, high count yarns, which results in a silky, untextured feel. The fabric is made using either combed or carded yarns. When lawn is made using combed yarns, with a soft feel and slight lustre, it is known as “nainsook”.Lawn is pure cotton of a superb quality. Lawn is a lightweight, sheer cloth, crisper than voile but not as crisp as organdy. Lawn is known for its semi-transparency, which can range from gauzy or sheer to an almost opaque effect, known as lining or utility lawn. The finish used on lawn ranges from soft to semi-crisp to crisp, but the fabric is never completely stiff. Lawn can be white, or may be dyed or printed.

Lightweight wools:

Not many people know that, with correct engineering,

wool can be made to act as a very cool fabric for summer heat. The astonishing and interesting fact about summer suits is that they are made of light weight wool apart from cotton and linen. With the hot scorching sun over the head, the first thing that comes to our mind while selecting an outfit is the type of material, quality and of course colours. Light and airy dresses are most comfortable during the heat. The extra large sized clothes available in the market are not only comfy enough, they are also great to look and stylish. By summer plus size clothes I mean those which allow free movement of body parts and are thinner and soft. These also help in reducing risk of skin infection due to friction. What’s more? Evaporation of the body sweat is easier and makes you feel fresh all the time.

Silk:

Silk is a natural protein fiber, some forms of which can be woven into textiles. The protein fiber of silk is composed mainly of fibroin and is produced by certain insect larvae to form cocoons.[1] The best-known silk is obtained from the cocoons of the larvae of the mulberry silkworm *Bombyx mori* reared in captivity (sericulture). The shimmering appearance of silk is due to the triangular prism-like structure of the silk fibre, which allows silk cloth to refract incoming light at different angles, thus producing different colors.

Womens Attire

When it comes to the Kodava women, their traditional costume stands apart. This is because of the unique way in which they wear their saris. The sari is pleated at the back and its pallu is also wrapped in a unique way. The sari is worn with a full or three-fourth sleeved blouse and the head is covered with a scarf. A gold beaded necklace with a gem pendant is largely worn among the Kodava women.

This description of their costume is enough for one to know how distinctive the Kodava culture is. Their attire is not just unique but also pleasing in appearance and highly representative of their land.

Coorg women have no special fabric or style from which our sarees are woven; only different sarees are worn in a special style. C M Kushalappa in his little book on the Origin of the Coorgs, felt that since the occupation of the Coorgs was primarily cultivation of paddy, and the women worked in the fields, they found it practical to move their pleats to the back. When they had to bend to wash the paddy seedlings, the pleats moved up, instead of down, into the water which would happen if they were in front. Mrs. Cheppudira Appanna in her book on Kodava weddings has an interesting tale, as to why the pleats are worn at the back. Kavery , the river which starts in Coorg began its journey towards the plains. The people of Kodagu were most upset, and went to Balamuri, near Bhagamandala where the Kaveri starts, to stop the river from leaving the district. With the force of the water the women’s pleats moved to the back, and the Goddess requested the women that they wear the sari in the distinctive style of her

hometown and promised to come back every year in the month of October.

Kodava women usually wore a long sleeved, high necked “jacket” made of cotton or silk, on occasion. Again, this was probably due to the weather conditions. Being hill country it could get very cold and damp in the monsoon, so the jacket took care of protecting the lady, without the added weight of a sweater or shawl! The same practical mind devised the “knot” in the Coorg style sari. They tied the loose end of the “pallav” to a portion of the sari near the shoulder with a clumsy knot, so that their hands were free. Today it is common to see this style among the Yeravas and Kurubas (tribes in Coorg). Modern Coorg women sport a “brooch” making the sari look like an elegant dress, the brooch has also become a fashion accessory.

The harsh weather probably accounted for the need to wear a head covering which gradually got refined into a “vastra” (head scarf) made of chiffon or georgette, embroidered on the edges and more elaborately embellished over the forehead and then gathered at the back , to fall gracefully over the shoulders. In some families the bride wears a “musku” at the single muhurta – a veil in red and gold that is draped over the head and shoulders.



Coorg women's costume

Wedding Attire

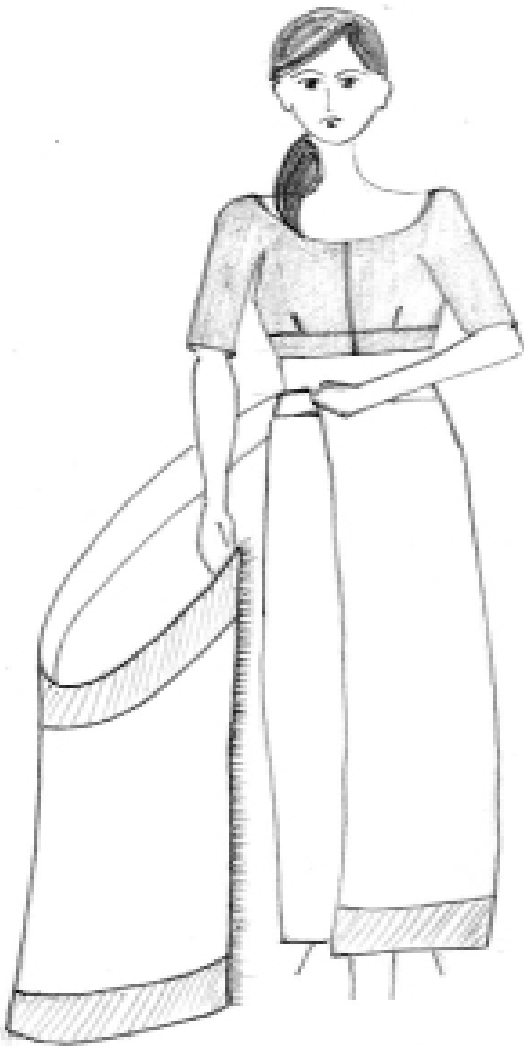
In the past, Coorg wedding and ceremonial sarees were mostly made in Banaras, or in that style. They had ornate gold borders, floral motifs, and exquisite gold tissue or silk “pallavs” and often “konia” (corner) motifs at the edge of the pallav. The colours were usually black, red, purple, deep pink – judging by what one sees from the past. Even the old “musku” (head covering) was in the same Banaras style, as are the old “madaku battte” (lap cloths) that are spread on the groom or bride’s lap, to collect the rice grains and protect the bridal clothes.

Just as Kodavas are an interesting mix of original settlers who inter married with those who came to the district, so also in our clothing we have adopted elements from different cultures to suit our needs. The red silk check cloth that the bride groom wears on his head on the “Oorkuduva” (meeting of the clan, the day before the wedding) day is adopted from Kerala, as is the turban from Mysore. Since Banaras is famous for its silk and brocade, wedding and ceremonial accessories seem to have been sourced from there. The Coorg couple in their traditional attire makes a striking picture, and their clothes are as impressive as the land to which they belong.

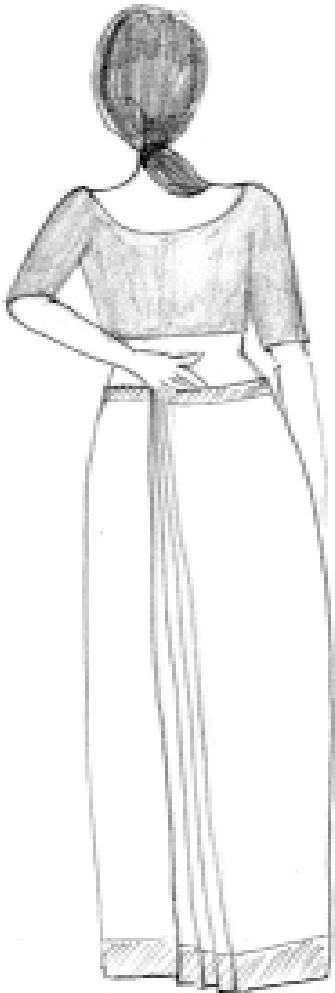


Coorg women's wedding attire with mandathuni

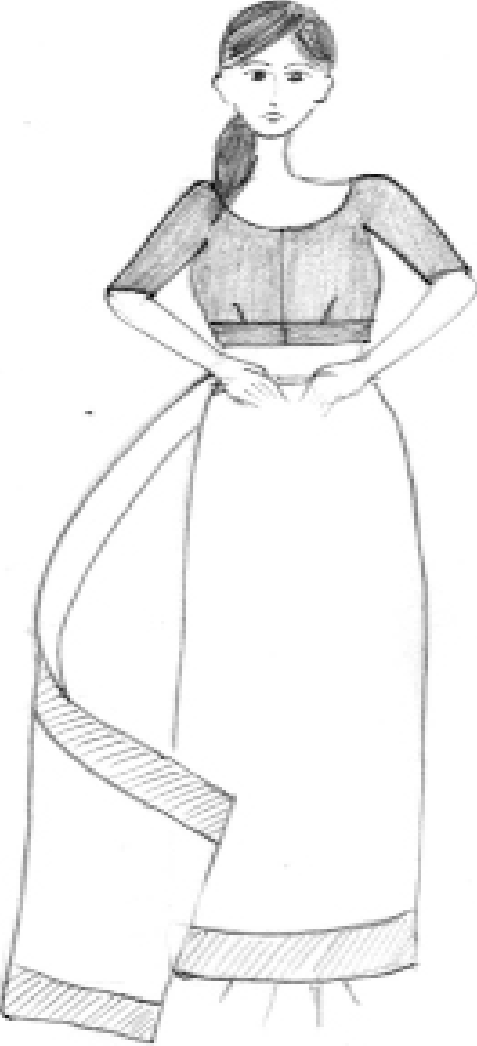
Draping way of women's coorg sari



Step 1



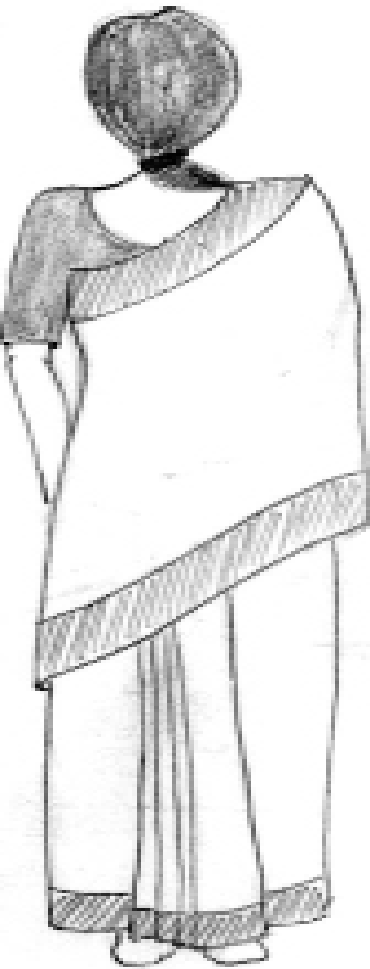
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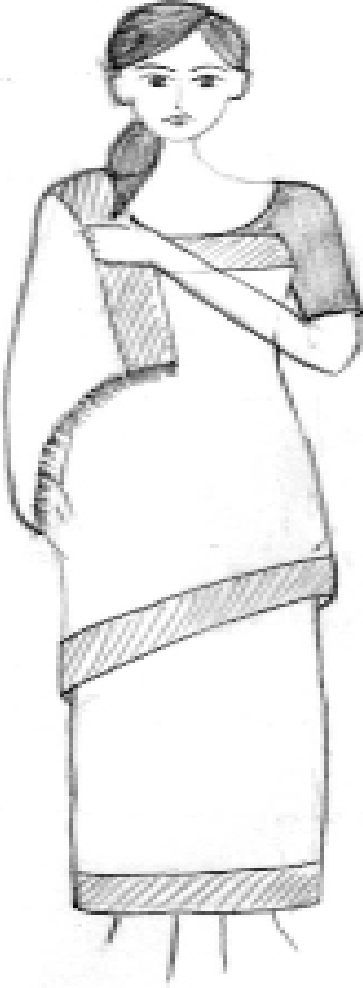
Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Step 6

Material Used

Silk:

Silk is a natural protein fiber, some forms of which can be woven into textiles. The protein fiber of silk is composed mainly of fibroin and is produced by certain insect larvae to form cocoons. The best-known silk is obtained from the cocoons of the larvae of the mulberry silkworm *Bombyx mori* reared in captivity (sericulture). The shimmering appearance of silk is due to the triangular prism-like structure of the silk fibre, which allows silk cloth to refract incoming light at different angles, thus producing different colors.

Banaras:

Banarasi saree is a saree made in Varanasi, a city which is also called Benares or Banaras. The sarees are among the finest sarees in India and are known for their gold and silver brocade or zari, fine silk and opulent embroidery. The sarees are made of finely woven silk and are decorated with intricate design, and, because of these engravings, are relatively heavy. Their special characteristics are Mughal inspired designs such as intricate intertwining floral and foliate motifs, kalga and bel, a string of upright leaves called jhallar at the outer, edge of border is a characteristic of these sarees. Other features are gold work, compact weaving, figures with small details, metallic visual effects, pallus, jal (a net like pattern), and mina work. The sarees are often part of an Indian bride's trousseau

Cotton:

Of course cotton would be one choice — it's lightweight



Emblishment on mandetuni

and comfortable. However, if it's an extra-humid day and you're going to be sweating a lot there's better options. Cotton likes to absorb water so your sundress will become heavy and cling to your skin as the day wears on.

Georgette:

Georgette (from crêpe Georgette) is a sheer, lightweight, dull-finished crêpe fabric named after the early 20th century French dressmaker Georgette de la Plante. Originally made from silk, Georgette is made with highly twisted yarns. Its characteristic crinkly surface is created by alternating S- and Z-twist yarns in both warp and weft. Georgette is made in solid colors and prints and is used for blouses, dresses, evening gowns, saris, and trimmings. It is springier and less lustrous than the closely related chiffon.

Emblishment:

Emblishment is done to enhance the beauty of a garment alays. Coorg people loves to wear rich and elegant fabric and garmet for the occassion. Women wear the manda thuni with small emblishment done with sequins and zari threads.



Mens Accessories

Coorg jewellery is very distinctive, yet the influence of neighboring States is evident. The jewellery worn by the Coorgs are inspired by nature, in the form of flowers, fruits, serpents, the moon, sun, and stars.

Peeche Kathi:

This is an ornamental dagger with a handle terminating in the shape of the head of a parrot or peacock and a sheath beautifully decorated with a gold covering and embedded with rubies. The Peeche Kathi is linked with a richly designed silver chain, which is tucked behind the chele (sash) to the right. It has silver tassels and five smaller knives. A bride or a new mother uses the Peeche Kathi to cut open a coconut at the well while she performs the ceremony of Ganga Puja.

Odi Kathi:

This is a Kodava war knife with a broad blade which was used during battle. It is now used for ceremonial purposes only. The Odi Kathi is used to chop down banana stumps at wedding ceremonies in a show of strength. It is fixed to the thodang at the back of the waist.

Pommale

This is a chain with coral and gold beads.

Thodangu

This is silver girdle tied around the waist to hold the

Kattibale

This is a solid bracelet made of gold.

Kaduk

In olden days men wore earrings called Kaduk.



Women's Accessories

The 'Karthamani' and 'Pathak' are both symbols of marriage in Coorg. The former, fine black beads strung on a gold chain, sometimes made with as little as two grams of gold are common to both South and Western India.

Pathak

The 'Pathak' is usually a half sovereign, or a larger gold coin, engraved with Goddess Lakshmi or Queen Victoria, framed by rubies, surmounted by a cobra, with hanging fresh water pearls, and a chain of gold and coral beads on a twisted strand of black glass beads.

Jomale

The 'Jomale' which consists of gold moulded grooved beads strung on black cord, about 71 cms long, is a necessary part of a Coorg bride's wedding jewellery. The hollow beads are filled with lac. Nowadays, the Jomale is strung on different coloured threads to make a fashion statement.

Kokkethathi

The 'Kokkethathi', a crescent shaped repousse pendant set with graduated cabochon rubies, framed with sea pearls, filled with lac, and a chain of 'Gund' or hollow gold beads, is mandatory for a Coorg bride. The pendant has the image of a seated Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth, flanked by two birds, by a cobra with a distended hood, which is a multiple symbol of wealth and fertility. The chain is usually 26 inches long to show it off to advantage.

Paunchi

The 'Paunchi', which has gold grains in two or three recurrent rows, is a work of art, as is the 'Vajrachudi', which is supposed to represent jackfruit. 'Pimbale', and 'Piribale' are simpler gold bangles.

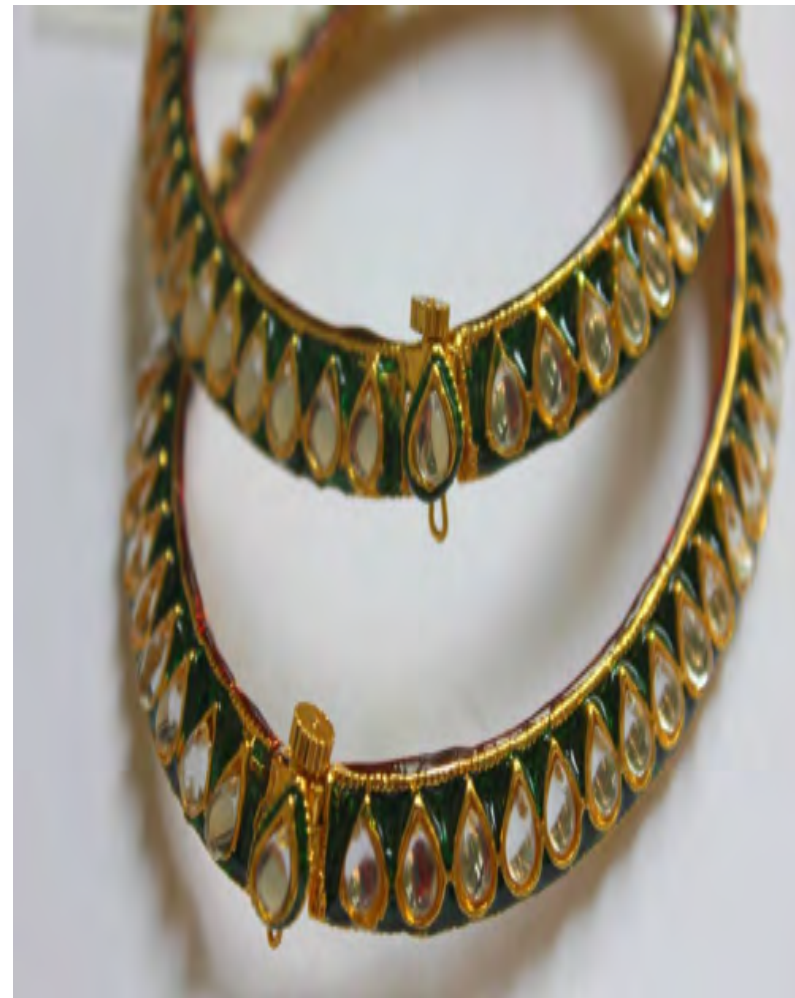
Headjewel

The Coorg head ornaments, are of South Indian origin. The main head piece usually has Shiva and Parvathy with Ganapathy, and the ornament is made to stay firm, with three strands of hair woven through a slit in the jewel. The 'Jadaenagara', includes the 'Suryamukhi' and the 'Chandramukhi' and the 'Kutchu' of 3 black strings, ornamented with gold which hold the plait in place.

Feetjewel

As the bride walks to the 'Mantap', or stands for the Ganga Puja, her feet are very much in focus. The jewellery she wears on her feet, in silver, are special to Coorg and represent the finest craftsmanship of the local jewellers. There are individual toe rings attached to chains, linked to the ankle chains all of which are finely crafted.

The earrings could be 'Jhumkis', 'Muravu' or 'Bogadi', all of Carnatic origin, and mostly gold, ruby and pearls.



The repousse work commonly used in Coorg jewellery, uses a small quantity of metal, beaten to paper thinness, to convey an impression of weight and solidity, and a three dimensional effect.

The Coorg sari needs to be pinned with a 'brooch' – and that has spawned a special set of ornaments.



Coorg have a folk poem describing their culture of give importance to a women's life. The poem is the subject of a widowed woman who was married by one of the brothers of her husband.

“Choth choth chunnayi
tedigond pokane
tedi pona paballi
kal ke tore budda.
Ennanend arivira?
tannadanna devayya
kala kanda ponalli
anna bechcha momma
pandiya nadapole
ponnayi nadakalu
endenni nenatith
cheelanalla balan
baipirinji bandith
machchi manekerith
tanna petta avvang
ee suddinarpchi”

[A boy searches for a girl everywhere. However he fails to find the proper match for him. Then he realizes that the widow of his elder brother Devaih could be a proper match for him. The realization at the time seems like a medicinal herb for which he searched everywhere in the forests was just beneath the sole of his foot. He tells his mother that he wants to marry his sister in law according to the ancient customs.]



Coorg community is a rich heritage culture right from their birth to death. I am so privileged to learn the most authentic culture of our nation. I was so astonished to see the customs they follow and consider a woman in society just like man. Their costume, accessories made me feel a trace of western culture and Indian culture. Costumes, eating habits, beliefs, rituals, and body language are just some aspects which are largely influenced by a culture. Culture, indeed plays a huge role in shaping us, hence it won't hurt to say that culture defines us. It defines who we are and what we are supposed to be. It tells us what to believe in and the traditions we should follow, which in the long run is what makes us who we are.

One of the aspects of culture is the costume. The way we dress and how we dress are also highly culture specific. The simplest example of this is how we Indians have saris as the national costume for women. This style of dressing is deep rooted in our culture. Hence every country has a national costume or one would rather say, their own style of dressing/costume which is influenced by their culture.

India being a land of multiple ethnicities, every state in the country has its own set of traditions and values. Apart from this, they have their own style of dressing too. Very often, we even guess which part of the country the person belongs to by just looking at the costume they are wearing. Such is the importance of costume/dressing. The use of sword and their custom to hold it in their costume makes me feel the men's are eminent and courageous. They make themselves to get involved in army shows their patriotism towards our nation and makes me feel that I am so selfish to live for myself. As a whole I am so proud that I have a chance to know and get along the real heroes of our country by showing me their culture with no hesitation but with pride.

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