

SHAMANIC RITUALS AND THE SURVIVAL OF ENDANGERED TRIBAL LANGUAGES – AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF RAWLA LANGUAGE

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Abstract

In many indigenous communities, particularly tribal communities, there exists a system of dialogue and conversations with and between supernatural beings and the supernatural world they inhabit, as well as their transmigration into a human's body. The supernatural world could be the realm of the gods, or of the spirits of ancestors, or of satanic evil spirits. It is not possible for the ordinary person to have a dialogue with them. The magical skill of enabling this dialogue is referred to as Shamanism. A Shaman can bring to earth, and communicate with tribal or cult gods, or control spirits, ancestors and animals and birds with his supernatural powers. Beyond these powers, shamanic rituals have a linguistic significance. In communities where there is a strong shamanic tradition, the shamans and his associates generally use the traditional language in its original form, without diluting its unique features. The songs used in the rituals would be in the traditional tribal language, uncontaminated by recent linguistic incursions. This is particularly seen in religious rituals involving the sending off of the spirit of a deceased person to the ancestors.

This study is related to *Gaddika*, the shamanic ritual of the *Rawla* tribe, which is a prominent tribal community in Kerala, and about the songs that are part and parcel of this ritual. The study also examines how much the *Rawla* dialect is retained in its original form, and the tribal myths that are woven into the language of the ritual. The *Rawla* language belongs to the Dravidian family, and is passed on in oral form only. In the *Gaddika* ritual, the original language is widely used and forms an important aspect for the survival of the language. This study has been conducted among the *Rawla* community, through observations during several *Gaddika* rituals, and documenting the songs and ritual dialogues. The study also analyses the shamanic ritual and its discourses. It attempts to document the language in its original form and structure and along with it the prominent myths that have been passed on through generations. Through this process, a precise analysis of the survival of the language is also attempted. The study concludes that shamanic discourses and magico-religious rituals have a vital role to play in the continuity and survival of the original dialect, and such communities where these rituals continue to hold a prominent place in their daily lives would ensure the usage and of their traditional language.

Keywords : Shamanisam, Tribe, Gaddika

Introduction

There are 43 generic tribes in Kerala, of which 38 are provided special privileges being included in the schedule and known as scheduled tribe. Each tribe has its own language. This language, which does not have a script, has been passed on orally. Because of lack of script, many of the

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languages are threatened with extinction. The language is not being used within the tribe, or between tribes. Some languages, being dialects of Malayalam language, easily assimilated into Malayalam and became extinct. Even then, most tribes use their traditional language in shamanic rituals to parley with their ancestral spirits and with gods. This paper analyses the collection of shamanic conversations, incantations and songs preserved in their native language by the *Rawla* tribal community.

The *Rawla* Language

Rawla is a matrilineal tribe inhabiting Wayanad in Kerala and Kudagu in Karnataka, a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. This community is included in the schedule by the exonym *Adiya*. They use a traditional language, *Rawla*, which has characteristics of Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil.

This language, without any written script, is rapidly disappearing, with community members using it only within the tribe, and using Malayalam to communicate with those outside the tribe. The new generation has practically left the language. They do not maintain the language as language shift is the reason for it. Children from this community have moved to hostels/residential schools at an early age in search of good education, and have adopted Malayalam as their language. Their use of Malayalam for communication has adversely affected their mother tongue; *Rawla* language. Today, the new generation use Malayalam as their medium of communication within and outside the community.

The Language and Communication with Ancestral Spirit

It is only during parleys with the ancestral spirits and gods that the tribal language survives in its original form. Tribes invoke the gods to earth in order to hear their prayers, as also the ancestral spirits. It may be to introduce a new born to the ancestral world, or to give farewell to a soul, bound for the world of the ancestors. At times of illness, deprivation, crop loss or wild animal attacks, ancestors and gods are invoked and brought to earth.

The incantations and conversations for these are in the ancient language. Community belief is that such conversations, if held in another language, is considered a crime. The belief is that one has to use the ancient language in order to provide honour to the ancestors. The *Bettakkuruma* tribal rituals such as *Keermehke*, *Binje*, *Ajyadoge*, The *Hadikkayadal* of the *Kattunaickans*, the *Penappattu* of the *Paniyar*, *Thira* of *Kurichiyar*, *Eluppamkuthu*, *chattu* of *Kanikkar*, *Muramkulukki* of *Malayar*, *Gaddika*, *Kooliyattu*, *Kootta* of *Rawleru* are all similar shamanic ceremonies.

Shamanic Rituals and Peculiarities of Language

- The languages are sung as shamanic chants and passed on orally. Community tradition enjoin the selected members to study these.
- These tribal chants are in ancient form /original form of languages.
- The tribal language is the only one used to invoke ancestors, dead spirits and gods.

- Discussions and disputes with these supernatural beings have to be held in the undiluted pure version of the traditional language.

The Shamanic Rituals of *Rawleru*

There are several small and big ceremonies commonly conducted among them. *Kuntippula*, *Kootta*, *Pathimootannu* are post-death rituals involving conversations with ancestral spirits. Special rituals are necessary to facilitate entry of the soul of a dead persons to the afterworld. The ancestors of *Rawleru* are called *Achan* or *Acharale* or *Achirale*.

The ancestors of each *Chemmam*² (Matrilineal Clan) have to be propitiated through songs and invoke them in the body of shamans in community and then handed over the *pey* or soul of the departed person to them. Some *peys* (departed members) transforms into an *Achirale* (ancestors) after being taken to the afterworld. *Rawleru* believe that the *pey* is very dangerous, which will not leave this world if not sent off properly. They can trouble humans turning into terrible spirits. As soon as a person dies, the *pey* is placed in the custody of *Chudalappey*, the deity of the *Chudala* ie; burial ground. This is done by the *Rawla* shaman; *Karimi*. It is believed that *Chudalappey* will look after all necessities of the departed spirit just after death.

The World of Powerful *Peys*

All those spirits which do not become ancestors or accepted by the ancestors are continued to be *peys* or *Anthippeys* some of which are powerful like Gods, ferocious and dangerous. Some animals are believed to turn into *peys* after death. *Pantikkalooramma*, *Pantikkaloorappan* are spirits of pigs. *Anappey* is the spirit of elephants and *Nakurupey* the spirit of serpents. *Manavalan pey*, *manavattippey* and *Koorippey* are other major *peys*. *Kuliyen*, *Maliyamma*, *Ummiri*, *Shavandi Veeran*, *Poyyaleri Balamaga*, *Vijari*, *Manavalan* are other prominent spirits. Spirits of fellow tribes of the Nilgiri belt also become *peys*. *Kurichiya pey* of *Kurichiyar* tribe and *Kuruma peys* of *Kuruma* tribe. *Panipeys* is the spirit of *Paniya* tribe. *Uralipey* is the spirit of *Bettakkuruba* tribe.

After Death Rituals and Language Usage

Only the body of the dead are interred in the burial ground (*chudala*). The soul is entrusted with the *chudala pey*, through a ritual called *pey kettal*, where the soul is invoked into a coin which is covered and handed over to the *chudalappey*, the deity of burial ground. The soul of the dead person has a naming ceremony for the after world. The *Karimi*, who conducts the ritual, calls on the ancestral head of the mother of the dead person, followed by those of the paternal grandmother and those of the maternal line of the paternal grandfather. If a man dead, he named by the eldest male in the mother's family's name and followed by the names of the eldest male in

² The higher matrilineal clans are known as Mantram and the lower ones as Chemmam. The major Mantru are Tirunelli Mantru, Batakk Mantru, Puthaar Mantru, Cheruvaali Mantru, Ilaankut Mantru, Kachyale Katha Male Mantru, Kachyale Valayappa Mantru, Madacheri Udayamaile Mantru. The major Chemmams are Kalakottu Chemmam, Kallila Chemmam, Muthire Chemmam, Momatte Chemmam, idamalai Chemmam, Madecherry Chemmam, Kathamale chemmam

the father's mother's family. The third is the name of someone in the father's father's family. This is to introduce the dead person to the world of ancestors. Mantra and chemmam name must be prefixed with the names. Then the ritual leads to *Chanthidal* and *Vellakettal*

Chanthidal and Vellakettal

After the naming ceremony, if the deceased is a woman, *Chanthital* is performed. *Karimi* is responsible for grinding the unboiled rice and making the white paste as *Chanth*. No one else should do this. The *Karimi* put the chanth in the forehead of deceased woman and the rest of the *Chanth* is usually taken to burial ground. On that day, the children or people of the same age should bring clothes for the dead person to wear. It is the responsibility of matrilineal clan members to come with the shrouds.

Placing white cloths on the dead person's head is called *Vellaktu*. The deceased's father's father's family should come with a white cloth. After that, *Karimi* will give everyone some rice in their hands. After reciting these rice mantras, everyone shower the rice. At that time all the women are crying together from inside. After that, the *Manchal* brought to lay the dead body is turned towards the south and 3 people go inside with a mat and take it and lay it on the *manchal* and tie the mat to the *manchal*. *Karimi* has to make the *chavara* cot (*chavkuttal*) used to lay the dead body.

Kuntripola / Kuntru pola / Kunnupola The Naming Ceremony and Ancestral Invoking

Pela or *Pula* is an enduring practice related with impurity, among all religions in connection with death. It is known as *Pola* among Rawlerus. *Pula* is performed by blood relatives of the deceased. *Rawleru* has three types of *Pola*. They are *Kuntru Pola*, *Chemma Pola* and *Kakkapola*. *Kuntripola* is the first ritual after death, a simple ceremony which involves invoking the ancestors spirit and the naming of the departed person. The rituals and death taboos is for the whole *Kunt*³ the geographical division of *Rawleru*. The meaning of the word *Kunt* is *Kunnu* or hill.

The *Kuntru pola veedal* should be performed on the seventh or thirteenth day after a person's death. The head man of *Kunt* is known as *Kuntukkaran* and he is the authority to manage all the rituals regarding the *Kuntru pola* and is conducted under the leadership of *Karimi*. Everyone is served rice and *talukari* (leaf of colocasia) on that day. To prepare a feast for the *Kuntru pola*, the *Kuntrukar* should go to all the houses in the *Kuntu* where the death took place, buy rice and money and bring it to the house where the death took place. Each family member

³ The territorial division of Rawlerus is known as *Kunt*. This matrilineal geographical divisions have clans like chemmam and Mantram. It is believed that the God Pakkatheyyam divided the Rawla land as *Kunt*. Each *kunt* include number of houses and is known as *kullu*.

should pay one *ser*⁴ of rice and 50 rupees to *Kuntukkar* on this day. The chicken will be bought on that day. On that day Karimi cleans the house by sprinkling dung.

Karimi should cook food named *Oti* ;dosa-like bread, rice is roasted *malar*, grinded *malar*, and chicken curry before going to *Ktakka*⁵. For the chicken curry, a chicken is brought and taken to the place where the dead person was bathed before the cremation. Because *Chudala Bhadrakali* is believed to have come to this place, and killed the chicken. This blood belongs to *Bhadrakali*. After this, the chicken is roasted on the fire, its feathers and udder are dried, the meat is removed and only the liver is roasted on the fire. Then the liver is given to the *kuntru mooppa*. From this, some parts of the liver are taken to the place where the *Karimi* chicken is slaughtered and given to *Chudalakkali*. Each *karimi* is fed from chicken liver. The rest of the liver is taken to *Ktakal* and given to *Chudalakkali*.

After this *Karimi* is to prepare turmeric rice to be served to *Chudalakkali* when she goes to *Ktakal*. The specialty of that rice is that it is mixed with turmeric and lime. Turmeric rice and ordinary home-made rice are also cooked without charcoal. Rice mixed with lime is not curdled. After this, the *oti* and *malar* are tied in another sheet along with the rice. The rice and curries are tied with one outside and one inside. After placing outside and inside, everyone will eat. After everyone has eaten, the elder will say, "Let's do the *nalukettal*." This ceremony is known as *Nalukettal*.

Nalukettal

Nalukettal is a shamanic ceremony should be done by the Karimi and the Kuntrumooppa. It is the selection of date for kuntrupula. They start Acharala Parayunnenti to invoke the ancestor spirit Acharale. During this time they tied the date and food bag by praying *eecharale*, *poomi*,⁶ the ancestor of Nadu and *Kuntru*.

Nalukettal is one of the important rituals is done after everyone has eaten, the tied rice and the rice mixed with turmeric and lime will be taken to the *Ktakal*; the burial ground and placed in the buried place. Tied turmeric powder is sprinkled over the grave and says "now we will be told to open the door".

After the cremation, everyone returns to their homes after placing the deceased in the hands of *Chudalakkali* on that day. The spirit of deceased should be buys back from *Chudalakkali* during *Kuntru Pola*. *Ktakal* is believed to have 4 doors. All these doors should be opened and *Chudalakkali* 's hands should be tied. Only then can the soul of the dead person be brought back to *Kunt* from *Ktakal*. The elder will chant mantras to release the dead soul from *Chudalakkali*. There they will give blessings to everyone and tell them to open the door. After opening the door,

⁴ Ser is a measure used in ancient India to measure grains. A measuring vessel made of wood was used. A ser is four मण्डल. It no longer exists and in 1871 it was fixed at one liter (1.06 quarts). It became obsolete in the 20th century with the adoption of the metric system in India.(wikipedia)

⁵ The burial ground

⁶ Eeswaran the God and earth the Bhoomi

the elder will tell the dead person and his relatives that there is *Kuntu Pola* in In a particular *Kuntru*, so you should get there early. All this is said in Rawla language only. After that, they should move some distance away and eat the the tied rice brought from home. The remaining rice should be burnt and kept aside. After that, there is a ritual of invoking the departed soul and placing it in the hands of the ancestors.

At *Kuntru Pola*, the rice is measured at night. First 3 *sers* of rice are measured for the *kuntru*. After that, 7 *sers* of rice are measured for *Chemmam* too. The rice for the ancestors is measured out in one winnow and coins are placed on a banana leaf with oil squeezed wick.

After that, when the elder says ``*neekkiyitt ba*'', means "remove the rice and come back" one person should go inside and remove the rice. Rice is stirred in the belief that all kinds of plagues afflicting the deceased will be contained in this rice. By stirring the rice in this way, those plagues are kept away.

Pathimoontannu; The Send off Ritual of the Soul

This is a ritual to send off the soul of the dead person. A *pandal* / temporary construction is raised with fires placed in the four corners. A figure of the dead person is made from raw rice by the shamans; *Karimi* and fellow shaman *Kanaladi*. The next is to call the *Achirale*, the ancestors for which the *Rawla* language is used. When the *Karimi* says something, the *Kanaladi* has to reply, and vice versa. This is known as *Chaththram parachil*

This *Chathram parachil* is to sing the praises of the dead person. Ancestors will understand it only if said in the traditional *Rawla* language. After that, the women would come forward to touch the figure made of rice and wail aloud.

Kootta

This is a ritual to bring back the soul entrusted with the *chudala pey* in to the house of diseased. for this, *Karimi* otti is made, which is a flat pancake like *Dosha* to please the souls. The last conversation with the soul is *murakettu* (*Mura*- winnow, *Kett*- knot) ritual. The *Kanaladi* shaman sits in the *pandal*, with a winnow tied with a bell, and rice within it. This is covered with a white towel. The soul of the person enters the body of Shaman. Accompanied by drumbeat, music and tribal incantations, the spirit starts speaking, about the cause of his death, his desires and other matters. He also promises to return as a bird or god. Then the food for the journey to the afterworld is served under a resinous tree, consisting of turmeric rice, roasted chicken and coconut. A portion of the food is the right of *Chudala pey*, who had kept the soul in custody. After this *Akathu neekkintey* and *ampu pidikkal* will conduct.

Gaddika

This is a ceremony where gods or ancestors appear. *Gaddika* is held to remove illness, for an easy child birth or against the attacks of wild animals. Here the major shaman is *Thammadi*, and the elders or *Karimi* or *Kanaladi* hold parleys with the spirits that will inhabit his body. Men, dressed as women known as *Mari*, invoke *Mari* the mother goddess through dance. Complex

discussions are held between ancestors and gods. As part of this study, several songs of the *Gaddika* have been collected and analysed. So the songs were obtained in the original language. Several myths, traditional language names and transactions were collected.

Prominent Myths and Gods, Deities Identified

The origin of *ithi and Achan*, *Pookkari Magatheyyam*, the promiscuity of *Bellooramma*, the myths of *Shuvani*, *Malakkari*, the heroics of *Bashavappan*, the life of *Jogiyachan*, the high mother goddess *Allirabbamari*, the origins of gods *Mallappan*, *Siddhappan*, *Parubathi*, *Nanjappan* and many other *Marees* were all obtained during the collection.

Part II

Female Deities and Goddess

<i>Bellooramma</i>	<i>Allirabbamari</i>	<i>Kaliyamma</i>	<i>Perunkalu devi</i>
<i>Parubathi</i>	<i>Kunddala mari</i>	<i>Pachekkallu pakethi</i>	<i>Panubathe</i>
<i>Paruvathi</i>	<i>Pookkari Magatheyyam</i>	<i>Pakkallu pakethi</i>	<i>Sheemal mari</i>
<i>Chikkamma</i>	<i>Neerukolliyamma</i>	<i>Pakathi</i>	<i>Mullooru maari</i>
<i>Cheevamma</i>	<i>Karikkaaliyamma</i>	<i>Muthamma</i>	<i>Nenchi</i>
<i>Chodalakkali</i>			

Male Deities and Gods

<i>Shuvani</i>	<i>Kottichire thevaru</i>	<i>midukkiyan</i>	<i>Chanthirapakavan</i>
<i>Malakkari</i>	<i>Bahsuveeshiraan</i>	<i>Nootaaru</i>	<i>KariShchathan</i>
<i>Kandappeeli</i>	<i>Thirunelli Perumal</i>	<i>Kamadean</i>	<i>Mavondathappan</i>
<i>Beethibali</i> <i>Bashuvappan</i>	<i>Thirumunde Kunjithampuran</i> <i>Theyyam</i>	<i>Kadalumukke</i> <i>Kadalarakkan</i>	<i>Thiruchileri thevan</i>
<i>Kuttichathan</i>	<i>Badaakkina Perumalu</i>	<i>Paandaaru</i>	<i>Mavundathappan</i>
<i>Boykavan</i>	<i>Chooriya Pakavaan</i>	<i>Parathaath</i>	<i>kinaanthiperumal</i>
<i>Mathappan</i>	<i>Thekkina Thevaru</i>	<i>Vellidevan</i>	<i>Badakkila Thevaru</i>
<i>Bashavappan</i>	<i>Muthuvili Muthappan</i>	<i>Kuliyen</i>	<i>Mallappan</i>
<i>Yogiyachan</i>	<i>Aadibali Bashuvappan</i>	<i>Poothappan</i>	<i>Siddhappan</i>
<i>Jogiyachan</i>	<i>Pandathu Malakkari</i>	<i>Pakavan</i>	<i>Nenjappan</i>
<i>Puliyen</i>	<i>Poroora Bavu Thalachilav Devan</i>	<i>Ayyappan</i>	<i>Elicheri</i>
<i>Malakkari</i>	<i>Muthaleribav Vettakkorumaky</i>	<i>Kalappan</i>	

Words Collected from Shamanic Songs and Discussions

Song of Gaddika to Praise God Shuvani /Shivani/Shvani

Shuvani naalageLo Shuvani naalageLo
 Kashivutti kailasavo Shuvani naalageLo
 Poomi vuttib pooloka sheeme Shuvani naalageLo

Ashatha mele Shuvani naalageLo Shuvani naalageLo

Keerulokathallee guRuguLu Shuvani naalageLo

Achappa guRuguLu pathaavo Shuvani naalageLo

Thaayi guRuguLu pathaavo Shuvani naalageLo

Maama guRuguLu pathaavo Shuvani naalageLo

.....

Kottine nEre kaapavanE Shuvani naalageLo

Sample Words Collected

Rawla	English	Malayalam	Rawla	Malayalam	English
<i>Shuvani</i>	A primordial divinity	<i>Shuvani</i>	<i>PattaruvaaL</i>	<i>Pradeshangngalude Thamburan</i>	Lords of region
<i>NalagELO</i>	Praise	<i>Pukazhthuka</i>	<i>Chooththiram</i>	<i>Soothram</i>	Ritual, sutra
<i>Poomi</i>	Earth	<i>Bhoomi</i>	<i>Thila</i>	<i>Thala</i>	Head
<i>PooLoka</i>	Universe	<i>Bhoolokam</i>	<i>Baakku</i>	<i>vaakk</i>	Vaakk , word
<i>Ashatha</i>	In the sky	<i>Akaasam</i>	<i>Poruththu</i>	<i>Poruthu</i>	Forgive
<i>keeRu Loka</i>		<i>Keezhlokam</i>	<i>Achappa</i>	<i>Muthachan</i>	Grand father
<i>Eechira</i>	Iswar, God	<i>eeSwara</i>	<i>Merloka</i>	<i>Meloka</i>	Swargam
<i>Peema</i>	Bheema	<i>Bheem the giant</i>	<i>Guddi</i>	<i>Ambalam</i>	Temple
<i>Poodam</i>	<i>Pedestel</i>	<i>Peedam</i>	<i>Utti</i>	<i>Piravi</i>	Born
<i>Chinnam</i>	Gold	<i>Swarnnam</i>	<i>iLuthu</i>	<i>Irangi</i>	Descended
<i>Biramala</i>	Brahmin	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Bili</i>	<i>Nirayuka</i>	To fill
<i>kOtti</i>	Crore	<i>Kodi</i>	<i>Kikappu</i>	<i>Cheruth</i>	Small
<i>Mekkapp</i>	Big	<i>Valuth</i>	<i>Billu</i>	<i>Villu</i>	Arrow
<i>Maligali</i>	Mansion	<i>Malikayil</i>	<i>Oobathi</i>	<i>Thiri</i>	Wick
<i>karaadi</i>	Bear	<i>karati</i>	<i>Thesa</i>	<i>Desam</i>	Region
<i>Bediya</i>	Big	<i>Valuth</i>	<i>kajji</i>	<i>Kai</i>	Hand
<i>Nevulu</i>	Peacock	<i>Mayil</i>	<i>Moolathaana</i>	<i>Moolasthaanam</i>	The base
<i>Bikche</i>	Beg for alms	<i>Biksha</i>	<i>Shomi</i>	<i>Swami</i>	Lord
<i>BethiyaaLu</i>	Midwife	<i>Vayataatti</i>	<i>Juvaale</i>	<i>oonjaal</i>	Swing
<i>Eeniyam</i>	Insult	<i>Apamaanam</i>			

Ancestors Mentioned in Shamanic Songs and Debates

Rawla	Malayalam	English	Rawla	Malayalam	English
<i>Acharale</i>	<i>Muthachan</i>	Ancestors, grand parents , great grand parents	<i>Dolacha</i>	<i>Dolachan</i>	An ancestor spirit
<i>Achirale</i>	<i>Achachan</i>		<i>Maaracha</i>	<i>Maarachan</i>	An ancestor spirit
<i>Guru</i>	<i>Guru</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like teachers	<i>Eeracha</i>	<i>Eeracha n</i>	An ancestor spirit
<i>Shomi</i>	<i>Swami</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like Lords	<i>Chombacha</i>	<i>Chombachan</i>	An ancestor spirit

<i>Achan</i>	<i>Adi pithav, Achan</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like Father	<i>Pattiyacha</i>	<i>Pattiyachan</i>	An ancestor spirit
<i>Appan</i>	<i>Adi pithav, Appan</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like Father	<i>Palakacha</i>	<i>Palakachan</i>	An ancestor spirit
<i>Karaneru</i>	<i>Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like head man of family, clan etc	<i>Thombacha</i>	<i>Thombacha n</i>	An ancestor spirit
<i>Mantilu Karaneru</i>	<i>Mantam Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of head man of phraterly Mant	<i>Manabayalu Maracha</i>	<i>Manavaayal Marachan.</i>	An ancestor spirit of Manavayal hamlet near Pakkam Kotta
<i>Chemmathi Karaneur</i>	<i>Chemmam Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of head man of Matrilinial exogamous Clan Mant	<i>Vemathu mooppacha</i>	<i>Vemam Mooppachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Vemam hamlet
<i>Appante Karaneru</i>	<i>Acchachan Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like father	<i>Thooneri Pallukadiyacha</i>	<i>Thooneri Pallukadiyacha</i>	An ancestor spirit of Thooneri hamlet near Thannikkal
<i>Achan Karaneru</i>	<i>Muthachan Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like father	<i>Payyappalli mantacha</i>	<i>Payyappalli mantacha</i>	An ancestor spirit of Payyanmpalli hamlet
<i>Acha Kuruppe</i>	<i>Muthachan Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like father	<i>Appaa Kuruppe</i>	<i>Achachan Karanavar</i>	Ancestor spirit of persons like father
<i>Illathu Molle Eecharacha</i>	<i>Illathu Molle Eecharachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Illathu moole hamlet	<i>Shemmad Navarcha</i>	<i>Shemmad Navarchan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Chemmad hamlet near Payyamballi, kurukkanmoola
<i>Kaathaleri Bachuvacha</i>	<i>Kaathaleri Bachuvachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Kathaleri hamlet near Padukana , Mananthavadi	<i>Puthiyadathu Karampacha</i>	<i>Puthiyadathu Karampachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Puthiyadam hamlet
<i>Nadabayalu Auracha</i>	<i>Nadavayal Paurachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Nadavayal hamlet near Padukaana	<i>Nelliyattu Bachuvacha</i>	<i>Nelliyattu Bachuvachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of Nelliyatt hamlet near Payyamballi
<i>Madathukar</i>	<i>Madathukara</i>	An ancestor	<i>Cherukattu</i>	<i>Cherukattur</i>	An ancestor

<i>e Mallacha</i>	<i>Mallachan</i>	spirit of <i>Madathukara</i> hamlet near Payyampalli	<i>kariyacha</i>	<i>kariyachan</i>	spirit of Cherukattoor hamlet
<i>Ooruppalli Pakkacha</i>	<i>Oorppalli Pakkachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Oorppalli</i> hamlet.	<i>Karadimattu Mallacha</i>	<i>Karadimattur Mallachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Karadimattur</i> hamlet
<i>Kaattrappalli BaaShacha</i>	<i>Kaattarappalli BaaShacha</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Kaattarappalli</i> hamlet	<i>Kaithakka Chakkacha</i>	<i>Kaithakkal Chakkachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Kaithakkal</i> hamlet
<i>Kelaath Kariyacha</i>	<i>Keloth Kariyacha</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Keloth</i> hamlet	<i>Pakkanadu Pakkacha</i>	<i>Pakkanad Pakkacha</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Pakkanaat</i> hamlet near Chekadi
<i>Anjani Javaracha</i>	<i>Anjani Javaracha</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Anjani</i> hamlet near Panamaram	<i>Akanaatile kanemaaru</i>	<i>Akanaattu Kaaranavar</i>	An ancestor spirit of headman of Akanad/Thirunelli
<i>Pariyataathu Paakkacha</i>	<i>Pariyataathu Paakkacha</i>	An ancestor spirit of Manavayal hamlet near Pakkam Kotta	<i>Puranaatile kanemaaru</i>	<i>Puranaattu Kaaranavar</i>	An ancestor spirit of headman of Puranad; places other than Thirunelli
<i>Mathakottu Pambacha</i>	<i>Mathankottu Pambachan</i>	An ancestor spirit of <i>Mathankottu</i> hamlet	<i>Kivorithimu</i>	<i>Cheriya Muthassi</i>	A Female ancestor spirit.

Linguistic Features of Rawla language

Variation at Phonological and Morphological levels in the Dravidian cognates and other shared lexical items of Malayalam and Rawla have been identified in this study.

Phonological Variations

A). Vowels

The following are the major variations in vowels at word level, found in Rawla when compared to Malayalam.

1. Vowel lengthening

In the lexis shared by Rawla and Malayalam the most notable phonological feature is vowel lengthening. **a>ā** and **e>ē** are prominent among them.

a. a>ā

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
<i>i:ṇattil</i>	<i>i:ṇaattilu</i>	In tune
<i>ivar</i>	<i>ivaaru</i>	This people
<i>ulakka</i>	<i>ulaakke</i>	Pestle
<i>piṇakkam</i>	<i>piṇaakkam</i>	rupture
<i>enakkə</i>	<i>enaakku</i>	For me
<i>urakkam</i>	<i>uraakku</i>	Sleep
<i>adaykka</i>	<i>adaaykka</i>	Areca nut

From the table above it can be seen that **a>ā** change occurs when /a/ appears inter-consonantly. Hence, the rule for this process would be: **a->ā/consonant_consonant**.

b. a>ē

This vowel shift occurs at three environments:

- i). When preceded by agemminated voiceless palatal affricate [tʃ]

uccakkə>ucci:kkə *at the noon*

- ii). When preceded by an alveolar trill [r]

kuravə>kuri:və *less, deficiency*

iracci>iri:cci *meat*

pontara>ponti:ri: *golden*

- iii). When preceded by alveolar lateral approximants [l]

mala>mali: *hill*

Thus the rule for this change can be: **a > i: / {^cl_r}** –

c. a>e

The word final /a/ in Malayalam lexis become /e/ in Rawla language. Rule: **-a > e / _#**

amma>amme	<i>mother</i>
āna>āne	<i>elephant</i>
āla>āle	<i>cowshed</i>

pana> pane	<i>palm tree</i>
kaṭala>kadḍale	<i>ground nut</i>

d. ə > u

The enunciative vowel /ə/ in Malayalam becomes /u/ in Rawla

ə > u / _ #

tunṭə>tunṭu	<i>piece</i>
pu:ppə>pu:ppu	<i>mildew</i>
oḷukkə>oḷukku	<i>flow</i>
u:kkə > u:kku	<i>strength</i>
pajjə>pajju	<i>cow</i>

e. addition of /u/ with word final *Chillu*

If the coda of a word final syllable is a nasal, trill, or lateral /u/ is added. The rule is:-

$$\emptyset > u / \$ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} + \text{nasal} \\ + \text{liquids} \end{array} \right\} -$$

avar>avāru	<i>they</i>
makaḷ>magāḷu	<i>daughter</i>
vaṭṭaṭṭil>baṭṭaṭṭilu	<i>rounded</i>
bēḍḍār>bēḍḍāru	<i>disconcertment</i>
kaṇṇə>kaṇṇu	<i>eye</i>

B). Consonants

a. Deletion of word final /m/

The word final /m/ is dropped in Kannada in the lexis shared by Malayalam and Kananada. This feature can be seen in Rawla as well. Considering the geographical proximity with the Karnataka, this change can be treated arguably as an outcome of language contact between Rawla and Kannada. It needs a detailed research to establish the same.

However, the a> e change is retained in Rawla even after the deletion of /m/ at the word endings. Thus the rule would be:

m > ∅ / _ # followed by a > e / _ #

Malayalam	Kannada	Rawla	Meaning
balam	bala	bale	<i>Strength</i>
vellam	vella	belle	<i>Jaggery</i>
iṣtam	iṣta	itte	<i>Liking</i>
naṣtam	naṣtam	natte	<i>Loss</i>

b. Voiced Labiodental Fricative to Voiced Bilabial Plosive (v > b)

This variation is shared by most of the northern dialects of Malayalam arguably under the influence of Kannada where v>b change is consistent at word initial position. As found in the case of the deletion of word final /m/, this can also be treated as an outcome of language contact with Kannada. Examples:

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
vaṭakkə	baḍaakku	<i>North</i>
vajal	bajaalu	<i>Field</i>
vākkə	bākku	<i>Word</i>
vittə	bittu	<i>Seed</i>
vaḷa	baḷa	<i>Bangle</i>
vala	bale	<i>Spider net</i>
vaṇṇātti	baṇṇātti	<i>Washer women</i>
vasu:ri	basu:ri	<i>Small pox , Chickenpox</i>
valli	balli	<i>Creeper</i>

c. Retroflex approximant to voiced labiodental fricative (ɻ > v)

The intervocalic retroflex approximant at word medial becomes labiodental approximant. The rule is: $\text{ɻ} > \text{v/vowel_vowel}$

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
kaṭuttə	kavuttu	<i>Neck</i>
kaṭiṇṇu	kavunnu	<i>finished</i>
kaṭukkol	kavukkol	<i>Rafter</i>
cuṭi	cuvi	<i>Whirlpool</i>
meṭukə	mevvu	<i>Wax</i>
meṭukutiri	mevvutiri	<i>Candle</i>
ēṭə	ēvu	<i>Seven</i>
āṭam	āva	<i>Depth</i>

d. Homorganic nasal +stop clusters are not assimilated

One of the identity markers of Malayalam is the tendency to convert homorganic nasal + stop consonant clusters to geminated nasal consonants, such as $\eta g \rightarrow \eta\eta$, $\eta c \rightarrow \eta\eta$, $\eta r \rightarrow \eta\eta$ and $nd \rightarrow nn$, through the process of assimilation. Here, the succeeding consonant (a stop consonant) becomes more like the preceding consonant (a nasal consonant). Such a process is absent in Rawla language. The clusters [nt] and [nc] remains unchanged in Rawla language and in some cases the geminated nasals [nn] becomes [nt] Examples:

[nn] < [nt]

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
panni	panti	<i>Pig</i>
pannikkoorkka	pantinuvaakku	<i>Plectranthusamboinicus</i>
kunnu	kuntu	<i>Hill</i>
tinnu	tintu	<i>Eat</i>
venṭennu	benṭentu	<i>Don't want</i>
paraṭunnu	parentolu	<i>Telling</i>
aanennu	anentu	<i>To be so</i>
mu:nn	mu:ntu	<i>Three</i>

[ɲc] < [ɲp]

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
maṇṇaḷ	maṇcaaḷu	<i>Turmeric</i>
uṭaṇṇu	utaṇṇu	<i>Broken</i>
maṇṇu	maṇcu	<i>Snow</i>
paraṇṇu	paraṇcu	<i>Said</i>
ariṇṇu	ariṇcu	<i>knew</i>

e. Voiced aspirated bilabial stops becomes Voiceless un-aspirated

At the word initial position the voiced aspirated bilabial plosive is changed to voiceless un-aspirated. All such words are Sanskrit loan crept to Rawla probably through the contact with Malayalam. Examples:

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
bhu:mi	pu:mi	<i>Earth</i>
bhu:loka	pu:loka	<i>Universe</i>
bhi:ma	pi:ma	<i>gigantic</i>

f. Voiceless alveolar fricative to voiceless palatal plosive (s > c)

This change occurs at both initial and medial positions of the words. Examples:

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
satja	cattija	<i>Truth</i>
sahājam	cagāja	<i>Help</i>
samaram	camare	<i>Strike</i>
sakṣi	cācci	<i>Witness</i>
su:rjan	cu:rijan	<i>Sun</i>
maisur	maiccu:ru	<i>Mysore</i>
sāri	cāri	<i>Sari</i>
su:rjakānti	cu:rjaānti	<i>Sunflower</i>

g. Voiceless post-alveolar fricative to voiceless palatal plosive (ʃ > c)

Similar to s > c this change occurs at both initial and medial positions. Examples:

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
ʃāstra	cāttāra	<i>Science</i>

o:ʃāram

occāra

*Free***h. Voiceless palatal plosive to Voiceless post-alveolar fricative (c > ʃ)**

Interestingly, a counter change **c > ʃ** is also found in the Rawla language.

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
cakka	ʃakke	Jackfruit
cakiri	ʃagiri	coconut fibre
cankə	ʃanku	Heart
cāṇam	ʃāṇa	Cow dung
cāma	ʃāme	little millet
cilanti	ʃilanti	Spider
ci:ra	ʃi:re	Spinach
cukkə	ʃukku	Dry ginger
ce:na	ʃe:ne	Elephant Yam

i. Word final /n/ and /l/ are dropped in some environment

/n/ and /l/ are dropped when it occurs at the coda position of word final syllable in the following environment:

- a). When the onset is a voiceless labiodental fricative /v/

e.g. ammāvan > ammāva *uncle*

pu:van > pu:ve rooster

arivāḷ > arivā sickle

- b). When the nucleus of the syllable is a long vowel

puḷḷimān > puḷḷimā dear

arivāḷ > arivā sickle

tattān > tattā goldsmith

tambrān > tambrā lord

- c). When the onset is either a geminated consonant or homorganic cluster

appan > appa father

kollan > kolla ironsmith

makkaḷ > makka kids

komban > komba big, male elephant

j. Voiceless bilabial stop is dropped at the word initial position

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
pu:	u:	Flower
pu:və	u:və	Flower
pu:māla	u:māla	Garland
puli	uli	Tiger
pauran	auran	A name

Alveolar flap to alveolar trill /r/ > /r/

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
kuruti	kuruti	<i>Blind</i>
karal	karulu	<i>Liver</i>
cēraṭṭa	cēraaṭṭe	<i>Millipede</i>
cēra	cēre	<i>Ratsnake</i>
ro:mam	roma	<i>Body Hair</i>

k. Voiced dental plosive to voiced palatal plosive /d/ > /j/

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
dinam	jina	<i>Day</i>
dosa	joca	<i>Pancake</i>

j. Voiceless retroflex plosive changes to voiced geminated retroflex plosive /t/ > /ḍḍ/

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
kaccavaṭam	kaccavaḍḍa	<i>Business</i>
kaṭam	kaḍḍa	<i>Loan</i>
kaṭal	kaḍḍalu	<i>Sea</i>
tuṭa	tuḍḍa	<i>Thigh</i>
kuṭil	kuḍḍilu	<i>hut</i>
jaṭa	jaḍḍe	<i>Hair</i>
tāṭi	tāḍḍi	<i>Beard</i>
tuṭi	tuḍḍi	<i>a musical instrument</i>
to:ṭu	to: ḍḍu	<i>canal</i>
vaṭakkə	baḍḍāḱku	<i>North</i>

k. Voiceless velar plosive to voiced velar plosive at the word initial

Malayalam	Rawla	Meaning
kuntə	gundu	<i>Pit</i>
ku:ma	gu:mey	<i>Owl</i>
karuka	garukke	<i>Cynodondactylon</i>

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