

Nayar of india outline essay sample

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There are different cultures in many places all over the world. The Nayar of India culture stood out to me from many others. The way they unite in marriage, heal sickness, their beliefs and values, and kinship took me by a great surprise. Their way of life is very unique. Growing up and living in a place such as America, where the cultures are similar in many ways makes me very interested in cultures such as theirs. In this research paper I plan to identify their primary mode of subsistence, the aspects of the culture, and compare and contrast the culture to my own.

The Nayar of India villages are primarily comprised of family farms. They are considered to be emerging agriculturalists. Their economy is based on the cultivation of coconuts and rice. The traditional Nayar compound is typically a garden home. The families grew everything they needed to supply their own families. Their diet consisted of mostly rice, coconuts, pork, and fish, cooked in a variety of different ways for each meal (Panikkar, 1918).

The Nayar of Indians is Christians and Muslims. Over thousands of years of considerable influence by mainstream religious faith denominations such as Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism, the Nayar have been substantially unphased in adopting one of the recognized religions. While the Nayar do use Hindu temples for worship and ceremonies, the nature of these particular practices are not recognized under any Hindu creed or other religion for that matter. The Nayar belief in magic and spirit worship continues although they are recognized leaders in literature and music within their culture and subsequently would not be considered uncivilized. Another characteristic of the Nayar people is where they fit within a caste society. “A caste is an endogamous social grouping into which a person is born and within which a

person remains throughout his or her lifetime. It is an ascribed position.” (Nowak and Laird, 2010).

The kinship system of the Nayars is similar to most cultures, but it differs also. They follow matrilineal descent and are said to practice polygyny (Nowak and Laird, 2010). This is one of the few societies that practice polyandry, where a woman has more than one male spouse or partner (Worell, 2002, p. 298). They maintained matrilineal households in which sisters and brothers and their children were the permanent residents. The matrilineal compounds in this society are called tarawads. Each tarawad is headed up by a senior woman. Traditionally women in Nayar cultures hold decision making powers over themselves and their families and are the primary holders of all land and assets owned and maintained within the family line. (Malayali, 2005) Men, traditionally, were free from these restraints or the restraints of conventional husbandry due to the necessity of being free to leave for purposes of war but, freedom came at the cost of having very little political, social, or economical power or stature within the community. In fact, the only duty men are expected to fill at home is to train their nephews and visit their wives long enough to impregnate them, and of course to show up and claim paternity when necessary. (Moore, 1985)

In conclusion, the Nayars of India has a unique lifestyle. Growing up and living in a place such as America, where the cultures are similar in many ways makes me very interested in cultures such as theirs.

Reference Page

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