A STUDY ON THE SOCIO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF KATTUNAIKAN WOMEN IN WAYANAD DISTRICT OF KERALA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Tribal people groups who are food-gatherers (without any habit of agricultural practice), with diminishing population and very low or little literacy rates can be called as Primitive Tribes. Cholanaikkans, Kurumbas, Kattunaikans, Kadaras and Koragas are the five primitive tribal groups in Kerala. They constitute nearly 5% of the total tribal population in the State. Cholanaikkans can be said as the most primitive of them and found only in the Malappuram District. Only a handful of families are living in the Mancheri hills of Nilambur forest division. Kattunaikans, another lower-hill community related to Cholanaikkans, are mainly seen in Wayanad district and some in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts. Kadar population is found in Trisur and Palakkad districts. Kurumbas are living in the Attappady Block of Palakkad district. The Koraga habitat is in the plain areas of Kasaragod district. Tribals in Kerala (Adivasis of Kerala) are the indigenous population found in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Most of the tribal people of Kerala live in the forests and mountains of Western Ghats, bordering Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Wayanad has the highest number of tribals Idukki and Palakkad districts are the next two that make the lion portion of the native tribal people groups in the state. The Paniya (Paniyar) are the largest of the 35 major tribes. This research study is intended to find measure for social economic empowerment of kattunayakan women.

Key words: Tribals, Education, Poverty, empowerment

INTRODUCTION

India is the home to large number of indigenous people, who are still untouched by the lifestyle of the modern world. With more than 84.4 million, India has the largest population of the tribal people in the world. These tribal people also known as the adivasis are the poorest in the country, who are still dependent on haunting, agriculture and fishing. Some of the major tribal groups in India include Gonds, Santhals, Khasis, Angamis, Bhils, Bhatias and Great Andamanese. All these tribal people have their own culture, tradition, language and lifestyle. This enables the tourist to get an insight into many different cultures at the same time on the tribal tour to India.
MAJOR TRIBES

Tribals in Kerala are living on the hill ranges, mainly on the Western Ghat, bordering Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. As a natural border, the mountain has branches in Kerala as well as in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The tribals on the Kerala hills are only listed here.

Adiyan, Alar, Arandan/ Ernadan, Cholanaikkan, Eravallan, Malappulayan, Irulan, Kadar, Kammara, Kanikkar, Kattunayakan, Kochu Velan, Kondakapus, Kondareddis, Koraga, Koragar, Kota, Kudiya, Melakudi, Kurichchan, Kurumans, Kurumbas, Kurambar, Maha Malasar, Malai Arayan, Malai Pandaram, Malai Vedan, Malakkuravan, Malasar, Malayal, Mannan, Marati, Muthan, Mudugar, Muduvan, Muthuvan, Paliyan, (Palleyan), (Palliyan), Paanan, Paniyan, Parayan, Ulladana, Ually

It is estimated that there are about 4 lakh tribal people living in Kerala and about half of this population has made the interiors of Wayanad their home. The tribals were the original inhabitants of Wayanad region. But once the British era opened roads to this region and commercial plantations began to sprout, there occurred a migration of settlers to this region and during the 1940s this migration enhanced tremendously displacing the aborigines or adivasis of the area. The tribes lost their land and dwindled in numbers and now they constitute only 20 percent of the total population of the district.

The native Adivasis of the district belong to various sects like Paniyas, Kurumas, Adiyars, Kurichyas, Ooralis, Kattunaikkans and Uraali Kurumas. They are mostly physically distinguishable with darker skin and stout built physique. They often live in houses made of thatched roof, mud, bamboo and brick houses set in swampy valleys and plateaus.

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS

Recognizing the special needs of various weaker sections including STs, the Constitution of India not only guarantees equality before the Law for all (Article 14), but also enjoins upon the State to make special provisions of affirmative discrimination for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes, (Article 15(4)). It also empowers the State to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class citizens which in the opinion of the State is not adequately represented in the services under the State (Article16(4)).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The socio economic development amongst the tribals is of paramount importance for ensuring their well-being and empowerment, especially in the context of the specific depressing situations that STs are in viz. – exploitations, indebtedness, abject poverty, no asset, poor productive capabilities, primitive technology, lack of marketing linkages etc. This study is focusing mainly on the challenges faced by the government and other institutions while implementing various developmental and scaffolding programmes for the empowering tribal especially very back ward tribes like kattunaika

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objectives

The primary objective is to study the socio economic empowerment of kattunaika women in kerala

Secondary Objective

1. To suggest measures to improve the condition of kattunaika women in kerala.
2. To know the standard of living of kattunaika women

SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This paper has been made an attempt to describe the socio economic profile of tribal communities, development programmes and institutions for scheduled tribes, in Kerala. This study conducted among
kattunaika tribes in Kerala. Data was collected from tribes and officials like promoters, SC/ST development officers, Kudumbasree workers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research is descriptive in nature. Sample design is determined before data is collected. Random sampling method is used to collect the data from the population. The study is designed as a descriptive one on survey method. Simple random sampling method is used to collect data. Data are collected directly from tribal people and collects opinions from others and officials like development officers, promoters etc.

Population and sample

Population comprises of tribes and other officials in Kerala. The tribes include kattunaika men and women and officials like SC/ST promoters, development officers, panchayath members for the period from January 2014 to February 2014.

Tools for data collection

Both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data was collected directly from the tribes, social workers and tribal development officials through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from journals, articles, websites, blogs etc.

Tools for data analysis

Data was analyzed by using simple statistical tools like tables, bar diagrams and pie diagrams.

Limitations of the study

1. It took time to collect data due to non-co-operation from some kattunaika tribes.
2. Some of the results of the study cannot be generalized to other areas of the state and country as they are the personal opinions of the officials.
3. It took time to collect the data due to the busy schedule officials.

Data analysis and interpretation

The dropout rate also varies among districts. Idukki has the least number of dropouts among the tribal-concentrated districts in Kerala. At high school level, Palakkad has a higher dropout rate than Idukki and Wayanad.

Table No. 1: Dropouts among ST students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>ST Students</th>
<th>Dropouts</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>33781</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>24449</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>15882</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td>6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74112</td>
<td>2626</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Directorate of Public Instruction, Govt. of Kerala).

Dropout ratio among ST students is found to be higher than that of other communities and castes including the Scheduled Castes; it is four times that of SCs and even more compared to the general category. This is another area of major concern.
Employment level shows that 18% of kattunaika women have regular job. Majority of them (62%) have seasonal job. Among them 20% are unemployed.

This study reveals that kattunaika tribes are not much bothered about family planning. 58% of them have more than four children.

The main source of income for kattunaika is honey collection. They are expert in collecting forest honey. They bring them to Tribal honey society located at kallur, muthanga, bathery.

Chart 1: Marital age

(Source: primary data, 2014)
Majority of kattunaika tribe get married in very early stage of life. This leads to higher mortality and infant mortality rate.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTION
The role of tribal women is important but their socio-economic development is poor. More needs to be done. The problems of kattunaika women and tribals are largely common. Suggestions and recommendations to strengthen and empower kattunaika tribal women are:

1. Train kattunaika women in kitchen gardening, childcare, food preservation, handicrafts and other house based activities
2. Form and stabilize tribal women’s co-operatives to take up dairy, sericulture, fisheries, handicrafts, horticulture agri-food processing and post-harvest technologies
3. Impart practical knowledge and training in modern techniques to all kattunaika women regularly so that their work becomes easier and crop production increases.
4. Low literacy especially among tribal girls and high dropout rates at elementary and higher levels are areas of serious concern.
5. Focus on girls’ education, inclusive of context-specific traditional and innovative interventions. Launch special and sustained education initiatives/drives in low female literacy tribal pockets.
6. Teach tribal children in their mother tongue at least at primary level. Prepare textbooks in tribal languages.
7. To prevent teacher absenteeism in tribal areas, give preference to local and tribal teachers from local panchayats, and place the teaching and non-teaching staff of primary schools under the control of the village management committee.
8. Devise new systems to improve the access of tribals to modern healthcare.
9. Provide good drinking water facilities in tribal areas.
10. Train tribal women to take up their responsibilities and sensitize the Gram Sabha about the new provisions.

These strategies would empower kattunaika women and bring them into mainstream development.

CONCLUSION
The existing socio-economic profile of the tribal communities is low compared to the mainstream population. It is even low when compared to the other marginalized sections including Scheduled Castes. All forms of social exclusion and a high degree of deprivation are the major problems faced by the tribal community in Kerala. In almost all deprivation indices, they are behind the general population. The Scheduled Tribes in Kerala are still to gain more from affirmative action, tribal development programmes and institutions, Tribal Sub- Plan and decentralized planning.

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