



TRIBAL ECONOMY OF INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT :

A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so. A tribe is a group of people in primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor. The Indian tribal communities have economic pursuits ranging from hunting to settled agriculture and urban or industrial callings. Tribal communities near or within the forests have to collect a number of commodities such as fruits and vegetables, fuel wood, fodder, timber for construction and repair of houses, medicinal plants and a lot of minor forest produce (MFP) items. Minor forest produce items are obtained without felling the trees. Minor forest produce items are the major avenue of employment and income for the scheduled tribes in certain areas. It is estimated that non-wood forest produce provides employment for 28 to 30 million tribals per year. However, at present due to several restrictions imposed by the state governments on the collection of items of non-wood forest produce and also due to rapid deforestation, the stock of items of non-wood forest produce is much reduced.

KEYWORDS : Tribe, Tribals, Barbarous. Hunting, Tribal Community, Deforestation.

INTRODUCTION

The tribal communities live in about 15% of the country's areas, in various ecological and geo climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas. The tribal groups are at different stages of socio economic and educational development. While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life, at the other end of the spectrum, there are 75 groups still not adopted mainstream life, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs), who were identified earlier for having the following characteristics:

- (a) pre-agriculture level of technology;
- (b) stagnant or declining population;
- (c) extremely low literacy and
- (d) subsistence level of economy

The word 'tribe' has different connotations for different branches of social sciences. For the present day western anthropologists and sociologists, the term in general usage is taken to denote a 'primary' aggregate of people living in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief.

It is necessary to point out that one single criterion has been followed to distinguish 'tribals' from 'non-tribals'. In his endeavour to specify the elements common to tribals, Parmar expresses the divergent views associated with the thesis propounded by Max Weber, Robbert Redfield, Bailey, Ghurye, and Surjit Sinha. But as synthesis, the tribals who are still resisting acculturation or absorption, possess certain features, once possessed by all the tribal groups. These features, considered as common to all such groups are :

1. They live away from the civilised world in the inaccessible parts lying in forests and hills.
2. They belong either to one of the three stocks namely Negosritos, Austroloids, or Mongoloids.
3. They speak the same tribal dialects and
4. They profess primitive religion known as Animism in which the worship of ghosts and spirits is the most important element.

The above synthesis seems more or less in line with what Majumdar advocates. To him "A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking the same language and observing certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and has developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations."

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The level of economic activity is very low and there is a vast untapped potential of their resource endowment. The problem of indebtedness of the rural poor of the country has been the cause of much concern for decades. The nature of the problem assumes serious dimensions when reviewed in the context of tribal economy where agriculture, as the only source of livelihood, along with the collection of minor forest produce, is characterised by the traditional techniques and practices. The credit procured even for economic activities like agriculture becomes debt because of the low yield of agriculture which further compels the tribal people to procure and spend borrowings on unproductive activities. The continuous failure of repayment of loans, makes the tribal society to fall in the trap of vicious circle of low earnings, poverty and indebtedness and the existence of greater inequality among the tribals. Although due to the intervention of LAMPS, the professional money-lenders and landlords who were the major sources of rural credit in the past, have lost their grip in the tribal economy, why the position has not improved appreciably. To answer this question is the aim of this study.

OBJECTIVES

The study is undertaken the general objective of assessing the contribution of tribals on operational efficiency, income and employment potentials of the farmers in the region of Tiruchirappalli district.

- To study the Socio-economic characteristics of tribals relating to the inequalities in income, expenditure and land holding consumption pattern.
- To study the levels of inequality in the sizes of land holdings and the household incomes of the tribals in the study villages.
- To study the extent of poverty, employment potentiality and capability of male and female tribals in the study area so as to suggest measures to enhance their standard of living.
- To analyse the economic aspects (cost, profit or loss) of the paddy and tapioca cultivation in the study hill villages.
- To study the level of indebtedness of the tribal households, their repaying capacity and the problem of large scale default in the repayment of loan.

HYPOTHESES

1. The LAMPS do not make any significant contribution towards the socio-economic life of the tribals in the study area.
2. The differences in the size of land holding and the household income do not make greater inequality and significant variation in the extent of poverty of the tribal households.

3. The Tapioca cultivation is more profitable than the paddy cultivation.
4. Presence of LAMPS does not reduce the indebtedness of the Tribals.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Database and period of Study

The study has employed both primary and secondary data. The primary data collected for the financial year 2017-18. The data were collected from the respondents by using Interview Schedule method from May 2017 to June 2018.

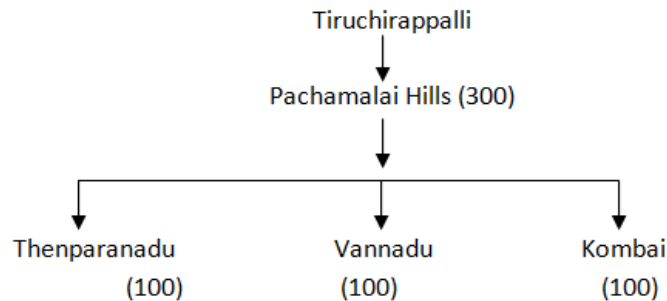
SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

Trichirappalli district is the Universe which consists of 3 hill blocks namely Thenparanadu, Vannadu and Kombai.

Thuraiyur Taluk - Revenue Villages		
Number of Revenue Villages		64
A.batharpettai	Aalathudaiyanpatti	Aathanoor
Ammappatti	Azhagapuri	Balakrishnampatti(e)
Balakrishnampatti(w)	Chokkanathapuram (49)	Eragudi - North
Eragudi - South	Kalingamudaiyanpatti (51)	Kallathu Kombai
Kamatchipuram (27)	Kannanoor	Karappudaiyanpatti
Keerambur (37)	Kollappatti	Kombai (Hills)
Koppamaapuri	Koppampatti (5)	Kottaiyoor
Kottappalayam East	Kottappalayam West	Maruvathoor
Murugoor	Muthaiyampalayam	Naduvalur (44)
Nagalapuram (42)	Nallamathi Kombai	Okkarai (29)
Osarappalli (9)	Pagalavadi (45)	Pasalikkombai
Patchaperumalpatti-n	Patchaperumalpatti-s	Pokkalaaya Kombai
Ponnusangampatti (56)	Puliyancholai	Ruthiratsha Kombai
Sangampattikombai-i	Sangampattikombai-ii	Senappanallur (54)
Sengattuppatti	Sikkathambur - North	Sikkathambur - South
Singalanthapuram	Sirunatham (31)	Sirunavalur (25)
Sobanapuram (7)	Sookkalampatti	Thalugai (1)
Thenbaranadu	Thu.renganathapuram	Thuraiyur
Uppiliyapuram North	Uppiliyapuram South	Vadakkuveli
Vairichettipalayam	Vannaadu (Hills)	Veeramachanpatti
Vengadajalapuram	Vengadathanoor	Vengadesapuram
Vis.ammal Samuthiram		

The research design of this study is based on Pachamalai Hills in Tiruchirappalli District. The three different stages of sampling are (1) Selection of the hill block (2) Selection of three revenue villages from hill block, and (3) Selection of 100 sample households from the total tribal households of the three villages in hill block.

Thenparanadu, Vannadu and Kombai were the revenue villages chosen from Pachamalai hills in Tiruchirappalli District.



Thus a total of 300 sample tribal households were chosen on a simple random basis. Data were collected through a survey method by administering an interview schedule to the head of each household.

b) Primary Data

A pilot study was taken on to test the schedules and verify the concepts and definitions adopted for this study. The data collected included the occupation, (Primary, secondary, territory), the size of holdings, source of irrigation, household composition, details about assets and liabilities, cropping pattern, cost of cultivation, family employment, sale of minor forest produce, agriculture income, other sources of income, household expenditure, investment if any, amount borrowed, repayment position etc.

The primary data were collected through survey method by administering a household interview schedule to the head of the household. The respondents have generally provided information by recollecting from their memory. Maintenance of accounts by the households in rural areas (especially in tribal households) is conspicuous by its absence in the study area. In spite of all the efforts made to elicit correct information by careful probing during interview, it would be wrong to assume that lapse of memory on the part of the respondents was fully overcome in regard to the minute details about the quantum of inputs used, output produced, pattern of expenditure incurred in various ways and so on by cross-checking. Therefore, the outcome of the analysis of primary data is within the limitations of the responses for various ways and so on by cross-checking. Therefore, the outcome of the analysis of primary data is within the limitations of the responses for various questions in the schedule. Some of the respondents were initially reluctant to give out correct information regarding their income from collection of minor forest produce with the apprehension that they may be penalised for the violation of Forest Laws. A few others were not willing to give out correct information about the quantum of loans borrowed from private moneylenders as the moneylenders had previously threatened them not to disclose the matter. However, by arranging meetings with the help of local leaders in the villages for creating proper understanding and confidence of the respondents, efforts were made to elicit correct information.

SECONDARY DATA

As regards the information from secondary sources related to District Statistical Office, Panchayat Union Office and Block Statistical Office. Block Development Office, Cooperative societies and the non-government organisations. These Secondary sources of information have been supplemented with reference to a number of books, official reports from the centre and state governments, journals, newspapers, and other relevant materials, both published and unpublished.

Collection of Data

The 300 samples tribal households are selected by multi stage random sampling technique.

Primary data are collected by personal interview method from the informations by providing a pre-tested questionnaire. Data are collected for one calender year. The requisite secondary data are collected from the published materials and from various related centres.

Measures of Analysis and Tools of Analysis

Lorenz curve analysis, cost-benefit analysis and suitable diagrams are used then and there to make the study more analytic.

FINDINGS

1. The quantum of jewel loan received by the tribals in all the three hill villages is meagre when compared to crop loan and medium term loan because the tribals do not keep adequate quantities of jewels.
2. The LAMPS extend loan to the tribals not with a profit motive but only as a service. The loans repaid within the period do not incur any interest. However, the tribal members default and the overdue positions of the LAMPS have increased considerably during the study period.
3. The non-repayment of loans by the tribals and the mounting overdue positions have been the major difficulties encountered by the LAMPS in the study area. But the financial crunch experienced by the LAMPS have been reduced to some extent by the deposit mobilisation.
4. The LAMPS in the study area perform yeomen service by way of public distribution system and implementation of government sponsored programmes. The values of sales of household commodities and fertilizers by LAMPS have been found at Rs.3562872 and Rs.239726 in Thenparanadu Hills, Rs.2241088 and Rs.168493 in Vannadu and Rs.5793140 and Rs.217772 in Kombai respectively.
5. Agriculture is the main occupation of tribals and nearly 81% of respondents are cultivators and agricultural workers. They also involve in subsidiary occupations like hunting, fire wood collection, honey collection livestock maintenance, etc.
6. Paddy and tapioca are the two major crops cultivated by the sample households. Based on the data available on value of land, distribution of the yield of paddy or tapioca and distribution of the expenditure incurred in paddy or tapioca production, it was found that the profit of tapioca cultivation is more compared to the profit in paddy. However this analysis has been done without calculating the managerial cost of the farmer.
7. The sample households earn sizeable income by cultivating food grains like samai, cumbu, ragi etc, pulses, and herbal plants. They get income from minor forest produce and livestock also.
8. The inequality in income is much less than the inequality in land holdings in the three hill villages.
9. The sample households spend only on 24 consumption items in which the major expenditures are on clothing (29%) and food items (48%) which include cereals, pulses, edible oils, sugar, milk, milk products, meat, fish, egg, vegetables, fruits etc.
10. The sample household raise loans for cultivation, business or to meet daily requirements from LAMPS, moneylenders, relatives etc. Almost 77% of sample households borrow for one or more purposes.
11. The results of the analysis indicate that there is ample scope for increasing the numbers of both male and female field laboureres in the study area to boost further the production of paddy and tapioca. As there is no scope to increase the area of cultivation, more of male and female tribal labourers may be absorbed in agricultural occupation in order to boost the tribal economy in the study area.
12. The loans extended by LAMPS (X_3) to tribal households in all the three hill villages show a declining trend as the contribution of LAMPS is insignificant. The authorities must come forward to extent adequate credit for paddy and tapioca cultivation in the selected hill blocks ignoring the overdue position.

13. Tapioca is a commercial crop which is less labour – intensive than paddy. Tapioca cultivation brings more returns than that of paddy in the study blocks because the prevailing weather conditions are more suitable to tapioca cultivation than that of paddy. Also tapioca is the least affected by pests and diseases when compared to paddy leading to higher yield of tapioca. In view of these facts, it is found that more acres of land are brought under tapioca cultivation in all the three hill villages studied.

CONCLUSION

This study on the socio-economic life of the tribals in Pachamalai Hills in Tiruchirappalli District be useful to understand the standard of living, the customs and heritage, and the unique problems and issues faced by the tribals in this area. Some of the findings and the suggestions made in this study may be helpful to the policy framers and the authorities towards improving the tribal life and tribal economy at the national level.

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