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SCHEDULED TRIBES IN TAMIL NADU - AN ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT:

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in India. The concept of tribe has never been properly defined with any precision. The concept of tribe emerged only after colonialism took root in Asia, Australia and America. The term encompasses a wide variety peoples at various stages of development. The tribal population in India is distributed over 570 separate communities. Most tribal-inhabited areas are backward in economic development. Studies and researches on tribal people carry great significance for us as India has about



69 million tribal's spread across its plains and hills. The majority of the tribals in Tamil Nadu are landless. Over 78% of the tribal people are agricultural labourers. Fifty per cent of the Primitive tribes in Tamil Nadu do not own any land properly. Hence, this paper discusses the core aspects of the Socio-Economic Development of Primitive Tribes in Tamil Nadu. It is timely and socially relevant one.

KEYWORDS: Scheduled Tribes, Tribal Population, Socio-Economic Development, Primitive Tribes, Agricultural Labourers, Alienation of Tribal Lands, Crop Patterns, Agricultural Practices, Wage System and Non- Monetized Economy.

INTRODUCTION

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in India. The terms are recognized in the Constitution of India and the groups are designated in one or other of the categories. For much of the period of British rule in the

Indian subcontinent, they were known as the Depressed Classes. The concept of tribe has never been properly defined with any precision. The concept of tribe emerged only after colonialism took root in Asia, Australia and America. The term encompasses a wide variety peoples at various stages of development. The origin of the existing concept can be traced to colonialism. Many tribes were once independent communities with whom colonialists concluded treaties. India has the largest tribal population in the world. Yet, too do not have a universally acceptable definition for them. Small size, emphasis on kinship relations, life in hill areas

and forests, lack of a written language and native religion are the chief characteristics attributed to them. These peoples in general are historically evolved entities and are biologically self-perpetuating, marked by certain common cultural features and are subordinated in several ways to the dominant society and its institutions and values.

The tribal population in India is distributed over 570 separate communities. Most tribal-inhabited areas are backward in economic development. Most probably tribal economy in Tamil Nadu is purely based on Forest based Agro-economy.

However, their regions contain about 70% of India's mineral resources. The modern technology has enabled the state to exploit this wealth, thereby further paving way for the interference in the tribal way of life. In spite of several protective measures for the non-alienation of tribal land, the exploitation continues.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The literature on tribal cultures has always been a favorite subject for sociologists and anthropologists. Descriptions and understanding of tribes and their cultural institutions have been of immense help not only to learn about particular tribes but also to comprehend human culture in general. This is because tribal culture is considered to be indigenous and, perhaps, the prototype of the many evolved cultures.

Studies and researches on tribal people carry great significance for us as India has about 69 million tribal's spread across its plains and hills. The majority of the indigenous people are found in the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan. Some states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and the Union Territory of Lakshadweep are mostly inhabited by tribal's. The size of the tribes in India varies considerably.

In India, politics ultimately decides the tribal identity. A tribe is an administrative and political concept. The President of India has designated some communities as Scheduled Tribes in each state. To drive the point home, one may refer to the recent agitation of Gujjars in Rajasthan for including them in the Scheduled Tribe category in Rajasthan. It may be noted that they are already in that category in the state of Himachal Pradesh. After accepting non-tribe status all these years, they now want a new designation by resorting to even violence.

The most recent agitation by the tea-garden laborers in Assam for Scheduled Tribe status is another glaring example. Ironically, they are called Adivasis in Assam without enjoying the designation of Scheduled Tribe, or even that of backward community. The most widely discussed theme is tribal economy, particularly related to land-alienation. The majority of the tribals in Tamil Nadu are landless. Over 80 percent of the tribal people are agricultural labourers. Fifty per cent of the Primitive tribes in Tamil Nadu do not own any land properly.

Those tribals who live below poverty line are 45.28 per cent, and in Nilgiris, they constitute 63 per cent. There are unresolved legal issues in giving away forest land. The Nilgiris tribals are now carrying out agitations and protest movements for restoration of land under various organizations, such as Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association, Nilgiris Wynaad Tribes Welfare Society, Kothagiri Women's Welfare Society, and Indian National Farmers Movement. The history of displacement of the tribals from their land in Nilgiris and how it has led to identity crisis among the tribals.

The alienation of the tribal lands that started after the arrival of the British in the region became widespread as a result of migrants. This period saw a revolution in the crop patterns and agricultural practices. New cash crops and the introduction of the wage system deeply affected the tribal population. Their self-reliant and non-monetized economy was transformed into a dependent and monetized economy.

The tribal way of cultivation has been ruined because of the Malayalee and Tamil migrants. Irular, Paniyans, Kattunaickens, Kotas, Todas, Mudugar and Kurumbar are the tribes found in the study area. The land-based resources of the indigenous people dried up, and many tribals were reduced to daily wage earners. The conflict of interests that has arisen between the traditional and modern healthcare practices in the community. There is an elaborate description of the reproductive health care practices of the community. An integration of local and global systems of medicine as they are not isolated practices but interacting ones. The history of displacement of the tribals from their land in Nilgiris and how it has led to identity crisis among the tribals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tribal studies have been traditionally founded by anthropologists over the last decades. The purpose of the analysis were different in those times than what they are envisaged now. From the

methodological point of view, it has been easier to study simpler tribal cultures as compared to the urban complex cultures.

The realities of the tribals provide constraints as well as possibilities for the improvement of the status of them. It has been noted that the tribals are rural, illiterate, unhealthy and poor, attached to land and forest, engaged in agriculture and forest-related occupation and are all different levels of development. Over all, tribal economy is purely based on forest based agro- economy.

Aphale and Bairagi (1984) reviewed that there is high percentage of disparity among the tribals and the general population due to their backwardness, ignorance and poverty.

Beteille (1992) stated that when anthropologists speak of tribes, they mean communities of people who have remained outside of the state and civilization.

Srivastava (2006) mentioned that the tribal societies were pre-literate scantily dressed, relatively off from other societies of the wider world, had few personal effects, lived in similar types of habitations and the values of accumulation, investment, gain, profit and surplus were largely alien to them.

A.K. Auja and A.K. Ojha (2009) pointed out the tribal development over the years has been a major concern of the Government, voluntary organisations, social reformers, social scientists etc.

Yoganandham. G. (2014) Elucidated that Kota Primitive tribal's economy is predominantly forest based agricultural one. They are engaged in agriculture and allied activities for their sustenance.

Yoganandham, G. (2015) mentioned that commercial vending of liquor in the Paniyan Tribal areas has caused serious damage to their economy resulting in impoverishment of the Paniyan Tribal families. Brewing of indigenous drinks for self consumption is a traditionally permissible activity among the Paniyan Tribals in Nigiris.

Swati Girase (2016) elucidated that the tribal communities are scattered all the states of India. All tribals are having same characteristics and problems. They have their own culture and lifestyle.

Yoganandham, G. (2016) stated that the levels of living of the Primitive Paniyan Tribal households largely depend upon its income and size of the family. Thus most probably there is a direct relationship between the size of family and the level of income.

Ayesha Marfatia (2018) discussed that, it is important to look at tribal health problems as separate and distinct, and clubbing them together with the issues faced in general by rural populations negates the vastly different context within which tribal communities exist.

Bahuguna, V.K. (2019) stated that, since independence several Governments have launched numerous programmes, which have seen minimal success in terms of enhancing the socio-economic condition of the tribal population. Many NGOs as well as social workers have been raising the issue of tribal land with the forest department. Tribal livelihood rights, after all, are intricately linked with the management of forest ecosystems.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the nature and pattern of tribal development in theoretical perspectives.
- To identify the problems and prospects of Primitive Scheduled Tribes in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study is descriptive and diagnostic study based on secondary data which is sourced from various books related to tribal development, journals, scholarly articles, government publications, reference papers in print and on from websites related to the theme of this research paper.

DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS

According to the census reports, 2011 the population of India is 1,210,854,977 with 623,724,248 males and 586,469,174 females. The total literacy rate in the country at present is 74.04%. The density of population is 382 persons/sq.km. A substantial list of Scheduled Tribes in India is recognized as tribal under the Constitution of India.

As per details from Census 2011, Tamil Nadu has population of 7.21 Crores, an increase from figure of 6.24 Crores in 2001 census. Total population of Tamil Nadu as per 2011 census is 72,147,030 of which male and female are 36,137,975 and 36,009,055 respectively. Nilgiris District in Tamil Nadu is one among the highest tribal populated district. According to the 2011 census, the Nilgiris district had a population of 735,394 with a sex-ratio of 1,042 females for every 1,000 males, much above the national average of 929 females. A total of 66,799 people were under the age of six, 33,648 males and 33,151 females.

Thirty six (36) STs have been notified in Tamil Nadu by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1976. Of the STs, six have been notified with area restriction. These are Malayali, Kurumbas, Kanikaran, Kammara, Kota and Toda. Malayali have been notified in Dharmapuri, Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, Pudukkottai, Salem, Namakkal, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Tiruchirappalli, Karur and Perambalur districts, Kurumbas in Nilgiri district, Kanikaran in Kanniyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district. Kammara, Kota and Toda have been notified throughout the state except Kanniyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district.

The growth rate of ST population in the decade 2001-2011 at 14.8% is higher than the overall growth rate of 12.3% of the state. As per the 2011 Census, among the numerically large STs, Kurumans have reported the highest growth rate of 42.4%, followed by Malayali (26.5 per cent), Irular (13.8%) and Kattunayakan (6.3%).

THE SIX PRIMITIVE TRIBES OF TAMIL NADU

According to the Tamil Nadu forest department website, 6 tribal communities, Toda, Kota, Kurumbas, Irular, Paniyan and Kattunayakan, have been identified as Primitive Tribal communities. Interestingly all the six tribes are natives to the Nilgiris. Here we present some information on those tribal communities.

1. KATTUNAYAKAN: The members of this community are short, have black skin, and have protruding foreheads. Hunting and collecting forest produce are the two main means of living for the tribe.

2. PANIYA: The Paniya have historically worked as agricultural labourers. The Paniyas have only a crude idea of religion. Their major deity, is called 'Kali' and they also worship banyan tree.

3. IRULA: Irulas are engaged in collection of minor forest products. Some of them are also engaged in looking after the herds of cattle belonging to others. They speak Irula, which belongs to the Dravidian family.

4. KURUMBA: The traditional occupation of the Kurumbas is food gathering, like collection of honey and forests produce. Kurumbas are known to possess keen eyesight, gained possibly from constant watching of the honey bee to the hives.

5. KOTA: Kotas claim to be blacksmiths by profession and making agriculture equipment and weapons for war. Kotas have their own unique language that belongs to the Dravidian language family.

6. TODA: The Todas are an exotic race and are generally not dark; they are fair-skinned, ruddy with constant exposure to sunny to rainy weather. The eyes for most are light coloured varying from brown to grey.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explain the concept, evolution and status of primitive tribes.
- To understand and identify the socio-economic conditions of the selected primitive tribes in Adilabad district.
- To examine and find out the socio- economic development factors responsible for primitiveness in selected study areas.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The present study has conducted in the two Mandals i.e. Bela and Utnoor in Adilabad District. The researcher has selected 200 sample respondents, 100 from each mandal on the basis of convenient sampling. A structured schedule was administered for collection of data from these respondents. A

pre-tested interview schedule was also administered for the purpose of collecting the data. For the usage in the appropriate places, secondary data are also collected from journals, books, reports and various documents and related publications.

SEX RATIO

The overall sex ratio of the ST population in Tamil Nadu is 980 females per 1000 males, which has recorded improvement from 960 in 1991 Census. Among the district, Thanjavur has recorded the highest sex ratio of the ST population (1054) and Perambalur the lowest (936). The Statement below shows sex ratio and child sex ratio (0-6) of the ST population at the national, state and numerically the largest five STs in 2011 Census.

Table 1: Details of Sex Ratio in India and Tamil Nadu, 2011

S.No.	Age Groups	All STs (in India)	All STs (in Tamil Nadu)
1.	All Ages	978	980
2.	0-6 years	973	945

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Census Report, 2011 & Government of India, New Delhi.

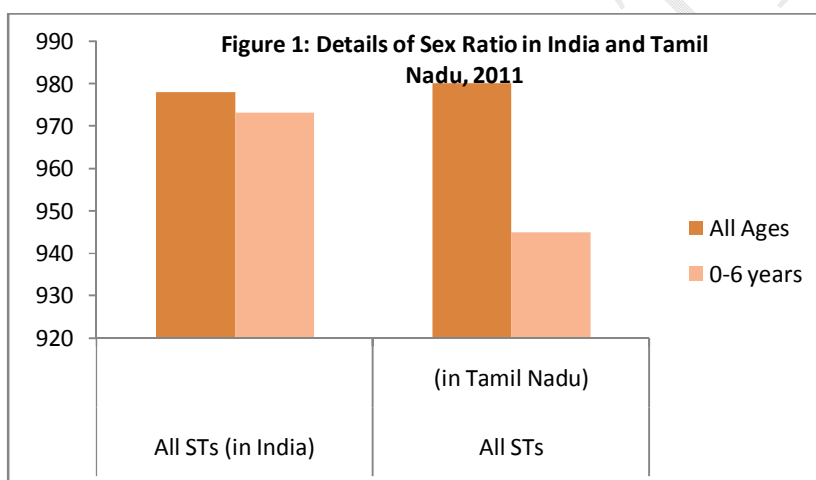
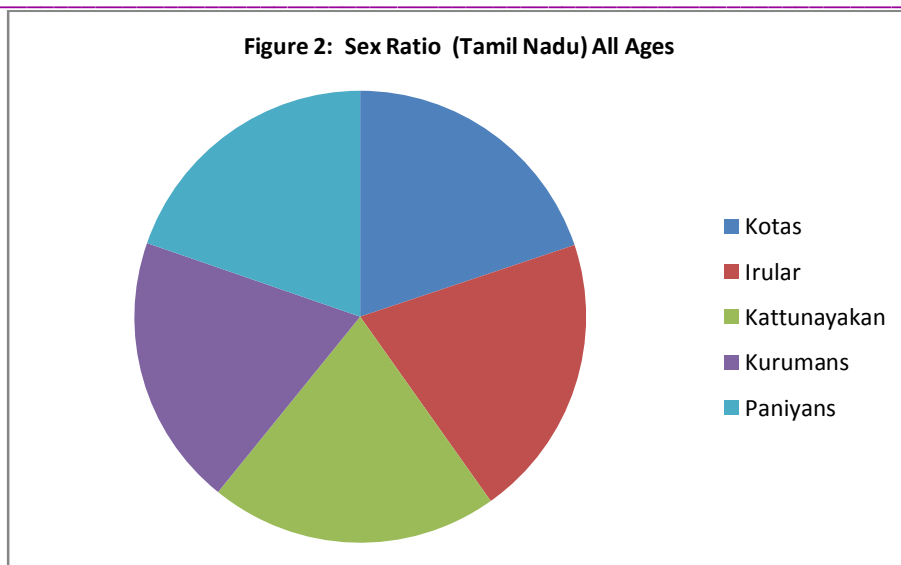


Table 2: Details of Sex Ratio in Major Tribes of Tamil Nadu, 2011

S.No.	Particulars	Sex Ratio (Tamil Nadu)	
		All Ages	0-6 Years
1.	Kotas	972	948
2.	Irular	996	984
3.	Kattunayakan	1012	923
4.	Kurumans	953	872
5.	Paniyans	964	912

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Census Report, 2011 & Government of India, New Delhi.



As may be seen from the Statement, the overall sex ratio of ST population in Tamil Nadu is almost equal to the sex ratio of ST population of the country.

LITERACY STATUS

Literacy and level of education are two basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a society as literacy results in more awareness besides contributing to the overall improvement of health, hygiene and other social conditions. According to 2011 Census, percentage of ST literate (those who can read and write with understanding) persons aged 7 years and above is 41.5% in the state, which is lower than 73.5% reported for the state as a whole. The literacy rate (41.5%) has however increased from 27.9% recorded in 2011 Census.

Table 3: Literacy Status of Major Tribes in Tamil Nadu, 2011

S.No.	Particulars	Name of STs					
		All STs	Kotas	Irular	Kattunayakan	Kurumans	Paniyans
1.	Literate without educational level	10.6	11.0	12.5	10.6	6.1	4.2
2.	Below primary	26.3	24.6	31.4	23.9	19.3	15.2
3.	Primary	33.3	30.4	33.5	31.0	31.7	24.9
4.	Middle	14.7	13.9	13.6	16.5	17.7	16.6
5.	Matric/Secondary /Higher Secondary Intermediate etc.	12.8	9.8	8.1	14.7	20.1	25.7
6.	Technical & Non-technical diplomas	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.6	1.5	2.4
7.	Graduates & above	1.8	1.1	0.5	2.6	3.6	9.2

Out of the total literates, 10.6% are either literates without any educational level or have attained below Primary level. The literates, who have attained education up to Primary and Middle levels, constitute 33.3% and 14.7% respectively. 12.8% are having educational level up to Matric/Higher Secondary levels, implying that every 8th ST literate is a Matriculate. Literates with educational level of Graduation and above are 1.8%. It can be inferred that, it also emerges that the drop out starts after the primary level and it increases with each subsequent level of education. Population in

the age group 5-14 years are the potential students. 61.7% of the ST population in this age group is attending various educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

By far the most numerous studies are summary accounts of individual tribes dealing with all the aspects of their social organization. The main reason for this may be that most tribes are small in population lending little opportunity for thematic accounts. However, some tribes have received far more anthropological focus than the others.

The literature review calls for certain overall comments. There is no doubt that a large number of studies exist about four lakhs tribal population distributed over 36 scheduled tribes. The tribal people constitute only 0.8% of the total population of India and 1.10% in Tamil Nadu. Unlike in the North-East India where the foreign missionaries and administrators started tribal studies, in Tamil Nadu, it is the regional scholars who contributed to the development of researches on the tribal population.

Tribal communities are scattered all the states of India. All tribals are having same characteristics and problems. They have their own culture and lifestyle. After independence some changes and development have been taking place but still expected success could not cover by them. Through this article special focus given on the various problems and the role of government for maintain the policy of development in current scenario. The serious and important problems have been discussed in this article and suggestions with eradication plan mention for fix the direction of tribal development. The discussion held up about constitutional provisions for tribal communities along with the various schemes and plans started by government for the tribal's. The main problem i.e. naxalism has been illustrate in detail with causes, effects and solutions. In current scenario, how the tribal's exists them self and resist for survival. While implementing the government plans, its side effects also mention in this article. Indian bur orates; loopholes in administrative process are illustrated. The role of current process like industrialization, urbanization, modernization and globalization also explain with the current status of tribal community. The role of tribal commission, implementation of constitutional articles, political reservation and place, provision of special fund in the budget etc are the essential factors are related to the tribal development and empowerment. In the last part of article common illustration with present facts narrated and what actually everyone has to do for the overall development of tribal's mentioned in detail.

SUGGESTIONS

- The policy measures of 'Primitive Tribal peoples' social and economic development must necessarily start from 'Primitive Tribal peoples' own description and pointer of poverty and well-being.
- Sponsorship of micro credit facilities through proper and constructive terms with the focus on poverty alleviation, Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Debt relief legislation and Legal aid,
- The promotion of tribal education needs a fresh approaches and revised strategies in new direction.
- The planners and policy makers should focus on the enhancement of quantity as well as quality aspects for tribal education.
- Raising their productivity in agricultural and allied activities and stipulation of employment in all period.
- Appropriate legal and administrative support will prove anti-exploitative measures for the tribes.

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