

EMPOWERMENT AND CHALLENGES OF TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

Karnataka is a state of diverse culture, languages, faith and the socio-economic scenario within the state, in many ways, mirrors the scenario prevalent in the country itself. Tribal population constitutes around 8.6 percent of the total population of India. These communities are varied from their belief, customs, traditional and religious practices. The south Indian State of Karnataka, once part of several kingdoms and princely states of repute in the Deccan peninsula, is rich in its historic, cultural and anthropological heritage. The State is the home to 42,48,987 tribal people, of whom 50,870 belong to the primitive group. Although these people represent only 6.95 per cent of the population of the State, there are as many as 50 different tribes notified by the Government of India, living in Karnataka, of which 14 tribes including two primitive ones, are primarily natives of this State. Extreme poverty and neglect over generations have left them in poor state of health and nutrition is their major problem. Unfortunately, despite efforts from the Government and non-Governmental organizations alike, literature that is available to assess the state of health of these tribes of the region remains scanty. Tribal population is the aboriginal inhabitants of India who have been living a life based on the natural environment and have cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment. The Concerted efforts for the development of these groups by the Central and State Governments have had only marginal impacts on their socio-economic conditions in spite of the various welfare measures and constitutional protection. The main objective of this research is to find out the socio-economic status of tribes and their problems in Karnataka.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, Problems, Tribes, Karnataka.

INTRODUCTION

The above all are documented in their oral epics and songs. Tribal communities too have their legends about birth and death meaning of the universe. Tribal people believe that "The ultimate purpose of life is the creation of a meaningful order through imitation of the celestial model transmitted by myths and celebrated in rituals. (Madhu-2002). In India, the tribal development planning is being implemented since the implementation of five-year plans by Government of India. But, Indian tribes are facing some unsolved problems from time immemorial. The tribes of India are in a way separated from the rest of population. Some of them are living in the unapproachable geographical areas such as deep valleys, dense forests, hills, mountains, etc. It is difficult for them to establish relations with others, and hence, socially they are far away from the civilised world. In most of the nation states of the third world and even in many developed countries the resource base for agricultural and industrial development are located mainly in forest areas which are mostly inhabited by the tribals. This kind of physical as well as social isolation has contributed to other problems.

According to the census reports, the tribal population of Karnataka increased to 34.64 lakh in 2001 from 19.16 lakh in 1991. The decadal growth rate during this period is a high 80.8 per cent, caused not by a spurt in fertility rates but by the addition of several new tribes to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category. The decadal growth rate is higher for females (81.9 per cent) than for males (79.8 per cent). The highest decadal growth rate occurred in Mysore district (around 328.0 per cent), Bagalkot (261.6

per cent), Dharwad (201.1 per cent) and Belgaum (193.0 per cent). The decadal growth rate is negative in Dakshina Kannada (-2.9 per cent). Raichur (18.1 per cent) has the highest percentage of ST population followed by Bellary (18.0 per cent), while Chitradurga (17.5 percent), which had the highest percentage of ST population in 1991 came down to third place in 2001 on account of its bifurcation. The reverse is true of Raichur. Bellary has the highest population of Scheduled Tribes as a percentage of the ST population in the state.

A cursory glance at these figures shows that the tribal population is still not defined properly in Karnataka. Certain tribes like the Kudubis are still to be recognized as the scheduled tribes, Therefore any increase in the tribal population at large doesn't necessarily mean that they have access to welfare programmes by the State, This may serve as an example to show the difficulties in indexing and empirically stating and establishing the nature of problems of the tribes.

Tribal population mainly contributes a major hajre of wide spread poverty in the nation. The level of the socio-economic development varies considerably between tribal and non-tribal population between one tribal and another tribe and even among different sub group of tribal groups, these disparities and diversities make tribal development and micro level planning of tribal and the gross root level imperative more than ninety per cent of the STs population depends upon agriculture and allied activities in India.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

Tribal community viz., scheduled tribe continue to be vulnerable even today, not because of they are poor arrest less and illiterate compared to the general population, but after their distinct vulnerability arrives from their inability to regulate and cope with the conveyance of their integration with the mainstream economy, society, culture and political systems, from all of which they were historically protected by their relative isolation. The requirement of planned development brought with them the mines, industries and roads, all located in tribal lands, with these came the concomitant process of displacement followed by a complete between development and protection of tribal rights and interest, tribal institutions and practices were forced into money co-existence, which paved the way to market of format state. Institutions, also the tribal found themselves act a great disadvantage in the face of an influx of battles equipped outside into tribal area, the repercussions for the already fragile socio-economic sustenance base of the tribal were devastating ranging from the loss of livelihoods and land alienation on a vast scale of hereditary bondage.

A significant fact that has emerged from the lack of consensus regarding the perception of the problems and the solutions thereof and the judgment on the outcome of the developmental efforts made so far. It seems that the tribals like to be upwardly mobile. This being so, the crucial questions would be whether the development agencies have properly played the facilitating role expected of them. It is helped that such a study would be helpful to planners, policy makers, administrators, N.G.O's, self-help groups, development agencies and social organizations in implementing the welfare and developmental programmes for tribal upliftment in a useful way.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To elucidate the various economic development problems of tribes in Karnataka.
2. To assess the economic development programmes of state government and NGOs in economic development of tribes.
3. To suggest the future plans and programmes to improve their present condition.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is mainly focused on the socio-economic status of tribes and their problems in Karnataka. The material of this study was collected through review of literature and secondary data and other reports of State government and Government of India.

PROBLEMS OF TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

Schemes are framed and visions are stated for the development of tribes. Several schemes of tribal development are still active through several five year plans in India. Attempts have been made to help the scheduled tribes to develop socially, educationally, economically, politically and culturally. For the development of tribes, various models, approaches and theories of development have been propounded in different five-year plan periods. The problem areas for where the State could intervene are:

1. Educational Problems
2. Economic Problems
 - a. Problems of land ownership
 - b. Unprofitable cultivation
3. Social and Cultural problems
4. Atrocities against Tribal People
5. Indifferent Political Attitude
6. Problems of non-scheduled tribes
7. Development induced displacement

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS OF TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

Since illiteracy and poverty are factors that play off one another to create a cycle of deprivation, ensuring greater cohesion at the gram Panchayat level between anti-poverty programmes and school enrolment/retention drives would provide the poor with viable ways to access education. Following are some of the suggestions to improve the conditions of the Tribals in the state.

1. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.
2. The state should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.
3. There should be a comprehensive policy on tribal development, which derives inputs from people at the grass root level to ensure sustainable development that is ecologically sound, people oriented, decentralized and culturally acceptable.
4. A rapid survey must be conducted on the health status of the tribals and prepare region-specific and tribe-specific health plans.
5. Tribal girls should be selected for training as ANMs and post them to sub-centers located in predominantly tribal areas. They could also be trained in traditional medicine and health practices, thus encouraging and integrating traditional healing systems into modern medicine.

6. 100 per cent antenatal care coverage and immunization of women and children must be assured. Provide secondary and tertiary care, transport facilities for emergency services and obstetric care.
7. Greater access to education through convergence of the services of several departments should be ensured for the tribals. Education, Rural Development and system to monitor child labour, track dropouts and provide local employment to their parents.
8. Tribal culture, traditional knowledge systems, tribal history and vocational skills training must be included in the school curriculum.
9. We must involve tribals in biodiversity conservation; encourage them to grow fruit trees on degraded forest-lands; allow sustainable harvesting of the non-forest produce for their livelihood, without endangering the biodiversity of the forest.
10. Government should provide them more budgetary support to their land purchase scheme.
11. Organic farming and conservation of traditional seed must be supported. Tribes at village level to should be empowered to participate effectively in Gram Sabhas, by promoting community based organisations.

In spite of the above changes the state should also develop a comprehensive policy on tribal development, which derives inputs from people at the grass root level to ensure sustainable development that is ecologically sound, people oriented, decentralized and culturally acceptable. Include tribal culture, traditional knowledge systems, tribal history and Vocational skill training in the school curriculum.

CONCLUSION

In order to improve the structure and organization of cooperatives in the tribal areas on the one side and to examine the problem of exploitation of tribals on the other side, a committee on cooperative structure in tribal areas recommended the organization of integrated credit cum marketing cooperative societies termed LAMP cooperative societies at the primary level to meet multifarious requirements of tribals. By way of giving a package of services, these societies ensure a faster growth rate of tribal economy in our country. With a view to analyzing the performance of cooperatives particularly LAMP societies in tribal areas, many research studies have been conducted by individual researchers, state governments, reserve bank of India and other research organizations.

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