

An Analytical Study on Rural Development Prospects through Reservation Schemes with Special Reference to Tribal Tea Labourers of the Nilgiris District

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Abstract:- Tribal communities are considered to be one of the most vulnerable classes in the global scenario. Despite of the geographical locations, they have common issues that affect their socio economic status in the society. Political and cultural constraints are addressed as the bigger setbacks such vulnerable groups. The study focuses on the awareness and perception of the tribal tea labourers of the Nilgiris district, Tamilnadu. The data gathered through interviews and questionnaires has been analyzed to obtain the results that shows the awareness level of the tribal tea labourers towards the government beneficial schemes.

Keywords:- Tribal Communities, Tea Labourers, Government Beneficial Schemes, Tribal Labourers.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term Scheduled tribes came into existence only after the emergence of the constitution of India on 26 January 1950. Some characteristics like primitive traits, Distinctive culture and fear in mingling with public, economic and social backwardness are listed out by the Lokur committee in order to categorise tribes from other communities. According to Article 342 & 366(25) in Indian constitution act, scheduled tribes are people those who are declared by the president of India through a public notification. There are around 75 tribal groups which have been listed as Primitive tribal groups (PTG) which are now called as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). These primitive tribal groups are not having much knowledge in technologies in pre-agricultural level. Their population rate is declining and their literacy rate is extremely low. They don't have a sudden rise on decline in their status and also in their population.

In Tamilnadu, Kurumbas, Irulas, Kattunayakans, Kotas, Paniyas and Todas are declared as Primitive Tribal Groups. In which Kotas, Todas and Paniyas are found only in the District of Nilgiris, Whereas Kurumbas, Irulas and Kattunayakans are found in other districts of Tamilnadu including Nilgiris.

The traditional tribes of the Nilgiris like Kurumbas, Irulas, Todas, Kattunaickens, Kotas and Paniyas were involved in the tea estates as labourers on different occasion and for different reasons. The Todas and Kotas who were found at the high altitudes of the Nilgiris Mountain were not much involved in tea cultivation or works associated to such plantations. Their main occupations are agriculture, animal husbandry, shawl making and tools making. The Kurumbas and Irulas are largely involved in tea estates as labourers with minimum wages and they were enrolled as contract labourers or minimum wages labourers by the contractors or agents. They reside in the middle range of the hills and their settlements were nearer to the tea estates. The Irulas were forced to be employed as tea labourers as the British government banned the practice of shifting cultivation in the Nilgiris District. Kattunaickens and Paniyans reside at the foot hills and Plateau of the Nilgiris in which the Paniyans were involved in tea estates and other agricultural farms as bonded labours

➤ Objectives of the Study

- To identify the tribal labourers' level of awareness on government schemes and laws.
- To ascertain the tribal labourers' perception towards the beneficial schemes

➤ Statement of the Problem

The awareness level among the tribes seems to be very poor and hence they are not able to claim their rights from the government as well as their employers. This results in a poor living condition, lack of education, accommodation and medical facilities. Moreover, due to the lack of awareness, they are denied basic rights which have to be provided by the employer.

This study has been undertaken in order the bring out the socio-economic conditions of the Tea labours of tribal community who are not aware about the government benefits provided for their betterment in education, employment & other sectors.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SundaraRao and SankaraReddiMajji [1] differentiate the tribal development activities carried out during pre-independence and post-independence periods in their work “Tribal Development, issues and prospects”. They explain the step by step procedures which have been carried at different time periods for the development of tribes at different parts of the nation. In spite of continuous processes and development plans, still the tribal community were not able to be advanced in social and economic aspects. JagabandhuSamal [2] in the article “Rethinking Sustainable Tribal Development in a Cultural Perspective” describes the two factors which are responsible for the transformation of the tribes. Traditional factors and modern factors are the two factors which creates way for the positive changes in the socio economic status of the tribes. Nowadays tribes have started creating a bonding way of life style with their non-tribal neighbors both in social and economic aspects. Baiju [3] in their article entitled “Tribal development under decentralized governance in Kerala: Issues and challenges” examines the roles of government in implementing the development and welfare schemes. He analyses the issues related to poverty, health care, land alienation and other relevant problems faced by the tribes. He suggested that the government has to take speedy measures and actions for implementing the welfare schemes because denying or slowness in the progress will pave way for more backwardness than the current conditions of the tribes.

III. AWARENESS ABOUT GOVERNMENT RESERVATIONS AND OTHER BENEFICIAL SCHEMES

The Nilgiris district is the only district which constitutes all the six primitive tribes or particularly vulnerable tribal group in Tamilnadu state. Hence the district management concentrates well regarding tribal development schemes. But the tribes are not aware about the beneficial schemes and acts enacted by the central and state governments. The awareness level about the reservations in the government jobs, higher education and other sector are very low among the tribal tea labourers in the district. Many tribal students, after completing the high school education go to jobs without having proper knowledge about the reservations and benefits provided by the government for their higher education. Such students could not continue their higher education even though they have opportunities. Sometimes due to the compulsion of their parents they are employed in the tea estates where their parents work.

Similarly, many government exams were not appeared by the tribal community people in the Nilgiris district. Many government posts were filled by scheduled castes in the district and scheduled tribes were very less in number. This scenario shows that the tribes are not much aware about the government schemes. Self-help groups (SHG) and Non-Government Organisations (NGO) also try to bring awareness about education and the benefits and reservations in education and government sectors. But the tribal tea labourers have not seen the beneficiaries in a large number.

Hence they are not much interested in utilising the benefits from the government. Moreover, they think that it is not possible for them because they have not seen any beneficiaries in their previous generations. Teachers, social activists, Government officials and the NGOs have a greater responsibility in creating awareness about such benefits and the government has to make the procedure easier for the tribes to enjoy the actual benefits of the government schemes.

IV. SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES FOR THE TRIBES

The state government has implemented the socio economic development schemes for the tribes under TAHDCO (Tamilnadu AdiDravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited) which has been incorporated by the government of Tamilnadu under companies’ act 1956, in the year 1974. The development schemes and the eligibility have been listed below.

➤ Land Purchase Scheme

This scheme initiates the tribal women for purchasing land under TAHDCO which covers a maximum limit of 7.50 Lakhs with 50 per cent subsidy. The age limit between 18 to 55 is eligible for being a beneficiary under this scheme.

➤ Land Development Scheme

The tribes who own agricultural land are eligible for applying a maximum loan amount of Rs 3.75 lakhs with 50 per cent subsidy for irrigation and other agricultural development purposes. This scheme would help the tribal tea labourers who wish to exit the tea estate.

➤ Entrepreneur Development Scheme

Many tribal tea labourers who wish to quit their job from the tea estates prefer to start up a new income generating business. Such people can apply for a maximum loan amount of Rs 3.75 lakhs with 50 per cent subsidy. The age limits are similar for all the plans which have been discussed above.

➤ Self-Employment Programme for Tribal Youth

The tribal tea labourers around the age limit of 18 to 35 can utilise a scheme named Self-employment Programme for Tribal Youth which provides a maximum loan amount of Rs 4 Lakhs for purchasing light motor vehicles like Jeeps and small goods carriers which would help them in self-employment.

➤ Infra-Structure Development Schemes for the Tribes

• Free House Patta (Legal Land Document) for Houseless Tribes

House sites are provided at free of cost for the tribal families who never own a house. This scheme will provide patta for the house sites of 3 cent which has been allotted for the tribes under the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Land for Harijan Welfare Schemes Act 1978

- *Drinking Water Facility for the Tribal Habitations*

In order to construct wells or bore wells, pipelines and overhead tanks in the tribal settlements where there is no proper drinking water facility, the government sanctions Rs 75,000 for such facilities under the invigilation of the district tribal welfare officer.

- *Community Halls*

Community halls are constructed in the tribal villages for helping the tribal community people to conduct village meetings, marriages and other social events.

- *Burial Grounds and Pathways*

Funds are allocated for the tribal settlements and villages without burial grounds and proper pathways. Such constructions are carried out under the supervision of the district tribal welfare officer and the project officer of the concerned panchayat and block development officer.

- *Financial Support for Funerals*

The government also provides financial assistance to the tribal families with less than Rs 40,000 as annual income with Rs 2,500 as meet the expenditures on funerals.

- *Tribal Welfare Schemes*

Tribal welfare schemes are initiated by the tribal welfare department which has been functioning as a separate directorate since 1st April 2000. The schemes concentrate on education, literacy rate, migration, health and sanitation, infrastructure development, developing poor living condition and rehabilitation of tribal labourers who are working for cheap wages. The state government and central government are sanctioning grant in aid for the welfare of particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) every year, apart from the following schemes are provided by various departments for the development of tribal community. The tribal tea labourers who wish to quit of from the estates have various opportunities to be an entrepreneur and as an income generator.

- *Horticulture Development*

Horticulture is the method of growing and conserving plants but not for large scale crops. Horticulture department provides saplings, fertilizers and seeds at free of cost for the tribal who have a minimum of one acre land on their own. The department also provides technological support and assistance to the tribes who practice horticulture effectively. The tribal labourers who own at least one acre of land can contact the district horticulture officials for being a beneficiary under this scheme.

- *Scheme for Sericulture Development*

Sericulture is the process of cultivating silkworm through which silk can be produced. Mulberry plantation is mandatory for this process because the silk worms are being fed with mulberry leaves. Subsidy has been provided for the tribes who own at least half acre of land for mulberry plantation and silk worm rearing.

- *Animal Husbandry*

Animal husbandry is also considered to be a branch of agriculture in which the domestic animals which have economic importance are grown for milk, meat, eggs and other purposes. The tribes can afford the facility of receiving milk yielding animals (Milch animals) at free of cost and other veterinary supports from the animal husbandry department and livestock inspectors.

- *Supply of Beehives*

Beehives are the artificial nests for bees in which the bees raise the young ones. Honey can be collected from this artificial man made hives. Such beehives are issued at free of cost by the Tamilnadu Khadi and village industries board.

V. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION CANDIDATES

The schedules tribe youth who have passed the Tamilnadu Public service commission examination are financially assisted with Rs 50,000 for main examination preparations. If the candidate has applied for main examination and if he is not an employee of any state or central government sector then he is eligible for this benefit.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Data

The required primary data collected through questionnaire.

B. Sampling and Sample Size

Data has been gathered through interview method and questionnaires from 390 respondents from the tribal community.

C. Tools used

The collected data have been analyzed by using Friedman Rank test and Chi-Square Test.

VII. FINDINGS

Table 1 Awareness on Government Schemes and Basic Rights – Friedman Rank Test

Particulars	HA	A	NA	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Reservation schemes for tribes by state & central governments	24 (6.20)	114 (29.20)	252 (64.60)	390 (100.0)	5.07	3
Medical assistance by employer as per labour law	2 (0.50)	99 (25.40)	289 (74.10)	390 (100.0)	4.62	5
Provident fund scheme	5 (1.30)	48 (12.30)	337 (86.40)	390 (100.0)	4.11	6
Dearness allowance & benevolent benefits	0 (0.00)	36 (9.20)	354 (90.80)	390 (100.0)	3.92	8
Reservation for education for the children	75 (19.20)	210 (53.80)	105 (26.90)	390 (100.0)	6.94	2
About Tamilnadu Plantation labour rule 1955	0 (0.00)	33 (8.50)	357 (91.50)	390 (100.0)	3.85	9
Pension schemes	6 (1.50)	50 (12.80)	334 (85.60)	390 (100.0)	4.05	7
Trade unions & its activities	40 (10.30)	81 (20.80)	269 (69.00)	390 (100.0)	4.97	4
Tribal welfare department	120 (30.80)	191 (49.00)	79 (20.30)	390 (100.0)	7.47	1

From the Friedman Rank Test, it is inferred that majority of the employees are aware on promotion of Tribal Welfare Department by the Government for the upliftment of tribal people followed by reservation for education for the children, reservation schemes for tribes by state & central governments and the like.

TABLE 2 Awareness and Level of Perception

Level of awareness	Level of Perception			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Low	13 (18.3)	55 (77.5)	3 (4.2)	71 (100.0)
Moderate	37 (14.0)	186 (70.2)	42 (15.8)	265 (100.0)
High	3 (5.6)	37 (68.5)	14 (25.9)	54 (100.0)
Total	53	278	59	390
Df:4	Chi-square : 14.071		P Value: .007	Significant

It is inferred that the tribal tea labourers who have low level of awareness have low level of perception towards the benefits and schemes offered by the government and the tribal tea labourers who have high level of awareness have high level of perception.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

The study's findings have led to the following recommendations.

- The tribal labourers must be cognizant towards the opportunities and the benefits provided by the government for the betterment of tribal community
- The tribal tea labourers have to be aware about their basic rights which must not be prohibited by the employers.
- They must be ready to send their children to school in spite of financial crisis or social discrimination.
- The Non-government organisations have the greater responsibility to provide proper awareness to the tribal community on education, health and sanitation,

employment opportunities, reservations by the government etc.

- The Non-government organisations can instruct the government schemes which would favour the tribal community
- The government has to confirm whether the beneficial schemes for the tribes are communicated properly to the responsible official and departments.
- Awareness towards education is the best way to solve maximum problem of the tribal community. Hence the government must be more conscious in providing education for all the citizen in the tribal community.
- Hospitals, transportation and infrastructure development has to be sanctioned and implemented without delay and political and interruption for the betterment of tribal development.

IX. CONCLUSION

The tea labourers in the tribal community are very limited in numbers at the Nilgiris district in the pre-independent India. But due to poverty, land alienation and state of oblivious, many tribes are engaged in tea estates as cheap labourers. Their ignorance at all aspects is utilized by the contractors, agents and the employers who are associated with the tea estates. Our constitution has provided equal rights for all the citizen of this nation. Though many of the individual in the tribal community have not realized that they have all the privileges to claim their rights, it is the duty of every citizen to share the rights and benefits with all and enlighten them towards development. They are not just indigenous or vulnerable groups in the society but the resources who laid the foundation for the current development of our nation. Hence it is the responsibility of the government to concentrate on the development of the tribes regarding education, health, employment and modernization.

X. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study can be extended or can be taken as reference for future studies in the following platforms.

- Tribal anthropology
- Socio economic conditions of the tribes
- History of Tea plantation in India
- Poor management systems in Indian plantation sectors
- Labour welfare in Tea plantations
- Tribal welfare and development

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