

Socio-Economic Condition Of Sitheri Hill Malai-Aalees Tribal -A Study

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Abstract

Earlier , tribals were called primitive groups or traditional people. But , on the contemporary period they are named as Vulnerable groups. Because they are faced several difficulties on Modernization or globalization. According to the census India consisted 17.89% of tribal population , TamilNadu has 1% of them. Perhaps Tamil Nadu possessed 36 tribal communities, 6 were the primitive tribals. Tribals mainly inhabited on the hill areas , very few on the plain areas. On the whole, Dharmapuri district hill named sithericonsisted Malai-Aalees was the major tribes in a Tamil Nadu. Besides, their social and economic condition is very poor. With reflection, both Central and state Government of Tamil Nadu implementing innovative schemes for the tribal development. .So this study is mainly focused on site to hills tribals socio economic condition particularly Malai-aalees tribes.

Keywords: Tribals, primitive groups, development, Malai-Aalees, Modernization

Introduction

India has possessed the largest tribal population among the countries in the world, next to Africa. According to 2011 census the total tribal population numbered 17.89 % of the country, on total population. The majority of the tribal population is concentrated in parts of the eastern , central and western regions of the country. Tamil Nadu is the one of the southern state from India sealed 1% of Tribal population. Moreover , Tamil Nadu has 36 types tribal community. On the whole, six tribals were listed under the primitive tribes. Among them , malaiyalis constitute on the top list which means major population of tribes in TamilNadu.

Mostly, they are inhabitants on the hilly tracts of the state . These Malai-Aalees

have an unique lifestyle , culture and economical status. Both central and State Government implementing several schemes to enhance their quality of life and their status. On the great process several NGO's were contributed for their development. Unfortunately, still their life style and educational status is very poor. This study is focused on Socio-economic and cultural condition on Sitheri Hills, which has been located on the Dharmapuri District.

Geographical setting

Tamil Nadu has 37 districts, Dharmapuri is one among them. It came to existence from 2nd May 1965. It is located in the north western corner of Tamil Nadu and is bounded by Tiruvannamalai and Villupuram District on the east. Salem District on the South, Krishnagiri District in the north and Kaveri river on the west. It is situated between latitude N 11' 47' and 12' 33' and longitude E 77 02' and west . The total geographical area of Dharmapuri District is 4497 sq.km ,which possessed 3.46 % of Tamil Nadu .Dharmapuri district comprises Mysore plateau, Sitheri hills and shevory hills. Sitheri hills is located on the boundaries of Pappireddipatti taluk of Dharmapuri District. Its area is 685 km and is inhabited by 9045 persons. It consisted 63 village. There were several communities were inhabitants namely Adi-Dravidars, Arunthathiyars, from major who scattered throughout the district. But the Malai-Aalees settlement mostly in the Sitheri hills.

Soil

The soil types found here are forest loamy and red ferrugeneous .Hosur is the nearest town which is known for paper industries and high quality mangoes in the west.Sitheri hills which is famous for manufacturing of wood and wooden products in that area and also known for paddy cultivation, Bamboo, Eucalyptus, Tamarind and small and large scale industries. Thus, the boundaries of the hills clearly portray that it is situated in the midst of urban and semi-urban areas with

agriculturally and industrially advanced districts. The total area of the Sitheri hills is 685 square kilometers, which covers 0.47 percent of the total geographical area of the State. The elevation of the hills ranges from 1097 feet to 3600 feet from the Mean Sea Level.

Etymology

Term 'Tribe' has been widely used in anthropology, but there is no general consensus as to its precise definition or appropriate application. The Roman word 'Tribua' meant a Political Unit, and was used to refer to social groups defined by the territory they occupied. Morgan (1877) defined the tribe as a group which possessed social institutions but not political ones. Maine (1861) characterized it as a group in which legal relations were based in the principle of status rather than that of control. In this sense of a pre-political or pre-contract society, the term passed into general usage as a synonym for a Primitive Social Group.

Appearance of the Malaiyalis

The Malaiyalis are dark in complexion but a strong race of medium stature and active habits. Both men and women grow their hair alike and have it tied round in a knot at back of the head. In modern days, many have adopted the front tuft of the indigenous Hindus of the low land. Ruggles Gates observes "the Malaiyalis have usual structure as like we people and kinky hair indicating Negrito relationship. Spirally hair had observed among the Malaiyalis.

Economical status

The average rainfall in a year ranges from 722 millimeters to 900 millimeters and the maximum rainfall is usually in the months of October and November. But, this is much below the State's average or normal rainfall of 943 millimeters per annum. Further, the hills area is irrigated by Kallar River, Varattar

River, Vaniyar River, Kambalai River and Anaimaduvu River. These rivers drain the rain water into the Vaniyar dam and connecting rivers in the plain areas. Therefore, check dams have been constructed across the rivers, to stop the quick drain of rainwater into the plain areas. The hills area is known for its rich forest resources like, sandalwood, jackfruit, lemon tamarind, curry leaf, oilseeds and millets.

Occupation

The Malaiyalis are still nomadic agriculturists. Besides paddy, they cultivate tapioca. They also cultivate Thinai, Ragi, Cholam. They grow Brinjal, pumpkin and maize. They have large areas under plantain cultivation. The present hill tribes are a class of nomads who subsist mainly on agriculture, fruits and roots, and make periodic migration in group from place to place. They choose land for cultivation in a compact block. In the case of fresh clearing of land, the Headman has the land cleared by all the men and the refuse is burnt. He then allots a piece of land to each man and a man of large family gets more land than a single man. The domestic animals of the Malaiyalis are few in number. They rear pigs, which are tended by the women. When a pig is sold, the sale proceeds are equally divided between husband and wife. Women utilize the money for the purchase of vessels, ornaments and the like. They have more claims on the pigs than men, so much so that when a woman dies, the pigs become the property of her children according to the Malaiyalis. The Malaiyalis rear cows and bulls. They use the bulls for ploughing the paddy flats. They drink cow's milk. Dogs accompany them when they go for hunting. They rear fowl and goats. Hunting forms a subsidiary occupation to meet deficiency in the supply of food. The hunters go in a body of ten or fifteen. They follow the track of the animal and encircle it. Two or three go in the wake of the animal.

Social status

The inhabitants of the Sitheri hills are known as Malayali Tribal. According to a Government report, they had come from Kanchipuram as Warriors belonging to Karalar community, said to have settled in the hills and later overpowered the native vedars (Hunter). Whereas, another report says that they had come from Gingee and settled in the hills during the Mohammedan invasion of Carnatic. However, the census reports from 1981 onwards, classify the hillsmen as Malayali tribal. The Malayali tribal were under the control of three Jagirdars over many centuries. That is, during the King Krishna Devaraya of Vijayanagar Kingdom (1378 AD), said to have given rights to three Jagirdars, as a reward to the services rendered by them to the King in a military operation. Further, by about 1890, the three Jagirdars had obtained a title deed from the British Government to enjoy possession of land in their respective Jagris, by paying a quit-rent to the Government. Moreover, in the Jagir's regime the hills were termed as a non-ryotwari area and there was no Government machinery in the hills. The three Jagirdars were The AriyaGoundan, The KurumbaGoundan and the JadatyaGoundan.

According to the Manual of the North Arcot District, The 63 villages on the Sitheri hills are divided into three Polliams. The Poligars. The Poligar names are JadayaGoundan, KurumbaGoundan and AriyaGoundan. They pay a small annual pay cash to Government Rs. 225 to 154 and Rs. 70 respectively. The Polliam or JadayaGoundan is the Southernmost of the three which comprises 40 villages. The chief village in it, where he resides is called Chinnathirupathy. KurumbaGoundan's polliam adjoins that of JadayaGoundan on the north. It comprises 42 villages, of which the principal one is Thumbai. That of AriyaGoundan's and comprises 14 villages, of which the chief one is Kallanur the

compiler was unsuccessful in his efforts to get full information from all the Poligars regarding their estates, but the following facts regarding the Pollium of Jadaya Goundan may most probably, be accepted as applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the two others. No information at all was procured from Ariya Goundan.

The Malayalis have developed certain special characteristics peculiar to themselves which keep them in isolation from others. Hard work, industriousness, conservation, truthfulness, honesty, timidity and shyness are considered as his special qualities. Tribal Development is an area in which both state and central Government have shown much interest to uplift them by many pull factors. And even non-government agencies have also rendered considerable services for their welfare. The tribals utilized those welfare measures and with 77 years period since independence the pattern of their lives, dressing style, food habit, housing pattern, modes of occupation have been changed. Tribal development programme, is an evaluation of what has happened in the tribal Sitheri hills especially in relation to ITDP and its impacts on various activities.

Government Schemes

Fortunately, Government of India and State Government of Tamil Nadu plan wise to promote innovative schemes and implementing for enhancing their social economic and educational status. On the consequences, improving the socio-economic conditions of the tribals, the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) as a concept was introduced in Tamil Nadu during 1976-77. Under this programme, the areas in which the tribal population is more than half the total population get declared as 'scheduled areas'. Further, the area was divided into tribal blocks with a separate block for every 10,000 tribal population. The Sitheri hills was declared as the 'scheduled area' in 1971.

Perhaps, stupendous schemes provide for tribes in tamilnadu namely, select villages schemes, Economic assistance through SHG by TAHDCO, Land purchase scheme and land development scheme., Entrepreneur Development programme, self Employment programme for youth(SEPY), development of agricultural lands held by tribals in hilly and supply areas by providing soil conservation measures, supply of 10 Beehives at free of cost for collecting honey, providing saplings for afforestation and incentives to tribals in forest operation, providing interest free loan to tribals , provision of essential articles at reasonable price and marketing the minor forest produces to ensure better return to the tribals through LAMP societies and etc.,

Moreover, there are several scheme to enhance basis and infrastructure facilities namely provision of street lights to tribal inhabitants, provision of link road facilities to the tribal village connecting with plains or main villages , construction of free houses for tribals , drinking water facilities in tribal Hamlet's and etc.,

Conclusion

Generally, Dharmapuri ranked economically very low percentage to compare with other districts from Tamil Nadu. On the circumstances, tribal from dharmapuri district faced two kinds of difficulties , one is already they are belonged to economically poor district, another disadvantages is they are tribals. So ,to improving their sociology economic status is a tough task . However , Government take steps to achieve success via tribal development programmes. But schemes will not developer their status, and economical level. This, they should get literacy and improve their economy is the only solution for the tribals from sithi hills.

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