

A Study On Social And Political Empowerment Of Tribal Women In Tamilnadu With Special Reference To Kolli Hills

M. D. Chinnu

School of Excellence in Law,
The Tamil Nadu Dr.Ambedkar Law University, Chennai-28,
Email: d.chinnus@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

There are various studies have been conducted on the income and employment potential of IRDP programmes in other areas of our country, the number of studies on measuring the impact of IRDP programme in tribal economy and inter-linkages with crop enterprises, are very limited. Hence, in the present study an attempt has been made to analyze the socio-political capital in tribal population so as to provide policy suggestions to alleviate poverty and bring the tribal women into the mainstream of economic development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Delivering multiple roles every single day, women are undoubtedly the backbone of any society. However, they have also been an ignored fraction of the society in many parts of the world. To restore their rightful and dignified status, empowerment programs need to be initiated to provide a solid foundation to nurture the inner strength and self-esteem for the tribal women. Education is a potent tool to progress in life serving as a catalyst that has unsettled centuries of restrictions and given women the much-deserved platform to set themselves free and rise as equal.

The greatest challenge for the Government of India has been facing since independence is the proper provision of social justice to the Scheduled Tribes by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and de-notified tribes constitute the weaker sections of the Indian population from the ecological, economic and educational perspectives. The National Sample Survey Organization released a report on state wise percentage of BPL tribal population in 2009-10; the report stated that there are 32.5 percent of tribes in Below Poverty Line in Tamil Nadu, and 47.3 percent in overall India. Tribal's are also subject to an inextricable nexus of exploitation and are engaged in low yield agriculture. The single most important challenge for their emancipation lies in raising agricultural productivity. The draft national tribal policies focus on strategies for the development and empowerment of tribal communities in India. However, it ignores the cultural perspective of the tribal communities. Even it does not lay emphasis on tribal's rights over natural resources.

Usually tribal's livelihood have changed their habitation for several times because always they want to survive and also for the betterment of living standard. Struggle is everywhere for survival or existence. The different barriers like isolation and others sometimes have a great impact on human life and that's why some are in advanced stages and other are in opposite. Mainly the

different barriers were started to break from the middle of the last century due to better means of communication which made them to come into close contact with each other in social, economic, political and cultural perspectives.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature promotes greater understanding of the problems and its crucial aspects and ensures the evidence of necessary duplication. The literature for the present investigation has been presented under this sections, as given below.

According to **VidhyaSagar Reddy** there are various political parties have overtly supported it, some of their members opposed it covertly, because their male leaders would not get a chance to fight elections when those seats are reserved for women. Particularly, the Bill has also been opposed by politicians from the socially and economically backward classes. For, they argue that reservation would only help women of the elitist groups to gain seats, thereby causing further discrimination to the backward classes. Of all the parties, some oppose it latently; few others oppose it quite nakedly.

Chambers and Conway (1992) said that, "A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable, when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.

Hasnain (1999) pointed out, among the major causes for land alienation, chronic shortage of cash has been number one economy of the poor tribals ever since they came into contact with the so called civilized world and its monetary institutions. The tribal people are always in need of cash for various purposes like marriages, fairs and festivals, clothing, liquor and a host of needs of everyday life. Due to poor and inadequate yield and uneconomic (holding) agriculture. They have also to purchase food grains from the market. Thus, their chronic indebtedness to the neighbouring shop keepers and moneylenders becomes the primary factor in land alienation.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present studies cover following objectives;

- 1) To find out the Social capital of tribal women in selected Tribal areas.
- 2) To explore the performance of Social participation of tribal women through self-help groups in selected tribal areas.
- 3) To find out the magnitude of Political capital of tribal woman in the study areas.
- 4) To suggest and measures for improving tribal woman empowerment and strengthening of socio-political capital to minimization of poverty.

4. METHODOLOGY

The method of research adopted, the description of the tools and techniques used, the sample, the procedure of data collection and the outline of statistical techniques used in the analysis of data are discussed under appropriate heads.

SOURCES OF DATA

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used both primary and secondary data.

PRIMARY DATA

A standard questionnaire was developed for this purpose and a pilot survey was conducted. Based on this survey, necessary modifications were carried out in the questionnaire, which was used in the field survey.

SAMPLING DESIGN

This study is based on multi-stage proportionate random sampling method. In the first stage, Namakkal district as the sample district is purposively chosen, since it is one of the districts in Tamil Nadu which according to the Census of India (2011) concentrate at 57,059 Scheduled Tribes, the dominance of low level of education, employment and income is still quite considerable. In the second stage, Kolli Hills block has been selected deliberately, because it has the highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes population when compare to the other blocks. In the third stage, the entire Kolli Hills areas has been stratified into three groups i.e., the hamlets located adjacent to plain villages (Karavallikombai village in Valanthikombai Panchayat in and Periyakombai village in Periyakombai Panchayat) constitute the first group. Thus, a total of 300 respondents were selected for the study.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The social capital includes member of group, network, relationship with institution, access to wider institution of society etc., upon which people draw pursuit of livelihoods.

Religious Celebration at Habitat Level

Table No1
Religious Celebration at Habitat Level of the Surveyed Respondent

RC at Habitat	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.33)	1 (0.33)
Sometimes	4 (3.2)	1 (1.00)	2 (2.67)	7 (2.33)
Mostly	10 (8.00)	9 (9.00)	19 (25.33)	38 (12.67)
Always	111	90	53	254

	(88.8)	(90.00)	(70.67)	(84.67)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

This table depicts the attending religious celebration at habitat level of the respondents in the selected three villages of the study area. The overall 0.33 percent of them revealed that they never participated in religious celebration 2.33 percent at sometimes and 12.67 percent of them mostly attended religious celebration and remaining 84.67 percent always participated in religious celebration at habitat level in the study area.

From the above table, it is apparent that the Respondents of Remote Villages participate more in religious celebrations in habitat level when compared with the Proximate and Plain Villages.

Religious Celebration at Outside of Nadu Level

Table No 2
Religious Celebration at Outside of Nadu Level of the Respondent

RC at outside Nadu Level	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	4 (3.2)	4 (4.00)	12 (16)	20 (6.67)
Sometimes	79 (63.2)	53 (53.00)	54 (72)	186 (62)
Mostly	42 (33.6)	32 (32.00)	8 (10.67)	82 (27.33)
Always	0 (0.00)	11 (11.00)	1 (1.33)	12 (4)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

This also reveals the participation of respondents in religious activities outside of nadu level in the study area. Respondents belonging to plain village (63.2), proximate village (53.00), and remote village (72.00) have participated religious celebration outside of the village sometimes only which was significantly high than remaining factors used for the study. From the overall respondents 6.67 percent of them revealed that they never attended religious celebration outside the nadu level. And remaining 62.0 revealed that they participated in this at sometimes, 27.33 were mostly attended this at outside nadu level at remaining 4.0 percent only always attended this celebration outside of Nadu level in the study area.

From the above table, it is discernible that the Respondents of Proximate and Plain Villages participate more in religious celebrations outside Nadu level, where as it is lesser in the Remote Villages, as they give much importance to religious celebrations in their habitat level.

PARTICIPATION OF SHG MEETING

The following table reveals the participation of SHGs activities of the respondents in the study area. The respondents belonging to remote village 46.67 percent of them never participated such activities and there were just 1.6 percent from plain village, 7.00 percent for proximate also never participated in SHGs activities thus the overall 14.61 percent of them never participated in SHGs activities.

Table No 4
Participation of SHG Meeting of the Surveyed Respondent

SHG Meeting Participation	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	2 (1.6)	7 (7.00)	35 (46.67)	44 (14.67)
Sometimes	5 (4.00)	6 (6.00)	5 (6.67)	16 (5.33)
Mostly	60 (48)	41 (41.00)	22 (29.33)	123 (41.00)
Always	58 (46.4)	46 (46.00)	13 (17.33)	117 (39.00)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

The overall 5.33 percent of them sometimes participated and 48.00 percent from plain village 41.00 percent from proximate village and just 29.33 from remote village mostly participated which overall was 41.00 percent. The respondents belonging to plain village 46.4 percent, proximate village 46.00 percent and 17.33 percent only participated always in SHGs activities which overall was 39.00 percent. Thus it is evident that the respondents belonging to plain and proximate villages only participated in SHGs activities more vibrant in the study area.

From the above table, it is apparent that participation in SHG meeting is higher from the Plain and Proximate Villages, whereas it is lesser in Remote Villages. When looked into the table above, the percentage of non-participation is higher because of lack of awareness, ignorance of the Respondent, lack of transport facilities, and most of the men Respondents do not allow their spouses to go out of the habitat. Besides, the Respondent men state that if they allow their spouses to attend such meetings, there will be no one to take care of the family, the animal husbandry, and

other household works. These thoughts of the Respondent men play a vital role curtailing their spouses to attain financial growth, thereby cutting the financial capital of the Remote Villages.

VISITING RELATIVES OUTSIDE THE HABITAT

The table No.5 provides the information on visit of relatives home outside the habitat of the respondents. There are 38.4 percent in plain village, 43.00 percent in proximate village and 85.33 percent in remote village visited sometimes outside the habitat and over all it was 51.67 percent. And 54.4 percent, 45.00 percent and 1.33 percent of the respondents visited mostly from the respective villages and overall it is 38.00 percent and remaining 6.00 percent always and 4.33 percent never visited outside the habitat always in the study area.

Table No 5
Visiting Relatives Outside the Habitat of the surveyed Respondent

Visit Relatives	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	3 (2.4)	2 (2.00)	8 (10.67)	13 (4.33)
Sometimes	48 (38.4)	43 (43.00)	64 (85.33)	155 (51.67)
Mostly	68 (54.4)	45 (45.00)	1 (1.33)	114 (38.00)
Always	6 (4.8)	10 (10.00)	2 (2.67)	18 (6.00)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

From the above table, it is apparent that the Respondent of the Proximate and Plain Villages visit their relatives outside the habitat mostly, whereas Respondent of the Remote Villages visits their relatives outside the habitat very rarely. This is main reason that the Respondents of Remote Villages state that as they go daily wage work and take care of animal husbandry.

POLITICAL CAPITAL

The political capital includes participation of general meeting, voting of panchayat, legislative and parliament election, network, and awareness access to wider state of society etc., upon which people draw pursuit of livelihoods.

PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL EVENTS

Table No.6 illustrates the participation of the sample respondents in general meeting held in their respective villages. The respondents belonging to plain village 51.2 percent, 76.00 percent in proximate village and 82.67 percent in remote would never participate any general meeting held at

villages and overall 67.33 percent of them never participated. It observe that nearly 29.33 percent of them sometimes participated in which 48.00 percent from plain village and 20.00 percent from proximate village and only 2.67 from whole village. Thus, awareness about participation in general meeting is very low in the study area. Just 0.67 percent only always participated in such a meeting.

Table No 6
Participation in General Meeting of the Surveyed Respondent

General Meeting Participation	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	64 (51.2)	76 (76.00)	62 (82.67)	202 (67.33)
Sometimes	60 (48.00)	20 (20.00)	8 (2.67)	88 (29.33)
Mostly	0 (0.00)	4 (4.00)	4 (5.33)	8 (2.67)
Always	1 (0.8)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.33)	2 (0.67)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed, Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

From the above table, it is apparent that non-participation in political events is higher in all the three villages, but it is much poorer with respect to Remote Village. Because of non-participation, there is lack of awareness about various Governmental Schemes and programs, which remain unreached in the ears of the Respondents. Such Governmental Programs are held in places comfortable to the person who promotes the programs and the Respondents from all the three villages are unable to travel to such distances due to lack of transport facility and also their unwillingness to participate in the General Political meetings. Therefore, the above incidents reflect the loss of political capital in the Social Welfare Schemes. Hence, lack of political awareness about social welfare and other governmental schemes pave way to loss of source of livelihood.

Voting in Panchayat Election

The following table figures the status of voting in Panchayat election of the respondents in the study area. the respondents belonging to plain village 92.8 percent, 76.00 percent in proximate village and 44.00 percent from remote village and overall 75.00 percent would vote always in Panchayat election and 5.6 percent, 22.00 percent, and 29.33 percent were to vote mostly in three respective villages which is overall 17.00 percent and remaining just 8.00 would vote sometimes in which 26.67 contributed by the remote village respondents due to various constraints during election. Therefore compared to plain and proximate villages remote village respondents were far behind in voting in the election.

Table No.9: Voting in Panchayat Election of the Surveyed Respondent

Voting Panchayat Election	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Sometimes	2 (1.6)	2 (2.00)	20 (26.67)	24 (8.00)
Mostly	7 (5.6)	22 (22.00)	22 (29.33)	51 (17.00)
Always	116 (92.8)	76 (76.00)	33 (44.00)	225 (75.00)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

From the above table, it is evident that the voting percentage in panchayat elections is higher in Remote and Proximate villages than the Plain Villages, as the Respondents are willing to participate mostly in programs in habitat level alone. As they are restricted and controlled by the Village Kut/chieftain, the Respondents have to accede to their direction and orders and has to attend the village panchayat elections.

Voting in Legislative Election**Table No.10: Voting in Legislative Election of the Surveyed Respondent**

Voting Legislative Election	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	2 (1.6)	0 (0.00)	14 (18.67)	16 (5.33)
Sometimes	6 (4.8)	18 (18.00)	31 (41.33)	55 (18.33)
Mostly	26 (20.8)	31 (31.00)	20 (26.67)	77 (25.67)
Always	91 (72.00)	51 (51.00)	10 (13.33)	152 (50.67)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

This table also figures the status of voting in legislative election of the respondents in the study area. The respondents belonging to remote village 18.67 percent never vote in assembly election and just 1.6 percent from plain village thus overall 5.33 percent of them never vote in assembly election. Likewise 41.33 percent from remote village 18.00 percent from proximate village and 4.8 percent from plain village and overall 18.33 percent of the respondents voted sometimes in assembly election. 31.00 percent in proximate village, 26.67 percent in remote village and 20.8 percent in plain villages and overall 25.67 percent of them voted mostly in the assembly elections, and remaining 50.67 percent of the respondents belonging to three villages always voted in the assembly election in the study area.

From the above table, it is evident that the percentage of voting in legislative election by the Respondents of Remote Villages is lesser than the Respondents of Plain and Proximate Villages. The reason behind the same that the Respondents state is that they do not want to lose their daily wage by going for such elections, which could take at least a day for them to travel and thereby their one day wage is lost.

Voting in Parliament Election

In the below table it is given the voting in parliament election of the respondents 1.6 percent from plain village and 29.33 percent from remote village never vote in this election overall 8.00 percent of them never vote and similarly, 5.6 percent in plain village 24.00 percent in proximate village and 37.33 from remote village sometimes voted and overall it is 19.67 percent.

Table No.11: Voting in Parliament Election of the Surveyed Respondent

Voting Parliament Election	Plain Village	Proximate Village	Remote Village	Total
Never	2 (1.6)	0 (0.00)	22 (29.33)	24 (8.00)
Sometimes	7 (5.6)	24 (24.00)	28 (37.33)	59 (19.67)
Mostly	25 (20.00)	24 (24.00)	15 (20.00)	64 (21.33)
Always	91 (72.8)	51 (51.00)	10 (13.33)	152 (50.67)
Total	125 (100)	100 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Computed

Note: Figures in Parentheses are Percentages to the total.

Respondents belonging to plain village 72.8 percent, proximate village 51.00 percent and remote village 13.33 voted always in the parliamentary election. It is very less compared to first two villages in all aspects. Since it is located in the interior place of the study area and they did not have interest in voting for such election in the study area.

From the above table, it is evident that the percentage of voting in Parliament election by the Respondents of Remote Villages is lesser than the Respondents of Plain and Proximate Villages. The reason behind the same that the Respondents state that most of the Respondents in the Remote Villages and Proximate Villages have migrated to towns such as Tirupur, Coimbatore, and Kerala for job opportunities and they are unwilling to travel such a long distance to their native just for the purpose of voting.

In the above tables, we have compared two different capitals that determine the source of empowerment and livelihood of the Respondents such as Social Capital, and Political Capital. When there is increase in two capitals, there is increase in the source of livelihood and empowerment of the Respondents. When there is decrease in all the two capitals, the source of livelihood and empowerment of the Respondents drops and becomes even nil that they are forced to sell their lands and other belongings to survive and thus they attain the below poverty stage.

From comparison of the above tables, it is clear and discernible that all the two capitals is seen in decreasing range in the Remote Villages than the Proximate and Plain Villages and thus the Respondents in the Remote Villages can be termed as being under below poverty line and suffering for basic survival.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND LAWS

The important of women as an important human resource was recognised by the constitution of India which not only accorded equality to women, but also empowered the state. A number of Articles of the Constitution repeated towards the socio-economic development of women and participation decision making. These are;

- i. **Article 14:** Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social Spheres
- ii. **Article 15 (1):** Prohibits discrimination against any citizens on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste and etc.
- iii. **Article 16 :** Equality of opportunity in matters of public appointments for all citizens
- iv. **Article 39(d)** Equal pay for equal work for both men and women
- v. **Article 42:** The state to make provision for ensuring first and humane condition of work and Maternity relief. Government also enacted specific class to save got the interest of women and for up gradation of the status. These are,
- vi. **The Hindu Succession Act 1956** which provides for women the right to parental property
- vii. **The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961** which declared the taking of Dowry unlawful activities and thereby prevents the exploitation of women
- viii. **Equal Remuneration Act 1976** which provides payment of remuneration equal with men for work of equal value
- ix. **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971** with legalize abortion conceding the right of a woman to go for abortion on the ground of physical and mental health.
- x. **The Criminal Law Amendment Act 1983** which is seek to stop various type of crimes against women. The indecent representation of Women Prohibition Act 1986 which prohibits the vulgar presentation of women in the media such as newspaper, Cinema,TV and etc.
- xi. **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005** provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the constitution who are victim of violence of any kind occurring within the family.

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