

Status of Tribal Development in Kerala : An overview

Nitheesh kumar KP

Ph.D Scholar

Center for Applied Research

Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram, 624302

Abstract: The developmental discussions of tribal people have been started from the British period itself. After independence the Government of India has been considered the tribal people as a vulnerable section of society and made some special provisions in the constitution for their socio economic development. This paper described the status of tribals of Kerala and presented the demographic details, education, economic conditions, health status and other development indicators. It is portraying the factors contributing to marginalization, exploitation and underdevelopment. The role of state for tribal development, education, employment, displacement and rehabilitation is also examined. The researcher used secondary information from census and sampling data from different government sources to describe the present situation of tribals. The insights of this paper reflects the conditions that have influenced conceptualization of tribal development, which considerably change the society, destruction of culture and land suffered by the tribal of Kerala.

IndexTerms - Tribals, Development, Marginalization, Exploitation

I. INTRODUCTION

The tribals considered as children of forest and they are isolated from the common society. The tribes also called as indigenous people, advisis, original inhabitants, jungle people, submerge humanity, girijans, etc. They are survived with an unchanging ways of life and traditions. The United Nations estimated that there are 370 million tribal people existing in 70 countries in the world. Tribal people have been the guardian of environment; build a holistic communal view of humanity and its link to the ecosystem (Yahiya, 2015). The mainstream society have historically marginalized, exploited and suppressed the tribal society (CK Janu, 2016). The colonization alienated the traditional communities from their ways of life (Bipin Chandra, 2013). Introduction of modern life situations by main stream society have made great effect in tribal communities. Although the modern developmental principles, it has failed to promote cultural life of the tribal communities.

Social, political and economic histories were important factors in shaping the policy and governance in Kerala. These start intensively from the British colonial period, the Reform movements from lower caste communities were against native rulers of the region demanding for basic social services. Most important social reform movements were lead by Shri Narayana Guru and Ayyankali against the caste system. These social movements were the foundation for emergence of more secular movements, along with peasants and workers, and it lead to the formation of radical and leftist ideology. The world's first democratically elected communist government came to Kerala in 1957. This government initiated various welfare measures for peasants and working class like land reforms, ensuring minimum wages, abolition of tenancy and improving working conditions. It also created a great assertion of self respect and dignity among the agricultural labors and small peasants in Kerala (Kurien 1995).

The state of Kerala is well known for its different experience of developmental process compared to the other states in India. Predominantly in the areas of high Literacy rate 93.91% (males 96.02% and females 91.98%), Life expectancy 74, Sex Ratio female 1084 male 1000 and Infant Mortality 12 death for 1000 live birth (Census Data 2011). This model also emphasized on poverty reduction, land reforms, access to education and welfare of children. The emergence of Kerala development was motivated by various public actions through politically motivated and informed citizens (Steur 2009). Scheduled tribes, Dalits and fisher folk, cashew workers and coir workers are still lagging behind others in terms of social development indicators (Kurien 1995; Omvedt 1998).

TRIBAL POPULATION

Indian constitution referred that scheduled tribals as those groups or communities, who are scheduled under the article 342 and declared by the president. In India there are 725 tribal communities. Majority 50% of the tribal communities are in central and north east state of the nation. The smallest state Kerala has 1.45% of tribal population, which distributed in 37 different tribes (Census of India, 2011).

Table.1
Tribal Population in Kerala (In Millions)

Population	Year						
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
General	361.1	439.2	548.2	685.2	846.3	846.3	1210.5

India	ST	19.1	30.1	38.0	51.6	51.6	84.3	104.2
	Sex Ratio	946	987	982	983	972	978	990
Kerala	General	13.54	16.90	21.34	25.45	29.09	31.84	33.41
	ST	-----	0.269	0.261	0.32	0.364	0.484
	Sex Ratio	-----	1022	1016	1032	1,036	1021	1035

(Source: Census of India 1951- 2011)

According to the census reports there is an increase in tribal population from 1951 to 2011 in India and Kerala. The change in population rate is high in India and it's comparatively less in Kerala state. And also increase in the sex ratio. The tribal population of Kerala forms 1.5% of the total population of the state. Tribal population growth is very controlled in Kerala state. Less poverty rate and high education and health statue may be contributing to this balance population growth. The district Wayanad has the highest number of tribal concentration in the state. The districts Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad, Kasargod and Kannur contribute more than 70% of the state's tribal population. The overall sex ratio among the tribes is 1035 females for 1000 male in 2011(Census of India, 2011).

LITERACY RATE

Education is an important element in the on the whole development of an individual, provides them to better awareness, proper understanding of their socio cultural and political environment. It also helps in the improvement of their socio economic conditions (Statistical profile of ST in India, 2013).

Table .2

		Literacy Rate (As per 1951 to 2011 Census)						
Region		1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Kerala	General	47.18	55.08	69.75	78.85	89.81	90.86	94.00
	ST	NA	17.26	25.75	31.79	57.22	64.4	75.8
India	General	18.33	28.30	34.45	41.43	52.22	64.84	72.99
	ST	NA	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.1	59.9

The table 2 showed that an increasing trend in scheduled tribal literacy in considerably over the years in national level and Kerala. But there exist some significance difference in national and state level. As per the census 2011 the literacy rate of all social groups in India is 72.99 %, which is higher than STs (59.9%). Since 1961 to 2011 the trend of literacy is increasing in Kerala state also. And tribal literacy rate of Kerala is higher than the national average. But literacy gap between the general population and tribals is high. It is proved that the government literacy programmes are failed to promote tribal literacy (Raju Narayana Swamy, 2010). The comparative educational backwardness of tribals is a matter of concern in Kerala development.

Education in Kerala is heavily biased against the Scheduled Tribes. Although a few ST students do benefit from education, they represent the cream of the community and not the masses. The children of the poor, less educated parents with low income occupations are only marginally represented. Decentralization of educational management is an aspect that needs special consideration in the context of tribal areas (Raju Narayana Swamy, 2010). Thus, low literacy rate has been identified as a major development problem among the STs (Ram Ahuja 2014)

ECONOMIC CONDITION

Majority of tribal communities have low economic and they are belong to BPL population (Economic Review- 2009). According to the study of C K Krishnan, 2008 poor socio economic conditions are the major factor contributing for the educational achievement and low aspirations on the part of tribal folk. Agriculture and alienated activities are main source of livelihood of the tribal communities. Poverty ratios of 1993 to 2005 have more significance, National level poverty had been decreased but in Kerala state it has increased to 37.34 to 44.3 (Planning Commission, 2005).

Poverty alleviation has been of the major objective of planning process of India. There are many policies and programmes implemented to compact poverty in the country. There have been some additional programmes executed for the vulnerable section of societies. Independence

Table. 3
Poverty among ST 1983 - 2013

Region	1983		1993		2003		2013	
	All	ST	All	ST	All	ST	All	ST
India	45.6	63.3	35.8	49.6	27.5	37.9	27.5	47.4
Kerala	40.42	36.6	25.43	35.2	23.7	34.4	15	24.4

(Source: Planning Commission, 2013)

The table pointed out that poverty ratio of tribal community has been declined from 1983 to 2013. The poverty ratio among the STs is significantly higher both in India and Kerala compared to the general population. It shows that the negligence of tribal people from the spheres of development. All other communities are rapidly developing but tribals are in a pathetic situation.

Health

“Enjoyment of the highest standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic and social condition” (WHO, 1948). Health is a fundamental issue facing by the tribal of Kerala. High infant mortality and maternal mortality, nutritional deficiency, sickle cell anemia, tuberculosis, cancer, etc are highly prevalent among the tribals of Kerala.

Table. 4
Infant Mortality of STs

State	Infant Mortality Rate		
	Males	Females	Persons
India	84	88	85
Kerala	33	57	44

(Source: Census, 2011)

Infant mortality defined as the number of infant deaths in a year per 1000 live births during the year (Statistical profile of Scheduled tribes in India 2013). According to the census report the infant mortality for STs is highest in India comparing to Kerala (84 and 44). There is a significant gap in IMR in male and females in India and Kerala.

Table.5
Maternal Mortality of STs

Region	Maternal Mortality Ratio, Maternal Mortality			
	Live Births	Maternal Deaths	Maternal Mortality Ratio(MMR)	Maternal Mortality Rate
India	436,411	926	212	16.3
Kerala	14624	12	81	4.1

(Source: Special Bulletin on MMR, June 2011- Registrar General of India)

The table presented the mortality rate of scheduled tribes of India and Kerala. As per the data the birth rate in India is 435411 and Kerala 14624. The table 5 indicates maternal death is comparatively less in Kerala (12) than the national level (926). Maternal mortality rate is highest in India (16.3) comparing to the state Kerala. But Kerala tribals are facing many health issues like malnutrition, TB, cancer, etc. Malnourishment among tribal people is directly related to food and indirectly related to non food factors. Inadequate food intake being the immediate factor, lack of employment opportunities, landlessness, decline in agriculture, reduction in forest cover, ineffective government policies etc cumulatively contribute to insecurity of tribal people (Mohammed Labeeb 2015). Tribals need information, education and communication concerning the risk of repeated pregnancies and other associated danger signs in case of complications. Simultaneously, the health service delivery system needs to be upgraded. Most of the tribals' health problems are related to unsanitary conditions and lack of education. They are preventable by public health measures. In these areas importance is given to curative measures instead of preventive ones (Suman Pamecha, 2010).

CRIME AGAINST SCHEDULED TRIBES

The constitution of India guaranteed equality and opportunities to all citizens. And also provides that no individual shall be discriminated from grounds of sex, cast, religion etc. The weaker sections have some special protective measures including scheduled tribals. Tribals have been victims of countless crimes, both because of their gullibility and lack of hearing of their grievances (Statistical profile of Scheduled tribes in India, 2013)

Table. 5

Number of Cases Registered under Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 in India (1998 to 2014)

Region	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Kerala	716	NA	529	499	469	335	374	427	439	565	625	569	671	991	934	891	120
India	27561	26285	30315	30022	27894	22603	23629	31387	32407	35352	38943	38849	38449	39401	39512	46114	49124

(Source: Crime in India)

In India, state is responsible to the development and welfare of its people especially the vulnerable sections of the society. The constitution of India provides the equality and opportunities to all the citizens and ensures that no individual shall

discriminate on the position caste, sex, religion etc. the Scheduled tribes have been victims of countless crimes, both because of their gullibility and lack of hearing of their grievances (Statistical Profile Of Scheduled Tribes In India 2013). Studying the incidence rate and percentage contribution to all over India of crimes during 2012 under different categories, it is clearly showed that Kerala has 2.09 % contribution. Rate of cognizable crimes against STs is highest in Kerala.

- Extent of Alcoholism among the tribals

Alcoholism is condition in which an individual lose control over his alcohol intake in that he is consistently unable to refine from drinking once he begins (Joshi,1998) in India society alcoholism consider as a social problem. Tribal communities are prominent to alcoholism. Many communities are using alcohol in their traditional rituals. It is important in alcoholism is the socialization to accept alcohol (Ram Ahuja, 2014). According to the NFHS report- 2005-06, 49.9 % of the tribals are using alcohol. Most of the studies conducted among the tribals have highlighted the issues of alcoholism. The mainstream societies have been used the alcoholism as tool of exploitation towards tribal communities (Geethandan, 2016). Apart of wage they used to provide alcohol as wage. Culturally and socially alcoholism made root in the tribal society. The alcoholic people have been spending lots of money for alcoholic consumption. It is affecting the financial stability of the family. And also it's creating the health problems, domestic, violence, unemployment, etc.

LAND ALIENATION AND ISSUES OF RESETTLEMENT

Land alienation has been one of the most significant factors that explain the deprivation that tribal communities have faced and continue to face. This can be understood if researchers try to analyze the percentage of agricultural labourers from tribal in Kerala. Within a span of 15 years (1961-1976) the percentage of agricultural labourers among tribal increased from 43% to 72% (Kunhaman, 1985). Highest incidence of land alienation is reported in Kerala (Bijoy, 1999). In addition to that livelihoods of tribals are made vulnerable by small land holdings, lack of capital and infrastructure to carry out agriculture, conflict with wild animals especially elephants, and drought in rain fed agricultural areas because of poor rainfall (Rozario, 2013).

Table .6
Area operated by operational holding for STs

Region	2005-2006					2010-2011				
	Marginal	Small	Semi medium	Medium	Large	Marginal	Small	Semi medium	Medium	Large
India	14.58	21.81	26.83	25.97	10.81	17.26	22.6	26.27	23.76	10.11
Kerala	54.42	26.66	13.43	4.55	0.94	49.84	23.39	17.82	6.69	2.28

(Source: Agriculture Census)

The table 5 indicated the percentage of distribution of number of operational holding land for STs. It is showed that marginal land holding in 2005-06 were 14.58%, which has increased to 21.81 % in 2010-11 but in Kerala, which has decreased as 54.42% to 26.66%. Small land holding have increased from 21.81 % to 22.6, in Kerala it has decreased from 26.66 to 23.39. semi medium operational holding for STs decreased to 26.83 % 26.27 in national level and in Kerala it has increased to 13.43% to 17.82%, Medium and Large holding has been increased both national and State level.

Land lessens is the one of major problem faced by the tribals of Kerala. According to the TRDM 2016, survey there is 12261 landless tribal families in Kerala state. Land alienation is a historic process and still it is continuing. Therefore the tribal land struggle movements are become part of day to day life of the Kerala people.

Adivasis were fighting for the restoration of alienated land since the advent of British in India and from then onwards the focus of the struggle shifted to landlessness which still is continuing. Thus, started the ongoing struggles of Adivasis and at last in 2001 Government tried to settle the issue by agreeing that "subject to availability of land, all tribal families of Kerala will be given 1 to 5 acres of land". Subsequently a Tribal Land Mission was launched in November, 2001. The mission recommended the Kerala Government to complete the land distribution in five years time (Sreerekha, 2010). The state resettlement plan promised each tribal family that moved to resettlement entitled for land, basic amenities for the infrastructure development, like drinking water, transportation facility, educational institutions, electricity and houses. They are also promised of employment opportunities, financial and material assistance from the Government for agricultural purpose. Along with that resettled tribes are also entitled to rationing scheme. There are seven major resettlements in kerala. But the promises to the tribes were laid on the paper; Kerala Government did not enact the rehabilitation plan fully. The basic infrastructure facilities were not provided, the most important thing the Government couldn't provide was the employment opportunities to the tribes (Nitheesh kumar, 2014). Tribe faced problems in fulfilling their family needs. The threat from the animals made the rehabilitated tribes' life more dangerous. Whatever they cultivated wild elephant and wild boar destroyed. Many of the resettled tribes committed suicide and many of them later became alcohol addicts. But the promises to the tribes were laid on the paper; Kerala Government did not enact the rehabilitation plan fully. The basic infrastructure facilities were not provided, the most important thing the Government couldn't provide was the employment opportunities to the tribes. Tribe faced problems in fulfilling their family needs. The threat from the animals made the rehabilitated tribes' life more dangerous. Whatever they cultivated wild elephant and wild boar destroyed. Many of the resettled tribes committed suicide and many of them later became alcohol addicts (Yahiya 2014).

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS

The team Scheduled tribes appeared in the Article 365 of the constitution. "Scheduled Tribes" means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution. There are special provisions for scheduled tribals in the constitution for safeguarding them from the social evils. Education, economic development, employment opportunities, and equality are the major concern. There entitlements are implementing in the form of reservation. Tribal communities are entitled for reservation in government jobs and public posts. And also some special laws for prohibiting all kind of atrocities and discriminations.

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The government of India has notified that the tribal people are vulnerable section of Indian society. There for they made special safeguards for the protection and development of the tribal communities. The provisions are aims to promote education, economic interest and protection from exploitation and social injustices. It is implementing through policies and programme and mechanism of reservation. The mechanism of tribal development are Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Where the tribal population more than 50% and Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) for the small pockets. Government of Kerala has implemented many programmes for the tribal development for the last decade. Resettlement of Landless Tribals, Package programme for the Rehabilitation of backward tribes, Treatment and Rehabilitation of ST's affected by various diseases, Financial assistance to Marriage of ST Girls, Restoration of Alienated land Act 1999, Insurance programme for Tribals, Repairs and Maintenance of Tribal Hostel, Schemes for providing better educational facilities to bright ST students, Post -metric hostels for Tribal Students, Training On Information Technology, Extension of Kudumbashree to Tribal areas and Opening of Grain Banks System in Tribal Ares are the major schemes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the improvement of life status of tribes we should address tribes as a whole along with that we should also focus on certain programmes targeting younger generation. These groups of people often have not difficulty to access the recourses and services. There should be comprehensive multi dimensional model strategies to deal with education, livelihood, needed multiple level of actions individual level, family level, community level etc.

Appropriate administrative structures should be developed under a person who knows about tribal culture. Tribal participation and involvement of the tribal development organisations like the civil societies, community based organisations, voluntary organisations, local NGO s in governance is an essential input in all the stages of development; so more efforts need to be made in this direction. Integrated development together with employment generation, economic activities, and community facilities.

CONCLUSION

Kerala is often known for its development indicators and its robust form of decentralized governance. The state always supports the social and cultural constructions of the dominant class and they avoid the knowledge and exclusive culture of tribal community. Most of the policies served the economic and political interests of dominant community. After six decades of Independence the tribal societies remains isolated and marginalized. It created a historical discrimination between tribe and non tribal community. The active efforts of conquering and eliminating the tribal culture were justified by an ideology that saw tribes as primitive and uncivilized. Tribes have been viewed as not ready to be a part of democratic state and dominant community; they should be civilized to join the mainstream. Most of the policies were motivated by paternalistic attitude that often failed to recognize tribal right of self determination or richness and diversity of their culture. The cumulative effects of these policies worsened their condition and leads to losing their culture. The collective shortsighted policies and involvement from the dominant community manifested the trauma, loss, and grief among the tribal society. Ensure the Infrastructure and accessibility services for all including the remote areas, through mobile clinic, tribal promoters, networking strategies. The policy makers should always respect the cultural values of tribes, their strengths, knowledge and traditions. The policies and programs for rehabilitation and rebuilding livelihood could have been culture and context sensitive.

REFERENCE

- Agriculture Census 2010-2011, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India
- Bijoy, C. R., & Raman, K. R. (2003). Muthanga: The real story: Adivasi movement to recover land. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1975-1982.
- Bipin Chandra, 2013, India Struggle for Independence, Penguin publication, Haryana, India.
- C K Janu, 2016, Personal interview, March 2016
- Census of India, 2011 Government of India
- Halliburton, M. (1998). Suicide: A paradox of development in Kerala. *Economic and political weekly*, 2341-2345.
- Human Development Report 2005, 2006, 2008, Government of India.
- Joshi, Vidyut. 1998. *Tribal Situation in India: Issues in Development*, New

- Kurien, J. (1995). The Kerala model: its central tendency and the outlier. *Socia Scientist*, 70-90.
- M Geethandan, 2017 Personal interview, October 2016
- Mohammed Labeeb PK (2015), Malnourishment among tribals in Wayanad: Food and Beyond
- Nitheesh kumar KP, 2014, The Quality of Life of Resettled Tribals of Kerala with Special Reference to Aralam.
- Omvedt, G. (1998). Disturbing aspects of Kerala society. *Bulletin of Concerned Asian*
- Planning Commission Report, 2013, Government of India
- Raju Narayana Swami (2010) Tribal Education as a Tool for Rural Transformation: A Case Study of Paniyas in Wayanad, Kurukhetra,
- Ramanathaiyer, S., & MacPherson, S. (2000). Social development in Kerala: illusion or reality?. Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Ramanathaiyer, S., & MacPherson, S. (2000). Social development in Kerala: illusion or
- Rammohan, K. T. (2008). Caste and landlessness in Kerala: Signals from chengara. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14-16.
- Ram Ahuja, 2014, Social Problem in India,
- Sreerekha, M. S. (2010). Challenges before Kerala's Landless: The Story of Arala Farm. *Economic and political weekly*, 45(21), 22-28.
- Status of Health and Family Welfare among Scheduled Tribes, 2013, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.
- Steur, L. (2009). Adivasi Mobilisation 'Identity' versus 'Class' after the Kerala Mode of Development?, *Journal of south Asian development*, 4(1), 25-44.
- TRDM Survey, 2016 Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of Kerala.
- Xaxa, V. (2001). Protective discrimination: why scheduled tribes lag behind schedule castes. *Economic and Political weekly*, 2765-2772.
- Yahiya v u, 2016, Mental health of resettled paniya tribes in Aralam farm of Kerala
- Suman Pamecha, 2010, Health issues of Tribals in Rajasthan, Kurukshetra, Ministry of Rural Development.

