

Role of Government and Problems Faced by Tribes in Agricultural Activities - A Study among Tribes in Idukki district

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Abstract : Tribal communities play an immeasurable role in the agricultural production. It represents an element in Indian society which is integrated with the culture mosaic of our civilization. The tribal population of India constitutes nearly 8 percent of the total population. They are the owners of wide varieties of resources. No attempt is made to identify those tribal resources and to make its best maximum possible utilization. Tribal seem to be isolated from the developed areas and so they are not prone to any sort of development. The study is a tribal centric study which focuses on identifying the scope of agripreneurship in tribal areas. It also aims at identifying the products produced, problems faced in production, marketing, and discussing the role played by government in agricultural activities of tribes. The study recognized that the tribal people are facing a large number of problems which has a severe impact on the production and marketing of their products. Government should take initiatives to eradicate those troubles and to bring them free from the clutches of private parties.

Index Terms: Agripreneurship, Government factors, Problems faced by tribes, Tribes

I. INTRODUCTION

A tribe is viewed, developmentally or historically, as a social group existing outside of or before the development of states. They are identified as more isolated from the wider community and who maintain a distinctive cultural identity. They live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forest. The traditional and cultural distinction of each tribal community has made them distinguishable from each other and their cultural and traditional heritage add colour and variation to the Indian culture as a whole. Tribal people of Kerala live in the forests and mountains of Western Ghats, bordering Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It is estimated that there are about 4 lakhs tribal people living in Kerala and about half of this population has made the interiors of Wayanad their home. The study "Role of Government and Problems Faced by Tribes in Agricultural Activities – A study conducted among tribes in Idukki district was taken place among four tribal areas namely Kovilmala, Marayoor, Kannampady and Plakkathadam. It aims at identifying the problems faced by tribal communities in their agricultural practices and to seek the attention of administrators and policy makers to take appropriate steps for their upliftment. The tribal are poor and their standard of living lies below the poverty line. They should be paid a reasonable price for the products collected as it is only the means of livelihood. If not it can hamper the day to day life of tribal. So there exists a need to conduct a study to understand the problems in order to safeguard the interest of tribal communities.

II. SAMPLE AREAS AT A GLANCE

The sample areas include 1) Kovilmala 2) Marayoor 3) Kannampady and 4) Plakkathadam.

Kovilmala: Kovilmala, locally known as Kozhimala (the hill of hen), is a tribal settlement and a small village near Kattappana in the district of Idukki. It is the only existing tribal kingdom in South India and also the headquarters of Maannan community who preserve certain customs and form of governance, making them a unique tribal unit. The system of governance followed here is a democratic monarchy in which a king is elected by the people.

Marayoor: Marayoor is located 42 kilometers north of Munnar on SH 17 connecting Munnar with Udumalpet, Tamilnadu. It is the only place in Kerala that has natural sandalwood forests. It has more than 1000 species of flowering plants and is well known repository of medicinal plants. The two major tribal groups in Marayoor are Muthuvans and Hill Pulayans. The tribes of Marayoor are aborigines and they prefer a secluded life fostering their own tradition and customs. They tend to be highly superstitious, believing in animism and totem worship.

Kannampady: Kannampady is a remote tribal settlement located inside the Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary and near the Idukki Hydro Electric Project area. It is noted for its beautiful sceneries and the old government tribal school, started in 1956. In collaboration

with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Peermade Development Society (PDS) initiated a major programme for the integrated development of the tribal communities in Idukki District. The programme aims at promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities for 500 tribal families belonging to Uraly and Ulladan tribal communities in Kannampady.

Plakkathadam: This village which comprises of 113 families is only five kilometers away from the Peermade Taluk head quarters, which is surrounded by forests in all the four sides. It was in 1951 during the reign of the King Chithirathirunnal of Travancore that these families belonging to Malayaraya community were brought here. It was with the intention of cultivating Quaina plants which were used for the preparation of medicine for wild fever (Malaria). Another four families are living deep inside the forest that belongs to the Malapandaran community.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

- 1) To identify the products produced by the tribal community.
- 2) To study the problems faced by the tribes in production and marketing of products.
- 3) To analyse the role played by Government in promoting production and marketing of products

IV. HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses formulated for the present study are as under:

- 1) **H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to problems faced in production of products by tribes.
- 2) **H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to the problems faced in marketing of products by tribes.
- 3) **H₀₃:** There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to government factors.

V. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The study "Role of Government and Problems faced by Tribes in Agricultural Activities – A Study among Tribes in Idukki District" is purely an empirical research. Convenience sampling was adopted for data collection and the study was conducted with a sample of 50 respondents. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through interview method from tribal communities of Kozhimala, Marayoor, Plakkathadam and Kannampady. Interview schedules were administrated to collect data from the respondents which were converted into Malayalam for the convenience of the respondents. Secondary data were collected from journals, articles published in magazines and other publications. The study made the use of Likert Scale, various mathematical techniques and statistical tools like percentages and t test supported by charts and table, Ms Excel and SPSS in order to analyse the data collected from the respondents.

VI. RESEARCH REVIEW

(Barla, 2013) : conducted a study on the topic "*The Impact of New Agricultural Technology on Tribal Farming: A Study of Ranchi District of Jharkhand State*" with the objective of exploring the new agriculture technology and the factors affecting their adoption. The data were collected through random sampling and discovered that the positive impacts and obstacles to improve food habits reduced the problems of malnutrition, under nutrition and starvation, a growth in the level of overall awareness among the beneficiaries and vegetable consumptions have improved the overall health and hygiene of the farming communities of the region. It was recommended that the basis needs should be met locally through sustainable development, strategies for farm generation of organic matter need to be evolved, and information technology should be used for maintaining an update and timely dissemination of information to farmers.

(KB, 2009) : tries to identify the knowledge and perception of tribal adults regarding natural resources, food and agriculture in the study "*Agriculture Knowledge and Perception in Tribal Communities*". The study used interview method of data collection and identified that people were more positive towards natural resources while least positive towards agricultural policies. The study was concluded with the findings that respondents living in rural farms were more knowledgeable about agricultural concept than respondents in city. It was recommended that proper policies should be adopted to improve the knowledge of people in the area of agriculture.

(Alex, 2014) : the study "*A Study on the Challenges Faced by the Tribal Youth with specific reference to Nandhimanagalam in Poondi*

Block" aims to understand the tribal youth employment opportunities in agriculture sector of Tripura. The tribal youth as a disadvantaged social group suffer from many crippling problems that retard their development keeping them relatively backward and marginalized in growing economy, thus paving the path of dissension and social unrest of which the North Eastern states have

a better experience. This study concluded that finding work for tribal youth is not necessarily the problem, but finding decent work that offers decent pay, good working conditions is a difficult task.

(Dr Jalaja V, 2015) : conducted a case study on the topic ‘*Tribal Farmer’s Agricultural Information Needs and Accessibility in Attapady Tribal Block, Pallakad*’ with the objective to identify the various agricultural information needs of tribal farmers along with the examination of channels and sources of information communication used by them. They used survey method and find out that most of the farmers were illiterates and were unable to use the information sources. It was found that they face many problems like lack of knowledge about various cultivation methods, non – availability of basic agricultural inputs on time, the inadequacy of labourer and high rate of illiteracy. The study concluded with the suggestions that agricultural extension officials should concentrate on the information needs of the farmers, make attempts to improve the adult literacy education programs among the tribal and the Government should encourage them by giving special attentions especially in case of infrastructural facilities and productivity capacity.

(Zacharias, 2014): presented a study “*The Micro-Level Impact of Tribal Development Programmes among the Kadar Tribe of Kerala*” with the objectives of examining the various tribal development schemes, analysing the present economic and social conditions of the Kaders. The samples were collected through cluster sampling techniques and it resulted that there is a considerable increase in literacy level, but these schemes failed in providing higher education for them as it was found that no one hold a degree. The physical achievement of the housing scheme was good as 75.9% of Khadars owns Government constructed houses. The study suggested that various welfare programs should be implemented with proper understanding of Khadar’s culture, habits and needs. The respected authorities should make required follow ups regarding those programs for maintaining its benefits.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Sample profile

Out of the 50 respondents, 54 per cent of people were male and rest of them was female. In the case of age, 26 per cent are below 25. Other 26 per cent belongs to the age group ranging from 25 – 35. 28 per cent of them are from the age group of 35 – 45 and the rest 20 per cent are above 45. 70 per cent of them have an education qualification of SSLC or below SSLC. 26 per cent of them possess plus two while only 4 per cent are graduated. None of them holds a qualification above degree. Majority of them are engaged in the cultivation of banana.

7.2 Problems faced by tribes

This area studies the major problems faced by tribes in production and marketing of the products.

TABLE 1. PROBLEMS FACED BY TRIBES IN PRODUCTION

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lack of proper irrigation facilities	9	18	21	42	13	26	5	10	2	4
No adequate knowledge about technology	6	12	24	48	12	24	7	14	1	2
High cost and no regular supply of electricity	4	8	9	18	24	48	13	26	0	0
Lack of proper availability of raw materials	4	8	13	26	14	28	14	28	5	10

Source: Primary data

It is evident from Table 1 that 42% of them agree that they lack proper irrigation facilities. Majority (48%) of them showed a neutral opinion towards the statement that no adequate knowledge about technology. It is also clear that 48% have an impartial opinion towards the statement that there is a high cost and no regular supply of electricity. Lack of availability of raw materials for production is another major constrain faced by the respondenst.

TABLE 2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND PRODUCTION FACTORS – RESULT OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T TEST

Gender of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f	Sig.	t	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)
MALE	27	3.3519	.66960	.011	.918	.720	95%	.475
FEMALE	23	3.2174	.64537					

Source : Primary data N = 50

This result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean score for male ($M = 3.3519$, $SD = .66960$) and female ($M = 3.2174$, $SD = .64537$), ($t(95) = .720$, $p = .475$). This result suggests that gender of the tribal does not have an effect on the production factors such as lack of proper irrigation facilities, no adequate knowledge about technology, high cost and no regular supply of electricity, lack of proper availability of raw materials which act as a constrain in agricultural activities of tribes..

TABLE 3. PROBLEMS FACED BY TRIBES IN MARKETING

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No adequate price for the products	15	30	21	42	6	12	7	14	1	2
Unavailability of timely market information	4	8	21	42	20	40	3	6	2	4
Lack of transport facilities	13	26	9	18	14	28	10	20	4	8
Malpractices adopted by agents and intermediaries	2	4	9	18	26	52	9	18	4	8

Source : Primary data

It is clearly stated in Table 3 that most of the respondents (42%) agree that they doesn't get reasonable price for their products. Some of them (42%) agree that there exist unavailability of timely information regarding the market conditions. Majority (28%), (52%) are impartial regarding the transport facilities and malpractices adopted by agents and intermediaries respectively.

TABLE 3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND MARKETING FACTORS – RESULT OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T TEST

Gender of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f	Sig.	t	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)
MALE	27	3.3333	.74679	.001	.979	-.534	95%	.596
FEMALE	23	3.4457	.73452					

Source : Primary data N = 50

This result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean score for male ($M = 3.3333$, $SD = .74679$) and female ($M = 3.4457$, $SD = .73452$), ($t(95) = -.534$, $p = .596$). This result suggests that gender of the tribal does not have an effect on the

marketing factors such as no adequate price for the products, unavailability of timely market information, lack of transportation facilities, malpractices adopted by intermediaries and agents which acts as a constrain in agricultural activities of tribal.

7.3 Role played by Government

This area identifies the role played by government in the agricultural activities of tribes.

TABLE 4. ROLE PLAYED BY GOVERNMENT IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF TRIBES

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No subsidies and bonus	23	46	12	24	8	16	7	14	0	0
No adequate training programs	7	14	26	52	14	28	3	6	0	0
No support from govt. officials	3	6	18	36	18	36	10	20	0	0
No subsidies for commodities	3	6	6	12	27	54	12	24	2	4

Source : Primary data

From Table 4 it is clear that 23 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they are not getting any subsidies or bonus. Majority of them (52%) agree that adequate training programs are not taken place in their locality and 36% of them have a neutral opinion regarding the statement that “no support is offered from govt. officials”. Among the respondents, 54% have a neutral opinion that they don’t get any subsidies for the commodities.

TABLE 5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND GOVERNMENT FACTORS – RESULT OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T TEST

Gender of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f	Sig.	t	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)
MALE	27	3.435	.5701	.705	.405	-.557	95%	.580
FEMALE	23	3.533	.6670					

Source : Primary data N = 50

This result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean score for male ($M = 3.435$, $SD = .5701$) and female ($M = 3.533$, $SD = .6670$), ($t(95) = -.557$, $p = .580$). This result suggests that gender of the tribal does not have an effect on the government factors such as no subsidies and bonus, no adequate training program, no support and help from govt. officials and no commodity subsidies.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study identified that the agricultural activities of tribes are affected by a number of problems. Lack of post – harvest technologies, lack of access to credit, lack of storage facilities, lack of market information, lack of finance for farming, poorly developed village markets, poor producer prices, inadequate access roads and high transportation costs, inadequate training programmes and inadequate demonstration of new technologies were some of the problems faced by the tribal farmers. There exists a need to provide effective and efficient quality extension services in order to equip farmers with important skills. So the government should take initiatives for promoting agripreneurial activities among tribal as they are the major contributors in economic development of India.

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