

# ORIGIN OF THE SCHEDULED TRIBES IN TAMILNADU

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## Abstract

Though more than two thirds of the tribes depend on forests for an important part of their livelihood, forest management in India is state centered. In this framework, the process of development has come to be equated with the channelizing of an ever more intense volume of resources, through the intervention of the State apparatus and at the cost of the state exchanger, to sub serve interests of the urban and rural elite, as a results, state subsidies have become a central element of the hands of the merchants and money lenders who accompanied the industrial agent. Slowly their land was alienated to the money lender and some of them became bonded labourers. The hills tribe who are scattered in countries all over the world more or less resemble the Pre-historic human beings. It at all there are differences between these two groups it is this that the present day hill tribes have a language, established customs and traditions and better livelihood than the pre-historic human. But their improvements are not quite satisfactory. When compared to the civilized human of today, the tribes are far backward. They are yet to shed some of their age-old customs and manners which make them akin to the Pre-historic people.

## Introduction

Sociologists and Anthropologists have been doing a lot of researches inquiring into the customs and traditions of hill tribes. With the exception of a few areas we have a number of hill tribes in India, each are distinct from one another Tamil Nadu is also a state where we come across

a number of hill tribes. The word hill tribe denotes the fact that these tribes live in mountainous regions. Though more than two thirds of the tribes depend on forests for an important part of their livelihood, forest management in India is state centered. In this framework, the process of development has come to be equated with the channelizing of an ever more intense volume of resources, through the intervention of the State apparatus and at the cost of the state exchanger, to sub serve interests of the urban and rural elite, as a results, state subsidies have become a central element of the hands of the merchants and money lenders who accompanied the industrial agent. Slowly their land was alienated to the money lender and some of them became bonded labourers. India has the second largest tribal population of the world next to African countries. As many-as 250 tribal groups live in isolated regions of the country. They constitute 7.76 per cent of the total populations of the country. The group speak about 105 languages and 225 subsidiary languages. Sri Govind Ballabha pant also gave more importance to the tribal people. In his own words he says. India is a vast country with a rich variety culture and our tribal brothers occupy a very important place. According to the census of 1981 out the total population of 68, 51, 84, 692, in India, 4, 98, 30, 435 belong to category of scheduled tribes and they constitute about 7 percent of the population of the country. These tribes are the indigenous people of India because they have settled in different parts of the country before the Aryan settlements India. The tribal people play a vital role in the Indian social set-up because they belong to a weaker section of the society and the most backward people of the country.

### **Ethraicity of Tribal people in Tamil Nadu**

'Tribe' is a group of people with a common ancestry, language, culture, historical tradition and identifiable territory. Tribe is a group of human social organization based on small groups defined by traditions of common on descent and having temporary or permanent political integration above the family level and a shared language, cultures and ideology. The term 'tribe' is derived from Latin word 'tribe' meaning one third which originally referred to one of the three people who united to found Rome before 24113.c. The English word 'tribe' is the first to refer the

Hebrews. The word suggests simple folk living in the hills and forest. The 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' means a political unit, and was used to refer to social groups defined by the territory they occupied. Tribe is a social group in which there are many clans, nomadic bands, villagers or other sub groups which usually have a definite geographical area, a distinct culture and either a common political organization or at least a feeling of common determination against strangers". The English word tribe has the following five different meanings. The word is derived from Latin language for the clans of romans were termed as tribes: The word also refers to similar division, either natural or political.

According to the oxford dictionary, a tribe is a group of people in primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of chief and usually regarding themselves as having common ancestor this is enough as far as it goes by it does not go far enough. In life sciences the meaning of 'tribe' is very different. It refers to a taxonomic category (family). It does not refer even to a subspecies or race which is an artificial division of species.

As defined in the imperial Gazette of India, a tribal is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and which have been if they are not endogamous. Barbarous the tribe is a group of person having a common definite territory common dialect common name, common religion and culture. They are united by blood relationship and have peculiar political organization.

Etymologically, the term derives its origin from the word tribe meaning three divisions namely the Negritos, the Mongoloids and the Mediterranean or the Peroto Astrolodis. The Negritos are believed to be the earliest inhabitants of India living in central region. The tribes of sub-Himalayan region represent the Mongoloids. The Mediterranean's live in the peninsular India. Morgan (1877) defined the tribes as a group which possessed social institutions but not political ones. They live in the relative isolation of the hills and the forests. There are two ways of setting about in search of a definition of the 'tribe'. The first is to examine the existing definitions which

have been worked out on general consideration. The second is to analyze the specific conditions in India and to find out the attributes, which are distinctive of groups conventionally regarded as tribes". A 'tribe' is a collection of individuals sharing a common culture a clear linguistic well-defined political and cultural boundaries. 'A tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions, rules by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united language or dialect, recognizing social distance from tribes to caste but without any stigma attached in the case of a caste structure following tribal tradition, beliefs and customs, liberal of naturalization of ideas from alien source and above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.

At present the term 'tribe' according to western writers, generally means as ethnic group, geographically isolated or semi-isolated, identified with one particular territory and having instinct social, economic and cultural traditions and practices. In the Indian context, the term has undergone further change, particularly in post independent period. Robert Red field an expert in tribal studies has put forward four qualities for describing the tribes. They are distinctiveness, smallness homogeneity and self-sufficiency. The trials are recognized as social groups. These groups are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sect having the following features via a definite territory or, who claim to occupy a common territory a common nature, a common dialect, a common culture, behavior of an endogamous group, common taboos, existence of distinctive social and political systems, full faith in their leaders and self. Sufficiency in their distinct economy.

The term 'tribe' is an introduction of the British in India. For the first time, the attempt to have classified information about the tribes was done by them. In the census report of 1891 J.A.Bains, the commissioner of census classified the caste according to their traditional occupations. Under their category of agricultural and pastoral caste he formed a sub-heading called 'Forest Tribes'. In the census report of 1901, they were classified as 'Animists' and in 1911 as tribal animist' or people following tribal religion. In census reporting 1921 they were specified as "hill

and forest tribes" and their number was estimated to be 16 million, 1931 census described them as primitive tribes. The Government of India Act, 1935 specified the tribal population as 'Backward Tribe'. However, in the Census Report of 1941, they were classified as tribes only some distinguished anthropologists have put forth the various terminologies for describing these groups. Riley, Elwin, Martin, Sedgwick, A.V.Thakkar and others have described or aboriginals. Hutton called them primitive Tribes. Dr.Ghurye described them as 'Advises' hile others designated them as 'submerged humanity further T.B.Nayak emphasized the following criteria in identifying a tribe in Indian situation. There should be a comparative geographical isolation of the people with others. Culturally the people toe the tribes should have a common dialect through a may be subject to regional variations a tribe to be the tribe should be politically organized and its community panchayats should be an influential institution.

Tribal communities reside in about 15percent of the country's areas, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains, forest bills to inaccessible areas. Tribal groups are at different stages of social economic and educational development, while some tribal communities have adopted the main stream way of life. At one end of the spectrum, there are 75 primitive Tribal groups at the other who are characterized by: A re-agriculture level of technology, stagnant or declining population, extremely low literacy and a subsistence level of economy. According to the 1941 census, the population of the scheduled tribes in the composites state of Madras was 5-6 lakhs and in 1951 it was 6-4 lakhs. But after reorganization of states the population of the schedule tribes in Tamil Nadu was reduced to 2-5 laksh in 1961. As per the 1961 census, the scheduled Tribes in our state form only .8 percent of the total scheduled tribe's population in India and .75 percent of the total population of TamilNadu. The total population of scheduled tribes in the 1971, was 31,515 constitute .76% and in the year 1981. There were totally 52,2,26 constitute 1.08% in 1991 the scheduled caster were 558946 refers 1.3% in 2.01 there were 651321 refers 1.02% It is evident that the above table explains that there were 5, 74,194 persons /belonging to schedules tribes in Tamil Nadu when compared to the total population of 5, 5946 in 1991. They constituted 1.03%

percent of the total population of the state in 1991. They constituted 1.03% percent in 1981. Through there is a drop in the ratio of scheduled tribes to the total population in 1991. Registering a growth rate of 1.37 percent during the decade. The Malayalam forms the biggest tribe with 53.7 percent and next to it is the Irular with 33.9 percent. The schoolgirl, the Kattunaykans and pariyans are also fairly appreciable in strength the well-known tribes of Todas, kotas, Kadars and Muduvar to be minor ones from the point of view in their numbers. They are each last than in number. The largest tribal population is centre in Salem district, where it forms 2.64 percent of the population of the area. The largest tribal group according to the report of the ministry of education and social welfare is that of the adiyans. Next come to mudugr or mud van. Among the districts, Nilgiri district has the highest tribal population where the ratio is 3.53 percent Salem and Thirvannamalai districts are the other two districts with a comparatively higher population of scheduled tribes and the ratio in these districts is also more than 3 percent. The tribal population ranges between 1 and 2 % in four districts they are changelpaatu 1.24% North Arcot 1.65% Dharmapur 1.96% and South Arcot 1.19%.

### **Conclusion**

There are fifteen major tribal groups in Tamil Nadu with very many sub sects all numbering to more than 30 tribes. Out of all these groups the Malayalis are the majority amounting to 60% of the total internal population. They live in three hill area viz. Jawadhus, Kolli Hills and Pachaimalai Hills. Each group lives a separated life having no marriage connections. Out of the total Malayali population nearly 70% live in Jawadhus. They allow other tribals like Kurumbas, Irulars, Irula Poochanees, to live with them and work for them. On the whole there was no intermingling other than general contacts. The general contacts, mostly through contractors and the men who go over there for sowing, collecting and loading of forest products as well as grazing from the plains who go to the hills with their cattle was considerable. Quite a substantial awareness among the tribals was created by intermingling with them. Though it had good effect on the society, it led to certain health problems also. The hills tribe who are scattered in countries all over the world more or less

resemble the Pre-historic human beings. It at all there are differences between these two groups it is this that the present day hill tribes have a language, established customs and traditions and better livelihood than the pre-historic human. But their improvements are not quite satisfactory. When compared to the civilized human of today, the trials are for backward. They are yet to shed some of their age-old customs and manners which make them akin to the Pre-historic people. Tribes living in isolation, which in turn was allowing them to live a life of their own with the set pattern and a limited contact with plains. Even though they were aware of the life pattern in the plains, the civic facilities what the plains people enjoy, they remained passive.

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