

SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to highlight the social and economical empowerment of Tribal women in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu in India. Among the 36 tribal communities of Tamil Nadu, six of them are found in the southern most of Kanyakumari District. They are Kaniyan, Kanikkaran, Kattunayakan, Kuluvan, Malaivedan, Malaikuravan. This article focused only Kani tribes in Kanyakumari District. Tribe who inhabits the Forest Mountains of the southernmost Kanyakumari District of Tamilnadu. They tribe live in 48 settlement scattered over mountains and forest. The habitat area of the tribe is categorized under the sites of the world heritage sites that geographically fall under the Western Ghats in the Agasthiyar Sub-Clusters.

Key words : Kani, Kanikkaran, Tribal women SHGs,

Introduction

The term 'tribe' denotes a group of people living in primitive or barbarous conditions. It is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions. They have a headman or a chief who control the activities of that group. Tribal have several sub-groups all of them together known as 'tribal society'. It is really difficult to say whether they are Indigenous or not but they are earliest settlers of India. They were living in forests since early times and even now some of the groups follow the same trends and live in forest. Since they are older settlers and living in forest they are known as Vanyajati, Vanvasi, Pahari, Adivasi, Anusuchit Jati, Anusuchit Jamati, etc., in Indian Language. Tribal have their own culture and social life and thus are important in India. The Social-economic status of tribal women are not satisfactory. Diversity of horticultural important crops are scattered throughout the green vegetation of tribal people. Horticultural education and training can help the tribal women to be self sufficient through placement in different Government or private institutions or through self employment scheme. Tribal women also may be nutritionally and medically

more secure through horticulture education. Society also may be gainer from their service in different aspect. The majority of feminist literature on the states of women asserts that in comparison to women in other countries , They are relatively well positioned as a result of nearly six decades of states social programs with the provisions of universal education, health care and food sub siders.

Social development means bringing about improvement in the social being of the people and as such lays stress on provision of health services, education, housing, cultural amenities, protection of children, a change in the status of women ,regulation of labour and improved status for workers and reeducation of disease, poverty and other social ailments. Tribal societies are said to have no special preference for or prejudices against women. Though there are clear differences between the roles of men and women in some spheres of tribal life the status of women cannot be said to be low on every count. Women have an important place in tribal society. Though the term status of women does not have a very clear cut or specific definition it is basically related to women's roles as well as performance in important areas of social and economic.

Kani settlements

‘Kaani’ means ‘owner of the land’. In the ancient period, the ‘Kaanis’ were called “Malai Arasar” 38 which means ‘kings of the forest’. Most of the thick forests were under their control. They lived in small huts. The huts are constructed with the help of wood, mud, and grass. They contain only limited facilities. The kaanikaran, who call themselves Kaanikkar and Kaanikkarar, are referred to as kaanikka by others.

There are 48 kani settlements in Kanyakumari district. Women is called Kanikkaree, Men is called Kanikkaran. The tribal women are generally dwarf and small in size. They are dark-skinned and platyrhined type. They are straight forward, truthful and open-hearted. They are usually helpful to the new visitors of the forest. Women wear Maravuri inside the house covering breast to the feet. They don't use foot wears women put up dress after the age of 14. Women use blouse above waist and dhotis below waist. Both men and Women wear ear studs made of brass or silver.

Good health is a prerequisite to human productivity and the development process. The progress of society greatly depends on the quality of its people. Health is the greatest possession it lays a solid foundation for his happiness. Health was vital for ethical, artistic, material and spiritual development of human being. Health is not only basic to leading a happy life for an individual but it is also necessary for all productive activities in the society.

The new generation tribes are coming out of the forest to get cure of their diseases since they expect a sudden relief from it. For looking after the health condition of the tribal people a special facility is arranged known as "The Mobile Outreach Programme for the Tribes". It is there to do the needful for these people consists of a van with a doctor ,a head nurse and a lab technician The van has all the facilities to take care of the health of these people. They used to travel different areas during the week days

Today the government constructs so many school for the tribes. They went up to school education. They did not appear for higher education. There are a number of schools but the enrollment number is comparatively less among the girls. Instead they send the girls to do their house-hold work and the like. Tribal girls also improved the Higher education. Girls Hostel scheme was started in the third five year plan. Its main aim was to provide residential facilities to the tribal girls in pursuit of education. The tribal students in the hostel are provide with free mats, double set uniform and text book, notes books, bathing oil, soap, surf, face powder and play things. Scholarship system has been started in all Tribal Residential School are benefited the scholarship.

A Family consists of husband, Wife and children. The wife enjoys equal status with her husband .Both sit and chat together. Both eat together from the same leaf or separately. Both go out for food gathering. Though a woman is debarred from possessing land, she has an enviable position at home. When a women is about to become a mother in the hamlets adjoining Kulathupuzha and Neduyangad, She is lodged in a seclusion-shed. Delivery takes place there. Old women who are experience d in midwifery attend on her and aid in the delivery.

Economic is a science of wealth. It is the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses. Agriculture is the chief occupation of the kani. Now the tribal women are empowering gradually in all the fields . Likewise in the economical side also they empowered to some extent. The women are undergoing a lot of self employment such as tapping, clearing the weeds from the forest, goat, hen, honeybee rearing , getting fuel wood forest, tailoring, growing, valuable things like pepper and the like.

The tribal women are mostly engaged in earning money through rearing of earthworm for the preparations of natural manure. The way they prepare manure is that in a big tank they hoard vast leaves of all kinds and sprinkle some amount of cow-dung over it. Earth worm is dropped in to the tank and it is closed for four months. Then it will be taken out and the manure is collected . Then they sell it in the Horticulture Research Center at the rate of 5 rupees per kg. This is the main income for

these tribal The tribal women are also involved in making baskets and mats with the help of bamboo sticks. These things got popularity among the other people since using such things have some medicinal values. In all these ways they are empowering now.

Further special efforts have been made to improve the women development among tribal. The forest department has established 29 women self-help group Rs8.76 lakhs of lone amount and revolving fund has been provided to tribal women self-help group.⁵ tribal women SHGs at Motheramalai and Mookaraikal are engaged in bamboo seedlings production, spinning, tailoring, etc., Through DRDA Rs, 10,000/-assistance has been provided to each 22 tribal women SHG on the request of the forest department. Further the kani women SHGs have been provided with Rs:2 lakhs loan from Indian overseas bank the initiative of forest department

Kanis in the forest area follow traditional form of administration to maintain law and order in their settlement. A well organized social system of kanis, functions effectively in hierarchical manner. Through they are uneducated, they administer their settlement effective and interesting manner, without violating the traditions of the land. The kanis pay special attention to old from of cultivation and entertainments The people in the plain area are familiar with the ancient form the cultivations. At present they are used wi9th modern method of cultivations They are getting less and less opportunities in education sector. In the long run the life of the tribes will be progress. The economy of kanis is limited and not self-sufficient one. They have no land of their own.

Hence, their cultivations in mainly centered around the banks of the river, streams and lakes, When comparing the life of kanis in hilly area with the civilized people in the plain their living condition is simple and deplorable. They used the natural fruits and roots freely available in the forest. The honey collected from forest is used as medicine.

END NOTES

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