

Livelihood Status Of Uraly Tribes In Sathyamangalam Block, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract: The present study focuses on livelihood issues of Uraly tribes which is one of the thirty-six tribal communities in Tamil Nadu. The tribal populace is one of the most underprivileged communities in various social, economic and other factors in India. The problem of survival has become a major concern of tribal communities in the current scenario. Despite numerous initiatives for the welfare of these communities, tribal communities still stand at the lowest end of the country's socio-economic ladder. The current study examined the livelihood issues of Uraly tribes in Kuthiyalathur Panchayat, which is located in Sathyamangalam block of Erode district, Tamil Nadu. The descriptive research design is adopted and a self-structured interview schedule was used in this research study to collect primary data. The study findings throw light on key livelihood issues of Uraly tribes, which are liable for their present predicaments. The study identifies critical concerns like wild-animal menace in agriculture, which indeed necessitate prompt action from the authorities. This study suggests taking that the promotion of livelihoods among Uraly tribes requires alternative occupation with sustainable development in the study area.

Key Words: Uraly tribes, livelihood, Poverty, Kuthiyalathur Panchayat

1. INTRODUCTION

Every indigenous community lifestyle and culture is different and is linked to the use of a particular natural resource and work type. The tribal groups who reside in and around the forest have been engaging in hunting and gathering, farming and changing agriculture for centuries. They had collected resources from the forest without causing any harm to it. The tribal populace is one of most underprivileged communities in India. Scheduled Tribes Population depicts national, state and even district heterogeneity with differences in language, cultural practices and living patterns that influence their socio-economic status. The Department for International Development (DFID) (2000) states; "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". The problem of survival has become a major concern of tribal communities in the current scenario. Despite numerous initiatives for the welfare of these communities, tribal communities still stand at the lowest end of the country's socio-economic ladder. While our national leaders and constitutional leaders are committed to elevating the tribal community, a desired amount of development has not yet been achieved (Chandra Guru, 2015). The paradigm for sustainable living was based on the belief that individuals require resources to create a positive outcome of life. People have very different forms of capital that blend to help them achieve the livelihoods they are searching for. Simply put, these are combinations of people's skills and capital (including social physical, economic, natural and material assets) and the actions they perform to make a living and achieve their goals and ambitions. As per 2011 census, tribes constitute 7.95 lakhs people which account more than one percent of

Tamil Nadu's total population. Among the thirty-six scheduled tribe communities in Tamil Nadu, five scheduled tribal communities are sharing majority of 80.32% in the state scheduled tribal population namely Malayali, Irular, Kattunayakan, Kurumans, and Uraly. Comprehensive research was therefore conducted to examine the living condition of Uraly tribes of Kuthiyalathur Panchayat of Sathyamangalam block in the Erode district of Tamil Nadu.

1. Methods

The main objective of the research study is to identify the livelihood problems of Uraly tribes in Sathyamangalam Taluk of Erode district, Tamil Nadu. The specific objectives of the research study were to find out the socio-demographic profile and to identify the livelihood issues of the respondents. The study was carried out in Kuthiyalathur Panchayat, situated in Erode District's Sathyamangalam Community Block. The descriptive research model was embraced for the study by the researchers. A self-structured interview schedule was administered. The researchers have chosen Uraly tribes who are residing in Kuthiyalathur Panchayat of Sathyamangalam block. The sample size of the research study was forty households and the researcher has selected twenty households randomly from every two hamlets respectively. Systematic statistical analysis was used to know the current problems of the livelihood.

2. Results

The livelihood issues of Uraly tribes were analysed from the primary data collected from the field are interpreted in detail below:

3.1. Socio-demographic profile

Table 1 - Socio-Demographic Profile of the respondents (sample size 40 households)

| Variable | | Frequency N=40 (%) |
|----------|-------------|--------------------|
| Religion | Hindu | 170 (100.0%) |
| Age | 0-6 years | 6 (4.61%) |
| | 7-15 years | 21 (16.15%) |
| | 16-25 years | 28 (21.53%) |
| | 26-35 years | 29 (22.30%) |
| | 36-45 years | 26 (20%) |
| | 46-55 years | 10 (7.69%) |
| | 56-65 years | 7 (5.38%) |

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| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | 66 years and above | 3 (2.30%) |
| Land ownership | 1 acre | 3 (7.5%) |
| | 2 acres | 4 (10%) |
| | 3 acres | 2 (5%) |
| | 4 acres | 5 (12.5%) |
| | 8 acres | 1 (2.5%) |
| | 3 cent | 21 (52.5%) |
| | No Land | 4 (10%) |
| Family Type | Nuclear | 34 (85.00%) |
| | Joint | 6 (15.00%) |
| Educational Qualification | Non Literate | 68 (52.31%) |
| | Nil (Infant) | 6 (4.62%) |
| | Primary | 18 (13.85%) |
| | Middle | 20 (15.38%) |
| | Secondary | 13 (10%) |
| | Higher Secondary | 1 (0.77%) |
| | Dip. In Nursing | 1 (0.77%) |
| Occupation | Drop Out (Middle) | 3 (2.30%) |
| | Agriculture labour and Daily wage | 77 (59.69%) |
| | House Wife | 5 (3.88%) |
| | Nurse | 1 (0.78%) |
| | Student | 20 (15.50%) |
| | Textile | 3 (2.33%) |
| | None | 24 (18.60%) |

Source: Primary Data

The specific objective of the study to find out the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and from table 1, Out of forty families, thirty-four families were nuclear and six families were joint families. More than three fourth (85%) of Uraly tribes are living in nuclear families who are instrumental in determining the family size. More than one-fourth of Uraly families have a family size of three (37.5%) and four (27.5%) respectively which shows Uraly tribe's family size is small. The age group of the respondents were seems to be equal representation as little less than one fourth (22.30%) of respondents were in the age group of 26 years to 35 years as well as little more than one fifth (21.53%) of respondents were in the age group of 16 years to 25 years and one fifth (20%) of respondents were in the age group of 36 years to 45 years. Most of the respondents were young and fewer respondents (7.58%) were in elderly. Little more than half (52.31%) of members have not attended the schools. Out of total population, little more than two-fifth (42%) members were in the age group of 0 - 25 years i.e. children and youth. But little more than one fifth (15%) of members who were currently pursuing their studies at the time of data collection. Three respondents (2.30%) were stopped attending schools within six months and their parents could not help them to send back to school. Nearly three-fifths (59.69%) respondents were engaged in agriculture labour in daily wages for their occupation. Little less than one fifth (18.6%) respondents were not engaged in any occupation due to their age factors. Only one respondent has completed diploma in nursing and working as nurse in nearby town hospital. Less than one fifth (15.50%) of respondents were studying different grades in schools. It is clear that more than half (52.5%) of the families were having three cents of land and those land were allotted by government with semi-pucca house. Even one-tenth (10%) of families were not holding any land.

2.2. Income Status

The findings shows that, One fourth (25%) of total Uraly tribal families had monthly income less than rupees 1000 and less than one fifth (5%) of families had an income above rupees 5000 per month. Remarkably, it is observed that about four percent of the source of incomes of respondents is from salaried occupations. The level of income is found to be very pitiful.

2.3. Household expenses

It is evident that household expenses per week expenses for food, health, transport, etc. of Uraly families were more than one fourth (27.5% and 37.5%) between rupees five hundred to one thousand and rupees one thousand and one to one thousand five hundred respectively. Little less than one fifth (15%) families were spending rupees one thousand five hundred to two thousand per week for their household expenses.

2.4. Debt status

The debt status of Uraly families is diversified from the range of rupees fifteen thousand to seventy thousand. Little more than two-fifth (42.5%) of families do not have any debt. Little more than one fifth (12.5%) of the family's debt level is rupees twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand and rupees forty-five thousand to fifty thousand respectively. One-tenth (10%) of families have debts of rupees thirty to thirty-five thousand and rupees sixty-five thousand to seventy thousand respectively.

2.5. Sanitation

Sanitation is important for a healthy life and depicts that, little more than three-fifth (65%) of families are having toilet facility in their home but out of twenty-six families (65%) seventeen families(42.5%) were not using them. A little less than (35%) of families do not have toilet facilities.

2.6. Usages of energy

From the primary data it is interpreted that little more than half (52.5%) of the families were using grid energy without paying the bill due to the provision of free hundred units by the Tamil Nadu government. Less than one fifth (15%) families were having grid connection and were paying less than rupees one fifty per two months as current bill. More than one fourth (32.5%) families were not having power supply and mostly depended upon kerosene light during night time.

2.7. Man-wild animal menace

The tribal area mostly affected by wild animals like any other tribal area and little more than half (55%) of families were affected by elephant attack in their land or agricultural land. Due to elephant attack, Uraly tribes could not cultivate ragi and tapioca in their lands and among those who were holding lands (37.5%) were forced go for ration rice as their consumptions.

2.8. Usages of Communication

Little more than three-fifth (62.5%) of families were having communication devices (mobile, television) and 5% were having laptop which was given by state government. Little less than two-fifth (32.5%) of families was still did not have any communication devices as mainstream communities.

3. DISCUSSION

Article 46 of the Indian Constitution explicitly recognizes the need to safeguard the interests of the weaker sections of society, particularly those of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Bakshi, 2014). This study reveals that little more than half of respondents have never undergone schooling in their lifetime and due to lack of land-owning among tribes, more than half (59.69%) were engaged in agricultural labour. Among the Uraly tribes most of them have to work in sugarcane farms to pay back loans. It's kind of semi-bonded labour, but the tribes have very few options. Because of this, respondents have to live in nearby cities for one to two months and have not been able to focus on the education of their children. The drop-out rate is more common during the cultivation period as children are required to assist their family members in seeding, weeding, planting, and harvesting activities. Economic distress is a significant factor in tribal children dropping out (Ghosh, 2007). Education becomes a luxury for the tribal family in a circumstance of extreme necessity of life (Pradhan 2011). Xaxa (2011) observed that formal education was not introduced to traditional tribal culture. It was the Christian missionaries who brought to tribal society. This new concept of education system was alien to the traditional tribal environment; young tribal children do not want to stay in it. Entering school brings a new and unfamiliar world where the child may not be able to adjust. The tribal students did feel uncomfortable as those engaged in imparting knowledge are outsiders to their community. In tribal society, the serious problem of high drop-out levels is also connected to this trend to a considerable extent. The Higher educational qualification leads to the intensity of individuals, which in effect is linked with good financial and social skills. Training is therefore considered an important variable in poverty reduction, on which development programs should be focused (Butler and Mazur, 2007). The central and state government social security schemes were mostly helping them to sustain their livelihood i.e. public distribution system, free hundred units' electricity and free pieces like television, laptop and mixer. This indeed is the most important source of livelihood. Uraly tribes were living are with household assets given by the state government. In one way, government free pieces (for example Fan, Television, and Gas Cylinder) are helping their day to day life. Out of forty households little more than one third (37.5%) of respondents were holding land varies from one acre to eight acres and remaining respondents half of them (52.5%) got three cents of land given for government with semi-pucca house which shows Uraly tribes land-owning was very low for cultivation purposes. The extremely low landings could be a significant factor behind their extreme poverty as a social group (Kumar and Chaudhary, 2005). This leads to severe repercussions in employment, and in turn results in deprivation from one's earnings. The findings from a study by (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003), indicate that there is a greater trend of economically and socially deprived groups falling into most vulnerable occupations. Numerous factors are identified for the slow improvement among the Scheduled Tribes at this part of the globe which includes poor irrigation, displacement, and relocation and slow stride of attempts for resettlement and recovery (Reddy & Kumar 2010). As a result of the virtual failure of previous developmental programmes and the consequential poor conditions of existence of the people, apathy, and insensitivity towards progressive projects, in

general, has grown among the population, especially the youth. At present, the source of livelihoods is diversified. The number of Uraly tribe who depends on forest for their livelihood is very minimal. Most of the community members are working as agricultural labourers depending on daily wages. The current occupation is not sustaining their livelihood status. Lack of tribal communities in the state's political activism created a situation in which the tribal people's voice rarely received attention (Janu, C. K. and Geethanandan, M. 2003). The primary reason for fostering livelihoods is the conviction that all human beings have the basic right to equal opportunity. Poor people have no choices in life, nor do they have resources. Ensuring that a poor family has a comfortable lifestyle will raise its income significantly and over a period of time would improve possession of property, self-esteem and public involvement (Rengasamy, 2016). With the lack of livelihood assets, the mission of fostering livelihoods for the vulnerable is the hour's need. According to psychologist Lines (2004), among the empirically verified consequences of participation is to improve people's motivation and dedication. Obviously, the livelihoods of local people and even their sustainability sometimes depend on local and national natural resources (e.g., Whittingham et al, 2003; Fisher & IUCN, 2005). This is a statement that was accepted in a large study on the relationship between community and development by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). They concluded that "unless economic development has a cultural basis, it can never lead to truly lasting development. Culture is 'not' something 'to be taken into consideration'. It is fundamental" (UNESCO, 1995, p. 1) It was understood that development must be done from the viewpoint of disadvantaged people who understand their personal perception of what it entails to be bad and what a good life involves (Narayan et al., 2007). Therefore, because protected areas and ecosystems are a long-term achievement, a sustainability program depends on local benefits and support (Nepal, 2000; Child, 2004; Lockwood & Kothari, 2006). From the above finding and analysis it was observed that low level of livelihoods. Analyzing the research area's livelihood through a holistic process has allowed local issues to be established and solutions to address these issues.

4. CONCLUSION

Livelihood, for Uraly tribes in Kuthiyalathur Panchayat, is a thing of contradiction. In contrary to the general perception, the marginalization of other communities is found in its worst form in Tamil Nadu. From above discussion, it is clear that Tamil Nadu presented a scene of a "paradox within a paradox" in spite of its tribal groups' extreme marginalization. The efforts taken by the government to develop the Schedule Tribes are still not materialized in this region. Illiteracy is still prevailing, Poverty is found more among the Uraly tribes and the government spending on the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes population is still awaiting attention. Employment oriented and professionalized instruction coupled with active use of resources available at the vicinity needs to be encouraged. Collaborative efforts between governments at different levels, Non-Governmental organizations, corporate sectors, and community-based organizations need to be augmented. This study suggests taking that the promotion of livelihoods among tribal people requires a paradigm shift with sustainable development and the elimination of poverty in the area.

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