

Tribal Development in Karnataka State

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Abstract

The Karnataka state has a sizeable chunk of tribal population. According to the 2011 Census Report, a majority of the tribes in Karnataka constitute the workforce in agriculture, cottage industry and other unorganized sectors. The Department of Tribal Welfare was formed specifically to address the needs of STs in Karnataka. The Government of Karnataka has launched series of development programmes for the empowerment of women and weaker sections. Karnataka state has witnessed several tribal development initiatives over a period of time. The Department of Tribal Welfare earmarks three per cent of their plan budget for expenditure on tribal development in the state. The objectives of the Tribal Sub Plan are poverty alleviation, protection of tribal culture, education, healthcare and providing basic minimum infrastructure. Most of the tribal areas of Karnataka state are deprived of basic needs, infrastructural facilities, sustainable livelihood opportunities and developmental resources. The percentage of permanent houses for tribes is less than 40.0% according to the latest data. The poor sanitary condition of ST households is highlighted by the 2011 Census data, which shows that 76.8 per cent of households do not have latrines and 62.0 per cent do not have any kind of drainage facilities. It is a well-accepted fact that access to knowledge is crucial to improving the human development status of people in the tribal areas.

A majority of the tribes practically constitute the workforce and remain at the receiving end from development point of view. The occupational distribution shows that the majority of the tribal people are small and marginal farmers and agricultural labor. The educational, health and development status of tribes has not improved substantially over a period of time. The non-tribes have snatched away the reservation benefits and developmental opportunities of the tribes because of their proximity to the power structure. Series of innovative, need based and area specific tribal development measures are required in Karnataka state to achieve the goal of tribal development in letter and spirit.

Introduction

Karnataka state has achieved commendable progress in all walks of life in the post-independence era. The Government of Karnataka has launched series of development programmes for the empowerment of women and weaker sections. Tribal development is a multi-directional process which demands active mobilization of tribes and participation of various stakeholders of tribal development in the process of development. Public-Private Partnership is essential to achieve the goal of tribal development in the new millennium. Karnataka state has witnessed several tribal development initiatives over a period of time. But, the tribes continue to remain economically weak and vulnerable sections of society in the state. An overview of tribal development in Karnataka state is presented in this article based on review of relevant literature.

Tribes in Karnataka

The Karnataka state has a sizeable chunk of tribal population. There are both primitive tribes and other tribes who are spread across the state. The prominent tribes of Karnataka include –Adiyan, Barda, Bavacha, Bamcha, Bhil, Bhil Garasia, sholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, Dungri Garasia, Mewasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Tadvi Bhil, Bhagalia, Bhilala, Pawra, Vasava, Vasave, Chenchu, Chenchwar, Chodhara, Dubla, Talavia, Halpati, Gamit, Gamta, Gavit, Mavchi, Padvi, Valvi, Goud, Naikpod, Rajgond, Gowdalu, Hakkipikki, Hasalaru, Irular, Iruliga, Jenu Kuruba, Kadu Kuruba, Kammara, Kanivan, Kanyan, Kathodi, Katkari, Dhor Kathodi, Dhor Katkari, Son Kathodi, Son Katkari, Kattunayakan, Kokna, Kokni, Kukna, Koli Dhor, Tokre Koli, Kolcha, Kolgha, Konda Kapus, Koraga, Kota, Koya, Bhine Koya, Rajkoya, Kudiyam Melekudi, Kuruba, Kurumans, Maha Malasar, Malaikudi, Malasar, Malayekandi, Maleru, Maratha, Marati, Meda, Naikda, Nayaka, Chollivala Nayaka, Kapadia Nayaka, Mota Nayaka, Nana, Nayaka, Naik Nayak, Beda, Bedar, Valmiki, Palliyan, Paniyan, Pardhi, Advichincher, Phase Pardhi, Patelia, Rathawa, Sholaga, Soligaru, Toda, Varli, Vitolia, kotwalia, barodia, Yerava and Siddi.

According to the 2011 Census Report, a majority of the tribes in Karnataka constitute the workforce in agriculture, cottage industry and other unorganized sectors. They continue to live under the precarious livelihood status economically because of their low literacy and lack of vocational skills. The urban tribes are slightly better placed than their rural counterparts. Their status has not improved considerably due to non-implementation of various tribal development programmes. They do not have adequate land ownership opportunities and income generating

capabilities due to inbuilt constraints. They are also known for small and semi-medium land holdings in the state. Their per capital monthly income does not exceed Rs.500 states Karnataka Human Development Report (2005:07).

Tribal Development in Karnataka

Karnataka state has achieved notable progress in the fields of agriculture, industry, education, science, technology, human development, media management and other sectors of development. The state has also emphasized the need and importance of tribal development in the post-independence era. Series of tribal development programmes are implemented across the state for the welfare and progress of tribal people. The government has also formulated a policy on tribal development and implemented Tribals Sub-Plan (TSP) which is the Special Component Plan (SCP) of national Fifth Five-Year Plan. In particular, the Department of Tribal Welfare was formed specifically to address the needs of STs in Karnataka. Its budget is part of the budget of the Department of Social Welfare.

The Department of Tribal Welfare was formed specifically to address the needs of STs in Karnataka. Its budget is part of the budget of the Department of Social Welfare. The concept of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and its counterpart the Special Component Plan (SCP) emerged in the National Fifth Five-Year Plan. The Tribal Sub-Plan was first introduced in 1976-77 when it was implemented in select districts of Karnataka state. This project was extended to all districts in the state in 1992. The objectives of the TSP are poverty alleviation, protection of tribal culture, education, healthcare and providing basic minimum infrastructure.

Chandrapoojari (2004:03) states: “Several programmes are also included for the welfare and progress of tribes under Tribal Sub-Plan. They include- agriculture and soil conservation, horticulture, animal husbandry, forest, co-operation, area development RD programmes – SGSY, minor irrigation, power-transmission, industries and commerce, sericulture, handloom and textiles, KIADB, primary and secondary education, adult education, PU education, collegiate education, technical education, vocational Education, university education, Kannada and culture, IREP, Karnataka panchayat grants, Karnataka rural service delivery project, non-conventional source of energy, rural water supply, tanks improvement, Rastriya Samvikas Yojana, rural roads, rural communications, rural employment, national employment guarantee scheme, grants to PRIs, road transport, housing department, IAY, scheduled tribes welfare, TSP pooled fund, labor, women

and child welfare, PWD- roads and bridges, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, urban development, major and medium irrigation and health and family welfare”.

Chandrashekar (2004:02) observes: “The Tribal Sub-Plan was first introduced in 1976-77 when it was implemented in the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) in the districts of Mysore, Chikmagalur, Kodagu and Dakshina Kannada (including Udupi). In 1992, it was extended to all districts in the state. The objectives of the TSP are poverty alleviation, protection of tribal culture, education, healthcare and providing basic minimum infrastructure. Poverty alleviation includes programmes in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, horticulture, village and small industries as well as all employment-generating schemes such as Swarna Jayanthi Swarozgar Yojana (SJSY)”.

Directorate of Tribal Development (2014:05) amplifies: “Poverty alleviation includes programmes in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, horticulture, village and small industries as well as all employment-generating schemes such as Swarna Jayanthi Swarozgar Yojana (SJSY). Pooling TSP funds under the TSP, departments’ earmark three per cent of their plan budget for expenditure on tribal development. However, as in the case of the Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes, some departmental schemes were not particularly relevant or effective and ended up being symbolic gestures to the development of STs. The TSP funds were first pooled in 1991. In ‘pooling’, funds earmarked under TSP are partially or completely withdrawn from the department. The resultant corpus is then utilized to finance three strategic areas: housing, education (construction of hostels) and financing irrigation wells and pump sets under the Ganga Kalyan scheme”.

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The Department of Scheduled Tribes Welfare is implementing various programmes for the educational, social and economic development of Scheduled Tribes in Karnataka. The Department of Scheduled Tribes Welfare is implementing various schemes for the all round development of Scheduled Tribes in the State. A Super Time Scale KAS officer heads the Department of Scheduled Tribes Welfare as the Director at State level. The Director is assisted by two Deputy Directors,

one Assistant Director, one Research Officer, one Accounts Officer, One Assistant Statistical Officer, and other staff in the Directorate. In the District level, the Departmental schemes are being implemented through the District Social Welfare Officers in 16 Districts, In 5 ITDP Districts, i.e. in Mysore, Kodagu, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Chickamagalur Districts, Project Co-ordinators are working and in 9 District i.e. Chitradurga, Belgaum, Raichur, Chamarajnagar, Davanagere, Bellary, Tumkur, Haveri and Chikkaballapur Tribal Welfare officers are functioning they are working under the administrative control of the Chief Executive Officers of the Zilla Panchayat of the concerned District. In 176 taluks of the State, Taluk Social Welfare Officer is the head of the Taluk Social Welfare office. He is implementing the departmental schemes with supporting staff in taluks. They are working under the administrative Control of Executive officer of the concerned taluk panchayat.

Health surveys have indicated that the crude birth rate (CBR) at 22.79, which is marginally higher than the state average of 21.8. The crude death rate (CDR) is estimated at 8.50 which is again higher than 7.50 for the general population. The CDR is lower for STs than SCs (9.12) in the state. Most of the health indicators show deterioration in the health of women and children. The health status of the tribal population is not on par with the rest of the state's population. The infant mortality rate (IMR) of STs (64.37) is much higher than the state average (52.0); the IMR for STs is marginally lower than the IMR for SCs (64.74) and there is a marked difference between male (75.84) and female IMR (54.48). The studies have revealed that the principal causes of death among infants are diseases of the circulatory system (49.06 per cent) and respiratory system. (23.45). Disturbingly enough, NFHS data for 2011-12 shows regressive trends with the total fertility rate increasing to 2.38 from 2.15, the post-neonatal mortality rates to 21.9 from 18.0, the child mortality rate to 38.9 from 38.0 and the under-five mortality rate to 120.6 from 120.3. Several studies have reported that tribal areas are deprived of basic healthcare facilities due to the neglect of the state government and other agencies. The tribes continue to suffer from food insecurity, malnutrition, communicable diseases and other health hazards due to financial constraints and social exclusion.

Suresh (2008:14) notes: "Most of the tribal areas of Karnataka state are deprived of basic health care facilities. The tribes also suffer from food insecurity, ill-health and malnutrition due to poverty and unemployment problems. The crude death rate (CDR) is estimated at 8.50 which is again higher than 7.50 for the general population. The CDR is lower for STs than SCs (9.12) in the state. Most of the health indicators show deterioration in the health of women and children.

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There are also certain genetic disorders and deficiency diseases specific to tribal areas such as GEPC and sickle cell anemia. Malaria, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases are other areas of concern. Cases of HIV/AIDS too have made their appearance among the tribal population. Given the isolation of some tribes, their traditional healing systems should be allowed to complement modern medical care practices. Many ST habitations are located in remote areas in the forest where immediate attention by trained medical staff is rarely available when it is most needed, so traditional healthcare can fill this breach.

Madhu Gundlupet (2002:06) remarks: "The tribes also suffer from certain genetic disorders and deficiency diseases specific to tribal areas such as GEPC and sickle cell anemia. Malaria, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases are other areas of concern. The nutrition status of tribes is not satisfactory according to the empirical data. The family planning programmes are also implemented in the tribal areas to certain extent. The brunt of family planning is borne by women, possibly because they have a higher stake in not becoming pregnant frequently and because men are not prepared to take equal responsibility for birth control, or possibly, because healthcare providers find it easier to target women". The tribal environment is also known for unsanitary environment which contributes to the proliferation of disease, leading to high morbidity rates, which reduces productivity and affects the earning capacity of individuals. The poor sanitary condition of ST households is highlighted by the Census Reports. The taps are the primary sources of drinking water for the tribes.

The Government of Karnataka has provided free housing facilities to the tribes. Most of the tribes continue to live in kutcha houses rather than well-constructed and maintained houses. Most of the houses are deprived of sanitation facilities due to their financial poor status. A vast majority of tribes own houses due to progressive central and state sponsored housing programmes such as Ashraya, Ambedkar, Indira Awaas etc which clearly have had visible outcomes. The electrical connectivity is also fairly good enough in the tribal areas. According to the 2011 Census, a total 70.0 per cent of ST households in Karnataka had electricity as a source of lighting. This level of electrical connectivity indicates that state policies to provide electrical connections to ST households have paid off handsomely.

Navada (2004:11) reports: “The percentage of permanent houses for tribes is less than 40.0% according to the latest data. A higher percentage of rural STs live in semi-permanent houses (43.4) than urban STs (23.1) who live predominantly in permanent houses (66.9). The electrical connectivity is fairly high among ST households. According to the 2011 Census, about 70.0% of ST households in Karnataka had electricity as a source of lighting, compared with 78.5 per cent for all households and 68.5 per cent for SC households. In rural areas, STs depended on electricity (60.3 per cent) as well as kerosene (38.8), whereas urban ST households relied principally on electricity (80.6 per cent)”. These high levels of connectivity indicate that state policies to provide electrical connections to ST households have paid off handsomely.

Sanitation is an important factor associated with community health and progress. An unsanitary environment contributes to the proliferation of disease, leading to high morbidity rates, which reduces productivity and affects the earning capacity of individuals. The poor sanitary condition of ST households is highlighted by the 2011 Census data, which shows that 76.8 per cent of households do not have latrines and 62.0 per cent do not have any kind of drainage facilities. About 90.0 per cent of the households in tribal areas do not have latrines which is responsible for unhygienic conditions and communicable diseases. In Karnataka, STs have better sanitary facilities than their counterparts at the all-India level, but this is only a matter of degree. A low 12.36 per cent of ST settlements/villages have community latrines, about 32.6 per cent of households have open drains and only 9.4 of households have closed drainage.

The tribes have not gained substantially from the literacy campaign and other educational schemes of the government agencies. The total literacy movement has not benefitted the tribes due to lack of participation of tribes in the movement and apathy of the non-tribes towards tribes who are weaker sections of the society. The tribal areas have government schools which are not fully equipped in terms of manpower, accommodation, equipments, books, library, playground, toilet and allied facilities. Healthy academic environment is not found in the tribal schools. The number of drop outs is increasing in the tribal areas since the children are not motivated by their parents, teachers and other stakeholders of tribal development.

It is a well-accepted fact that access to knowledge is crucial to improving the human development status of people. Improvements in literacy levels have positive spin-off effects, such as better health indicators and an increase in productivity, which can increase the income levels of poor people significantly. The literacy rate of STs in Karnataka is a cause for concern, as it has consistently been lower than that of the total population. The literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes,

which was 48.3 per cent in 2001, increased to 49.04 per cent in 2011. While the state average moved up from 56.04 to 66.64 per cent. The gap between the literacy rate of the total population and the ST population is very wide, although there has been a marginal per cent) than the rate for the total population. The literacy rate of urban STs (64.6 per cent) is higher than the overall literacy rate of STs and compares quite favorably with the state average.

Shinde (2012:13) laments: “Their literacy rate is the lowest for all social groups and female literacy, which is a low 36.6 per cent when compared with the state average of 56.9, places ST women far behind a population that is, itself, disadvantaged to start with. There are disparities between ST students and others at every level and along all indicators of educational attainment: enrolment and retention in primary education and subsequent participation in secondary and tertiary education. One bright feature is the fact that girls perform well scholastically once they clear the hurdles to the deceptively simple acts of first enrolling and secondly, being allowed to stay on in school”.

The Scheduled Tribes in the state have markedly lower literacy rates than other groups. The fact that they are above the all-India average in respect of men and women is, of course, an indicator that Karnataka has performed better than many other states in this respect. However, the literacy status of the STs in Karnataka, which is in marked contrast to the improvements in literacy of other social groups, is a matter of concern and needs strong policy initiatives to push up literacy levels significantly.

The state government runs the hostels for the tribal children from V to X standard with free lodging, boarding, stationery, uniform and other facilities. The government also gives post-metric scholarship to the students of post-metric courses. The tribal girls also receive financial benefits from about 28 women welfare centers in the state. There are nurseries cum women welfare centers which provide basic informal education and mid-day meal facility to the tribal children. There are certain Ashram schools which are functioning for the benefit of tribal children under non-plan. The voluntary organizations also receive grants from the government for running hostels for tribal children.

Historically, the tribal economy was based on subsistence agriculture and/or hunting and gathering. However, since the tribal people treated land as a common resource, they rarely had land titles, and thus, lost their lands to outsiders when exploitation of forest resources began to take place on a significant scale. This ensured that a majority ended up as small and marginal landholders. The 2011 Census data reveals that a majority of the tribes practically constitute the

workforce and remain at the receiving end from development point of view. The tribes do not have the privilege of better occupational patterns and prospects since they are socially excluded and economically marginalized section of society. They do not have adequate choice for making their destinies economically due to serious constraints and limitations. Practically, the tribes largely own low-productivity assets: the principal asset being their own labor. This scenario is exacerbated by their low literacy and lack of vocational skills, which pushes them into jobs with poor remuneration, where men, women and children, between them, earn insufficient wages, as represented by their monthly per capita expenditure. Urban STs are slightly better placed than their rural counterparts. According to the 2011 Census, 9.25 per cent of STs are cultivators, 14.16 per cent are agricultural laborers and 6.20 are in household industry.

The occupational distribution shows that the majority of the tribal people are small and marginal farmers and agricultural labor. Their holdings are unirrigated and therefore economically unviable. The Scheduled Tribes also have very low monthly per capita expenditure compared with the rest of the population. Access to MFP and NTFP is critical to the survival of certain tribes, who live in or around forests, most of which are now classified as wildlife sanctuaries. The traditional occupational patterns of tribes are known for limited income generation and poor economic status of tribes in Karnataka. Apart from poverty reduction and income generating programmes such as SJSY, SGSY, Stree Shakti, there are also specific schemes to address the needs of the Scheduled Tribes who are landless or who have land that is not irrigated.

The Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation implement various programmes for the economic development of the community. The progressive measures include – land purchase scheme, self-employment programme, subsidized financial assistance, vocational training, formation of self-help groups, tribal co-operatives and so on. These measures have benefitted the tribes and promoted their social and economic status to certain extent. The LAMP Cooperatives, which were established to provide marketing tie-ups and ensure better prices for NTFP products procured by the tribals, have had mixed outcomes. They do not provide much scope for tribals in the price fixation mechanism for NTFP. While the NTFP selling rates have been registering a steady increase, the purchase price fixed for procuring the produce from the tribals has shown only a nominal increase. LAMPS should enhance rates so that the poor tribal people, who actually procure these items from within the deep jungle at some personal risk, can improve their economic conditions.

Mahantesh and Sedan (2014:09) examined the role of self-help groups in the process of tribal development and stated that these groups had radically changed the micro-credit systems in rural areas. Tribals, who form a large percentage of rural agricultural labor, and subsistence farmers find it difficult to source credit from financial institutions and are likely to benefit from the SHG philosophy. Self-help groups promote savings and microfinance among members, but they also have other objectives such as social empowerment and gender equity.

The non-government organizations have also played considerable role in the process of tribal development in the state. Daivajna (2004:04) writes: “There is growing realization of the need to develop a healthy partnership between the government and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The role of NGOs in tribal welfare activities, though small, has been responsible for introducing qualitative changes in the lives of the people. Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra, Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, DEED, FEDINA, CORD, Samagra Grameena Ashrama, Janashikshana Trust, Chintana Foundation, DUDI, Samvridi/Krupa, Vanavasi Kalyana Ashrama are some of the NGOs involved in tribal development in Karnataka”. NGO experiences in tribal health participate in issues concerning tribals, such as preventing forest fires, illegal quarrying, smuggling and poaching. Their participation in programmes such as sustainable harvesting of NTFP through participatory resource monitoring, value additions to the NTFP and conservation of bio-diversity has helped to reduce the exploitation of minor forest produce by outsiders.

The tribal community based organizations have also played a limited role in the community education, organization, participation and action for tribal development in the state. It is possible to make development works more effective and sustainable through an engagement with the local community, which has a better understanding than non-tribals, of its own socio-economic needs, traditions and culture. Their participation in programmes, funded by government and voluntary organizations builds confidence in the people to utilize the services thus offered and provides feedback for modification and re-orientation of programmes, according to Anjanayya and Sreeramulu (2014:01).

The Government of Karnataka has implemented certain programmes for the benefit of tribes who remain at the lowest rung of the social and economic orders. Programmes like free housing, drinking water supply, electrical connectivity, ashram schools, scholarships, free text books and uniforms, midday meals and poverty reduction programmes have benefited the tribes who had experienced serious economic constraints. Studies have reported that the tribal

development programmes have not significantly enhanced the educational, health and economic status of tribes despite these initiatives. The magnitude of the problem is so great that a large percentage of Scheduled Tribe families is still poor and lacks access to resources that would improve their education and health status. The human development status of the Scheduled Tribes is more than a decade behind the rest of the population of the state and they are the poorest and most deprived of all sub-populations in the state, according to the Human Development Report (2005).

Conclusion

The review of tribal development programmes in Karnataka indicates that tribes live in hilly and forest areas which are cut off from the mainstream of national life. The tribes continue to depend heavily on minor forest produce, hunting and other activities for their survival. The tribes do not enjoy the benefit of land ownership in the forest areas even though they are the angel guardians of environment. The educational, health and development status of tribes has not improved substantially over a period of time. The non-tribes have snatched away the reservation benefits and developmental opportunities of the tribes because of their proximity to the power structure. The self-help groups and cooperatives are not adequately organized in the tribal areas due to large scale illiteracy and poverty among the tribes. The Integrated Tribal Development Project has not yielded better results from tribal development point of view mainly due to inadequate human resources management, budgetary allocations, functional autonomy and people's participation according to empirical evidence. The LAMP Cooperatives too have not achieved notable success due to mismanagement and improper utilization of resources. The non-government organizations have also played a considerable role in the process of tribal development. The community based organizations are also playing a limited role in the empowerment of tribes in the state. The human development status of the Scheduled Tribes is more than a decade behind the rest of the population of the state and they are the poorest and most deprived of all sub-populations in the state. Series of innovative, need based and area specific tribal development measures are required in Karnataka state to achieve the goal of tribal development in letter and spirit.

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