Chapter 4

Tribal Women and Economic Condition
Chapter -4

TRIBAL WOMEN AND ECONOMIC CONDITION

Women are the part and parcel of every society. They are in fact the backbone of every family and every society. They are to therefore accept the toils of any transition. Women continue to be at the receiving end for all kind of inequalities including economic disparity. So world at large is becoming conscious of the fact that only when a women develops, can the society develop and progress.

Empowerment of women calls for strict and rigid implementation of all the laws and progammes that have a bearing in their lives. Mere passing of laws and counseling of welfare schemes have little meaning for women. Therefore women’s employment is considered not only as an important indication of their status, but also an instrument of their integration in development.

Among the citizens of India, tribals are kept under weaker section because they are economically backward classes. In the tribal pockets, women are playing a key role in drafting the tribal economy. The role of tribal women in economy could be placed at different economic stages beginning from hunting and food gathering to the stage of industrial economy. Development whatever has been the stage of economic development, and whatever be their position, in family economy, it is certain that the tribal women play a major role. The development of tribal society requires full participation by all and opportunities for full development of the potentialities of women.

The tribal women possess greater economic independence and freedom than non-tribal women. Their poor economic condition forces men and women to co-operate and share in joint economic activities. Barring a few economic activities tribal women have been taking part in almost all the activities at all the stages of economic development. They stand as an example for the old English couplet, “Man’s works ends at setting Sun, yet women’s work is never done”. In few families tribal women are considered as economic assets. Their contribution to the family economy is no less then that of their male counterparts. They are hard working and play double role in earning bread for the
family, and they keep themselves busy in domestic chorus round the clock. In some families it is the women who manage the entire economy of the family.

Tribal women who have been assisting their husbands in most of the economic activities are able to hold a place of importance over their family members. Primarily they use to assist their husbands in traditional occupation, but in the changed situation they themselves have entered in the local jobs.

In Coimbatore district their economy is divided into three categories as traditional, modern and occasional. Economically they are primitive and have greater love for their tradition. Hence tribal economy is called as primitive economy. Due to their very engagement in economic activities of the women they have been enjoying a status in their society. The economic status of the tribal women has development as the change in occupation and the increase in income and employment level.

The males take up the jobs like coolies, agricultural labour and other jobs. The females undertake food gathering, child rearing and other domestic work. They also take active part in rope making activity. Usually the womenfolk go out for marketing. If the man tills the field, the women may prepare other activities. They do not give importance to the status of the job but their only concern was the job itself.

The husband in many cases does not work at all. They are lazy and addicted to liquor and for them they required money so that the financial burden of the family fell up on women and they become the sole breadwinner of many families. Several tribal women of different economic status came out and have taken jobs in various fields to break up the circle of poverty and exploitation. In comparison to the non-tribal women tribal women start earning at an earlier age and continue till late.

In Coimbatore district, with the growth of Industries and Mills in tribal areas, a large number of tribal women have been drawn into occupation unknown to them. So their status in labour market has changed and now they are employed in such jobs which give them ready cash. Tribal women involve in trade and earn more, by that their economic role gives her a high position in the society at par with man.

Government policy and Development:
Since Independence, various planned efforts have been made for the development of scheduled tribes. A number of development projects and schemes were introduced with a view to safeguard and protect the interest of tribes and to uplift their condition.

The problem of different tribes may vary in different regions, but priority had been given to the maximum development of their economic life through five year plans.

Realizing the needs of scheduled tribes, the makers of India made special safeguards to protect them from all the possible exploitation and thus ensure social justice. Article 46 enjoins upon the state to promote with special care of the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular the scheduled tribes and promises to protect them from social injustice and from all form of economic exploitation.

The President issued the schedule of the tribes entitled to the special rights conferred on scheduled tribes by the constitution in March 1950. Article 275 of the constitution requires that a special financial grant should be provided for the programmes for the social and economic welfare of the tribal population living in scheduled areas.

To improve the condition of the hill tribes, it was decided to grant more land for cultivation and to grant more loans under Land Improvement and Agricultural Loan Act, free of interest for the improvement of land and for the purchase of cattle. In addition to this, tribal people were taught handycrafts such as gardening and crop cultivation in small plots.

In all the states which have tribal population, Tribal Advisory Boards were organized with a view to help the state governments in drawing up and implementing welfare programmes.

In Tamilnadu, though the tribal population is small, the state government has taken special efforts towards the acceleration of programmes for the development of scheduled Tribes. Even in the early 1950 special programmes were taken up for the tribals and tribal areas. With a view to bring their hitherto unprivileged tribal classes to the mainstream of national life, new concepts in tribal development were initiated.
The Community Development Programme was launched as early as 1952. The objective of the programme was to initiate a process of transformation of the socio-economic life of the rural areas, by allowing the full participation of the beneficiaries into development programme. With the introduction of the Panchayat Act of 1958, Community Development Programmes in Tamilnadu entered a new phase with the newly created panchayat union becoming the implementing agency for the programmes. The different programmes implemented under Community Development Programme were, 'Medical Relief, Link roads Education, Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Works Programme and National Rural Employment programme'.

List of schemes like purchase of cattle for cultivation, communication, housing and supply of dress were proposed under the second five-year plan for the welfare of the scheduled Tribes. And the third five-year plan was a plan for balanced development of all sections of our economy. In their plan emphasis was laid on the entire problem of tribal life.

The Dhebar Commission of 1960, summed up the tribal problem in its 'Protective' and 'Developmental' aspects. The protective aspects relates to safeguarding of the Rights of the tribals in land and forest and to protect them from exploitation. The development aspects of positive welfare programmes for the tribals were to lift them to the level of other sections of Indian society.

In order to implement the sub-plan the Tamilnadu government constituted the Tamilnadu Tribal Development Authority in May 1976. The Tamilnadu social Welfare Department designed to study the matter of tribes for indebtedness of tribals in Tamilnadu and measures for their relief and marketing facilities in tribal areas in Tamilnadu.

The core problem of tribals was indebtedness. To relieve them from Poverty Government of Tamilnadu wanted to prepare a sub-plan for the development of the tribal area in response to Government of India overall planning apparatus the Union Planning Commission. It proposed the guidelines to select tribal pockets. According to its guidelines, an area which has at its list 10,000 total tribal population of which at least
50% to be tribal for such planned development purpose. By adopting their norm, nine pockets had been identified in Tamilnadu.

Under the tribal sub plan economic development programmes like horticulture, animal husbandry, soil conservation, minor irrigation, sericulture, small industries, bee keeping etc were implemented.

The Tamilnadu Tribal Advisory council, an advisory body under the fifth schedule of the constitution of India was re-constituted and met at Yercard in Salam and Vivekanandapuram in Kanyakumari District in 1981 and undertook the following ameliorative measures for the economic development of the tribes.

- Provision for house sites.
- Provision of drinking water wells and ground level reservoirs.
- Grant of subsides to purchase of plough bulls and sinking of irrigation wells.
- Starting of cottage industries.
- Supply of tools and appliances to the technically trained persons.
- Grant of interest free loans for starting petty shops.

Government of Tamilnadu had provided Rs.17,00/- in the budget estimated for 1978-79 towards the scheme for training in Radio and TV mechanism in Sir Seva Mandir for scheduled tribe girls after the completion of SSLC.

Several anti-poverty programmes were undertaken in the fourth five-year plan for the economic development of the scheduled tribes such as Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA), Marginal farmers and Agricultural labourers Development Agencies (MFAL) Tribal and Development programmes, Pilot Project Tribal Development, & Minimum Need Programme.

**Reservation in Employment service**

Article 335 provides that the claims of the SC & STs shall be taken into consideration consistent with the maintenance of efficiency of administration in providing appointment in the Union or of the State.

For scheduled tribes the reservation is 7.5 percent of the vacancies for which the recruitment is made by open competition on All India basis.
7.5 percent reservation for scheduled tribes in promotions on the results of the competitive examinations limited to departmental candidates in Group B,C&D in promotion by selection in Group B,C &D to the lowest rank of Group A in grades or service to which direct recruitment if it does not exceed $66\frac{2}{3}\%$.

Reservation is provided for scheduled tribes in promotion on the basis of seniority subject to fitness in Group A, B, C&D posts in grades or service to which direct recruitment if any, does not exceed $66\frac{2}{3}\%$.

Concessions are given to the scheduled tribes in appointments, such as
a) Relaxation of age limit.
b) Relaxation in the standard of suitability.
c) Selection provided they are not found unfit for the post.
d) Relaxation of the Qualification regarding experience in the care of direct recruitment only whenever necessary.
e) Inclusion of scientific and technical posts up to the lowest grade of Group A required for research in the scheme of reservation.

State Governments have also framed rulers under the power given by item 41 of the state list of the seventh schedule to continue to the reservation of posts for scheduled tribes to increase their representation in the state service.

**Welfare schemes**

The Central and State Government introduce many schemes from time to time. Several schemes are available providing support to different components of tribal development. Schemes are also periodically modified to reflect the experiences over the years.

**TAHDCO:**

Tamilnadu Adi-Dravidar Housing Development Corporation was launched by Government of Tamil Nadu in 1974, with the objective of improving the economic condition of Adi-Dravidar and tribal people, particularly who are below poverty line. It provides loan for agriculture, manufacturing, processing, servicing, trade and commerce, transport, storage and communication.
TAHDCO's economic development initiatives economic development programme for women. The focus of the scheme has been stiffed from benefiting only individual beneficiaries to largely women self Help Groups by allowing 75% of the total subsidy earmarked for income generating projects exclusively to self Help Groups\textsuperscript{17}.

Under their programme, subsidized or fully funded programmes are conducted. Computer programming, type writing, shorthand etc. are some of the economic development programmes to benefit 2000 SC women and 500 ST women which was planned in IX five year plan\textsuperscript{18}.

TRYSEM:

The scheme of Training Rural Youth Self-Employment was launched on August 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1979 with the objective of training the rural youth, to acquire necessary skills and Technology and enable them to take to vocation of self employment in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector\textsuperscript{19}.

One of the most innovative and constructive aspect of TRYSTM in Coimbatore District is that of setting up of a placement cell. The trainees who have completed TRYSEM training are placed on the vacancy list given by industries, which is compiled at DRDA for ready reference and is used for placing the trainees either for self-employment or wage employment\textsuperscript{20}.

DWCRA:

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas scheme was launched from September 1982 to train the rural women and children\textsuperscript{21}.

TRIFED:

Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited has been, set up as a national level apex body by Government in the seventh five-year plan. TRIFED commenced its operation from April 1988\textsuperscript{22}. It provides marketing support to the state Tribal Development Co-operative Federations, Forest Corporations for marketing and export of minor forest product and sample agricultural products collected by tribes so as to protect them from exploitation by private traders.
This federation had taken up the procurement, processions and marketing of commodities. In keeping with the objective of eliminations the exploitation of tribes by private traders TRIFED offered higher procurement prices than more prevailing in the market for various commodities. In 1989, TRIFED has offered further increased procurement price. Thus TRIFED came to rescue the tribes, particularly tribal women, who collect minor forest products daily. It improved the economic condition of the tribal women by enhancing the procurement price.

NSFDC:
National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation was a national level Institution, started in the year 1989, interested to provide credit support for employment generations\(^2\).

SSTDC:
The State Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation functions as a channalising agency to identify eligible families for financial aid and other assistance to income generation projects through credit support. Grant-in-Aid to state Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation is rendering help to increase the volume of procurement of minor forest products for tribals at remunerative prices\(^2\).

JGSY:
Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana, provided wage employment to tribal women.

EAS:
Employment Assurance Scheme envisages to provide gainful employment to rural poor including scheduled tribes during the lean agricultural season. This was implemented in Coimbatore district in 1994-95\(^2\).

SGRY:
Both JGSY and EAS were brought under the purview of the meager scheme of Sampoorna Grameem Rozgan Yojana in September 2001. It provided financial assistance to scheduled tribes to various small-scale entrepreneurial ventures.
IJRY:

In most of the tribal settlements, land under cultivation is very limited and due to frequent agricultural practices the facility of the soil has dwindled. So in order to improve the productivity within the minimum area and to avoid further expansion of land inside the forest, the following development works were undertaken by Innovative Jawahar Rozgar Yojana.

- Elephant proof trench work around the settlement and cultivable lands in order to protect the land from wild life.
- Construction of check dam for supply of water for irrigation along with development of irrigation channels.
- Construction of check-walls bench, terracing, gully plugging, re-training wall for soil and moisture conservation and increasing land productivity.
- Supply of improved / hybrid seeds along with agricultural implements for improved agriculture and increasing productivity.
- Supply of horticulture seedling, such as coconut, Margo, Pomegranate, Lime, Guava and Jack-fruit seedlings to plant in their land holdings.

SGSY:

Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana had been launched from April 1999\textsuperscript{26}. This is a holistic programme covering all aspects of self-employment such as organization of the poor into Self Help Groups, training, technology, infrastructure and marketing. SGSY is funded by the central and state in the ratio of 75:25.

The objective of SGSY is to bring 30% of the families below poverty line as above poverty line, by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and Government subsidy. SGSY aims at establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas and building upon the potentials of the poor. Tribal women are the beneficiaries of this scheme.

Land purchase schemes:

During 2003-04, a new scheme called land purchase scheme\textsuperscript{27} has been introduced. Major thrust has been given for women empowerment by implementing land
purchase scheme to cover 7000 SC/ST. Women beneficiaries with the subsidy and loan assistance of Rs.70.00 crores. Under this scheme, loan assistance was given to individual beneficiaries up to Rs.1.00 lakh to purchase of land and Rs.1.00 lakh for land development, minor irrigation, and animal husbandry activities with 50% subsidy and 50% as term loan. In addition, 5000 agricultural pump sets were provided with service connection on primary basis for these SC/ST beneficiaries. Exemption of 75% of the stamp duty and registration fees also decided to provide to the beneficiaries under this scheme.

**Forest And Tribal Women**

Forests are closely connected with tribal life. There is always been a close link between tribal people and the forest. Forest is their well loved home, their livelihood and their very existence depends on forest. For generations together, they have lived in and around the forest and their economy is always been depended on forest. It is desirable that tribal communities are the primary agents of the forest. Tribes have emotional attachment with forest. Even today it is deep in their hearts that, the forest belongs to them.

In the beginning forest tribes were hunters and collected jungle products. They led a nomadic life and were less attached to the soil. From time immemorial, tribes enjoyed the freedom to use forest products to hunt animals. Their daily needs and requirements on day-to-day basis have always been rested on forest as for fuel, fodder and minor forest products. 20% of land in India is tribal and about 7% of the total out lay is for tribal development.28

Since women have always been the major workforces in tribal economy. They are the preservers, protectors and defend of forest. Their forest economy is divided into traditional and modern. Traditionally tribal women have daily habit of collecting minor forest products, consumable roots, tubers, fruits, fibers, gums, medicinal plants, seeds and fodder and fuel for their daily use and for commercial-consumption. They conduct their economic activity with in the territory of the forest with the natural boundaries. So it is
very difficult for a tribal woman to live without forest. Their modern economy is agriculture. In agriculture, tribal women work equal to men folk in the field.

When the non-tribal people began to move to the forest, the condition began to change. Gradually forest officials started to have a control over the forest and forest products. This understanding of the forest department disturbed the entire forest economy and made them to turn towards shifting cultivation.

After Independence, Government had implemented various schemes to encourage the tribal cultivators to move from the hilltops to slopes to settle in permanent settlement. Hence shifting cultivation became an integral part of tribal economy. In Tamilnadu it is called Kumri. They pay special veneration to the fertile soil, the earth mother, with offerings of not only flowers and fruits but also domestic animals like chicken, goat, pigs and buffaloes. Tribal women are specialized in recognizing herbal medicine. So they go to villages for the sake of recognizing the disease and give herbal medicine.

Even though tribal men collect honey it is the tribal women who go to nearby villages or markets for sale. Tribal women make objects in clay and wood. They make baskets, containers, musical instruments, smoking pipes, hunting weapons, clay lamp, etc with the forest products. Related to their art and craft occupation, it is a joint venture. The males collect mostly the raw materials and women do the processing.

In animal husbandry and poultry farming, tribal women’s contribution is no less than man. Right from the early adolescent stage, the girls take the cattle to the field or forest for grazing. Even at home, animal care is part of her work. She does it day and night. The tribal women have better language of animals because she has close association with the domestic animals.

Forest Department:

Coimbatore is one of the few districts of the state, which has dense forest. In 1856 the forest department was organized for the first time under the auspices of Dr. Cleghorn and Satyamangalam, Talamalai, and Bhavani were among the earliest areas to be brought under the control of the new department and placed under the change of captain W.H. Morgan with head quarters at Ootacamund for administrative purpose, they have been
included in two divisions as North Coimbatore Forest Division and South Coimbatore Forest Division\textsuperscript{30}. North Coimbatore Division consisted of Forests of Erode, Bhavani, and Gobichettipalayam. And South Coimbatore Forest Division consists of Coimbatore, Pollachi, Udumalpet and Dharapuram taluks. In 1927, forests of the district comprising of 50 square miles were handed over to the panchayats but as mismanaged, they were taken by the forest department in 1955\textsuperscript{31}.

The Coimbatore forest Division was reconstituted from the then Coimbatore North forest Division and renamed as Coimbatore forest Division\textsuperscript{32}. It consists of 69,347,72 ha managed by six territorial Ranges\textsuperscript{33}, as 1) Bolumpatty 2) Coimbatore 3) Perianaickenpalayam 4) Karamadai 5) Mettupalayam 6) Sirumugai.

These forests can boast of having teak, sandalwood and rose wood, besides a variety of other valuable trees. Coimbatore forests Reserve comprising Coimbatore Division, Nilgris south Division and Mudumalai National park. In addition to Elephants, the forests have other species like Gaur, various types of Dear and carnivores such as Leopards, Wild Dogs etc. It considered the vast potential available for Eco-tourism and also for improving the socio-economic livelihood condition of tribals living in and around the reserve forest area.

There are 33 tribal settlements inside the reserves of Coimbatore forest Division and totally 526 families are living in there settlements\textsuperscript{34}. These tribals are mainly unskilled employed for ordinary forestry work like regeneration operations, sandal extraction, fire protection and fire line cleaning. Their settlements consists of few thatched huts around which they cultivate dry crops like Ragi, chola, varagu etc. with a view to settle then permanently at a place and to end the shifting cultivation, they have been allotted lands inside the Reserve forests, which they cultivate under an annual lease as ‘Tenants – at will’ of to forests Department. The main conditions of the lease are as follows.

a) The lands are enjoyed free of rest.

b) Any alienation of the leased area is prohibited.
The tribes were employed on department work on daily wages and were allowed to enjoy certain rights and privileges over Minor forest products in the reserve forests.

Fuel coupons and leases for collection of fire wood of minor forest products were granted to co-operative societies especially for tribes at concessional rates, whenever there was demand for such considerations suitable areas in reserved forest areas were leased temporarily for cultivation. And all possible measures were taken to improve the economic condition of the tribes within the limit of the forest area.

The various, hill tribes co-operative societies continual to have minor forest produce, leases at concessional rates in Coimbatore circle by the Forest Department. Leases were granted to the various co-operative societies formed by the scheduled tribes at concessional rates.

The hill tribes were employed on departmental works and some of them were also employed as forest guards and watchers. Forest contractors for their work also employed few of them. All the elephant mahouts and cavadies were recruited from hill tribes. In all these work, their women, who are very close to forest and environment, help them.

The forest department is the nodal agency for taking up the departmental works in the settlement areas. All the funds allocated, specifically for tribal development works in the department shall be recruited through the department of forest officer for better supervision. Forest departments have already takes up construction of residential houses, with the funds allotted under Western Ghats Development programme. As part of Community Development, the Forest Department has taken up drinking water supply scheme in all the settlements, and also provide funds for there maintains. The National A forestation project (NAP) scheme was implemented during the 10th five-year plan in Coimbatore Division. Under the scheme 33 tribal village forests committee (VFC) were formed. To improve the socio-economic condition of the tribes, housing, roads, electricity, sanitation and the Forest Department provides health facilities. Tribal Women Self Help Group (WSHG) were created and maintained and existing tribal WSHGS are given support, assistance and guidance.
Self Help Group and tribal women Development:

The process of women empowerment is conceptualized in terms of self-esteem and confidence, ability to protect themselves as women attaining economic independence and providing leadership in both women and community-related issues at all levels. To empower women, Government of India had launched several programmes and schemes in the past few years with the ultimate goal to complete development. In such the women self Help Groups are praiseworthy.

This scheme is intended to promote economic development and social empowerment to the poorest women through network of SHGS, formed with active support of NGOs, for tribal women it is a boon. The concept of SHGs, a micro financial institution is a window for the development of tribal women.

The major factor, determining the socio-economic status of tribal women is concerned with occupation. For example a better occupational success is related to higher achievements, which in turn leads to better economic order. The tribal women has gained much more in the recent years that what they have been aspiring for ages through self Help Groups.

Tamil Nadu women Development project was extended to Coimbatore District in phase III in September 1999 and has got 22 approved NGOs working for the implementation of the scheme throughout the District.40

The main objectives of ‘Mahalir Thittam’ are social, political and economic empowerment to enhance their status as participants, division makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. It helped for the capacity building of poor and disadvantaged tribal women to enable them to cross all social and economic barriers and to come above the poverty line.

Each SHG consists of 12 – 20 members. The SHG women are doing regular savings. Animator and representatives and SHG members training have been formulated in three Modules and four Modules respectively to impart capacity building, saving and thrift habit. Double entry accounting system to SHG members is ultimately leading towards economic empowerment.
In Coimbatore District ‘Mahalir Thittam’ has imparted skill training, skill upgradation training in accordance to the need of the SHGs, in association with DRDA, DIC Backward classes, Agriculture and TAHDCO Department. This training made them as self employed to start their own enterprises for promotion of life style.

The SHGs have been benefited by way of loans to carry out their economic activities and became enterprises through loans like SGSY-RF, EA, NABARD, TAHDCO, and RF & EA schemes. The focus of the scheme has been shifted from benefiting only individual benefactions to now largely women SHGs by allowing 75% of the total subsidy earmarked for income generating projects exclusively for SHGs⁴¹.

In order to encourage SHG women, ‘Mahalir Thittam’ gives incentives like, (a) Free gas connection for newly married SHG women / Daughter & (b) Pregnant women in the SHGs have been identified and an assistance of Rs. 200/- through PACBs of the area is provided.

In the first year (1999-2000) of the introduction of ‘Mahalir Thittam’ in Coimbatore District, there were 395 SHGs, among them only 23 were the SHGs formed by tribal women. Due to the initiatives taken by both the Government and Non Governmental organizations, in 2004-05 there were 255 tribal women self Help Group in Coimbatore District (Appendix- II).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total No. Of SHG in Coimbatore District</th>
<th>No. of tribal women SHG in Coimbatore District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
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<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>3294</td>
<td>106</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>9375</td>
<td>255</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Tribal SHG members activities are fiber making, palm leaf mat making, bamboo basket making, growing vegetable, Bee-keeping, candle making, agarbathi making, match making, stone cutting, potter, leaf plate making, chalk making, Basket making, petty shops, etc.

Above all these activities, few tribal SHG members have taken initiative in peculiar activities like.

- Tribal women SHGs in Anamali, Udumalpet and pollachi area have obtained licenses for stone quarrying.
- In Thondamuthur Panchayat Union tribal SHG women are collecting herbs in hill areas near Sadivayal and sell it to wholesale dealers.
In Karamadai Panchayat Union, six SHGs of Kopanari village joined together and got loan to run a mini bus. Rs. 7.5 lakhs was sanctioned by Indian Overseas Bank. This minibus is running between Mettupalayam to Bellary in the name of "Innaitha Kodigal".

In Thondamuthur Panchayat Union, Devi Mahalir tribal SHG got the right to collect tollgate collection in Velingiri temple.

Members of Lilly Pushpam tribal SHG received the Collector trophy as the best performing SHG for Mulberry plantation near Pilloor in Karamadai range.

Five tribal women SHG members of Udumalpet, in Kurumalai, Kulipatti, Kattupatti and Karumutti settlements are preparing lemon grass oil under the leadership of Mrs. Andichchi in Mavaduppu. This lemon grass oil is famous even in big cities like Bangalore and Chennai, because this oil has medical properties and reportedly cures various ailments including pains in joints.

An eco-tourism project was scheduled at Karamadai forest range in Coimbatore District. For this project, the Forest Department had purchased ten coracles (called parisal in tamil). It is operated by two tribal committees namely Barali forest Eco Tourism committee and Poochimarathur Eco Tourism committee. Each committee is comprised of ten tribal women. It takes tourist on trips down to Barali Reserved Forest area in Karamadai range. Rs.4 lakhs was sanctioned under the tribal development fund by the state Government.

In Thondamuthur Panchayat Union, at Siruvani foothills, tribal women SHG member purchased two share autos to take the tourist from foothills to Kovai Kottralam.

SHGs scheme has made the tribal women to develop self confidence, assurance, strength and encourage them to believe in their own ability, to develop a sense of self worth, division making ability, communicability and risk taking ability.
NGOs and tribal women development:

The role of Volantry Agencies or No-Governmental Organizations has come into prominence as part of a state to make the administration more responsible. Today there are a number NGOs are working in different parts of the country. Several NGOs have been working among the tribal communities for their development. These include religious institutions like Christian and Hindu missions, & secular development agencies. They work towards the development of tribes in the fields of agriculture, education, health, training, eradication of social evils and struggle against all forms of exploitation. These NGOs try to raise their skills and social action groups whom emphasis the organization of tribes for their own protection and development. In Coimbatore District, each and every tribal woman SHG is working under the guidance of an NGO-

(Appendix –III)

Brake up of employed women:

Conclusion derived from the survey states that among employed women, majority of them are working in Self Help Groups, a number of women are working in forest and a very small portion of the women are self employed.

Fig: 11 Occupation of the tribals
Among the working tribal women, only two percent women only are earning more than thousand rupees per Annam. And majority of them are earning a major amount of Rs.100-500 per Annam. Details of their earning is shown in the following diagram.

Fig:12 Monthly income of the tribal women

To conclude it can be inferred that an overwhelming majority of the respondents belong to the poor income group.

Suggestions:

In order to improve the economic condition of the tribal women in Coimbatore District, the following suggestions be considered.

- Helping tribal women to organize themselves into collective groups for better development and improving their skills are the key to the future strategy.
- Young tribal women need a special attention of the planners and administrators.
- More paper work will not be sufficient. To solve their economic problem, awareness is to be created to know their rights and economic benefits.
Administrators and the planners should know their needs and local needs. Plans must be prepared not only to develop the tribal area, but the tribal people especially the tribal women who are considered as real assert.

**Contribution of economically developing tribal women:**

Though a very few tribal women have exposure & economic development their contribution are considerable.

- They are playing a key role in drafting the tribal economy.
- In certain area, tribal women have enforced discipline among the man drinking liquor.
- They are becoming conscious of their health and their family welfare.
- They have come forward to enroll their children, especially girls in local schools.
- Inequality and inferiority complex among them, and with non-tribals are slowly disappearing.
- Influence can be seen in their food habits, dress patterns and behavior.
- Altogether, it gave recognition to bring unprivileged tribal women to the mainstream of national life.

To achieve sustained development of the tribal women, they have to benefit and also to feel they have benefited. If tribal women are economically independent, they will be seen in different light. Today a number of tribal women are employed, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. This despite government through the national policy for the encouragement, endeavoring to create an environment for the development of women.
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