CHAPTER – IV

TRIBAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN KARNATAKA

4.1 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. In this chapter profile of Karnataka state, tribal developments in Karnataka state and tribal women empowerment in Karnataka state are delineated.

4.2 Profile of Karnataka State

4.2.1. General

The State of Karnataka is the 8th largest state in the Indian Republic in terms of geographical area 1.90 lakh sq. kms. It is also the 9th largest in terms of population. The state is situated in South West India and accounts for 6.3 percent of geographical area and 5.1 percent of the population in the country. The state is bounded by Maharashtra and Goa states in the north and northwest; by the Arabian Sea in the west; Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south and Andhra Pradesh in east. The State is confined roughly within 11°.5’ and 18°.5’ North latitudes and 74° and 78°.5 East longitudes, situated on a table land, where the Western and Eastern Ghat ranges converge in the Nilgiri hill complex. It comprises of 30 districts. The state’s capital city is Bengaluru.

Karnataka state has a rich legacy of cultural and administrative traditions traceable to the Vijayanagara kingdom, Bahamani kingdom, Hoysala kingdom, Mysore kingdoms, Tippu Sultan kingdom and so on. Karnataka State has various types of variations in topography – high mountains, plateaus, residual hills and coastal plains. It is enclosed by chain of mountains to its west and north. It consist mainly the
plateau which has higher elevation of 600 to 900 meters above mean sea level. The entire landscape is undulating, broken up by mountains and deep ravines. Plain land of elevation less than 300 meters above mean sea level is found only in the narrow coastal belt facing the Arabian Sea.

Karnataka State extends to about 750 km. from north to south and about 400 km. from east to west. It covers an area of about 1,90,498 sq. km. Karnataka is one of the 30 states in India, emerging as an industrial super power of the country. The state has 30 districts and 176 taluks. There are 20 sea ports including Mangalore Port and Karwar Ports. Karnataka has four revenue divisions namely Gulbarga, Dharwad, Bangalore and Mysore. Karnataka also has four functional airports at Bangalore, Mangalore, Belgaum and Hubli. The International Airports was commissioned in 2008 at Bangalore. The railway network in the state covers a total length of 3172 kms. The major cities like Bangalore, Mysore, Hubli-Dharwad, Belgaum, Gulbarga and Mangalore are well linked by rail to other parts of the country.

4.2.2. Physical Features

The State has wide variation in climate, soil and topography. The soils vary from vast stretches of deep black soils to shallow red soils. Forests cover about 20% of the geographical area. There are Coastal Region, Northern Plateau Region, Central plateau and Southern Plateau Region. The State of Karnataka enjoys 3 main types of climate and the tropical climate covers the entire coastal belt and the adjoining areas. The coastal region receives excessive rainfall during June to September every year. The winter season exists during December to February while the summer season exists during March to May. The state also receives about 70% of normal annual rainfall during the south-west monsoon and north-east monsoon.

4.2.3. Demographic Features

The State has the population of 5.28 crore according to Census, 2001. The rural population constitutes 66% and urban population constitutes 34%. The male population constitutes 50.90% while the female population constitutes 49.10%. The decade of 1991-2001 witnessed a low growth of population (17.20%) as compared to the all India level (21.34%). The density of population in the state was at 275 persons per sq km. The state has about 25% of people who live below poverty line. The urban poor constitute about 25.25% while the rural poor constitute about 17.38%. The
agriculturists and agricultural laborers together accounted for 67.7% of the main workers in the state about 55% of the work force is associated with the agriculture sector while the remaining the work force is associated with industry, business and other unorganized sector.

4.2.4. Development Indicators

The first hydro-electric power station was set up as far back as 1902 in the state. The infrastructure development index of the state was 106.12 as against 100 at all India level as per the estimates of CMIE, 2000. The state has registered an impressive economic growth during 2001-10. The annual growth rate of GSDP for the state was at 8% as compared to 9% at all India level during the present decade. The sector wise shares in the income of the state stood at 20.9% for primary, 23% for secondary and 56.1% for tertiary sectors. The developmental expenditure stood at 63% while the non development to the expenditure stood at 37% in the present decade. However, expenditure on agriculture and allied services formed 11% of the total development expenditure.

The State has a total road length of 2,09,014 km, which works out to 108.98 km of road length per 100 sq. km. About 70 percent of villages are connected with all weather roads and the rest are connected by fair weather, kutcha and non-motorable roads. The agriculture sector consists of about 55% of net shown area followed by 16% forest, and 29% of the land consisted of non agricultural, uncultivated and barren land. The small and marginal holdings accounted for 72.9% in the state and a large proportion of farmers in the state were small scale cultivators. The state also witnessed decline in the size of land holding mainly due to division of families, fragmentation of holdings and migration of cultivators to urban areas. The state has about 43.95% of irrigation resources. The major sources of irrigation were canals (33.7%), wells (15.1%), bore wells (31.3%), tanks (6.3%) and other sources (13.6%).

Food grain production in the State was estimated to be 97.90 lakhs while production of oil seeds was estimated to be 13.49 lakh tones during 2006-07. Animal husbandry played an important complementary role in the rural economy. The state also achieved commendable progress in the field of dairying due to implementation of cross breading programme, disease diagnosis and control, adoption of new technology, improvement of infrastructural facilities and other developments. Small
farmers and landless laborers accounted for about 53% of the animal husbandry and 51% of milk production in the country. The extent of awareness of modern aspects of forming, crop insurance, membership of registered farmers’ organization and membership of Self Help Groups consistently grew in the state during the present decade.

Karnataka state is a leader in financial services, with one district alone being the birthplace of five major commercial banks. It is also a prominent centre of high technology manufacturing industries after independence in areas such as machine tools, defence electronics, aerospace, telecommunications, and earth-moving equipment. It also introduced decentralized systems of governance. It provided a supportive environment for the creation of India’s globally competitive information technology services industry and today accounting for 35-40% of software exports from India. It is considered as a pioneering e-governance in India through Bhoomi project to computerize rural land records and make available land record information for a nominal fee. The state as maintained about 18% of share of industrial sector and the average annual growth of industrial production stood at 6.39% during 2004-05. The growth of IT sector has been phenomenal. The state leads the IT revolution with software exports of over US$ 1.6 billion. About 110 new IT companies were established in the state with an investment of Rs.2000 crores during 2004-05. About 131 biotech companies have also invested about Rs.1000 crores in the state during this period. About 12,780 small scale industries were also established in the state with Rs.433.47crores of investment.

Karnataka state has gained the leadership position in software and information technology-enabled services, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and light engineering industry (particularly precision engineering). Karnataka also has a strong base of education and research institutions in the country. It has a well developed higher education system which is noted by the various stakeholders of education. The notable features of Karnataka include - Strong economic growth, A well-structured and qualified administrative system, fertile lands and high agricultural productivity along river basins and in irrigated areas, leadership in coffee, raw silk, sandalwood, and floriculture production, reputation as a progressive state, strong position in new high-technology industries such as biotechnology, rub-off from success of high technology industry, availability of trained manpower, wide network of educational
institutions, generally peaceful environment and communal amity, according to Karnataka Vision – 2025 document.

Karnataka has the potential to move to be within the top three ranks on an all India basis on these human development indicators by 2025. The State has also registered satisfactory progress with respect to the indicators of health and quality of life as compared to all India levels. The worth rate (20.6%) and death rate (7.1%) were also lower as compared to the all India level. The infant mortality rate was also lower at 50 per 1000 while life expectancy at birth was 62.8 years for males and 66.2 years for females. The literacy rate is (66.6%) in 2001 and the state occupied 8th rank in the country in this regard. Gross enrolment rate at the primary school level was (98.06%) for boys and (97.98%) for girls. The State has also implemented Vidya Vikasa, free uniforms and textbooks and mid-day meal programme in order to enhance the educational status of children.

4.2.5 Vision of Karnataka - 2025

The Government of Karnataka has developed a novel document entitled ‘Vision of Karnataka - 2025’ which envisages integrated development of the state on the basis of constructive participation of all stakeholders of development. The government is primarily responsible for the development of the state by mobilizing the resources and enhancing the budgetary allocations for infrastructure development, civic amenities and social and economic programmes. The regional imbalance should be overcome through suitable development measures. In particular, the human development goals should be achieved to improve the quality of life of the people. The industry and commerce sector also has a great corporate social responsibility to go beyond their economic roles to partner with government and NGOs in human development. The non-government organizations also have a salient role to play in three dimensions of the vision – leadership in human development, balanced regional development, and improving accountability in governance. The progressive organizations and media institutions also have a great responsibility of sensitizing the government, industry and other stakeholders of development to take appropriate actions in the right time for the integrated development of the state.
4.3 Tribal Development in Karnataka State

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, Raigond, 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 (2005:94).

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 (2004:37) 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 (2004:38) 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, Chikmaglur, 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 Swarojgar Yojana (SJSY)”.

Directorate of Tribal Development (2014:66) 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 Swarojgar 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”.

The Department of Tribal Welfare earmarks three per cent of their plan budget for expenditure on tribal development in the state. 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, notes Mariswamy (2006:135).

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 (2008:237) 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. 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)”.
There are also certain genetic disorders and deficiency diseases specific to tribal areas such as GEPD 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 (2002:81) remarks: “The tribes also suffer from certain genetic disorders and deficiency diseases specific to tribal areas such as GEPD 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 (2004:156) 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 (2012:214) 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.

Jyothish (2013:101) comments: “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 (2014:126) 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 (2004:48) 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, Samvirdi/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 (2014:05).

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 Karnataka Human Development Report (2005:94).

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.

4.4 Tribal Women Empowerment in Karnataka State

The subject of empowerment of women has been widely discussed across the globe by the stakeholders of development. The need for empowerment of women is seldom questioned. Women play a major role in the process of development in all walks of life. But, they are excluded from the mainstream of development by the powers that be. The tribal women play a crucial role in the development of tribal economy but they have limited control over resources and economic activities. Therefore, there is a need for empowerment of tribal women by creating adequate educational, economic and political opportunities in modern society.

Kantidas (2012:106) has pointed out that the main reason for the poor empowerment of tribal women was noted as lack of knowledge about new technology and information. From time to time a number of descriptive studies about the process of and issues in economic empowerment of tribal women, with reference to different tribes in various parts of India are attempted. Most of them have advocated policy initiatives like: a) Agricultural diversification. b) Increased emphasis on the growth of non-farming activities. c) Policy measures for promoting girl’s education d) Emphasis upon increasing the access for modern allopathic medicine system and e) Protection of tribal land property from the encroachment by the main land people and
the State. All these policy measures are universally relevant for promoting the human capabilities which help to increase economic empowerment of tribal women.

In Karnataka, scholars have examined the various dimensions of tribal women empowerment over a period of time. Prominent among them include – Balasubramaniam and Shanthi (2008:12), Puttaraja and Heggade (2012:183), Kusugal and Nagaraja (2013:117), Shivananja (2014:215), Sonnad and Sangan (2014:230), Kamath et.al. (2014:103) and Kumar and Mahesh (2014:112). They have identified several disadvantages from tribal women empowerment point of view. Studies have revealed the causes, consequences of backwardness of tribal women. The studies have also offered certain implications which facilitate the empowerment of tribal women.

The tribal women are the most disadvantaged section of the society in modern times. The tribal population of Karnataka increased to about 36 lakh in 2011 from 34.64 lakh in 2001. The decadal growth rate during this period is above 80 per cent caused not by a spurt in fertility rates but by the addition of several new tribes to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category. The decadal growth rate is higher for females (81.9 per cent) than for males (79.8 per cent). The sex ratio for Scheduled Tribes is higher than the all-India average for STs as well as the state average according to the latest statistics. Culturally, there is greater gender equity among the Scheduled Tribes compared with the general population, which is largely shaped and driven by several factors.

The tribal women play a crucial role in the farm management. The tribes primarily depend on agriculture-based economy. The tribal women possess unique skills in agricultural operations and MFP collection. However, over the years, various new techniques have been introduced to reduce the manual labor power and to use the different external inputs to enhance the productivity. Generally it leads to unemployment, particularly women labor, who works in the tribal areas. The mechanization and modernization of farming and plantation sectors have cost the employment opportunities to the tribes. The tribal women migrate to the cities and townships in search of employment. They work in unorganized sector as domestic workers and laborers without social security and financial benefits. Thus, tribal women in Karnataka are economically marginalized in modern society.

The tribal women are yet to achieve economic security and autonomy under the existing circumstances and constraints. They depend on primary sector based
production activities and wage earnings. They are also denied of skill development, entrepreneurship development, leadership development, and ownership of assets, self-employment opportunities and other means of economic empowerment to a great extent in Karnataka. The tribal women are not equipped well with vocational, technical and professional educational facilities mainly due to absence of state patronage. The fruits of scientific and technological innovations and developments are not accessible to the tribal women who are worst victims of traditionalism. They are compelled to follow the age old practices which in turn result in poor work efficiency, low productivity and economic backwardness.

The implementation Wild Life Protection Act (1972), Forest Rights Act (2008) and other legislations have hindered the progress of tribal women. The central and state government schemes are not properly implemented in the tribal areas to generate gainful employment opportunities and enhance the economic status of tribal women. The tribal women do not have any control over resources like land, productive asset ownership, livestock and other resources. They are not in a position to have any control over productive assets will create a sense of belonging and owning. The micro-credit programmes usually offer a combination of services and resources to their clients, in addition to credit for self-employment. But, these formal credit institutions rarely lend to the tribal women according to Puttaraju and Heggade (2012:183).

The self-help groups are not adequately and systematically organized in the tribal areas for the empowerment of tribes including women. Experience reveals that these organizations do not provide sufficient micro-finance to the tribal women. The government agencies, banks, cooperatives and other micro-level organizations have not intensified the grass-root credit schemes for the benefit of tribal women.

The education is indeed the tribal development resource. Education can be an effective tool for women empowerment since it enables the tribal women to acquire knowledge for improving and empowering their tasks in all fields. But, the level of education of the tribal women in Karnataka state has not exceeded 35% till now. The dropout rate of tribal girl child is also more than 80.7 percent according to Shinde (2012:214). There are several reasons behind this sad story. The child marriage, forced labor, migration, human trafficking and other reasons are responsible for the educational backwardness of tribal women in Karnataka.
The female literacy rate among STs in 2001 was 36.6 per cent and it increased to 37.4 per cent in 2011. There is slightly higher growth than the gap between the male and female literacy rates for the total population (22.92 in 1991 and 19.22 in 2001). The literacy rate for ST women is the lowest in the state in comparison with all women as well as Scheduled Caste women. The literacy rate for rural ST women is a low 33.3 per cent compared with 56.9 per cent for men decline of about 1.6 percentage points in the last decade.

The tribal women are not the owners of land, resources and other properties in modern Indian society. In Karnataka, the tribal women constitute about 42 per cent of the workforce. The largest percentages of ST women are in household industries (58.80) and agricultural labor (57.90). Only 29.89 percent of ST cultivators are women, according to recent estimates. An analysis of the income levels of STs in the Sample Survey (DES: 2011) reveals a wide gap of more than 100 per cent between STs in urban areas and their rural counterparts. The annual per capita income of rural STs is Rs.4, 768, as compared with Rs.10, 987 for urban STs. The percentage of families below the poverty line in the rural ST population is 40 while it is 25 for the urban ST population.

The health and nutrition status of tribal women is vulnerable according to empirical evidence. Chandrapoojari (2004:37) observes: “The tribal women face many problems in health and nutrition. The maternal malnutrition is quite common among the tribal women. The fertility rate of tribal women is more compared to the women at the national level. The infant mortality rate and child mortality rate of the tribal women is also high compared to the national average. In addition to that under-nutrition and CED (Chronic Energy Deficiency) is also very high as compared to others. The development of health facilities for tribes is undertaken by the government through its successive five year plans. The health centers are physically present but they hardly used by the tribes living in isolated villages and hamlets”. Under these circumstances, the health status of tribal women has not improved considerably in the state.

The tribal women are not blessed with better health, nutrition, sanitation and other privileges. The percentage of tribal women receiving no antenatal care has increased to 31.4 per cent in 2011 from 28.2 per cent in 2001. The number of pregnant women receiving antenatal care from registered medical practitioners also
showed a decline from 54.8 per cent to 46.4 per cent during the same period. While the percentage of women not getting tetanus toxoid vaccinations at any time showed only a negligible increase from 33.0 per cent to 34.0 per cent, those receiving iron and folic acid showed a slight increase from 61.6 per cent to 63.3 per cent. This leaves a very large number outside the purview of antenatal care and the protection it affords to the mother and her infant, report Balasubramaniam and Shanthi (2008:12).

The tribal women are also deprived of professional health care during various stages of their life. The NFHS data indicates that there was a marginal increase in institutional deliveries from 31.0 per cent in 1999-2000 to 33 per cent in 2010-11. The data reveals that the situation has improved significantly with the percentage of births receiving some kind of professional care being a high 63.36 per cent, with another 24.08 per cent attended by trained dais. The outcomes in terms of lowered IMR and MMR are yet to become visible. The inaccessibility of ST habitations, combined with high absenteeism of medical staff in primary healthcare centers, further contribute to the difficulties that tribal people have in availing basic health facilities, according to Puttaraju and Heggade (2012:183).

The nutritional status of tribal women has not improved over a period of time on account of inadequate food security, medical facility and other constraints. The diet of tribal women is comparatively low due to poor consumption patterns. The NFHS (2011) reported that tribal women had very poor nutritional levels and suffered from several nutritional deficiencies like protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient malnutrition caused by inadequate dietary intake, as well as intake of food insufficient in protein and micronutrients. Studies have also reported that tribal women have very high levels of under-nutrition. Tribal children also suffer from sharp levels of under-nutrition, according to Kamath et.al. (2014:103).

The tribal women are motivated to adopt family planning norms by the health force and volunteers. 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. Adoption of small family norm has not become a possibility in the tribal areas due to traditionalism and social constraints.
Tribal women are not socially, economically and politically empowered in Karnataka state due to above stated constraints and limitations. The state and civil society have not translated the constitutional provisions of tribal development into realities. The tribes are also socially fragmented. They do not have a confederation of ethnic groups in order to assert themselves in modern times. Social and political mobilization among tribes is absolutely weak. Hence, they have not achieved the goal of empowerment due to multi-pronged attacks against them by the dominant powers. The tribal women continue to live under most miserable circumstances in all walks of life. Tribal women need to be sensitized about the constitutional safeguards, legal provisions, development schemes and other opportunities through active and positive campaigns and mobilization activities. Integrated efforts are required to achieve the goal of tribal women empowerment in Karnataka state.

4.5 Summary

Karnataka state has a rich legacy of cultural and administrative traditions traceable to the various kingdoms. Karnataka state has attained the status of model state from human development point of view in the country. The state has about 6 per cent of tribal population in the present times. A vast majority of tribes in Karnataka are socially excluded and economically marginalized due to several system failures. The state has not witnessed a strong tribal movement for development. The tribes continue to remain at the receiving end from development point of view. In particular, tribal women face series of disadvantages and challenges of development. The Department of Tribal Welfare was formed specifically to address the needs of STs in Karnataka. The objectives of the TSP are poverty alleviation, protection of tribal culture, education, healthcare and providing basic minimum infrastructure. The Department of Scheduled Tribes Welfare is implementing various programmes for the educational, social and economic development of Scheduled Tribes in Karnataka. Empirical studies have revealed that tribal women have not achieved notable progress in the fields of agriculture, industry, education, health, basic amenities, infrastructural facilities, political leadership development, entrepreneurship development and social mobilization. The tribal women need to be sensitized about the various dimensions, methodologies and opportunities for their empowerment in the state.