CHAPTER 1

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The Perspective

The tribal population in India is accepted to be the oldest people of the land. These communities have lived for centuries in the forest and hilly regions. India has a total of 573 Scheduled Tribe Communities spread over almost all the States and Union Territories. According to the 1991 census estimates, there are about 65 million Scheduled Tribe people in the country. Habitat of tribals play an important role in their cultural sustainability. Most of the tribal habitats are under threat with the onslaught of modernization and technological development.

Among the 573 Scheduled Tribes, nine major tribal groups are Bhill, Gond, Ho, Khond, Mina, Munda, Naga, Oraon and Santal living in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Sikkim, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Assam and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The areas of minor concentration of the tribals are found in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Goa, Diu and Damno.

These tribal communities and groups are spread all over the Indian mainland and in certain islands. They constitute a distinct dimension
of Indian life and culture. They are given protection and enabling support, to the extent possible, by the government as well as a host of voluntary agencies. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of their life by helping them improve their earnings by increasing productivity through agro-economic schemes and self-employment through cooperatives. At the same time, the problems of exploitation by vested and greedy interests continue to haunt the tribals. Education has been considered as a key catalyst of their development and change in the social, cultural, economic, philosophical, psychological and political lives.

Article 46 of the Constitution of India, which relates to the Directive Principles of the state policy, specifically enjoins that “the state will promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation”.

According to the Imperial Gazetteer, “a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so.” According to U.N. Dheber, Chairman Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribe Commission “to a common man the term 'tribe' would mean a simple folk dwelling in forest; to people who are better informed it signifies colourful folk; famous for their feasts, festivals, songs and dances; to an administrator it means a group
of citizens who should be specially taken care of; to an anthropologist it indicates a special field of study of special phenomenon, in their own way these expressions are correct and meaningful. Verrier Elwin affirms that the tribal folk are human beings exactly like ourselves in all fundamental ways. But the ultimate human needs, aspirations, loves and fears are exactly the same as ours. Tribal people have a cherished tradition of sustainable dependency on the forest in which they generally inhabit. These societies have developed effective methods of manipulating the natural resources for sustainable exploitation. These management practices get reflected in their technology, boundary maintenance, knowledge systems, institutional practices, folklore, etc.

The British administration in India did not care to bestow any serious attention on the development of these downtrodden and helpless sections; rather they preferred to keep them aloof and in isolation. Only after independence, the Indian Constitution inscribed many articles to protect and improve the standard of living of the tribals. For the first time, during the Fifth Five Year Plan period, a strategy of allocating funds for the development of Scheduled Tribes was evolved. The Government of India have adopted a policy of assimilation and integration towards tribal communities, who have remained almost isolated from the mainstream population. The Constitutional safeguards, various rules and regulations framed and implemented from time to time, centralized planning, etc, could not bring about the targeted outcome.
In recent years, it has been realized that economic development is inseparably linked with social development and change, specifically change in social relations, attitudes, etc. It has also been recognised that it is difficult to achieve the goals of development without proper attention being paid to the facets of social and cultural progress. The process of tribal development involves the inter-relationship of many factors which are both difficult to be specified and complex in their social, economic and technical characteristics.

**Tribal Development in Tamil Nadu**

The tradition-oriented tribes of Tamil Nadu exhibit a chequered pattern of life. The tribes of Tamil Nadu are characterised by diverse economic perspectives from the primitive food-gathering subsistence stage to the up-to-date panorama of industrialization and allied activities. The total tribal population in the state of Tamil Nadu as per 1991 census is 5.74 lakh, of whom 2.92 lakh are males and 2.82 lakh are females. At present, there are 36 different categories of tribals in Tamil Nadu. Out of this, 6 communities are recognised by the Government of India.

They are Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Kattunaickens, Panlans, and Irulas. The tribal population is unevenly distributed among the various districts of Tamil Nadu. As per 1991 Census, the concentration of tribal population is more in the districts of Salem (3 percent), Thiruvannamalai (3 percent), Nilgiris (4 percent), Vellore (2 percent), Dharmapuri (2 percent), Kanchipuram (1 percent), Thiruchi (1 percent), Dindugal (1 percent), Coimbatore (1 percent), Erode (1 percent) and Cuddalore (1 percent). On
the other hand, the concentration of tribal population is low in the districts of Pudukottai, Perambalur, Karur, Tanjore, Nagai, Thiruvarur, Sivagangai, Madurai, Theni, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. For over four decades, Tamil Nadu has been engaged in a massive and far-reaching exercise to integrate the tribal population into the mainstream of national life. Improvement of tribal living conditions has, therefore, been accepted as a major objective in Indian planning, and policy-making.

The Ninth Five Year Plan document issued by the Tamil Nadu Planning Commission claims that "to accelerate the development of tribal people in Tamil Nadu, a separate plan called Tribal sub-plan has been in implementation from 1976-77". This area-oriented Tribal sub-plan is meant to benefit about 2 lakh tribals living in the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) areas. Under the Plan, programmes are formulated for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, soil conservation, sericulture, forestry, village Industries, etc. In addition, Area Development Programmes are formulated for providing infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, formation of roads, electrification, schooling, health facilities, communication and co-operation; and social welfare schemes have been implemented aiming at all round development of Scheduled Tribes.

Tribal Population of Nilgiris

Nilgiris is situated at the junction of three linguistic zones, viz., Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. It is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu and
extends over an area of 2549 square kilometres. This district is divided into four taluks: (1) Udhagamandalam, (2) Coonoor, (3) Kotagiri and (4) Gudalur. It consists of a great plateau, about 40 by 20 miles long and an average altitude of 6500 feet. It is located at the junction of the ranges of the Eastern and Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu. Nilgiris is called as 'Blue Mountains' by the people living in the plains at the feet of these mountains. To the south-east, east and north-east there is a rapid fall of about 1625 meters to the adjoining Coimbatore plains. In every direction, the sides of the hills leading up to the plateau are steep and often precipitous. In the north-west the slope is more gradual, but on the north there is a steep fall of about 1330 feet. The Nilgiri plateau is covered with thick and almost imperceptible jungles and precipitous rocks until a few decades ago.

Kota is a Dravidian tribe, numbering about 1835 (according to 1991 Census). They are found to be living in all the four taluks of the mountainous district of the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. But their concentration is more in Udhagamandalam taluk. In addition to Kotas, five other tribal communities are living in this district. They are Todas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyas and Kattunayakans. Another important community is Badagas, an agricultural community, migrated into the Nilgiris before 1603.

The name Kota and its meaning have become controversial among the early writers. According to Thurston, "the term Kota is defined as the Gauda - Dravidian word Ko (Ku) means mountain, and they belong
to the Gaudian branch. Kota is a small and low ranking community living in this region. Observations made by anthropologists and writers do not clearly show whether Kotas were the original inhabitants or migrants to the Nilgiris. Kotas are popularly known as artisans, particularly smiths, and that the term 'Kota' used to refer to metal workers. Harihara is one of the different names of the Kotas of Nilgiris.

According to the 1991 Census report, Nilgiri district had the highest percentage of Scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu. It is interesting to note that the tribal population is not evenly distributed in this district. About 50 percent of the tribal population is concentrated in Gudalur taluk, and the remaining 50 percent is distributed in the other three taluks of Nilgiris.

Three Kota villages are situated in Udhagamandalam taluk and two in Kotagiri taluk. Coonoor and Gudalur taluks have one Kota village each. In addition to these, nowadays some Kota families are found in Udhagamandalam, Kollimalai, Coonoor, Indunagar, Aravankadu, Wellington, and Gudalur towns. “Kamarataya” who is considered as the creator of the Kotas and worshipped by them is akin to the gods Kama and Kamachuma, at least in name, worshipped by the Kotas and Panchala of Harihara. In addition, Siva worship or at least Saivaites tradition is found among the Kotas.

The Kota houses called “Pai” are modern pucca houses provided by the Government within the framework of the traditional physical settlement structure. In all the villages they live amicably in linear type of houses along
with their lineage members side by side. The mean household size is 5.6. The higher household size among Kotas is due to the presence of a considerable number of extended joint families.

Kotas of all ages are generally habituated to take three meals a day. The usual items of the meals include cereals or millets such as ragi, samai and rice; pulse, generally red gram dal; and vegetables, mostly potato, field beans, brinjal, cabbage, and carrot. They also use large amounts of green keerai such as parupu keerai and manatakali keerai; and fruits like banana, jackfruit and plums. Kotas are non-vegetarians too. They take fish and meat frequently. At present the Kotas depend for their maintenance on different occupations. Although their main occupation is cultivation, a few are still continuing their traditional occupations such as black smithy, and carpentry. Many of them are also employed in government departments / organisations.

The common festivals of Kota tribe are Nambi festival, harvest festival and the like. The kota folktales are a vital factor in understanding their culture and these tales very often throw light on the complex traditions and social beliefs.

Among the six tribal communities of Nilgiris, the Kota tribal community is evolving as a hard working and economically better off community in comparison with other tribes. The stigma of untouchability and the low caste status of the Kotas is slowly disappearing and this is
because of their hard work and to some extent due to their sound economic status.

As the earlier studies on Tamil Nadu tribal economy were mostly conformed to sociocultural and anthropological aspects, it was thought fit to attempt an appraisal of the socioeconomic impact of the massive investment by the government on various tribal developmental schemes with particular reference to Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) since 1976. The development strategies designed to improve the socioeconomic, political and psychological conditions of the vulnerable sections of the society, especially the tribal population, thus need assessment with a view to comprehending the impact of the state's role in accelerating development of the weaker sections. Ultimately it will help certain dissatisfaction and discontent among them.

The formation of Tribal Advisory Council in 1957, identifying the Tribal Development Authority in 1976, upgradation of the Directorate of Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department in 1981, starting of the implementation of Tribal sub-plan through ITDPs in 1976, and other relevant schemes such as take over Tribal Research Centre in 1995 helped the 36 tribal communities of Tamil Nadu to enter into the development mainstream of Indian population. Hence the study will focus attention on the Tribal Development Schemes or welfare schemes for tribal development, in the areas of agriculture, horticulture, village industries, animal husbandry and dairy development. Although some improvement has been made, there is a vast scope for the Government to achieve its target of tribal development.
The present research study aims at studying the socioeconomic conditions, and the impact of the Tribal Development Schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu with particular reference to agricultural development.

Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study is to assess the socio-economic impact of the various tribal development schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district with special reference to agricultural development.

Specific Objectives are:

1. To examine the progress of various tribal development programmes implemented in India and Tamil Nadu in particular.

2. To analyse the significance of tribal development programme as a scheme to alleviate poverty of the tribals.

3. To evaluate the socioeconomic conditions and traditional economy of the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district.

4. To bring out the salient features and sustainability of tribal development schemes introduced for the primitive tribes with particular reference to Kotas of Nilgiris.

5. To assess the working of tribal welfare programmes in Nilgiris district with special reference to Kota settlements and to examine the various dimensions of the programme.

6. To estimate the impact of tribal welfare programmes on economic conditions of the sample beneficiaries.
7. To explore and explain the difficulties in the implementation of the tribal welfare schemes and to suggest suitable remedial measures.

8. To study the recent trends and performance of the provision of social overheads or infrastructure facilities for the development of the Kotas.

9. To examine the reasons for the failure in attaining the targeted outcome.

10. To understand the problems of the Kota farmers in performing their occupation and in availing the benefits under ITDP.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in income before and after the implementation of the Tribal Welfare Schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiri district.

2. There is no relationship between the income from farm sources and non-farm sources.

3. There is no significant difference in the consumption level of the respondent households before and after the implementation of the Tribal Welfare programmes in the study area.

4. There is significant difference among the seven Kota settlements of Nilgiris as far as changes in social aspects are concerned.

METHODOLOGY

In consonance with the above objectives, the study is designed in the form of a sample survey of the beneficiaries of the Tribal Welfare Programme. This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The
extent of the impact of Tribal Development Schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district is explained by using primary and secondary data. The primary data collected through interview schedules is supplemented by analysis of secondary data gathered from the concerned offices and agencies involved in the implementation of the Tribal Development Programmes. Secondary data are collected from the published and unpublished records of the offices of the State Planning Commission, Director of Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Directorate of Survey and Settlement, the Collectorate of Nilgiris District, office of the Special Officer of Nilgiris Hills, and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Sample Frame

For any survey, the sample design depends to a larger extent on the type of available sample frame, which is a complete and up-to-date list of sample units. For the present study, the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district have been selected. Information regarding total population size, profile of the study area, and other related materials are collected from the Department of Adi-Dravidar & Tribal Welfare. In order to determine the total sample size, particulars regarding the number of beneficiaries in the study region due to the implementation of Tribal Development Programme, and other related materials were collected from the records of the Director, Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare and the Tribal Research Centre. A list of beneficiaries of the
Tribal Welfare schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district was needed to draw the sample frame.

The first systematic effort for the development of tribal areas was initiated in 1955 in the form of creation of special multipurpose Tribal Development Blocks. Subsequently, a modified version of this Programme was taken up in the Second Five Year Plan on a large scale and Tribal Development Blocks were started. During the Third Five Year Plan, this programme was further expanded and all areas with more than two-thirds tribal concentrations were covered. During the Fifth Plan, a new strategy called the Tribal Sub-Plan was devised and adopted. The Tribal Sub-Plan had the twin objectives of socioeconomic development of tribals and protection of tribals against various forms of exploitation. During the same Plan, 65 percent of the tribal population in 18 States/Union Territories was covered under 160 Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP). In the Sixth Five Year Plan, Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was also adopted to cover smaller areas of tribal concentration having population of atleast 10,000 of which 50 percent or more were tribals. Smaller areas called cluster with a tribal population of atleast 5,000 and above with scheduled Tribe concentration of 50 percent or more was also identified during the Seventh Five Year Plan. The impact of any development programme could be studied only after a period of its implementation.
Sample Design

After careful examination it was decided to follow two stage sampling. At the first stage Kota settlements of Nilgiris district were taken as the sampling unit. All the seven Kota settlements were selected for the collection of data: viz (1) Kollimalai, (2) Tiruchigadi, (3) Sholurkokkal, (4) Gudalurkokkal, (5) Newkotagiri, (6) Kilkotagiri and (7) Kundah Kotagiri. In the second stage a beneficiary was taken as the sampling unit. The list of Kota settlements in the Nilgiris district was obtained from the office of the District Tribal Development Agency. At the time of the survey, there were a total of seven Kota settlements in the four taluks of Nilgiris District put together. A sample based on stratified random sampling technique was drawn from the total number of Kota settlements. The second stage of sampling proved to be quite laborious. The beneficiaries were spread over a wide area in seven settlements of four taluks in Nilgiris District. The sample survey covered 183 households from 7 settlement of the Kotas in the Nilgiris. That is 10 percent of the total Kota Population in Nilgiris district. The survey was completed with the help of interview schedule.

Processing and Analysis of Data

The primary data have first been master-tabled and from it four data sets have been selected. The first of these related to sample characteristics. The second of these was on the assistance. The third and the fourth related to measuring the levels of welfare/development before and
after the implementation of Tribal Development Programmes. These data sets were processed in to frequency tables and summary statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation were estimated for the important economic variables. The correlation co-efficient was used to find out the relationship among the various sources of Income formation. The last two sets have been separately entered for Factor Analysis and the dimensions extracted have been examined so as to know the nature, extent and kinds of assistance and their impact. The Discriminant analysis was attempted in the study to verify the homogeneity and variability of the socio-economic variables across the seven Kota settlements in the Nilgiri district.

IMPORTANT OF THE STUDY

The present study is not a conceptual one but it tries to find out the impact of tribal development schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiris district with special reference to agricultural development: poultry farming; sheep and goat rearing; and other income generating schemes, under the Integrated Tribal Development Programmes (ITDP). In this study efforts are also made to analyse the extent of overall tribal development in the Nilgiris district with particular reference to the Kota settlements. It is hoped that the study would be a valuable addition to knowledge for policy makers, planners, administrators and social scientists, in understanding the socio-economic conditions of Kotas in particular and Scheduled Tribes in general. It is also hoped that the study may provide some knowledge to the volunteer organisations, teachers, researchers, students, and others in
understanding the socioeconomic status of Scheduled Tribes in Nilgiris district with special reference to Kotas of Nilgiris.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study has been restricted by the time set for study and the availability of resources for carrying out the fieldwork. Due to this hardship, the sample size for the study was fixed as 183. Hence the findings of the sample survey of 183 sample households has been generalised for the universe. The primary data for the present study has been collected through personal interview method and hence recall bias of the informants could not be completely overcome. Since the beneficiary households do not maintain proper accounts, and most of them are illiterates, there is possibility of statistical bias, and hence the data collected would only be an approximation of actual facts. However, efforts were made to collect reasonably satisfactory information from the sample respondents by repeated appeals and persuasion. Again, since this is a micro level study, i.e., covering only seven Kota settlements of Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu, the findings of the study may not be relevant to the other areas in the country. However, the findings and suggestions may throw some light on certain broad characteristic features of Scheduled Tribes and as such the study may be of practical use in formulating better plans.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis is a blend of seven chapters. The First Chapter discusses the objectives, methodology, importance of the study and the
limitations of the study, besides presenting the perspective of the study. The Second Chapter examines the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Tribes in India and Tamil Nadu. The Third Chapter examines the progress of Tribal welfare measures in Tamil Nadu. The Fourth Chapter presents the demographic and socio-economic profile of the Nilgiri district. The Fifth Chapter describes in detail of the demographic and socio-economic profile of the respondents. The Sixth Chapter form the core of the study, which analyses the impact of the tribal development schemes in the Kota settlements of Nilgiri district. The Seventh Chapter gives the summary of the findings and suggestions drawn from the study. The Chapters are followed by Bibliography and Appendices, notably the schedule used in the survey.