Chapter-VI

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The stigma attached to ‘Yerukalas’ being Ex-Criminals has been Tribes has been gradually changing with the occupational shift. The attitude of the people have definitely changed for the better since they started their new jobs. It is found that majority of the respondents have grown old and therefore have become ineffective for any kind of adventure. Young generation is seen opting for new occupations, which guarantee honour and respect to them. The threat of insecurity in their old age has made them to choose other professions.

SUMMARY

The present study had revealed the plight of Ex-Criminal Tribes of Stuvartpuram had been transformed and leading a decent life with the help of NGOs and Government intervention. New avenues and opportunities have been created to trans-avenues and opportunities has been created to transform these tribals and made them to lead a social life with a better livelihood opportunities. The lives of these ex-criminal tribes had been transformation and leading a decent life.

The Criminal Tribes Act was amended a several times to protect and reform these people. Though the Act remained in force for about 80 years, it could not do what it was expected to do. The policy of the government was to suppress the turbulent elements among the tribes and also to encourage them to settle on land and to provide them with means of earning an honest livelihood. But the conditions and the status were the same as before.
After India got Independence, the leaders and social reformers, took note of this problem. They realised that it was a blot on the Indian society. Nehru stated in a speech delivered at Nellore, Andhra Pradesh in October, 1936, that: “I am aware of this monstrous provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act which constitutes a negation of civil liberty. Wide publicity should be given to it working, and an attempt made to have the Act removed from the Statute Book. No tribe could be classified as criminal as such and the whole principle is out of consonance with all civilised principles of criminal justice and treatment of offenders.”

The Central Government (Federal Government) appointed a committee in 1949 to study the useful existence of the law. It expressed that the Act was against the spirit of the constitution. The public also moved, and as a result the Criminal Tribes Act of 80 years was repealed in 1952 and in its place, the Habitual Offenders Act was enacted in that year. With this repeal of the Act some 22,68,348 persons in the country were legally set free. Now the status of the criminal tribes in law is the same as his fellow Indian. The Committee also recommended that suitable steps should be taken for the amelioration of the criminal tribes after the repeal of the Act. The Government is taking necessary steps to ameliorate these groups of people.

In spite of all the facilities provided by the Government of India, the social position of the criminal tribes is the same as before. The stigma is still thrust on them. These people are unable to free themselves from this social bondage.
Crime is mostly a male phenomenon and most often criminals are illiterates. The criminal tribe’s social status has not changed, though, legally they are equal with their fellow countrymen.

In addition to them, the *Chenchus* became a grave menace to the countryside. They were not amenable to reform and were apt to misconstrue conciliatory methods for weakness of authority. The supervision over criminal settlements was transferred from the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Railways and Criminal Investigation Department to the Labour Commission in February 1920. This was considered to be a voluntary settlement.

These are the settlements that existed in Andhra Pradesh along with Stuartpuram settlement which is the theme of the present study.

It is true that Stuartpuram settlement produced a good number of criminals. Among them a notorious criminal Tiger Nageswara Rao was their hero gained popularity in the settlement. He was the local Robinhood and spent a major portion of the stolen wealth on his fellow men i.e., the poor people. Being an orphan himself, he gave shelter to orphans. This ‘hero’ was ‘Tiger’ Nageswara Rao. He became so legendary in his own life-time that songs were composed extolling his philanthropy, kindness etc. In one of the songs the atrocities committed on him by the police who killed him later were also vividly mentioned.
Stuvartpuram consists of both criminal and non-criminal families. The section of non-criminal families are employed in government jobs, industrial establishments, agricultural operations and petty trade. Among the criminal families there are two categories ‘white collar’ and ‘Blue collar’ criminals. These people have criminal background, but they are averse to committing crime. The reasons are obvious viz., 1) Some of their kinsmen are killed by the police, 2) They are unable to bear the ill-treatment and harassment either by the police or from the public, 3) Education has enabled them to realise their folly, 4) They are interested in the future of their children, 5) They want to lead a respectable life by joining the mainstream of life. Gradually, they are taking to small jobs and business and changing their life styles. But there are not many opportunities either in the private or public sector to provide them with some meaningful occupations, even though the government is providing some succor in the shape of small loans, cattle, rickshaws etc. It is needless to state such measures are inadequate.

The government should come forward to provide them with alternative means of livelihood. Though the government is taking some immediate rehabilitation measures, such as providing them buffaloes, rickshaws, loans etc., these measures can hardly be a permanent solution. Their rehabilitation through the removal of their age-old serious problem, says G.P. Bharal, “Largely depends on how far they are integrated into society. Rehabilitation has to be tempered with a human approach to the entire question."
FINDINGS

- The policies and the welfare measures extended by the State Government and the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) have improved the quality of their lives. It is revealed that from the study that 58 per cent of the respondents are illiterates and it is considered to be one of the reasons for their criminal profession. Due to the intervention of Samskar Salvation army there is reformation in their attitudes. They started choosing occupations such as tailoring, typing work, handicrafts etc. The age old Profession of robber has been totally stopped. They are leading a good life by participating in the activities of agriculture and farm work.

- Majority of the Stuvartpuram dwellers have chosen other occupations, apart from government jobs. Most of the respondents are choosing petty business, agricultural labour work and auto-driving under self employment. Some are showing interest in agricultural activities and local politics. They are using their right to vote, and they are taking their own decisions. They are wise enough to train their children motivate them to go to schools founded by NGOs and Government.

- Most of the respondents possess agricultural land donated by Samskar and Salvation Army. As the land cannot be sold to outsiders, all the lands were left with them for agricultural operations. As the majority is below poverty line, they settled as agricultural labourers.

- The ex-criminal tribes are generally addicted to easy way of life by not doing regular hard work. Hence, it became imperative that economic rehabilitation programme should be designed to inculcate the work culture by creating work ethics.
• It has been revealed that majority of the respondents have 1-7 children due to lack of awareness on family planning programme on one side and illiteracy on the other side. The NGOs are creating awareness on the benefits of having a small family. Most the ex-criminals feel that children are the assets for their economic growth. Grown up children are seen assisting their parents in agriculture, small scale industries, petty business, and etc. They are engaged in domestic front to each additional income for their families.

• Majority of the ex-criminals have pucca houses constructed under the Indira Awas Yojana programme. Clean and neat houses have been constructed with good sanitation for the benefit of the ex-criminal tribes. As the result, they are now free from cyclonic effects and rainfall.

• Most of the respondents are indebted and always seeking financial help for their support. The require money on credit to solve their problems and become self-sufficient. Though the NGOs are advising the ex-criminals to take credit from banks and co-operative societies, yet, they are seen moving round private money lenders. They are unable to overcome their financial problems and they are ever indebted.

• Education brought a lot of transformation to the children of the ex-criminal tribes. They are provided with the education and boarding. The education as a common platform, and which transformed their lives. Their children are made to sit with other children, on a common platform of education and this experiment has resulted in the development of a positive attitude among the children of ex-criminals towards life.
• It has been revealed from the study that lack of employment opportunities have led them to go with criminal activity and most of the ex-criminals believed it is their ancestral profession and should be carried on. But due to NGOs intervention the lifestyle of criminals has been changed. Today, they believe that their past life as a stigma and are welcoming Christianity for bringing a change in their lives.

• Today ex-criminal tribes are feeling guilty for the robberies done in the past. Their children are sent to schools and technical institutions with a hope that they may lead an honest life.

• Most of the respondents revealed that the money accumulated through robbery and theft has been spent on their children’s education, marriages and clearing of debts of their elders.

• The criminal activity has been discarded due to motivation and jobs under self-employment schemes provided by the NGOs and Government. Now they feel insulted to be called as ex-criminals.

• There is role of caste leaders, Government officials NGO and police officials in educating them to have a better profession than that of criminal activity.

• The study reveals that due to reformation and economic compulsions, they are choosing to settle as agricultural labourer, autorickshaw drivers. Some are settling in private and government jobs.
• It has been revealed that social change took place after the initiation of NGOs. Now they are leading a better standards of life and improved their economic position. They are advising other people to join to the main stream of life by accepting the new change in the society. There is a lot of change in the attitudes of the criminal tribes due to media exposure (Television and Newspapers).

The study reveals that most of the so called ex-criminals and their family members are leading a decent life since they are gaining a good status with economic upliftment from the NGOs and Government. Now, they are taking a good decisions and planning for the future development of their community.

However, the following few Conclusions are made below with a view to improve the rehabilitation programme for the welfare of these Yerukala settlers of Stuvartpuram.

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. The settlers should be provided with enough land to make them self-sufficient. Added to this, agricultural implements, fertilizers and necessary financial assistance should be provided to cultivate it.

2. Small scale industries such as basket-making, weaving, mat-making, brick-making and the like should be encouraged.

3. Dairy farming, piggary, poultry are useful schemes for their economic development. Government should provide financial assistance on loan-cum-subsidy basis.
4. Arrangements should be made with banks to sanction loans for ex-criminal tribes in setting up small business, such as bunks, tea shops, stores, fancy stores and etc. Settlers are generally uneducated and lack the initiative and are unable to establish contacts with the government officials. They are unaware of the avenues and opportunities and procedures for taking loans. Politicians in the village are not genuinely interested in working for their welfare. This situation gives an opportunity to the middlemen to exploit them. These middlemen take loans from the banks in the names of the settlers. Instead of giving the whole amount to the borrower, they cease sums from the loan amounts. The government should initiate steps to curb this fraud.

5. The government should undertake to conduct elaborate surveys periodically to assess their living conditions. Their ideas and aspirations should be taken in to account. Appropriate measures could be introduced for their betterment only after listening to their grievances.

6. They may be recruited into the departments of police as constables, as water-boys, etc., into the government offices, as bus-drivers and conductors to the road transport corporation. Though, at present, some of them are employed, the number is negligible. Such a step, if taken, would not only provide them with a respectable livelihood but also take them away from the criminal atmosphere.

7. Stolen property dealers, corrupt police officials, investors in crime and greedy advocates should be strictly dealt with.
8. Educational facilities as they exist today are not adequate. A few more schools may be established and all these schools should be provided with the necessary infrastructural facilities.

It is not an obligation on the part of the government alone to help these people, but they should also on their part make sincere efforts to lead an honest life and make use of the opportunities provided to them. The stigma of their being ‘criminal’ constrained them more glaringly, as people always doubted a person who had spent some time in this settlement. No doubt, this is a serious psychological problem. To get rid of the stigma attached to them will in fact take a longer time. Reformation should not be merely materialistic. They should be instilled with self-confidence and their faith in humanity should not be shaken. This could perhaps be done through a proper treatment towards these people. ‘Trust would beget trust’ should be the maxim in dealing with them. It can be also suggested that the rehabilitation programmes concerning these denotified tribes, should either be entrusted to the educational institutions as part of their extension programmes or to the reputed social service organisations whose attitude will be less mechanical and more personal compared to that of government agencies.

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