Livelihood Security and Empowerment Status of Tribal Women in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

Tribal women work very hard for the livelihood of their family. They live a poor life in spite of having their contributions in the house as well as in the farm. They have a pivotal role in socio-economic needs, performing many household affairs. Without them, tribal welfare in livelihood is meaningless. The living condition of tribals is often appalling; with very low standards of living, little earnings, poor education and insufficient access to adequate health care. Because of these social and economic problems, the majority of tribals in Nilgiri and Dindigul Hills still remain economically backward and undeveloped. Majority of tribal population of these districts live in forest and remote areas. Tribals have been living in the forest since ancient times and the forest is the backbone of the tribal economy. They face lots of health problems like malnutrition and diseases and even today they lack drinking water, electricity, housing and other basic facilities. The main objective of this studies to study the profile characteristics of tribal women and find out the relationship between profiles characteristics of tribal women and their livelihood security in Nilgiri and Dindigul Districts of Tamil Nadu. The study concludes by an actuality, the living conditions and status of the tribal women are still backward; the Government needs to focus on livelihood security among tribal women and implement without discrimination through economic channels.

Introduction

Livelihood security is the ability of a household, to meet its basic needs like food, health and shelter, basic education and community participation. Livelihoods can be made up of a range of on-farm and off-farm activities, which together provide a variety of procurement strategies, for food and cash. A livelihood is a system, which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, enhance its capabilities, and assets and provide sustainable opportunities. Each household combines its livelihood resources, within the limits of their social and political content, to pursue a number of livelihood strategies such as various types of production and income generating activities. A holistic analysis of livelihood security begins with the understanding of the dimensions, the factors that influence the range of possibilities for each livelihood system and should include the household livelihood analysis, to determine the information on the resources, held by each household and how these are used to earn adequate income and critical outcomes, achieved in terms of food security, nutrition and health status and access to resources like water, shelter and safe environment.

Review of Literature

Anjaneya and Sreeramulu (2014) examined the status of scheduled tribes in Karnataka and observed that about seven percent of the population of the State consisted of tribes, who lived in hilly areas and forests, with some peculiar primitive traits, distinctive culture and shyness of contact with other communities, geographical isolation, backwardness etc. The study revealed that tribes suffered from low literacy, high dropouts from school, inadequate health services, lack of nutritious food and extreme poverty, despite implementation of central and state tribal development projects in Karnataka state. Hence it was suggested that special area-specific and target group-specific tribal development projects, should be implemented in the State, for the empowerment of tribes.

Sujith et al (2014) analyzed the livelihood status of tribes in Attappady Block, Kerala and noted that majority of tribes lived under weak and vulnerable conditions in all respects. The study revealed that there was wide development gap between the tribes and non-tribes in Kerala State, due to constant exclusion of tribes from the mainstream of development. Hence it was suggested that the State and civil society should ensure proper living conditions and developmental opportunities, to the tribes, as a matter of social justice and responsibility.

Paul (2013) evaluated the income, livelihood and education of tribal communities, in Kerala, in terms of inter-community disparities and noted that a meager minority of tribes in Kerala received education, employment, financial assistance and other benefits. The study revealed that majority of tribes continued to remain backward, educationally and economically in Kerala, in the absence of tribal unity and activism. The author suggested that tribes should be enabled to receive better educational facilities and employment opportunities, to achieve progress on par with non-tribes.

Arulsevam and Maheswari (2011) in their study on 'Demographic Profile and Living Conditions of Tribal Population' studied about the educational status, health status, infrastructure facility and living conditions of the

tribal people such as Sc's Tribes, OBC's and some minorities especially in rural areas. They study found that the self-employment activities were quite low due to poverty, illiteracy, lack of knowledge and infrastructure facilities in rural areas. The author suggested that it would be appropriate to improve educational and developmental programmes to improve their living condition among the tribal communities.

Significance of the Study

This study highlighted their livelihood security and status of tribal in India and neglected the major primitive tribal's of the Dindigul and Nilgiri districts in Tamil Nadu. The outcome of this study will help to understand the livelihood status of primitive tribal in these districts. It will highlight the adaptive mechanisms and struggle for survival strategy of the tribal's of the Nilgiri and Dindigul District in Tamil Nadu.

Objectives of the Study

1.   To study the profile characteristics of tribal women in Nilgiri and Dindigul Districts of Tamil Nadu.
2.   To find out the relationship between profiles characteristics of tribal women and their livelihood security in Nilgiri and Dindigul Districts of Tamil Nadu.

Hypothesis of the Study

H01: There is no significant relationship between the profile characteristics of tribal women and their livelihood security in Nilgiri District and Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.

Methodology of the Study

The study was carried out in primitive tribal dominated districts of high altitude and tribal zone of Tamil Nadu. Two districts namely Dindigul and Nilgiri were selected for this study. 15 villages from Dindigul district with 100 respondents and 20 villages from Nilgiri district with 200 respondents were selected and thus making a total of 300 respondents. Data was collected through structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data was coded, tabulated and analyzed statistically and the results were interpreted accordingly.

Cluster of Economic Empowerment

The study applied K-Means Cluster analysis on Livelihood Security Status Parameters total scores. The Livelihood status Parameters and the respective score for clearly presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1 - Parameters of Livelihood Security Status

S.No	Parameters	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5	Score 6
1	Please indicate the status of land on which the house is built	Patta land	Forest land	Purampoku land	Inherited land	Primitive land	
2	If migrated now lived in	Forest	Rural	Urban	City		
3	Not migrated reason	No other source	Primitive land	Government patas for the land	Agriculture land	Easy to access forest produce	
4	Availability of Ration shop	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil
5	Availability of Anganvadi	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil
6	Availability of Primary health centre	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil
7	Availability of Community hall	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil
8	Primary school	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil
9	Bank	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil
10	Availability of Main road	Within premises	Less than 1 K.m	1-5 K.m	5-10 K.m	More than K.m	Nil

Based on parameters scores, the Researcher was able to generate the total livelihood status scores, for tribal women in Dindigul and Nilgiri Districts. The application of cluster analysis, on these livelihood security total score, yielded the following result.

Table 2 - Final Cluster Centers

	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Livelihood Security	50.66	29.07	38.71

Source: primary data

From the above table it can be inferred that the 1st cluster score was 50.66, 2nd cluster score was 29.07 and 3rd cluster score was 38.71 and comparing these three numerical values, the Researcher identified 1st cluster to be strong in Livelihood Security, followed by the 2nd cluster to be week in Livelihood Security and 3rd cluster to be moderate in the Livelihood Security.

The distribution and frequency of these three clusters are clearly given below:

Table 3 - Number of Cases in Each Cluster

Cluster	Scale	Sample Unit	Percentage
	High	123.000	41
	Moderate	59.000	19.7
	Low	118.000	39.3
Valid		**300.000**	**100**

Source: primary data

From the above table is found that the sample unit consisted of 123 (41%) respondents with High Livelihood Security, 59 (19.7%) under Moderate Livelihood Security and 118 (39.3%) under Low Livelihood Security.

T- Test of Livelihood Security

In the **Table 4** the comparative analysis between Nilgiri District and Dindigul District for Livelihood Security is presented. The independent T-test was applied to the total scores of Livelihood Security and the following results were obtained. These results were used to verify the following Hypothesis.

H01: There is no significant relationship between the profile characteristics of tribal women and their livelihood security in Nilgiri District and Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.

Table 4 - Descriptive Statists of Tribal Women's Livelihood Security Status

Districts	Numbers	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T-Value	P-Value
Nilgiri	200	40.7750	9.25216	.65423	-2.978	0.003
Dindigul	100	43.5900	6.82404	.68240		

Source: primary data

The independent T- test clearly revealed the significant T value to be -2.978, P to be .003, the mean value for Nilgiri District to be 40.7750 and Dindigul District to be 43.5900. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected, at 5% level. In other words, there was significant difference between Nilgiri District and Dindigul District in the Livelihood Security of tribal women because the tribal women of Dindigul District tribal were more secure than tribal women of Nilgiri District.

Findings of the Study

- It is found that tribal woman's livelihood security 1st cluster score is 50.66, 2nd cluster score is 29.07 and 3rd cluster score is 38.71.
- The independent T- test clearly revealed the significant T value to be -2.978, P to be .003, the mean value for Nilgiri District to be 40.7750 and Dindigul District to be 43.5900. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected, at 5% level.

Conclusion

The living conditions and status of the tribal women are still backward. Tribal women face problems and challenges, in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life, due to environmental poverty and the interference of outsiders. The strategy for tribal development, especially for women, needs improvement and upliftment, to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional lifestyle in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of tribals, particularly women, have improved their socioeconomic conditions and status.

References

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[4] Arulsevam and Maheswari (2011), Demographic Profile and Living Conditions of Tribal Population, International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 2, Issue 2, January 2012.

[5] Rajendralal (2005) reported that while considering certain major communities, that average family size in respect of the paniyans worked out to 4.5, Mala Arayans 5.5, Irulas 4.42 and Kurichians 5.45.