



Hand to Mouth Economy of Male Kudiya Tribe In Coastal Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

India has several socially disadvantaged communities and Scheduled Tribes are Socio-economic, politically and other all walk of life have been deprived. According to 2011 census, 104 million scheduled tribes are scattered across the nation and representing 8.2 percent of the total population of the country. Kodagu district is located on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats in Karnataka and is home to many communities with diverse ethnic origins, and tribes such as the Malekudiya, Bettakuruba, Jenu Kuruba and Yaravas obviously who are of hunter-gatherers. The present study focuses on the economic conditions of the Malekudiya tribal community.

Keywords: Basketry, Cottage Industries, Economy, Minor Forest Produces, Western Ghats.

I. INTRODUCTION

The tribal and rural communities of the world have been passed through different phases of socio-economic advancement. It is mentioned that hunting-gathering, horticulture, cattle herding, shifting cultivation, settled agriculture, etc. are different stages of socio-economic development among different tribes in India. Food gathering and hunting is claimed to be the oldest form of economic activity. During 2 to five million years of human existence on this planet Earth, 99 percent of the time was spent in food gathering, hunting and fishing. Agriculture is alleged to own originated some 10,000 years ago. Industrial economy is alleged to own been breathing for the past 400 years only. Human communities of the globe practice various kinds of economic activities includes subsistence technologies, division of labour, and organization of labour, various customary ways of distribution of products and services and consumption and utility and decision-making at various stages within the processes of production, distribution and consumption. Basing on the subsistence technologies, the economic activities will be broadly categorized into food collection and food production. Under food collection, hunting gathering, intensive foraging and fishing are the most important activities.

According to Hoebel and Weaver (1979: 453), "Economic organization associates the behaviours that centre upon the assembly, the allocation and distribution, and therefore the use and consumption of goods". The above writers indicate culturally defined behavioural networks that operate in various economic activities. Achieving some rhythm and order within the provision of fabric goods and services for the satisfaction of necessities is crucial for the survival and continuity of society. In the majority societies, economic organization exists in one form or the opposite. Simple societies have simple mode of production which include simple technology and most of the labour constitute relations or relatives. The mode of economic organization is incredibly simple, mostly embedded in direct face to face relationship. Each style of economic organization ensures some role to any or all members of the community by means of making some space within the pursuits associated with economic activities. Every member includes a purpose to participate in such organized activities.

II. Brief Note on Malekudiya Tribe and Western Ghats

The Male Kudiyas are a gentle and modest people, short in stature, generally fair in complexion, with a characteristic way of tying their dhotis and saris. They seem to be a cheerful and contented people. The important hill Kudiya called Male Kudiya, lives on the Western Ghats bordering Mysore at Dharmasthala, Shishila, Neriya and Kukke Subramanya. Beltangady taluk of South Canara district is one among the few taluks within the district which have a high number of Male Kudiya tribes. All the ethnographers have noticed the presence of Male Kudiyas within the district and have made few observations on their body, customs, rituals, traditions, language and their way of life. The Western Ghats



range of mountains is situated within the South-West of the country and that they run through the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Goa. The Western Ghats in Karnataka cover a locality of over 20,000 sq km. out of a complete forest area of 38,284.30 Sq.Km. All the foremost rivers of South India namely The Godavari, Cauvery, Krishna, Nethravathi and Tungabhadra origin in Western Ghats and supply water for domestic, agriculture, industrial usage and facilitate to come up with hydroelectric power similarly. Western Ghats may be a rich source of timber and Minor Forest Produces (MFPs).

III. Objective of the Study And Methodology

The Present study has emphasized to analyse the hand to mouth economy of Male Kudiya tribal community of coastal Karnataka.

The study pertained to South Canara district of coastal Karnataka. Belthangady taluk is mostly covered by dense forests. The hills of the Western Ghats provide scenic beauty, especially during the monsoon season that usually lasts from the month of June to September. The taluk covers an area of 1375 Square Kilometers. About 200 samples were selected from Belthangady taluk. The study has been descriptive in nature, therefore the structured interview schedules have been used to collect the primary data by using the purposive sampling technique. Similarly, relevant literature is collected from secondary sources such as journals, books, encyclopedias, gazetteers, reports, and different websites as well.

IV. RESULT ANALYSIS

Apparently, Male Kudiya tribal community has been involved in the following income generating activities to meet the basic and additional requirements.

Nature of Economic Activities Performing by the Male Kudiyas

Sl.No	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
01	Temple Services	85	42.5
02	Cultivation	23	11.5
03	Forest Produce & Basketry	57	28.5
05	Agricultural Labourers	32	16.0
06	Govt. Service	03	01.5
Total		200	100

The data presented in the above table reveal the economic activities of the sample respondents. The data show a large majority of the respondents 85(42.5%) dedicated themselves for discharging the religious duties to the shrine. Dharmasthala is a great shrine and the trustee here plays the role of father to the tribes men. Some members of Male Kadiya community are attached to the temple and cultivate the temple lands. They are also expected renders services to the temple. The service consists of lighting the temple, erection of pandals (booths), pulling the car, arranging decoration of premise of temple etc. They need to bring the cane and bamboo from the forests. Particularly in Kukke Subramanya, all the operations of God Kukke Subramanya's feast are being taken up by Male Kudiyas. Many members of this community have been appointed to work in temple premises. The temple administrative authority provides two meals every day at least one member of each family.

About 57(28.5%) respondents are engaged in collection of minor forest produces like medicinal herbs, tubers, lac, wax, *Rampathre*, *Betta* (cane), soap nut, bamboo, creepers, pepper and soap nuts are gathered. However, the Government has set up co-operative societies for the collection and disposal of these products. Basket weaving also has been a source of livelihood for Male Kudiyas.

Another 32 (16%) respondents are working as agricultural labourers, the Male Kudiyas have been working under the patronage of one master for a very long time. In farmer days wages were mostly being paid to them in kind and all their requirements used to be met by the master. Cardamom collection in the forests and developing new plantations by raising nurseries is also performing by Male Kudiyas. Additionally, they are working in the rubber plantations, coco plantations and areca gardens to supplement their earnings. Remaining 23 (11.5%) respondents have been cultivating lands over the slopes of the Ghats from a very long time. Plots measuring from two to eight acres are cleared and turned into paddy fields. Generally areca and coconut palms are raised in the fringe areas. Annually two or even three crops of paddy are taken.



Formerly they were following the Kumri type (Shifting Cultivation) of agriculture by burning patches of forest lands and sowing crops like paddy or maize. Relatively speaking one can say that Male Kudiya have responded well to the fast changing conditions in the country with more confidence in themselves and in their chances of betterment than many other tribes found under similar circumstances.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of the study and fieldwork experiences, some important recommendations for the implementation by the government, voluntary service organizations, activists and all those who are interested in the progress and development of Male Kudiya.

- There is a need to improve agricultural activities among Male Kudiya by way of providing basic infrastructural facilities like irrigation, financial support, fertilizers and hybrid seeds.
- Handicrafts and basketry, and cottage industries are need to be promoted from the level of livelihood to industry with the help of advanced technology and also be provided with a wider marketing facility.
- Male Kudiya should be made aware of the importance of education, health and sanitation.

CONCLUSION

Due to the influence of modern education, legislation, the advancement of transportation and communication, the market economy, and employment opportunities, the younger generation of Male Kudiya is being driven away from their traditional occupations like basketry, temple services, cultivation and collection of minor forest produces. However, in the course of time, unique technique of basketry and herbal medicinal practices will be disappeared in course of time from the young Male Kudiya. Hence, unique skills of them need to be documented and disseminated among the younger generation. Government, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and civic society need to create space for leading a dignified life.

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