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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### A STUDY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBES IN THE NILGIRI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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#### Abstract

Tamil Nadu, one of the major states of southern zone in India, consist of 36 important groups live in different district. According to the census of 2011, the scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu constitute 1.10% of the total population. The Tribal Topography in Tamil Nadu broadly divided into three categories viz., 1) Tribal concentration areas 2) Dispersed tribal area and 3) Primitive tribal areas. According to the Ministry of tribal Affairs, Nilgiri district had the highest percentage of tribal population area in Tamil Nadu came under the primitive tribal areas because of the presence of six primitive tribal groups (PTGs) viz., Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Paniyas, Irulas and Kattunayakans. Each of these tribes maintain unique cultural traits. All these tribes coexisted locally in a loose caste like community organisation. In our study facilitates to understand the social development of the six primitive tribal groups in Nilgiri district and provide an overall pictures of development initiatives by the government of India and Tamil Nadu Government for the upliftment of these tribal people and also focus on the status of these tribal how they empowered themselves through self-help groups and other organisations. The study reveals that a number development programme, schemes, policies have been introducing to improve the well-being of tribal people.

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#### Introduction:-

The Indian Tribal population is an integral part of Indians population and represented a true synthesis of Indian culture. Generally, the term tribe is a collection of individuals sharing a common culture, a clear linguistic, well defined political and cultural boundaries people. India has second largest concentration of tribal population after the African continent. The scheduled tribe population in India as per the 2011 census, is 10.42 crore, constitute 8.6% of the total population with consists 500 scheduled tribal groups in different states. Tamil Nadu, one of the major states of southern zone in India, consist of 36 important groups live in different district. According to the census of 2011, the scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu constitute 1.10% of the total population. The Tribal Topography in Tamil Nadu broadly divided into three categories viz., 1) Tribal concentration areas 2) Dispersed tribal area and 3) Primitive tribal areas.

According to the Ministry of tribal Affairs, Nilgiri district had the highest percentage of tribal population area in Tamil Nadu came under the primitive tribal areas because of the presence of six primitive tribal groups (PTGs) viz.,

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Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Paniyas, Irulas and Kattunayakans. Each of these tribes maintain unique cultural traits. All these tribes coexisted locally in a loose caste like community organisation.

In our study facilitates to understand the social development of the six primitive tribal groups in Nilgiri district and provide an overall pictures of development initiatives by the government of India and Tamil Nadu Government for the upliftment of these tribal people and also focus on the status of theses tribal how they empowered themselves through self-help groups and other organisations. The study reveals that a number development programme, schemes, policies and have been introduce to improve the well-being of tribal people.

### **Objective:-**

1. To identify a social condition of tribals in the Nilgiri.
2. To study the support given by the government and non-governmental organization to tribals.
3. To examine the obstacles faced by the tribals.

### **Methodology:-**

In the present study, field research has been done. The personal interview has been planned to comprise both formal and informal discussions regarding the daily life, economic, education and employment and income. The Analytical method has been found to be very useful to present the attitude and aptitude of the tribes related to their livelihood. Methodology adapted in writing this paper is historical descriptive cum analytical method. These methods have been followed in the process of completing this work.

### **The Nilgiri District**

In early period the Nilgiris was part of the kingdoms ruled by most of the rulers of south India viz., The Cheras, The Cholas, The Pandiyas, The Rashtrakutas, The Gangas, The Pallavas, The Kadambas and the Hoysals. And later British East Indian company take the administration of Nilgiri District. Because of its natural charm and pleasant climate, was a place of a special attraction for the European. John Sullivan who was the collector of Coimbatore in 1789. During his administration Nilgiri it's a part of Coimbatore district and later 1868 the Nilgiri was separate from the Coimbatore district.<sup>1</sup>

In 1882 Nilgiri district was created a new district of the Presidency. Richard Wellesley Barlow who was the first collector Nilgiri District. At the administrative purpose the Nilgiri is divided into Six Taluks viz., Udhagamandalam, Gudalur, Pandalur, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Kundah. The Udhagamandalam town, also called as Ooty or Udhagai or Ootacamund is the Headquarters of the Nilgiri District Administration.<sup>2</sup>

The Tamil Nadu state government in India has traditionally placed a high priority on tribal development. Six primitive tribal groups-the Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyas, and Kattunayakas- call the Nilgiris home. These six primitive tribes are not equally divided in the district. Each tribes follow their own tradition and culture by the surrounding environment. At present some of the tribal groups changed their habits for upliftment of the society, like people who settles in the plains.

The present study makes as assessment of the social condition of the Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyans and kattunayakans tribal groups in the Nilgiri district.

### **Tribal Development Programme In The Nilgiris**

In accordance with the tribal-sub plan, the government sets aside and allocates 1% of all non-state yearly plan outlays each year for use in both indivisible and divisible programmes. In addition, the grants granted under Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution. are being used to provide houses, roads, drinking water, and electricity to the tribal settlements around India. Our state government's programme to advance tribal development in Tamil Nadu also made use of this plan.

#### **(i)Hill Area Development Programme**

HDAP was initiated during Fifth Five Year Plan. The National Committee on the Development of Backward Area in 1981 recommended that all the hill areas in the country having a height above 600 m and not covered under tribal sub-plan be treated as backward hill areas. The Nilgiri is one of the Hill Stations in Tamil Nadu consist six particularly vulnerable Tribal groups (PVTGs) settlements. So these Hill Area Development Programmes were used

by these tribes for construction of Houses and basic Amenities. Because, most of the Tribal people were settled into their Traditional huts or hamlets.<sup>3</sup> Under the programme various schemes were used for the Todas community to build Modern houses. Other interior tribe settlements Irulas, Paniya and Kattunayakas are benefited by this HDAP. The Scheme called Swatch Bharath Aryan (SBA) have helped to improving sanitation houses for Irulas settlements in Masanagudi Village (Udhagamandalam Taluk) the joint hands of HADP to constructed 23 Houses with Toilets facility.<sup>4</sup>

#### **(ii) Forest Right Act**

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs. It also provides rights to allocation of forest land for developmental purposes to fulfil basic infrastructural needs of the community. In conjunction with the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Settlement Act, 2013 FRA protects the tribal population from eviction without rehabilitation and settlement. The Act further enjoins upon the Gram Sabha and rights holders the responsibility of conservation and protection of bio-diversity, forests, water sources and other ecologically sensitive areas as well as to stop any destructive practices affecting these resources or cultural and natural heritage of the tribals. Most tribal settlements in Nilgiri were located in forest area. FRA gave security and their basic amenities to the six primitive tribals. But this rights not aware to the most of the tribals.

The Gudalur Forest division is home of two different Adivasi Communities, all who fall in the categories PVTGs – Paniyas and Kurumbas. The FRA gave licenses to the tribes construction houses in selected areas and also gave awareness about the Grama Sabha. The hamlet of Todas widely scattered across the Grace land are concentrated on the North Western side of Hills- Particularly in the area of rolling pastures. At present most of Todas hamlets have been replaced to the Modern Houses. FRA gave licenses to the Todas Settlements in the Forest areas. Kattunayakas are other ethnic group who received benefit from the Forest Right Act.<sup>5</sup>

#### **(iii) Green House**

The government of Tamil Nadu implements several welfare schemes for the social development of the Tribals intestate. The objective of the program is to facilitate faster social development of the tribals to end their social seclusion in the society. The construction of traditional houses, distribution of land, provisions of drinking water facilities and street lights are the advantages extended to the particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups for people who residing at hilly areas. In the Nilgiris, the government to sanction 100 additional green houses for tribals in the district.

At a recent event to mark the 66<sup>th</sup> All-India cooperative week, attended by the Former municipal administration Minister S.P. Velumani, and former Collector Miss Innocent Dhiya, said the spell of heavy rain in the district as necessitated the building of more green houses in the district. In the Nilgiris, **3429 Green houses** are been constructed for tribal people from tribal communities and economically weaker section of the society.<sup>6</sup>

#### **(iv) Community Hall**

The community halls are constructed in a very phased manner from 1971-72 onwards in Adi-Dravidar colonies to cater to the needs of Adi-Dravidar for the purpose of conducting marriages, social functions, meetings etc. Community feasts are arranged every year on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 15 Aug, 2<sup>nd</sup> October and or any local important day of that District. Voluntary Organization are involved in arranging the Samabandhi Virundhu or Community feasts.<sup>7</sup> non-governmental organization also constructed community halls for the tribals. In the Nilgiris the non-governmental organization called Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association (NAWA) construction community halls to the Kotas and Kurumbas in seventeen acres.<sup>8</sup>

#### **(v) Water Facility**

One of the fundamental utilities for the human community is access to Water. The Nilgiri are one of the most Bio diverse area of the Western ghats and of two variety of habitants. The Tribal community that are indigenous to this area primarily engaged in agriculture and eco related purpose. Water facilities are desired by the tribal settlements for Irrigation and Drinking. The Government took action and providing water facilities in in certain tribal areas.

Water is made available to the Three corners village with a Three Water taps connected with main water tanks by motor facilities under the Municipal Administration for the construction of Water Tanks by the government for

domestic purpose. The Municipal administration and Water supply department in the tribal settlements provide Water facilities for Irrigation and Drinking Water, In Accordance with the Government order straight by for drinking water set up by the district Administration.

In the Nilgiri, Banagudi Kurumba Villages Indigenous women unfilling effect has helped the local economy and “Naneer Programme” last for full years. Banagudi has the First Tribal Community in the State to have with Water Purified Utilizing an ultra-filtration membrane- based Technology many years. Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) selected the hamlet has a test site for new technology on March 9, 2020. Nilgiri Adivasi Welfare Association an NGO, selected the villages as a part of its Initiative to supply safe water to is adopted Banagudi Community. BARC Purified system was installed for 42 House filed of Kurumbas. But still interior tribal settlements faced lack of water facilities because there are not aware about the government Programme.<sup>9</sup>

#### **(vi)THAI Scheme**

In order to address the problem of unequal resources distribution and provide a minimal level of basic infrastructure to every habitation site, the government has launched a flagship programme called the Tamil Nadu Village habitation upgrading scheme for 2011 to 2012 and beyond. The programme offers basic amenities to the tribal populations, including a water supply, street lighting, roads, cemeteries, etc. In the Nilgiri the general tribal community used the plan.

#### **(vii)Road Facility**

As their living inside the forest they didn’t have through much of road facilities to travel from their settlements to other areas. It would take time for them to come and go through the forest, sometimes it also dangerous for their life. Government took initiative to constructed necessary road facilities for make their traveling easier and safe.<sup>10</sup>

Road facilities is very important for the peoples get their Anaipallam, an Irula tribal village with 65 families, is located eight kilometers away from Pillur Mattam in Coonoor taluk of Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. Tribes’ people from Anaipallam region and activists in the area to understand why the people are not entirely happy about the new road. The project costing Rs 6 crore was completed after three years. Residents from Chinnala Kombai now want the district administration to extend this road connection by another 3km so that it connects their hamlet. They also want the administration to expand the road’s width so that mini buses could be operated.

Due to concerns about their ability to support themselves, the Kurumba tribal communities in Tamil Nadu's Kotagiri district have left the areas where they had previously grown ragi and other millets. After all, it's not simple to walk 16 kilometers up and down in one day to buy necessities, transport children to school, or sell their crop to make a livelihood. The hamlet where Irula and Kurumba indigenous families originally resided is 8 kilometers from the closest road.

The Government take several steps to make construction of Road facilities to the tribes but still some of Kurumbas, Irulas and Kattunayankans settlements don’t have the road facilities because their hamlets are located deeply inside the forest.

#### **Comperhensive Tribal Development Programme**

The Government has allocated a sum of Rs.50 crore for the Comprehensive Tribal Development Programme for the year 2018-19. Through this Programme, Land development activities, improvement of Katcha houses, road work, improvement of GTR schools, provision of drinking water facilities, economic development schemes and skill development Programmes are being implemented through TAHDCO for Tribal Development. Construction of building, maintenance, repair work, construction of toilets, bathrooms, kitchen, provision of borewell and motor, provision of drinking water, electrical maintenance works etc. This scheme was utilized over all tribal communities in Nilgiri district. These schemes are mostly benefited to Todas, Kotas and other are not much know about the scheme.

#### **National Health Mission**

The National Health Mission was launched to provide universal access to equitable, affordable and quality health care. Goal - Reduction of child and maternal mortalities, population stabilization, and reduction of disease burden on account of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Strengthening of NHM - Operational guidelines for District Hospital, CHC, PHC, Urban PHC, Initiatives Kayak alp, Free drugs and diagnosis, dialysis programme,

Comprehensive primary health care, Health and Wellness Centre. The Primary healthcare services in rural areas are provided through a network of 1,56,251 Sub- Centers, 25,650 Primary Health Centers and 5,624 Community Health Centers across the country as on 31.03.2021

### **Health and Family Welfare Department**

The Health and Family Welfare Department implemented the Tamil Nadu Health System Project in 2005 with funding from the World Bank established fresh strategies to deal with a range of health challenges, including non-communicable diseases, providing healthcare to the state's tribal population, and working with NGOs to achieve its objective. The initiative identified the health problems the tribal people have and the barriers to care they encounter.

It created a wide range of interventions to deal with the issues at hand based on its understanding of the issues in the field. Many tribal welfare projects and programmes, including the Integrated Tribal Development, the Directorate of Tribal Welfare, and ITDP, have been implemented. The state is running a programme (ITDP, etc.) primarily for the welfare and socio economic development of the primitive tribal groups. Some voluntary organizations established hospitals under the programme of National Health Mission,

1. ASHWINI- A Gudalur Adivasi Hospital was established by ASHWINI (Association for Health Welfare in The Nilgiris).

2. NAWA – Nilgiri Adivasi Welfare Association

The government of India gave importance to welfare of the tribal communities particularly, health condition. The focus of NAWA works initially attending to primary Health and Education. At present NAWA is running hospitals, dispensary and Mobile Medical unit to tribal patients from the Nilgiri District and adjoining area with grand-aid from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India New Delhi. NAWA works closely with the District Administration, District Health Department in monitoring and implementation of various programmes in health and family welfare in the Nilgiri district.<sup>11</sup>

Government implemented several schemes for the tribal health but they refuse to accept this scheme, because some tribal groups are followed traditional medicine to cure their illnesses. Example 1) Kurumbas are followed ancestral medicine, 2) Irulas are the well-versed in the snake's bite remedies or medicine.

### **Conclusion:-**

The Indian government implemented a number of comprehensive welfare programmes to ensure the comfort of the indigenous population and to advance their socio-economic standing. Many provisions in the Indian Constitution are dedicated to promoting and defending the interests of the Scheduled Tribes. The development schemes and programmes proved to be very helpful in the development of the social condition of these tribes. They were far better now. It is a fact that still some are unaware of these schemes and still are suffering socially without any assistance.

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