



Livelihood Transition: Socio- Cultural and Economic Impact on Tribal Life

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ABSTRACT: Tribes are indigenous people with their own tradition, language and life style. Each tribal group is associated with a particular livelihood which determines their lifestyle. Forest is the life and livelihood of Indian tribes except in the cases of some nomadic groups. All the predominant tribal livelihood patterns like gathering of forest produces, hunting, shifting cultivation are forest centered. Forest act 1878 alienated tribes from forest and subsequently from forest produces. Deforestation has led to scarcity of forest produce which made their survival difficult. All these facts forced forest goods gathers to diverge from their traditional livelihood. Tribes explored new fields like plantation, agriculture and small industries as waged labors. Government projects also promote non-traditional livelihood. As a major determinant of lifestyle, any change in livelihood leads to significant impacts on socio- cultural and economic systems of tribal life. This study is an attempt to compare economic status and socio-cultural life of 'Kattunaika' who engaged in traditional livelihood practices and who adapted non- traditional livelihood practices.

The tribal group 'Kattunaika' lives in the tri-junction of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states, belongs to pre agrarian civilization and traditionally they depend on hunting and forest goods gathering for their livelihood.

Study put light on the increased tendency towards individual based economy of both traditional and non-traditional group. Economic disparity and saving habits are high among non-traditional group. Social interaction is high among non-traditional group. So that, they are able to, make use of educational facilities and other welfare programs. It also leads to active political participation. Traditional group still keep on their culture like dressing, language, rituals etc. But weakening of traditional culture is visible among non-traditional group. Circumstances made them unable to pass on traditional knowledge like folk songs, dance, and language etc. They exhibit strong affiliations towards religion while the other group declares that they are 'Kattunaika' not following any other religion. The paper also discuss about their active and passive participation in political process.

Keywords: Traditional livelihood, Non-traditional livelihood, economic status, social life, cultural practices, Political participation.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Tribes in India have come to be featured primarily according to their geographical isolation and distinct features like language, food habits, livelihood, autonomy etc. Among these livelihood plays a major role as it determines the food habits, way of living and mobility of a tribal group. Each tribe is associated with a particular livelihood such as shifting cultivation, cattle rearing, and forest goods gathering. It can be classified as pre- agrarian and agrarian civilization. Within their geographical space they have developed own socio- political and economic system. Tribal economy is characterized by community based ownership and sharing system which has little space for money and monetary based services. Whatever they get from the forest or cultivation would be shared among community members. Each tribal group owned a treasure of folk songs, dance and traditional medicines.

Tribes enjoyed autonomous administration in pre-colonial period. British government tried to intrude their land and administration, which resulted in strong tribal revolt. Forest act 1878 and 1927 alienated tribes from their own land. It prevents tribe from collecting forest produce. After independence, Government of India intervened in the nature of tribal life. They are unfavorably included in the political process. Finally in 1991, adoption of new economic policy widened the gap between national development goals and tribal development. (Ajith Menon, 2014)A significant number of tribal populations were displaced from their land by the state for natural resources. Various state governments and the central Government has been initiated a number of livelihood projects for tribes to resolve the unemployment issue. All of the above discussed state interventions along with deforestation helped to bring a transition in tribal livelihood. As livelihood is closely related with culture and economy any change in one will affect the other. This study attempts to compare economic status and socio-cultural life of 'Kattunaika' who engaged in traditional livelihood practices and who adapted non- traditional livelihood practices.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Tribes of Kerala

In Kerala 1.14% of the population comes under the category of Scheduled Tribe. It constitutes 0.43% of tribal population in India (Census, 2001). Tribes of Kerala belong to the category of Dravidian tribe (Luiz, 1962). Among fourteen districts Wayanad has highest tribal population (37%). (NIC, n.d.) There are thirty five tribal groups in Kerala out of them seven are recognized as primitive tribe.

According to PRG Mathur Kerala is divided in to seven tribal zones.

1. The Kasargod Tribal Region
2. The Wayanad Tribal Region
3. The Attappadi Tribal Region
4. The Nilambur Tribal Region
5. The Parambikulam Tribal Region
6. The Iduki Tribal Region
7. The Thiruvanthapuram Tribal Region (PRG Mathur, 1977 in (Menon, 2013)

2.2 Traditional Livelihood Patterns

Each tribal group belongs to a specific traditional livelihood. According to livelihood adopted for living south Indian tribes can be classified in to five categories. First forest hunting type, they live mostly in caves of interior forest used to make trap for animals like deer and fox. Some tribes domesticate dogs for hunting. 'Cholanaika' of Kerala is best example for forest hunting type of tribe. Second is pastoral or cattle herder type, they rear cattle like buffaloes, sheep or look after the cattle neighboring plainsmen for a nominal payment. Both of the above said categories belong to pre agrarian stage of development. Third one is hill cultivation type, who practices shifting cultivation. Forth is folk artist type, they play traditional musical instruments and dance women are specialized in tattooing 'Pinchis' and 'Dommars' of Andhra Pradesh are best examples of this type. Fifth is labour type, they are landless labourers. The Scheduled Tribe communities of the state can broadly be classified into four categories viz, hunters and gathers, agricultural labourers, shifting cultivators and settled cultivators, based on their traditional economic activity (Sukumaran Nair, 2003 in (Menon, 2013).

2.3 Process of Livelihood Transitions

Tribes enjoyed complete autonomy in pre-colonial period. Forest act 1878 enacted by British Government initiated the process of marginalization. Indian forest act 1927 introduced the principle of 're-nulius' implies any property which does not have a documented legal owner will be appropriated by the government. (Yojana, 2014). This act alienates tribes from their land and livelihood related to that land. Interventions by Government of India were mostly through various mainstreaming programs. Tribal Sub Plans were created to promote education and new form of employment generation among tribe. In order to cope up with mainstreaming process tribes started adopting new livelihood practices viz. waged labours in plantation, manual labours in factories etc.

Employment generation programs of government like MNREGA absorbed a good number of people. All the government proposed programs were created only for income generation, which does not match with the existing way of tribal life. Some of them forced to move out of their territory in search of new livelihood options. In some case lack of traditional livelihood option exposed them to illegal distilleries and drugs cultivation. Land acquisition for development projects enhanced the situation by displacing tribes from forest land. 10 million tribes were displaced and lost their livelihood on account of developmental activities undertaken by the nation. (Yojana, 2014) Tribe's interest and welfare were sacrificed in the name of national development. (Xaxa, 2014) Breakage of territory and livelihood changes affected other cultural aspects like language, social life, administration etc.

2.4 Population

'Kattunaika' a tribal group with pre - agriculture civilization constitute the population. They are present in three states viz. Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. They speak a dialect which closely resembles with Dravidian language Kannada. Traditionally they practice hunting and forest goods gathering for their livelihood. They are experts in trapping animals and extracting honey and wax. They used to eat fruits and roots from forest.

Each tribal village that is 'Uru' will be headed by a headman called 'Janmadeva' who has the authority of worshipping also. Their worshipping place is called 'Daivappura' located inside the village. They worship rocks, hills, snakes and animals. There will be festival for deities once in a Year. Men and women used to sing and dance together during all celebrations like marriage and festival. They have abundant Knowledge about medicinal usage of forest plants. Earlier they used to consume whatever they hunt or collect; now they started selling it through tribal cooperative society.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this article, we are going to present a descriptive study conducted among tribes who depend on traditional livelihood practice and tribes who shifted themselves to other non-traditional livelihood practices.

3.1 Objectives

1. To understand the socio-economic conditions of the respondents.
2. To examine the variance in living conditions and economic status of Kattunaika engaged in traditional livelihood practices and non-traditional livelihood practices.
3. To analyze the changes occurred in social life and culture of Kattunaika due to livelihood Transitions.

3.2 Sample and Data collection method

The study has been conducted at Noolpuzha Panchayath of Wayanad District in Kerala. The village is situated in the tri-junctional area of Kerala Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states. The population was divided in to two and 30 samples were taken from each group using self-made questionnaire.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Living Conditions

Living condition is analyzed by using three variable such as housing, water and sanitation, food habits. People who practice traditional occupation enjoys modern housing facilities (Table 1) with concrete roof and electricity in other criteria of housing like brick wall and cemented floor they are sharing the same status with their non-traditional counterparts. None of the respondents have made their own pucca house; it's given through various government projects. So, people with traditional occupation will have some advantage in benefitting projects. Kattunaika used to live in bamboo houses floored with cow dung this pattern has been drastically changed in both traditional and non-traditional group. For all those who are having brick wall house there is toilet attached with it. But nobody is using those toilets. They are using common wells and taps for drinking water sometimes nearby streams are also used.

Table 1: Housing Conditions of the respondents

Category	Traditional	Non Traditional
Concrete roof	36.66%	13%
Brick Wall	80%	83%
Cement Floor	53%	53%
Electricity	73%	60%

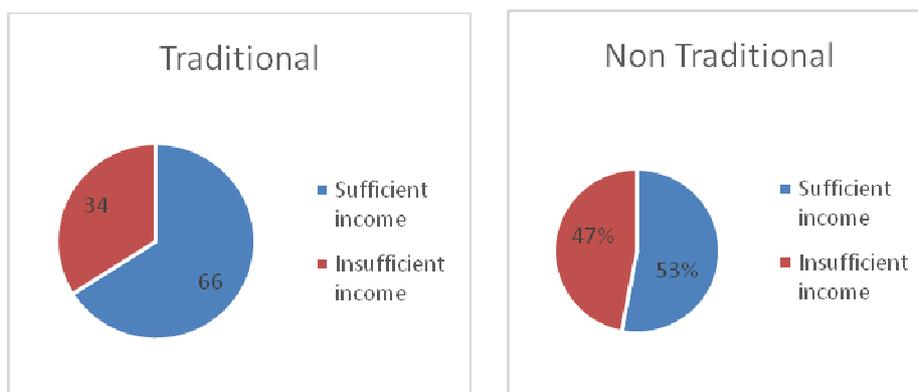
Non-traditional group is having better in-take of food than traditional group as they are having food at least one time and some-times two times in a day. In traditional group, 83% of respondents do not get food every day due to various reasons which includes lack of forest goods, and low purchasing capacity. During heavy rain they cannot enter in to the forest for collecting produces. As they need to go interiors to get enough stuff it takes two to three weeks to get out of the forest. So, sometimes they go hungry due to shortage of edible fruits and roots.

4.2 Economic Status

Kattunaika used to practice community based informal economy. They share the hunted and collected materials together. It has little space for money and monetary based services. They got exposure with money through the selling of forest produce like honey and wax. The traditional livelihood practitioners earn money through sale of forest produce. Tribal cooperative societies help them to sell these products. The people who shifted from traditional livelihood were mostly act as waged labours a small percentage got government job and a few of them started self-employment.

Among non-traditional group 53% is experience an increase in their income rest of the respondents shared either they have no change in income or their income reduced. A significant population of both category claims that they have sufficient income (Figure 1) to maintain the house hold activities.

Figure 1: Income Sufficiency of the respondents



As far as economic status is concerned income disparity seems to be high among non- traditional group. Their monthly income ranges from 500-10,000. Among traditional group 90% of them receive an income between 1000-5000. But income stability is comparably high among the non-traditional group because adverse climate affects forest goods gathering. Both savings habit and debt (Table 2) tendency are high among non- traditional group. Amount of savings and debt is also high among them. Traditional group possess only small savings left in cooperative societies and small debt in shops. Both trends give clear indication of moving from community based economy to individual based money centered economy which is faster among non-traditional group

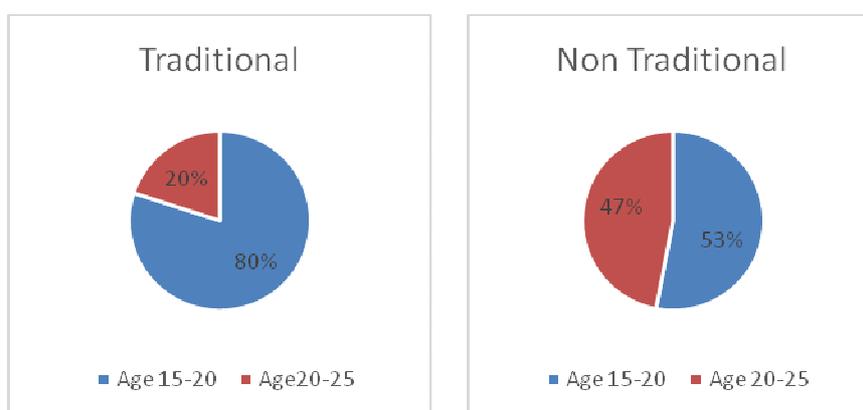
Table 2: Saving and Debt

Category	Traditional	Non traditional
People having debt	23%	36%
People having savings	46%	53%

4.3 Social Life

Kattunaika rarely interact with other communities, shy in nature. Their language has no script and they don't have any formal system of education. They are purely endogamous. Divorce and remarriage is common among them. Both girls and boys marry (Figure 2) at the beginning of teenage. Data analysis shows that these trends are slowly changing. Education and literacy rate is increasing among non-traditional group. Tendency to educate younger generation is also high among them. They are utilizing all educational facilities provided by the government viz. school, hostels, scholarships etc. But traditional category is lagging behind in all these things. Early marriage and illiteracy rate is high among traditional group.

Figure 2: Age of Marriage



Non-traditional group with more exposure to interact with other tribal groups and non-tribes get to know about formal education (Table 3) and other facilities will be able to explore it. They find themselves more comfortable with marriage between 20-25 and sending children for residential education.

Table 3: Education Status

Education Status	Traditional	Non-traditional
Illiterate	60%	23%
Primary education	36.66%	46%
High school	3.33%	31%

4.4 Political Participation

Political participation of non-traditional group is comparatively higher than non-traditional groups. They participate in Oorukootam, eco-development committee and keep good relationship with other community members while others have poor performance in this respect. Both the groups cast their votes but traditional group have little knowledge about politics and political parties. Non-traditional group have better knowledge about politics and even some have membership also.

Table 4: Participation in various groups

Category	Traditional	Non-traditional
Membership in Oorukootam	73%	86%
Membership in eco-development committee	43%	100%
SHG participation	63%	66%
Maintain relationship with other community members	10%	80%

Oorukootam and SHG consists only tribal people from the same community. Some forest officers also participate in eco-development committee meetings. Increased rate of interaction with other tribes and non-tribe can be seen as a reason for these changes. Work place have a significant influence on them both in social life and culture as 40% of non-traditional group work near-by places and 60% of them go to long distance for employment.

4.5 Culture

Kattunaika possess a rich culture, they have their own language, food habits and their own peculiar dressing. All these culture traits face threat in the modern era, changes in livelihood enhances this deterioration. Data shows that non- traditional groups rarely speaks their language, wearing of traditional dresses and ornaments is very rare. Some time they fail to follow rituals and tribal administration. Knowledge on traditional art form is also decreasing and they even do not get opportunity to transfer the culture to next generation. They said children are studying in hostels and they are also go to distant places for employment so they rarely meet.

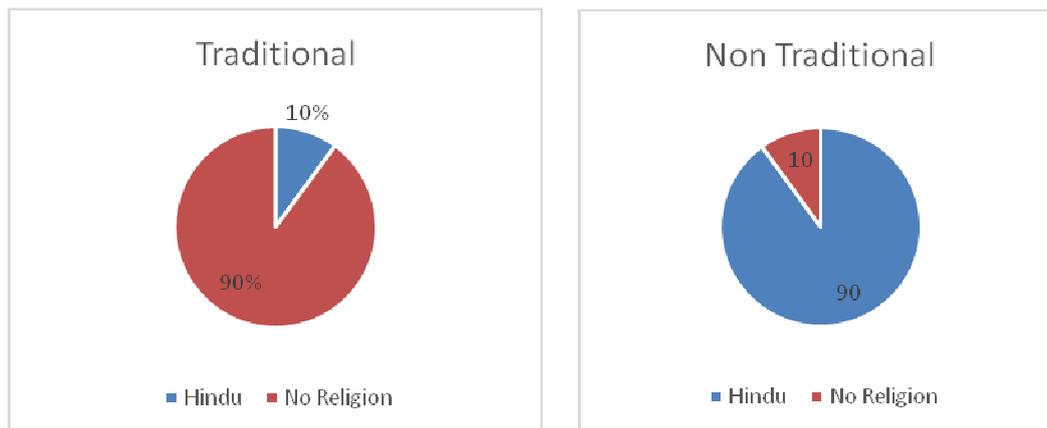
Table 5: Use of Language

Use of Language	Traditional	Non- Traditional
Only using Kattunaikka dialect	50%	0%
Frequently using Kattunaika dialect	0%	40%
Rarely using Kattunaika dialect	50%	60%

Table 6: Dressing, art forms and rituals

Category	Traditional	Non-traditional
Use traditional Dress	90%	40%
Follow rituals	100%	90%
Performs traditional art forms	100%	80%
Able to transform culture to next generation	90%	40%

Another important factor is religious affiliation. For traditional group 'Daivapura' is the only worshipping. But non-traditional groups visits temples and churches also. 90% of traditional groups declare that they have no religion while other group find themselves as Hindu.

Figure 3: Religion

People who migrate for job will get rare chance to speak Kattunaika dialect. They will get rare chance to attend community function. The official language of Kerala 'Malayalam' is used as a medium of education in all the tribal school so they won't get opportunity to learn their language. Their migrant parents neither get time nor feel it very important to transit culture to the new generation. Till 2001 census all the tribes except those who convert themselves to Christianity or Islam were appropriated as Hindu. But tribes do not associate themselves with any religion. They have own worshiping system they sing dance and cut chicken to please deity. People who migrate from their places started associating themselves as Hindus.

7. CONCLUSION

Livelihood transformation has both positive and negative influence on tribal life. It helps to increase the social participation to a great extent. Livelihood changes do not make much effect on living conditions. It has some mixed influence on economic status as on the one side, it increases saving habits and on the other side increase economic disparity and debt. So it is clear that the employment generation is promoted for national development it does not pay attention to tribal development. Cultural deterioration can be seen as a negative impact as people who move out of their territory became reluctant to follow their culture. Tribal development at the cost of their culture is no more appreciable. Art 29 Indian constitution ensures the right of all linguistic minorities to protect and promote their culture. At present only religious and regional minorities are covered under this category. Government can either include tribes or frame a separate policy to protect tribal culture. Tribes should be given enough participation while creating projects for them so that they can take better steps to protect their culture and tradition.

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