



ATTITUDE OF TRIBAL WOMEN TOWARDS EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND THEIR LIFE ASPIRATION IN KODAIKANAL

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ABSTRACT

The present study of tribal women is a changing milieu aims at describing the changes occur in all aspects from their traditional way of life. The changes explored include education, employment and life aspiration which determine the women's position and their attitude in turn improves the whole tribal sector. The tribal women are supposed to be the natural upholders of family unit, responsible for the lineage as well as for the physical and mental well being of generations. Tribal women's creativity, organizational ability and potentialities should be identified be encouraged and should be motivated to participate in educational activities for personal, social and national development. Hence the investigator has taken an attempt to conduct a study on Attitude of Tribal Women towards Education, Employment and their Life Aspiration in Kodaikanal.

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INTRODUCTION

According to 2001 census, the tribal population of India was 8.2% of the total population and population of Scheduled Tribes were 19% and 1.04% respectively. In Dindigul district the Scheduled Caste constituted 19.56% and Scheduled tribes constituted 3.4%. In Kodaikanal, 9.8% and 2% were the population of those groups respectively.

Scheduled communities are the most backward communities in education, economy, social and caste hierarchy. In the past years they had their lives in forests only 'Adivasi' is their common name and they have come out of forests now and live in isolated regions. These under privileged communities at Kodaikanal with reference to Pallyans and Pullayans have been considered for the study. Their attitude towards education, employment and their aspiration in life has been considered as variables for the investigation.

Education

As Nehru said, "The destiny of a country is determined in the classrooms", only through education, a women can get rid of her superstitions, believes, and all traditional ties. Education is essential to fulfil different roles of women in the house, office, factory, field hospital etc. So, educating a girl means educating a family." Kodaikanal is a hill station where an extreme of poverty among village people is seen. Their economic status is very low. Transportation is also a big obstacle. So, the educational status is of women was very low before some years.

But, after opening of many higher secondary schools and Mother Teresa Women's University, the enrolment of girls has been raised in schools and colleges in recent years.

In 2004-'05, the block wise literacy rate of Scheduled caste in Kodaikanal was 76% in male and 58% in female and among Scheduled tribes it was 48% in male 40% in female.

Employment

A good education leads to get a good employment. Employment is defined as "Participation in any economically productive activity". But the tribal women are economically very backward. Higher education and higher position is also very rarely to be noted among them. In Kodaikanal most of the tribal women do manual jobs only.

Community wise registration statistics in District Employment office at Dindigul in the year 2005, reveals the registration of Scheduled caste – 22,327, Scheduled tribes – 34, backward caste – 45, 893, Most backward caste – 14,893 and other caste were 10,539. Here also, it is obvious only 34 have registered from Scheduled tribes.

Life aspiration

Educational and employment levels automatically determine the life style of an individual. There is greater relationship lies between literacy and economical growth, nutrition, medical care, house facilities, savings and other aspirations in life. Education paves way to scramble for top jobs which fosters economical status which in turn also determines the standard of life.

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In Kodaikanal, two tribal communities exist. Viz. Palliyan and Pullayan. After 1979, the Palliyan community has been separated from tribal community and included under Scheduled caste.

Life of Palliyan

The Palliyans are a nomadic tribe. They used to live in forests. Now they have occupied 36, small, isolated villages in and around Palani hills. They have very small, simple houses constructed either by voluntary organization or by the government. Though, they take rice as their food in many villages, people in remote villages takes honey, underground stem and greens.

They involve in collection of forest things like gooseberry, firewood, coffee beans, cardamom etc.,

Mostly they communicate with others in Tamil and they also understand Telugu in some areas. Their life span is shorter because of their ill health, malnutrition and lack of medical facilities.

Their educational status is very poor. But, very recently the enrolment of tribal students is more in many schools located nearby. The accessibility to schools is not very easy also. Many residential schools like InigoSiruvarIllam, PoyyaVillakku, Girihini, Malaicharal, Good will children's home are run by some voluntary Organizations in their localities. They take initiation and steps for their up liftment in their family life they get married earlier. No male domination is found in tribal society. Likewise, one cannot see any widow among them in tribal community. If a woman losses her husband, immediately she gets married with another man.

Either they follow Hinduism or Christianity. In some villages they celebrate religious festivals.

Medical facilities are not available to them. Their economical status does not permit them to afford for medicine. But they are used with herbs to get recovery.

Only 20% of them recently have started saving money. 3 tribal men and 3 tribal women have contested and won as ward members in the last Panchayat election. On the whole their life status is very low.

Pullayans

Pullayans are the first inhabitants of Palani hills. Their life is slightly a step advanced compared to Palliyans. Nearly 688 houses have been constructed for them and many have no patta for their houses. They have 28 class among them. Pullayans in Kodaikanal Municipal area have improved in their educational level but at the same time Pullayans in remote villages are not up to the mark. Most of them do manual jobs and work as labourers. They are also daily wages. Some have joined in railways and as L.I.C agents. They worship Hindu Gods. Both Palliyans' and Pullayans' traditional values are getting changed in all walks of their life. Still they are not aware of the welfare and developmental schemes available for them. It has to be informed.

Voluntary Organizations, Commissions and Committees:

SPIRIT, KARUNYA, SIDT, GETS, MOTHERS, GOOD WILL CENTER, GRIGINI, are a few voluntary organizations work for tribal communities. Many Commissions and

Committees have been set up for tribes like International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 1963, Convention of the Elimination of All forms discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) Conversion on the Rights, National SC and ST Parliamentary forum National Commission for SC and ST (2004) etc. But still, they have a long way to go.

Reservation

The Central Government reservation, 22.5% (15% for SC 7.5% for ST) is followed in government for educational institutions. In Tamilnadu the reservation is 18% for SC and 1% ST based on the population.

Privileges

Government is making efforts to extend housing facilities, stipends, scholarships, mid day meals, uniform, free books, exemption from the payment of hostel and examination fee etc.,

Need of the Study

The Preamble of our constitution stresses equality before law. Article 15 denotes prohibition of discrimination of people on the grounds of religions, race, caste or sex or place or birth.

Policy note in AdiDravidar Welfare department (2002) informs privileges given to them and the amount of money allotted to the various schemes for the welfare of Scheduled communities.

In spite of steps taken by our government, given privileges, till now it is witnessed that they lag behind from the advancement of the society in all angles. So, the investigator is interested to find their real status and attitude of tribal communities in Kodaikanal.

Various related studies on this topic are reviewed and reported.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the attitude of tribal people in Kodaikanal towards education.
2. To find out the attitude towards employment among tribes.
3. To find out their aspiration in life.
4. To find out whether there is any difference exists among Palliyans and Pullayans.
5. To find out whether there is any gender difference exists in their attitude towards education, employment and aspiration for life among tribal people.

Hypotheses - Education

1. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST literate men and ST. literate women towards education.
2. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST men literates and ST / SC women literates towards education.
3. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST men and ST women towards education.
4. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST men and SC women towards education.

5. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST women and SC women towards education.
6. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST married men and ST married women towards education.
7. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST married men and ST unmarried men towards education.
8. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST employed men and ST unemployed men towards education.
9. There is a significant difference in their attitude between adolescents and old age people towards education.

Employment

1. There is a significant difference in their attitude between tribal literate men and SC literate women towards employment.
2. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST women (Total) and SC women (Total) towards employment.
3. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST unmarried women and SC unmarried women towards employment.
4. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST married men and ST married women towards employment.
5. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST married women and SC married women towards employment.
6. There is a significant difference in their attitude between married SC women and unmarried SC women towards employment.
7. There is a significant difference in their attitude between employed ST women and unemployed ST women towards employment.
8. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST unemployed men and ST employed women towards employment.

Life Aspiration

1. There is a significant difference in their attitude between SC women employed and SC unemployed women towards life aspiration.
2. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST women and SC women towards life aspiration.
3. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST women and ST men towards life aspiration.
4. There is a significant difference in their attitude between ST married women and ST unmarried women towards life aspiration.
5. There is a significant difference in their attitude between SC and ST women towards life aspiration.
6. There is a significant difference in their attitude between adolescents and old age people towards life aspiration.

Method

The method adopted for the present study was Normative Survey Method. Here the investigator made visits to the

selected villages where the tribes are thickly populated. Survey method was adopted to find out the attitude of Palliyan and Pullayan women towards education, employment and their aspiration for life. Based on the responses, collected data, and observations during visits qualitative analysis was carried out. In addition to qualitative analysis, case study analysis and quantitative analysis has also carried out.

Field survey and selection of sample

Dindigul district has three blocks namely Dindigul, Palani and Kodaikanal with 306 villages. Kodaikanal is a beautiful hill station with pleasant scenery which is an extension of Palani hills. Though, the government intends to uplift the socially crippled people by many schemes, though crores of money is being spent for their welfare, still it is witnessed that indigenous people resides in tribal belt who are not even aware of the privileges and the opportunities given to them. So, the researcher has made a risk to investigate their attitude, in their life situation, in attaining education, employment and life aspiration. Three tools were used for all the samples. Out of 36 villages occupied by Palliyans in Dindigul district, 8 villages were selected where one can see a cluster of tribes in 4 villages and Scheduled caste people in another 4 villages. The investigator herself visited those places and collected all the data.

Details of their settlements

S.No	Name of the tribal Group	Name of the Settlement
1	Palliyan – ST	Moolaiyar Vadakraiparai Poothamalai Kaduhuthadi Gandhipuram
2	Pullayan – SC	Kadayamalai GatlangKadu MangalamKombu

In Moolaiyar both men and women were selected and in other three tribal villages only women samples were selected. Likewise, the survey was made in 4 Pullayan’s settlements like Gandhipuram, Kadayamalai, Batlangkadu and MangalamKombu.

Sample size

S.No	Name of the Community	No. of Men	No. of Women	Total
1	Palliyan – ST	30	170	200
2	Pullayan – SC	--	120	120
	Total	30	290	320

A sample of 320 tribal people was selected. Out of 320, 30 were tribal men, 170 samples were tribal women and 120 samples were from Pullayan community. Altogether 30 men 290 women were selected.

Tools

Attitude Scale towards Education

The attitude of tribal women towards education was measured by an attitude scale. This tool was constructed by Kalaivani and Rajeswari (2016). The attitude scale consists of 20 statements. The respondent has to indicate in a five point rating scale-Strongly agreed, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly disagree with scores of 5-1 for the positive items and 1-5 for the negative items. In this questionnaire item

numbers, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,15 and 18 were positive statements and the rest were negative items.

Validity

The tool was constructed and the questionnaire was sent to the experts in the field and the opinion was received. Based on suggestions and guidelines given by the experts, necessary modifications, additions and deletions were done in the final tool.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by the test and retest method and it was found that the reliability of coefficient as +0.78.

Attitude scale towards employment

The Attitude scale towards employment consists of 25 items. The scale was designed to find out the attitude of tribes towards employment. Out of 25, items No.1,2,10,11,12,14,16,17,20,22,23 and 25 were positive items and the rest of them were negative ones. Both validity and reliability was established.

Life aspiration scale

To measure the aspiration of tribal people for life, a scale was constructed by Kalaivani and Rajeswari 2016. The scale was validated by establishing validity and reliability. It consisted of 30 statements for the final study. The respondent has to indicate according to their choice of five point rating scale. The five points were Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and strongly disagree. Positive items were given scoring 5 to 1 scoring and the reserve scoring was given for negative items 1 to 5.

Statistical techniques used

1. The 't' test, test of significant difference between the means used.
2. Karl Pearson's product moment correlation method was used to find out the relationship between the two variables.

Limitations of the Study

- The investigation is restricted only to the two communities, (i.e) Palliyan and Pullayan communities which are available in Kodaikanal hills at present.
- The study is focused only on three dimensions – education, employment and life aspiration.

Delimitations of the study

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribal Community who are drawn from 8 villages out of 36 villages for the present study.

Analysis and Major Findings

Item wise analysis, Qualitative analysis, Quantitative analysis were carried out. Case study was also made with some successful students.

Item wise Analysis

The investigation herself visited some villages where the tribes concentrate. Data were collected using three tools namely attitude scale towards education, employment and aspiration for life. The data were collected from 320

respondent including men and women. According to their scores the responses were interpreted and discussed. The statements carrying first highest three scores in positive statements and the statements carrying the lowest three scores in negative items were also discussed. Case study was also carried out with successful respondents in Schedule caste and Schedule tribes.

In the tool on education, positive statements like 18, 6 and 4 viz.,

1. "I accept that if I improve, by family will improve, if my family improves the country will improve",
2. "Women in our community should flourish in knowledge like men",
3. "Education is essential to come up in life",

Get the first three levels of high scores respectively. This denotes their positive attitude towards education and they want to improve in their life.

Negative statements bearing the numbers 12, 5, 7 like "Women can achieve greatness only by getting married" "Vocational education of women will make them to lose their femininity"

The first statement reveals that their traditional believes for women to get married. According to the second statement, as their localities are far away non-formal education was not imparted in regularized manner. They think that non-formal education will have much useful for them.

According to the third statement though they believe in equality of men and women yet they consider women will lose their feminism when the do machinery goods. This response shows that they prefer indirectly women should avoid some jobs.

In the employment the following items

1. "The involvement of women in various fields denotes social development"
2. "Women get awareness by women's education"
3. "Women have skills to work like men"

And these three items got the highest scores. This reveals they believe in awareness through education, social uplift by women's participation.

Their responses to the negative statements are:

1. "Women's work outside should be considered as secondary after marriage" reveals that they give priority to their family life only.
2. "If option is given, they prefer sending their sons to schools", shows that their preference to male children. Hereby they express that they want to provide a better education for their male children.
3. "There is no necessary of education for women who take care of their families" are the negative statements scored the lowest three scores respectively.

Their responses for the above statements reveal that they have first priority to family, their preference to male children and women are solely responsible for their family. Hence they need education to change in their attitude.

In life aspiration tool item no.16, 22 and 15 stating.

1. "Bringing up children well is a duty we do for our country".
2. "Quarrelling in the name of god is a shame"
3. "Maintenance of health is a fundamental need"
4. The above items have got highest scores. This reveals that they want to bring up their children well and they believe that they should not quarrel in God's name. They want to maintain their health conditions also.

The following negative items received the three lowest scores.

1. Item No.9. "Only women should have the loyalty to their husband and worship of Lord for the welfare of their family",
2. Item No.5. "Women are the only one who can preserve and grow social culture."
3. Item 27. "Women should not do religious rites".

Their responses to the above statements show that they underestimate women's status and value their traditional believes. This attitude must be changed by education and mass media.

Qualitative analysis

Education

In the questionnaire on 'Education', tribal men and women reveal like that they lack education in their lives. But still they believe that education will from foundation of one's life. Though they lag behind in social status, they wish that their children should get better education and come up in life. They also consider educated parents can teach their children. They also accept fully that if an individual improves in life, their family and country will also improve automatically.

There is a slight increase in literacy rate among tribal women. They also wish to have vocational education to stand on their own.

Even some of adults want to join adult education or non-formal education. They also want to have guidance for leisure time activities and vocational education. The tribal women agree that the involvement of women in various fields denotes the development of society. With regard to the potentialities of women, they believe that women also have equal talents to work as men and other community women. They do not accept the fact that due to women's employment there is unemployment problem.

Employment

It is observed that the employed women believe that after marriage, women should give first preference to their family and then to their work. Many women expressed their confidence that employed women can take care of their children very well and they can fulfil the demands of men too. They also want to have vocational education, training and counselling for them spend their leisure time in a constructive manner.

But one sympathetic matter is that they are not much aware of the allotments and the privileges given by the government for tribal people in education and employment.

Life aspiration

Regarding their aspiration for life, it is observed that they prefer joint family with elders and they want to protect and support them till their last breathe. In family life they realize the co-operation of members for a happy family. Regarding the number of children, they do not want to limit the number of children. They also accept to maintain their health conditions and the significance of saving money for their future. But they do not show much interest to save because they are daily wages and get meagre amount of money. They also wish to bring up their children well and some of them give preference to male children only.

In their family life Scheduled tribes accept inter caste marriages but Scheduled caste people do not prefer. Child marriage also still exists here and there in remote villages.

Problem of untouchability is still rampant in many of these areas. They hardly accept that marriage is meant only for women. They believe that only women can preserve and grow social culture, and women should be loyal to their husbands and take care of their family. They also express that women can join in politics and even perform religious ceremonies.

In society, they want to avoid religious conflicts and they do not to quarrel in the name of God and religions. Most of tribes still reside in very small huts and they have only greens and Vallikizhangu as their food.

Quantitative analysis

1. There is no significant difference in their attitude of ST literate men and ST literate women towards education and employment.
2. Significant difference lies in the attitude between ST women (total) and SC women (total) towards education, employment and their aspiration to life. But ST men and ST women have no significance in their attitude towards education.
3. No significant difference is found in their attitude between ST married men and ST married women towards education and employment. This shows their positive attitude towards women's education and employment.
4. There is no significant difference lies in their attitude between adolescents and old age towards education and life aspiration. This is because, though the tribes differ in their age group, they well understand that only through better education; better standard of life can be attained.
5. There is no significant difference lies in their attitude between ST men literates and ST and SC women literates towards education and also the same with ST literate women and SC literate women towards employment. This shows that all literate groups realize the better employment can be sought only through good education.
6. Both ST married men and ST married women have no significant difference in their attitude towards education and employment. Likewise both ST married women and unmarried women in the same community also have no significant difference in their attitude towards their life aspiration. This indicates, though they differ in gender and marital

status, they understand that education is a must for them for their better knowledge, economic uplift and their way of lives.

7. ST married women and SC married women do not differ significantly in their attitude towards employment and no difference is found among SC married women and SC unmarried women towards employment. Because they believe that marriage is not an obstacle to perform both family responsibilities and other work outside the home.
8. It is also inferred that ST employed men and ST unemployed men do not differ significantly in their attitude towards education. ST employed men and ST unemployed women as well as ST men unemployed and ST women employed also do not differ significantly in their attitude towards employment. This denotes they do realize the vital role of education and employment in life.
9. Likewise, among SC women also no significant difference in their attitude is found towards their life aspiration. This denotes that they do realize the vital role of education and employment in life.

Case study analysis

Case study was carried out with ten successful students in Scheduled tribes and Scheduled Caste in Kodaikanal region. Here, it is witnessed that these girls in the first generation are studying in B.Ed. course or in technical streams.

Recommendations for the present study

Role of Government

- Government has to bridge the gap existing between Prlliyans and Pullayans. Since the Scheduled Caste are converted as Christians they are treated as B.C and they get privileges announced for Scheduled caste and this can be redressed.
- The following welfare activities have to be considered for their betterment of their life.
- To get Community certificate, it consumes a lot of time and expenditure for tribes. Still, many of the tribes in Kodaikanal hill are unable to get the caste certificate. Hence, it is the right time that needs to be helped to get it easily.
- Problems of untouchability are still rampant. It has to be taken care for complete eradication.
- The Government's order should include all the Scheduled tribes within the states of that the programme and plans could be drawn up for their up lift.
- Allotment of land-to-land less is to be examined now and then whether bonded labour continues to exist or not. If exists, efforts should be taken to relieve them from it.
- Proper utilization of grants should be the sole responsibility of the official machinery.
- A common grievance among rural Scheduled caste today is the practice of discrimination by their urban counterparts. In this context the elected representatives could help to ensure the various benefits provided by the Government to reach the deserving masses and not utilized exclusively by urban elites.

Upliftment programme

- Officials in Harijan welfare are target oriented and could not do much because of the bureaucratic set up. So, regional welfare committees can be set up which will be fully responsible for upliftment programmes in particular regions.
- Systematic follow up work to check whether they have attained the desired improvement in particular span of time.
- It is found obviously lack of education is the major reason which keeps SC and ST women away from their involvement in social, economic and political aspects. So to educate them in every aspect is the best way to reach their upliftment.

Employment

- Although women are considered as an economic asset and considerable value is placed for them in their labour, there is clear cut sex typing jobs. So women's organizations should fight for equality of labour. Equal work and equal wage should be followed even in the unorganized sectors like agriculture.
- Efforts can be made to set up small cottage industries for better employment chances. Knitting, Tailoring, Basket making etc., can be encouraged. This is to avoid the mobility of village people to urban areas. More employment opportunities can also be eradicated.
- More number of crèches and balwadis facilities should be provided to women to leave their children for the sake of employment.
- Organizations may volunteer to train the tribal children on vocational, job oriented subjects.
- Educational facilities are out of their reach in many localities. Hostel facilities are also inadequate. The private Social service Organizations have succeeded much in taking constructive steps in executing plans for tribal welfare. Additional care also can be given to the people in hilly regions.
- The priority of education for SC and ST women should be given in the national planning itself.
- Specially trained teacher to reach tribal people according to their life oriented curriculum should be taught in tribal schools.
- Private tuition coaching centres for professional courses can be arranged by higher educational institutions.
- Special emphasis should be given on adult education with flexi time and flexible syllabus can be followed.
- Universal provision of schools, universal retention of pupils till they complete the prescribed course should be strictly implemented for better literacy and education of tribes.
- Efforts should be made to arrest as far as possible the flow of educated young men of ST community from villages to urban centres so that their knowledge, skills and expertise could be utilized for the betterment of their own community in their own locality.

Awareness Programme

- The cause for decline in enrolment of tribal students in the primary level should be scrutinized and set right.
- Population awareness camps should be organized so that they can plan for their family size.
- Awareness programmes can be conducted often.
- Child care, nutrition and hygiene should be stressed.
- Guidance and counselling may be given.
- In some villages, political awareness has increased so that women contest as ward members in allotted quota in their area. This also could be encouraged.
- Modern technology and mass media communications are need to be introduced in their localities.

Privileges

- Labour, Co-[operative societies should be formed with landless ST persons.
- Loans should be sanctioned at liberal rate of interest. Pattas can be given for their houses.
- Incentives may be encouraged for inter caste marriage.
- Voluntary organizations can take appreciable steps to uplift their life and to bring awareness for them.

General aspects in life

- Toilet facility is totally lacking in these localities. Considering their health and hygiene, this facility can be given by the Government.
- Primary Health Centres can be run in these regions.
- SC / ST Women's groups, Youth Clubs can be formed to solve their problems.
- Long term plans for their compulsory social and economic development should be a matter of concern.
- Sexual abuse need to be curtailed.
- Transport facilities could be increased. Basic facilities like schools, hospitals, transportation must be given.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. A study can be made on the professional tribal women achievers.
2. A study can be taken up on the welfare schemes being implemented in Palani and Kodai Hills.
3. Comparative study of tribes between tribes in Kodaikanal and Ooty can be carried out.
4. A study relating to the use of vocational educational for the upliftment of tribes can be carried out.
5. Comparative study can be taken up comparing the tribes of South India and North India.

CONCLUSION

Tribal women have a vital role in family, society, education, employment, religion, politics and cultural aspects. Though so many initiations are taken to impart education, to abolish their bonded labours, to uplift their social economic and political status, it is very obvious to see that the outcomes are not up to satisfaction. It is high time for us to scrutinize their obstacles and barriers, to give our hands to cross their boundary and to mingle with the main stream of nation and with special reference to STs and SCs at Kodaikanal in Tamilnadu.

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