

CHAPTER - 18

EMPOWERING TRIBAL WOMEN THROUGH NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

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Introduction

The backwardness of the tribal community is visible most among its vulnerable groups consisting of women and children. An array of activities by the NGOs including formation of self-help groups, skill training programs, health awareness classes and community development programs are targeted at the female members of the community. In the view of J K Sharmah (2009), "The role of voluntary agencies in tribal development is assuming importance because of their special qualities like innovativeness, committed agency workers for effective implementation, flexibility in approach to suit local conditions, close contact with local people, high level of motivation and minimum procedural practices, reveals the involvement of various types of voluntary action towards empowerment of women, issues of livelihood, health, legal aid credit facilities, vocational trainings etc."

Importance of the Study

The role of NGOs in development of tribal women needs to be studied so as to determine the relevance and importance of such voluntary organisations in serving the marginalised sections of the population. This calls for an empirical study in this respect in order to analyse the impact of benefits conveyed to the recipients through livelihood, educational and community development programs initiated by NGOs. The notable feature of a NGO is its welfare motive. Being a non-profit organisation, it is the drive for social commitment and public welfare which act as the guiding reason behind the formation of an NGO and not the economic gains. The impact of such voluntary agencies of deprived sections of the society can be identified only if the status of the beneficiaries before and after their works are asserted. Since, it is not possible to measure the magnitude of works of NGOs in such a large time frame, the impact of voluntary sector on tribal women is examined by studying the status of tribal women with and without the presence of "NGOs".

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of Non Government Organisations in the development of tribal women.

Methodology

The study has been confined to the district of Wayanad as the percentage of tribal population accounts to more than 30 percent of the total tribal population in Kerala. It is two times higher than the proportion of tribal population in the second highest district. Wayanad also has the highest number of NGOs with proper maintained accounts. Three gram panchayaths namely Panamaram, Noolpuzha and Thirunelli have been identified for the study due to their large number of Schedule Tribe Population in Wayanad. A control sample has also drawn from a fourth gram panchayath named Kaniyambetta due to its salient feature of absence of NGOs. The NGO absent gram panchayath facilitates comparison and helps to identify the magnitude of difference brought by NGOs.

Three NGOs from each Gram panchayath namely "Thudi" in Panamaram, "Shreyas " in Noolpuzha and "Thanal" in Thirunelli were identified and they are presumed to have a varieties of programs and activities focusing at tribal communities. The data collection was carried out between March to June 2018

Size of the Sample

The number of households from each village namely Kaniyambetta Panamaram, Noolpuzha and Thirunelli represent 1% of the total schedule tribe population respectively. The percentage share of female respondents to total number of respondents is 53.8%. Noolpuzha has the highest percent of female respondents and Thirunelli has the lowest. A total of 414 households were chosen across four villages. 107 households from Panamaram, 110 households from Noolpuzha, 133 from Thirunelli and 64 households from Kaniyambetta village were chosen. The table.1 shows the total number of females in each village respectively

Table.1: Size of the sample

Count	Kaniyambetta	Panamaram	Noolpuzha	Thirunelli	Total
Female respondents	36(56.2)	64(59.8)	72(65.4)	51(38.3)	223 (53.8)
Number of households	64(100)	107(100)	110(100)	133(100)	414(100)

Source: Primary Data,2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

Out of the 64 households from Kaniyambetta village, 34 respondents are females. Out of 107 respondents from Panamaram village, 64 of them are females. Out of 110 and 133 sample households from Noolpuzha and Thirunelli, the number of female respondents is 72 and 51 respectively. The total number of females in all the households of all the four panchayaths sums up to 990. Noolpuzha village has the highest female respondents of 65.4% and Kaniyambetta has the least share of female respondents. The percentage of females in Kaniyambetta is lesser than the other three villages.

The total fertility rate in Kaniyambetta is 1.8, which is higher than the other three villages. Total fertility rate (TFR) represent the average number of children born to women belonging to fertile age group .The high level of TFR in Kaniyambetta village is evident from the large size of families. It is also interesting to note that Paniya and Adiya community has higher level of fertility rate than Kattunaikar community. The fertility rate is lower in Noolpuzha with 1.2.Panamaram has a fertility rate of 1.5 and that of Thirunelli is 1.4.

The sex ratio in Kaniyambetta is 1121 females to 1000 males while it is 1088 in Noolpuzha, 1162 in Panamaram, 1141 in Thirunelli. The sex ratio for the tribal population is higher than the Kerala's sex ratio which is the highest in the country. Sex ratio for Kerala is 1084 females to 1000 males and it can be seen that in all the four villages, the sex ratio is highly favourable with the least high in Noolpuzha and the highest in Panamaram. Adding to this, it can only be stated that though tribal women faces many injustices including early motherhood, unwed motherhood and low health care, the issues like female infanticide or female foetiscides are rarely in practice. This could also be due to the absence of dowry system or financial burden often associated with the birth of a girl child in tribal societies.

Age Group of Female Respondents

The female respondents have been classified into 4 age groups. The first group represent the females between the age group 18 to 30 years. The second group includes the females between 30 to 45 years. The third and fourth age group consists of females between the age 45 to 60, and above 60 years respectively. Table 2 shows the age group of the female respondents of all the four villages. The percentage of females under each age group is marked in parenthesis

Table 2: Age group of the female members

Age group (in years)	Kaniyambetta	Noolpuzha	Panamaram	Thirunelli
18 to 30	5(13.8)	10(13.9)	3(4.7)	1(1.9)
30 to 45	20(55.6)	30(41.6)	32(50.0)	8(15.6)
45 to 60	8(22.2)	18(25.0)	20(31.2)	20(39.2)
60 and above	3(8.3)	14(19.5)	9(14.1)	22(43.3)
Grand Total	36 (100)	72(100)	64(100)	51(100)

Source: Primary Data, 2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

The total number of female respondents in all the villages account to 223, which represent more than 50 percent of the total respondents. Except in Kaniyambetta, all the other villages have the least share of female respondents belonging to 18 to 30 age group. In Thirunelli, the number of female respondents belonging to 60 and above years of age is highest. This may be because, all the females under 60 years are wage earners. On the other hand, in Kaniyambetta, Noolpuzha and Panamaram villages, the percentage of females in age group 30 to 45 years are the highest. This could also imply a higher proportion of economically productive group of women.

In all the four Gram panchayaths, the dependency ratio is less than 45 percent, implying women in economically productive age group are high. Women of all the age groups are included in the target group of NGOs, where elderly women above age 60 has been provided with free medical checkup, distribution of medicines and blankets. Children are also benefitted from educational programs which will be discussed in later part of the Chapter. The inverse relationship between female fertility rate and development (Phipps, 2015), and the high dependency ratio is an inclination of lower gender development in the NGO absent village of Kaniyambetta. Employment Status

On the basis of the status of employment, the village wise population of females are divided into four categories. Employed and unemployed include the females age group 16 -55. Children and Aged/Retired represent the female population who are not available for work.

Table 3: Employment Status of women

Current employment status	Kaniyambetta	Panamaram	Noolpuzha	Thirunelli	Total
Employed	45(25.5)	89(31.1)	77(31.5)	107(37.6)	318
Unemployed	25(14.2)	47(16.4)	54(22.1)	47(16.5)	173
Children	90(51.2)	129(45.1)	94(38.5)	100(35.2)	413
Aged/retired	16(9.1)	21(7.3)	19(7.7)	30(10.6)	86
Total	176(100)	286(100)	244(100)	284(100)	990

Source: Primary Data, 2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

The share of employed females is highest in Thirunelli village while it is lowest in Kaniyambetta village. On the other hand the percent of unemployed females is the highest in Noolpuzha village. Percentage of female children with 51.2% is largest in Kaniyambetta where the percentage of aged /retired is highest in Thirunelli compared to other three villages. The total share of population who are not available to work is highest in Kaniyambetta village. Most of the females are casual labours who depend on MNREGA for employment. On the remaining days, they work in plantations and agricultural fields.

It is evident from the table that the percentage of employed females in NGO absent Kaniyambetta is relatively lesser than the NGO villages. On the contrary, the percentage of unemployed females are also lesser in Kaniyambetta signifying a higher dependent ratio of females in the village. The low current employment status in Kaniyambetta could also be due to the high fertility rate and larger size of family. Further, they are also an indicator of low level of awareness and lack of family planning, since higher population growth. However, present status of employment does not imply the unwillingness to work as the women in all the tribal settlements seek employment from time to time.

Occupation Structure

Occupational structure examines the nature of employment and remuneration. They are classified into four categories. Most of the females employed belong to the category daily wages are of the category of unskilled labour. In spite of attending skill development programs, which will be discussed in the later part of this Chapter, the apprehensions in getting finance, lack of self-confidence and unstable income discourage the tribal women to start any new ventures. Table 4 examines the occupation Structure of tribal women.

Table 4: Occupation Structure of the female earning members

Occupation	Kaniyambetta	Panamaram	Noolpuzha	Thirunelli
Daily wages	43(95.5)	84(91.3)	68(90.7)	105(96.4)
Salaried	2(4.5)	8(8.6)	3(4)	3(1.8)
Salaried and daily wages	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(1.3)	1(0.9)
Self employed	0(0.0)	2(0.1)	3(4)	1(0.9)
Total	45(100.0)	92(100.0)	75(100.0)	108(100.0)
Work Participation Rate	40.1	46.7	69.1	47.8

Source: Primary Data, 2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

Among the four villages, Kaniyambetta has the least work participation rate among female population. Also there are no self-employed women in Kaniyambetta village. Work participation rate shows the percentage of women actually employed to the total labour force. Noolpuzha has the highest work participation rate followed by Thirunelli. The share of salaried females is the highest in Panamaram village. Noolpuzha has relative edge over other three villages on the number of self-employed females which is only 4 %. The salaried category implies females who are in Government service while salaried and daily wages include women who are employed in private sector.

The lower work participation rate of females in Kaniyambetta followed with higher dependent female population shows an unfavorable trend in gender related development in the village when compared to the other three villages with NGO involvement. Cattle rearing and poultry are the commonly practiced self-employment ventures carried out by women in the NGO villages. It requires a special mention here that in Kaniyambetta, none of the female members are self-employed. It can be seen that some of the tribal households with land ownership, homestead cultivation is also practiced.

Monthly Income

The monthly income earned by the female members of the household is given in table 5. The monthly income as received by the female members have been subdivided in to six income groups as shown in table.5. Monthly income is an indicator of female economic productivity and the mean value represent the average earning capacity of female members in the family in each village.

Table 5: Monthly Income of Female Earning Members

Monthly income of Female members (in Rs.)	Kaniyambetta	Panamaram	Noolpuzha	Thirunelli
>500	19(29.7)	18(16.8)	33(0.3)	26(19.5)
500-1500	26(40.6)	52(48.5)	32(29.1)	93(70.0)
1500-3000	17(26.9)	30(28.0)	39(35.4)	09(0.6)
3000-5000	1(1.8)	2(1.9)	3(2.7)	1(0.7)
5000-10000	0(0.0)	4(0.4)	2(1.8)	2(1.5)
< 10000	1(1.8)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	2(1.5)
Total	64(100.0)	107(100.0)	110(100.0)	133(100.0)
Mean	2305.3	2308.91	2309.16	2311.08

Source: Primary Data, 2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

Less than Rs.500 per month is earned by women who rarely work or are unemployed. The NGO intervention has clearly increased the income level of female tribal communities of the three villages as shown in table. Within the higher income range of Rs.5000-10,000, none of the females falls in the tribal settlements of Kaniyambetta. The above Rs.10,000 categories is meant for females who are salaried

The number of females earning a monthly income of Rs.500-1500 is the highest in all the villages except Noolpuzha where the largest share of females falls under the income group of Rs.1500-3000. The percentage share of females earning Rs.500 or less is highest in Kaniyambetta village which is characterised by the absence of NGOs. The mean incomes of the households are shown in the table. Of all the four villages, Kaniyambetta village has the lowest mean income though the difference is very small. The mean income of Thirunelli village is higher when compared to other three villages, but this higher income is due to high work participation of females in daily wages.

Higher Education and Skill Development

The education attainment rate of the tribal females in all the four villages for primary and upper primary divisions is very high. However, the number of females enrolled for high school education and hence after is less. Also, the number of women enrolled for professional course and admitted in colleges are even lesser as shown in table 4.6.

Table 6: Higher Education and Skill Development

Education and skill	Kaniyambetta	Panamaram	Noolpuzha	Thirunelli
Females studied above high school	19(17.0)	44(21.1)	18(10.0)	27(12.1)
Skill training program attended	04(3.6)	09(4.3)	13(7.2)	14(6.3)
Professional course	5(4.5)	19(9.1)	6(3.3)	2(0.9)
Females between 19-59 years	112(100.0)	208(100.0)	180(100.0)	223(100.0)

Source: Primary Data, 2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

A percentage analysis shows that the share of women who have attended skill development programs in Kaniyambetta where the NGOs are absent is the lowest compared to other three villages. Panamaram has nearly 9 percentages of females attending professional courses while Thirunelli has the least. The percentage of female studied above High School is the lowest in Noolpuzha while the village also has the highest share of females who have attended skill development program. All the skill development programs in the Panamaram, Noolpuzha and Thirunelli were organised by respective NGOs working in these three villages.

Maternal and Child Health Status

The health issues of infants and the maternal health status are examined using the indicators as shown in table 7. Hence, this section is limited to the maternal and child health indicators which give an insight in to the health status of women.

Table 7: Maternal and child Health Status

Maternal and child health indicators	Kaniyambetta	Panamaram	Noolpuzha	Thirunelli
Incidence of Underweight children during birth	7(11.0)	14(3.1)	14(12.7)	12(0.9)
Number of deficiency diseases reported in infants	4(6.2)	10(9.3)	4(10.5)	3(0.22)
Number of miscarriage	0(0.0)	10(9.3)	5(4.5)	0(0.0)
Still birth	10(15)	0(0.0)	14(12.7)	14(10.5)
Maternal Mortality	2(3.1)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	4(3.0)
Total	14(21.8)	35(22.6)	38(41.3)	33(24.8)

Source: Primary Data, 2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

The incidence of underweight children during birth and the deficiency diseases reported in infants are closely related to nutritional intake and breastfeeding pattern of the mother. The numbers of miscarriages, the number of stillbirths, as well as maternal mortality are examined.

As it can be seen from the table, the incidence of underweight children is highest in Noolpuzha village followed by Kaniyambetta. The number of deficiency diseases reported in infants also higher in Noolpuzha village. Incidence of miscarriages in Kaniyambetta and Thirunelli is nil while in Panamaram 9 percentage of females have reported the same. The occurrence of infant mortality is also relatively higher in Kaniyambetta. The health status of maternal and child health shows a relatively better status in Panamaram even though the percentage of miscarriages are higher.

In Kaniyambetta, the maternal mortality and infant mortality are very high. This could be because of the high incidence of consumption of intoxicants like pan and tobacco among women.. Even though, the impact of NGOs is clearly visible in terms of income, work participation and self-employment creation among females, the status of health do not show any relative improvement in NGO villages except Panamaram. The NGOs in Panamaram are more oriented towards education while in Noolpuzha and Thirunelli, the area of focus of NGOs are livelihood creation. It is obvious that the educational reach resulting in higher level of awareness must have been the reason for better health status among women in Kaniyambetta.

Degree of Social Participation

The tribal women are one of the most excluded and marginalized sections of Wayanad district. The social custom and cultural pattern of the tribes like "Kattunaikar" restrict them from socialising and moving out of their forest dwelling units. Hence one of the major impacts that NGOs can bring is to increase the level of social participation among tribal women. With a series of questions, the extents of social participation among tribal women have been measured. Since, the extent of willingness to participate is crucial in availing various schemes and programs implemented for the development of the tribal community, the impact of NGOs can be studied by comparing the extent of female social participation in Panamaram, Noolpuzha and Thirunelli Villages and there by comparing with that of Kaniyambetta, where NGOs are absent.

The extent of mobility is a clear indicator of the development of tribal women. The fear, insecurity and lack of confidence is not the only reason why tribal women are not moving out of their settlements. The custom, culture and the geographical location of the settlements also form a major constraint in restricting their mobility. Communities residing in forest prohibit women from travelling so as to protect them. Their mobility type can be divided as given

1. Domestic travel- travelling for collecting water, firewood, food gathering etc
2. Occupational Travel-travelling for occupation, to agricultural fields, farms etc
3. Travel for accessing public utilities- which includes traveling for availing health, financial services, panchayath office etc.

The third type of travel shows a relatively higher level of development of tribal women. The percentage of women in each village with respect to their travelling pattern has been examined. Table 8 shows the level of mobility

Table 8: Level of Female Mobility of the sample households

Grama Panchayath	Region of Mobility	Yes (%)	No (%)
Kaniyambetta	Ability to move alone outside settlement	90.9	9.1
	Ability to pursue employment and earn income	72.8	27.2
	Ability to travel alone to market for purchasing	75.1	24.9
	Ability to visit the health centres for treatment	5.0	95.0
	Ability to attend meetings, awareness, training classes	1.2	98.8
Panamaram	Ability to move alone outside settlement	73.4	26.6
	Ability to pursue employment and earn income	34.2	65.8
	Ability to travel alone to market for purchasing	81.4	18.6
	Ability to visit the health centres for treatment	2.0	98.0
	Ability to attend meetings, awareness, training classes	38.1	61.9
Noolpuzha	Ability to move alone outside settlement	90.4	9.6
	Ability to pursue employment and earn income	76.3	23.7
	Ability to travel alone to market for purchasing	22.2	77.8
	Ability to visit the health centres for treatment	15	85
	Ability to attend meetings, awareness, training classes	12.2	87.8
Thirunelli	Ability to move alone outside settlement	88.1	11.9
	Ability to pursue employment and earn income	62	38
	Ability to travel alone to market for purchasing	36.3	63.7
	Ability to visit the health centres for treatment	22.6	77.4
	Ability to attend meetings, awareness, training classes	5	95

Source: Primary data, 2018

The reach of NGOs also depends on the level mobility of the beneficiaries. The ability to attend meetings, awareness classes and training classes are part of capacity building programs which eventually lead to the emancipation and upliftment of tribal women. Table 8 shows that in Panamaram, 38 percent of females participate in the capacity building events while in Noolpuzha it is only 12 percent. Kaniyambetta, in the absence of NGOs shows less than 2 percent of women who have attended any kind of awareness or skill development classes.

Self Help Groups

SHGs are small voluntary associations of rural women from the same socio-economic background. The poor tribal women may not be able to form the groups by themselves due to lack of proper education and management skills. Therefore, different kinds of promotional agencies have come forward to function as catalysts and facilitators for these SHGs. These include not only the GOs but several professional and development agencies as well (Thalmaki,2015). Studies have shown that the role of SHG in community development of tribal women is not restricted to the activities of saving, lending and community participation. They also form a platform to address personal issues, instill a sense of self-esteem and confidence. Table9 shows the level of benefit received by the females of the four study areas

Villages	Table 9: Level of benefit received from SHGs					
	Nil	Very less	Moderate	High	Very high	Total
Kaniyambetta	54(84%)	1(1.5%)	2(3%)	6(9.3%)	1(1.5%)	64
Panamaram	73(68.2%)	5(4.6%)	9(8.4%)	7(6.5%)	13(12%)	107
Noolpuzha	69(62.7%)	19(17.2%)	14(12.7%)	4(3.6%)	4(3.65%)	110
Thirunelli	103(77.4%)	0(0%)	9(0.6%)	18(13%)	3(2.2%)	133

Source: Primary Data, 2018

The women who haven't received any benefit are not members of SHGs. The benefits of being a member in SHG include (1.) Development of saving habit, (2.) Access to credit/loan (3) Better utilisation of public services/ schemes (4) Participation in community development programs (5) Decision making within the household etc. The respondents were asked the benefit received from joining SHGs and based on the level of benefit received, the scores were marked on a five point scale. The household with no benefit received were new members or non-members of SHGs. All the households with membership in SHGs have reported to have received at least a score of 1 out of 5. Some of the members have association for more than 10 years with SHGs.

It can be seen from table 9 that, the share of households without any association with SHGs are greater in Kaniyambetta. Panamaram has received more benefits from involvement with SHGs, followed by Thirunelli and Noolpuzha. The score indicating high to very high benefit from SHGs are comparatively lesser in the households of Kaniyambetta. Out of 133, households in Thirunelli, only 20 of them have membership in SHGs, but with a higher level of benefit compared to all other villages.

The utility of SHGs for the household can be evaluated using the following method.

Utility of the SHG= $(B1/P1+B2/P2+B3/P3+...+Bn/Pn) N$

Where,

$B1, B2, B3 \dots Bn$ are the score of benefit received by the households,

$P1, P2, P3 \dots Pn$ are the maximum score of benefit on the scale

N = The number of households having membership in SHGs.

The village wise analysis of the utility obtained from SHG, are given in Table 10

Table 10: Utility from Self Help Groups

Villages	Utility
Kaniyambetta	6.8
Panamaram	22.8
Noolpuzha	16.6
Thirunelli	21

Source: Primary Data, 2018

This method is used for comparing the performance of SHGs, within the villages. The utility score of SHG in each village shows their performance in accordance with the benefit conferred to their members. Panamaram not only has the highest percentage share of members in SHG, but also the extent of utility to the household members is also very high, followed by Thirunelli and Noolpuzha villages. The performance of SHGs in Kaniyambetta shows a relatively lesser score.

Some of the key indicators such as the skill/training acquired, the level of income, female work participation rate, the degree of social mobility and utility from SHGs indicates that the villages where NGOs are present are performing better than the Kaniyambetta village where NGOs are absent. However, Kaniyambetta also shows relatively better results than other three villages in the fields of maternal health status and education. This could be possibly due to the locational advantage of Kaniyambetta as the village is closer to the capital city of the district

Social Mobility Parameter

As defined by Barber (1960), social mobility refers to movement, either upward or downward between higher or lower social classes; or more precisely, movement between one relatively full time, functionally significant social role and another that is evaluated as either higher or lower. This movement is to be conceived as a process occurring over time, with individuals moving from one role and social class position to another because of what has happened to them in various kinds of social interaction. Mobility arises in social interaction, as each individual reacts to others in a changing series of social roles.

The mobility variables have been constructed in such a way as to highlight the various aspects required for the development and upliftment of tribal women in general. The educational mobility has been measured in terms of number of women who have qualified 10th standard and above. Likewise, the nature of occupation has been measured in terms of number of employed women with respect to their mothers, as most of the tribal women, although they have attended skill development classes, are employed only as unskilled labour.

The self help group is an indicator of involvement in many economic and social activities. These include saving and thrift, availing of loans, participation in awareness classes and access to information about the Government schemes and programs etc. The females who are involved in community development programs include the tribal promoters, NGO volunteers and helpers who act as communicators, translators or trainees involved in various schemes and programs. These are the women who have developed leadership due to association with many community development programs and hence are actively involved in services aiming at tribal development.

Social mobility measured in terms of inter-generational mobility in education, occupation, socio-political participation has been measured in table.10. The information regarding activity status, educational background and nature of occupation of each household has been collected from women belonging to two generations i.e. mother and the daughter. The comparative analysis of mobility levels of mother and daughter give us the picture of tribal development occurred between the past 15 to 20 years among the tribal women.

Table 11: Social Mobility Index of females

Social Mobility	Kaniyambetta		Noolpuzha		Panamaram		Thirunelli	
	Mother	Daughter	Mother	Daughter	Mother	Daughter	Mother	Daughter
Female studied above High School	0(0)	19 (29.6)	0 (0)	16 (14.5)	0(0)	44 (41.2)	0(0)	26 (19.55)
Female Earning members	16 (25)	31 (48.4)	19 (17.75)	57 (51.8)	21 (19.0)	55 (51.4)	30 (22.5)	75 (56.3)
Female participating in self help groups	1 (1)	49 (76.5)	0 (0)	48 (43.6)	0 (0)	84 (78.5)	0 (0)	75 (56.3)
females involved in community development programs	0 (0)	5 (7.8)	0 (0)	5 (4.5)	1 (0.8)	12 (11.2)	0 (0)	8 (6.02)
Total Households	64		110		107		133	

Source: Primary Data.2018

(Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage of the total value)

In the absence of daughter in some households, the data was collected from daughter in law or other relatives who represented the next generation. The aim of the construct is to measure the change and compare the difference in terms of inter-generational mobility in education, employment, economic and social participation.

The educational mobility definitely is positive in all the aspects of all four villages, Panamaram is showing a positive indication towards the status of tribal women when compared with their former generation. The number of females studied above high school is higher in Panamaram while the percentage of female earning members is higher than Kaniyambetta in all the three villages. It can also be seen that even the females in the older generation were employed, but the percentage was very less. The tribal women of the older generations were involved in agricultural and allied activities as casual labourers. The intergenerational difference is also very less in Kaniyambetta. The number of females actively participating in self help groups and community development programs are also higher in Panamaram. Compared to older generations with limited accessibility and amenities available, the condition of the present generation has been fairly improved.

Findings

As many as 38 percentage of the households in Noolpuzha and 30 percent in Thirunelli are headed by women. The reason for the absence of male head in the family is stated as death. However, the informal channels of information received from neighbouring households, Panchayath offices and Tribal promoters point towards the problem of unwed mothers. 2011 census has identified 500 unwed mothers in Manathavadi block. These issues have not been addressed by the tribal women because of two reasons, (1) It is consensual (2) Part of their culture. Such cases have been identified at Chukkalikkunnu colony in Noolpuzha and few tribal

settlements in Thirunelli namely Meenkolli, Kaatikkulam etc. However, most of these households receive widow pensions as the same can be availed in the case of separation from spouses. It is evident that the injustice met by these women is mainly due to lack of awareness and educational backwardness.

Gender issues faced by tribal women in the villages are not restricted to mobility constraints, social non participation, low level of income or education. The major problems faced by women as observed by the researcher are the

1. Problem of early marriages
2. Problem of frequent reproduction
3. Widowhood at young age or, and Problem of unwed mothers

Panamaram has relatively higher edge over the level of educational and social mobility among tribal women. Noolpuzha and Thirunelli shows a better performance in terms of employability and work participation level of women. Kaniyambetta has better health indices over other three villages while the aggregate income of tribal women belonging to all the four villages is similar. The skill development programs have more number of participants in Noolpuzha and hence the number of self employed is also higher by a meagre percent in the village. However, the benefits received from Swelg Help Groups are higher in Panamaram could be due to their increased participation level as a result of increase in education and mobility.

Conclusion

The NGO (Thudi) in Panamaram caters to the education of tribal women while the NGO in Noolpuzha (Shreyas) and Thirunelli (Thanal) largely focus on livelihood creation. It can be concluded that the tribal women belonging to Panamaram is better than rest of the villages in terms of education, social mobility and participation level. The NGOs functioning in Panamaram aiming at education of tribal community has yielded better results than NGOs working towards community development through employment or livelihood creation. The focus on education and awareness of tribal community by focusing on younger generations could be the key towards tribal development. Kaniyambetta on the other hand shows a positive impact on health of tribal women which the NGOs could not materialise in the other three villages could be due to the lack of institutional facilities or infrastructural support.

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