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Prasaranga
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Shankaraghatta, Shivamogga



ISSN 2583-0708

KUVEMPU UNIVERSITY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIALOGUE

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ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಸಂವಹನದಲ್ಲಿ ಕನ್ನಡ ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರಗಳು: ಪುಟ್ಟಕ್ಕನ ಹೈವೆ ಸಿನಿಮಾದ ಒಂದು ವಿಶ್ಲೇಷಣೆ

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VOLUME-2
ISSUE-2
JUL-DEC 2022





Koraga Tribal Land Rights Movement in Coastal Karnataka

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Abstract: Tribal communities are one of the important segments of the nation. The main characteristics of all tribes are their tribal (indigenous) origin, primitive way of life, habitation in remote and less easily accessible areas and general backwardness in conventional developmental parameters. Scheduled Tribes (STs) who constitute around 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. The Koraga is an indigenous tribal community that is basically found mainly in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi districts of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala state. They are also found in small numbers in almost all districts of Karnataka. In Udupi district they are found in Udupi, Kundapura, Baidoor, Hebri, Brahmavara, Kaup and Karkala taluks and in Dakshina Kannada district they are found in seven taluks namely, Mangalore, Puttur, Sullia, Bantwal, Belthngady, Kadaba and Moodabidri. Mangalore is the headquarters of the district. This study took the social and land right aspects of the Koraga (PVTGs) community of Coastal Karnataka. The study has used both primary as well as secondary data to analyze the land rights movements of Koragas.

Key words: Koragas, Coastal Karnataka, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Scheduled Tribes, Primitive Tribal Group, Particularly vulnerable group, land rights movements.

Introduction

Tribal communities are one of the important segments of the nation. The main characteristics of all tribes are their tribal (indigenous) origin, primitive way of life, habitation in remote and less easily accessible areas and general backwardness in conventional developmental parameters. Scheduled Tribes (STs) who constitute around 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. There are 705 STs living in different parts of the country. Majority of them live in scattered habitations located in interior, remote, and inaccessible hilly and forest areas of the country. 75 Tribes who have been identified as Primitive Tribal Group” (PTG, now called Particularly Vulnerable Group) Development is a gradual process of civilization. The purpose of development is to provide basic needs as well as to increase the opportunities to the entire citizen for a prosperous life. It is essential to bring out a more equitable distribution of income and wealth for promoting social justice and efficiency of production. In India, tribal rights are constitutionally preserved. The Constitution of India provides for a comprehensive framework for the socio-economic development of scheduled tribes and for preventing their exploitation by other groups of the society.

The Koraga is an indigenous tribal community that is basically found mainly in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi districts of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala state. They are also found in small numbers in almost all districts of Karnataka. In Udupi district they are found in Udupi, Kundapura, Baindoor, Hebri, Brahmavara, Kaup and Karkala taluks and in Dakshina Kannada district they are found in seven taluks namely, Mangalore, Puttur, Sullia, Bantwal, Belthngady, Kadaba and Moodabidri. Mangalore is the headquarters of the district.

In the first census report of 1871 Koragas referred as 'No Hill Tribes' In the 1881 Census report, they were recognised as 'Aboriginals'. In the 1891 Census, Koragas were treated as 'Forest and Hill Tribes of South Canara.' In the Census of 1921, 1931 and 1941 they were classified as 'Depressed Classes.' In the 1951 Census, they were classified as 'Scheduled Caste'. From the 1956 to 1986 Census report they were re-classified as 'Scheduled Tribes.' In 1986 they were classified as 'Primitive Tribal Groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Groups (PVTGs). "In Dakshina Kannada Koragas are considered as untouchables and the practice of social distance, keeping out of personal and social contact is followed in case of Koragas. Hence, Koragas are not allowed to mingle with others in any of the social functions. They are also not allowed to enter into places of worship. The persons who touch a Koraga are considered to carry the risk of impurity. Since the concept of untouchability has its roots in the ideas of purity and pollution it is the lifestyle of Koragas who used to eat dead animals and left-over foods that have forced others to keep themselves away from them".

Koraga Tribe is considered one of the most backward communities in South India. Their origin is a web of legend and history. Until recently Koragas were slaves, sold and bought along with land. As per the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list Order 1956, the Koraga tribe is identified as 'Scheduled Tribe.' According to Dakshina Kannada district, gazetteer gives the disruption of Koragas as thus "Koragas is a forest tribe, whose chief means of subsistence, however, is basket-making. It is perhaps owing to this fact and to the similarity of name that they have been said to be allied to the Koramas, Korachas, Koravas or Yerukalas, the well-known gipsy tribe of basket-makers and salt-carriers. The tribal is that a king called Habashika brought an army from Anantapur to Canara and the Koragar formed part of his forces. This army was at first victorious, but it was subsequently defeated and the Koragas were driven into the forests." (Sturrock J, 1894).

Lawrence D'Souza (1991:9-11) writes that "the Koragas once ruled South Canara District under a chief named Habashika. There are a few recorded legends which, although differing in details, connect the Koraga with the Habashika. According to Aiyappan a certain invaded Tuluva and conquered it from Mayura Varma, king of Vanavasi. Mayura Varna is the scholar of Kanchi who founded the Kadamba empire. Habashika was treacherously murdered after 12 years. The Kadambas now attacked Habashik's followers, overthrew them and subjected them to slavery. The Koragas appeared to have accepted the slave's position on condition that they are fed day after day without having to bother about the next day's meal". The reference to Habashika or Habashi perhaps also hints to their various cultural origins which seem to have varied with the Hindu caste of the area, especially the Kshatriyas and the Brahmin.

The Koragas are reported with few sub-tribes or sub-divisions. However, the number and the subdivision names vary with different accounts available in the community. M.A. Sherring (1975) states that "the Koragas have three subdivisions and they are AndeKoragas, VastraKoragas, and SoppuKoragas." These classifications are named based on the different kinds of dresses worn by them. As per the above-mentioned sub-tribes, the following names have appeared are as follows:

The Koragas have a variety of occupations like sweepers, performing the role of musicians (drummers), basketry, scavengers and flaying the skin of dead animals or similar other 'so called'

dishonoured occupations. They also divide bamboos and make baskets and mats, work as labourers and sweep the streets and act as scavengers. According to Sturrock J (1894), basket making is one of the important means of community maintenance. He also confirmed that, in addition to basket making the members of the Koraga community work as drummers, scavengers, some collect the horns and hides of the dead animals. Edgar Thurston (1909) also mentioned their principal occupation as basket making and providing labour to their masters.

The majority of the workers are working in the household industry, which in their case largely relates to the traditional sector of the economy. Basket weaving is mainly carried on by women groups, while men are seeking outside work. Alongside the household industry, the industrial category of agriculture labour accounts for a huge number of workers. But the majority of the workers in the agricultural sector are not happy with being labourers. A handful of workers were engaged in construction jobs such as mining, digging, drilling etc. and a few in commerce, trade, communication and storage. Until now, Koragas were made to carry night soil and hence they were called Thotties. Koragas have not been able to take up different occupations and are unable to stick to a particular occupation. Even now they are largely dependent on the traditional occupation.

Research method

This study took the social and land right aspects of the Koraga (PVTGs) community of Coastal Karnataka. The study has used both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was collected through the structured questionnaire from the Koraga tribe. Secondary data was collected from books, Journals, Reports, Articles, Census Records, Districts Gazetteers for review of literature and profile of the study.

Objectives

- To study the historical background of Koraga Tribe.
- To discuss the land rights movement and various issues relating to their development.

Population of Koraga Tribes in D.K and Udupi Districts as per 2011 Census

Sl.No	Districts	Male	Female	No of Families	otal Population
1.	Dakshina Kannada	2465	2393	1206	4858
2.	Udupi	5627	5506	2568	11133
	Total	8092	7899	3774	15991

Source: as per 2011 census

Background of land rights movements

P.Gokul Das, born in 1935 in a small village in Karkala was one of the first leader of the Koragas in DK district. He was formed KoragaAbhivridhiSanghagalaOkutta, which has been a source of support and strength for all Koragas to represent the Koraga voice jointly in Karnataka and Kerala. He led a struggle in the 1990s, and demanded that the Karnataka Government allot land to Koraga Tribe. More than 1000 people carried out a march, starting from Boutagudde to the office of the Zilla parshad in DK in 1993. This land right movement forced to District administration form a one -man committee to pacify the Koragas. Dr. Mohammed Peer, Professor Department of Sociology, Mangalore University took the responsibility to conduct study on Koraga tribe.

After conducting interviews in 113 Koraga settlements and 407 households, Dr Peer released

an eleven-chapter report titled “Social Economic and Educational conditions of Koragas- An Action Plan”. The crux of the report was that “The Koragas are regarded as the lowest among the backward castes”, “Majority of them are engaged in menial and low paid occupations like basket making”, “Members of other castes visit Koraga settlements only to invite them for performing ajal duties and “modernization and industrialization have not helped them improve their social status”. Dr. peer also recommended to the administration that one of the main reasons for the failure of programmes initiated for Koragas was zero effort to understand their “problems, requirement and socio-cultural situation”. He has suggested to government to allot 2.5 acres of land on a per family basis to the koraga community along with resettlement support, and to plan extensive programmes for their education and employment.

Kalathur Land Movement was a one month long paada yatra organized in 2000. Demanding land for koragas as it started out from udupi and travelled throughout udupi, ending in kalathur at hebri and occupied 200 acres of reserved forest land and built 200 makeshift settlements. In less than 15 days, they were arrested by the forest department. Twenty seven were arrested out of which 20 were women. As a result of this movement, there are 350 acres of land has been allotted to the koraga tribe in udupi district .This movement as a foundation for them to rebuild their lives and supported to become self sufficient.

Case study 1: Battuguli is a village where 26 acres of land reserved for koragas which is located 6 km away from HaladyKoragaraHadi in Kundapura Taluk. In 2000 Haladykoragarahadi 26 families occupied land in battuguli, Each family had secured one acre of land but out of 26 only 18 families were settled and availed benefits from ITDP and Sc/St Corporation. Only three families started cultivation. As one of the youth Mr.Kumar Das from battuguli settlement opined that more than 20 years they were collectively spent for land leveling and resettlement and also he added the lack of transportation and communication makes people not initiate to resettlement in battuguli as coolie workers burden to pay 350 rupees per day for transportation. With the lack of basic facilities they struggled to resettle in battuguli land.

Case study 2: Horlali is a village where 6 acres of land reserved for Koragas which is located 4 km away from Kokkarne KoragaraHadi in Udupi Taluk. As 6 families occupied land in Horlali in 2008, Each family had secured one acre of land but out of 6 only 2 families were settled and availed benefits from ITDP and local grama panchayath. Only two families started horticulture. As one of the land holders Mr.Bogra from Horlali settlement opined that he had never dreamed to be a land holder and also he said basically koragas has a nomadic way of life that makes people less interested in agriculture and resettlement. With the lack of basic facilities they also struggled to resettle in horlali land.

Major findings and suggestions:

- As a result of the land right movement, out of 3774, only 350 Koraga families were allotted government land in coastal districts but the majority remained the same. Therefore the government should be accountable for resettlement once land is allotted as mentioned in the Dr. Peer committee recommendation and Government to allot 2.5 acres of land on a per family basis.

- The Koragas are landless, vulnerable and food insecure community. Their source of income is limited and unsustainable. Low literacy is rampant among these groups. The situation has turned all the more worse in recent years. This indicates that the more targeted policy frame work is needed to address the issues of these indigenous communities.

- Because of various problems and restrictions such as unavailability of raw materials, rapid industrialization and prohibition to enter into the forest area, Koraga community has lost their source of

income as well as natural life. Therefore, the Government should provide basic livelihood facilities to this tribe to lead a better life and sustainable development.

- In Karnataka, Koraga Tribe is declared as the primitive vulnerable tribal group. In this regard, they are unable to compete with other tribal communities of Dakshina Kannada district. So, Government and Private sectors should provide separate reservations for Koragas to achieve economic growth and employment opportunities, financial assistance so that they can participate in various programmes which will enhance their talents, skill and knowledge.

Conclusion

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) is growing nowadays. Though Koragas are natives of coastal Karnataka and Kerala, their livelihood and dignity are being spoiled by the inhuman practice of Ajar and untouchability. The main reason for the failure of welfare schemes for Koragas is due to the inadequate knowledge of their problems, requirements, and socio-cultural values. The majority of them face a nomadic way of life, geographical isolation, distinct cultural identity, and social backwardness. No clear documentation and research has been made till today about their history. Lack of awareness of programs, low self-motivation and isolation has made the Koragas inward-looking thoroughly and led to their socio-cultural separation.

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