



Economic Condition among Koraga Tribe

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Abstract: *The tribal communities of India represent an important social category of Indian social structure. The tribals are said to be the original inhabitants of India. India is a country of multiracial stock. Different types of groups occupy different parts of India having their own cultural characteristics and levels of development. A number of groups are still referred to as tribals, primitives, Adivasis and so on. The tribal population in India according to the 2011 census was 104 million. The Koragas are one of the primitive tribes perhaps the poorest among the scheduled tribes in Karnataka and Kerala facing serious problems such as poverty, unemployment, ill health and malnutrition. Present paper makes an Endeavour to analyze the economic condition of the Koraga tribe.*

Keywords: *Koragas, Occupation, Mainstream Primitive Tribes.*

Introduction The Koraga are a tribal community who are basically found mainly in the Dakshina Kannada, Udupi District of Karnataka and Kasaragod District of Kerala State. They are also found in small numbers in almost all districts of Karnataka. The Koragas are classified as a Primitive Tribes Groups (PTGs) by government of India.

The Koragas are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as being a wild tribe of basket-makers and labourers, chiefly found in Puttūr, Mudbidri, and Uppinangadi tāluk of South Canara district. They are, Mr. M. T. Walhouse writes, "a very quiet and inoffensive race; small and slight, the men seldom exceeding five feet six inches; black-skinned, like most Indian aborigines, thick-lipped, noses broad and

flat, and hair rough and bushy. Their principal occupation is basket-making, and they must labour for their masters. Apparently, they live on the outskirts of villages, and may not dwell in houses of clay or mud, but in huts of leaves, called koppus. Like many of the wild tribes of India, they are distinguished by unswerving truthfulness.

The Koragas are employed by the sanitary department as scavengers. They remove the hide, horns, and bones of cattle and buffaloes, which die in the villages, and sell them mainly to Māppilla merchants. They accept food, which is left over after feasts held by various castes. Some are skilful in the manufacture of cradles, baskets, cylinders to hold paddy, winnowing and sowing baskets, scale-pans, boxes, rice-



water strainers, ring-stands for supporting pots, coir (cocoanut fibre) rope, brushes for washing cattle, etc. They also manufacture various domestic utensils from soapstone, which they sell at a very cheap rate to shopkeepers in the market.

Objective of the Study

- ❖ Present study has emphasized To analyze the economic condition and nature of professions performing by the Koraga Tribe of Dakshina district.

Methodology

Present study has been conducted in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state. Since large number of Koragas concentrated in Mangalore, Puttur, Sullia, Moodabidri and Belthangadi taluks, the respondents were selected from these taluks. Primary Data concerned to the professions collected from the respondents with the help of interview schedule. Similarly, relevant literature collected from secondary sources as such journals, books, and encyclopedias, Gazetteers, reports and different websites as well.

Economic Condition of Koragas

Koraga are mostly situated in the rural areas, due to their low status in the rural areas, the Koraga settlements are located in the outskirts of the village, where they form group of their own or even separate hamlet. Since, the caste Hindu do not mix with them, they are forced to have their separate colonies far away from other houses. The primitive shed used by the Koragas was called Kotta (Kotya - Tulu) or Koppa. The Koragas give reason that they were cursed by the spirit. (Bhuta) Kallurtti thus were not supposed to live in decent

houses. They should not live under a roof, Koppa is a primitive structure, and a sort of improvised hut made of bamboos and covered with grass or coconut leaves. The traditional Koppa is disappearing from the scene and now the community men reside in houses made of mud huts with thatched. In the cities and towns the design and construction of the houses of Koragas follows the same regional patterns as found among the communities belonging to lower economic and social strata.

Occupational Status of Koragas

According to Gurulingaiah M "Occupation not only exhibits the economic position of a person but also represent the social status of an Individual. The socio-economic life of a particular group or individuals is predominantly determined by the nature and types of occupation. Occupation of tribal people is generally classified into traditional occupation and non-traditional or modern occupations. Traditional occupations are those occupations which are associated with the community. Even though occupational changes have taken place among the tribes today they depend on traditional occupation for their livelihood, such as food gathering, hunting, shift cultivation, cattle rearing and handicrafts etc." During the field work it was observed that majority of the members continued their traditional occupation i.e. Basket making.

Nature of Occupation Performing by the Koragas

Sl. No	Nature of Occupation	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Basketry	117	58.5



02	Agricultural Labours	09	04.5
03	Coolie	15	07.5
04	Latrait Cutters	21	10.5
05	Scavengers	26	13.00
06	Minor Forest Produce	06	03.00
07	No Occupation	06	03.00
Total		200	100.00

Result Analysis

The data presented in the above table reveal the main and subsidiary occupations of the sample respondents. The data show a large majority of the respondents 117(58%) perform basketry as their main occupation. About 26 (13%) respondents serving as scavengers in local municipal corporations, another 21(10.5 %) respondents working as latrait cutters, merely 9 (4.5%) respondents working as agricultural laborers, about 15 (7.5 %) respondents working a coolies in unorganized sector and hardly 6 (3 %) respondents are involved in collection of minor forest produce such as soap nuts, bamboo, honey and die making leaves.

Economically, Koragas are backward, for a long time they used to shift their dwelling from forest to forest, practicing shifting cultivation. But today they have settled down as basket makers. For their livelihood they depend on almost all available economic means such as plough cultivation, hunting, fishing, collecting minor forest produces like bamboo, soap nuts and honey. However, on account of various factors such as new forest policy, deforestation and modernization process, the Koragas are slowly alienating from forest. Non availability of agricultural land records forced Koragas to live in a pathetic condition and desperately they are

looking forward kind co-operation from all the stake holders of the society.

The following guidelines are suggested by Dr. Mohammad Peer committee for the holistic development of Koraga tribe.

- ❖ Providing necessary rehabilitation
- ❖ At least 2.5 acres of land is allotted to each Koraga family
- ❖ Irrigation facility
- ❖ Promotion of agricultural and horticultural activities.
- ❖ Financial assistance for selfemployment
- ❖ Model education system
- ❖ Implementation of projects through the establishment of cooperative societies.
- ❖ Creating awareness on developmental programmes
- ❖ Raising awareness on health.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study and fieldwork experiences some of the important recommendations for the implementation by the government, voluntary service organizations, activist and all those who are interested in the progress and development of Koragas.

- ❖ There is an urgent need on the part of government to extend the benefits of Tribal Development schemes to Koragas.
- ❖ There is a need to improve agricultural activities among Koragas by way of providing basic infrastructural facilities like irrigation, bank loan, fertilizers, purchase of improved seeds and purchase of hybrid cattle.



- ❖ Basketry need to be promoted to from the level of livelihood to industry with the help of advanced technology and also to be provided wider marketing facility.
- ❖ Koragas should be made aware of the importance of education, health and nutrition education.

Conclusion

Presently Koraga Particularly vulnerable tribal group has been facing many crisis including access to education, training, unemployment and acute poverty Hence, Koragas are struggling lot to fulfill their basic requirements. On the other hand geographic isolation has been greater hurdle to access education and employment opportunities by Koragas. The paradox of the society is that, big corporations are investing billions of CSR funds for the further promotion of well to do people, at the same time organizations which are working for the welfare of tribes have failed to convince the corporations to think over indigenous people of the nation and their economic crisis. In the journey of economic prosperity of Koraga tribe all stake holders of society need to cooperate for a greater extent.

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