



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Attitude of Scheduled Tribes Towards Tribal Development Schemes in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

The Central and State Government have implemented several tribal development schemes throughout the country for the welfare of the tribes. But, whether the tribes have felt the real benefits of these schemes is a big question. It can be measured by analyzing the attitude of tribes towards tribal development schemes. In this context, a survey was conducted among the tribes of Jawadhu hills and Kalrayan hills, representing three districts: Salem, Tiruvannamalai, and Viluppuram. From the study, it was found that 35.19 per cent of the tribal respondents had a highly favorable attitude, followed by 33.33 per cent with a less favorable attitude and 31.48 per cent of tribal respondents with a moderately favorable attitude towards tribal development schemes. The possible reason for the findings and the suggestions to improve the attitude of scheduled tribes in favour of the tribal development schemes described.

Keywords: Attitude; Scheduled Tribes; Tribal development schemes; Jawadhu hills; Kalrayan hills.

INTRODUCTION

India has the second-largest concentration of tribal population followed by Africa. As per the 2011 census, the Scheduled Tribe population of India is 10.45 crores, constituting 8.6 per cent of the total population. Tamil Nadu has 7.95 lakh tribal populations as per the 2011 census, which constitutes 1.10% of the total population. There are 36 tribes and sub-tribes in Tamil Nadu. Tribes are the most underprivileged community in the State who are striving hard for their development. The economic and social condition of tribal communities in the state is desperate. The major reason for their hardship is that tribes are mostly isolated from the other privileged communities because of their locality that is mostly in hilly areas and the deep forests.

The key areas where the Scheduled Tribes face problems are the provision of basic amenities, educational development, employment generation, indebtedness and provision of health care facilities. The need of the hour for tribal development is to reduce the gap between the tribal and non-tribal population concerning economic, educational and social status. The State and Central Government have implemented several Tribal Development Schemes for the welfare and betterment of the tribal community in the state. Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) are being implemented since the Fifth Five Year Plan in the country with specific objectives of poverty reduction, improving educational status, and improving the socio-economic status of tribal families.

Tamil Nadu has 9 Integrated Tribal Development Programmes Areas (ITDP) in seven districts, namely, Salem, Namakkal, Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Tiruchirappalli, Dharmapuri and Vellore, where the population of Scheduled Tribes exceeds 50% of the total population. Menon *et al.* (2003) reported that in the surveyed ITDPs, in Tamil Nadu, the majority of the households (60.10 per cent in Salem and 64.71 per cent in Dharmapuri) expressed that they received assistance under the poverty alleviation scheme. However, the study was not able to identify any family which was capable of creating assets to ensure continuous income through self-employment ventures. Muni Swamy (2015) in his study indicated that 52.08 per cent of the respondents reported a marginal increase in their income by being beneficiaries of tribal development programmes followed by about 23.33 per cent of respondents with significant change and 14.58 per cent of the respondents has expressed there is no change in their income levels.

Vijaya Kumar (2015) has reported from his study among Lambada tribes in Anandpur district of Andhra Pradesh that only 13 per cent of the sample respondents expressed that there is greater improvement in their economic status after the implementation of the tribal development schemes followed by 40 per cent of the sample respondents with moderate improvement and more than 72 per cent of beneficiaries said that tribal developmental schemes did not provide them employment all through the year and also they felt that tribal developmental schemes were not asset-creating in nature. So it was concluded that the tribal development schemes did not prevent tribes from migrating to urban areas for gainful employment.

Despite several tribal development schemes for the upliftment of tribal communities, they are still marginalized and remain underdeveloped. It is because most of the tribal development schemes have not reached the tribes in the remote areas. Even though most of the schemes benefited tribals, they are not enough to improve the economic and social status of the tribals. The biggest roadblock towards the development of tribal communities is the lack of awareness about tribal development schemes that need to be strengthened. Also it is necessary to know the attitude of tribal people towards tribal development schemes. It can be useful in forming better development programmes in the future and avoiding the restricting factors in the currently running schemes. In this context, a study was formulated to analyze the attitude of Scheduled Tribes towards tribal development schemes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu. Three districts, namely Salem, Tiruvannamalai and Viluppuram districts were selected for the study

based on the highest scheduled tribe population in the state. Also, these three districts have been identified with Integrated Tribal Development Programmes Areas (ITDP) from Pethanaickenpalayam (Kalrayan hills), Jawadhu hills and Kalrayan hills blocks. These three blocks were selected purposively based on the highest Scheduled Tribes population. Totally nine villages viz. three from each district were selected using a proportionate random sampling method.

A well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule with an attitude scale was used to measure the attitude of Scheduled Tribes towards tribal development schemes. The attitude scale developed by Sripal (1983) was used in this study to measure the attitude of Scheduled Tribes towards tribal development schemes. This scale consists of eleven statements, of which five were positive statements and the remaining six were negative statements. The data was collected with a five-point continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scoring procedure used was 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for the positive statements and it was in reverse for the negative statements.

The data was collected directly from the tribal respondents by personal interview method. After data collection, it was tabulated and analyzed with statistical tools such as percentage analysis and the cumulative square root of frequency method. Based on the total score, the respondents were categorized with less favourable, moderately favourable and highly favourable attitude and the results were presented in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thurstone (1946) defines an attitude as the degree of positive or negative affect associated with some psychological object. By the psychological object, he means any symbol, phrase, slogan, person, institution, ideal or idea toward which people can differ positively or negatively. In this study, attitude is defined as “the degree of positive or negative opinion, feeling, belief and disposition towards tribal development schemes by the tribal people. The scale used for this purpose included eleven statements, of which five were positive and six were negative. The data was collected and the results are furnished in table 1.

Table 1 shows that almost three-fourth (72.96 per cent) of the respondents agreed with the statement ‘Tribal development schemes uplift all the tribes equally’ followed by statements such as, Based on the economic development tribal development schemes should vary with each tribal community, Tribal development schemes are the best gift of the government to the tribal community, All the tribal development schemes are in line with the needs and problems of the tribal community and the statement ‘Tribal development schemes made us know about our civilian counterparts’ agreed respectively by 58.52 per cent, 57.04 per cent, 47.41 per cent and 37.04 per cent of the respondents. All the statements mentioned above with high agreement among the respondents were positive. Hence, it is clear from the above statements that the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards tribal development schemes.

It is also identified that four-fifth (82.22 per cent) of the respondents have disagreed with the statement ‘It is difficult to know different tribal development schemes running for us’ followed by statements namely, Tribal development schemes fulfill the people needs of few leaving the mass, Tribal development schemes personnel make commitments very early but do not keep them, Implementation of tribal development schemes involve heavy bureaucratism, Tribal development schemes are established against the wishes of the tribal community, Tribal development schemes are just the

show drums of government functionaries were disagreed by 62.59 per cent, 62.22 per cent 61.85 per cent, 54.07 per cent and 42.22 per cent of the respondents respectively. Here all the statements mentioned above with high disagreement among the respondents were negative. So it is clear that most of the tribal respondents had a positive attitude on tribal development schemes.

Overall attitude

Further, the scores of the respondents on each statement were added to obtain an overall attitude score. Based on the overall attitude score each respondent was categorized as less favourable, moderately favourable and highly favourable (fig. 1.)

From fig. 1 it is shown that more than one-third (35.19 per cent) of the respondents had a highly favourable attitude towards tribal development schemes followed by exactly two-thirds (33.33 per cent) of the respondents with a less favourable attitude and about 31.48 per cent of the respondents possessed with a moderately favourable attitude. It is also clear from the findings that the respondents were almost evenly distributed among the categories.

From the findings, it can be concluded that two-third of the respondents (66.67 per cent) had a moderately favourable attitude to a highly favourable attitude. It is because the government has implemented several development schemes such as distribution of house site pattas, construction of houses and construction of toilets that are targeting individual households. Also, there are schemes for construction of community halls and provision of basic amenities like roads, installing street lights, supply of drinking water and construction of burial grounds which are the schemes targeting the whole community.

Meanwhile, the main occupation of the tribal respondents of the study area was agriculture. The agriculture and horticultural departments have implemented some schemes such as the provision of funds for digging well, provision of pipelines for increasing the area under irrigation and subsidy for the installation of drip irrigation system. Also, the state department of horticulture provided silver oak samplings to the tribes for wood which can also be used as support for pepper crops. These schemes are implemented with the ultimate aim to increase the area under pepper cultivation in the study area in the future so that the migration of tribes to Karnataka for pepper harvesting can be reduced.

Even though the government has implemented several schemes for the tribal community a considerable proportion (33.33 per cent) of the tribal respondents had less favourable attitudes towards tribal development schemes. Many of the respondents applied for the housing scheme and waited long for the sanction of the houses. Also, they faced many procedural struggles while applying for these schemes. When it comes to toilet construction schemes, most respondents felt the toilet as an unnecessary amenity. Even after the construction of the toilets, most of them do not use the facility properly.

Also, most of the respondents have applied for the dug well scheme and only a few of them have received the benefits. Most of the respondents have received the irrigation pipelines from the department, but only a few are utilizing them for irrigation purposes; others are not using them. These may be the reason for the less favourable attitude of some of the respondents towards tribal development schemes.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude toward tribal development schemes. Also, there were a considerable number of respondents with a negative attitude towards tribal development schemes. It is mainly because of the procedural difficulties they faced while applying for the schemes, which is the outcome of the predominant illiteracy among the tribal respondents in the study area. Also, there was no sufficient awareness among the respondents about the availability of various development schemes. So the government has to create sufficient awareness among the tribes about the tribal development schemes through mass media sources such as radio, television and newspapers.

Also, the government has to create a monitoring mechanism to ensure that the development schemes have reached the needy people on time. The government offices have to be assigned with some person to assist the tribal people in the application procedures and take necessary steps to ensure the timely delivery of the benefits to the scheduled tribes without any delay. By following these suggestions, it can be possible to achieve the full reach of the development schemes to the needy scheduled tribes and hence we can ensure a positive and highly favourable attitude towards tribal development schemes among the tribal community.

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Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on their response to the attitude statements

S. No	Statements	(n =270)					
		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Tribal development schemes uplift all the tribes equally	197	72.96	44	16.30	29	10.74
2.	Tribal development schemes fulfill the people needs of few leaving the mass*	49	18.15	52	19.26	169	62.59
3.	Based on the economic development, tribal development schemes should vary with each tribal community	158	58.52	48	17.78	64	23.70
4.	Implementation of tribal development schemes involve heavy bureaucratism*	73	27.04	30	11.11	167	61.85
5.	Tribal development schemes are just the show drums of government functionaries*	76	28.15	80	29.63	114	42.22
6.	Tribal development schemes are the best gift of the government to the tribal community	154	57.04	42	15.56	74	27.41
7.	It is difficult to know different tribal development schemes running for us*	29	10.74	19	7.04	222	82.22
8.	Tribal development schemes made us to know about our civilian counterparts	100	37.04	60	22.22	110	40.74
9.	Tribal development schemes are established against the wishes of tribal community*	93	34.44	31	11.48	146	54.07
10.	All the tribal development schemes are in line with the needs and problems of the tribal community	128	47.41	58	21.48	84	31.11
11.	Tribal development schemes personnel make commitments very early but do not keep them*	48	17.78	54	20.00	168	62.22

* Negative statements

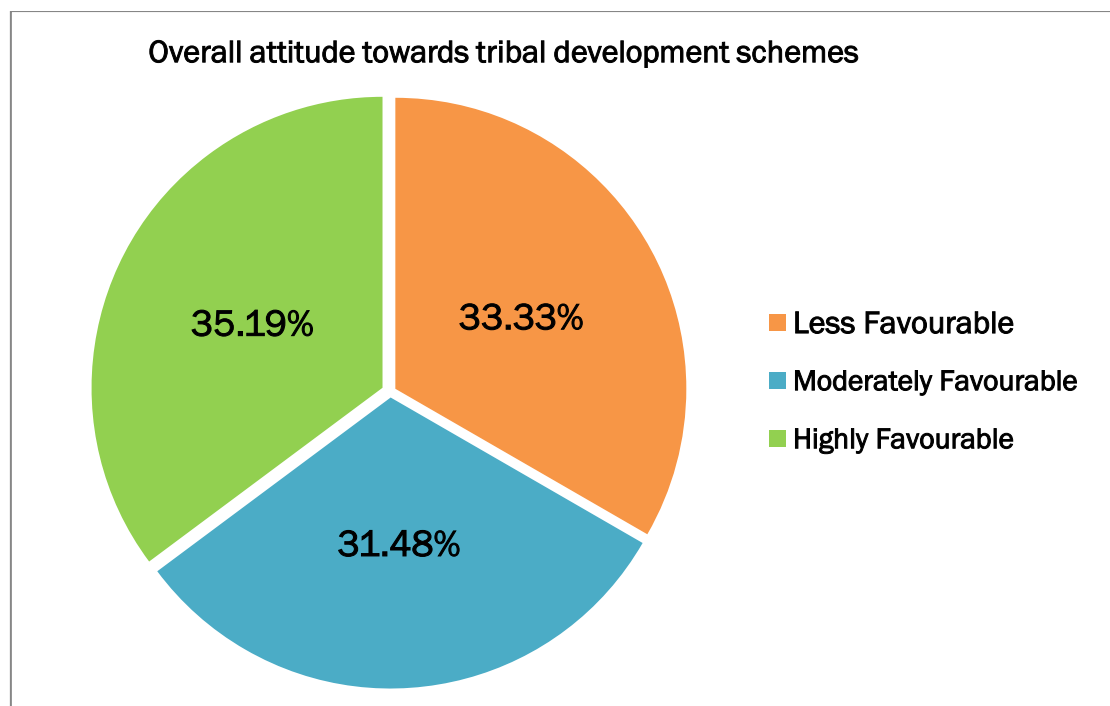


Fig. 1 Distribution of respondents based on their overall attitude towards tribal development schemes