

Economic Condition Among Kudubis

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Abstract: The people belonging to Kudubi community living in remote villages across Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts are socially, economically and educationally the most backward community in Karnataka. Though literacy had improved among the youth through governmental schemes, higher education is still a dream for the majority in the community. The Kudubi youths are largely unemployed. Around three-fourth of the community are daily wage workers and their economic condition is very pathetic. Present paper makes an Endeavour to analyze the economic condition of the Kudubis of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.

Keywords: Backward, Basketry, Kudubis, Manual labourers, Occupation.

Introduction

Kudubis are one of the non-scheduled tribes of Karnataka. They are predominantly found in Kundapur and Mangalore taluk and a few of them are found in Udupi, Karkala and Bantwal taluks in Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka State. They are the migrants from Goa, According to socio-economic and educational survey of government of Karnataka there are more than 2,000 families of Kudubis scattered in both the districts. In the literature and reports presented by Stephen Fuchs (1973), A. Aiyappan (1948), Olivinho J. Gomes (1983), Ananthakrishna Iyer (1928), L.G. Havanur (1975), P. Gururaja Bhatta (1963), Thurston (1909), Sturrock (1895), Abhishankar (1973-Dist. Gazetteer), Kudubis have been listed and described variously as 'food-gathering tribes', 'hunting-tribes', 'hill-tribes', 'aboriginal tribe interesting-tribes' landless labourer of aboriginal stock. Though Kudubis are tribes, and their social and economic position is as poor as the other tribes in Karnataka, nevertheless, they had been included in group 'B', by the government of Karnataka till 1973. They were re-classified as the 'most backward caste' by the government of Karnataka in 1994 as per the recommendations of Chinnappa Reddy Commission. Though Kudubis have been left out from the Scheduled Tribe position, the earlier governor of Karnataka thought that there is a need to designate Kudubis as Scheduled Tribes, Various Ministers present and earlier, scholars and writers expressed their views in favour of including them in the category of Scheduled Tribe.

STUDIES ON KUDUBIS

So far, no systematic empirical study has been conducted on Kudubis. Since sociological or social anthropological study or research of an applied nature on Kudubis has not yet been attempted, analytical literature on the life and problems of this community is not available. However, a few articles and write-ups written in Kannada and English have been published in

regional newspapers, weeklies and monthlies. A short monograph written in Kannada is also available. And a mention may be made of a few reports published in gazetteers and manuals.

Thurston, (1909) one of the early ethnographers and a pioneer in tribal studies in South India presents a brief description of various tribes and castes of South India, including the Kudubis of Dakshina Kannada District. He gives brief information about various customs and traditions observed by Kudubis about a hundred years ago. His description on various tribes is based on his own observations. Though Thurston's work provides brief information regarding various tribes and castes existing in South India, it does not analyse the problems, changes and developmental programmes of tribals in India.

Sturrock in Madras District Manuals, South Canara (1894), compiled various castes and tribes of South Canara District. In his study, he has presented a brief account of Kudubis under the chapter 'Forest and Hill Tribes'. This study shows that Kudubis are the tribes who live in the forest and hills of South Canara District. The study reveals some of their social institutions and practices that existed a century ago.

Nanjundayya and Iyre (1928) made a brief study on one of the sub-divisions of Kudubis known as Are Kudubis (also listed as Kunbi Marhattas). They observed life patterns of Are Kudubis with reference to internal structure of the tribe, marriage prohibitions, tribal council, religion, Kumri cultivation, religion, dietary, dress etc.

Karnataka Government has published a brief account of life and cultural practices of Kudubis in the form of reports in South Kanara District Gazetteers (1973 ed. by K. Abhishankar) and in Karnataka Backward Classes Commission, Vol. II (1975, under the Chairmanship of L.G.Havanur) describing them as 'a nomadic hill tribe living in isolation'.

Objective of the Study

- ❖ Present study has emphasized To analyze the economic condition and nature of professions performing by the Kudubis.

Methodology

Present study has been conducted in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka state. The respondents were selected from Mangalore taluk and Karkala 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.

Result Analysis

Kudubis are hard working and skilled in agricultural operations. All those who have become settled agriculturists are predominantly dependent on plough cultivation. Their common agricultural crops are paddy and pulses. The pulses generally include black gram, horse gram, green gram etc. Recently certain cash crops like sugarcane, turmeric, chilies, ginger, coconut, and areca nut are also grown in some villages. With the establishment of Sugar Factory at Brahmavar in Udupi taluk sugarcane crop is becoming popular among Kudubis. Besides, the Kudubis are skilled and experts in cultivating variety of vegetables and greens. Generally vegetable cultivation is done by women, either in the kitchen garden or in the paddy field after the farm operation is over. Excess vegetables along with their handicrafts are sold in the weekly markets by women, which supplement their income. And in turn they purchase groceries, clothes, earthen pots, vessels, salt etc. from the market.

Nature of Occupation Performing by the Kudubis

Sl.No	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
01	Agriculture	118	47.2
02	Basketry	05	02.0
03	Forest Produce	03	01.2
04	Beedi Rolling	15	06.0
05	Manual labour	98	39.2
06	Govt. Service	11	04.4
Total		250	100

The data presented in the above table reveal the main occupations of the sample respondents. The data show a large majority of the respondents 118(47.2%) perform agriculture as their main occupation. About 05 (02%) respondents are engaged in basketry and handicrafts, another 98(39.2%) respondents working as manual labourers in unorganized sector, about 11 (4.4%) respondents are employed in government sector, 15 (06%) respondents are engaged in *beedi* rolling and merely 03 (1.2%) respondents are involved in collection of minor forest produce such as soap nuts, bamboo, honey and die making leaves.

The traditional economic organization of Kudubis has undergone a tremendous change. Many have given up their traditional occupations and accepted new occupations. The consumption of liquor, *beedi* smoking, expenditures on festive occasions, increasing amount of bride price and the practice of dowry system are contributing to their economic backwardness. The poor economic condition of Kudubis is mainly due to lack of education, lack of irrigational facilities, possession of non cultivable dry land and non availability of benefits extended to scheduled tribes.

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 Kudubis.

- ❖ There is an urgent need on the part of government to extend the benefits for the welfare of Kudubis.
- ❖ There is a need to improve agricultural activities among Kudubis by way of providing basic infrastructural facilities like irrigation, bank loan, fertilizers, purchase of improved seeds and purchase of hybrid cattle.
- ❖ For the development of tribal cottage industries and improving their conditions, there is need to establish co-operative societies, at village level for the supply of raw materials and marketing of their handicrafts taking into account the size of the Kudubis population.
- ❖ Handicrafts and 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.
- ❖ Kudubis should be made aware of the importance of education, health and nutrition education.

Conclusion

The Kudubis have gradually transferred into a settled agricultural stage. The agricultural income is supplemented by handicrafts, selling of dried medicinal leaves and roots etc. They also work as labourers on farms, building constructions or seasonal labour. Their skill in labour work particularly wood cutting, quarrying, digging wells, installation of granary, weaving of *mudi* (rice mura) is well recognized in all villages. Recently a few Kudubis who are living in Mangalore and Karkala region have taken up *beedi* rolling. It is a popular subsidiary occupation among the people belonging to lower and lower middle class families in the district. *Beedi* rolling now occupies an important place as it has contributed substantially to the female employment in rural Dakshina Kannada District. Many low-income Kudubi families gave up their agricultural labour and traditional occupations of mat-making, etc. and adopted *beedi*-rolling as a source of livelihood. Owing to poverty, now women also work as domestic servants, farm labourers, coolie etc. outside home. Hence, there is an urgent need on the part of government to extend the benefits for the welfare of Kudubis.

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