



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OF NOMADIC TRIBAL WOMEN IN KALYAN-KARNATAKA REGION

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Abstract

The nomadic tribes are wandering from place to place in search of source for their livelihood. As such, they have no fixed shelter or native place and living usually in temporary tents or settlements at the outskirts of towns and cities. The British were passed the Criminal Tribes Act and restricted movements of many of these tribes and branded them as criminals. Though, the Act has been repealed, still these tribes are being treated as criminals, thieves and robbers in civilised society. The occupations of these tribes include snake charming, monkey-playing, etc, which are restricted by the Government by passing the Wild Life Protection Act. Few of these tribes were collecting forest products such as honey and selling and after passing forest laws, movement of these tribes into forest has banned. Occupations of the tribes which are engaged in entertainment activities such as folk songs, music, etc were decreased their importance due to television and internet. In this way, these tribes have no occupation for their livelihood. Due to illiteracy and poverty, orthodox culture is followed by these tribes. The orthodox tribal culture has resulted in gender inequality faced by nomadic tribal women. Consequently, these women are facing many of the problems such as deprivation in education, healthcare, nutritious food, shelter, equality, etc. In this way, their human rights are violated. Hence, the proposed research is planned to address human rights violations of nomadic tribal women.

Key words: *Women, Tribes, Human Rights, Violation, Nomadic*



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Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) states that, “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/herself and his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social service. Everyone has the right to education and health” (What is Foreign Aid, 2010). Even the Indian Constitution has also emphasized human rights in fundamental rights of citizens. As per the human rights, every human being has right to freedom and basic facilities such as education, nutritious food, shelter, clothing, employment, healthcare, etc and such rights should be based on equality and these rights are formed against discrimination based on any of the criteria such as religion, caste, gender, etc. When the human rights of different castes, gender and tribes are analysed, it is observed that, human rights of nomadic tribal women are violated in modern Indian society.

The term 'Nomad' has been derived from the original Greek word ‘Nemo’, meaning “animal husbandman” or “cattle rearer” and Nomas in Latin. In Kannada, the term used is Alemari. The term Nomadic Tribes in sociologically refers



to the people who were forced to live a wandering life by the Indian social system divided into deferent castes and their origins. Hence, the tribes that do not have a village of their origin, nor own agricultural lands or permanent homesteads but keep migrating from place to place in search of livelihood, are educationally, economically and socially backward and exist on the extreme periphery of the mainstream society, are generally known as ‘nomadic tribes’ or wandering tribes.

The history created by Britishers categorised Nomadic tribes which are found in different states as criminals in India. There were tribal revolts against the British at different parts of the country. To suppress such revolts, the British were passed the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871 (Gandhi, 2008). The purpose behind the enactment of this Act was to enhance the power of the police administration and suppress the here criminal section of the society. The Act restricted the movement of certain communities and confined them to specific areas. Under this Act, the persons who registered under the Criminal Tribes Act were to report to the nearby police station and should stay there for fixed hours (Pushpalata, 2014). Though the CTA was repealed in August 1949, still many of the nomadic tribes are facing alienation from social stigma of being treated as ‘criminal’.

Statement of the Study:

From the abovementioned discussion, it is clear that, nomadic tribes are facing many of the problems and as such, basic human rights of nomadic tribes in general and human rights of nomadic tribal women in particular are violated. Hence, the present study is proposed under the title “**Human Rights Violations of Nomadic Tribal Women in Kalyan-Karnataka Region**”.

Objective of the Study:

1. To study the nomadic tribal women Problems and challenges in Kalyan-Karnataka region.

Research Methodology:

The proposed study will begin with the literature search. This study will refer leading regional, national and international journals, web sites and books published in the fields such as nomadic tribes, tribal settlements, education and healthcare of nomadic tribal women, human rights of nomadic women, etc. Based on these secondary literatures.

Review of Literature:

None of the studies were made on nomadic tribal women and few of the studies made on nomadic tribes are reviewed as under:

Ghatage (2011) published a paper entitled “**Disabilities And Social Justice For Nomadic Tribal Communities In India**” in ‘*Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*’. In British India the government enacted law against criminal attitudes of the tribes and castes those traditions adopted as the occupational system of livelihood. Over hundreds of years without any good means of life under the influence of caste system, they are forced to live under sub human conditions. The large section of these tribes is known as Vimukta Jatis or Jamatis or ‘Ex-criminal castes or Tribes’ because they were branded as criminals by birth under the act Criminal Tribes Act- 1871.

Puttaraja and Heggade (2012) writes on “**Economic Empowerment of Tribal Women in Karnataka: A Case Study in Mysore and Chamarajanagara Districts**” in ‘*Studies of Tribes and Tribals*’. Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the various walks of life like education, employment, good



health and economic empowerment etc. After the analysis of the data and field observation, it is revealed that lack of education, poor health status and infant mortality rate, low level of wage work, lack of self-employment opportunity, organizing capacity and leadership quality are the main obstacles to the economic empowerment of tribal women. The government and non- governmental organizations should prepare suitable plans and programmes for the economic empowerment of tribal women.

Farahani, et al (2014) published a paper entitled “**Investigating Adequacy and Content Patterns of Nomad Women in Craft Production and Cultural Tourism**” in *‘International Journal of Cultural and Digital Tourism’*. The roles of nomad women in livestock, production of various livestock products, active participation in agricultural work, making fine craft as a tourist attraction, as well as their role as a wife and mother have made them as strong support for their families. All efforts of nomadic women are to use limited and few facilities to create well-being for family and economic independence. Results show that women try to increase productive economy in nomad and decrease consumption and expenses of family by involving in different fields. Thus, they apply content and adequacy simultaneously.

Gupta, et al (2014) published her paper entitled “**An Intense Blind Spot of Gender and Health in India Three Times the Size of Nordic Countries: Health and Reproductive Health Concerns of Denotified and Nomadic Tribe Women and Girls**” in *‘Indian Streams Research Journal’*. The total population of Nordic Countries together is about 20 mn. One of the most deprived population on his earth this paper refers to is Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNT) in India whose total population is more than 110 mn and that of women & girls is more than 55 mn. Though this population of DNT is about 3 times the total size of Nordic countries, their health and reproductive health concerns are hardly addressed. They are at extreme periphery of health and social welfare policy and action.

Satpathy (2015) has published paper entitled “**Human Rights Approach to Livelihood of Tribal Women in Odisha: A Review**” in *‘EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review’*. The tribal communities in Odisha present diverse socio-economic panorama and livelihood pattern ranging from nomadic food gatherers and hunters to skilled and settled agriculturists and horticulturists. However, the tribal communities of the State are immersed in high incidence of poverty and backwardness which induced developmental planning to enhance their welfare through varied livelihood opportunities in order to bring them above poverty line. The study adopts human rights approach to livelihood programmes in empowering tribal women of Mayurbhanja district in Odisha. The opportunities given to the tribal womenfolk in terms of training and skill upgradation programmes, financial assistances through micro-credit linkages and marketing tie up etc. have not been able to yield expected results due to lack of internalization of modern technologies. Further, it is revealed that the relative advantages of compatibility with the tribal culture, simple to adopt in limited scale and low input intensive technologies are quickly accepted by the tribes. There is a need to modify the development approach to reach and teach tribal women in the area under the study. Besides, the study also illustrates the challenges faced by the tribal womenfolk in the context of livelihood such as ignorance, illiteracy, poor connectivity, financial crisis and low productivity, etc. The study also highlighted the constraints in terms of social, economic, environmental and technical aspects.

Problems and Challenges of Nomadic Tribes:

Impact of modernization has neglected the tribal culture expressed by folk music, folk songs, folk dance, etc, which were popular means of entertainment earlier and consequently, the tribes who were depending on these arts were



become marginalized. The television and internet have become popular means of entertainment compared to traditional arts and entertainment of nomadic tribes such as snake charming, monkey-playing, rope walking, etc. Their art, songs, dance and religious performances have not been recognized by laws, even not recognized by Sahitya or Sangeet Academy and the Ministry and the Government have tagged them as the beggars and they do not have any scope to improve their livelihood. The Prevention of Begging Act passed in several states has been used to target communities who perform on the street, including acrobats, tight rope walkers, dancers and singers. In this way, there is a decrease in demand for their arts and culture and also no income for their livelihood. It leads them to no sufficient earning source of livelihood for their survival. Though, a few of nomadic tribes were living in forests and getting income by selling forest minor products such as honey, they were restricted by the Government to extract forest produce as per modern forest laws. In present context, the environment laws and wild life security act have strong hold making the traditional performances of Monkey players, Bear trainers and Snake charmers difficult. In the Indian civil society, the system is very conscious about the animal rights (security, safety and their lives) but seldom do they bother about human beings like the marginalized denotified and nomadic tribes. More significance has been given to animal rights while denotifying a human tribe. By designating protected forest areas, the Forest Conservation Act has displaced nomadic communities who have traditionally relied on the availability of forest land for subsistence.

Due to loss of their source of livelihood, they are poor and these situations are affecting on their next generation. They do not send their children to school and practically it is impossible because of their nomadic nature of life.

Some of the nomadic tribes such as Vaidu, Banjara, Shikkalgar, Kanjarbhat, Beldar, Ghisadi, Patharwat, Chapparband, Kaikadi, Mannu Waddaru, Kallu Waddaru, Mati Wadar, Otari, Sangar, etc. used to provide goods and services to the people such as handmade wool cloths, wood basket, Ayurvedic medicine, herbs, local liquor, stone gadget, wool blanket etc. due to mechanization and industrialization, these communities lost their traditional occupation. Industrial production captured the whole urban and rural market with better quality production compared to handmade production, however, demand for these people's production has decreased automatically and it leads to livelihood crises among this group of people (Madane, 2016). As they are wandering, they are living in temporary camps usually at the outskirts of cities or towns. Hence, they have no permanent place or even settlement. They are afraid of poisonous insects and animals as they are living on the outskirts of villages and even fear of extra-natural powers such as ghosts, witchcrafts, etc.

The nomadic tribes including Denotified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes and Semi-Nomadic tribes are far away from individual freedom, right to liberty, right to justice (Right to justice means right to be treated in terms of equality), because they cannot live in one place for a long time due to lack of livelihood resources which is dependent on their traditional occupation as well as society do not accept them in their residencies for a long time because of stigma of criminality has attached to them. Thus, these people cannot enjoy their civil rights and are excluded from civil rights. The political participation of nomadic tribes is also discouraging.

These tribes do not have residence of a particular place and citizenship documents such as Voter ID, Ration Card, Aadhar Card etc., because of which they cannot be recognized as a citizenship of the country and hence, they are excluded from political representation including voting rights. They have remained excluded from government facilities and welfare services because of lack of citizenship documents which is required for accessing such government welfare services, e.g. under PDS (Public Distribution System), Government of India distributes subsidized food and non-food items to India's poor, major commodities distributed include staple food grains, such as wheat, rice, sugar, and kerosene



through a network of public distribution shops established in several state across the country. But without a Ration card, they cannot take advantage of this government services. They cannot stay near (out of the village) the village more than three months. When these people come near the village in search of their livelihood that time villagers make a public announcement in the village that theft has come near village be alert (Rathod, 2012). It is due to social stigma attached to their lives since passing of the Criminal Tribes Act by the British. Due to such reasons, wandering tribes are getting trouble to get livelihoods by begging, entertaining people through physical dexterity, providing services to people like a wood basket, Ayurvedic Medicine, stone things etc which depend on the other people's response to them. Thus, these communities have excluded from the government and society (Mandane, 2016). As they are wandering from place to place, their children are unable to get education. Their health is neglected as they are poor and can't able to get health benefits. The nomadic tribes suffer from extreme poverty, landlessness, illiteracy and homelessness. As they are always living in temporary camps and tents, they are always prone to ill health and diseases due to drinking of contaminated water, absence of sanitation facilities, malnutrition due to poor food habits, etc.

The status of women among nomadic tribes is most vulnerable. There is gender inequality as the nomadic communities are patriarchal in nature and enforce traditional patriarchal structures and institutions. Alike other poorer sections the nomadic women are also engaged in productive tasks. They are not confined to the four walls of the house simply because the house does not exist. They are involved not only in processing and manufacturing activities, but also in selling and marketing ones. As they have to interact with the surrounding world on an everyday basis, they are quite bold, fearless and articulate. But the other side is that the nomadic women remain severely repressed by the patriarchal structures. Though outward expressions differ in different communities, the underlying feature is that women are considered a piece of property. Child marriages are common. In some of the nomadic communities like the Pardhis or Vaidus, women are sold, exchanged, mortgaged and even leased out (Mane, 2001). There are also stringent rules on conduct and behaviour of women. The most traumatic aspect is the penalty imposed on women when these rules are broken. Exogamous marriage, adultery and pre-marital pregnancy are considered serious crimes. The forms of penalties, to put it simply, are inhuman, brutal and barbarous. Surprisingly, it is noted that though the whole world including India is modernized, still the nomadic tribal women are facing deprivation in basic facilities such as nutritious food, clothing, pure drinking water, shelter, healthcare, education, gender equality, etc. and in this way, there is violation of human rights of nomadic tribal women in India. Hence, the research study is proposed to address the human rights of nomadic tribal women in Kalyana-Karnataka region.

Relevance and Anticipated Outcomes:

When the published literature made to study the nomadic tribes are analysed, it is found that, nomadic tribes are wandering from place to place along with their families. Due to their orthodox traditions, frequent wandering and poverty, girls are not allowed to get education. The orthodox traditions emphasized gender inequality among most of nomadic tribes and it resulted in different types of problems and challenges such as domestic violence, female subjugation, discrimination, exploitation, sexual harassment, etc not only from their own family members, but also by outsiders. Due to poverty and frequent migration, they are unable to get nutritious food and healthcare facilities. As these tribes are identified as criminals since the British, many times these families are attacked by people and the Police and under such circumstances, nomadic tribal women are the main targets. In this way, nomadic tribal women are facing many of the problems and challenges, which have resulted in violations of their human rights. Hence, the



proposed study is proved as significant in identifying and exploring human rights of nomadic tribal women and emphasizing the human rights of these women. The outcome of the study helps to formulate pass suitable legislations to protect human rights of nomadic women and initiate welfare schemes help to empower nomadic tribal women.

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