

The Role of Government Initiatives in the Development of Tribal Haadis: A Sociological Study in H.D. Kote Taluk, Mysuru District

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Abstract:

Tribal communities in Karnataka particularly Jenu Kuruba, Soliga, Betta Kuruba and Yerava face persistent challenges of displacement, livelihood, insecurity and socio cultural marginalization despite the presence of multiple welfare schemes. This paper examines the role of government initiatives in tribal rehabilitation and development in H.D. Kote taluk of Mysuru district. Using a descriptive research design and data collected from 89 respondents across Three tribal haadis the study highlights gaps between policy intent and implementation. Findings reveal that while schemes related to housing, education, healthcare and livelihoods have improved basic welfare, structural challenges such as poor infrastructure, bureaucratic delays and cultural displacement continue to limit their effectiveness. The paper argues for a rights based, participatory and culturally sensitive approach to tribal development.

Keywords: Tribal development, Jenu Kuruba, Soliga, Yerava, Government schemes, Forest Rights Act, Rehabilitation

Introduction

India, home to one of the world's largest tribal populations, constitutionally recognizes its indigenous communities as Scheduled Tribes (STs), comprising 8.6% of the population (Census 2011). In Karnataka, 50 tribes—including the Jenu Kuruba, Soliga, Betta Kuruba, and Yerava—inhabit ecologically sensitive areas like Mysuru, Kodagu, and

Chamarajanagar districts, especially H.D. Kote in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Development projects, conservation policies, and commercial agriculture have disrupted their forest-based livelihoods, leading to displacement and loss of cultural identity. Despite policies like the Forest Rights Act (2006), Tribal Sub Plan, and PVTG schemes, gaps in

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implementation persist, leaving many communities impoverished and marginalized. This study explores government initiatives in the development of tribal haadis in H.D. Kote, examining the intersection of state-led development with tribal rights, cultural preservation, and social transformation

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Conflict Theory and Political Economy: Drawing from Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. The conflict perspective highlights how state led interventions often serve dominant economic and political interests rather than the needs of marginalized groups. Tribal displacement for conservation projects and commercial plantations in Karnataka reflects processes of primitive accumulation and control over natural resources. Gramsci's notion of hegemony further explains how welfare schemes create a sense of inclusion while masking structural inequalities, thereby normalizing state authority over tribal lives.

Subaltern and Postcolonial Perspectives Ranajit Guha The Subaltern Studies collective argues that marginalized voices are often silenced in official narratives. In the context of tribal development, policies such as the Forest Rights Act (2006) or rehabilitation schemes may appear progressive. Still their implementation often excludes the participation of tribal communities rendering them subaltern. Similarly Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the

subaltern speak" becomes relevant in examining whether tribal communities are genuinely able to articulate their needs within policy frameworks.

Relevance of the study

This framework positions tribal development as a site of tension between welfare and rights, inclusion and displacement, state control and community autonomy. It guides the analysis by showing how government initiatives, though progressive on paper, can reproduce marginalization unless they are participatory and culturally sensitive.

Review of Literature

Nagaraja (1985), in *The Jenu Kurubas of Karnataka: A Socio-Economic Study*, examined the Jenu Kuruba tribe's dependence on forest-based livelihoods like honey collection and shifting cultivation in Mysuru and adjoining districts. He highlighted how modernization and forest restrictions disrupted their traditional economy, causing poverty and dependence on wage labour. This provides a historical baseline for the present study in H.D. Kote, which evaluates later interventions such as the Forest Rights Act (2006), the Tribal Sub Plan, and PVTG schemes through the lenses of Conflict Theory and Subaltern Studies.

Guha (1999), in *Savaging the Civilised: Verrier Elwin, His Tribals and India*, critiqued colonial and postcolonial portrayals of tribal communities, showing that even sympathetic administrators

framed tribals within the state's vision of modernity. He argued that tribals were treated as "objects of policy" rather than active participants. This perspective informs the current study's analysis of welfare schemes in H.D. Kote, emphasizing the need for participatory, community-led development.

Sundar (2010), in *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar*, traced how state interventions displaced tribal populations in the name of conservation and industrial growth. Though focused on Bastar, her insights resonate in Karnataka, where displacement from forests like Nagarahole and Bandipur parallels similar patterns. Her analysis aids the present study in exploring how welfare schemes appear progressive yet fail to fully restore tribal dignity and autonomy.

Madegowda (2009), in *Traditional Ecological Knowledge among Soliga Tribes*, documented the Soligas' sustainable forest practices and deep ecological knowledge. He found that conservation laws and bureaucratic hurdles limited their access to forest resources even after the Forest Rights Act (2006). This directly parallels the experiences of tribal communities in H.D. Kote struggling to balance forest rights, conservation, and rehabilitation.

Baviskar (2011), in *Tribal Communities and Development: The Indian Experience*, explored the paradoxes of tribal development, where welfare

programs coexist with structural exclusion. She argued that benefits often accrue to dominant groups while tribals remain marginalized. The present study in H.D. Kote echoes these contradictions, revealing persistent vulnerabilities despite the presence of housing, education, and livelihood schemes.

Objective of the Study

- To evaluate the role and effectiveness of government programs in improving livelihood, education and health.

Significance of the Study

This study offers both empirical and theoretical insights into the condition of tribal communities in H.D. Kote, Karnataka. Empirically, it documents the socio-demographic profile, housing, education, health, and livelihood challenges of Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba, Yerava, and Soliga households. Theoretically, it applies frameworks like Conflict Theory, Subaltern Studies, and post-development perspectives to reveal how welfare schemes often fall short due to weak implementation and limited participation. By identifying gaps between policy intent and ground reality, the study contributes to sociological understanding of tribal marginalization and provides actionable insights to strengthen programs such as the Forest Rights Act, Tribal Sub Plan, and PVTG schemes.

Conceptual framework of this study

This study views tribal development in H.D. Kote as shaped by the interaction

between state policies, their implementation, and community realities. Although schemes like the Forest Rights Act (2006), Tribal Sub Plan, and PVTG programs aim at inclusion, bureaucratic delays and limited participation reduce their impact. Drawing on Conflict Theory, Subaltern Studies, and post-development perspectives, the framework highlights how development often reinforces inequalities and overlooks tribal voices. It emphasizes that sustainable progress requires moving from top-down welfare delivery to a rights-based and culturally sensitive approach rooted in local participation and traditional knowledge.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design with a mixed-methods approach to examine the socio-demographic profile and developmental experiences of tribal households in H.D. Kote, Karnataka. Primary data were collected through structured and semi-structured interviews with 50 respondents from four selected tribal settlements (haadis) representing Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba, Yerava, and Soliga communities. Interviews focused on family structure, occupation, income, education, housing, health, and access to government schemes. Both men and women were included to capture gender perspectives. Field observations documented living conditions, housing types, and basic amenities such as schools, health centres, and anganwadis, providing valuable contextual insights. Secondary data were

drawn from government reports, census records, policy documents (e.g., Forest Rights Act 2006, Tribal Sub Plan, PVTG schemes), and relevant research studies to supplement field data and situate findings within broader policy and sociological contexts.

Area of the Study

Heggadadevana Kote (H.D. Kote) taluk of Mysore District.

Findings and Discussion

Family Structure

The majority of respondents (86.5%) live in nuclear families while only 13.5% belong to Joint. The persistence of joint families highlights strong kinship ties, resource sharing, and collective survival strategies, especially in agricultural and wage based livelihoods. However, the small but emerging presence of nuclear families reflects gradual socio economic changes influenced by urbanization, migration, and exposure to mainstream lifestyles.

Housing Conditions

Housing patterns reveal structural deprivation: 51.7 percent live in huts, 27 percent in tiled houses, 7.9 percent in sheet houses, and only 4.5 percent in RCC houses. This suggests that most households remain vulnerable to environmental challenges, particularly during the rainy season.

The government has introduced several housing schemes to address such deprivation. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY Gramin) aims to provide

houses with basic amenities for rural families, including Scheduled Tribes. Similarly, Karnataka's the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) allocates specific funds for housing assistance in tribal majority areas. However, field evidence shows that these schemes have not reached all eligible households. Bureaucratic hurdles, corruption and lack of awareness often exclude the poorest tribal families, while those with better political connections or administrative access benefit disproportionately.

Sanitation and Water Supply

Jenu Kuruba, Soliga, Yerava and Betta Kuruba haadis, sanitation facilities remain inadequate with many families still practicing open defecation. Women are disproportionately affected, often walking long distances to fetch water, which reduces their time for education and wage work. Programs such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Jal Jeevan Mission have improved sanitation and piped water supply in some accessible haadis.

Education

Despite improvements in enrollment through Anganwadis, Ashram schools and scholarships, dropout rates remain high after primary school, particularly among girls in Jenu Kuruba and Yerava families. Poverty household responsibilities and early marriage are key drivers while language barriers alienate Soliga children, who grow up speaking their own dialects rather than Kannada. Initiatives such as

the Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and Pre and Post Matric ST Scholarships were meant to reduce dropouts, but the lack of culturally adapted curricula and bilingual teaching models continues to push children out of formal schooling. Very few from these communities pursue higher education, perpetuating cycles of marginalization.

Health care

Health challenges are widespread among these tribes. Malnutrition and anemia are common among women and children, while alcoholism affects many men, creating both health and social issues. Access to Primary Health Centres (PHCs) is limited as many hamlets are located far from service points and transport facilities are scarce. The National Health Mission (NHM) and Poshan Abhiyaan have expanded immunization coverage and nutrition programs through Anganwadis but irregular supply of nutrition kits and weak infrastructure reduce their effectiveness. Seasonal diseases such as malaria and respiratory infections remain high, particularly among Soliga and Betta Kuruba families living close to forest zones.

Reliance on Traditional Healers

Tribal communities continue to rely on folk healers and herbal medicine both due to cultural traditions and the inaccessibility of modern healthcare. While the AYUSH Mission was launched to integrate traditional medicine into

formal systems, it has not effectively reached tribal hamlets in H.D. Kote and surrounding regions. Local healers still operate without institutional support and their knowledge remains undervalued by the state. Instead of bridging these practices with biomedical services, policy tends to sideline them, leaving a gap between community healthcare preferences and formal systems.

Decline of Traditional Livelihoods

Traditional livelihoods such as honey collection shifting cultivation and bonded plantation labor have declined due to forest restrictions, land alienation and poor access to markets. Forest based occupations once ensured both income and cultural continuity, but conservation laws and displacement have weakened these systems. The Van Dhan Vikas Kendra under TRIFED aims to promote minor forest produce based enterprises yet in practice its reach is minimal in Mysuru regions. Without support for value addition and marketing, traditional occupations cannot compete with wage labour, leading to dependence on insecure alternatives.

Dependence on Wage Labor and Migration

With the decline of traditional forest based work, tribal families increasingly rely on daily wage labor and seasonal migration. Jenu Kuruba, Soliga Yerava and Betta Kuruba households in particular migrate to coffee estates or construction sites and Depend on agricultural wage work. Average monthly incomes range

between ₹3,000 and ₹5,000, leaving households trapped in debt cycles with moneylenders. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provides supplementary income but is undermined by delayed wage payments and irregular availability of work. For many tribal households, migration remains the primary coping strategy despite the presence of welfare programs.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Implementation:** Ensure that welfare schemes like housing, education, and health programs reach all eligible families without bureaucratic delays.
2. **Promote Participation:** Involve tribal leaders and community members directly in planning and decision-making to make schemes more relevant and effective.
3. **Support Livelihoods:** Develop sustainable income opportunities by integrating traditional ecological knowledge such as honey collection, medicinal plants and forest based crafts with modern markets.
4. **Focus on Education and Women:** Reduce dropout rates through culturally sensitive curricula, scholarships, and special initiatives that promote girls' education and women's empowerment.

Conclusion

The study reveals that government initiatives in H.D. Kote have improved access to housing, land, education, and

healthcare but continue to face challenges of displacement, livelihood insecurity, and cultural loss. Many welfare schemes remain ineffective due to poor implementation and limited participation. Sustainable tribal development requires shifting from top-down welfare delivery to inclusive, rights-based, and culturally sensitive approaches that recognize tribal communities as active decision-makers and custodians of their ecological and cultural heritage.

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