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Impact of TRIFED on sustainable livelihood of tribal households: A special reference to Tiruvannamalai district, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

This study looked at changes in household income and employment trends as well as the impact of TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India), a group whose main goal is to improve the economic status of the nation's scheduled tribes by marketing the products that sustain them. The study examines 190 households in the Tiruvannamalai District of Tamil Nadu using Purposive Sampling methods. The impact of TRIFED will be most noticeable in the areas of asset creation, employment creation, and income generation. It was discovered that, regardless of caste, gender, or social class, TRIFED covered all poor tribal society segments. It was also noted that this organization increases household income and savings.

Keywords: TRIFED, income-generating, tribal, sustainability, asset creation

Introduction

Livelihoods encompass the essential means by which individuals sustain themselves, ensuring not just survival but also the possibility of thriving. They emerge as a result of how people organize themselves to harness technology, labor, power, knowledge, and social connections to transform their environment in order to meet their needs. These livelihoods are profoundly influenced by the overarching economic and political systems in which they are embedded.

Within the vast and diverse landscape of India, a significant portion of the population comprises indigenous communities that have remained largely untouched by the forces of modern society. These communities, often referred to as "tribals," are bound together by kinship ties and are intimately connected to specific territories. Members of these tribes share a profound sense of social cohesion akin to a familial bond, coupled with a strong sense of political autonomy within their respective regions.

Despite this unique cultural heritage, many tribal communities still rely on primitive agricultural practices. Their populations remain stagnant, literacy rates are low, and they rank among the most marginalized in terms of human development. These tribal groups often fall victim to exploitation by outsiders, resulting in meager income levels, perpetuating their socioeconomic challenges.

Recognizing the need for intervention, the Planning Commission initiated a significant effort toward the socio-economic development of these tribal communities through an initiative known as TRIFED, which stands for the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India. TRIFED seeks to empower these communities by incorporating the sustainable trade of minor forest products into their livelihoods. By providing a fair price for their surplus agricultural products and other resources, TRIFED plays a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of these tribal populations and, in turn, contributes to the broader economic development of the nation.

Review of Literature

Sunil and Anupriya (2015) ^[1] concluded that the increase in income was not satisfactory even it somehow increases the standard of living of the respondents and very few percentages of households did utilize 100 days of wage employment. The scheme is not fully and uniformly implemented in all the surveyed villages and it was successfully implemented in some villages.

The assets created under the scheme were not proved for immense use and in some villages the scheme has increased irrigation facilities. They further concluded that the impact of the scheme on the economy was not equal.

Prabhakara Reddy (2018) ^[12] examined that the tribal development measures of Andhra Pradesh and problems of tribal such as Land problems, Cultural and present strategies of tribal development. The study discussed that the concept of culture and Indus valley civilization in relation to tribal culture. The author made an interesting observation that the tribal women should be given appropriate skill to prepare leaf plates with 'adda' leaves and deciding of tamarind lead to value addition and increase in their income. Government reservation was increased education and economic status of scheduled tribes. The author provided details of policies and their approaches, in each five-year plan separately. The author also focused on the empowerment of tribal communities.

Sinu E (2019) ^[13] made an extensive study on Living condition of Irula tribes in Villupuram District, TN. The researcher finding revealed that 66percent irulas were illiterates, negative attitude towards education and girl children education, 84 percent of irulas lives in adequate housing conditions, farming, better job security, indebtedness.

Statement of Problem

Economic circumstances wield an enormous influence over an individual's life, and for primitive tribes, this impact is particularly profound due to their constrained income levels, making it challenging to meet their daily needs. In terms of their distinct characteristics such as isolated ethnic groups, static population growth, and limited script literacy, these tribes lead lives that markedly differ from those of more mainstream societies.

As per the 2016 census report, India is home to 906 ethnic groups classified as Scheduled Tribes, constituting 12.56 crore individuals, or 9.5% of the total population. A mere 10.09% of this tribal population, approximately 2.04 crore individuals, reside in urban areas, with the overwhelming majority of 90% relying on rural economies. The tribal population has shown significant growth, surging from 40.22 million in 1972 to 208.7 million in 2016, with the remaining 28% categorized as primitive tribes. These tribes inhabit small, hard-to-reach regions characterized by precarious living conditions and have largely maintained their distinctive cultural identities through their unique ways of life.

Primitive tribal households grapple with a range of challenges, including income disparities and food security issues, exacerbated by various factors. Although government initiatives have aimed to enhance their living conditions by integrating them into the mainstream development process, these changes have often fallen short of the promised allocations. In comparison to other communities, literacy rates, income levels, and living conditions for primitive tribes have experienced a decline.

In light of these challenges, TRIFED, the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India, has taken steps to support tribal communities through retail marketing development. As a result, this study seeks to investigate the impact of TRIFED on the livelihood security of specifically vulnerable tribal groups in the Tiruvannamalai District of Tamil Nadu. This research endeavors to shed light on the effectiveness of TRIFED's interventions and their

implications for the well-being of these marginalized tribal populations.

Objectives

To assess the impact of TRIFED on sustainable livelihood security of Tribal households.

Methodology of the Study

Primary data were collected through a structured interview schedule. The respondents selected for this study were PVTGs of Tiruvannamalai Districts. The survey was conducted among Irulas and Kattunayakan PVTGs in Tiruvannamalai District. The interview Schedule method is adopted to assess the significance of 4 variables. All the select variables have been identified by conducting a study among 190 respondents. Structural Equation Model has applied for the study to analyze the impact of TRIFED on sustainable livelihood of PVTGs.

Result and Discussions

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of the respondents

| S. No | Parameters | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Age Group | | |
| | 18-25 | 45 | 23.68 % |
| | 26-35 | 64 | 33.68% |
| | 36-45 | 59 | 31.05% |
| | 46 & Above | 22 | 11.57% |
| 2. | Education status | | |
| | Illiterates | 114 | 60.00% |
| | Literates | 76 | 40.00% |
| 3. | Type of families | | |
| | Joint Families | 74 | 38.95% |
| | Nuclear | 116 | 61.05% |
| 4. | Marital Status | | |
| | Un Married | 59 | 31.05% |
| | Married | 131 | 68.95% |
| | Single | - | |
| | Widow/Divorced | - | |
| 5. | Type of House | | |
| | Hut | 48 | 25.26% |
| | Tiled House | 104 | 54.74% |
| | RCC Slabs | 42 | 22.10% |
| 6. | Level of Income (Rs) | | |
| | < 2000 | 53 | 27.90% |
| | 2000-5000 | 110 | 57.90% |
| | >5000 | 27 | 14.20% |
| 7. | Employment | | |
| | Cultivation | 26 | 13.68% |
| | Labour | 47 | 24.74% |
| | Daily Wage Labour | 44 | 23.16% |
| | Collecting Forest produces | 73 | 38.42% |

Source: Primary Data

In Table 1, the socio-demographic profile of the respondents is depicted. A majority of the sample respondents' fall within the 26-35 age groups, which represents a young and highly productive segment of the workforce, comprising 64 out of 190 respondents.

The data concerning Education Status reveals that 60.00% of respondents are illiterate, lacking knowledge about non-tribal society, which unfortunately makes them susceptible to exploitation by non-tribal individuals. When it comes to the type of family, Nuclear families make up 61.05% of the total, indicating that even tribal families value privacy and development. This information sheds light on housing

patterns in the study area, where a majority of the families reside in government-provided tiled houses, typically part of various government schemes.

Furthermore, the data illustrates the types of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) collected from forests, such as leaves, seeds, and flowers. Approximately 38.42% of respondents are engaged in collecting forest MFPs. Turning to income levels in the study area, it is evident that 27.90% of respondents earn below Rs. 2000, while 57.90% fall within the income bracket of Rs. 2000 - Rs. 5000. A smaller percentage, 14.20%, report incomes exceeding Rs. 5000.

Impact of trifed services on sustainable livelihood development among PVTGs

The PVTG communities, renowned for their rich cultural heritage, encounter numerous challenges in enhancing their livelihoods. TRIFED has taken the initiative to provide services aimed at catalyzing their socio-economic transformation. This study embarks on a comprehensive assessment of the impact of TRIFED's offerings, which

encompass a range of initiatives including E-commerce platforms, PMVDJ schemes, and the promotion of tribal artisans, exhibitions, events, and physical outlets. This evaluation centers on understanding how these initiatives have contributed to the improvement of livelihoods within PVTG communities. The assessment encompasses dimensions such as financial well-being, economic progress, social development, and the empowerment of women. TRIFED's diverse array of services has been thoughtfully tailored to address the unique needs of PVTGs. These services empower them to access broader markets, nurture entrepreneurship, foster skill development, and gain exposure through product showcases. This research endeavors to empirically measure the impact of TRIFED's services on the livelihood development of PVTGs, shedding light on the pathways through which TRIFED's efforts contribute to their holistic advancement.

H₀: There is no impact of TRIFED Services on the sustainable livelihood of PVTGs.

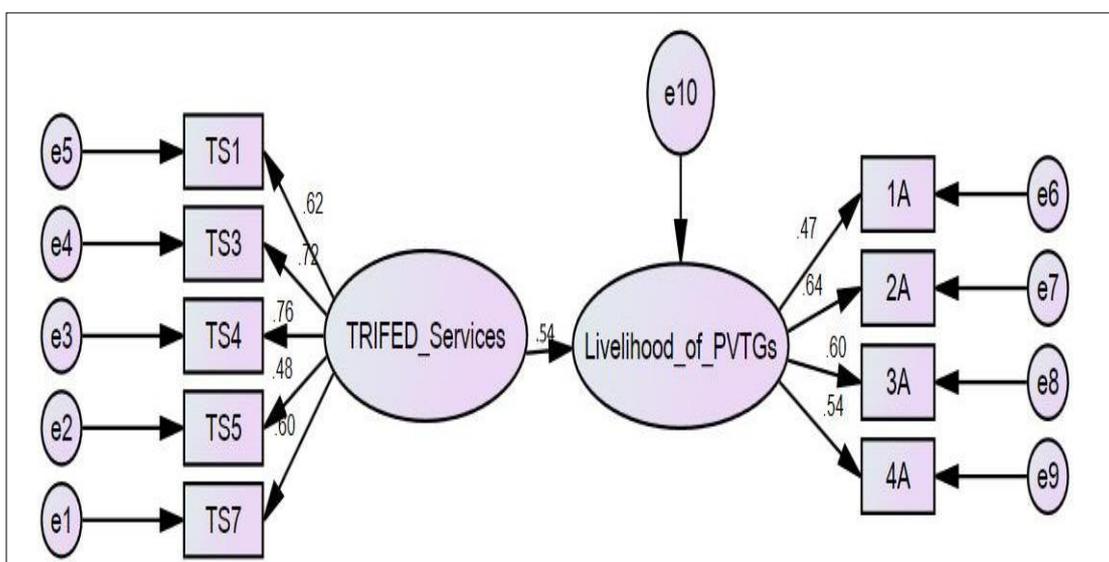


Fig 1: Shows the TRIFED Services on the sustainable livelihood of PVTGs

Table 2 (a): Fitness of the Structural Relationship Model

| Fit Indices | CMIN/DF | P | GFI | AGFI | NFI | CFI | SRMR | RMSEA | TLI |
|---------------|---------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Model Value | 3.76 | 0.00 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.97 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.96 |
| Cut-off Value | ≤ 5 | > 0.05 | >0.90 | >0.90 | >0.90 | >0.95 | ≤ 0.10 | <0.08 | >0.95 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The statistical significance and model fitness of the structural model are shown in the table 2(a). All fit indices that had normalized chi-square values less than five satisfied the threshold requirement. While validating the overall

fitness and precision of the predicted model, the probability value is significant. As a result, the null hypothesis has been rejected and PVTGs' development of their means of subsistence has been impacted by TRIFED services.

Table 2 (b): Standardized Regression Weights

| Variables | Estimate |
|---|----------|
| Livelihood of PVTGs <--- TRIFED Services | .537 |
| E-commerce <--- TRIFED Services | .601 |
| MSP for MFP <--- TRIFED Services | .479 |
| Physical Outlets <--- TRIFED Services | .761 |
| Exhibition and Events <--- TRIFED Services | .716 |
| PMVDJ Scheme <--- TRIFED Services | .623 |
| Average of Financial Status (1A) <--- Livelihood of PVTGs | .466 |
| Average of Economical Status (2A) <--- Livelihood of PVTGs | .642 |
| Average of Social Development (3A) <--- Livelihood of PVTGs | .602 |
| Average of Women Empowerment (4A) <--- Livelihood of PVTGs | .536 |

The findings of the standardised regression weight analysis regarding the sustainable livelihood of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are shown in Table 2(b). These findings show that all of the regression items have values greater than 0.5, highlighting their importance. This suggests that TRIFED services have a significant and advantageous effect on the improvement of PVTGs' means of subsistence.

Conclusion

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) represent one of the most marginalized segments of our contemporary world. They remain entrenched in a bygone era, largely isolated from the touch and influence of modern development initiatives. Despite substantial financial investments by the Government of India through the Planning Commission and various welfare programs aimed at tribal communities, the benefits of development have yet to reach the most vulnerable members of primitive tribal societies.

Hence, this study centers on assessing the diminishing impact on the livelihoods and financial well-being of primitive tribes in Tiruvannamalai District. The results of factor analysis underscore the significant influence of Self-Employment, Savings Levels, and Entrepreneurial Status on the tribal population's livelihoods. TRIFED plays a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of these tribes by providing support through initiatives like the VAN DHAN YOJANA scheme and Cooperative development. However, it is important to note that many tribal communities in extremely remote areas remain unaware of such development schemes. Therefore, effective management and implementation of developmental programs hold the potential to uplift tribal populations to a point where they no longer fall under the classification of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that this is a time-consuming process, requiring the tribes' patience as they strive toward a brighter future.

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