

Marginalisation and Tribals in Kerala on the Light of Globalized Era

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Abstract

Globalisation is the integration of Economic, political and cultural systems across the globe through interactions between nations, with the economic perspective government policies around the globe that have opened economies domestically and internationally, aided by technological development have spurred increases in cross boarder trade, investment and migration so large that many observers believe the world has enter a qualitatively new phase in its economic development. But there are sharp differences on its impact on society. The Indian state of Kerala have had entirely different experience of development process from anywhere else in the country, the much celebrated Kerala model of development has faced enough criticism for excluding the tribals, Dalits, fisher folks and other weaker sections of the state. The present paper argues that It is been accepted that the celebrated kerala model of development has not made much changes for the socio-economic life of the tribals of kerala, by using different secondary data sets the paper argues that after the sixty years of formation of the state tribals continues as one of the most marginalised community within the state, the post globalised developmental projects and developmental dreams of the state has again made the deprivation of the tribals of kerala and the developmental divide has increased between the tribal and non-tribal in the state.

Keywords: Tribals, Technological development, Development process

Tribals who are a continuously neglected lot, are the forest dependent people in India. The process of globalisation can be defined the way it has to be seen, economic, political, social, cultural or any other, there are examples that globalisation is not at all a new phenomenon and which started early ages of the recorded human history, Globalisation describes an on going process by which regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through a globe spanning network of communication and execution. The term is sometimes used to refer specifically to economic Globalisation: the integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology (Bhagawati, 2004) India started the process of economic globalisation in the early of 1978 by taking small steps and during the 1991, the major policy changes were adopted and India opened up for liberalisation and privatisation. Liberal economic and trade policy, opening up of Indian market for the foreign trade and investment, huge privatisation of public sector, and highlighted rapid economic growth were the main characteristics of this process. In the shadow of this, there were claims by the government of India that per capita income has increased considerable and huge decrease in the number of people who live under the poverty line. But this was later understood as the play with numbers by the Planning Commission of India. This huge process have impacted directly and indirectly the millions living in India, this was reflected in the all sectors, agriculture, industry, health education and even culture and lot more in the day today life of every Indian. The process of has brought shining economic growth with two digits of GDP, but which created the more structural inequalities in the Indian society where all ready huge inequality have existed and still persisting. The process of globalisation has hit the lives across the globe, but the people who have hit by this was the indigenous communities everywhere, it was worsely affected the lives of Dalits, Adivasis, other backward populations and women in India and they were the people who had to pay the price for so called celebrated post liberalised economic growth of the country.

Marginalisation

Marginalisation is a complex phenomenon in the present-day world and a critical concern of national and international communities. Its widespread occurrence is a consequence of several interrelated factors in socio-economic development which gain significance in the era of globalisation. In many Third World societies, people of the lower classes/castes [such as Dalit and Adivasi (tribal) communities in India] are pushed to the margins of society as a result of various historical and developmental factors. Tribal communities in India have been alienated not only from the development processes, but even from their own dwellings. As mainstream development processes tended to create social spaces of inequality, Dalit and tribal communities face marginalisation virtually in every sphere of social life. Insofar as the marginalised groups sustain a unique point of view shaped by their long-standing social position, the question of their self-representation? has become relevant in social research. The tribal communities in Kerala also continued to face marginalisation over decades.

Impact of Globalization on Tribals

The process of globalisation has made unprecedented change in the lives of indigenous people across the world, though the degree of exploitation and marginalisation vary from state to states and tribal group to group. Tribals as a homogeneous group across India has paid the price for the globalisation process led development which was reflected through the large scale so called developmental projects, displacement from the forest, alienation from the land and livelihoods, violation of rights with the forest and its resources and threatening their existence, the example of the central Indian tribal belt where the states like Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have had enough displacement of the tribal people and alienation from their livelihoods, According to one estimate, irrigation projects, mines, thermal power plants, wildlife sanctuaries, industries, etc. between 1950 and 1990 in India, displaced 213 lakh persons. 85 percent of them are tribals (Fernandes & Paranjpe, 1997) This is in the context where poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, anemia, illiteracy, morbidity, bondage and dept is phenomenally higher among the tribals than anybody else in the country. Though the impact on tribals was different to the state and specific tribals are concerned the alienation by the process is and double marginalisation was true to all the tribal groups, there were assertion form the tribals in the forms of resistance as social movements in response to the capital lead development and its consequence their lives, this was emerged basically in the places where there development intervened as brutal to the tribal people, but those where suppressed by the state mechanism with the help of local industrial and capital lobbies from wherever it has emerged. Considering all this one has to say that the LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation) policy made the tribal population as the victims of development which was highlighted by finance ministers of India with two digits of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth which made financial system fluctuating with unstable economy with a more unequal society all together.

Development of Kerala and Tribals

The development of Kerala was a historical process where many factors have contributed and enriched it before and after the formation of the state in 1956 under EMS, This experience of Kerala is much deliberated upon in the developmental literature and discourses, Kerala's achievements in terms of some of the basic indicators of human development are well known and have been much commented upon. The life expectancy at birth of over 73 years in Kerala, well beyond what has been attained in the rest of India, compares well with Asian countries like South Korea, Malaysia and China. Importantly, however, these countries, unlike Kerala, were already on a path of economic growth. Kerala's female-to-male ratio, at 1.058, is identical to that of Europe and North America. It is substantially higher than that for China (0.94) or for the rest of India (0.93). Further Kerala is much ahead of other Indian States in achieving the goal of universalising elementary education. The State ranked first among major Indian States in the Human Development Index (HDI) at the three time points of 1981, 1991 and 2001 (National Human Development Report,2001, Planning Commission, 2002), but its per capita income lagged much behind the all-India average till recently. Implied in this phenomenon is a higher rate of translation efficiency in terms of public action, and giving higher priority and precedence to the development of these services (such as education and health) in response to organised public demand (Centre for Developmental Studies-UN 1975). but there were questions raised that how equally this development is distributed with in the Kerala society, Previously, 'tribal' communities had been noted as 'outliers' of the Kerala model's 'central tendency' (Kurien 2000: 194)—as exemplars of the 'harsh micro-realities' hiding beneath macro-level social indicators (Ramanathaiyer and MacPherson 2000: 196)—but a consensus now formed that the adivasis were in fact the victims of the model. The Communist Party had refused to organise along community lines, had insisted on issues of 'class' and emphasised the well-being of 'peasants' and 'workers'. What used to be seen as a cornerstone of the Kerala model (Heller 2000; Jeffrey 1992) was now perceived as having silenced the voices of marginal communities, particularly the tribals. When there was hunger death and starvation in the adivasis colonies of the state especially from Wadyandu and Palakkadu districts the question was raised by the Prof. K Kunjaman an eminent economist states that weather Tribals of the state was not part of the Kerala model of development. Kerala has comparatively less population of tribals, the scheduled tribal population is 3,64189(male-180169 and female-184020, the Waynadu district has highest number of tribals(1,36062) and idukki and Palakkad are the next two districts where the tribal population is high in the state. Paniyar is the biggest tribe among the 35 major tribal groups in the state (census of India-2001).

If one compare the tribals on the socio-economic or quality of life indicators, it is true that the tribal groups from Kerala will appear to be far better than many other states, The literacy rates for male and female STs in Kerala was respectively 74 and 51 per cent, much higher than the 24 and 18 per cent for STs across India but when they are compared with the rest of the Kerala society it is interesting that they left as the lest developed with in the state. One of the big criticisms on the Kerala model of development was that it was not inclusive to the Tribals, fisher folks, Dalits and few section of Muslims of the state, The model was severely criticised when there where starvation and hunger deaths reported from the adivasis colonies of Waynadu and Palakkadu districts and questions were raised that where was the Adivasi of kerala with in these whole process, as a

community where will they fit in the whole process. When there were assertion for the land in Muthnga in the district of Waynadu and demands for the land in Chengara in Patthanamtitta district both places adivasis mobilised themselves and demanded for the right over the land, there after the land question was raised again in the state where there was celebrated land reform, this was a time again the claims of development and the condition of adivasis with in the state discussed in the main stream. According to the official statistics of 2008, four lack is the scheduled tribe population in the state of Kerala, this population spared across the districts of Waynadu, Palakkadu, Kasaragode, Kannur and other districts, this constitute the five primitive tribal groups Koraga, Kattunayakkan, Cholanaikkan, Kurumbhar, and Kadar, what is the sad part of Adivais in the state is that there was not much detailed information and statistics of the socio economic data for separately, considering this It was decided to conduct a comprehensive survey among the tribal's of the state by the government of Kerala during 2008, the survey completed by the KILA (Kerala Institute of Local Administration) with Kerala Tribal Development Department and Department of Local Self Government. Findings of this survey have again unfolded the pathetic living conditions of the tribal in the state which is supporting that the developmental divide between Kerala and tribals with is huge.

There are 33 scheduled tribal communities in the state which constitute about the third percent of the total population of the state. According to the survey there are about one lakh tribal families with 100912 individuals, among them near 27,416 families have land, this is the land including the lands with out proper records, this includes 20,027 families who are having five cent land 14,9777 families below the nice cents of land. after 2004 government has given land to more than ten thousand families under different programmes and missions but the number of land less has increased despite of this in the state, so the land question of tribals still remain same or bad as the early conditions of the state. 49 per cent doesn't have toilets and more than 39850 families don't possess a kitchen. Kerala is known for the highest literacy in the county with the percentage of 93.9 but the literacy rate for the tribals in the state is mere 72.77 and most of them drops out from the school at the primary level and go to get their livelihood. kerala is a state which embarked on total literacy campaign and achieved total literacy with a rate of 93 percentage but for tribals the literacy rate is 72.22 percentage and 98,536 people are still illiterates and the number of people who received the formal education is 2.48 laks only, Palakkad is the district where AHADS (an NGO) has worked but still the literacy rate among the tribals her is 57.63 percentage which is far behind than anybody. The drop out rate among the tribal students is also high in the state, 15393 students in the primary, 12907 students of secondary and 1453 students from the higher secondary has dropped out for several reasons. Among the tribals more than 77680 people in the age group between 15-59 are unemployed this is including 2112 graduates, 200 post graduates and 2000 of professionally qualified people. The survey also shows the pressing poverty among the tribals in the state, about 2402 families take meal one time in a day and amongst them half are agricultural laborers and 34,092 families only have two meals a day and the number of family members who are having malnutrition is 13,960. The share of BPL population among ST was decreased to 24.2% in 1999- 2000 from 37.3% in 1993-94. ST constitute 3% of the total BPL population while the proportion of ST population is only 1.14%. It implies that the incidence of poverty among the ST is about three times that of the total population of the state, though all families are given ration cards there are 2381 families where all members in the family is not included in the ration card and the people who don't have a voters id card is 40,037, Kerala has registered a remarkable improvement in poverty reduction over the years among all the social sections, including SC and ST population. The socio economic position of most of the tribals residing in the scheduled area of the state is miserable, Socially they are at the lowest rank of the society. Although agriculture is predominant in the pattern of tribal economy. most of them are depending mainly up on cheap daily wages, these all show the tribal population of kerala is side lined than anybody else.

Land struggles

Kerala is one of the state in India where land reform taken place and two acts were passed in this regard, but two struggles demanding for land in the state has was questioning the populore image of the land reform, Chengara is a local place in the Patthanamtitta district of the state, where about 300 families of Adivasis, Dalits and other landless people converged on the rubber estate owned by Harrison's Malayalam Plantation Ltd and thatched sheds there and started living there demanding for the land for cultivation and financial assistance for each family after 790 days of straggle they demands were adjusted and they were informed that they will be given land and financial assistance which is yet to be given. The another was in Muttantga, Muttanga is a wild life sanctuary in Wayanadu district was capture and tribal were started living it the land over there under the leader the banner of Adivasi Kshema Samithi, an adivasi organization, on February 19 2003 at Muthanga forests they were fired the people including women, children and elderly by police and brutally evicted from the that land by the state government, One tribal was killed in the police firing, while many others were wounded. A policeman who was held hostage by the tribals was also killed in the fight. Apart from these there were other small struggles for land across the state but all of then where suppressed by the state government, these shows how state has delt with the issue of adivasis and their demands.

Globalisation and Kerala

Kerala is one state in the country, which had to suffer a lot as a result of the process of integration of economy with the international market place much before the advent of globalisation. In fact, for Kerala, globalisation started the moment the colonial raiders set foot on its soil, inaugurating the western conquest of India. Kerala's agricultural products found its way to the European markets and, in course of time, domestic production had to be fine-tuned to the vagaries of international market place. coconut, coir, cashew, spices etc which were and continue to be the mainstay of Kerala's agriculture faced ups and downs consequent on the changes in demand and supply at the international level. However this state was also not free from the national level policy changes that were adopted in a particular period in time. Kerala's post-liberalisation period, starting in 1991, however, the tensions inherent in an alternative model of development that forsakes capitalist accumulation and global competitiveness in favour of the redistribution of wealth through land reforms and the provision of general social security through social programmes and labour regulation have become ever more pronounced. The lack of industrialisation and mechanisation, high unemployment rates and fiscal deficit that Kerala faced in an increasingly liberalised market (Tharamangalam 2006: 9–15). With the LPG policies, (Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation) all those cushions have been done away with. The removal of import restrictions has seen the market flooded with imported agrarian produce. It has literally crushed Kerala's agriculture. The other policies of the central government, especially in areas like education, health, public distribution system, industrial policy, had made far reaching consequence in the economy and society of the state. When ninety percentage of tribals are engaged in the primary sector, its also has to be noted that they are the meagre workers and don't own any thing, the same sector was hugely hit by policy changes adopted by the state and this was reflected directly in the livelihood of the adivasis in the state. The state has become a mere consumer of products with a remittance economy by the keralites working out side the state and country. New Kerala is embarking on huge and large investment projects in order to stabilise the economic growth, the Adivasis of this state with poor socio-economic achievements; they left in open in the state to fight against this with out even a stable livelihood and income when health, education and all other services got privatised.

Conclusion

The development of Kerala has started from the early periods the formation of the state, and there after it was called as model by academicians considering many factors which led to the high social development of the state even with low per capita come. This has laid the foundation for the development of far developed society in terms of developmental indicators in India compare to other parts of the country, But some sections of the population particularity, Tribals, Dalits and fisher folks were not beneficiaries of this development or they were not shared the development as equal as others in their state because of many reasons. That has side lined their development in the state and they are most backward and under developed people in the state. Globalisation project has changed the life across the state and changed the day to day life, this change is reflected in the all walks of the life and all strata of society. How globalisation has impacted one has to be examined by looking at which layer of society one belongs to. What is evident from the survey that is conducted KILA is that tribals are the weakest and excluded people from the general development experience, from this foundation of development there was emergence of middle class in one side and migration of to side state and country which decided the post globalised developmental projects and developmental dreams of the state has again made the deprivation of the tribals of Kerala and the developmental divide has increased between the tribal and non-tribal in the state.

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