A study on Causes and impact on Land Alienation of Tribal community living in HD Kote, Mysuru district: Karnataka

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Abstract:

The article here has tried to explore the causes and impact of land alienation of Kadu Kuruba a prominent tribe of Karnataka, whose population is concentrated only in three districts namely Mysuru, Kodagu and Chamarajanagara. The researcher visited the Jamma or settlements of the Kadu Kuruba tribe of Chakkodanahalli Gram Panchayth, HD Kote Block of Mysuru district. This article has discussed on land alienation in two parts here. The first one studies what are the causes of land alienation of Kadu Kurubas and its impact. The impact highlights the benefits of development programs and their present living conditions.

Key words: Kadu Kuruba, Alienation,

Introduction:

History of Land Alienation

The history of land alienation among the tribes began during British colonialism in India when the British interfered in the tribal region for the purpose of exploiting the tribal natural resources. Coupled with this tribal lands were occupied by moneylenders, zamindars and traders by advancing them loans etc. Opening of mines in the heart of tribal habitat and even a few factories provided wage labor as well as opportunities for factory employment.

But this brought increasing destitution and displacement. After the British came to power, the Forest policy of the British Government was more inclined towards commercial considerations rather than human. Some forests were declared as reserved ones where only authorized contractors were allowed to cut the timber and the forest -dwellers were kept isolated deliberately within their habitat without any effort to ameliorate their economic and educational standards. The expansion of railway in India heavily devastated the forest resources in India.

The Government started reserving teak, Sal and deodar forests for the manufacture of railway sleepers. Forest land and its resources provide the best means of livelihood for the tribal people and many tribes including the women engage in agriculture, food gathering and hunting they are heavily dependent on the products of the forest. Therefore when outsiders exploit the tribe’s land and its resources the natural life cycle of tribal ecology and tribal life is greatly disturbed.

About the Tribe Kadu Kuruba:

The term Kadu Kuruba has got an etymological importance. If one dissect the term, one can find that in the Kannada language, Kadu signifies forest and Kuruba stands for tribal community. Thus Kadu Kuruba constitutes of the people residing in forest areas, as a whole. These Kadu Kuruba tribes are one of the sub castes of the famous Kuruba tribal community. Cultural excellence is widely being depicted in all its aspects like dance, language, religion & festivals.

Just like many of the tribal communities of the whole of the Indian subcontinent, these Kadu Kuruba tribes also are the ardent followers of Hinduism. To top of it, these kadu Kuruba tribes practice Halumatha, also known as palamatha by many people of the Indian Territory. The peculiar ritual of this Kadu Kuruba tribal community is that they revere ‘Almighty Source’ in a stone.

According to the beliefs of these Kadu Kuruba tribes, stone is the source for the soil, which in turn nourishes all the plants. Obviously as everyone knows, plants provide basic sustenance for all the creatures of the animal kingdom. Regarding the religious practices of these Kadu Kuruba tribes, another important information has been narrated by all the anthropologists who have carried on surveys on their culture and lifestyle. Through all these years, this culture of the stone worshipping has developed the trend amongst this Kadu Kuruba tribal community of revering several images of Lord Shiva, better known as Pashupati. These are namely Mailara Linga, Beeralingeswara, Khandoba, Mahadeshwara, Nanjundeswara, Mallappa, Mallara, Mallikarjuna, Junjappa etc.

Some anthropologist even go to the extent of saying that the worship of the power, Shakti ,as it is called , in various forms of deities like Yellamma, Renuka, Chowdamma, Kariyamma, Chamundi, Bhanashankari, Gullamma etc. have also originated from the tradition of Kadu Kuruba tribal community. However ancestral worship too has been incorporated in the religion of the Kadu Kuruba tribal community. This tradition is prevalent both in the primitive times as well as in the current times also. The reverence of
ancestors, namely, Rama, Revanasidda, Hanuman, Krishna, Keshava, Ranganatha, Era Thimmanna, Tirupati Thimmappa, Venkateswara, Kalidasa, Siddarama, Kanakadasa etc. as Devaru very much present in Kuruba culture. Over the years, this Kadu Kuruba tribal community have adapted to diverse occupational activities. The common practice is that in all the famous temples like Beeralingeshwara and Milaralingeshwara, all the priests that are being duly appointed belong to this Kadu Kuruba tribal community.

Maximum of these Kuruba tribes have proved their excellence as great soldiers and had even flourished many primeval kingdoms such as the Hoysala kingdom in Kamataka and Pallava kingdom of Tamil Nadu. In fact all these Kuruba tribal community reached their pinnacle of affluence between the time periods of AD.1300 to AD.1600 under the impact of the famous Vijayanagara Empire. In the beginning of the 1970s, when this Kadu Kuruba tribal community was evicted from their original homeland of the forests, they were enforced to reside on the wayside or plantations on the border. These indigenous people are devoid of land rights and stay marginalized even today.

Concept of Alienation:

The concept of Alienation The problem of land alienation in tribal areas has not been adequately dealt with by researchers. It is not a mere structuralize – legalist problem, but a much more deeply connected phenomenon full of contradictions related to the existing socio-economic order. The separation of land from tribal communities can be understood in a more scientific substantive manner with the help of the theoretical formulation of the concept of alienation. As Satya deva has pointed out, alienation is inherent in exploitative relations of production and its nature varies with that of exploitation.

Hence also differ among societies based on slavery and serfdom. The discussion on alienation is presented here in two parts. The first part looks at the process of land alienation in tribal areas, and the second, at the forms and effect of land alienation. In tribal communities, this can be given with land alienation concept. The land holding system, which is a network of human relationship pertaining to the control and use of the land, has everywhere been a major factor conditioning the socio-economic and political order of the day. Land being the major source of livelihood of the vast majority of the Indian peasantry, it assumes great importance in their lives. But in an economy dominated by private property relations, concentration of land in the hands of a few would be net result.

This creates an artificial scarcity of land and a land hungry majority. Land at this stage becomes a commodity where it also becomes a source of exploitation, which necessarily results in perpetuation of many kinds of inequality among the people. The level of production and ownership over the means of production and the way in which the products are distributed among the different classes of society as a whole. Land concentration, particularly in the hands of few, results in structural inequalities, which would further engulf the land disparities.

These changes introduced rapid capital penetration, irrigation facilities, railway and communication facilities, sale and purchase of lands and Tribal Land Alienation and Political Movements creation of certain land systems like Zamindari, Ryotwari systems etc. These pre-independence changes were later on supplemented by the changes in the post-independence period which led to the pauperization of the Indian peasantry, which in its turn, leading to numerous peasant struggles led by different political parties, individuals for different reasons at different times, which led the Indian state to adopt a policy of enactment of various land laws and land reforms. In the period various developmental institutions came into existence in the form of credit network to counter the rural indebtedness and to reduce the role of moneylenders such as small farmers.

Land Holding Pattern among Tribe in General:

According to 1961 census report, 29% of the scheduled tribal households have land holdings of less than 2.4 acres compared to 34.5 percent in the general population. The percent of S.Ts. having holdings between 2.5 to 4.9 acres was 25.6% or those having 10 acres or more were 20.8% compared to 22.8% and 21.2% households in the general population respectively. Thus, the inference that may be drawn from the data shows that a majority of the scheduled tribes have small sized landholdings.

The data also shows a gradual deterioration of land ownership among the STs. According to census, there were 84.18 lakh cultivators and 48.32 lakh agricultural labourers amongst the scheduled tribe workers who constitute about nine-tenths of the total working population. And further it was observed that in the states having large tribal areas the all India pattern of continuing command over land on the one end and high incidence of landlessness on the other get reflected between different regions. However, in many regions with the development of communications and internmixing of population the situation has further deteriorated. In some of the advanced areas the members of the tribal families have been rendered completely landless and they may not possess even to 10% of the total land area. The migration of non-tribal communities and land acquisition by them has also led to the decrease of the tribal land holdings.

Land Alienation since 1960s

This phenomenon was as dominant in the 1980’s as it was in the 1960s and prior to that. After the 1960s land alienation took a different turn, where it was accompanied by the much renewed industrial activity, which has established the contractual co-existence of industries. Thus, both the increasing industrial activity backed by the alien capital on one side and increasing disparities in the country side which has been progressively resulting in the impoverishment of small-middle class peasantry in the plains on the other forced the non-tribal to look for alternative lands. This alternative source was available in the forest lying in the tribal areas. This process therefore, resulted in the depeasantisation of the tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh in particular and India in general. The major objectives of the study the focus of the study is on the causes and impact of land alienation, leading to political movements in the selected areas.
Table 1: GP CHAKKODANAHALLI: HD Kote Block, Mysuru district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL.NO.</th>
<th>NAME OF THE HADIS</th>
<th>HH</th>
<th>CASTE</th>
<th>LAND HOLDING</th>
<th>HH LANDHOLDING DETAILS</th>
<th>HOUSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Basavanagiri A Hadi</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>Y, S, JK</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Basavanagiri B Hadi</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>BK, JK</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sollepura C Hadi</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>JK</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Metikuppe Hadi</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>JK</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sonalli Hadi</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>JK</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gowdamachayanakahalli Hadi</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>JK</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Bomlapura Hadi</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>JK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Boodanur Hadi</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>JK</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td>718</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1147.5 acres</td>
<td>459 hec.</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PDO, Chakkodanahalli GP)

Of the total KaduKuruba families of the Chakkodanahalli Gram Panchayath of HD Kote Block. Out of total 718 HHs 70 HHs were selected for the study. The table no.1 below shows the number of HH and other tribe living in the study area.

Review of Literature:

Much of the literature has been done on the conditions of the tribal population, their culture in various parts of India. As far as Karnataka is concerned no literature found on Land alienation issue of Kadu Kurubas of Karnataka. Hence this study conducted. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire was administered at random.

242 families are landless because there is no lands, 237 families does not have houses. Sollepura, Basavanagiri hadi people shifted from N Begur Bandipura tiger reserve, all others have been are all from original Metikuppe Nagarahole tiger reserve. Kadu Kurubas have come from Madhu Mali forest. Forcibly they were evacuated because of Nagarahole Eco development project. All were living Nagarahole forest except sollepura hadi (which is near N Begur). Kadu Kurubas are originally the food gatherers they used to gather tubers, pache, gooseberries, honey, bamboo, tamarind living with nature and wild life, they used to collect NTFP. Their settlement is called as ‘Jamma’ One Jamma is equal to 1500 to 3000 acres of land. Only here they used to collect NTFP. During Forest (conservation) Act 1980 itself (amended 1988 & 2006) Kadu Kurubas living inside the forest areas like Kaimara & Ballehadi were evacuated to the present hadis mentioned above in table no.1. By this evacuation this tribe lost their Jammas and that means they lost their complete culture. At present they take the permission of the forest department and perform their traditional festival in their original habitat. The forest department has respected the tribe’s culture. They were and only 2 to 3 acres given, cotton, ragi, rice, tobacco, and community rights denied.

Reason for Evacuation:

As majority of the tribal respondents said that the forest act which came during 1980 which was implemented to for wild life protection, promotion of National Park, and Tiger reserves is the main reason for their evacuation. Though tribal fought not to come out of the forest, some of the elders were forced to come out and then the rest of the population followed their leaders. However, nowhere it is told that Kadu Kurbas are responsible for degradation of forest or because of them there is a threat for wild animals or flora and fauna. It was convinced to the tribe that they have to join the main stream of development and they cannot remain inside the forest and further they were convinced that protection of wild animals are important.

Impact:

Agriculture Development:

95% of the respondents have said they were not provided with lands for agriculture however in recent years very few families have got some lands which are C & D lands given. C & D lands are categorized as hard soil and very difficult to carry out agriculture activities. No land rights are given to these families. RTCs (Hakku Pathra) are not yet given. This has made them not to avail any loan from the bank for agriculture development activities. Because they do not have RTC, they could not avail irrigation facility under Ganga Kalyana Scheme. 75% of the Respondents have expressed good opinion about crop insurance Bele Phasalu Bheema Yojana.

Animal Husbandry:

Though government has provided some domestic animals such as cows, goats, sheep etc, they are not properly look after by the tribe as it is not their traditional occupation. No proper training nor right information is provided for the people for animal husbandry activities. No irrigation facility.
Housing:

It is surprising that each family has been provided with Rs. 10 lakh. In total 73 crores was earmarked towards Housing. But the quality of houses are not good.

Corpus fund:

Corpus of fund of Rs. 40 lakhs earmarked for power, drinking water, roads, drainage.

Migration:

Because, they do not have RTCs, they cannot sell the lands. Agriculture has proved to be big investment but no fruitful return. Hence they seasonally migrate to Coorg Coffee Estates, where they get good wages

Forest Department:

The people go to the works of forest department for 3 to 4 months in a year. They get the works of forest fire prevention, and putting forest lines. A person will get approximately Rs. 7000/- pm.

KADU KURUBAS GRIEVANCES:

1. The respondents have expressed very strongly that their evacuation has made them to feel that they have lost their natural rights of living inside the forest. They have lost their Jamma which means losing one's own culture. Alienation of lands means alienation of culture, alienation of culture means losing their original identity, their GOD, the community's burial ground. There are very strong incidences that some of the people who have opted for inter-tribal community marriages, such people have faced boycott especially when they die, no place of burial ground is given to them. Their unity is destroyed by government's action of alienation.
2. The government has neglected their integrated rehabilitation works.
3. Illiteracy and ignorance of the tribal people have led to many social problems such as alcoholism and child marriages.
4. Failure on the part of Government to provide land records to the tribe and making them insecure for a longer period of time i.e. almost 45 years.
5. Complete absence of coordination and cooperation among the development department to offer development programs for their integrated development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has clear recommendations:
1. The department of Tribal Development should work as a nodal agency and bring together all the development departments for the integrated development of the Kadu Kurubas. For example the Tribal development department should converge with Revenue department to provide RTCs, work with forest department to get rights to enter forest Minor Forest Produce (MFPs or NTFPs), closely work with Gram Panchayath to provide other development programs like Housing, Education, and Health to the vulnerable.
2. Erotic and disorganized rehabilitation works should be completely avoided.
3. Administrative delay and indifferences should be minimized
4. The Social Justice Committee of the Gram Panchayath should be made vibrant to look into the injustice happening to the tribal.
5. The NGOs can play a major role as a catalyst of change in the lives of the tribal. They should work as a bridge between the Tribe and the government.

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