

A SURVEY ON ECONOMIC GROWTH OF SIDDIS: A SCHEDULED TRIBE COMMUNITY

Dr. Basalingamma S. H.

Full Time Guest Faculty, Department of Social Work, Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi

Abstract: *There is one proverb is there that told like this “Fittest is survived” means who is fit they only survive not weak people. Same like this to emerge as strong community means they should be fit for all the aspect of the society. Here the word fittest is meant for economical strongness of any tribe. The economy of any empire, kingdom, state, tribe, class is an essential element for the survival of the same. If the tribe have enough economy to survive means they can get well recognition in the society and place where they are living. This paper put some light on the economy growth of siddis a tribe.*

Key Words: *Economic; Growth; Siddis; Harvesting Honey;*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Economy of any empire, kingdom, state, tribe, class or clan is an essential element for the survival of the same. The prosperity, wealth of a culture and tradition is enhanced and sustained with a healthy and wealthy patronage. Siddhis were a nomadic group who sustained themselves on hunting and fishing and gathering activities. In this chapter an attempt is made to understand Siddhi's economic position today as compared to their past from a historical point of view.

This paper has analyzed their life, right from their ways of daily sustenance; their forest based economy, their hunting habits as well as their barter system besides various methods employed in agriculture to today's economic condition that supports them. The paper is also discusses their changing patterns of agriculture, their migratory practices that earn them good income and their professions that the modern economy offers them such as teacher, driver, social worker etc. Besides all these the researcher portrays the skills that Siddhis have in making crafts, quilt and wood carving. The paper further presents the siddhi income and savings and their loan transactions and the barter system that is prevalent among them besides the developmental schemes of the Government.

2. The Economy Place of siddis :

In the past if the economic and political elite depended primarily on Siddhi slaves for basic production, then one may speak of a Siddhi slave society wherein Siddhis played an essential role in the economy. Siddhis have been accommodated in large estates under radically different conditions: in societies where Siddhis served. As an economic institution, Siddhi slavery was profitable. Ranging from domestic labor to prostitution, the Siddhi slaves were profitable to the masters who held them in their sway.

Siddhi economy is conspicuously forest based in the jungles of Western Ghats. Their main source of livelihood is as agricultural laborers. However, few have emerged as small and marginal farmers. The few among them who own pieces encroached lands grow rice, cotton or sugarcane. The community is extremely poor and is exploited by the well-to-do communities. holding of less area of land, unfavourable employer-employee relationship, indebtedness and limited resources of income at disposal are the factors responsible for economic hardships of the Siddhis. With the consent of the Forest Department, some of them collect firewood, honey, gum, spices and vegetables as others work as watchmen, truck drivers. They collect the minor forest wealth by foraging in dense forests. This provides them with nutrition, medicine and material for shelter. Minor forest produce is a source of parallel income during the dry months of agricultural break observes Mahesh from Green India Trust. A.J.D. Fernandes observes that Siddhis cleared some edges close to the river and used to cultivate, collect wild pepper, jack fruit, mango, wild banana, and other medicinal plants and sell them to the people in town and those in need.

By Harvesting Honey also siddis become economically strong. All Siddhis are not experts in harvesting honey a few are good at it. Hunting honey is mostly done at night They collect honey mainly from the tall and huge trees unlike the Jenu Kurumbas of Blue Mountain who collect honey from the mountain clips. They tie tender green grass along with some dried stuff to the edge of a stick and light the fire. As there is green grass the fire does not light up in flames rather smoke is produced which they keep right under the honey comb and the honey bees disperse or fall off. The honey bees do not die due to this technique observes

By fishing also Siddhis gaining the economy strength. Fishing is practiced by several methods, by bunding across the stream, by netting and by poisoning the stagnant water. Hence Siddhis go fishing in the flowing waters except for those who are near to natural or artificially created ponds or tanks. They also collect crabs and tortoise besides trapping the birds that come to hunt fish in the water.

3. Professions of Siddhi tribes:

All the Siddhis are not engaged in agriculture as it does not provide the family enough for the whole year. Therefore Siddhis need to look for alternative means of survival and train themselves to be skilled labourers such as carpenters, masons and honey gatherers, observes Minin Fernandes. Even women are engaged in daily labour. From the research analysis it is found that a high number 75.70% of the respondents agree that females among Siddhis are engaged in daily wages, where as 12.00% female Siddhis go for daily wages occasionally.

The following list shows the various professions performed by Siddhi's

- Crafts Work
- Wood Carving
- Quilting
- Dairy Farming
- Brick making
- Counter-Hegemonic Economic Activity
- Social Work

Crafts Work: Siddhis are find the other source of economy to grow their family and to meet all kinds of expenditure of the family. Household crafts are found in every tribal group as a part of their activities towards making a living. Siddhis are the most industrious tribe known for their artistic products of making baskets, quilts and other wood as well as bamboo based stuff. Wooden utensils, household fittings, roofing with natural material available from the forest are other skilled works that they are engaged in. Preparing drums (dhamaam, gummat) and other small instruments are examples of their extraordinary skills. Some of the Siddhis are very good at carpentry and masonry skills. Few generations ago they were experts in crafts as they were trained by the citizens of Portuguese Goa. But as the time elapsed they have not retained those skills rather have shifted to other skills desirable for their survival. Skills pertaining to agriculture, hunting, fishing and gathering were developed until recent years.

Wood Carving: Siddhis are good artisans and carpenters and their carvings convey totally a different meaning than those carved by the locals. The locals carve an elephant or any other animal on door or on cots to depict their gods but Siddhis' art shows the intimacy with the nature. The prodigious woodcarving skills of Siddhis are not recognized in the locality due to their imperfect artistic finish. They have carvings and paintings on the wooden instruments used in the kitchen as well as in the farm. Tables and special wall hangers are designed to serve the domestic purpose at the same time look artistic in the wall. Many Siddhis are sought after for the artistic works but rarely do Siddhis feel the real value of their artistic skills.

Quilting: Quilt making is a skill for livelihood for the Siddhi women especially the elderly women in the house. Through Loyal Vikas Kendra, another organization at Mundgod, a Siddhi women's Quilting Cooperative is established. After getting due training in the above mentioned institute the Siddhi women sew beautiful quilts for sale. They are sold at various costs in accordance to the demand in the cities and towns around Siddhi Quilting bedcovers are well known in Karwar especially among the forest-dwelling tribes. Long, thin strip units are sewn edge to edge to form the large square or rectangular quilt top. This is done by using old saris as the starting point. They begin to add up pieces of various used or unused colored clothes as they begin to stitch with, preferably, white thread in squares. The wonderful textiles are the traditional mattresses and covers of the people, made with love by women, especially the elderly, for their children and grandchildren.

Dairy Farming: Some Siddhis are financially helped by NGOs such as LVK, KDDC to buy milk-producing cattle, most of which is used for home use, where as others sell it to local villages. Siddhis also selling the milk products like curd, condiments made up of milk and other things. And they sell milk and curd to some homes also. By this also they were improved economically.

Brick making: Another form of economy growth in Some Siddhis are involved in brick-making in Kendalgeri and Uginigeri. While the project succeeded at Kendalgeri the latter at Uginigeri failed. Thus the failure of this project can be attributed to various factors such as lack of confidence and self-esteem on the part of those involved, lack of time and financial resource management, weakness of cooperative incentives as well as lack of private ownership and accountability.

Counter-Hegemonic Economic Activity: Some Siddhi people are engaged in selling forest goods that was treated illegal as per the government law but due to the lack of economy for their families this forced them to do that illegal business.

Social work: There are some siddi people are doing some social work also support the siddis to come across all most all difficulties of their life. They seek to create awareness among their people regarding their rights, importance of education, and development of their communities. These social workers keep their people informed about the advantage of Schedule Tribe(ST) status granted to them recently. Besides this they encourage and arrange for the education of other Siddhis to come up in the same line like them. Being social workers they train themselves in various skills besides earning their bread.

The siddis are raising their income source from other side also they are loan transactions the Siddhis borrow or exchange goods and not cash hence this remains as no loan in terms of money but in actual they have loans in the form of borrowing seeds, cereals, food grains and other edible items which they return when in plenty at the harvest season.

The other source is barter system which in form of exchanging good among them or from other community people. Barter system is still prevalent among Siddhis where they exchange their goods for household needs, mainly food items. It is practiced within the community as well as outside the community. Sometimes certain things are bought from the villages and bartered in the community too. This is one of the reasons for the low percentage debts among them. The debt is less than the locals as most of their needs are met in the barter system. But loans are surely taken in order to get their children married, for education, for settling some internal disputes and to build new houses etc.

4. CONCLUSION:

The siddi tribe's economy is not strong as local community because they were bought from other country and they took time settle down here. To run family they were found so many ways to raise economy to feed family of their own. In the economy of the siddis the mode of transaction is in cash and kind both. Child labour does exist in the society. The number of casual laborers is increasing day-by-day due to landlessness and lack of other economic resources. They sell their cash crops like sugarcane, groundnut, cotton, bajjri (millet) etc. to the local seth (traders). Like they improving the economy of the family and also for community and also with the help of Government and Non-Government organizations.

This paper has given some useful information about the siddi tribes economy conditions like the different sources and the working nature of the business. In future work more details about economy and the transaction of the money also taking consideration.

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