

Precarious Livelihoods of a Nomadic Community: An Empirical Study from South India

Kasi Eswarappa

Abstract

The terms livelihoods and development have different nuanced meanings in different societies, especially in South Asia. Development implies a better quality of life and livelihood and better access to assets and services for marginal communities. Developing its theoretical framework around the existing literature on poverty, inequality, marginality, development, civil society, NGOs, and livelihood, this paper argues that prevailing factional politics and apathy of the governing agency prevent the marginalized group(s) from adequately benefitting from the developmental interventions. As a result, the very objective of the developmental interventions has been thwarted. The present study is qualitative micro-level research aiming at understanding the livelihood systems of a tribe, Sugali, the semi-nomadic community of south India. Further, the paper also focuses on different trends and shifts in their livelihood processes. Based on this study, the paper has sought to raise pertinent questions to policymakers and developmental agencies about how far the policies, initiated since Independence, have benefited the targeted group(s) or marginal groups of Indian society.

Keywords: Precarity, Livelihoods, Semi-nomadic Community, Sugalis, NGOs, Empirical Study, South India

Background

The history of human civilization is the history of development. Man has progressed tremendously in almost all walks of life since the Stone Age. Over the centuries, innovation and man's search for excellence and creativity have made such development possible. Even today, many communities around the Globe practice their Indigenous knowledge, local innovations, and creativity in their day-to-day life. This is the case with many of the Indian Nomadic and Semi-nomadic groups. The term 'Nomadic Tribe' refers to the people forced to wander in the Indian social system, which was divided into different castes and origins.

KASI ESWARAPPA, Assistant Professor, Department of Tribal Studies, Art, Culture & Folk Literature, Faculty of Tribal Studies, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Amarkantak. Email: kasieswarigntu@gmail.com; kasie030873@gmail.com