

Empowering Tribal Communities of Wayanad: The Impact of Cooperative Societies on Local Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the socioeconomic benefits received by members of tribal cooperative organisations in Mananthavady, Kerala's Wayanad district. The paper's major goal was to figure out what the Scheduled Tribe Service Co-Operative Society members get in terms of socioeconomic benefits. The study focuses primarily on the significant socioeconomic benefits received by Scheduled Tribe Service Co-Operative Society members of the Mananthavady region in Wayanad, Kerala. The information for this study was gathered from 230 respondents in Kerala's Mananthavady taluk. The analysis was conducted using the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA analysis, and it was discovered that members of tribal cooperative organisations enjoy a variety of socioeconomic benefits. The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a substantial difference in the social advantages received by members of the tribal group.

Keywords: Social Benefits; Economic Benefits; Tribal Cooperative Societies, Non-timber Forest Products, Co-Operative Societies, Kerala, Wayanad

INTRODUCTION

In India, tribes are regarded as the most oppressed group. These people make up 8.6% of India's population, making them the world's largest population of tribal people. (Indian Census, 2011) Tribal people groups in India are commonly referred to as 'Adivasi,' which is an umbrella term for a diverse range of ethnic and inherent groupings that make up India's original population. The majority of the clans used to live in the woods, and they considered woodland to be their source of income. India is home to one of the world's most populous tribal areas. Before the Indian constitution was chosen, the tribes were referred to as aboriginals, Adivasis, forest tribes, slope tribes, primitive tribes, and so on. The tribes were incorporated in 1919.

Mananthavady taluk is in Kerala and has a tribal population of 21.6 percent. The taluk is located near the Kerala districts of Kannur and Kodagu in Karnataka. The tribal regions in Mananthavady include the Thirunelly, Thavinhal, Thondernadu, and Vellamunda. Over 55,000 tribes have settled in different villages of Mananthavady taluk. Three primary tribal groupings are the Adiyars, Kurichyas, and Paniyas.

Based on the literature review, it is believed that some questions need to be addressed here, such as "What is the role of Tribal Co-operative Societies (TCS) in Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) procurement and marketing?" "What are the members' perceptions of the services provided by tribal co-operative

societies in Mananthavady?" "What are the members' socio-economic benefits from tribal co-operative society?" and "What are the problems faced by members while procuring NTFP?" Based on these research questions, the study's challenges are formulated.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In India, tribes are regarded as the most oppressed group. These people make up 8.6% of India's total population and are the world's largest tribal community. Agriculture and the collecting of non-timber forest products are the two main sources of income for Kerala's tribal communities. Tribal co-operative societies were formed to uplift tribes and safeguard them from private parties' exploitation. Initially, their responsibilities were limited to providing agricultural support, operating consumer businesses, and offering training for indigenous women, among other things. TCS focused on NTFP procurement and marketing when completing all of the following tasks. More tribes are involved in TCS active engagement as they transition to NTFP procurement and marketing. However, tribal cooperative societies continue to operate according to the previous rules and bylaws. At the same time, Kudumbasree and other self-help groups are involved in NTFP procurement and marketing, reducing the amount of NTFP procured by TCS, and these agencies give a high price for NTFP items in order to draw collectors to these institutions. There are some doubts about TCS's participation in NTFP procurement and marketing; in the current situation, it's important to understand what type of methods they used for NTFP procurement and marketing, as well as what TCS's socioeconomic benefits are to its members.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess socio economic benefits from tribal co-operative societies to their members in Mananthavady Taluk, Kerala.
- To study problems faced by the members in the procurement of NTFP's in Mananthavady.

HYPOTHESES

- There exists significant difference between members of tribal category with regard to their social benefits through Tribal Co-operative Society.
- There exists significant difference between members of tribal category with regard to their economic benefits from Tribal Co-operative Society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is both descriptive and explanatory in nature; both primary and secondary data were collected and used for the study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study covers all the members of the Scheduled Tribe Service Co-Operative Societies located in Mananthavady taluk. Those members who collect NTFP in Mananthavady engaged for the last 12 months on average are included in the list of the population.

Sampling

From the Scheduled Tribe Service Co-Operative Societies in Mananthavady taluk, 230 members were selected for this study. For the selection of the respondents, a convenience sampling method was adopted. The respondents of this study include NTFP collection members of the Adiyars, Kurichyas, and Paniyas tribal communities. The sample size of the study is limited to 230 members of Scheduled Tribe Service

Co-Operative Societies in Mananthavady taluk.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected and used for the purpose of the study. The primary data was collected through using questionnaire two different questionnaires prepared to collect data from members and societies.

Secondary Data

The secondary data were collected from the books, published journals, last five-year annual reports and bylaws of Scheduled Tribe Service Co-Operative Societies, annual reports of the Ministry of co-operative Society (Government of Kerala) government publications, published dissertation and thesis.

Primary Data

The primary data required for this study were collected from 230 members of Scheduled Tribe Service Co-Operative Societies in Mananthavady taluk of Wayanad, Kerala.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Reliability Test of Socio-Economic Benefits

Reliability is a measure of the accuracy of a measuring instrument; a collection of query statements is usually the instrument itself. A measurement instrument is said to have good reliability if the question statements (or other measures) associated with each latent variable are understood in the same way by different respondents.

Initially, for establishing the reliability, Cronbach’s alpha is calculated where the recommended minimum value is 0.7. Higher alpha values (greater than 0.8 and 0.9) shows that indicators are truly representative measures of the construct.

Members Social Benefits through TCS

Tribal cooperative societies provide their members with a variety of social benefits, either directly or indirectly. Improving social contact, boosting communal cohesion, eliminating social prejudice, assisting in the identification of one's function, and reducing social isolation are just a few of the advantages. Table 1 shows the results of descriptive statistics on social benefits.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics: Members Social Benefits through TCS

Statement	Mean	SD
TCS improve social interaction	3.22	1.400
TCS make communal harmony between members	3.15	1.118
TCS reduce social discrimination from public	3.04	1.188
TCS help to identify my role in the society	2.98	1.132
TCS reduces social isolation	3.21	1.166
TCS made co-operation and interaction with other tribal groups	3.51	1.273
TCS improves transportation and communication facility among tribes	3.23	1.313

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviation calculated from the respondents' responses for their Social Benefits through Tribal Cooperative Society. TCS helps to improve corporation and interaction among other tribal groups has a high mean value (3.51), indicating that the majority of the members agreed that TCS helps their interaction with other tribal groups.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Members Social Benefits through TCS: Category-Wise Analysis

Category	N	Mean	SD
Kurichya	64	3.1964	0.69773
Paniya	102	3.0980	0.95211
Adiyars	64	3.3393	0.84145
Total	230	3.1925	0.85590

(Source: Primary Data)

Members in the Adiyars group have the highest mean value for Social Benefits, as shown in table 2. As a result, it can be deduced that Adiyars tribal members have a more favourable opinion of societal advantages.

The results of One-Way ANOVA are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Variation in Members Social Benefits through TCS with respect to Category: Result of ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.29	1	0.573	1.558	0.21
Within Groups	166.845	229	0.735		
Total	169.135	230			

(Source: Result of Analysis of Primary Data)

Because the p value is more than .05., there is no significant change in the member's social gains from TCS within members in the different tribe categories, according to ANOVA Table 3 calculated at a 5% significance level. As a consequence of the aforementioned research, the study's premise, that there is a significant difference between members of the tribe category in terms of social advantages obtained through tribal cooperative societies, is denied. It is assumed that members of the three tribal groups receive the same social benefits from TCS.

Member's Economic Benefits through TCS

Tribal co-operative societies indirectly provide their members with a variety of economic benefits. These advantages include increased savings and investment, assistance with household expenses, members' economic self-sufficiency, improved financial security, and so on. Table 4 shows the results of descriptive statistics of Economic Benefits.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: Member's Economic Benefits from TCS

Statement	Mean	SD
TCS has helped in saving	2.60	1.401
TCS helps to manage my financial constraints	2.89	0.980
I am getting additional income from TCS to meet my household expenses	2.75	1.227
TCS helps to increase my investment in gold, property, etc.	2.77	1.172
TCS helps to meet timely cash Requirement	3.41	4.819
My income level has changed due to TCS Participation	2.99	1.239
TCS ensures my economic self-reliance	3.07	1.160
TCS helped me to reduce borrowing from moneylenders	2.83	1.213
TCS helped me enhance my financial security	2.82	1.302

(Source: Primary Data)

TCS helps to meet timely financial requirements has a high mean value (3.41), indicating that the majority of the members agreed to the statement that TCS helps them meet their cash requirements on time.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Members Economic Benefits from TCS: Community-Wise Analysis

Community	N	Mean	SD
Kurichya	64	2.7153	0.76510
Paniyas	102	2.8649	0.86533
Adiyars	64	3.1493	1.38307
Total	230	2.9024	1.01751

(Source: Primary Data)

Members in the Adiyars group have the greatest mean value for Economic Benefits, as shown in table 5. As a result, it can be deduced that Adiyars tribal members have a more favourable impression of economic gains.

The results of One-Way ANOVA are presented in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Variation in Members Economic Benefits from TCS for Category: Result of ANOVA

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.29	1	1.145	1.115	0.33
Within Groups	232.902	229	1.026		
Total	235.192	230			

(Source: Result of Analysis of Primary Data)

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that the study's premise, that there is a significant difference between members of the tribe category in terms of the economic benefits they receive from tribal cooperative societies, is denied. TCS is ostensibly providing the same economic benefits to members of the three tribal groups.

SUGGESTIONS

The following recommendations are provided based on the study's findings and talks with TCS members and officials. In the Mananthavady Taluk, the TCS has not kept accurate and proper records of NTFP transactions in terms of collecting, marketing, and financial transactions. In order to avoid financial indiscipline in societies, correct, accurate, and transparent data must be preserved, and auditing operations must be done by external auditors. The survey revealed that, despite the fact that the cooperative department provides numerous sorts of help to its members, the majority of them are unaware of these services. As a result, the government must run effective awareness efforts among the members to inform them of these benefits. TCS must issue collection passes and collection kits in a timely manner, preferably before the start of the season, to assist members in collecting the NTFP on time. The TCS must give sufficient insurance coverage to members because collecting NTFPs is a dangerous activity.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to learn about members' perceptions of the various services given by tribal co-operative societies in Attappady, as well as the challenges they encounter in NTFP procurement and marketing. According to a review of the literature on tribal co-operative societies and NTFP procurement,

numerous factors influence member engagement in tribal co-operative societies. The purpose of this study is to examine members' perceptions of various tribal co-operative society services in order to better understand their impact on members' perceptions at the time. The members engaging in the operations of tribal co-operative society are indirectly influenced by the socio-economic benefits.

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