

Reproduction of marginality through developmentalism: The case of Tribal population in Attappadi, Kerala

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Abstract: *Attappady is one among the prominent tribal belts in Kerala in terms of the deprivation and vulnerabilities of the tribal communities. Therefore, the Union and State Ministries have been implementing a lot of projects in these tribal areas for the promotion of the socio-economic and cultural development of the tribal population. The Attappady Waste Land Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project (AWCECP) was one of the notable interventions in Attappady. They attempted to implement the activities of the eco-restoration project in the affected areas of Attappady based on the donor-recipient concept, especially in the tribal lands. It is an example of how the distorted development projects of government reproduce the marginality of already vulnerable communities through the developmental interventions of the state. It generated mixed results among the tribal communities. The AWCECP has made good results in greening Attappady through intensive afforestation programmes, whereas this has induced an adverse impact on the sustainable livelihoods of tribes by the ways of the destruction of tribal farming culture as well as agricultural lands of tribes. Moreover, the project typically failed in developing the indigenous livelihood sources of tribes on one side and created a state dependency syndrome among them due to the failure of formulating sound exit policies.*

Keywords: *AHADS, Attappady, De-concentration, Livelihood, Marginality, Tribal Development*

Introduction

Since 1950, Kerala has been moving through many radical changes as reforms in education and land, univerzalisation of the public distribution system, enactment of minimum wages, expansion of the public health system to all villages etc. The remarkable achievement of Human Development in the State is observing as the outcome of these reforms, which have been implementing in the various stages of the evolution of Kerala State (Kannan in KDR, 2008). Notwithstanding the higher human development achievements of the general population, the indigenous communities such as Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Fisher Folks lives under a higher level of deprivation (Kerala Development Report 2008; Census 2011). It indicates the actual benefits of these changes have not been percolating to the marginalized population of the State. The Human Development Indicators of these groups are far lower than the average of mainstream communities in Kerala. Among these three groups, Scheduled Tribes are the most vulnerable and face extreme levels of deprivation.

In general, the term 'Poor' means an individual possessing income below the poverty line. But, a single-dimensional parameter like income cannot describe the intensity of poverty in a family. Poverty is closely related to multi-dimensional parameters such as poor health status, lack of sanitation and drinking water facilities, less education and lack of shelter (Sen, 1995). When we link poverty with the indigeneity of the tribal population, it is seen that though the term tribe is a vernacular nomenclature, the deprivation rates among the tribal communities are different. In Kerala, tribal peoples have been facing various forms of deprivation as geographical deprivation, financial deprivation, and social and cultural deprivation. These have been directly or indirectly affecting the capability formation of tribal communities in wealth distribution, employability and income generation.

The Central and State Ministries have been trying to reduce the deprivation rate among the tribal communities by executing various developmental and welfare schemes since 1974 under the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) for providing basic needs and infrastructure facilities, capability formation through education and health support, implementing various projects and programmes for income generation through the expansion of livelihood activities in the tribal areas in all over Kerala. Moreover, for the promotion of household or community-based tribal development programmes in the tribal concentrated areas, the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) was started in the state during the period 1974-83 (KSPB, 2012). Among seven ITDPs in Kerala, only Attappady ITDP in Palakkad district was formulated by the Central government in 1976. Most tribal households in the Palakkad district are generally considered disadvantaged categories, especially the tribal groups in Attappady. So, as the objective of sustainable development among the tribal communities or area development in Attappady, both governments implemented various projects such as Attappady Valley Irrigation Projects, Attappady Farming Society, Attappady Goat Farm, Western Ghats Development Project and Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project (AWCECP) etc. (Annamalai, 2006). However, despite the immense expenditure of governments on development projects did not produce a significant effect on the progress of the socio-economic lives of tribes in Attappady. It might be happening due to the negligence of understanding the need of traditional societies in the project landmark and the imperfections in project planning, implementation and monitoring process. As an unintended consequence, many of these developmental programmes have created new social, cultural, economic and traditional issues in the tribal areas, such as the transition of tribal cultivators to

wage labour, intrusion of settlers, alienation of tribal land etc. (KFRI,1991). Also, it noticed the miserable condition of the health of the tribal people in Attappady. Despite the government having started a tribal hospital in Attappady, they have been facing a lot of health issues, such as severe malnutrition, high infant mortality rate, underweight children and a shortage of introductory health infrastructure facilities etc. ((Suchithra, 2013).

In several projects in Attappady Block, AWCECP was one of the prominent government interventions implemented by Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) in 1996. It was designed as a participatory development programme. One of the main objectives was eco-restoration and sustainable livelihood development of tribal communities through encouraging agricultural and afforestation activities in the affected areas (KSPB, 2010). Nonetheless, they did not give much emphasis to agricultural activities whereas more focus has been given to eco-restoration and afforestation activities. Their negligence in the area of the agriculture sector made an unintended impact on the sustainable livelihood activities of the tribal population. In light of the experience of AHADS, this paper argues that a celebrated project that used the language of participatory development led to the deeper marginality of the already marginalized group due to the erosion of their participation in real decision-making at the policy level. Based on some enquiries we are trying to examine the effects of developmental initiatives of AHADS in Attappady.

1. To what extent AHADS supported the enhancement of socio-economic conditions of tribal communities in Attappady?
2. Did the tribal communities get real benefits from the livelihood activities of AHADS?
3. Had any trouble lie in between service delivery, planning and administration systems in the project areas?

Attappady Block: A Brief Description

Attappady is an extensive east-slopping mountain valley on Western Ghat, about 745 sq. km. in area. It is located in the north of Palakkad district and adjoining the Coimbatore and Nilgiri districts of Tamil Nadu. Attappady Tribal Block was formed in 1962 under Mannarkad Taluk in Palakkad District. This block comprises three Panchayaths viz. Agali, Pudur and Sholayur. Bhavani and Siruvani rivers flow through the valley and irrigate the whole area. The climate of the Attappady is entirely different from other parts of Palakkad. Also, it varies from Agali to

Sholayoor Panchayath(Annamalai, 2006; KFRI, 1991; Sanathanan, 2004). In 1975, as per the directions from the State Planning Board, the Central government considered Attappady for starting the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) due to the assessment of the most vulnerable tribal block in Kerala. During 1930-40, Attappady was a 100 per cent tribal area. But, from the start of 1950, the massive in-migration of people from the plains of western regions of Kerala and the eastern-low-lying part of Tamil Nadu has made drastic changes in the population dynamics of this area. Initially, migration was provisional with the objective of work, business and commercial purposes. Subsequently, it became a permanent and regular phenomenon (KFRI, 1991; Mathur, 1977; SPB, 2010).

Tribal Communities in Attappady

The tribal population in Attappady belongs to Irular, Mudugar and Kurumbar, which are the broad categories of Dravidian tribes. These communities have been staying in 192 tribal hamlets in Agali (73), Pudur (67) and Sholayoor (52) Grama Panchayaths (STDD, 2013). By the data of ITDP Attappady (2018), the total number of tribal families in the block is 11,016, consisting of Irular (9370), Mudugar (980) and Kurumbar (666). The entire tribal population is 32,956 which includes Irular (26,908), Mudugar (3,497) and, Kurumbar (2,551). The average family size of the total tribal population in Attappady is 2.9. Among them, Kurumbar shows the most prominent family size at 3.83 and after that Mudugar (3.5) and, Irular (2.87). The average literacy rate of the tribal population in Attappady is 62 per cent. Kurumbar community shows the highest literacy rate at 69.92 per cent then, followed by Irular (60 per cent) and Mudugar (56.36 per cent) communities. The decadal population rate of Attappady gives in Table 1.

Table: 1 Population growth in Attappady during the period 1951 - 2011

Year	Total Population	Tribal Population	Non-tribal Population	Percentage of Tribes	Percentage of non-tribes
1951	11,300	10,200	1,100	90.27	9.73
1961	21,461	12,972	8,489	60.45	39.55
1971	39,183	16,536	22,647	42.21	57.79
1981	62,246	20,659	41,587	33.00	67.00
1991	62,033	24,228	37,745	39.15	60.85
2001	66,171	27,121	39,050	41.00	59.00

2011	64,318	27,627	36,691	42.95	57.05
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Sources: Report from Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi (1991); Census of India 1981 to 2011

The Irular community is a patrilineal and patriarchal society that speaks a mixture of Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam and was migrated from Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu state at the end of the 16th century or the beginning of the 17th century. The term Irular derived from their pitch-black complexion. Traditionally, they are shifting cultivators and employing in hunting and gathering non-timber forest products. But, due to the overwhelming land alienation, the majority of the workforce in the Irular community has been engaged in agricultural labour on settlers' land. Mudugar, the second largest tribal community in Attappady, migrated from Coimbatore. The name Mudugar was derived from the primitive practice of carrying children on their backs (Muthuk). Historically, there was a relationship between the Mudugar and Kurumbar communities. Later, Mudugar separated from the Kurumbas and started to live as a separate clan. In an earlier period, Mudugar engaged in shifting cultivation and the collection of non-timber forest products. But now, most of them are agricultural labourers employed by settled cultivators. Some of them are engaged in agriculture and related activities. Kurumbar belongs to the Primitive Tribal Group, the earliest inhabitants of Attappady, mainly in Puthoor Panchayath. They have been living on reserve and vested forest lands. So, the land encroachment of migrants did not seriously affect the lives of Kurumbar families. Traditionally, Mudugar is shifting cultivators. Moreover, they are experts in cattle rearing and the collection of non-timber forest products. They speak a mixture of Malayalam and Tamil. According to Mathur, the Kurumbas were illiterate. But the latest reports show that the younger generation of the Kurumbar community is most enthusiastic about organising themselves and getting an education (ITDP,2019; Mathur, 1977; Sanathanan, 2004; STDD, 2013).

Relation between land, forest and tribes in Attappady

Historically and genetically, there is a strong relationship between tribes and land as well as tribes and forests. It is mainly associated with their rituals and festivals, birth and death, livelihood activities, food gathering, etc. Moreover, the ownership of a sizable amount of land is the symbol of their cultural identity and socioeconomic status, especially in the case of traditional land. Hence, the displacement or alienation of hereditary land will destroy their culture, lives and existence (Mathur, 1977; Therakam, 2010). Several studies show that there was a vast amount of

tribal land alienated all over the state. According to Kerala Development Report 2008, 4219.85 acres of land were alienated from the tribal communities in the state during the period 1962–1982, and the alienated land under dispute as of June 30, 1996, was 17971.12 acres all over the state.

After 1950, as an impact of the implementation of developmental projects without rationality and the uncontrollable immigration of non-tribes to the tribal lands and their unscientific cultivation pattern in the valley of Attappady, the deforestation of forest land multiplied. Due to rampant deforestation, the natural mechanism of rainwater conservation failed, and subsequently, soil erosion extremely increased in the hilly regions. Thus, soil erosion and the low after-carrying capacity of the hills led to the drying of local streams. It seriously affected the agriculture-based economy of the tribes and settlers in Attappady (Annamalai, 2006). Though land degradation and marginalisation are technically two different phenomena, they are highly interlinked in the case of communities that depend on land for their livelihood. Deforestation, the high influx of settlers to tribal lands, and their unsuitable agricultural practices negatively affected the natural ecosystem of lands in Attappady, which led to land degradation and the marginalisation of tribal communities in this region. (KFRI, 2010).

Tribal communities have their own social and economic practices that are entirely different from mainstream communities. Uncontrollable inland migration to tribal land and land alienation harmed the socioeconomic and cultural lives of tribal populations in Attappady. Several studies show that a lot of tribal communities' agricultural land was alienated as a result of uncontrollable migration from Tamil Nadu and Travancore-Cochin to Attappady and their intrusion into aboriginal land. The absolute majority of the tribal families lost their cultivation because of land encroachment by immigrants. Gradually, they became wage labourers for migrant cultivators and contractors on various developmental projects at cheap wage rates. Moreover, with the influence of immigrants, the traditional cultivation pattern in Attappady was changed, and cash crop cultivation began without considering the geographical specialities of the valley. It negatively affected the structure of the soil and the nature of the local economy in the block. Because of the intensive involvement of migrants, the peripheral economy has moved to a cash economy. Moreover, they forcefully turned the tribal communities into part of the modern economy instead of their tribal economy. Subsequently, the lives of tribes became more miserable due to low wage rates, a lack of livelihood activities and employment, a degradation in social status, the depletion

of forest land, etc. As a result, once self-sufficient tribal families, are now struggling for survival and depending on the government for the attainment of basic needs.

Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS)

Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project (AWCECP) was one of the major projects executed in Attappady Block with financial aid from the Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC), renamed the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA). The project was started on the recommendation of the National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB) because Attappady has the highest proportion of wasteland in Kerala when compared to other places. Due to the dwindling of forest areas, rampant degradation of natural resources, and acute poverty among the tribal population, in 1993 the Government of Kerala decided to formulate an integrated sustainable eco-restoration project for the reclamation of 507 sq. km. of wasteland in Attappady and also provide livelihood facilities to the local people, especially the tribal communities, through participatory management of resources. The framework of the project was prepared by the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) with instructions from the Kerala State Rural Development Department. The project was submitted to the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Government of India, with a request for loan assistance from the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund (OECF), later renamed the Japan Bank for International Co-operation, which has now changed its name to the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA). It was a bilateral agreement between JICA and the Indian government. The DEA shortlisted the project in January 1995 for submission to the OECF and discussion with the central and state ministries. Subsequently, in October 1995, the Government of Kerala decided to handover the project to an autonomous institution under the control of the Local Self Government Department, naming it the Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS), which was registered on October 31st, 1995, under the Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1860. The project started on March 26th, 1996, at the headquarters in Agali. Initially, the project was named "Integrated and Sustainable Eco-Development of Attappady Wastelands," later renamed "*Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project. "Ecological restoration of degraded wasteland in Attappady and development of replicable models of participatory eco-restoration, to prevent further degradation and promote sustainable methods of livelihood to the local people (with special emphasis on the tribal*

population) in harmony with the resource base" (Annamalai, 2006; AHADS, 2008; KSPB, 2010) was the project's primary goal.

In 2002, AHADS restructured the objectives of the AWCECP project after a field survey, to assess the effectiveness of the entire developmental activities in Attappady. As the outcomes of the field survey revealed, they realised the attainment of the objective of participatory eco-restoration would not be possible without considering the primary issues of the tribal population, which are related to their poverty alleviation, livelihood activities, backwardness in education and health, etc.

Strategies and Approaches in AWCECP of AHADS: A Review

AHADS divided the 745 square-kilometer area of Attappady into 146 micro-watersheds in order to effectively implement the AWCECP project. Among them, only 93 watersheds have habitations, and hence 93 Users' Associations were formulated democratically based on 93 micro-watersheds. Subsequently, they started Ooru Vikasana Samithi to monitor the developmental activities in the hamlets. Moreover, five Multi-disciplinary teams were constituted for the prompt formulation and implementation of eco-restoration activities. Each group included experts in various subjects like forestry, soil conservation, civil engineering, agriculture, etc. Ecological Restoration, Soil and Water Conservation, and Total Hamlet Development Programmes were the primary activities implemented by AHADS with the support of community participation.

- AHADS implemented a watershed-based natural resource management system that includes soil and moisture conservation, gully plugging, planting, fencing, etc., for the ecological restoration of Attappady. The expansion of tree plantations resulted in reducing the overflow of surface water, improving the quantity of subsurface water, rejuvenating the streams and runnels, etc. These also promoted agriculture activities in the project areas. See Table-2.
- Soil and water conservation activities gave rebirth to gullies and rivulets in Attappady. The programme mainly focused on ensuring water availability in a sustainable manner through the protection of existing water resources. It includes expansion of water resources, groundwater recharge systems, irrigation systems, etc.

- The moneyed families were the primary beneficiaries of land development activities like water and soil conservation or afforestation. At the same time, the tribes that had already been expelled from their best areas could not derive any benefits from the programmes undertaken through the Users' Association. To avoid these issues, AHADS designed a new strategy for tribes as part of their project, named the Total Hamlet Development Programme (THDP). In this programme, AHADS gave more importance to attaining the basic needs and wants of the tribal communities through the construction of living spaces based on family size and cost-effective water supply and sanitation systems. In addition, they placed more emphasis on the facilities for educational promotions, recreation, and cultural activities. The primary purpose of the programme was tribal empowerment in Attappady. But, based on the deprivation rate of the tribal families, they implemented this programme only in 54 tribal hamlets out of 192.

Table-2: Land use changes in Attappady from 2001-2005

Major Land Uses	Land use (Km ²)		Percentage change in Land Use
	2001	2005	
1. Forest land	386.84	401.32	+3.74
2. Agriculture land	119.55	164.04	+37.21
3. Degraded land	238.18	180.24	-24.33

Source: Kerala State Planning Board Report, (2010)

The People's Institutions (PIs) are one method for implementing innovative transparent governance practices at the grassroots level. It mainly focuses on the assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring of the developmental activities in a locality for their sustainable livelihood achievement and environmental protection. Local participation is essential for protecting and regenerating natural resources (KSPB, 2010). In Attappady, AHADS started the project in the name of a participatory programme and followed the People's Institution strategy for their project implementation process. They constituted a range of local community associations to carry out various project activities and ensure the project's success. The associations are as follows: the User's Association (UA) as the workforce under AHADS for doing contract works, focusing on the expansion of basic needs and infrastructure facilities, etc.; Ooru Vikasana Samithi (OVS)

formed for the prevention of land alienation, monitoring of developmental activities in the hamlets etc.; Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC) established for the protection of forest land and prevention of land degradation and alienation; Income Generation Activity Groups (IGAG) under UAs framed for the promotion of income generated livelihood activities in the project area through micro-credit system; finally, Thaikula Sangams (TKSs) formed for the empowerment of women among the downtrodden families through the intensive intervention of fight against alcoholism, drugs and atrocities against women, education and health assistance etc. AHADS made new rules and regulations for the practical functions and control of these groups, and provided financial assistance and technical guidelines for the proper functioning of these associations as a part of project objectives.

The Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation project mainly focused on area-based development programmes than community development programmes. So, the entire population in the project area was engaged in developmental activities. The objectives and initiatives of the AWCECP project were attractive, and at a limit, they successfully implemented the project plans and programmes. However, AHADS could not succeed in the reduction of poverty among the deprived communities in Attappady because of the negligence in the forecasting of the long-term sustainability of project outcomes, failure in policy framework and execution of programmes and lack of initiative for finding a permanent solution for livelihood issues of tribal population. Moreover, AHADS failed to determine the ways for the long-term existence of the several collectives of people started at the time of the project period. People received regular income from AHADS labour during the project's running period, stimulating the local economy. But everything collapsed after closing the project AHADS, especially the lives of tribal families working as project labourers became more miserable. Based on this, we explore the reasons behind the reproduction of marginality among the tribal population in Attappady after the winding up of AHADS.

Discourses on Development

The word 'development' is an ever-contested nomenclature used in different dimensions. There are two main approaches to development. One follows the Top to Bottom process of development, and the other is Bottom to Top. The Centralised Planning is another term for the Top to Bottom approach, is the replication of the Soviet Model of Development. Jawaharlal Nehru, the

ardent follower of socialist planning in the Soviet Union, introduced this system in India. In this model, the decisions on development policies, programmes and schemes are framed by the Top Level of Authority (policy makers) and implemented through the hierarchical bureaucratic system. In this approach, people, the literal beneficiaries of development programmes, are denied the opportunity to express themselves, tell about their actual needs or desires, or participate in decision-making under this approach (Isaac and Franke 2000). The other is the Bottom to Top approach, which follows the path of participatory development. Here, the developmental goals and programmes are decided by the local people, and they would have more prominent participation in implementing these programmes (Parameswaran 1999). The decentralised mode of development planning follows different approaches i.e., devolution, delegation, and de-concentration (Gurukkal, 2001).

De-concentration refers to reassigning the administrative responsibility for specified functions to the lower levels of central government bureaucracy based on some positions in general (Ferguson and Chandrasekharan, 2011). It does not allow the autonomy of local people to frame programmes at the bottom level. Here, the primary decisions are taken at the Central Level and delegated power to the Bottom level only for the execution of programmes. Participatory bodies are framed at lower levels that considered the tool of programme implementation (Heller, 2001). In the case of **delegation**, the Central Level authority delegates some responsibilities to the lower level for the execution of programmes. The supremacy of assurance may not co-exist with the designation of powers and resources, which are indispensable factors for an effective development process. The third method of decentralisation is **devolution**. In this method, authority, responsibilities, and resources are devolved to the lower level, which provides a higher level of autonomy to the bottom tiers for the planning and execution of programmes. It recognises the concept of autonomy and also provides prominent space to the local people and communities in the planning process of developmental activities (Isaac and Franke, 2000). The development process is also equated with Freedom in the literature authored by Amartya Sen. He explained development as the process of improving the capabilities of individuals and communities (Sen, 1995).

The AHADS project in Attappady largely followed the path of the de-concentration method in the processing of planning developmental activities. The project was pre-designed by

international consultants and higher-level officials without any discussion with the beneficiaries, and without considering the actual situation and demand in the local areas. The public got a participatory role in the designing of some programmes at the local level under the User's Association, Ooru Vikasana Samithi (Hamlet Development Committee), and Joint Forest Management Committees. However, they performed the principal roles in the implementation process as supervisors, wage labourers, etc. It exemplifies how, despite using the language of participation, a project can alienate local people from its process by taking an instrumental approach. In the case of regions like Attappady, where the tribal concentration is high, the development approach of devolution is more significant. This approach can provide more administrative power to the local people on decision-making and implementation and more control of assets and the right to resources that can ensure more autonomy to the local people for the programme implementation based on their needs. This approach to devolution and liberty was missing in the AHADS project.

Lacunae in AWCECP of AHADS:

Unlike in other tribal areas of Kerala, most of the tribes in Attappady have retained a reasonable amount of agricultural land, even though many tribal lands have been infringed upon by immigrants. But, AHADS did not promote farming activities on the tribal land, and their negligence in farming activities had an unintended impact on the sustainable livelihood of the tribal population. Moreover, they mostly used the tribal population only as a labour force for the projects' execution, particularly afforestation and construction activities. Because of the continuous availability of wage labouring, tribes lost interest in agricultural activities, and finally, their lands became barren. And the shifting of job patterns from cultivator to labourer also affected their food culture and nutritional intake. The tribal people in Attappady, who had a sound cattle population, sold most of them because of the wage labour culture infused among them. AHADS authorities also promoted the selling of cattle by the tribes in the name of the destruction of saplings planted as part of afforestation activities. Agriculture destruction and the loss of the cattle population seriously affected their nutritional intake.

In the 1960s and 1970s, settlers occupied the predominant productive land of tribal families in irrigated areas such as riverside. They got ownership over this land from tribes through various forms of exploitation, such as phoney documents, paying the nominal price, providing liquor to

the tribal leaders, etc. And also, the current crises are the unavailability of irrigation facilities in the remaining agricultural land on hilltops. It negatively affected their farming culture and socio-economic status. It has created the necessity of lift irrigation schemes to provide irrigation to the tribal land, whereas such efforts were missing in the AHADS project. AHADS project did not focus on providing institutional support for agricultural activities such as seed distribution and source links, co-ordinating institutional credit, and facilitating farming activities. Because agriculture and animal husbandry were the primary sources of income for tribal communities in the region, the AHADS project's failure to support these activities in a long-term perspective contributed to the decline of their self-sufficiency. The AHADS project's limitations in agricultural and land development activities on tribal land acted as a barrier to attracting investments to expand irrigation and soil conservation activities on tribal land. It has indirectly made it advantageous for the settlers to take the tribal lands on lease and to do their agricultural activities.

AHADS has mentioned in their document that the principal objective of the AWCECP project was only eco-restoration through afforestation and soil conservation, not agricultural development with a livelihood focus. It shows the fault in the project design itself. While the objective of the AHADS projects has been formulated, the actual livelihood situation of the tribal people and their historical modes of livelihood have not been considered. Thus, it has led to the formation of a project with eco-restoration as a major objective in an area where the primary livelihood of the people derives from agriculture and animal husbandry. Instead of this project, eco-restoration could be performed through agricultural rejuvenation was the real need and suitable approach to this region.

The above lacunae underscore the civic-centred approach in the evolution of this project, even though it adopts participatory practices at the time of implementation. Unlike other government projects, AHADS projects predominantly relied on people's organisations for their execution. But, the project objectives were decided by the central funding agencies and higher officials. Moreover, the introductory fault of the project was agency did not consider the actual needs of tribal people. It generated unintended impacts on the lives of the tribal people even after its implementation. Also, the unexpected withdrawal of the project affected the income source of the tribes, and they could not recuperate from their financial crisis and failed to recover their traditional livelihood activities. Thus, it could be considered a concerning example of how a

development project can uproot people from their self-reliant livelihood patterns and turn them into a highly dependent community on the wage labour offered by the development.

It is examined as a replication of a colonial development strategy that alienates the indigenous people from their self-reliant living processes by creating a colonial mindset among them. Alienation from farming and their traditional food production system, which largely depended on cereals and pulses, has badly affected the food intake and nutritional status of the tribal people. In a way, this has also contributed to higher malnutrition, particularly among women and children who have faced the contemporary phenomenon of infant deaths in tribal hamlets. AWCECP reveals that a project did not participatory in its origin and process, even though it uses the language of people's participation and the structures of participatory institutions. A participatory project will fail unless and until its objectives are set in participatory ways according to the primary needs of the people.

In 2010, the project was closed and which negatively affected the lives of tribes who were dependent on the works of AHADS as a community who lost their self-reliant culture through the continuous offering of wage labour for years. Their socio-economic pattern has changed even though their purchasing power has decreased, and the financial conditions of the families directly influence their food intake. All these factors lead to the reduction of self-reliance in tribal communities and make their situation more depressing. Thus, the Aboriginal people lost their dominance in the local economy. While we analyse the experience of the AHADS project, it is worth mentioning that they did not have a well-designed exit policy that could have ensured the sustainable livelihood of the tribes who engaged in the project activities. It could also have contributed to the increase in the deprivation rate among the tribal labourers in AHADS. Even though the AHADS project is not the sole reason for the continuing tribal deprivation in Attappady, it has, directly and indirectly, contributed to the stagnation of the social mobility of the tribal population in the region.

Conclusion

Historically, Attappady is a tribal block, the first ITDP in Kerala, established by the Central Ministry. After introducing the Tribal Sub Plan in 1974, the Union and State Ministries have been executing various tribal development programmes and projects in Attappady. But, some projects failed due to failure in achieving their real goals. The evaluation studies of some projects revealed

that nepotism and mismanagement of fund allocations and project executions were the main reasons for project failures. Moreover, the studies indicated that the project objectives were formulated by the centralised officials without considering the needs of the real beneficiaries in the project locale. They gave more priority to the centralised decision-making approach than the participatory approach. Also, the lack of monitoring and social auditing processes leads to the repetition of failed projects in other places. The vested interest of nexus groups such as officials, political parties, contractors and powerful immigrants harmfully affected the effective execution of a project. The main reasons for the formation of nexus are the information asymmetry among tribes, lack of awareness about the tribal development programmes and their rights, socio-economic and educational backwardness, lack of negotiation potential and the exploitation of migrants to indigenous. Some of these reasons might influence the government to backslide the interventions without achieving the literal objectives of tribal developmental activities in Attappady.

The participatory approach of AHADS was successful in avoiding the nexus between vested interest groups and delivering labouring to people with a reasonable wage rate. It supported the tribal population in improving their socio-economic status and upgrading their lifestyles. Their purchasing power increased as buying furniture and electronic items, preferred hotel foods etc. It also endorsed the indigenous people for social involvement and to gather knowledge regarding various developmental activities. While we use the Capability Approach as an analytical framework, the AHADS project confirmed that the social involvement and negotiation potential of the tribal population was improved. However, the project failed to develop capabilities in terms of sustainable livelihood options and income generation activities.

After completing the AHADS project, the lives of tribes became more miserable because of the ceasing livelihood options, unemployment, barren agricultural lands, transformation of work nature etc. In the name of afforestation, AHADS forced the local tribes to sell their cattle. It also led to unbeatable deprivation among indigenous people. The principal drawback of the AHADS project is; the lack of involvement of participatory forums in the decision-making process, especially in object formation. It negatively impacted addressing the grass-root level problems locally. In this case, they followed a de-concentration approach and could not focus on the long-term livelihood activities and sustainable development of the vulnerable communities in

Attappady. It emphasises that most of the projects funded by international agencies in third-world countries are implemented with prefixed objectives without considering the ground reality or neglecting the real need of the beneficiaries.

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