

Assessment And Interventions Of Social Capital Among Primitive Tribal Communities In India

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Abstract

Social capital has been described differently by various researchers, depending on how they concentrate on social capital's functions, outcomes, sources or impacts. According to Robert Putnam (1993) "social capital refers to the collective value of all 'social network' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other". The tribal communities in India are in different stages of transition. Their unique system of living, tradition and customs differentiate one tribe from another. They are spread over in different geographical regions of the country. The present study will contribute towards understanding the role of social capital in influencing these outcomes, allowing tribal societies to respond faster to change than those with a certain number of resources. And it also intended to suggest the strategies to enhance the social capital among the Irula tribes in Tamil Nadu.

Key words : Social Capital, Tribal Community, Trust, Networking and Community.

Introduction

Social capital of Irula Tribes in Tamil Nadu are core concern to be explored in the present investigation. The study speculates that a definite and vibrant social capital is the key element for a community to flourish especially Irula Tribal communities in Tamil Nadu. "Social capital generally refers to trust, concern for one's associates, a willingness to live by the norms of one's community and punish those who do not. It reflects of how people interact in their daily lives in families, neighbourhood and work place" (Bowles and Gintis, 2000). "Social capital is viewed to be as a resource rooted in social structure that may aid in the pursuit of a wide variety of beneficial outcomes" (Krishna, 2007). The relationship is as critical in the process of reconstruction as it is in society. This cycle of restoration is ideal for tribal communities where interdependence and diversity are strong. Social capital describes it as a resource that concentrates on social relations with productive advantages. "Social capital refers to relationships and social networks and the trust, communication and cooperation that both sustains these relationships and are reinforced by them. Communities with high levels of social capital are likely to have higher educational achievement and less crime and violence and the young people living in these communities are likely to be happier, healthier, and to have a longer life expectancy" (Putnam, 2000). In communities where this is broken down, families, particularly parents, find it difficult to find resources, particularly during crisis. Regardless of socio-economic level, the children in these environments can suffer disproportionately, leading to a greater incidence of self-destructive choices (drug use, depression, personal mutilation, anger and assault). "The concept of social capital takes into consideration the broad social environment, as well as emphasizes how important social processes are in the development and elimination of social problems, rather than merely focusing on an individual's behaviour" (Osterling, 2007). Enhancing these social relationship, social interactions and social cohesion among young by means of introducing through family, neighbourhood, and schools can able to attain sustainable development

Social capital in the present study has social and historical dimensions of tribal communities lived social capital practices that are located and built upon. The dimensions of social capital such as group participation,

trust, generalized norms, togetherness, neighbourhood connections, and voluntarism are the main focus of investigation. A society that has high social capital accumulations should be able to cope with challenges, whereas a society with low rates should handle less well. This is possibly because collective action requires the use of protocols and networks in circumstances where individuals might be unwilling to participate or interact socially. Using these indicators, the present research aims to study assess the social capital of Irula tribal communities in Tamil Nadu.

Review of Literature

The social capital is mainly deals with social relations and social network between the people. Social capital simply describes a situation where people share a feeling of belonging, have common beliefs, trust each other and do things for each other (Kramer, 2006). The essence of social capital depends on various aspects of interactions such as the consistency of internal-external interactions, reciprocity, trust and shared values and norms.

Fukuyama (1999) “encapsulates the idea of trust within his approach to the concept: Social capital can be defined simply as a set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits co-operation among them”. The World Bank (1999) “however, suggesting: Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions”. Social relationships between the members of a community help them to bring together as a common entity. The value of good interactions and relationships within the community and with the other people can consider as a ‘capital’. This can be regarded as the social capital, the wealth of the community. It is an asset that creates opportunities for enhancing well-being and for reducing vulnerability among the members of the community. Buchan (2003) has elicited “social capital down to the ‘glue’ made up of community norms, values, and networks that brings together to work toward a common cause; without this glue, human alienation and environmental degradation will occur”. Thus, “social capital refers to the relationships between people and not just people themselves. Social capital is an invisible form of capital as it is built upon unseen social structures and relationships that form the foundation of networks”. (Koniordos, 2008).

Need and Significance of the Study

There are number of studies made on Socio and Economic conditions by Sociologist, Economists, and Agricultural Scientist of scheduled tribes in India. The present study discusses the social capital may enlarge understanding of society and its importance in tribal development in sustainable manner. “The measurement of social capital may inform policy in their area of responsibility, and the types of policy questions that measures of social capital may help to answer and the ways in which policy initiatives may impact on social capital. The study is concerned with how levels of social capital may contribute to particular outcomes in a range of areas of sustainable development” (OECD, 2002). The present study will contribute towards understanding the role of social capital in influencing these outcomes, allowing tribal societies to respond faster to change than those with a certain number of resources. If social capital and tribal growth are strong enough, then building social capital in communities will probably become an growing priority of social capital policy and practices in the Irula Community .

Objectives of the Study

The present investigation mainly intended to suggest the strategies to enhance the social capital among the Irula tribes in Tamil Nadu. By the considering the Irula tribes, they were the one of the most primitive tribes. Social Capital of Irula tribes were assessed with the components of Trust, Social Norms, Networking, Reciprocity and collective action and cooperation. The study also trying give intervention strategies for the improving social capital among Irula tribes in Tamil Nadu.

Method of Study

A Survey was conducted among the five Irula tribal villages in Tamil Nadu. The total tribal households in these villages are 168. The collected data from 65 households by using simple random sampling method. The researcher used questionnaire as primary tools for the collecting the data from tribal people in Tamil Nadu. The questionnaire was closed in nature. The first part deals with socio demographic details, the second part deals with various dimensions of social capital among the tribal communities and the last part deals with the management of social capital questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents usually a questionnaire consist number of question that the respondent has to answer in set of format. For analysing the data the researcher used IBM SPSS version 21.0. Percentage analysis and frequency analysis were used for getting accurate interpretation from available data.

Result and Discussion

Analysing the socio economic aspects of the Irula Tribes 75.4 percent of them were going for daily wages in unorganised sector. Based on the consistency of the place of residence, majority of Irula tribes (49.3 per cent) were living same area for more than 60 years, and among them 52 percent have own assets and 47.7 percent have houses also. The study revealed the saving habits of the Irula tribes, as like 33.8 percent have savings in post office, 29.2 percent having account in bank and 26.3 percent have savings with private chit funds. Considering the health status of Irula Tribes, 63.4 percent have normal health condition and 36.6 percent have average health, they were affecting seasonal diseases. It showed that, health condition of Irula tribes were appreciably in normal status.

Social capital of Irula tribes were assessed with dimensions of Trust, Generalized Norms, and Social Network, Reciprocity, Collective action and cooperation. Researcher used standardized tool from world bank by assessing social capital of Irula Tribes. The study revealed that, most of the Irula Tribes were not give importance to the values of the society as much as given by their ancestors. Helping mentality of the Irula tribes were not appreciable as 69.1 percent were not taking any support others and 72.8 percent of them were not ready to support others because of increased untrustworthy and selfish nature of the fellow beings. But the elder persons in the community revealed that, in their younger ages, all people in the particular locality were together and they have 'we feeling' for togetherness. But, as per the response of 71.7 percent of the respondents they don't have trust on each other.

According to the opinion of the 73.9 percent, group participation and group cohesion also being very less. But the safety of women and children were appreciable in nature as it is based on the opinion of 87.5 percent of the respondents. Most of the Irula tribes (68.4 percent) have not much contact with their neighbours, but 32.6 percent had good contact with neighbours. They regularly visiting their houses and involving various functions and activities in neighbour houses. The study further revealed that, there is not much participation community events, club activities of the community or no even community support during emergency as per the responses of 65.3 percent, 73.9 percent and 66.7 percent respectively. Based on the opinion of 78.3 percent, the people were not cooperating for the community dinning during festivals and ceremonies even though it was a religious ritual. And 54.6 percent doesn't have community feeling but remaining 45.4 percent have feeling of togetherness. The study further revealed that, social capital among Irula tribes were very less and it is being down word trend in day by day and investigation tried to mitigate the role of elder generation and they revealed that trust, togetherness, group cohesion, team spirit among the community people in younger age. They deeply desire to pass the positive messages to present and future generation too.

Intervention Strategies to Enhance Social Capital

The study suggested intervention strategies to enhance social capital not only in Irula tribe but in all indigenous tribal communities. Identifying and enhancing indigenous knowledge with cooperation of higher institutions and carrying out research in the forest areas and gain patent to products and knowledge will basic strategy to enhance socio economic condition of Irula tribes. Need to conduct ecological assessment of resources of the forest area to avoid the conflicts between livelihood gains and ecological sustainability. This will help the extraction levels that safeguard the integrity of forest area. The government should revitalize the tribal development department and make it effective to meet the needs of the tribal people. Co-operation and understanding between the government departments should be ensured. The tribal department should collaborate with various health, education, local self-government and forest departments provide jobs, training, social services, health care and education. All the tribal welfare programmes need to be properly monitored through a social auditing. Monitoring cell for assessing the implementation of Tribal welfare schemes have to be constituted in tribal settlements. Voluntary organizations should introduce programmes for Irula's to improve their education, civic awareness, health awareness and standard of living should be supported by the government in a participatory way. Enhance the role of Non-governmental organization to promote trust commitment and togetherness among the tribal communities by organizing awareness camping, street play, palm leaf and leaf leaf. Intervene with social work practice of case work group work and community organization for improving the capacity of team building, cooperation and collaborative action among and within the Irula tribes.

Conclusion

Social capital is characterized by “trust, norms, networks, reciprocity, and collective action”, which are non-material forms of capital, invisible to the eyes but having visible effects. This includes institutions, relationships and customs which form the quality and quantity of social interactions in a society. Social capital's commonalities are that they focus on social interactions that have positive benefits. The different meanings found in the literature are based on the extremely context-specific existence of social capital and the difficulty of its conceptualization and function. The present investigation analysed the socio-economic profile of the Irula tribes. From the study, researcher analyzed that social capital among the Irula tribes were very poor. They don't have much trust among each other, and most of the people are not cooperating with community activity. The researcher made a conclusion that, they had poor communication with each other and even they are not depending neighbours during emergency. So the researcher suggested strategies to enhance the social capital among the tribal community with the support of government departments and welfare schemes.

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