A CASE STUDY ON PREVAILING RITUALS, CULTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMICPROBLEMS FACED BY KOTA TRIBES OF NILGIRIS, TAMILNADU.

INTRODUCTION

UNITY IN DIVERSITY- India is an example of this amazing amalgamation of various races and cultures, with a landscape as diverse as its population, the county has the largest concentration of the tribal population in the world after Africa. According to the 2011 survey census, Scheduled Tribes are minority people, they constitute about 8.2 % of the overall population in India, which has 567 different tribal groups. The tribal population of the country makes an integral part of India's social fabric sector in the world after Africa.

The word 'tribe' is essentially used for a socially cohesive unit, related to a territory, the member of which regards them as politically autonomous. Mostly a tribe possesses a unique dialect and distinct cultural traits. The tribe can be termed as a "collection of families bearing a specific name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a standard territory and is not usually endogamous though originally they could be so".

According to R.N. Mukherjee, a tribe is a human group, in which the members have a common interest, territory, language, social law, and economic occupation. Scheduled Tribes in India are basically considered to be 'Adivasis,' meaning indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country. The tribes are confined to lower status and are often physically and socially isolated rather than being absorbed within the mainstream population of the Country. The Scheduled Tribes often experience active and passive indifference that will take the shape of exclusion from educational opportunities, social participation, and access to their own land and tribal rights have always been neglected in almost all jurisdictions across the world. All tribal communities aren't the same. They're the products of various geographical, historical, and social conditions. They belong to different racial stocks and non-secular backgrounds and speak different dialects.

Tribal people have been facing discrimination against women, occupational differentiation, emphasis on status, and hierarchical social ordering that characterize the predominant mainstream culture are generally absent among the tribal groups. Lack of administration and large-scale corruption in various departments and various wings of the government should make the developmental process of tribal peoples and their communities in the country but it results in no proper implementation of policies in uplifting the socio-economic rights of these largely downtrodden tribal people. Some ideas and recommendations of the employees, Social workers, and NGO professionals have been made for better implementation of development schemes and livelihood of the tribal peoples.

ABOUT KOTAS

In the south Indian peninsula, there are two great chains of hills they are western ghats and eastern ghats converge. The Nilgiri Hills is a region of mountains, forests, and tea plantations located in southern India that connects the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka all come together and rise to a height of 2,400 meters. The people and the terrain of the Nilgiris plateau have long attracted interest because of their unusual characteristics i.e., the sense of having special natural and human characteristics, markedly distinct from those of the surrounding lower lands. The Nilgiris is home to several aboriginal primitive tribes.

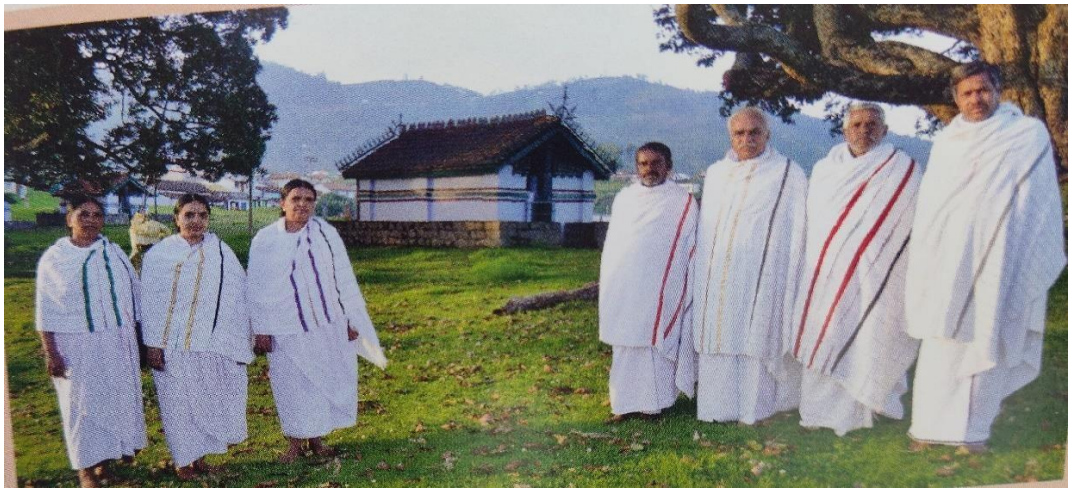


The Oldest picture of a Kota tribe is in kothagiri village.

The most ancient of the hill tribes are the Kotas, Todas, Irular, and Kurumbhas. Kota is one such tribe that takes pride in its lifestyle, culture, and traditions. Kota settlements are only present in Nilgiris. Kotas inhabit seven villages namely Kotagiri, Kilkotagiri, Tiruchikadi, Kollimalai, Kundhakotagiri, Sholur, and Gudalur.

HISTORY OF KOTAS

The Kotas are considered to be indigenous people of the Nilgiris Hill of Tamil Nadu. Also known as the Cohatur, Kohatur, Koter, and Kothur, they are classified as a Scheduled Tribe and have traditionally lived among the Badagas, Todas, and Kurumbas. Even though they are small in number (there are around 1,500 of them) they have managed to rise above their traditional roles as servants and consumers of carrion flesh to be influential bankers, doctors and civil servants in the Nilgiri Hills area.

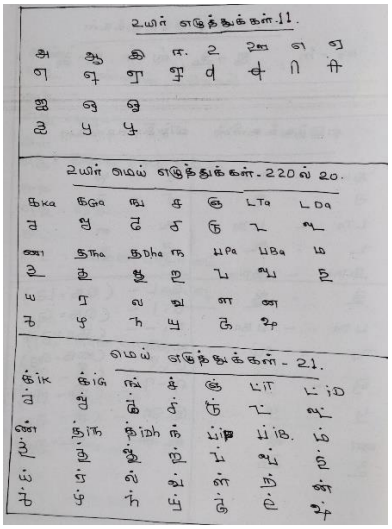


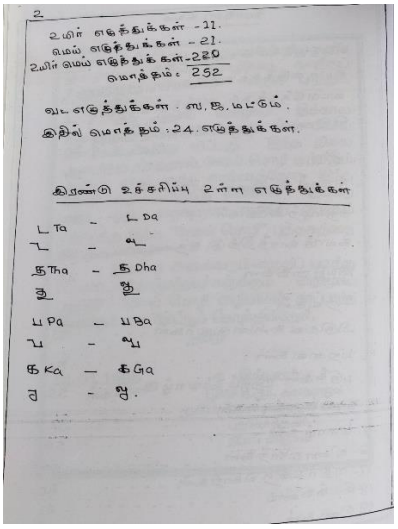
In the old days, the Kota lived in wattle and daub houses with thatched roofs and there is a verandah in front with a seat on each side. The door-posts of some of the huts are ornamented with carving executed by wood-carvers on the plains.

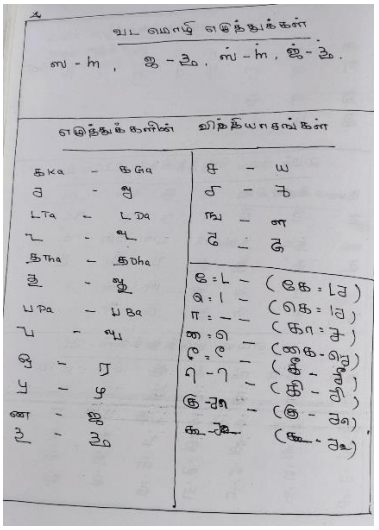
A few of the huts, and one of the forges at Kotagiri, have stone pillars sculptured with fishes, lotuses, and floral embellishments by stone carvers from the low country. It is said that Kurguli (Sholur) is the oldest of the Kota villages and that the Badagas believe that the Kotas of this village was made by the Todas. The Kotas settlement consists of three streets or keries, At Kotagiri the three streets are named Kilkeri, Nadukeri, and Melkeri which denotes the lower, central, and upper streets. People belonging to the same Keri may not intermarry, as they are supposed to belong to the same family, and intermarriage would be distasteful. A man’s Keri is determined by birth and patrilineal clan, irrespective of where they live.

LANGUAGE

The Kotas speak a mixture of Tamil and Kanarese and speak Tamil without a foreign accent which is noticeable in the case of the Badagas and Todas.







OCCUPATION

The Kotas are blacksmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, carpenters, tanners, rope-makers, potters, washermen, and cultivators. They are the musicians at Toda and Badaga funerals. It is noted by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers that" in addition, they provide for the first Toda funeral the cloak (putkuli) in which the body is wrapped and grain (patm or samai rice) to the amount of five to ten Kwa. They give one or two rupees towards the expenses, and, if they should have no grain, their contribution of money is increased. At the marvainolkedr (second funeral ceremony) their contributions are more extensive. They provide the putkuli, together with a sum of eight annas, for the decoration of the cloak by the Toda women. They give two to five rupees towards the general expenses and provide the bow and arrow, basket (tek), knife (kafkati), and the sieve called kudshmurn. The Kotas receive at each funeral the bodies of the slaughtered buffaloes, and are also usually given food." Though all classes look down on the Kotas, all are agreed that they are excellent artisans, whose services as smiths, rope and umbrella makers, etc., are indispensable to the other hill tribes. The strong, durable ropes, made out of buffalo hide, are much sought after by Badagas for fastening their cattle. The Kotas at Gudalur has the reputation of being an excellent thatcher.

The Todas claim that the Kotas are a class of artisans specially brought up from the plains to work for them. Each Toda, Badaga, Irula, and Kurumba settlement has its Muttu Kotas, who work for the inhabitants thereof, and supply them with sundry articles, called muttu, in return for the carcasses of buffaloes and cattle, ney (clarified butter), grain, plantain, etc.

The Kotas eat the flesh of the animals which they receive and sell the horns to Labbai (Muhammadan) merchants from the plains. Chakkiliyans (leather-workers) from the plains collect the bones, and purchase the hides, which are roughly cured by the Kotas with chunam (lime) and avaram (Cassia auriculata) bark, and pegged out on the ground to dry. The Kotas had a reputation for being a jack of all trades and provide services such as blacksmithing, music, leatherworking, and pottery making for other groups such as the Toda and Badagas in return for food and clothes.



Bow and arrow made out of bamboo (hand-made) placed in their home

The Kota blacksmiths make hatches, bill-hooks, knives, and other implements for the various hill tribes, especially the Badagas, and also for European planters. Within the memory of men still living, they used to work with iron ore brought up from the low country, but now depend on scrap iron, which they purchase locally in the bazaar. The most flourishing smithy in the Kotagiri village is made of bricks of local manufacture, roofed with zinc sheets, and fitted with anvil pincers, etc., of European manufacture.

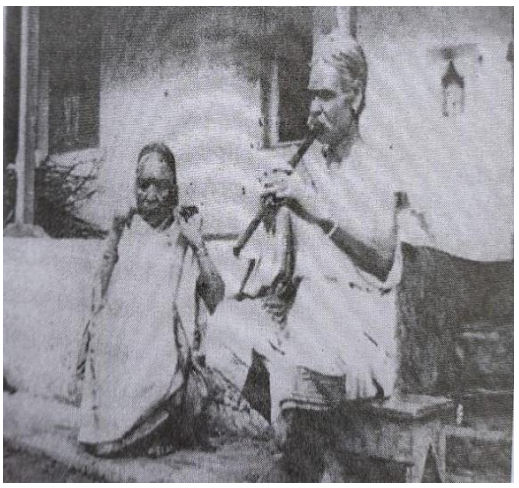
As agriculturists, the Kotas are said to be quite on a par with the Badagas, and they raise on the land adjacent to their villages crops of potatoes, bearded wheat (akki or rice Ganji), barley (beer Ganji), kirai (Amarantus), samai (Panicum miliare), korali (Setariaiialica), mustard, onions, etc. In former days, the opium of good quality was cultivated by the Badagas, from whom the Kotas got poppy heads, which their herbalists used for medicinal purposes. At the present time, the Kotas purchase opium in the bazaar and use it as an intoxicant.

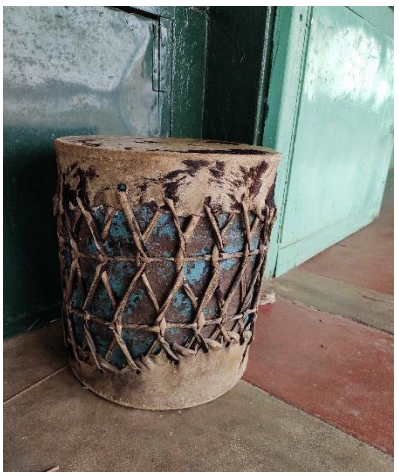


An old picture (1993) of women making pottery

The women also make baskets and rude earthen pots from a black clay found in swamps on a potter's wheel. This consists of a disc made of dry mud, with an iron spike, by means of which it is made to revolve in a socket in a stone fixed in the space in front of the houses, which also acts as a threshing floor. The earthenware vessels used by the Todas for cooking purposes, and those used in dairy work, except those of the inner room of the (sacred dairy).









Instruments are used by Kota tribes during their festivals in the kothagiri village.

Kota potters make utensils like pots, plates, cups, storage vessels, etc. Kota's pottery skill is associated with rituals. Kotas propitiate their fertility gods i.e Inor and Amnor are dedicated to Shiva and his consort Parvathi.

The Kotas go to the temple once a month, on Monday and Saturday after a new moon, according to the sight of the crescent moon. The main and a great festival of the Kotas is held in honor of (kamatraya) with the ostensible object of propitiating him with a view to his giving the Kotas an abundant harvest and general prosperity. The feast commences after the new moon day of the koodal (the beginning of the Kota yearly circle). Margazhi as per the Tamil calendar and in English the second fortnight of December or the first fortnight of January and lasts over many days, which are observed as general holidays. The ritual clay collection occurs during the main festival.

புது கோத்தகிரி கோக்கால் தேர்வ் 2021

வ. எண்	தேதி	நாள்		விஷேசம்
1	14.12.2020	தோவார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	பெர் கைசிது
2	21.12.2020	தோவார்ம்		திச் இட்டுத
3	28.12.2020	தோவார்ம்		ஊட்டும்
4	12.01.2021	அங்கிள்வார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
5	18.01.2021	தோவார்ம்		பப்பும்
6	19.01.2021	அங்கிள்வார்ம்		ஏர் இட்டுத்
7	11.02.2021	துக்ள்வார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
8	27.02.2021	தைன்	உனாவ் - பவுர்ணமி	ரங்கராமர் தேர்வ்
9	01.03.2021	தோவார்ம்		மாகாளியம்மன் தேர்வ்
10	11.03.2021	துக்ளவார்ம்		சிவராத்திரி தேர்வ்
11	13.03.2021	வெய்ள்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
12	11.04.2021	ஆச்சுவார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
13	17.04.2021	தைன்		கிரி தேர்வ்
14	20.04.2021	அங்கிள்வார்ம்		மாப்
15	26.04.2021	தோவார்ம்	உனாவ் - பவுர்ணமி	
16	03.05.2021	தோவார்ம்		உப் அச்சிது
17	11.05.2021	துக்ள்வார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
18	10.06.2021	துக்ள்வார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
19	18.06.2021	வெய்ள்		சொக்கலிகம் தேர்வ்
20	24.06.2021	துக்ள்வார்ம்	உனாவ் - பவுர்ணமி	
21	04.07.2021	ஆச்சுவார்ம்		முன்னீஸ்வரன் தேர்வ்
22	09.07.2021	வெய்ள்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
23	13.07.2021	அங்கிள்வார்ம்		வெல்லெய்த்துது
24	08.08.2021	ஆச்சுவார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவ்வாசை	
25	30.08.2021	தோவார்ம்		கிருஷணஜெயந்தி தேர்வ்
26	05.09.2021	ஆச்சுவார்ம்		ஊரைட்
27	06.09.2021	தோவார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
28	06.10.2021	புத்வார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
29	04.11.2021	துக்ள்வார்ம்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	
30	09.11.2021	அங்கிள்வார்ம்		முடுப்
31	04.12.2021	தைன்	முட்டும் - அம்மாவாசை	

Kota's festival calendar (2021).

Any rituals of Kotas begin with the participation of the Kota priest or his wife. If the ritual is male-oriented the priest will start and if it is female-oriented the priest's wife will do it. The priest to Kota is a diviner, an Oracle, who gives a collective expression to their harmony of conflict. The annual ritual obligation of the clay ceremony i.e. collection of clay and preparation of pots is an inbuilt system in the main festival. The pots made during the festival are only used to perform the rituals at the temple by priests. Earthen vessels made by Kotas are only used in the preparation of feast and offering to the God during the main festival, other ceremonies like sowing festival, harvesting festival, house warming, the salt giving ceremony to cattle, funeral, etc.



The present priest of the Temple in the village.

The Kota priesthood is represented by two classes, Munthakanon and the Therkaran of whom the former rank higher than the latter. The Munthakanons are from kilkeri and malekeri. Therkaran is from nadukeri.

The priesthood i.e. the Munthakanons must not be a widower if they lose their wives while holding the office, their appointment lapses widower Therkaran can continue to hold office till his death. When the vacancy of Munthakanon occurs, the entire people of the village gather together in front of the Temple. The eligible male members from where the vacancy arises must take a cold water bath in the stream or river. The entire village people seek the guidance of the god through Therkaran, who becomes inspired by their deity and declares the new Munthakanon. However, the new Munthakanon from Kilkeri is selected either inspired himself by their deity or through Therkaran inspired by the deity. The expenses for adornment, the construction of the cowshed, and the cost of the cow for the Munthakanon have to be borne by the community. During the swearing ceremony he may not speak to his wife or other women direct, but only through the medium of a boy, who acts as his assistant. Further, he should not sleep on a mat or other material but must lie on the ground and use only one dhuppatti as a covering. He must cook his food on his own. During this period, they abstain from meat. Cows are penned in the kraal and milked by the Munthakanon. The milk is preserved and if the omens are favorable it will not turn sour. As per the schedule of the ceremony, the male members of the community are served milk and food by the Munthakanon then another day the female members are served. If the vacancy of the Munthakanon arises after the main and the great festival of Kamatraya, a boy below the age of 12 from the Munthakanon family will act as the priest along with other Munthakanon who is alive, till the selection of new Munthakanon which will take place one month after Varlthav (Homage to ancient people) celebration.

Kotas make fire by friction (nenjkol) using a root of a tree. The fire obtained by friction is being used in the house of priesthood for all domestic purposes i.e. lighting of the lamp and cooking Lighting in the temple and other rituals, as well as social ceremonies, are to be performed by the fire obtained by the friction only. In the olden days, all the Kota people (male & female) used the stitched white cloth as a dress. After the migration of other people from nearby districts to Nilgiris, the Kota people except the priesthood started using the stitched dress. Till today the priesthood and his wife are wearing only unstitched white cloth as a dress. However other males and females have to use unstitched white cloth while performing rituals i.e. festivals and other social ceremonies. Coloured and stitched clothes such as shirts, underwear, and innerwear are prohibited during rituals for both males and females. Priesthoods are prohibited to wear colored dresses, underwear, innerwear, woolen blankets, colored bed sheets, and footwear. Also, priests are prohibited to attend funerals of other communities. Normally the younger should get blessings from the elders. However, the priesthoods can bless anybody irrespective of age. If a common person is elder than

the priesthood, he cannot bless the priesthood. Every household should separate plates and tumblers for Priesthood and those items should not be used by others.

As per tradition, the male member should have a mustache and tuft, the tuft is to be tied with a white tread with a small ball. The ball is made out of cloth or metal which contains five metals, dry cow dung, and three types of thorn. The first tuft is commenced after the age of 12 and the ritual ceremony of the same is performed by the priest at his residence. In the modern world except for the priesthood, most of the male members have haircuts but continue to have the holy ball tied with white thread around the neck. It is a must for every male member, above 12 years to wear a holy ball tied with white thread gold rings on the ears and a silver ring at the time of performing the ritual ceremonies.



Holy temple of Kotas

At the age of around 12 or before the puberty of a girl Munthelurvith's function was conducted. After attaining puberty Mandochivint function was conducted for the girl, by ornamenting with bangles made out of silver, shell, and brass, glass bead necklets, silver rings, and Mandooy, made out of bunches of green twigs with leaves of a plant tied in the hair. The ladies must always wear the mandoov, bangles, and silver rings, and wearing the above three are compulsory during the ritual ceremonies.

Hierarchy of the Kota community -First the Munthakanon who is in charge of the Inor, Second the Munthakanon who is in charge of Amnor. The third is the widower Munthakanon, the Fourth the Therkaran, the Fifth the Village Headman(Gothkaran) then the elder according to the age of the person. As per practice prevailing at Kothagiri village the holding charge of Inor and Amnor are rotated among the Munthakanons every year during the end of the main and great festival of Kamatraya.

As per the Kota calendar, the month starts at the first sight of the crescent after the new moon day. The New Year of Kotas commences after the new moon day of the Koodal (Kota month), which falls in Margazhi as per the Tamil calendar and in English the second fortnight of December or the first fortnight of January. The name of the months is Koodal, Aalanni, Nallani, Ani, Adi, Adhar, Avanni, Perttathi, Thoddeevili, Kirdeevli, Thai, and Pemmatti.

All traditional festivals are performed as per Tribal culture-rituals are performed with Samai, Avarai, Ghee, and wheat only. No image/vigram is inside the temple. All the traditional functions are started /participation of the Munthkanon. The duties of the Munthkanon are service to the god, milking of the cow, and participation in the seed-sowing and harvesting/reaping ceremonials. Munthakanons are not allowed to work for others, but may do so on their own account in the fields or at the forge(smith).



Samai rice with rajma prepared during the festival

On or the earlier day of the new moon day of Koodal the purification of the houses is done to prepare for the celebration of the main and great festival is celebrated in honor of Kamatraya which will last for a fortnight during which homage is offered to God every evening and dance at night according to music played, performed around the fire kept burning continually putting long bundles of brushwood. This homage offering starts on the first Monday of Koodal month. Tuesday clay collection ceremony along with music and dance. The women continue to make Earthen vessels for rituals. Homage offering and dance are continued till next Tuesday night. On the sixth day, i.e. Saturday selected members in eleven numbers will go to and collect bamboo and cane for the

reroofing of the temple. In the evening, a stone in a natural globe shape weighing about 200 kg kept behind the temple is rolled to the front of the temple and purified by Therkaran. The eleven persons who fetched the bamboo and cane will stand around the stone and all the village people including the priesthood offer the prayer then the eleven persons simply touch the bottom of the stone, and the stone raises in the air and after reaching some level it drops itself. The general prosperity of the year is decided by the height of the stone that came in the air. All the male members are to sleep in a temporary shelter made out of wood and green bushes in front of the temple for three nights i.e. Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Seventh-day, the only once a year all the male members who have undergone the tuft ceremony and wearing the sacred ball with white tread are allowed to enter the temple.

The day is spent reroofing and decorating the temple and it is essential to work should be completed before nightfall and dance to continue at night.



Dance performed by male members during the festival.

On the eighth and ninth days, the priests and all the male members will cook the samai rice and avarai (rajma) sambar. Avarai is boiled and salt is added but no other ingredients like chilly and other masalas are added to the sambar. The preparation is made in the earthen vessels manufactured by themselves and done in a place demarked in the temple area. In the evening the rice, sambar, and ghee are offered to God, and worship/prayer by the entire village people is followed. The food is served first to the priests, and then to all village people, seated around the temple. Then dance in the night the same process will continue on Tuesday also. Preparation of food and offering to God done

in a single day or two days in alternative years. Every ritual is performed along with different music played. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday the Munthkanon will not speak to his wife or any other women directly. Hence ladies are prohibited to appear before Munthkanon on these three days. Tuesday night after night dance a special ritual is conducted by the priests and leading members of the community. Wednesday morning the priests construct a forge and furnace within the temple and make something in way of his avocation and offer up a parting prayer to the god and the rituals are at the end. During the daytime, an elaborate dance is performed, in which men dress like a king to establish their original status before the arrival of the British. Ladies also dance and take part in kummi and the festival is at the end. Originally on the following Monday, the Bubm was celebrated.



Female members are making sweets for the male members during the festival.

The male members used to play games on the ground and female members were preparing feasts along with sweets made out of wheat flour and ragi flour. At the time sunset offerings were made to God at individual houses with the food and the sweets made out of Ragi and all the family members worship the God in their house itself and eat the food. After that, food is offered to the entire community. The Therkaran leads to accepting the offer and followed by others everybody should visit all the houses and eat a small quantity of food and the sweet. The Munthakanons cannot participate in this process because for the entire month of Koodal the Munthakanons are permitted to take food only from their home. Outside food even from own Kota community to Munthkanon is prohibited. In later days the Kota community felt that they wanted to offer them food and sweets prepared in their houses to Munthakanons also and decided to postpone the Bubm celebration to next month to enable the Munthkanon to accept the community people's offer Accordingly the Munthkanons leads the process and followed by others as per hierarchy mentioned above.

The seed sowing ceremony was conducted on the first Tuesday of the third month as per the original schedule. However, the same is also advanced to the second month along with the bubm. On Monday, after the feast dance is performed the night. Tuesday morning the seed sowing ceremony is conducted and in the daytime, dance follows. Goddess, the earth is giving all the lively hood to the people and the Mapu (not doing any work on the field) is observed on three occasions. First in the sixth month, second and third in the seventh month. Mapu is observed on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. The cows play an important role in the life of Kotas. It is essential for the care of cows. To prevent the disease, the cows are provided with saltwater along with three types of green twigs which have them take care of medicine value during the sixth month.

In the eighth month, the harvesting ceremony is conducted. The seed sowing and harvesting ceremonies are given importance as the main festival. These three ceremonies are treated higher than any other ceremonies. No pollution is allowed during these three ceremonies. Appointment of village headman i.e. either allowing the existing village headman to continue or selection of new headman is conducted on the First Tuesday of the tenth month. On this day land tax is being handed over to the village headman. During this month Varlthav, paying homage to ancient people conducted and it starts after the Full moon and ends before the new moon. Long ago this ceremony is being discontinued by Kothagiri village and other villages are continuing the same.

A red flag was tied to the top of a bamboo pole to be hoisted as a signal of death in the village. The death of a person is declared by the community by beating the drum in front of the house where the death took place. During the lifetime the person is an individual and after the death, the body

becomes common to the community. The message is being sent out to other villages. Male members of the community obtain wood and bamboo from the forest to construct a funeral car (Ther), an elaborate structure about twenty feet in height in four tiers. The village people and relatives from other villages continue to mourn with music. The corpse is kept on a wooden cot under the car. The relative of the dead man presents rice on the back of a pony which was paraded around the car. As a tribute of respect to the dead man, the firewood for cremation is offered by the village and other expenses are also borne by the village. The corpse on the wooden cot was set to fire along with dismantled car and other offerings such as iron implements, baskets of grain, rice, cakes, etc. On the day following the funeral, the smoldering ashes are extinguished with water, and homage is offered by three persons each from different keris. Milk is also poured by the same three people on the earth where the body was cremated. Food for the entire village and guests is prepared by the village and served, first to the three people who performed rituals at the cremation point then to all. In the evening the cleaning of the house and bathing in the river/stream concludes the ceremony. The Kotas as a rule have only one wife and polyandry is unknown among them. The man can have more than one wife if a woman bears no children or presented him with a daughter only. If they can get on together without fighting, all the wives may live under the same roof.

Kotas betrothal and marriage ceremonies are very simple in nature. A wife selected for a lad by his parents, subject to the consent of the girl's parents. The boy goes, accompanied by his father and mother, to the house where the girl lives. The boy's father expresses his desire to have the marriage between his son and the girl. The father of the girls seeks consent from the girl/bride, if she answers affirmative, the boy/bridegroom prostrates himself at the feet of the future father-in-law and presents with a four anna piece and seals the contract. The bridegroom pays the dowry according to his status to the bride's father and takes the bride to his house, where the wedding guests are feasted. On the appointed day preferably on or after the fourth day of marriage the married couple accompanied by the bridegroom's relatives, attend a feast at the house of the bride. The next day a feast at the bridegroom's residence is arranged for the couple's relatives. Divorce may be obtained for incompatibility of temper, drunkenness, or immorality. The divorce takes in the girl's house with witnesses from the village people. After divorcing the man as well the woman is allowed to marry any other person of choice.

When a married woman is known to be pregnant with her first child, her husband allows the beard to grow and leaves nails uncut. The delivery takes at a separate house in the village constructed for this purpose and for menstruating women to stay during the menstrual period. That house is divided into two rooms called Thelval and kunpai. Both the rooms are used by menstruating women during

the menstrual period. However, the kunpais are only used for delivery purposes. The woman and baby continue to live in the kunpai for three days with the help of elderly women. Her husband brings five leafy twigs of five different thorny plants. With each twig sticks of a bush called vallari are set alight with the fire made out of friction and placed separately in a row. The woman carrying the baby has to walk backward between the thorny twigs and enter the home. After this, the husband can remove the beard and cut the fingernails. The delivery of the child must take place at the place of the husband and the expenses towards the delivery should be borne by the husband or members of the husband. Delivery taking place at the place of the father-in-law and bearing the expenses by in-laws is considered a shame and source of disgrace to the husband and his family members.

Menstruating women during their menstrual period remain in seclusion for two days in Thelval and one day in kunpai and pass another day in the verandah of her house, or two days if the husband is a priest.

The naming ceremony is conducted after one or two months according to the appearance of the crescent moon by the elderly person of the family. In-laws must offer some ornaments to the child according to their status. In-laws' family members also must present firewoods for their daughter. The general name of the first male child always called Kamto denotes Kamatraya. The name of the first female child is Mathi, one of the synonyms of a goddess.

If a person constructs a dwelling house for him to reside in, the maternal uncle to share the cost of building at least by providing materials for one side roof. The maternal uncle has to perform the rituals at the time of the housewarming ceremony. At the time of the ear boring ceremony of a child, the maternal uncle has to borne the cost of earrings and the baby should sit on the maternal uncle at the time of ear boring.

The recognized place of worship in the Kothagiri village consists of a large square of ground, walled round with loose stones, three feet in height, thatched roofs made out of bamboo, cane, and bush in two pent shapes on the sculptured stone pillars, three in front and three in behind. The original date of construction of the worship place is unknown. As stated above during the festival the reroofing was done on yearly basis. No image of any sort is visible in the worship place. Though no representation thereof is exhibited in the worship place at ordinary times, God’s spirits are believed to pervade the temple. In 1908 the Kotas were forcefully evicted by the British people from Kothagiri and Kotas became refugees in their homeland. The land belonging to Kotas was occupied by other people without any sale deed from the Kota people. The British people destroyed all houses/huts of the Kotas, however, did not destroy the Kota temple at Kothagiri, even after settling

away from Kothagiri, Kotas continue to perform rituals at Kothagiri temple. Early 19th century Kotas constructed the present temple at Kothagiri with funds mobilized through the general public and continue to perform the rituals to date (2022).

Even though Kotas live in seven villages, the above study is written based on the prevailing rituals, culture, and socio-economic problems faced by the people at kothagiri.



A picture was taken with the Kota family in front of their home.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The researcher suggests certain plans which may be considered by the concerned departments of the Government and the policymakers for the better implementation of the developmental programs according to the specific needs of the Tribes and to improve the quality of living of the tribal people and to bring about change in their life.
- Community organization, a method of social work can be applied in order to bring about holistic development.
- Sponsorship of micro credit facilities through proper and constructive terms with the focus on poverty alleviation. Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Debt relief legislation and Legal aid.
- The promotion of tribal educational needs a fresh approaches and revised strategies in new directions.
- The planners and policy makers should focus on the enhancement of quantity **is as well** as quality aspects for tribal education.
- Raising their productivity in agricultural and allied activities and stipulation of employment in all period.

- The policy measures of 'Primitive Tribal peoples' social and economic development must necessarily start from 'Primitive Tribal peoples' own description and pointer of poverty and wellbeing.
- Appropriate legal and administrative support will prove anti-exploitative measures for the tribes.
- Social workers should campaign on the significance of health and education.
- Social workers should lobby to bring about policy changes to the tribes
- Inclusive policy can be brought up which may help them to understand the different cultures.
- Frequent forest treks can be organized for the schools around the city which may help the tribes to get motivated to lead a better life.
- Government should take initiative for the awareness programs on the development schemes to the Tribals.
- Government would be organized various skill development training programme for the implement development schemes.
- Government would identify the real loop whole for faliureness of the implement of the development schemes.
- The financial assistance for the Tribals under various schemes of Governments Plans should also have been made in consultation with the beneficiaries to give honour and importance to their specific needs.
- At first identify the basic need of the tribals, then allocated the schemes.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the study finds the importance of the government and non-government organization's efforts in developing the tribal group in the villages of Nilgiris. The impact of non-Governmental organization seems to be more useful in their livelihood of the tribal groups while the impacts of government schemes are seen in the education. But, still, it is found that the far distance is to be travelled to unwind the gap of health needs and resources.

The tribal peoples irrespective of such development lack basic and primary knowledge of their rights. Lack of proper awareness drives also contributes in most cases in failing to understand the modern steps taken by the government for their welfare. This lack of awareness also indulges corruptive tendencies amongst the officials of the government departments. Formal complaints, because of their lack of knowledge of any rights given to them by such schemes are far and few leaving them as one of the most deprived set of peoples in India, perhaps looking for a miracle as good as a revelry to save them. Needless to say, huge indigenous and traditional knowledge has become extinct and the remaining are on their way to extinction.

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