

A STUDY ABOUT THE PROPERTY RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN THE GYPSY COMMUNITY IN THOOTHUKUDI, TIRUNELVELI DISTRICTS.

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Abstract

This paper focused the studies about the Property Rights of Gypsy Women in Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli districts. According to our Indian constitution each religion has separate Act for the property rights for women. Like that the Gypsies women also have rights in their property. But their life and living conditions, behavior is totally different from other community people. The Gypsy is a word derived from the Europe which means nomad people. In Tamil Nadu we call them as “Narikuravar” it means hunting the “jackal or fox”. In India the Gypsies or Narikurvar people generally called nomadic people. They do not have any permanent resident or shelter to live. They are migrating to one place to another place for their job. In olden days their main occupation is hunting the wild animals and birds for their survival. These Narikuravar people belong to the Marginalized community in the society. These people faced much discrimination in the aspects of education, employment and economic, access of health care practices. There is another name for this people are kuruvikaran and vagirivala which comes under the common name Narikuravar.

Keywords: Property rights, Indian constitution, living condition, Narikuravar, Marginalised community, discrimination, education, employment, economic, health care practices.

INTRODUCTION

In ancient days they went to the forest and hunting the wild animals to survive but now-a-days the government not allowed them to enter into the forest. Still now many complaints are registered on these narikuravars hunting rare species of birds for their food or any other else. And they are doing the job like making ornaments and selling them to

people to selling their ornaments in the festivals, tourist places, and various religious pilgrimages throughout the country. Their children also accompany with their parents to selling the ornaments. They occupy bus stands in all the places to sell their ornaments. And also they used to collect honey from the trees, prepare herbal oil for the medicine, knife making, etc. All the family members joined together to do work and due to this reason the children can't able to go school which is unfortunate for them to get access for education.

In previous generation the girl child got married before they attain the puberty at the age of 10 years itself. Now they got married after they attain puberty and they married within their group and relatives only. In their community they organized into two clans one is "gujarato" who sacrifice of buffaloes and another one is "mevado" who sacrifice goats. They don't marry within the same clan because they are brothers and sisters, but the gujarato married mevado people. Women in the narikuravar community not have any awareness about marriage. In their community they like to give birth of number of children at least they want two girl and two boy children. The mother-in-law gave respected to their daughter-in-law according to their children.

According to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, there are two main objectives (i) Good Health and Well-being and (ii) Reduced Inequalities. To providing appropriate and equitable property access and other needful things for their life because these peoples were come under the vulnerable groups in the society as Global level. However there are many changes and development happened in the world but still now the gypsies not able to access education, occupation, health care facilities and other government identities in the society. Due to their illiterate the gypsy peoples difficult to access health care practices which are given in the Hospital. They can't able to understand our treatment practices. In some hospitals the Doctors afraid to give treatment to them due to their bad behavior. In 20th century these gypsy peoples don't have any permanent place or residence to live. They are nomads and they migrated from one place to another due to their Occupational reason. But in the 21st century they made some changes in their life because they need some development in their life like general people. They have vehicles like motorcycle, used modern technology Laptop for their occupation tattoo, Smart Phones, Electric stoves for cooking, etc. Any way they are still facing some problems like discrimination, inequalities, etc.

Property Rights of Women: Property Rights include the legal rights to acquire own, sell and transfer property, collect and keep rents, keep ones wages, make contracts and bring law suits. Every woman has rights and acquires and holds property for herself in her own names. Women's property and inheritance rights are one of the most important significant determinants of the women status. Property rights of women also vary depending on the status of the women in the family and in the society. Women property rights have proven largely ineffective in promoting their positions. Women's access to position of influence, power, or decision making within many societies and within the household is limited due to their lack of access of land and property rights.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "I, therefore, want the women of India not to believe they weak and give up their rights and privilege of protection their progeny. It is sheer ignorance to call woman weak. May be she has been so called simply in order to impress upon the male his duty towards her, to tell him that, being physically the stronger, he must not be a monster and, in his pride, oppress woman who is weak, but that, on the contrary he must do her service by protecting her".

In Oxford English Dictionary 23, "property means the condition of being owned by or belonging to some person or persons; hence, the fact of owing the thing, the holding of something as one's own; the right to the possession, use or disposal of anything (usually of a tangible material thing)". The property may be moveable and immovable, corporeal and incorporeal, tangible and intangible property, intellectual property, etc. According to section 22 of the Indian penal code,²⁷ the term moveable property is defined as property which is not immoveable property.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Rajathurai Nishanthi (2016) studied the socio-economic condition of narikuravar community people. The people follow only Hindu religion and most of the people have primary level of education. The people have lack of awareness about the education, poverty, child marriage and health activities. Still now these people are discriminated in the education and employment.

D. Kirubanithi and K. Raj Mohan Rao (2015) studied about the Socio-economic condition of narikuravar community They faced many problems in the economic status in

the society. Due to occupation these people mobility their family from one place to another place wherever the festivals happened and bus stands in all the districts. Because of this social movement the people affected in socio-economic; geographical or demographical identity of themselves. They are discriminated in education and employment so that there is no development in their economic status in the society.

Arafat Hosen Khan (2019) study about the access of property rights of women in Bangladesh. If there is a law for the women inheritance of rights in all the religions, still now the women inherit property right less than men. The women's property and inheritance rights are now a major human rights issue that challenges development and women's empowerment in Bangladesh. If many laws and policies are established by the government, still now there is an inequality and discrimination are present among the gender in the society.

Dr. R. Sathiya Bama and Dr. N. Neela (2014) studied about the property rights of women in the Hindu Succession Act 1937. The act bringing a meaningful change in the widow of the Hindus. The rights of daughter, mother, widow and the sister in the family can claim the equal rights of property left by their father, husband and son. The researcher explained detailed about the changes in the Succession Act, Provisions of the Act, Effect and Defects of the Act in the paper. Thus finally, the gender discrimination has been removed to a larger extent to the Act 1956.

B.Ratna kumara (2015) explained about the Property Rights of Dalit women particular in Andrapradesh. In this society the property rights for women become a great challenge. Property rights of Indian women are unequal and unfair. Due to the higher caste people there is lack of access to assets strongly inhibited their chanced at economic mobility. Socially and politically, the dalits economy is powerless in the society. The dalit women faced many problems education, employment, and violence and property rights. Indian women still continue to get less right in property than men, both in terms of quality and quantity.

Sule Toktas and Mary Lou O'Neil (2013) concluded the women's ownership of property is a keystone to improving women's status in the society. The set of beliefs and values in the society doesn't support the women property rights in their life. In their village the men dominated the property rights and the women's ownership of rights seems to be

very invisible in this society. If the property rights are given to them the women be empowered in the society. Thus the women's property rights and empowerment always link with each other. If the empower of women be increased the economic status of women also be developed in the country.

Muhammed Atheeque P.P, Rajathurai Nishanthi (2016) study on Narikurava community and brought out their unique way of life style. Presently Narikuravar Community is in a very pathetic condition as they are subjected to various kind of discrimination, living in a poor socio, economic and health conditions. Majority of this community people have primary level education. It is because lack of proper settlement in one place, lack of educational institution in their area, poverty, child marriage, negligence of government and lack of awareness about important of the education.

Klaus Deininger, Aparajita Goyal and Harhat (2010) study is the first attempt in the economic literature to estimate the impact of legislative changes in inheritance rights on women's lives in India. It shows that while more gender equal inheritance rights did lead to positive effects for women, it did not fully eliminate the underlying gender inequality. While developing countries continue to improve equality of economic opportunity for women, inheritance law remains strongly biased against women in many societies.

Nitya Rao (2005) explains women's property inheritance is very important to reduce poverty and enhance productivity and those that seek to empower women in different development progress. This study assesses progress towards gender equality and rural poverty reduction through women's control over land and identities a few key policy in options in main streaming gender in development programmes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

In Gender based studies many researcher found a lot of findings through their research in the society. In Gypsy community also like wise most of the studies are available regarding women empowerment, gender discrimination and gender inequality. But there are only scanty of literature available regarding the property inheritance of women among the gypsy community because the community people not having any property before few years back. Recently in the Gypsy community people have some

property like house, land, jewels, government houses. They feel that if they have some property in their own they can treat respectively like other community in the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To know about the socio-economic status of the women in Gypsy communities.
- To identify whether the Gypsy women's have awareness about the property inheritance in their society.
- To find out the Gypsy women's had the property inheritance in their families.
- To know about the kinds of property of Women among the Gypsy communities.
- To find out the equal rights of property of Gypsy women inheritance rights.

AREA OF THE STUDY:

The present study was conducted among the married women from the Gypsy community people in the Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts. Tirunelveli is about 2000 years old and is a town of old tradition. Tirunelveli was the capital of the Pandya Kingdom for some time, next to Madurai. The other name for Tirunelveli is Halwa city and the Oxford of South India. Thoothukudi is very famous for salt pan and fishing occupation. The other name for Thoothukudi is the pearl city and more than many years before Thoothukudi is famous for pearls and the fisher man only took the pearls from the deep sea by their own breath control.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE:

The Investigator selected 119 respondents on the basis of Simple Random Sampling for the present study. There are totally 119 families in the Thoothukudi –New bus stand and Tirunelveli – Pettai and Valliyoor.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:

Data were collected using the interview schedule .Based on the objectives of the study the interview schedule was formulated to get the relevant information from the people. Besides the interview schedule, observation was also made use of the study about the community.

Primary Data were collected by interview method from 119 married women from the selected areas.

The study was carried out more than one month and the researcher personally went to the field to conduct interview with the respondents. Observation method was also very helpful in getting supplementary information. It took about more than an hour to collect the information from each respondent.

FINDINGS:

The respondents belong to the Gypsy (Narikuravar) community women. The number of respondents taken for the study is 119 women from the age group of 15 to 45. Totally there are 119 Narikuravar families living in the Pettai town in Tirunelveli, Valliyoor, New bus stand in Thoothukudi District. Nearly half of the respondent (42.8%) belong to the 15 - 25 age group, nearly half of the respondents (42.8%) belong to 26 - 35 age group and few respondents (14.3%) between the age group of 36 to 45. One fifth of the respondents (22%) are illiterate, less than half of the respondents (36%) are primary educated and nearly half of the respondents (42%) completed secondary level education.

Half of the respondents (59%) are selling beats during the festival times and also doing it as a daily routine in the bus stands. One fifth of the respondents (29 %) selling fancy items in their two wheelers. Very few respondents (2%) engaged in the Tattoo and (7%) of them are Honey taking and (2%) of the respondents are involving in hunting birds. Most of the respondents (68%) are earned 100 to 500 rupees per day. One fifth of the respondents (20 %) earned between 501 to 1000 rupees, (8 %) of the respondents are earned 1001 – 2000 rupees and (2%) of the respondents earned more than 2000 rupees per day and one percent of the respondent not have any work.

Nearly half of the respondents (40%) are living in the Government house, nearly one fifth of the respondents (13%) have their own house, 1 percent of the people living in the rental system and (45%) of the respondents are living in tent base housing status. Very few respondents (9 %) have the savings remaining (91%) of the people doesn't have any savings but all the people have bank pass book. The reason of the account opening was to get loan in the bank for their occupation. Most of the respondents (86%) are migrated

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from one place to another place due to their occupation, few respondents (14 %) are not migrated to any other places. Most of the respondents (93 percent) have Aadhaar card, Voter card, Smart and Ration card for them. Only few of them (7 %) not have any identity cards for them. Most of the respondents (54 %) have the property. One fifth of the respondents (46%) not have any property they were very poor than other peoples in the area. One fifth of the respondents (13%) have their own house and (40%) of the respondents have the Government shelter provided by the government, very few of the respondent (3%) have the jewels as the property and Half of the respondents (51%) not have any property for his own. Nearly Half of the respondents (46 %) have the awareness about the property rights of them in their community.

More than half of the respondents (54%) doesn't have awareness about the property rights in their community. One fifth of the respondents (27 %) have rights about their property in the family. More than half of the respondents (73 %) have no rights in the property. Less than one fifth (13%) of the respondents have the property of their parents' house. Very few 3 percent of the respondents have jewels, Nearly Half of the respondents (48%) don't got property from their parents, Half (51 %) of the respondents don't have any property. Most of the respondents (46 %) are felt that they don't have equal share in their parents' property, one fifth of the respondents (20%) felt that they have the equal share in their parents' property.

The other findings that the men and women in the gypsy (Narikuravar) communities Education, Occupation, Income, Housing Status, Migration, Savings and the Property rights of the women in the community. First thing the Gypsy communities living in the Nuclear family type, but their parents are living nearby houses only. All the Gypsies women have more than three children's because then only they were respected by their parents. After the girl child attended puberty within one or two years the girl child got married within their family relations. Among the 119 families only two families the women got married in other caste men. In Gypsy community there are only two clans one clan of the gypsies worshiped Kalli god and other clan of people worshiped Meenakshi God. These people don't marry within the same clan. The people those who worship Kalli god took bride or groom from the opposite clan those who worship Meenakshi god. The religious wise classification of the respondents presents a high ratio of Hindu religion than

Christianity. There is no any Muslim follower. It is because original religion of Narikurava was only some customs but since it is considered in Hindu religion they are called Hindus.

The gypsy community people don't give importance to the education. No one studied above 8th standard, so many of them doesn't know how to write their names itself. Even though they were discriminated from the other people because of their illiterate they don't care about it. They were discriminated to access the health care. Because of their life style and habits the education also denied for them in the society. The gypsy community people migrated from one place to other place due to their occupation. Long years back in the period of Former Chief Minister Dr.MGR there are more than 450 to 500 families lived in the Tirunelveli Pettai after some years they were migrated to Valliyoor, Alagupandiyapuram, Tuticorin and some other places in the Tamil Nadu. But few of them 14 percent respondents living more than two generations.

According to them their god statue only the first property, second property their children's. In their community the married women have the respect due to their number of children gave birth if they don't have children, they were not respected by the other people even though their relations itself discriminated them. All married women have at least three children in their life then only their mother-in-law or father-in-law gave respect to them. The god statue made by Silver or copper and that belong to elder son in their family. The elder son only responsible for other younger sons in the family. The elder son took of the house and he gave the amount equally for his two younger sisters (on the day before one year back what value for the house he divided that amount and given to me and my sister).

At last, the few respondent's parents told that in our community most of us give respect to women because they have a strong mind and strong body, the women supported their husbands or parents very much. Even a 7years old girl child took care of her born baby and do whatever house work that is cleaning vessels, keeping home neatly, washing clothes all the work the small girl child do it very easily and they are very helpful to their parents. One big drawback is they doesn't give importance to education that's all but our girl children are very clever and smart. So we respect them and former generation they don't have any property to them because in our community we don't got any dowry we only put jewels or gave money for the bride for this reason we don't gave property to the

women. From the study one thing is very clear that is the parents gave respect to the women. Due to the discrimination of the general people, they don't able to access employment, health care services, etc.

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