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**GENDER BIAS; AS A STAGNATION OF WOMEN STATUS AMONG  
KERALA TRIBE**

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### **Introduction**

- Women have special internal connection with the environment
- The cornerstone of the social structure
- But ,they are debarred from performing customary practices
- The impact of modernization, cultural transition and non-tribal migrations
- Fundamental problems

### **Tribal Women Status**

- Level of income, employment, education, health and roles within the family, the community and society.
- The tribal women lag behind tribal men in many socioeconomic characteristics
- Literacy rate (illiteracy rate was 32% for men and 41% for women)
- Education at the school level for boys was higher than for girls
- There are more widows (10%) than widowers (2%).
- About 45% of women were unemployed, whereas only 32% of the men were unemployed.
- The average pay for men was Rupees 68 whereas for women, it was Rupees 40.

### **Economical status**

- The status of the tribal women usually depends on the economic roles they play
- Forest dwellers , the food-gathering economy and production of for self-consumption and sale
- Provisions for the basic necessities like food, fuel, medicine, housing material etc
- Large scale deforestation
- More tribal societies follow matrilineal pattern of inheritance, but, sharp distinction is made between 'ownership' and 'control'.
- While owner ship of land is transmitted through women, control invariably lies with men

### **Role of women in Family**

- Tribal women have more responsibility in family decision
- They control over production, home, children and even her life
- Major production prepare food and provide drinking water
- Minor products including edible fruits, tubers, flowers, vegetables and berries.
- The collection of Minor forest produce is contributing around 70% of their total income.
- As a result of deforestation and less fertile soil, women's workload has increased, food supply has decreased and their health and social status have deteriorated.
- **Descent system;** Most of the tribes in Kerala follow a patrilinear system

### **Health and malnutrition**

- Many tribal women and children die of malnutrition
- The environmental degradation and decline in the availability of minor forest produce
- Decline in the quality and quantity of food and the non-availability of many medicinal Roots
- The non-availability of primary health center and Advanced checkups and treatments
- Lack of health education and little medical attention
- Ignorance and superstitious beliefs

### **Educational status of tribal women**

- Modernization and industrial impact and managing social and natural change
- Education can bring changes and development
- But According to the 1991 Census, nearly 70 per cent of the tribes are illiterates.
- Illiteracy rate was 32% for men and 41% for women
- There are many reasons for low level of education among the tribal people:
- Formal education is not considered necessary and the role Superstitions and myths
- .more importance for their pleasure such as dance, music and other entertainments
- Indifferent attitudes of tribal parents and tribal teachers and tribal students
- Poverty and extra helping hands.
- No any special interest of the formal schools for the children.
- Interior location and remote areas where teachers would not like to go from outside.

## **Migration and Cultural transition**

- The destruction of the environment ,increasing pressure from the village and migration to other region
- deterioration of economical status
- in the absence of men, exploitation of moneylenders, businessmen and landlords.
- With low literacy, tribal women face cheating in weighing and pricing and sexual exploitation.
- Large-scale immigration of non-tribe caused to increase many unwed mothers in tribal areas just like wayanad district
- Imitation of western culture and degeneration of tribal culture and tribal arts such as dance, music and different types of craft.
- Complications for women to adjustment.
- The majority of the tribal women had not reaped any particular benefit from the technological development that was taking place.
- Children were badly handicapped by the corrosive effect of poverty as well as by the prejudices of the non-tribes

### **Customs and women**

- Tribal communities have some clannish customs associated with social institutions such as religion and marriage.
- They believe such costume as part of their identity.
- But its consequence caused to brutal punishment as honor killing and boycott from social activities.
- The Muthuvan tribe in the forests of Edamalakkudy, has customs a Valpura,
- Their monthly periods. using the cheap PILL continuously for many years to escape disabling isolation every time they menstruated

### **Livelihood issues of tribal women**

- The major livelihood issues of tribal women as perceived by tribal women and other non-tribal respondents
  - The poverty, alcoholism, wild animal menace in agricultural lands, land alienation, inadequacy of food as per nutritional requirement, addiction to narcotics, depletion of natural resources like forest and water bodies,

- inadequate transport facilities, inadequate educational facilities, inadequate medical facilities, social exclusion and discrimination

### **Women empowerment**

- The success of dynamic tribal development is dependent on various factors
  - Improved literacy rate, socio-economic status, women's empowerment, better health care and other human resource indicators.
- The programmers, oriented towards the empowerment of tribes, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status