

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ASH-2023-11016281

Volume: 11

Issue: 1

Month: July

Year: 2023

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 25.04.2023

Accepted: 18.06.2023

Published: 01.07.2023

Citation:

Vinoth. VS. et al.
“Effectiveness of Individual
Intervention on the Level
Self Esteem Among
Muthuvan Tribal Women in
Adimali Gramapanchayath
of Idukki District, Kerala.”
*Shanlax International
Journal of Arts, Science
and Humanities*, vol. 11,
no. 1, 2023, pp. 26-37.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.34293/
sijash.v11i1.6281](https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11i1.6281)



This work is licensed
under a Creative Commons
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0
International License

Effectiveness of Individual Intervention on the Level Self Esteem Among Muthuvan Tribal Women in Adimali Gramapanchayath of Idukki District, Kerala

VS. Vinod

*Research Scholar, Department of Sociology
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India*

C. Karuppaiah

*Professor, Head and Chairperson, Department of Sociology
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India*

Jiphy George

*Christ Central School
Thiruvalla, Kerala, India*

Abstract

India is a country that is home to a large number of tribes. These tribes are spread across the country and are a diverse lot, with each tribe having its own unique culture and language. Tribes are groups of people that share ancestry and cultural traditions. They usually live in small communities, which often cooperate to protect their land and resources from outsiders. Each tribe has its own customs and traditions, and members are usually fiercely loyal to their family, friends, and community. They speak the same language, often have similar cultures, and are often very religious. Whenever people hear the word 'Adivasi' or 'tribal', they immediately start thinking about scantily clad people living in the forests and many other mainstream misconceptions come to their mind! Rarely do people know the right facts about Adivasis and tribals. In Malayalam, the word Muthuvan means those who carry something on their back. It is said that they carried their children and belongings on their back during their migration to the Western Ghats, hence they were called Muthuvan. The Muthuvan are distributed in Idukki districts and in the adjoining Western Ghats of the Palakkad and Thrissur districts. They speak a dialect of their own. The patois is a debased form of Tamil. They speak to others either in Malayalam or Tamil. The Muthuvan have six matrilineal clans (Kootams), viz. Melaekootam, Kana kootam, Thushanikootam, Kanyakootam, Elli kootam and Puthanikootam with hierarchical order. Each kootam is again divided into six lineages. The functions of these divisions are mainly for marriage alliance, to keep up the social status and to indicate descent and ancestry. The Muthuvan are mainly a landowning community. In some areas, government has allotted agricultural land for them, but not on ownership basis. Traditionally the Muthuvans are nomadic agriculturists, hunters and trappers. Their primary cultivations are coffee, ginger, sugarcane and paddy. The Muthuvan are tribal religionists. The present day Muthuvans claim that they are Hindus. This study focused on effectiveness of individual intervention on the level self esteem among Muthuvan Tribal women in Adimali Gramapanchayath of Idukki District, Kerala.

Keywords: Tribals, Muthuvan Community, Muthuvan Women, Self Esteem

Introduction

The tribes in India form an important part of the total population. It represents an element in Indian society which is integrated with the culture mosaic of our

civilisation. The tribal population of India constitutes nearly 8 percent of the total population.

The term ‘tribe’ has a Latin root. The term ‘tribe’ is derived from the Latin word ‘tribus’ It has carried different connotations in different countries. For the Greeks the word meant fraternities, for the Romans it meant political divisions and the Irish history used the term to refer to communities having a common surname. However, in India, today, the term ‘tribe’ conveys a meaning of a bewildering and enchanting group of people who have been known by the various names from time immemorial —Vanvasi, Adivasi, Vanyajati and Adimiyati.

The present popular meaning of ‘Tribe’ in India refers to a category of people, included in the list of Scheduled Tribes. It has carried different connotations in different countries.

In none of the Indian language there were the term tribes. In India the term ‘tribe’ conveys a meaning of a bewildering and enchanting group of people. It refers to preliterate, localised social group the members of which speak a common dialect. The tribal people have been known by various names such as Adivasi, Vanavasi, Vanyajati, Adimjati, Girijan and Pahari etc. Ghurey has described them as backward Hindus.

Tribals are the people who belong to the tribes. They have been described in various ways. A tribe has been defined as a group of indigenous people with shallow history, common name, language, endogamy having distinct customs, rituals and beliefs, simple social rank and political organisation, common ownership of resources and technology. The Dictionary of Sociology defines tribe as a “social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organisation.” According to Hoebel “each tribe possesses some distinct culture that makes it off from the other tribes.” Crocker considered the tribe as “a small isolated and closely-knit society.

Wissler believed that tribe must have a specific name, unity of speech, specific territory and in breeding nature, an endogamous habit. The Imperial Gazetteer defined tribe as “a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it

might have been so.” The Indian Constitution has made important provisions for the development and welfare of the tribes. A list of tribes was adopted for this purpose. The list has been modified from time to time. In 1971, the list contained names of 527 tribes.

The people who have been listed in the Constitution and mentioned in successive presidential orders are called Scheduled Tribes. This is the administrative concept of tribe.

Constitutional Concept of Scheduled Tribe

A ‘Scheduled Tribe’ is primarily an administrative and Constitutional concept. It refers to a tribal community which is enlisted under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. According to Indian Constitution, a tribe alone can be specified as Scheduled Tribe. But at the same time, the word tribe is nowhere defined in the Constitution. Furthermore, the Constitution is also silent about the principles to be adopted for specifying a tribe as a Scheduled Tribe.

According to Article 342 of the Constitution, ” the President may with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purpose of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to State or Union Territory as the case may be”.

Thus, Article 342 only clarifies that for any ethnic group to become eligible to be specified as a Scheduled Tribe, it should necessarily be a tribe in the first place. In other words, non-tribal castes or communities are not eligible to be specified as Scheduled Tribes.

Despite the difficulties which stood in the way of identification of tribes as Scheduled Tribes there has been complete awareness about the extreme social, educational and economic backwardness of the tribal communities among the policy makers, planners and administrators of the country.

Under the Government of India Act, 1935 a list of “Backward tribes” was specified for the provinces of India. In fact the list of tribes specified under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 was

drawn by making additions to the list “Backward Tribes” under the Government of India Act, 1935.

In regard to the identification of tribes which qualify to be specified as Scheduled Tribes, the Backward Class Commission in the Preamble to their questionnaire has observed:

“The Scheduled Tribes can also be generally ascertained by the fact that they live apart in hills and even where they live in plains, they lead a separate and excluded existence, and are not fully assimilated in the main body of the people. The Scheduled Tribes may belong to any religion. They are listed as Scheduled Tribes because of the kind of life led by them.

Similarly, the Advisory Committee on the Revision of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, popularly known as the ‘Lokur Committee ‘has taken primitive traits, distinctive culture , geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the society at large and backwardness as the important criteria for testing the eligibility of a tribes as Scheduled Tribe.

Thus, in short, for specification of a tribe as a Scheduled Tribe it should fulfill the following criteria:

1. It should have its distinct language, religious beliefs and culture which should qualify to be considered as primitive.
2. It should have an isolated existence. In case it lives in close proximity to other castes or communities, it should not have assimilated with them.
3. It should be extremely backward both educationally and economically.

Problems of Tribal Communities

Issues of tribal development, integration and autonomy have confronted the indian society right from the british rule in india. Complexity of indian tribal population made the task of integration and autonomy even difficult. Ethnic tribal sub nationalism posed serious challenges and hampered the progress of the communities over the time. Autonomy is desired so that development policies are evolved to suit the tribal culture and lifestyle.

On the other hand leaving the tribal in their own state will deepen the developmental divide between

the mainstream and the tribals even deeper. Post independence the basic issue is that the integration is largely directed from above and not from below. Integration of tribes has neglected their own needs and desires. Integration has been on the terms of the mainstream society and it is also accused of benefitting the mainstream society only. The government monopoly over forests continued.

The exploitation of forests accelerated as most of the mineral resources fall in forest and tribal areas. The policy of capital intensive industrialization adopted by the indian government required mineral resources and power generation capacities that were concentrated in the tribal areas. Tribal lands were rapidly acquired for new mining and infrastructure projects. In the process tribals were displaced without any appropriate compensation or rehabilitation justified in the name of economic growth. These policies were often seen subjugating tribals and causing the degradation of the resources upon which they depended.

Land Alienation

The history of land alienation among the tribes began during british colonialism in india when the british interfered in the tribal region for the purpose of exploiting the tribal natural resources. Coupled with this tribal lands were occupied by moneylenders, zamindars and traders by advancing them loans etc. Opening of mines in the heart of tribal habitat and even a few factories provided wage labor as well as opportunities for factory employment.

But this brought increasing destitution and displacement. After the british came to power, the forest policy of the british government was more inclined towards commercial considerations rather than human. Some forests were declared as reserved ones where only authorized contractors were allowed to cut the timber and the forest -dwellers were kept isolated deliberately within their habitat without any effort to ameliorate their economic and educational standards. The expansion of railway in india heavily devastated the forest resources in india.

The government started reserving teak, sal and deodar forests for the manufacture of railway sleepers. Forest land and its resources provide the best means of livelihood for the tribal people and many tribes

including the women engage in agriculture, food gathering and hunting they are heavily dependent on the products of the forest. Therefore when outsiders exploit the tribe's land and its resources the natural life cycle of tribal ecology and tribal life is greatly disturbed.

Poverty and Indebtedness

majority tribes live under poverty line. The tribes follow many simple occupations based on simple technology. Most of the occupation falls into the primary occupations such as hunting, gathering, and agriculture. The technology they use for these purposes belong to the most primitive kind. There is no profit and surplus making in such economy. Hence there per capita income is very meager much lesser than the indian average. Most of them live under abject poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders. Indebtedness is almost inevitable since heavy interest is to be paid to these moneylenders. Banking facilities in the tribal areas are as inadequate that the tribals have been forced to rely on moneylenders.

Health and Nutrition

In many parts of india tribal population suffers from chronic infections and diseases out of which water borne diseases are life threatening. They also suffer from deficiency diseases. The himalayan tribes suffer from goiter due to lack of iodine. Leprosy and tuberculosis are also common among them. Infant mortality was found to be very high among some of the tribes. Malnutrition is common and has affected the general health of the tribal children as it lowers the ability to resist infection, leads to chronic illness and sometimes leads to brain impairment. The ecological imbalance like cutting of trees have increased the distances between villages and the forest areas thus forcing tribal women to walk longer distances in search of forest produce and firewood.

Education

Educationally the tribal population is at different levels of development but overall the formal education has made very little impact on tribal

groups. Earlier government had no direct programme for their education. But in the subsequent years the reservation policy has made some changes. There are many reasons for low level of education among the tribal people: formal education is not considered necessary to discharge their social obligations. Superstitions and myths play an important role in rejecting education. Most tribes live in abject poverty. It is not easy for them to send their children to schools, as they are considered extra helping hands. The formal schools do not hold any special interest for the children. Most of the tribes are located in interior and remote areas where teachers would not like to go from outside.

Cultural Problems

Due to contact with other cultures, the tribal culture is undergoing a revolutionary change. Due to influence of christian missionaries the problem of bilingualism has developed which led to indifference towards tribal language. The tribal people are imitating western culture in different aspects of their social life and leaving their own culture. It has led to degeneration of tribal life and tribal arts such as dance, music and different types of craft.

Concept of Private Property

The advent of the concept of private property in land has also adversely affected tribals whose community-based forms of collective ownership were placed at a disadvantage in the new system. Scheduled tribes and other traditional forest's dwellers (recognition of forest rights) act 2006 popularly known as forest rights act, 2006 tried to restore this status quo and ownership of the tribals but its implementation is not up to the mark.

In Migration

Many tribal concentration regions and states have also been experiencing the problem of heavy in migration of non-tribals in response to the pressures of development. The industrial areas of jharkhand have suffered dilution of the tribal share of population. These processes continue to prevail and have become even more powerful since the 1990s when the country was opened up for liberalization. The huge agitations in maharashtra against jaitapur

nuclear power plant and mining giant vedanta in niyamingiri in orissa are the examples of reactionary movements against policy of alienation and exploitation of the tribals.

Problem of Separatism

The divide and rule policy adopted by the british did a lot of damage to the tribal community of india. The british superimposed their own administrative patterns in the tribal areas and deprived the tribals of their traditional methods of interacting with the people. The criminal tribes act which the british introduced gave an impression that the tribals were either criminals or anti socials. The tribal groups such as kolis, mundas, khasis, and santals who fought against the british were branded as dacoits and robbers. The british also promoted missionary activities especially in the central and north eastern hills. All these activities alienated tribals which continued even in the post independent india.

Resource Exploitation

The forests of central india, particularly in the states of madhyapradesh and chhattisgarh, have long been a source of traditional livelihoods for the indigenous adivasi communities who live there. But over the past few decades, the forests have also become a source of conflict and resource exploitation. For example, in central india's stongu forest region, a 500-acre concession awarded to a private company in the 1980s has expanded to over 14,000 acres today. The company has clear-cut the forests, drained the wetlands, and grazed the area's wildlife to grow timber for export.

Gaps in Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of the tribal community, which was heavily affected by the droughts or some development projects, has been a long, difficult process. The community's main sources of livelihood, farming and animal husbandry, were severely hit by the drought. The development projects have forced the tribal people to look for other means of income generation, which has resulted in a shortage of labour in the agricultural sector. This has further added to the woes of the already marginalised tribal community.

Cultural Defacement

There is a great challenge in front of tribal communities, as they are being forced to mix up with modern society, which is leading them to lose their own culture and their habitat. "tribals" are considered the lowest class in most regions of india due to which they have faced cultural defacement, which is a huge problem of tribes in india.

Unemployment

There are numerous activities going on in the central region of the country regarding industrial and mining activities. Despite the intense industrial activity that is taking place in the central region of the indian tribal belt, a significant number of tribal people in these areas are not employed in modern enterprises. They are made to suffer on the ever expanding low wage, unconfident, temporary and impoverished labour market. according to the india human development report 2003, the poverty rate among the tribes of central india has dropped significantly. Although these people still suffer from high levels of poverty, the extent of the problem has been reduced.

Profile of Muthuvan Tribals

The present study was conducted on Muthuvan tribe of, Adimali of Idukki district. These people lead a very simple lifedepending on forest for their livelihood. The women are prohibited from having any relationship with the outside world other than the kudy. They begin consuming tobacco at an early age and their men are addicted to liquor and other intoxicants. Most of them have their own land and cultivate cardamom, pepper, tapioca etc. But cardamom and other refined products they collect are devalued and being exploited by the mediators. They are worshipping 'Maladaivam' which is originally the idol of 'Mathurameenakshi'. The Muthuvans in the Adimali belongs to the Kana and Poothanikootam. The child inherits the Kootam of mother. Dialect: The language that Muthuvans use as their medium of communication does not have a script. It is closely linked to Tamil and Malayalam. Almost all can follow Malayalam. In the schools, the medium of instruction is Malayalam.

Therefore the younger generation usually uses Malayalam more. Entertainment and Habits: The major source of entertainment is movies. Most of them have own TV in their houses. Tobacco chewing is a common practice among the Muthuvan men and women. They consider it as good for the cold climate. One practical use of tobacco is to treat leech bite especially when they work. In case of leech bite they chew the tobacco and put it on the leech which then gets detached and thus the blood flow from the wound is stopped. Alcohol consumption is also common among Muthuvans. Agriculture and Food Habits: Most of the Muthuvans have their own land. The state government has given them the land for agricultural purposes but without a deed certificate.

The main agricultural crops grown by Muthuvans are tapioca, pepper, cardamom. Muthuvans rear cattle, goat. Their food timings vary depending on their work. Their daily menu include rice, curries, tapioca, fish etc. women collect green leaves, wild vegetables, mushroom and other tubers from forest. They also collect 'rudraksha' and 'thelli' from the forest and sell it.

The Muthuvan women are hard working; they work in the field during the day time along with the men. Once, they are back in the evening from the field they cook the food. Some of them collect crab and fish from the streams. Cultural Change of Tribal Society Tribals have different social habits and cultural differences in their languages, clothing, ornaments and religion which make them who they are (Wei, 2014). But their culture is slowly eroding and its reasons are many. One reason is migration and the contact with other culture, the tribal people especially the new generation migrate to urban areas for higher education, jobs, better facilities etc. this will lead to bilingualism which led to indifference towards tribal language. Also they will imitate western culture in different aspects of their social life and leave behind their own culture.

These imitations in dressing patterns, modes of living etchaveled to the degeneration of tribal life and tribal acts. Another major problem is the disintegration of their economic system. Tribals are forest dwellers and food gatherers. Their major source of income was through the forest products. But due to various reasons like legal ban of hunting,

decreased availability and demand of forest products, climate changes etc, they cannot support themselves by depending purely on forest. As a result they have forgotten their ancient crafts and most of them are working as laborers in plantations, agricultural farms, factories, and other jobs. Politics and political parties start to influence tribal culture.

As a result of these influences, the importance of leaders like Moopan', traditional religious practices, etc got diminished. Insufficient recognition of their unique culture, closer proximity to urban lifestyles, improved roads, infrastructures technology, exposure to modern knowledge and governmental interventions are all reasons for cultural change in tribal people (Wei, 2014). These adaptation and incorporation of new ideas from elsewhere leads to the evolution of new practices within their culture and possible removal of old existing practices.

Major Findings about the Muthuvan Tribe Findings through Observation Muthuvan people are very welcoming and helping people. They welcomed the researchers whole heartily and accepted us as one among them during the entire week that we spend there. It was observed that adults, especially old people prefer to speak in their native language. But youngsters use Malayalam; this might be because they are constantly in contact with people outside the 'kudy' for various reasons like education health needs etc.

Regarding food, their daily menu includes rice, tapioca, fish, vegetables and they do not prefer junk food. Men and women chew tobacco, and there is increased use of alcohol among men. In every house there are one or two dogs, and it will accompany where ever they go. The people in the village had houses made up of palm trees. Though most of the houses were such, now only less number of such houses are found. The changes were the result of government's developmental activities. Both men and women were found interacting with others. They wear normal cloths as natives. They spend time for watching TV and speak fluent Malayalam. Most of them are having mobile phones. Even women are in possession of mobile phones. The younger population are not aware of their typical dance forms. The major threat that tribal community faced is the cultural cringe that lay foundation to most of the related issues of the community.

As the cultural cringe is very much old and related to the colonization, the challenges begin with the colonization to the extent of the present day technological advancement and development. Cultural cringe or inferiority complex about their culture add pace in people to a movement to something new without respecting the precious and age old culture of theirs. It has two way influences on tribal society. One is as a prejudiced concept, the people who claim themselves as the initiators of development and welfare of tribals hold, the enabler such as government and other agencies associated with it are example of it. The other way is, it influences directly upon the members of the community who believe in the need of a change. To such an 'other is better' attitude there come the most modern development policies of globalization and modernization where 'west is considered as best'. Everything that was introduced to them was easily accepted at the cost of neglecting a pious and distinct style of life.

This newness separated the tribals from the connection to the forests as the new culture could satisfy them to a great extent without the effort that they took earlier. These could erase some of the tribal nature from their lifestyles. Growing to consumerist style of life divorced their bond with the forest to which some of the new forest protection acts too have a role. The primitive and nomadic characteristics of this community have lost, causing extinction of the diverse approach to various fields like medicine, food, dress, first aid etc. Findings from the Interviews The story and the history of Muthuvans was also heard from them, their journey from Madura carrying the statue of Devi Meeakshi and travelled to Kerala as a result of the wrath that fell upon the city, thus getting the name as Muthuvans meaning 'carrying on the shoulders'. It was learnt from the elders of the community about the changes in the marriage that took place over time.

Against the strict and pious culture of marriage has taken an opposite style of approach where much freedom and flexibility is given to youngsters even to marry from outside the clan. The need to preserve the culture is intensely felt among the older generation of people but the new and younger people of the society are reluctant to hold back tradition and to follow

them. But the dislike of the youngsters towards it is an alarming concern for the community elders. This special group of the country has extraordinary art in dealing with the medication that too easily accessible through forest plants and other natural resources. But less attention was given for the protection of their own ways of medication that treat the sickness from the root cause. Furthermore, no measures were taken to safeguard or to provide advanced research upon them. On the other hand, mass dependence of the people on the modern medical facilities increased, providing a fast relief but not necessarily a permanent one. Surely, it has only positive impacts except downplay that has done.

Status of Muthuvan Tribal Women

The status of MUTHUVAN women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non tribals.

However, Muthuvantribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders. The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the programmes, oriented towards the

empowerment of tribals, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life. The impact of development planning needs to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of not only the socio-economic system but the entire ecosystem. Against this backdrop, the present paper reviews the emerging perspective in the context of the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women and changing paradigms of development. Preparing food and providing for drinking water is solely their responsibility so they operate closely with the forests from where they get water, fuel and minor products including edible fruits, tubers, flowers, vegetables and berries. Minor forest produce plays an important part in the tribal economy.

The different varieties are classified as plants for use in tanning, natural gums, resins and balsams, plants and seeds used in pharmacy and perfumery and tendu leaves. Firewood is also provided by forests. Since firewood gathering is done mainly by Muthuvanwomen, the interaction between forests and women gets further enhanced. Since all the duties of tribal women are connected with the forests and they look towards the forest for nature's gifts, their dependence on forests is strong and intrinsic. The tribal habitat across the world is characterized by natural surroundings, undulating plateau, hills and mountains, rivers and streams, forests and valleys and water falls. They are invariably rich in flora and fauna with innumerable species of plants, birds, insects and animals. Tribal are forest dwellers who lives in the midst of plants, trees, rocks, grass, birds, animals, rivers, fresh air and good sunshine. Their way of life is patterned according to their environment.

Self Esteem

Self-esteem can refer to the overall self or to specific aspects of the self, such as how people feel about their social standing, racial or ethnic group, physical features, athletic skills, job or school performance. Theorists have made many distinctions

concerning different types of self-esteem, e.g., contingent vs. noncontingent; explicit vs. implicit; authentic vs. false; stable vs. unstable; global vs. domain specific. Regarding the dimensionality of self-esteem, some authors conceptualized it as a unitary global trait, whereas others view it as a multidimensional trait with independent subcomponents (performance, social, and physical self-esteem) (Heatherton and Wyland, 2003). Branden (1969) maintained that self-esteem consists of two components: (a) to consider oneself effective, to trust in one's ability to think, learn, choose and make correct decisions, and to overcome challenges and produce changes, and (b) to respect oneself, the confidence in one's right to be happy, and the confidence that people are worthy of the respect, love and self-fulfillment appearing in their lives. More recently, Reasoner (2005) viewed self-esteem as composed of two distinct dimensions: competence and worth. On the basis of these two components, he defines self-esteem as "the experience of being capable of meeting life challenges and being worthy of happiness"

High Self-Esteem

The self-esteem is a personality trait related with the self-image and self-conscience concepts. All personality traits, including self-esteem, could be viewed as a continuum or a bipolar dimension. Individual differences through this continuum encompass several grades and levels. Self-approval is a basic human desire. High self-esteem score is a must factor in order to attain the feeling of happiness.

A high level of self-esteem supplies individuals with the ability to accept happy moments, to handle unpleasant situations, to cope effectively with challenges, to engage in close relationships and to improve their strengths. High self-esteem is also considered to positively moderate the expression of dysfunctional schemata and depressive symptoms at the experience of negative life events (Stavropoulos, Lazaratou, Marini and Dikeos, 2015). Several studies have found that high self-esteem individuals are more persistent in the face of failure than the low self-esteem individuals. High self-esteem individuals also appear more effective in self-regulating goal-directed behavior (Di Paula and Campbell, 2002).

Self-esteem is important for self-regulation and quality of life, and the relevance of self-esteem for positive psychology.

Self-esteem provides the energy to mobilize human behavior as well as contributing to its direction (Mackinnon, 2015, p. 18). Previous research has shown that self-esteem rises when a person succeeds, is praised, or experiences another's love, making self-esteem dependent on not only one's perceptions of himself but also other's perceptions of him (Schmidt and Padilla, 2003). Self-esteem is a major key to success in life.

Low Self-Esteem

People with low self-esteem suffer from feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and emotional instability, so leading to dissatisfaction with life (Ha, 2006). Moreover, there is a tendency of respondents with low self-esteem scores to have a general negative attitude toward many things, including other people and personal circumstances (Mackinnon, 2015, p. 15). development of healthy self-esteem is extremely important for good personal and social adjustment.

Low self-esteem has been linked to depression, aggression, less competency to overcome difficulties and decreased level of well-being in adolescence (Stavropoulos et al., 2015). Weber (2001) hypothesized that college students who report emotional abuse are expected to have a lower self-esteem than those who do not report emotional abuse. This hypothesis was generally supported for male participants only. The sociometer model maintained that subjectively experienced self-esteem serves as "a psychological gauge or indicator" that allows people to efficiently monitor other's reactions to them. Low self-esteem is conceptualized as an experiential indicator of social rejection (Leary, Schreindorfer and Haupt, 1995a; Leary, Tambor, Terdal and Downs, 1995b).

The low self-esteem person is an individual whose global self-evaluation is neutral, whose self-concept is uncertain and confused, who is highly susceptible to, and dependent on, external self-relevant cues, and whose social perceptions and behaviors reflect a cautious or conservative orientation (Campbell and Lavalley, 1993). Low self-esteem can be

understood in terms of confusion or uncertainty in self-knowledge, a cautious and self-protective approach to life, a shortage of positive resources in the self, and a chronic internal conflict. They lack a clear, consistent unified understanding of who they are, which leaves them at the mercy of events and changing situations (Baumeister, 1993). Lowered self-esteem frequently accompanies psychiatric disorders. It has been suggested that low self-esteem is an etiological factor in many psychiatric conditions as well as in suicidal individuals. With 957 psychiatric patients, Silverstone, and Salsali (2003) found that all psychiatric patients suffer some degree of lowered self-esteem. The lowest self-esteem was found in patients with major depressive disorder, eating disorders, and substance abuse. The authors concluded that there is a vicious cycle between self-esteem and onset of psychiatric disorders (See also Murphy et al., 2005).

Low level of self-esteem has been linked to behavioral problems and poor school performance as well as serious behavioral problems as suicidal tendencies, maladjustment, and leads to psychological problems such as depression, social anxiety, loneliness, alienation, etc (Sharma and Agarwala, 2015). Kempke, Luyten, Houdenhove, Goossens, Bekaert, and Wambeke (2011) studied a sample of 192 patients with chronic fatigue syndrome. They found that self-esteem fully mediated the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and depression. This finding may have important implications for the treatment and prevention of depression in these patients. As for the prognosis, longitudinal studies suggest that low self-esteem predicts depression later in life (Kamkar, Doyle and Markiewicz, 2012). The most prominent explanations for the link between low self-esteem and psychopathology are as follows: the vulnerability model (low self-esteem increases the probability of psychopathology), and the scar model (low self-esteem is a consequence of psychopathology rather than a cause) (Zeigler – Hill, 2011).

Negative Effects of Low Self-Esteem

People with low self-esteem suffer from feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and emotional instability, so leading to dissatisfaction with life (Ha,

2006). Moreover, there is a tendency of respondents with low self-esteem scores to have a general negative attitude toward many things, including other people and personal circumstances (Mackinnon, 2015, p. 15).

Low self-esteem has been linked to depression, aggression, less competency to overcome difficulties and decreased level of well-being in adolescence (Stavropoulos et al., 2015). Weber (2001) hypothesized that college students who report emotional abuse are expected to have a lower self-esteem than those who do not report emotional abuse. This hypothesis was generally supported for male participants only. Self-esteem was significantly and negatively correlated with internet addiction (Aydin and Sari, 2011). Using a cross-sectional convenient national sample of 23,532 Norwegians, Andreassen, Pallesen, and Griffiths (2016) elucidated the addictive use of social media in reflecting a need to feed the ego, i.e., narcissistic personality traits, and an attempt to inhibit a negative self-evaluation, i.e., self-esteem.

Individual Intervention on the Level Self Esteem Among Muthuvan Tribal Women in Adimali Gramapanchayath of Idukki District, Kerala.

When we Intervene with muthuvan tribal women in adimaligramapanchayth of idukkidistrict, I found that muthuvan tribal women have low self esteem. Their level of self esteem showed very low level. Muthuvan tribal women had faced low self-esteem from their childhood and its impact increased in their adulthood also. And their low self-esteem has common links to depression and anxiety, and in turn, this lead to the stigma around mental illness result in low self-esteem or low confidence.

According to muthuvan tribal women , While not a mental illness, poor self-esteem can still affect their thoughts, emotions, and patterns of behavior. Sometimes its signs can be fairly apparent. Other times, low self-esteem symptoms are much more subtle.

The major features regarding the self esteem and personality of muthuvan tribal women, are :

- Worry and doubt
- Fear of failure
- Feelings of self-doubt
- Passive or submissive behavior

- Difficulty trusting others
- Feeling inferior to others
- Overly sensitive to criticism
- Feeling unloved
- Lack of confidence
- External locus of control
- Negative social comparisons
- Trouble asking for help
- Difficulty accepting compliments
- Negative self-talk
- Poor outlook of the future
- Lack of boundaries
- Being a people-pleaser

Condition of Self Esteem Among Muthuvan Tribal Women

- The muthuvan tribal women not confident in their abilities.
- The muthuvan tribal women are worried about whether they are regarded as a success or failure.
- The muthuvan tribal women are not satisfied with the way their body looks right now.
- The muthuvan tribal women frustrated or rattled about their performance.
- The muthuvan tribal women having trouble understanding things that they read.
- The muthuvan tribal women had no feelings of others respect and admire them.
- The muthuvan tribal women dissatisfied with their weight.
- The muthuvan tribal women are not self-conscious.
- The muthuvan tribal women thought that they are not smart as others.
- The muthuvan tribal women displeased with themselves
- The muthuvan tribal women do not feel good about themselves.
- The muthuvan tribal women are not pleased with their appearance.
- The muthuvan tribal women worried about what other people think of them.
- The muthuvan tribal women are not feel confidence in understand things.
- The muthuvan tribal women inferior to others.
- The muthuvan tribal women always feel that they are unattractive.

- The muthuvan tribal women had less scholastic ability than others
- The muthuvan tribal women felt that they are not doing well.
- The muthuvan tribal women are worried about looking foolish.

The muthuvan tribal women with low self-esteem suffer from feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and emotional instability, so leading to dissatisfaction with life. Moreover, there is a tendency of respondents with low self-esteem scores to have a general negative attitude toward many things, including other people and personal circumstances.

Low self-esteem of Themuthuvan tribal women has been linked to depression, aggression, less competency to overcome difficulties.

Muthuvan tribal women are highly critical of themselves, ignore or downplay their positive qualities. They think that they are inferior to their peers, they use negative words when describing themselves and they have a habit of negative self-talk. Moreover, they avoid taking credit for their achievements, instead putting it down to luck. At the same time they blame themselves for things that go wrong rather than considering other factors that are out of their control. They do not believe compliments about them. Unfortunately they often feel incompetent, unloved, or inadequate and they are consistently afraid about making mistakes or letting other people down.

Conclusion

The tribals are self-respecting people. They are largely poor. They do casual labour, gather food like nomads in jungles, or make articles of use and sell them. But they never ask for any favour from anyone. We must recognize their needs and make efforts to fulfill them. The tribals must be developed so that they become a part of India's mainstream and contribute to the country's social, economic and cultural development.

India is the second largest concentration for tribes in the whole world. Till the tribes are not developed, our country will never be able to see the dawn of development. Tribes should be educated so that they can fit into the mainstream society and accepted by

all. Social exclusion is one major reason that they are not able to enter the society. This degrades their morale and is a major blow to their self-esteem. This problem goes a long way in hindering their all-round development.

They should be made to feel equal to all citizens in the country. Equality will help to dissipate their social complex and insecurities. Maybe when our tribes develop into complete societies, India runs strong on the wheels of development

First of all, their connectivity to the outer world should increase. They should be shown the dawn of education. Governments should take steps to educate them. Reservation alone will not do. They should spread awareness about the issue. They should ask them to send their children to school instead of work. The feet of modernization should reach their tribes fast else time will run forward. Some of our own brothers will be left behind in the pursuit of development. A shift in their lifestyle is necessary to convince them to experience technological sophistication.

Government interventions can be found in almost all realms of their life. LIFE programme, AAY, Kudumbashree, ICDS etc., are the few of government interventions. Even though these interventions along with consumerist style of life, increase of tribal participation in state politics, technological advancements, interactions with non-tribals cause remarkable changes in their food habits, dressing styles, language, health care and overall culture. These factors brought tribal developments also. Thus it was very important that the travails of tribal development need to be understood properly in order to integrate the development of unique culture with the ongoing rural development programs. Only through special care and personnel support, we can improve the self-esteem of tribal women in muthuvan community.

References

- Andreassen, Cecilie Schou, et al. "The Relationship between Addictive Use of Social Media, Narcissism, and Self-Esteem: Findings from a Large National Survey." *Addictive Behaviors*, vol. 64, 2017, pp. 287-93.
- Aydin, Betül, and Serkan Volkan Sari. "Internet

- Addiction among Adolescents: The Role of Self-Esteem." *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15, 2011.
- Branden, Nathaniel. *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*. Bantam, 1969.
- Di Paula, Adam, and Jennifer D. Campbell. "Self-esteem and Persistence in the Face of Failure." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 83, 2022, pp. 711-24.
- Ha, Y. J. *The Relationship among Self-Esteem, Internal Locus of Control, and Psychological Well-Being*. Yonsei University, 2006.
- Heatherton, Todd F., and Carrie L. Wyland. "Assessing Self-Esteem." *Positive Psychological Assessment: A Handbook of Models and Measures*, edited by Lopez, Shane J., and C. R. Snyder, American Psychological Association, 2003, pp. 219-233.
- Baumeister, Roy F. *Self-esteem: The Puzzle of Low Self-Regard*. Plenum Press, 1993.
- Campbell, Jennifer D., and Loraine F. Lavalley. "Who am I? The Role of Self-Concept Confusion in Understanding the Behavior of People with Low Self-Esteem." *Self-esteem: The Puzzle of Low Self-Regard*, edited by R. F. Baumeister, Plenum Press, 1993, pp. 3-20.
- Leary, M. R., et al. "The Role of Low Self-Esteem in Emotional and Behavioral Problems: Why is Low Self-Esteem Dysfunctional?" *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1995a, pp. 297-314.
- Silverstone, Peter H., and Mahnaz Salsali. "Low Self-Esteem and Psychiatric Patients: Part I – The Relationship between Low Self-Esteem and Psychiatric Diagnosis." *Annals of General Hospital Psychiatry*, vol. 2, 2003.
- Kamkar, Katy, et al. "Insecure Attachment to Parents and Depressive Symptoms in Early Adolescence: Mediating Roles of Attributions and Self-Esteem." *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2012, pp. 3-18.
- Kempke, Stefan, et al. "Self-esteem Mediates the Relationship between Maladaptive Perfectionism and Depression in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome." *Clinical Rheumatology*, vol. 30, 2011.
- Leary, M. R., et al. "Self-esteem as an Interpersonal Monitor: The Sociometer Hypothesis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 68, 1995b, pp. 518-30.
- Mackinnon, Neil J. *Self-esteem and Beyond*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Murphy, Christopher M., et al. "Change in Self-Esteem and Physical Aggression during Treatment for Partner Violent Men." *Journal of Family Violence*, vol. 20, 2005, pp. 201-10.
- Reasoner, R. *The True Meaning of Self-Esteem*. The International Council for Self-Esteem, 2005.
- Schmidt, Jennifer A., and Brenda Padilla. "Self-Esteem and Family Challenge: An Investigation of their Effects on Achievement." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 32, 2003, pp. 37-46.
- Sharma, Shraddha, and Surila Agarwala. "Self-esteem and Collective Self-Esteem among Adolescents: An Interventional Approach." *Psychological Thought*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2015, pp. 105-13.
- Stavropoulos, Vasilis, et al. "Low Family Satisfaction and Depression in Adolescence: The Role of Self-Esteem." *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2015, pp. 109-18.
- Weber, Angie D. *Influence of Family Environment on Self-Esteem and Hostility*. Southern Illinois University, 2001.
- Zeigler-Hill, Virgil. "The Connections between Self-Esteem and Psychopathology." *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, vol. 41, 2011, pp. 157-64.

Author Details

VS. Vinod, Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India, Email ID: adimalyvinooandvino@gmail.com

Dr. C. Karuppaiah, Professor, Head and Chairperson, Department of Sociology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Jiphy George, Christ Central School, Thiruvalla, Kerala, India.