



Insights from Asraya project for the Scheduled Tribes

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The Special Tribal Asraya project was a special effort to bring the destitute towards the mainstream by providing them with food, clothes, housing, pension etc. Experiences from various districts showed that tribes were still excluded from the list of beneficiaries prepared by the Panchayaths. It is such cases in point that prompted Kudumbashree to form special Asraya projects for tribal beneficiaries.

Kudumbashree plays an important role in bringing the Scheduled Tribes into the main stream. Especially the Tribal destitute were identified by the Kudumbashree through a systematic way. The 'Oorukoottam' formed for identifying the destitute from the tribal area. The Tribal promoters with the help of Oorukoottam find the beneficiaries. For this special Project CDS can open bank account. Land ownership, homeless, drinking water availability, sanitation facility; occupation, family head; physical and mental conditions etc are the criteria for identifying the destitute. The medical camps are also conducting for the identified destitute. As this particular group does not have the familiarity with the modern medicinal care, in the medical camp the traditional tribal Physicians (Paramparya Vydyanmar) are also included.

A person who does not have land for constructing a home, the people who use public places/slums as their resting places in the night, Unmarried mothers with children, unmarried women and widows, the person with disabilities and diseases etc can be included in the project. The Tribal Extension Officer and the Tribal Promoters are the members of the monitoring committee. The Oorukoottam identify the destitute and make a list of them and in the second stage they finalized the list by using the additional criteria. There are 10 additional criteria to find out them in the second stage. If any one of the criteria from the 10 additional criteria is

applicable to anybody from the list can consider as destitute and can include in the Special Asraya project. The project preparation can be done if at least 10 beneficiaries identified per LSGI by the Oorukoottam.

The special Tribal Asraya project offered a wide range of services to the destitute person and families. It took care of almost anything that would be required for their rehabilitation. The project package of services takes care of survival needs, sustenance needs and developmental needs of the destitute families.

The Special Tribal Asraya project has a great impact on the tribal community. In the olden days when the LSGIs made the list of the Asraya beneficiaries, the tribal were excluded from the list with different reasons. As government took this issue in to consideration, they took initiation for their including tribal destitute also in to the Asraya beneficiaries list. Then the inclusion was made with a special concern in the form of Special Tribal Asraya project. These faceless, powerless people lack capabilities and are neither aware of their entitlements nor are they in a position to access them. They cannot compete nor can they bargain. They drift pushed by circumstances. Severity of destitution is intensified by unfavorable physical, gender or caste status - that is, being disabled being a woman, being a widow, belonging to a Scheduled Caste or Tribe can singly or in combination aggravate the suffering. The collapse of the traditional social support systems has orphaned the destitute. They are sometimes objects of charity. But they are never subjects of development. They have to be invested with identity, personality and empowered to stand on their own. Only care and handholding can lift them. They can develop only after a period of well targeted, well-designed welfare.

The main areas the Asraya Tribal Project dealt with are:-

1. Provision for ensuring food to all destitute families
2. Health care facilities and free medicines
3. House sites and Housing
4. Drinking water
5. Education
6. Pensions
7. Social inclusion
8. Clothing

At present, 5462 beneficiaries are there in this special project. The tribal beneficiaries are spread through 86 LSGIs in Kerala. The destitute are the poorest of the poor. They are the outliers of the development scenario in the negative extreme. The implementation of this special Asraya Project brought revolutionary changes in the life of the tribal people who included as beneficiaries of the project. Under this special project free food made available for the tribal destitute who are above 65 years of the age. The tribal destitute got good housing facilities, drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities etc. Tribal destitute family children got special provisions for clothing and for their education.

In an overall viewpoint we can easily say that the Asraya Projects for Scheduled Tribes has achieved its goal by linking its activities with other programmes. The community organization of Kudumbashree is playing a crucial role in making this special Tribal Araya project to its great success.



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