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A critical analysis of social capital among Soliga tribal women

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Abstract

The study was carried in Heggadadevanakote taluk of Mysuru district during 2019 to assess the social capital of Soliga tribal women. Ex post facto research design was employed for the study. With respect to overall social capital status of Soliga tribal women, it was found that there was medium level social capital (50.00%) followed by high (26.67%) and low level (23.33%). Among different dimensions of social capital, groups and network got the highest mean score (17.16) followed by trust and solidarity (16.03), empowerment and action (12.10) collective action and co-operation (8.63), information and communication (3.93) and social cohesion and inclusion (3.03). It was quite interesting to note that there was high trust and solidarity among them because of medium level of mass media exposure and extension participation and regular visit of NGO. They have developed trust and solidarity among these Agencies and believe in each other. Based on the results, it can be concluded that there is a need to build social capital by addressing all the dimensions among tribal women to make them more empowered socially, economically and culturally particularly social cohesion and information communication has to be promoted among the Soliga tribal women.

Keywords: Tribe, Soliga, social capital, tribal women

Introduction

Soliga is an ethnic group of India. Its members inhabit the Biligiriranga Hills and associated ranges mostly in the Chamarajanagar and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu. The Soligaspeak Sholaga, primitively they belong to the Dravidian family. As a scheduled tribe they have a population of around 20,000 individuals.

The Soliga used to practice shifting cultivation but have more or less given up this practice now. They grow mainly agricultural crop like ragi for subsistence. Their main source of income is harvesting and sale of Non-timber Forest Produce (NTFP) like honey, nellikai (gooseberry), bamboo, paasi (Lichen), algae, wild turmeric, Indian blackberry, soapnut and nennari (wild root). They also make baskets using bamboo.

Social capital is an important dimension for development which is shrinking in developing countries in recent years. Sound social capital would play a decisive role in creating sustainable livelihood among rural masses. Social capital building approaches are increasingly used in poverty alleviation & empowerment programs. Further, the social capital is linked to people, their lives and their surroundings. However, social capital can also be defined as the resources available to one through the networks that they hold. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions that underpin a society but it is the glue that holds them together". Social capital not only helps to alleviate rural poverty but also helps in maintaining social and environmental balance. Even then the communities like tribes can come together only through sound social capital for their empowerment. Even then limited attempts have been done to study their social capital and built accordingly.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Heggadadevanakote taluk of Mysuru district in the year 2019. Further Kasaba hobli was selected for the study, since this hobli comprised Soliga tribal community. From among the settlements Basavanagiri hadi, Annur colony and G.M. Halli hadi from Kasabahobli were selected, where maximum number of Soliga population living together and sample of 10 from each hamlet were randomly selected and total constituting of 30 samples. Data was collected personally through structured interview schedule. The collected data was analysed using appropriate statistical tools like mean, frequency, standard deviation etc. The Ex-post-facto research design was employed for the study. Social capital of tribal

women was measured by making use of the scale developed by Raghuprasad (2007) [6] with slight modifications. There are six dimensions to measure of social capital of tribal women viz, (i) Empowerment and action (ii) Group and network, (iii) Trust and solidarity (iv) Collective action and cooperation (v) Information and communication (vi) Social cohesion and inclusion.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic profile of Soliga tribal women

Age: It could be seen from the Table 1 that more than half (53.33%) of the Soliga tribal women belong to middle age, while 30.00 per cent belonged to young age and the rest 16.66 per cent were in old age group.

Education: Data tabulated in the Table 1 depicts that more than half (53.33%) of the Soliga tribal women had primary school education followed by 33.33 per cent were illiterates and 13.33 per cent higher primary education.

Family type: It is tangible from the Table 1 that nearly three fourth (73.33%) of the Soliga tribal women belonged to nuclear family and 26.66 per cent of them belonged to joint family.

Marital status: A glimpse through the Table 1 reveals that nearly two third (63.33%) of the Soliga tribal women were married, 16.66 per cent of them were unmarried and 16.66 per cent of them were widows.

Land ownership: A close perusal of Table 1 shows that nearly more than half (60.00%) of the tribal women had no land in their name and 40.00per cent of them owned land.

Livestock possession: From the Table 1 it is evident that more than one third (36.66%) of the Soliga tribal women had high level of livestock possession followed by medium (33.33%) and low (30.00%) level.

Annual income: A critical analysis of Table 1 showed that 43.33 per cent of the Soliga tribal women had 10,000-20,000 annual income followed by 30.00 per cent had less than 10,000 income and 26.66 per cent of them had 20,000-40,000 annual income.

Mass media exposure: A bird’s eye view of Table 1 clearly indicates that 40.00 per cent of the Soliga tribal women had medium level of mass media exposure, followed by high (33.33%) level of mass media exposure. While 26.66 per cent of the respondents had low level of mass media exposure.

Extension participation: Findings of the Table 1 indicate that 36.66 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension participation followed by one-third (33.33%) of them had low level and 30.00 per cent had high level of participation.

Decision making ability: The data relevant to decision making ability is presented in Table 1 shows nearly half of the Soliga tribal women (40.00%) had medium decision making ability followed by one third (33.33%) of them had low decision making ability and 23.33 per cent had high level of decision making among Soliga tribal women.

Risk Orientation: A close perusal of Table 1 shows the distribution of Soliga tribal women’s respondents based on their risk orientation. It reveals that 43.33 per cent of the tribal women’s had medium level of risk orientation followed by one-third (33.33%) of them had high level of risk orientation and 23.33 per cent with low level of risk orientation.

Institutional participation: From the findings tabulated in Table 1 it can be found out that nearly half (46.66%) of the Soliga tribal women’s had low level of institutional participation followed by 43.33 per cent had medium of institutional participation and 10.00per cent of them had high level of institutional participation. (Ramya H.R, 2016) [7].

Social exclusion: A critical analysis of Table 1 indicates the extent of social exclusion of Soliga tribal women’s. It was found that 43.33 per cent of the respondents were partially excluded followed by 40.00 per cent of them were fully excluded and 16.66 per cent were not excluded. (Aswathy, 2016) [3]

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of Soliga tribal women.

| Characteristics | Category | Soliga (n=30) | |
|---|--------------------|---------------|------------|
| | | Number | Percentage |
| Age | Young | 09 | 30.00 |
| | Middle | 16 | 53.33 |
| | Old | 05 | 16.66 |
| Education | Illiterate | 10 | 33.33 |
| | Primary Education | 16 | 53.33 |
| | Higher primary | 04 | 13.33 |
| Family type | Nuclear | 22 | 73.33 |
| | Joint | 08 | 26.66 |
| Marital status | Unmarried | 05 | 16.66 |
| | Married | 20 | 66.66 |
| | Widow | 05 | 16.66 |
| Land ownership | Un-owned | 18 | 60.00 |
| | Owned | 12 | 40.00 |
| Livestock possession Mean=1.19 SD=0.53 | Low (<0.92) | 09 | 30.00 |
| | Medium (0.92-1.45) | 10 | 33.33 |
| | High (>1.45) | 11 | 36.66 |
| Annual income | Less than 10,000 | 09 | 30.00 |
| | 10,000-20,000 | 13 | 43.33 |
| | 20,000-40,000 | 08 | 26.66 |
| Mass media exposure Mean=2.23 SD=0.85 | Low (<1.80) | 08 | 26.66 |
| | Medium (1.80-2.66) | 12 | 40.00 |
| | High (>2.66) | 10 | 33.33 |
| Extension participation Mean=4.50 SD=1.48 | Low | 10 | 33.33 |
| | Medium (3.76-5.23) | 11 | 36.66 |
| | High | 09 | 30.00 |
| Decision making ability Mean=2.80 SD=0.92 | Low (<2.33) | 11 | 33.33 |
| | Medium (2.33-3.26) | 12 | 40.00 |
| | High (>3.26) | 07 | 23.33 |
| Risk orientation Mean=2.07 SD=0.98 | Low (<1.57) | 07 | 23.33 |
| | Medium (1.57-2.55) | 13 | 43.33 |
| | High (>2.55) | 10 | 33.33 |
| Institutional participation | Low | 14 | 46.66 |
| | Medium | 13 | 43.33 |
| | High | 03 | 10.00 |
| Social exclusion | Fully excluded | 12 | 40.00 |
| | Partially excluded | 13 | 43.33 |
| | Not excluded | 05 | 16.66 |

Dimension wise social capital profile among Soliga tribal women

A close perusal of Table 2 indicates dimension wise social capital status of Soliga tribal women. Under the dimension empowerment and action it was found that half of the tribes had medium level (50.00%) followed by one-third (33.33%) of them having high level and low level (16.67%). As far as groups and network dimension is concerned it indicates more than half (56.67%) of them had medium level followed by high level (30.00%) and low level (13.33%). Trust and solidarity shows high level (43.33%) followed by medium level (36.67%) and low level (20.00%). With regard to collective action and co-operation more than half (53.33%) of them had low level followed by medium level (33.33%) and high level (13.33%). Further information and communication shows 43.33 per cent had medium level followed by 36.67 per cent of them had low level and 20.00 per cent of them had high level.

With regard to soliga tribes it was observed medium level of empowerment and action. It may be due to the fact that majority of these tribes having higher livestock possession and more number of them studied up to primary school. As a result these tribes having one or the other domestic animals for their livelihood which supports their regular income. There was medium level of groups and network among soliga tribe because of low institutional participation, not much involved in external institutional activities which directly or indirectly influence their group activities. Further these tribes having minimum interaction among themselves because majority of them were married and having nuclear families and not depending much on communities. The results were in accordance with the findings of Raghuprasad (2007) [6].

Table 2: Dimension wise social capital profile among Soliga tribal women

| Dimensions of Social Capital | Soliga | | | Mean | SD |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| | Category | No. | % | | |
| Empowerment and Action | Low (<11.45) | 05 | 16.67 | 12.1 | 1.29 |
| | Medium (11.45-12.74) | 15 | 50.00 | | |
| | High (>12.74) | 10 | 33.33 | | |
| Groups and Network | Low (<16.43) | 04 | 13.33 | 17.16 | 1.46 |
| | Medium (16.43-17.89) | 17 | 56.67 | | |
| | High (>17.89) | 09 | 30.00 | | |
| Trust and Solidarity | Low (<15.43) | 06 | 20.00 | 16.03 | 1.19 |
| | Medium (15.43-16.62) | 11 | 36.67 | | |
| | High (>16.62) | 13 | 43.33 | | |
| Collective Action and Co-operation | Low (<8.05) | 16 | 53.33 | 8.63 | 1.16 |
| | Medium (8.05-9.21) | 10 | 33.33 | | |
| | High (>9.21) | 04 | 13.33 | | |
| Information and Communication | Low (<3.42) | 11 | 36.67 | 3.93 | 1.01 |
| | Medium (3.42-4.44) | 13 | 43.33 | | |
| | High (>4.44) | 06 | 20.00 | | |
| Social Cohesion and Inclusion | Low (<2.46) | 06 | 20.00 | 3.03 | 1.13 |
| | Medium (2.46-3.59) | 13 | 43.33 | | |
| | High (>3.59) | 11 | 36.67 | | |

It was quite interesting to note that there was high trust and solidarity among them because of medium level of mass media exposure and extension participation and regular visit

of local NGOs. They have developed trust and solidarity among these Agencies and believe in each other. The results were in line with the findings of Raghuprasad (2007) [6]. It is quite contradictory that even then the majority of them having low collective action and cooperation they have high level of trust and solidarity. The reason might be that they do have more trust among the community members because they belonging to same tribe having similar external and internal characteristics. The results were similar with the findings of Raghuprasad (2007) [6].

Majority of them showing medium level of social capital status with respect to Information and Communication because it is obvious that there was medium mass media exposure and extension participation to collect the information from different sources which in turn help for their economic activities. The results were in line with the findings of Raghuprasad (2007) [6].

As far as social Cohesion and inclusion is concerned again it was witnessed medium level since there was high trust and solidarity among these members due to existing social and cultural believes in the society. The results were in line with the findings of Raghuprasad (2007) [6].

Overall social capital status among Soliga tribal women.

The data recorded in table 3 depicts the overall social capital status of Soliga tribal women. It was found that there was medium level social capital (50.00%) followed by high (26.67%) and low level (23.33%).

Table 3: Overall social capital among Soliga tribal women.

| Category | Soliga | |
|----------|--------|-------|
| | No. | % |
| Low | 07 | 23.33 |
| Medium | 15 | 50.00 |
| High | 08 | 26.67 |

The result of overall social capital status among different tribes indicated that majority of them expressed medium level of groups and networks because of the influence of the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (NGO). Further, influence of other dimensions like Trust and solidarity, which was observed high level since they have built good relationship with NGO. Collective action and cooperation it was at low level because they are not coming together for societal causes may be due to their more number of nuclear families, low income and less interest in community activities and so on. With regard to Information and Communication it was expressed medium due to moderate exposure to television media which is common in their households which provides wide range of information related to developmental initiatives besides there entertainment.

Finally, it was predominantly conclude that they have expressed medium social cohesion and inclusion because of their Unique Identity culture, norms, taboos, common language, more or less equal socioeconomic status which bind their relationships with trust and solidarity and make them to be intact in their social system. The results were similar with the findings of Sajeew (2006) [8].

Conclusion

Social capital is an important aspect to bring people together for development and inclusive growth specially among tribal women. There was medium level of social capital among

Soliga tribal women and it is because of the isolation and less exposure to external world. Hence there is a need to build social capital addressing all the dimensions among tribal women to make them more empowered socially, economically and culturally particularly social cohesion and information communication has to be promoted among the Soliga tribal women.

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