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SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF INTERNAL IMMIGRANTS IN KONGU REGION

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ABSTRACT

Kongu Region in Tamil Nadu is gifted with various internal immigration activities. The socio-economic disabilities enforced vigorously towards the labelled migrant communities of this region. The cultural activities have a unifying force among the people whether they are majority. Therefore the internal immigrants as well as the Tamils take part in cultural activities without any discrimination. The history of Kongu Region from time immemorial revolved primarily upon the attainments in literary contributions. Migration became a powerful way of changing socio-cultural life of Tamil Nadu. Internal immigration – Telugu, Kannada, Naidues, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Sikhs, Malayalee, and - from rural areas to urban areas in the districts of Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Salem, The Nilgiris, Karur, Dharmapuri, Namakkal, Krishnagri, Dindugal, Palacod and Chamarajnager has increased since 1940 in Kongu Region. There contributions effected a big change in agriculture, industry, business, education, health, social and cultural conditions of Kongu Region. With the advent of migration as settlement – internal immigration, social changes began to take place. It proves the socio-economic development in Tamil Nadu. The primary sources contain a wide range of information and give a complete picture of the internal immigration.

Key wards - Immigration, Samaj, Navaratri, Gurudwaras. Intricate, Sankrit,Cultural, Sikhsm.

Introduction

The diverse and vibrant states of Gujarati, Rajasthani and Malayalee have a significant contribution to the cultural aspect of Kongu Region. The sheer simplicity and amiability of Gujaratis, Rajasthani and Malayalee have made them a flourishing community. They have a vibrant art, architecture, culture, and heritage; all of which is quite evident and attract in the day-to-day lives of the locals. The diversity exhibited by them is a result of the various ethnic groups constituting Gujarat's, Rajasthani's and Malayalee's population; including Indic and Dravidian groups. The vast array of handcrafted products displaying intricate the immigrant's art forms are not only popular in the Kongu Region, but are a well-known entity all across the country. These products include furniture, jewellery, embroidered garments, leatherwork, metalwork, baked clay articles and mirror works. Gujarat serves as the producer of some of the most creative and elegant furnishings that include bedcovers, quilts, cushion covers and table mats. Intricate dainty patterns are woven on the patola sarees with high precision. The traditional art forms of the immigrants play a significant role in preserving its rich heritage.

Social and Economic life of Internal Immigrants

The social and economic life of internal immigrants in Kongu Region helps to have a better understanding of the different communities such as Gujarati, Rajasthani, Sikhs, Kongu-Malayalee, Kongu-Kannada, Naidus, Marwadis, etc. The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 was an Act of the Parliament of India enacted

to regulate the condition of service of inter-state internal immigrant labourers in India labour law. The Act's purpose was to protect workers whose services are requisitioned outside their native states in India. Whenever an employer faces shortage of skills among the locally available workers, the act created provision to employ better skilled workers available outside the state.

Family and Marriage

Family is a group consisting of one or two parents and their children. Marriage is the legal relationship between a husband and wife. A joint family was a form of family where the grand-parents, father, mother, and children lived together under one roof in Kongu Region. In such form of family system, every member was expected to make some financial contribution to the common fund, shared common rights in the household property, made efforts to safeguard the common property, co-operated, respected, and supported each other, ate the food made at the common kitchen, and made their daily expenditure from common fund.

Joint family system continued in 50 per cent of the families in the Kongu Region. But they are not on a declined trend. As the houses built to the settlement families were meant for nuclear families, many of the joint families split into nuclear families. The role of kinship and dominance of a particular family in the administration of the local villages are now a thing of the past.

Though the internal immigrant families do not thinking of amassing big money, they feel the need to acquire gold as wealth, as it could be used in time of needs for dowry, or pledging to meet home needs or for educating children. The women make conscious efforts to plan for the future of their families and children.

Wedding ceremony is one of the biggest celebrations in the family. 95 per cent of the marriage are arranged by the parents with the consent of the boy and girl. Expenses for wedding ceremonies have been on a climbing chart. The middle class and the poor manage the dowry amount from the bank balance or by borrowing. Both 'haves' and 'have-nots' are forced by their counterparts to offer little dowries. Educated girls had to give more to get bridegrooms of equal status. The respondents reported that the dowry rates were soaring higher and higher in the urban areas. Families offer more than five lakhs as dowry amount. The consequences of dowry system are indebtedness, unmarried girls and breaking of families.

Monogamy played a prominent-role of Rajasthani community marriage was not allowed between bloody relations. Dowry system was not in practice, marriage ceremony was performed around Agni Navakarmantra. Love marriage was allowed but most marriages were arranged ones among the internal immigrants.

The culture and habits of Rajasthani and Tamil are very similar in many aspects and the two have mingled and mixed with each other. There are many inter - marriages between Rajasthanis and Tamils. Inter-faith marriages are encouraged among the Rajasthanis.

A Sikh marriage is patterned after the Hindu marriage ceremony and differs from it only minor details. The major difference is that the religious texts that the Sikhs use are not Vedic but from the Guru Granth Sahib. Among Sikh's the wedding shaping is inaugurated by buying a pair of Rumalisa Sahib. This is a set of four pieces of cloth used to cover the Granth Sahibji. The rest

of the shopping can be done only after this purchase. Invitation cards are sent along with a box of sweets.

A bride dresses up in the traditional bright coloured salwar kameez usually heavily embellished with salma sitara work with extensive use of gota kinari. She drapes her head and shoulders with a richly embroidered dupatta. Jewellery includes heavy long necklaces gold bangles, rings, tika. The bride also wears the choda (red and white ivory bangles) and kaleere (golden danglers) suspended from her wrists. As per the Sikh tradition, the groom must wear a Turban, Sehra and carry a sword, (Kripan) popular wedding dress code for the groom is a suit or churidar Pyjama-per-wedding rituals.

Prior to the wedding an Akhand Paath is held at the bride's house in which the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh religious text is read non-stop over three days. At the end of the Paath Ardass (Like an aarthi) is performed and sweets are distributed for the Radaas, relatives and friends are also invited. Once the ardaas is over and Prasad is distributed, a vegetarian feast is laid out for the guests.

The wedding ceremony itself is a simple affair called the Anand Karaj and is held the morning of the wedding day of the Gurudwara. The Guru Granth Sahib first Hymns (kirtan) are sung as the boy and girl sits in front at the Guru Granth Sahib. The hymn asks god to keep this occasion ceremony so pure.

For a few Christians of Kongu -Malayalee, marriage is a part of God's purpose in creation. It is therefore not to be entered or thought of lightly but held in honour: no one should enter upon it rashly, but with reverence and discretion and in love which is the gift of God himself. In general, the internal immigrants believe it is God's will that in marriage the love of man and woman shall be fulfilled in the wholeness of their life together in mutual companionship, helpfulness and care. By the grace of God this love grows and deepens with the years. Such love in marriage is the foundation of true family life and when blessed with the gift of children, is God's appointed way for the continuance of mankind and the bringing up of children in an atmosphere of security and trust.

Breast feeding is the best feeding among the internal immigrants like Gujarathi, Rajasthani and Sikhs. A mother's milk is the best food for a baby. It contains exactly the right quality of nutrients, in the right proportions, to ensure that a baby gets the perfect balanced meal. Educated women from Malayalee, Naidus and Marwadis stop breast feeding in just one or two months and start bottle-feeding their babies as early as possible. It is recommended that mothers always breastfeed their baby in its initial stages.

Religion

Religion is a socio-cultural system of designated behaviours and practices, morals, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics or organizations, that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, and spiritual elements. However, there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion in the society. All the internal immigrant communities in Kongu Region have a predominately Hindu, Sikhs and a few Malayalee Christian population. The religion had a great influence on their day-to-day affairs. The business community, especially the older and some times even the younger men live for today with no aspiration for the future. When

they got new sector for business, they called religious heads to bless the industry or institution. They observed religious practices for gaining support from supernatural power to face the risk of life and uncertainty of improvement.

The life of the business community centers around religious beliefs and ceremonies. The Christian Church influenced its values and practices among the Kongu-Malayalee. They have religious services and activities on a daily basis. Most of the people participate Sunday mass in Christian villages. The villages celebrate their patron's feast for ten days every year. The villages have small shrines. Important community announcements made in their religious gathering have tremendous effect on the people.

The spread of Jainism in Kongu Region was the missionary works of the Jaina teachers of Rajasthanis, probably the disciples of Badrabahu who settled in Sravanabelgola. The latter became starting point for the spread of Jainism in Kongu Region. In this context it is presumed that the disciples of Bhadrabahu carried the Jaina doctrine to the region. The Jains residing in the region still have been in contacts with the Jaina centres of Karnataka, Humchcha and Singanagadde.

The famous Nilakantheswar Temple, (a temple that is devoted to Lord Siva), situated in the heart of Khetrajpur, the Radha Krishna temple (a temple where Lord Krishna is worshipped along with his consort, Radha), in front of Regional Cooperative Marketing Society. The temples were built by the contributions of these Rajasthani traders. Very recently, the construction of the "Vaisno Devi" temple at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs was completed by the same community. The Berlia brothers of Khetrajpur took leading roles in this construction. A large number of other temples are also managed and financed by the Marwaris in and around Kongu Region. The community appears to be deeply religious and God fearing. The members attribute success in occupation and day-to-day life to the blessing of the Gods and Goddesses. Various religious associations not only provide it to cohesiveness to the community but also help intimately that interact with the local population submerge the linguistic and ethnic differences.

Eighty-five per cent of the internal immigrants participate in the functions and festivals which are religious in nature, and sixty-five per cent participate very actively in the cultural activities. The percentage of internal immigrants who attend the socio-religious or socio-cultural functions organised in the locality regularly or occasionally is as high as 90 per cent. Ninety-six per cent of all the immigrants contribute to the fund raised for celebrating regional festivals by the community. Their satisfaction with the community is not only reflected in their high rate of participation in the activities of the community but also in their opinion about various ethnic associations. Eighty-eight per cent of the internal immigrants feel that such associations are useful to them while ten per cent are undecided about it. Only two percent of the internal immigrants consider these associations as not useful at all.

Economical Life

Under the district bifurcations, the economic condition of the internal immigrants had deteriorated. All trade and commerce of the region went into the hands of the district administrations. The introduction of the machine made goods by the government destroyed the indigenous industries. Hundreds of internal immigrants lost their employment. An attempt was made to analyze the economic and socio political factors affecting the urban and rural areas of internal immigrants. The following factors helped to understand the economic situation. Small

Scale Industries in Tirupur, Coimbatore, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Namakal and Karur, textiles in Coimbatore and Namakal, white silk in Gobichettipalayam, poultry in Namakal, automobiles in Coimbatore, milk in Erode and Karur, edible oil in Erode, turmeric in Gopichettipalayam, pump industry in Coimbatore and vegetables in Oddanchatiram had been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator. It stimulated the growth of a number of subsidiary industries and provided cheap animal protein. It is a source of livelihood for a larger section of economically backward population of the cities.

Majority of internal immigrants were registered as members of the local cooperative society. Majority of them depended exclusively on business. The works include mainly industry and marketing.

Table - 1 shows the internal immigration's contribution in Kongu Region

S/No	Internal immigration	Small Scale Industries	Jewelleries	Textiles
1	Gujaratis	180	13	270
2	Rajasthani	310	610	439
3	Sikhs	47	79	212
4	Malayalee	220	33	55
5	Kannada/Telungu	31	21	10
6	Naidus	76	115	290
7	Marwadis	450	580	47

Source : District industries centres, Kongu Region, Tamil Nadu

Generally, internal immigrants used modern technologies in Coimbatore and Salem districts. Tamil has initiated its technological development well in advance. It has made use of all the opportunities given to it for making it suitable for digitalization and computerization in Kongu Region. The references like Small Scale Industries, Jewelleries, Textiles, etc. stand to establish its efforts in fulfilling the need of the day i.e. technological development. Governments, both state and central, funded liberally for the technological development of the Kongu Region. This helped it to develop economic systems. The Gujarathi and Rajasthanis organizations also contributed for this mission. Many immigrants, both from inside and abroad, literally worked for Tamil computing. The organizations such as schools and colleges established by internal immigrants were appreciated for their efforts in uplifting economic development. Banian industries of Tirupur have comparatively commendable resources and tools for national textile applications.

In computer world, sumptuous amount of text corpora, speech corpora and parallel corpora are available for Tamil by the effects of Kongu Region. A good number of speech recognition systems and text to speech systems are developed for Tamil. Computational semantics also improved in Tamil. There are attempts to develop word sense disambiguation system, question answering system, relationship extraction system, sentiment analysis systems, automatic summarization systems, and conference resolution systems. Efforts are made to develop text generation systems too for Tamil. Kongu Region shows only positive symptoms in the technological development.

Government did not have adequate programmes for business and for the development of communities like Naidus, Marwadis and Malayalees. Traditional business was becoming more and more capital intensive. The new technology deliberately warranted considerable doses of financial inputs. Modern industries demanded new varieties of machines etc. These changes in the traditional business confirmed the beginning of a new era. It obviously involved greater cash inputs which could not be met fully from personal savings by most average immigrants without assured and regular flow of credit.

Socio-Economic Development

The inclusive growth and development in the Kongu Region by internal immigration has been immense, although the main purpose of their path was development. Inclusive growth is an including socio-economic impact. Migration and internal immigration in India is not new. Historical accounts probe that people have moved in search of work, in response to environmental shocks and stresses, to escape religious persecution and political conflict; and they settled as citizens. However improved communications, transport networks, conflicts over natural resources and new economic opportunities have created unprecedented levels of mobility. But as the attempt is to discuss in following sections, the increase in mobility is not fully captured in larger surveys often leading to erroneous conclusions about mobility levels in India. Although significant in recent years, growth has been unequal in India, characterised by industry in developing state like Tamil Nadu drawing labour from agriculturally backward and poor regions such as Kongu Region.

Labour mobility has grown and will probably continue to grow once the economy recovers from the current crisis. Migrant labour and internal immigrants make enormous contributions to the Indian economy through major sectors such as construction, textiles, small industries, brick-making, stone quarries, mines, fish and prawn processing and hospitality services. But they remain on the periphery of society, with few citizen rights and no political voice in shaping decisions that impact their lives.

In fact migrants are poorly endowed all-round: they come from poor families where access to physical, financial and human capital is limited and where prospects for improving living standards are constrained by their inferior social and political status. Historically disadvantaged communities such as the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Castes are heavily represented in migration. Poor migrants are absorbed in informal sector jobs, much maligned for being insecure, poorly paid and unproductive but offering the only option for labourers to improve their capabilities. The internal immigrant groups such as Gujarati, Rajasthani, Malayalee, Sikh, Kannada, Telugu, Naidus, etc. came to Kongu Region with the construction boom, with the big-time builders and mega IT, airport, road and rail projects and the plywood factories. They are not a militant lot but are hard working and are willing to work anywhere. Their contribution in the field of agriculture, trade and industry, education and health, social welfare and cultural development is a notable one. By their service Kongu Region is developed with agriculture, employment, social communication, economic growth and changing attitude. They became visible and vibrant in the Kongu Region through the special support and the inter organizational efforts of Gujarati Samaj, Rajasthani Sangh, Sikhs Association, Malayalee Welfare Association, Kannada Devangar, Telugu Samithi and Naidu Welfare Association have played a supportive role for the inclusive growth between equity and development of their communities and the society.

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During 1940 - 2000, Tamil Nadu government was well aware of the fact that economic growth alone can not eliminate poverty if it is not inclusive. Therefore, through convergence of various schemes, the government strategise for family based intervention and monitor the socio-economic development till they cross the poverty line. The migration and internal immigration in Kongu Region worked towards smooth Centre – State relations. The socio-economic development is based on the development concept of agriculture, employment and industrialization, media of social communication, transportation, economic development and women, education and health, changing attitudes and cultural change in Tamil Nadu.

Internal immigration's socio-economic development can be analysed from the following table.

Table – 2

Percentage of development pattern in Kongu region in 2010

Internal Immigration	Agriculture	Employment Indoctriation	Media and Communication	Economic and women	Education and health	Cultural change
Gujaratis	20	15	2	40	3	40
Rajasthani	24	10	1	30	2	40
Sikhs	12	10	1	20	1	20
Malayalee	50	13	2	80	10	20
Kannada/ Telungu	62	10	5	40	5	40
Naidus	10	20	6	30	10	15
Marwadis	7	24	2	20	5	10
Others	70	50	19	60	20	50

Conclusions

The internal immigrants are active in the socio-economic, cultural, educational and medical fields and contribute to the development of the region and nation. In due course they will be assimilated to the main stream of society. The attitude and activities of the government do not lead to any other conclusion. When the cultural assimilation is complete the problem of the internal immigrants will be wiped out instead of being solved. Thus the immigrants contribute a lot to the cultural development of the ethnic with the inhabitants of the kongu region and began to practice their customs and traditions also. More over the immigrants forms as well as Celebrates the festivals like Pongal,Deewali,Nawarathi,Christmas,Onam,Ramzan etc. with much pomp and pleasure. The immigrants studied the local art forms and produce new fusion art forms like Jumpa dance, Gymnastic, Thiruvathira etc. It brings the Kongu region in an extreme level.

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