



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)

UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514

VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 9 | JUNE - 2019



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE PARDHI SCHEDULED TRIBEWOMEN IN KARNATAKA: A STUDY OF KALABUARAGI DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

The present study describes marginalization of women in pardhi scheduled tribe due to socio-economic status in Kalaburagi district of Karnataka state and to suggest ways and means for their overall development. Total 240 women were selected as a sample for the present study to understand their problems. Interview schedule was framed to collect information about women of this community. The snow ball sampling method was used to collection of data. Observation and discussion methods were also adopted to collect detail information. The Pardhi scheduled tribe has a cultural heritage, and traditions, but lacks socio-economic empowerment. They are not able to create wealth because their livelihood depends on small cottage industries and majority of them selling home made products to market, since they cannot hold land and properties and so on. Anyhow, governments offered constitutional relieves in the form of reservations, but it is still difficult to reach the needy people. Therefore, a detailed research study has been carried out on the socio-economic status of women in the Pardhi scheduled tribe. Here several strategic suggestions as well as policy guidelines have been suggested.



**KEY WORDS:** - Pardhi's Community Women, socio-economic status, Kalabuaragi.

### INTRODUCTION:

Phase Paradhi or Phasse Paradhi is a tribe in India. The tribe often faces harassment by Indian law enforcement agencies. The tribe is found mostly in Maharashtra and parts of Madhya Pradesh. The Phasse are a sub tribe of the Paradhi caste which includes sub-castes like Gav-Paradhi Berad-Paradhi, Gay-Paradhi, Chita Paradhi. Paradhi is the term for "hunter". There are only three surnames among them, Chauhan,

Pawar and Solunkhe.

Koppers traced the name Paradhi to Marathi paradha ("hunt") and accordingly described the Paradhi of Jhabua and Kushalgarh (Rajasthan) as a "caste" of hunters who used nets to catch their prey. The Gujarati Paradhis were known to him as a "wandering tribe of fowlers". Nowadays the Paradhi are classified as "migratory Bhil" who speak

one of the many Bhil "languages" (Pardhi) and live throughout Maharashtra and Kacch (or Kutch) in Gujarat, earning their keep as hunters of birds and small game, snake charmers, basket weavers and producers of black-stone bowls and pitchers ([www.ksafe.com](http://www.ksafe.com)).

### A Brief Anthropological Profile of Pardhis:

The word "Pardhi" which is derived from the Marathi term

“paradh” indicates a livelihood activity –hunting. Colonial accounts of Pardhis describe them as wanderers and hunters (Russell and Hiralal 1997: 358) indicating the nomadic lifestyle of the group. It is not a homogeneous category and encompasses many groups named differently on the basis of their occupation or their lifestyle. Some of the more well-known ones include Chittar Pardhis (antelope-hunters), Gay-Pardhis (who ride cows), Gaon-Pardhis (who live at the periphery of the village), Bhil Pardhis or Shikaris (who use firearms), Langoti Pardhis (who are dressed only in a loin cloth to cover their nakedness), Phase Pardhis (noose hunters) and Pal-Pardhis (who live in tents), Haran-shikari (hunters of antelopes) and Adavichanchar (literally, ‘wanderers in the forest’). The two distinct endogamous groups within the Pardhi fold are the Raj-Pardhis and Mahadeo Pardhis. The Raj Pardhis, also called as Mevadis, trace their original homeland to the Mewar region which is surrounded by the Vindhya and Satpura ranges (Sangave 1967: 67). The Mahadeo Pardhis out-migrated from Mewar region in Rajasthan much before the Raj Pardhis and settled down in different regions across present day central India, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Although Pardhis have come to be categorized as a “tribe” through the processes of enumeration, colonial accounts list them as a “low caste” (Russell and Hiralal 1997: 358). It is highly probable that they were treated as a caste in traditional rural Hindu society, and assigned the lower-most position in the social hierarchy. Besides engaging with the caste system (if not co-opted by it), Pardhis also bore economic links with the village society. While hunting and food gathering were their principal means of survival, Pardhis provided specialized services and goods to society, thereby engaging in reciprocity (before introduction of monetized economy) and later, in exchange with the wider society. But in all probability, Pardhis were not full-fledged members of the village milieu. They either engaged in nomadism or were settled at the periphery of rural areas in clusters of households bound by kinship relations. While supplementing the village economy, they remained outside the balutedari and jajmani systems that sustained self-sufficiency of the village and reflected its social order (Bokil 2002:148). Markers of cultural and social distinctiveness of Pardhis from the local Hindu caste societies include their unique language which is a unique mix of Gujarati and Hindi, a unique pantheon of totemic deities, with each totemic clan representing an exogamous group and sharing a unique cognomen, and prevalence of nyaya panchayat (council of justice) whose membership is accorded by birth in the community.

Phase-Paradhi community is known as a Scheduled Tribe in Karnataka state. However, they have good skill of hunting with hunting instrument of ‘Phasa’ (trap) through this they catch the animals and birds therefore they are known as Phase-Paradhi. The original habitat of this community is Rajasthan. Then they migrated towards Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Hunting was their primary occupation for that they were living in forest areas. They preferred to hunt in group; hence their bonds were very strong. As the number of animals decreased in the forest and government began banning unlicensed hunting, pardhis could not find substitute means of survival and turned to thieving and dacoit which alike hunting they committed in group. The British government therefore declared the entire paradhi population as a criminal tribe. The paradhis paid a heavy price for their chosen social isolation and remained ignorant, illiterate, superstitious and extremely indigent.

A socioeconomic status is an intricate concept covering of two different aspects, the social aspect that includes status or position within a social stratification and the economic aspect that includes resources such as income, occupation and wealth. Even though there is no generally accepted definition of the term “socioeconomic status”, it was defined heterogeneously by writers and scholars. A socioeconomic status is a construct that reflects one’s access to collectively desired resources, be they material goods, money, power, friendship networks, healthcare, leisure time, or educational opportunities. (Oakes and Rossi, 2003).

Women in a tribal society play a vital role within their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the various walks of life like education, employment, good health and economic empowerment etc. Empowering may be understood as enabling weaker sections of society, like poor women, especially tribal women, to acquire and possess power and resources, in order to make decisions on their own.

After the analysis of the data and field observation, we discovered that lack of education, poor health status and infant mortality rate, low level of wage work, lack of self employment opportunity, organizing capacity and leadership quality are the main obstacles to the economic empowerment of tribal women (Puttaraju and O. D. Heggade, 2012).

A socio-economic profile has an important role in characterizing the social life and behavior of an individual. It is, therefore, essential to analyze the socio-economic background of tribal women and to understand the pattern of relationships between tribal women and local environment. In Indian society, caste and kinship has been a very important influencing factor on social life, and it exists an acute disparity in terms of standard of living and sub-culture among various groups and regions. A study of the socio-economic conditions of a leader would help reveal its sociological significance. At the same time, socio-economic stratification determines the structure of political power (Nagaraja, S. and Pallavi. S. K, 2013).

Karnataka is one of the major states of India. There are about 6.95 per cent of scheduled tribes in Karnataka (Census 2011). Karnataka has been the home for both the forest-dwelling tribes and the nomadic tribes who are denotified. There is a lack of reliable official data on the size of the so-called denotified tribes (DNTs) in Karnataka. However, the federation of these tribes, known as Alemari tribes Federation and Mahasabha, has carried out a household survey by entrusting this responsibility to each of the nomadic tribes. On the basis of this survey, the federation has estimated the population of these tribes to be approximately eight lakh.

There are variations in living styles, food habits and other cultural expressions of the denotified tribes. However, there are many unifying factors in the lifestyle of nomads across different tribes. Most of them practice the traditional occupations like taming the wild animals such as bears, jackals, snakes, wild pigs etc., and use them for performance. They also use the knowledge of traditional medicine and put in several performances of tribal culture.

**Box 1**  
**Tribal population and Pardhi population in Karnataka**

1. Adiyar	2. Barda	3. Bavacha, Bamcha
4. Bhil, Bhil Garasia, Dholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, Dungri Garasia, Mewasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Tadvi Bhil, Bhagalia, Bhilala, Pawra, Vasava, Vasave	5. Chenchu, Chenchwar	6. Chodhara
7. Dubla, Talavia, Halpati	8. Gamit, Gamta, Gavit, Mavchi, Padvi, Valvi	9. Gond, Naikpod, Rajgond
10. Gowdalu	11. Hakkipikki	12. Hasalaru
13. Irular	14. Iruliga	15. Jenu Kuruba
16. Kadu Kuruba	17. Kammara (in South Kanara district and Kollegal taluk of Mysore district)	18. Kaniyan, Kanyan (in Kollegal taluk of Mysore district)
19. Kathodi, Katkari, Dhor Kathodi, Dhor Katkari, Son Kathodi, Son Katkari	20. Kattunayakan	21. Kokna, Kokni, Kukna
22. Koli Dhor, Tokre Koli, Kolcha, Kolgha	23. Konda Kapus	24. Koraga
25. Kota	26. Koya, Bhine Koya, Rajkoya	27. Kudiya, Melakudi
28. Kuruba (in Coorg district)	29. Kurumans	30. Maha Malasar

31. Malaikudi	32. Malasar	33. Malayekandi
34. Maleru	35. Maratha (in Coorg district)	36. Marati (in south Kanara district)
37. Meda, Medara, Medari, Gauriga, Burud	38. Naikda, Nayaka, Cholivala Nayaka, Kapadia Nayaka, Mota Nayaka, Nana Nayaka, Naik, Nayak, Beda, Bedar, and Valmiki.	39. Palliyan
40. Paniyan	41. Pardhi, Advichincher, Phanse Pardhi, Haranshikari	42. Patelia
43. Rathawa	44. Sholaga	45. Soligaru
46. Toda	47. Varli	48. Vitolia, Kotwalia, Barodia
49. Yerava	50. Siddi (in Uttar Kannada district)	

**Table**  
**Pardhi community population in Karnataka as per 2011 census**

Pardhi, Advichincher, Phanse Pardhi, Haranshikari	Details	Numbers
	No of Households	2,316
Total Population	Total	10,746
	Male	5,415
	Female	5,331
	Sex ratio	984
	Child sex ratio	973
Literacy	Total	38
	Male	47.3
	Female	28.5
	Main worker	79.4
	Marginal Worker	20.6

Source: census of India 2011

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

There are a good number of studies, explaining the causes and consequences of backwardness and the low socio-economic status of Pardhi community women. Such studies are related to a general enquiry on women exploitation and dependency. These studies have identified lack of education, absence of skills and training, lack of property rights, social isolation and segregation and male control over resources and reproductive rights as responsible for women disempowerment.

According to Mayank Sinha of the Centre for Criminology and Justice, School of Social Work, TISS, Mumbai one of the biggest hurdles this population faces is the issue of caste certificates. "Traditionally, Pardhis are nomadic. So, they do not have a culture of keeping certificates from the 1960s which the state has asked to categorise them. The government has split the sub-groups into schedule castes (SC) and other backward class (OBC) for inexplicable reasons. Plus, the DNT label is not recognized by the central government.

Ajay Saraogi (2013), highlighted the status of women in tribal society in India, and he explained anthropologists have been recently divided on the status of women in Indian tribal societies. The actual treatment, legal status, opportunity for social participation and the character and extent of work, all determine each in a specific sense and manner, the status of women in a society. All these four

determinants are independent from each other and not casually related. The correlation between them is empirical and not conceptual.

Das (2012) in an attempt to find out the level of autonomy and decision making power of tribal women and the impact of socio-economic status on decision making roles concluded that the tribal women enjoy autonomy at their household level, especially in social aspects and at some point enjoy equal rights along with their husbands in economic matters. But due to low literacy rate and unemployment the community participation of the women is inactive and autonomy levels are very low.

Veen Bashi explained that India as a whole is characterized by sharp gender disparities, although women's status varies considerably by region. On virtually all frontiers of human societal pursuits, in the economic, educational, scientific, legal, political, official, political and religious spheres Indian women suffer profoundly, because all time there are socio-cultural factors which validate for the status of women in particular society. Speaking of tribal girls' education, he showed that education is a fundamental right that provides opportunities for socio-economic uplift. In India reasons associated with the lack of education for girl children are financial constraints, early marriages, submissiveness, motherhood, and parental perception of education on women's worldview. The girl child is deliberately denied education and the future opportunity of total development.

Singh A.K. (1993) have expressed that the health and educational status of tribal women is low in comparison to their non-tribal counterpart and they have also characterised the status of the tribal women by over-work, invasion of sexually exploitative market forces in tribal society, illiteracy, high fertility and high malnutrition and near absence of modern health care facilities.

Kumari R. (1998) in an attempt to examine the relationship between women's work participation and their status finds that women's work participation enhances their status and also found out that there is a positive association between women's work and male view regarding issues relating to the status of women.

Mullah M.S. (2007) through their study highlighted that the socio economic status of the tribal people is substantially lower in comparison with the general people as they are lagging behind in terms of the economical, political, social and technological standings and most of them are still going on with old-fashioned tradition, standard of living and beliefs.

Rao V.M. (2010) through his work finds that the women do not have the freedom of decision making as all the decision on the important activities are taken by the male member in the family. So the woman has to go a long way to attain a sound socio-economic status in the society.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the socioeconomic status of the Pardhi scheduled tribe women in Kalabauargi district of Karnataka.
2. To find out the educational level of the Pardhi scheduled tribe women in the study area.
3. To examine the factors influencing on the socioeconomic status of the women in the study area.

### IV. METHODS OF THE STUDY:

The present study is based on primary data collected from 240 sample respondents from Kalabuaragi district following the purposive sampling method. A schedule is used to collect the demographic, social and economic status of the tribal women and have also been used Interviews, observation, group discussion, and case study methods.

### V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

In the present study we attempted to understand the different aspects of the social and economic status of the respondents. The main features of the socio-economic profile are family composition, education composition, occupation composition, marital status, family income, and family background of the respondents. Nevertheless, these variables could help us know the socio-economic status of tribal women in the selected study area.

**Table: 1 Type of family**

Type of Family	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear family	210	87.5
Joint family	22	9.2
Extended family	8	3.3
Total	240	100

Source: Filed study

A family is the basic unit of society, which assigns social status, roles and social responsibilities to every individual. A family is the most powerful medium through which a value system can develop over a period of time, and individual behavior and attitudes are determined by the family which he/she belongs to. That is, whether the family is joint or nuclear and it also determines the status and role of tribal women.

Table No 1 shows that 81.7% of the respondents belongs to nuclear families and 16.7 % of the respondents belongs to joint families and only the remaining 1.7% of the respondents are living in an extended family. Thus, the data indicate that there are more nuclear families than joint and extended families.

**Table: 2 Age of the respondents**

Age group	Frequency	percentage
Below 20 years	14	5.8
21-30 years	56	23.3
31-40 years	84	35.0
41-50 years	34	14.2
51-60 y	30	12.5
Above 60 years	22	9.2
Total	240	100

Source: Filed study

The above table shows that 10.0% respondents are in age group below 20 years, 17.5% of respondents are in the age group of 21-30 years, 25.8% of respondents are come 31 to 40 years age group, 19.2% of respondents are come under below 41-50 years age category, 15.8% of respondents are in the 51-60 age group, and only 11.7 % of respondents are above 60 years.

**Table: 3 Marital status of the respondents**

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	164	68.3
Unmarried	26	10.8
Widow	36	15.0
Divorced/separated	14	5.9
Total	240	100

Source: Filed study

Marital status is also a social indicator for understanding the socio-economic status of women. The early marriage system has been one of the important characteristics of tribal community. Marital status changes the women's status. It also changes the women's role and increases the duties and workload of the women. The marital status of the respondent is shown in the table 3.

The table 3 shows that out of 120 of respondents 65.8% of them are found to be married, 13.3% unmarried, 18.3% widowed and only 2.5% of them are divorced/Separated. Nowadays married and



widowed/ divorced women get different a treatment in the society but before there was no discrimination in this community. Remarriage is accepted in this society.

**Table: 4 Educational status of the respondents**

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	98	40.8
Lower Primary	66	27.5
Higher Primary	36	15.0
High school	20	8.3
PUC	12	5.0
UG and Above	4	1.7
Professional Course	4	1.7
Total	240	100

Source: Filed study

The educational status is divided into 7 categories which are illiterate, Lower primary level, Higher primary level, high school level, Pre-University level, under graduation and above, also other professional course. The educational status of the respondents is shown in Table 4, that reveals that 42.5% of respondents were observed to be illiterates followed by Lower primary (26.7%), Higher primary (14.2%), High school (6.7%), Pre university (5.0), under graduate and above (2.5% ) and only 2.5% women studied in Professional courses. This is mainly because tribal women are more prone to their traditions and they do not come forward to upgrade their educational standards. Among this community school dropout is very common both boy and girls.

**Table: 5 Occupational structure of the respondents**

Type of Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Agricultural	40	16.7
Agriculture labour	106	44.2
Collection of minor forest product	58	24.1
Govt service	8	3.3
Any Other	28	11.7
Total	240	100

Source: Filed study

Occupation is considered as the main source of income, and it represents the socio-economic status of people. Tribal women in India contribute positively to the local economy and participate along with men in subsistence activities. In reality, women do more work than men. In the study area they carry out all types of work at home as well as outside that according to the needs of a mixed agropastoral economy. Apart from caring for the house, children and cattle, the major portion of the agricultural work is made by women, who do weeding, hoeing, harvesting and threshing. Women also work as labourers. The role of women is important in economic as well as non-economic activities.

The above table (5) shows that out of 120 of respondents 38.3% are working as agricultural labourers, 20.0% are engaged in agriculture, 26.7% in the collection of minor forest products, 6.7% in government service, and 8.3% of respondents are engaged in other occupations like business, tailoring, selling in livestock product, gazing cattle, handicraft etc.

**Table: 6 Annual family income of the respondents.**

Income in RS	Frequency	Percentage
Upto 10000	68	28.4
10,001-20,000	114	47.5
20,001-30,000	38	15.8
30,001-40,000	12	5.0
Above 40,000	8	3.3
total	240	100

Source: Filed study

The income of a person in general, is an indicator of his/her economic status. The economic status of a person will impact on his/her attitude. Therefore, the study assumes that the attitudes of women belonging to the families with higher income differs from that of the attitude of women who are in middle or lower level of the income group. The economic status of a family also plays an important role in influencing the attitudes, ideas and values of its family members and their decision-making process. The respondents' annual income is indicated below in the table No.6, in a detailed manner.

Table No 6 indicates that 23.3% of respondents have annual income of up to Rs. 10,000, 40.8% of respondent's annual income is from Rs.10,001-20,000, 19.2% of respondents annual earning is Rs.20,001-30,000, 7.5% of respondents are earning is 30,001 to 40,000 and only 9.2% of respondents annual income of above Rs. 40,000.

**Table: 7 Preferred Place of Treatment by the respondents:**

Place of treatment	Frequency	Percentage
Govt Hospital	132	55.0
Private Hospital	56	23.3
Traditional healers and temple	44	18.4
Don't go anywhere	8	3.3
Total	240	100

Source: Filed study

Health conditions can be taken as another important socio-economic indicator. Even in this modern era quite a large number of people including tribes believes in superstitious practices, preferring the shamans and healers. Preferred place of treatment by the respondent women has been presented in Table 7.

The above table indicates that 59.2% of respondents prefer Government hospitals for treatment whereas 17.5% of respondents prefer private hospitals or clinics, 20.8% of respondents are dependent on traditional healers and temples, but 2.5% of respondents do not take treatment. This is due to lack of education, old mentality, belief in superstition and low economic status.

**Cause of Low Socio-economic Status of Respondents**

The researchers asked some questions to know opinions of the respondents about the main reason of Pardhi tribe women's backwardness. In the study area, the higher percentage of respondents reported that the main cause of backwardness and poverty, as well as lack of education, the patriarchal system as such are the causes of the low status of Pardhi tribe women, together with an inferiority complex, culture constraints, and lack of awareness.

**VI. CONCLUSION:**

In this study, we found that tribal women have multidimensional roles and responsibilities in their families. Their work burden is higher than that of men, but most of the time spent in their household activities. The literacy rate of Pardhi scheduled tribe women is low. They are deprived from



acquiring an education due to various social, personal, economic factors which are directly related to their incapacity to get a waged job. Only few Pardhi scheduled tribe women own their houses and some land. Most of the Pardhi scheduled tribe women have to work more but have a comparatively less decision-making power than the male counterparts in agriculture. Actually, the decision-making role of men is superior in most of the variables. Only few activities see an equal contribution of men and women in an household decision making. Thus, it can be concluded that the socio-economic status of Pardhi scheduled tribe women is low, and policy makers and local development practitioners should design appropriate and effective policies and programs in this regard. Informal education classes should be supported for illiterate women with some incentives. Efforts are necessary to be made to develop women's social prestige, self-confidence and feeling of equality by educating them. Poverty is the most threatening constraint against the improvement of women's socio-economic status. Various programs such as vegetable farming, goat farming etc., education, free health, and incentives for higher and employment-based programs etc. should be launched by the government in order to increase the living standard of the community.

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