



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF TRIBAL WOMEN LIVING IN THE PLAIN AND INTERIOR SUB-PLAN AREAS OF VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT :

India ranks the second in having the tribal concentration in the world next only to Africa. India holds unique position in the concentration of tribal communities. There are about 532 scheduled tribes in India. They speak about 100 languages and 255 subsidiary languages. A great variety of the oldest cultural segment is mostly found in tribes. They are called as primitive tribal, indigenous, aboriginal, and adivasis. Out of the selected sample, among the tribal women, 61 percent are suffering from reproductive health problems and 44 percent, 78 percent are suffering in plain and interior respectively. The literacy of selected sample reveals that only 33 percent are literates in the study area. Among the total literates, 60 percent are plain and 37 percent are interior tribal's in the study area. The land related issues depicts that 13 percent have less than 1 acre, 35 percent have 1-3 acre, 39 percent have 3-5 acre and 13 percent have 5-8 acre in the total study area. In the interior area, 40 percent have 1-3 acre, 30 percent have 3-5 acre and 12 percent have 5-8 acre and 18 percent have less than 1 acre.

In the light of these aspects an attempt is made in this study to highlight the different problems facing by the tribal women who are living in the interior hill tract Sub-Plan areas of the Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. While using the Probit model this study identified the factors influencing the tribal women living in the very interior areas. Based on the empirical results the study suggested few policy measures to improve the socio-economic and living conditions of the tribal women who are living in the very interior and hill tract villages.

KEYWORDS : tribal communities, indigenous, aboriginal, and adivasis.

INTRODUCTION

Tribals are called as primitive tribal, indigenous, aboriginal, and adivasis. They have a fascinating way of life. In general, the tribal families live together as groups. These groups have pre-historic economy, with several customs and rituals. Certain tribal languages have no script except speech. They live in interior forest areas far away from the civilized world. They have lacerate burn cultivation and hunting of the wild animals as the way of life. They have a common religion, common customs and live as a community. Andhra Pradesh is one of the states having large tracts of hilly and agency areas and size able scheduled tribe population. The scheduled area in Andhra Pradesh comprises of 29,683 square kilometres, which forms 10.7 per cent of the total geographical area of the state and 11.00 per cent of the total scheduled area of the country. There are about 33



specified castes of scheduled tribes in the united Andhra Pradesh.

A. Status of Women in Tribal Society

Tribal speak little of status and role to be played by them when talking about their social life. What they do talk of are the skills for managing the environment for making a living. They also talk of marriage, married life, children, and their socialisation within a community of relationships. The tribal family system has many forms and different structures. These have direct bearing on the status of women, not only in terms of the number and quality of relationships to which they have to adapt and the distribution of functions and roles, but also with regard to the allocation of resources.

In the study area nuclear, joint, polygamous nuclear, polygamous joint, polyandrous nuclear, polyandrous joint and extended types of families are present the beliefs and ideas held by locals have a vital influence on the lives of the men, women and children. For one thing, it reinforces the gender division of work, place, tools and language. According to religious beliefs, women are considered impure, that is why they are not allowed to use plough and interact with supernatural beings directly. The present position and condition of the tribal women is not an accidental affair. It has evolved because of the operation of several forces in the past.

B. Review of Related Studies:

The study of Chinnadurai R (2005) made an in-depth analysis of the potentialities of women entrepreneurship in the service sector and observed that there is a need to strengthen and streamline the role of rural women largely employed in the unorganized sector. Immobility, traditional value system, low level of literacy, lack of awareness, non-availability of proper guidance and difficulty in availing of the benefits of several loan schemes are some such socio-economic, political and cultural factors to have affected the women entrepreneurship

In an another research study Tripathy (2006) made an attempt to study in Kalahandi, Bolangir and Malkangiri districts of Orissa those are tribal dominated and the most backward. He analyzed the underlying reasons of migration and their socio-economic consequences, since labour migration has assumed alarming proportions in tribal dominated districts. He brought into lime light the evils of the Dadan (bonded) system and the exploitations suffered by the tribes. The work revealed that there are several factors like erosion of the resource base, alienation of land, restrictions of rights over forest produce and lack of employment opportunities in the areas of their domicile those have forced tribes to seek jobs outside and there is a need for a suitable economic policy for the rehabilitation of this marginalized community. The pioneering studies of Lewis, I.M., Paul D, Allison Dietz and M, Gail., et.al David Goddard and M.L.Patel also highlighted the need for special programmes and measures to uplift the socio economic conditions of the tribal women who are living in the interior hill tract villages.

C. Need and Relevance of the present study:

The earlier studies reveal that the poverty reduce programmes required an entirely new way of thinking and women actively involve in the nation's inclusive growth. Providing equal rights and equal access to resources and opportunities to women, general equality becomes an essential aspect of human development. Especially women have not been treated on par with men in every aspects of life, though their role is crucial for the sustenance of family as well as of society and also for development of economy as a whole.

Some of the earlier studies on tribal women confined themselves to selected issues connected with the status of rural women, employment of rural women, agricultural women workers, tribal development programmes for women, anti poverty alleviation programmes for rural women and rural women illiteracy. But these studies could not given either full information regarding the roots of poverty of tribal women folk or the strategies, which help to promote the tribal women socio-economic status. The present study attempts to analyze new approaches to improve the socio-economic status of tribal women. Some of the

research studies confined themselves to an evolution study of rural development programmes or poverty elimination programmes as a whole. No attempt has been made to study separately the experiences or strategies involved in capacity building or promoting socio-economic status of tribal women in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

Against this background, the present study aims at understanding the factors determine the socio-economic status of interior tribal women in the interior areas of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of the study is focussed on analyzing the different issues relating to the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the tribal women who are living in the very interior hill tract villages. In this context an attempt is made in this study

1. To presents the different issues relating to socio and economic conditions of the selected tribal women who are living in the very interior hill tract villages.
2. To examine the differences in the determinants of the socio-economic conditions of the selected tribal women households who are living in the village in plain areas and tribal women who are living in the interior hill tract village in the study area.
3. To suggest required measures to be taken for the up liftment of the socio-economic and living conditions of women in the interior tribal villages.

HYPOTHESIS:

Based on the above outlined objectives of the study the following Hypothesis are formulated :

(H₀₁): The Socio-economic conditions of the selected tribal women who are living in the interior hill tract village are in very backward condition when compared to their counterparts who are living in the village located in the plain areas.

(H₀₂): Literacy levels and health status are having much impact on the socio- economic conditions of the tribal women households both who are living in the village in plain area and also village in the interior hill tract area.

METHODOLOGY:

The discussion on the methodology indicates sampling method used how the data is ascertained and statistical tools used for analysis. Multi stage stratified random sampling method is used in the present study. The selection process is carried out in four phases, i.e. district, mandal, villages and households. The Visakhapatnam district is selected for the study due to the fact that the district has higher proportion of interior tribal population and wide extent of Sub-Plan area. The Anantagiri mandal is selected for the study because it is having both the plain and interior hill tract areas. From the Anantagiri mandal Nandikota village is selected as the village with plain area. Similarly another village Pedakota is selected for the study from the same mandal and it is selected from the interior hill tract area of the same Anantagiri mandal selected from the Visakhapatnam district. The villages are selected depending upon the higher concentration of tribal population, Nandikota village is located in plain area, where as Pedakota village is located in interior hilly areas. From each selected village 50 women households are selected for the study. As a whole 100 women households are selected for the in-depth study.

A. Model Specification

The relative socio economic status of the selected tribal women in the study area, is explained by considering a dichotomous dependent variable. The selected households who are relatively possessed with low and poor levels of social and economic indicators can be given a value of 1 (tribal women households in the interior Pedakota village) and the selected tribal women households from the Nandikota village are from the plain area who have relatively higher levels of social and economic indicators are given zero value

(0). This study explains the factors behind the prevailing conditions in the different areas. To identify relative risk factors, a sample of households of both types has been considered.

The probit regression equation is the form

$$Y^* = \beta'X + e$$

where, α = a coefficient on the constant term
 β_i = are the coefficients of the seven independent variables
 X_i = are the independent variables, and
 e = error term

More specifically,

$$Y^* = \alpha + \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Where,

α = a coefficient on the constant term
 X_1 = Family size
 X_2 = Literacy levels as binary (illiterate-1, otherwise-0) variable
 X_3 = Work participation
 X_4 = Health status as binary (calorie intake below normal-1, otherwise-0) variable
 X_5 = Income in rupees
 X_6 = Consumption expenditure in rupees and
 X_7 = Operational land holding

Using statistical package called STATA 14.1 the probit model has been estimated. The results of the estimated Probit regression model for inter tribe variations among the interior area tribe and plain area tribal women in the study area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

A. Reproductive Health Status of the selected Tribal women in the study area:

As far as reproductive health and family planning are concerned, the tribal women position is very poor in India. The present study has made an attempt to collect attitudinal survey on reproductive health problems of selected sample tribal women.

Table.1.
Details of reproductive health problems of the selected sample women

Reproductive Health Problems	No.of Infected		
	Plain	Interior	Total
Menstrual disorder	5 (10.00)	19 (38.00)	24 (24.00)
Reproductive tract disorder	7 (14.00)	8 (16.00)	15 (15.00)
Unitary track infection	1 (2.00)	3 (6.00)	4 (8.00)
Uterine Prolapsed with RTI	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (2.00)
Miscarriage	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (2.00)
Infection following tubectomy	3 (6.00)	5 (10.00)	8 (8.00)
Hypertensive disorder in Pregnancy	4 (8.00)	2 (4.00)	6 (6.00)
Total	22 (44.00)	39 (78.00)	61 (61.00)

Source: Field Data

Note: Parenthesis indicates percentages of respective sample sizes

Out of the selected sample(100) tribal women, 61 percent are suffering from reproductive health problems . Among the selected sample and 44 percent of women from plain village and 78 percent women are from the interior village. Among the diseased, 24 percent are suffering with menstrual disorder, among them 38 percent of them are from interior village and 10 percent are suffering in the plain village. In order, 15 percent women are suffering from reproductive tract disorder and followed by infection following tubectomy (8 percent), hypertensive disorder in pregnancy (6 percent). The need for checkups on a regular basis has to be stressed for all age groups. Facilities for post – menopausal women for treatment of chronic diseases like, hypertension, heart ailment, osteoporosis and cancer have to be strengthened with the spread of awareness among women and facilities for treatment.

B. Literacy Levels of the Selected Sample Tribal Women:

The literacy levels of tribal women households, to a great extent help to improve their skills and earnings. Data on literacy levels of the tribal women are ascertained and presented in the following Table 2.

Table: .2.
Distribution of Selected Tribal Women Literacy Levels

Literacy level	Plain	Interior	Total
Illiterate	30 (60.00)	37 (74.00)	67 (67.00)
Primary	9 (18.00)	11 (22.00)	20 (20.00)
Secondary	7 (14.00)	2 (4.00)	9 (9.00)
Higher	4 (8.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (4.00)
Total	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	100 (100.00)

Source: Field Data. Note: Parenthesis indicates the percentages of respective sample size.

The above table reveals that only 33 percent of the sample tribal women households are literates in the study area. Among the total literates, 60 percent are recorded from the village in the plain area and 37 percent are registered from the women in the interior tribal village. Only 4 percent of the sample tribal women households are having higher education and almost all of them are hailed from the village in the plain areas.

C. Land Particulars of the selected sample:

Economic status indicates involving oneself in decision making, gaining control over their resources and to achieve higher quality of life. Improving the economic status of the poor tribal women is an exercise that aims to enable women to gain control over the sources of power through inculcating awareness among them. The following table presents the particulars relating to land owned by selected respondents in the study area.

Table3.
Land Particulars of Selected Sample Tribal Women Households

Acres	Plain	Interior	Total
Less than 1	4 (8.00)	9 (18.00)	13 (13.00)
1-3	15 (30.00)	20 (40.00)	35 (35.00)
3-5	24 (48.00)	15 (30.00)	39 (39.00)
5-8	7 (14.00)	6 (12.00)	13 (13.00)
Total	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	100 (100.00)

Source: Field Data. Note: Parenthesis indicates the percentages of respective sample size.

From the above Table it can be noticed that from the total sample women percent of the respondents have less than 1 acre, 35 percent of them have 1-3 acres, 39 percent have 3-5 acres and 13 percent have 5-8 acres in the entire study area. It can be observed that in the interior village, 40 percent of the households are having 1-3 acres, 30 percent are having 3-5 acres and 12 percent are possessed with 5-8 acres and the remaining 18 percent are having less than 1 acre. The data ultimately reveal that the land holdings are relatively higher in size in the village in the plain area rather than in the village in the interior village.

D. The results of Probit model:

Table.4. Estimation results of the Probit model for Tribal women in the interior village

	No.of					
	Observations					100
	LR chi-Square					
	(5)					36.41
	Pob>Chi-square					0.0013
	Log likelihood					-219.65208
	Pseudo R					0.0743
Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>Z	95% Conf. Interval	
X ₁	0.00378**	0.0006489	1.12	0.024	0.0002038	0.0066473
X ₂	-0.21532**	0.1953769	-2.13	0.033	-0.7983308	-0.0324675
X ₃	0.138812*	0.0085966	3.89	0.000	-2.220978	1.4032981
X ₄	-0.235899*	0.2456339	-3.81	0.000	-1.417333	-0.4544654

X ₅	0.3995152**	0.1953769	3.12	0.017	0.7983308	0.0324675
X ₆	0.3024777**	0.1954625	1.13	0.041	-0.0324675	0.7983308
X ₇	0.3914592**	0.1954625	2.44	0.015	0.0946308	0.8608297
Const	-3.386838	0.67408798	-3.54	0.000	-3.708026	-1.065649

Source: Compiled by author, * indicates the 1 percent, ** indicates 5 percent, *** indicates 10percent probability

It can be observed from the above table that, the data set for 100 observations was used in the analysis. The iteration log also indicates how quickly the model converged. The likelihood ratio chi-square of 36.41 with a p-value of 0.0013 tells us that our model as a whole is statistically significant, that is, it fits significantly better than a model with no predictors.

It is also evident from the regression results presented in the Table 4, that all the variables are statistically significant. The Probit regression coefficients give the change in the z-score or probit index for a one unit change in the predictor. The Table shows that for a one unit increase in the demographic variable, family size (X₁), the z-score increases by 0.0037. On the other hand, the social variables, Literacy (X₂) and health status (X₄) shows a negative trend but turned out with the expected sign. For example, being illiterate versus literate (the reference group), decreases the z-score by 0.215. Likewise, low calorie intake reduces the z-score by 0.236.

On the other hand, all the economic variables namely work participation (X₃), income (X₅), consumption expenditure (X₆) and operational land holding (X₇) have turned out with the expected sign. More specifically, one can observe from the estimation result Table that, for each one unit increase in work participation (X₃), the z-score increases by 0.139. Similarly, a one unit increase in household income (X₅) and of operational land holding (X₇) of the household resulted in a 0.4 increase of z-score. Likewise, it is observed that a unit increase in household consumption expenditure (X₆) resulted in a 0.3 increase of z-score.

CONCLUSION:

The sample women in the interior village are facing more health problems when compared to the women in plain village. Reproductive health aspect is concerned, the tribal women position is very poor in the study area. Out of the selected sample of tribal women, 61 percent are suffering from reproductive health problems. Among them 44 percent in plain village where as 78 percent are found in the interior village. The literacy levels of selected sample reveals that only 33 percent are literates in the study area. Among the total literates, 60 percent are recorded from plain village and only 37 percent are identified from the interior village. In the study area only 4 percent of sample women are having higher education and all of them belongs to plain village. The land related issues among the total sample women depicts that 13 percent of them are having less than 1 acre, 35 percent have 1-3 acre, 39 percent have 3-5 acre and 13 percent have 5-8 acre in the study area. In the selected interior village, 40 percent of sample women have 1-3 acre, 30 percent have 3-5 acre and 12 percent have 5-8 acre and 18 percent have less than 1 acre.

The probit model analysis reveals that for a one unit increase in the demographic variable, family size (X₁), the z-score increases by 0.0037. On the other hand, the social variables, Literacy (X₂) and health status (X₄) shows a negative trend but with expected sign. For example, being illiterate versus literate (the reference group), decreases the z-score by 0.215. Likewise, low calorie intake reduces the z-score by 0.236.

On the other hand, all the economic variables namely Work participation (X₃), Income (X₅), Consumption expenditure (X₆) and Operational land holding (X₇) have turned out with the expected sign. More specifically, it can be observed that the estimation result table shows that for each one unit increase in Work Participation (X₃), the z-score increases by 0.139. Similarly, a one unit increase in household income (X₅) and of operational land holding (X₇) of the household resulted in a 0.4 increase of z-score. Likewise, it is observed that, a unit increase in household consumption expenditure (X₆) resulted in a 0.3 increase of z-score.

The socio economic conditions of the remote tribal women is poor than the plain area tribal women. Hence we accept the H_{01} . From the probit model it is observed that literacy status much impact on their socio and economic conditions in the study area. Hence we accept the (H_{02}) hypothesis.

POLICY SUGGESTIONS:

The analysis points out that there is immediate need to reduce the intensity of problems associated with the improvement of socio economic status of the tribal women who are living in the interior villages, .

1. In this context it is suggested that, the government has to focus special attention to provide more extent of basic infrastructure facilities like transportation, communication, marketing etc., on a priority basis in the interior hill tract villages of the tribal areas.
2. To empower the women in the interior tribal villages as partners in the development, process, there is dire need to promote their socio-economic and living conditions by way of building up the basic amenities as well as education and health facilities.
3. There is need for improve the economic status of the poor tribal women in the interior villages. Efforts have to be made towards aiming enable the tribal women to gain control over the sources of power through awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation in decision making process, control and transformative action.

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