

‘A comparative Study of Socio-Economic Conditions of Scheduled Tribes in Marathwada Region’

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ABSTRACT

Scheduled Tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from modern and civilized way of living since so many centuries. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA), it was pointed out, 'There are more Scheduled Tribal (ST) below the poverty line than those from other communities. Their economy is less diversified than other communities. It is largely based in and around agriculture. It is seen that wide gaps exist between the scheduled tribes and general population in the basis of various socio-economic indicators. The level of the socio-economic development varies considerably between tribal & non-tribal population, between one tribe and another tribe and even among different sub-group of tribal groups. Thus their problems differ from area to area within their own groups. The development schemes have to be devised in the light of socio-cultural factors and economic needs of the tribals in each region and same times each community. The significance of social, cultural factor cannot be ignored in formulation of schemes for their all round development. The development schemes have to be devised in the light of socio-cultural factors and economic needs of the tribals in each region and same times each community.

This study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary data has collected through a structured questionnaire scheduled from 300 tribal families from selected tribes i.e. Andh, Gond, Bhil, Kolam and Pradhan tribes across the 03 districts in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State.

Key Words: Tribal community, Tribal development, Social justice, upliftment of tribes.

Introduction:

The greatest challenge has facing by govt. of India, since independence in the proper provision of social justice to the scheduled tribe, by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled Tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Though the tribal are the sons of the same soil and the citizens of the same country, they born and grow as the children of the nature. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of social and economic exploitation. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from modern and civilized way of living since so many centuries.¹ The British rulers really did something in providing certain facilities in villages and towns such as education, transport, communication medical etc. these are inadequate and mainly with self-interest. But it did nothing for ameliorating the socio-economic

conditions of tribal people, except to the people in North-East region of the country. However, the Constitution of India has made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of tribal people throughout the country.² After independence welfare of the tribal has been given very high priority from the beginning of the first five year plan in India. Many steps have been taken by Indian government for their upliftment, for their entrance into the mainstream of development.

Tribal people of India are one of the original inhabitants and depend on land and land related occupations such as agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, fishing and hunting and so on. Consequently they are economically backward and belong to an ethnic group away from the main stream of other communities. They live on subsistence level of economy living on the barter system. As market economy expanded in the tribal areas, money as medium of exchange came into existence. Slowly and intervention of the state governments and Government of India many social and environmental factors took place for the upliftment of these tribal's from forest based life to a settled agriculture and non agricultural occupations. After independence due recognition was given to these tribal's for their socio economic empowerment. These tribal's have been designated as Scheduled Tribes (STs) under the Article 342 of the Constitution of India. These communities are notified as Scheduled Tribes (STs) based on the characteristics such as primitive traits, geographical isolation, and distinctive culture and economically backward. When labeled as scheduled tribe the community becomes entitled for some constitutional protection and developmental programmes designed to end their marginalization and bring them to the main stream of society.

Their interests are to be protected as per the constitution of India for their economic empowerment. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA), it was pointed out, 'There are more Scheduled Tribal (ST) families below the poverty line than those from other communities. Their condition is far from worse than the rest of the population and they have not been able to reach the envisaged level of development, where they can benefit from the new opportunities offered by the fast expanding economy' (page104, Annual report 2006-07). More than 90 percent of the STs live in rural areas. Given that incidence of rural poverty is higher than urban poverty, one can expect poverty among STs to be higher than that of the rest of the total population. STs are much less present in the non-farm sector. Their dependency on nature and their impoverished economy living in isolated pockets reveal the need to identify specific schemes for their socio economic upliftment. Their economy is less diversified than other communities. It is largely based in and around agriculture.

The level of the socio-economic development varies considerably between tribal & non-tribal population, between one tribe and another tribe and even among different sub-group of tribal groups. Thus their problems differ from area to area within their own groups. These disparities and diversities make tribal development and micro level planning of tribal at the grass root level imperative.

Indias Scheduled Tribes (STs) are one of the most disadvantaged sections of society due to their isolation and socio-economic backwardness. There are about 900 different tribal communities spread over India. According to the census of 2011, the scheduled tribe population in India was 104.5 million, accounting for 8.63% of the total population of the country. The tribal population in Maharashtra in 2011 was 105 million, which constitutes 9.35% of the total population of the state. Maharashtra has the second largest tribal population in the country, next only to Madhya Pradesh.³

The tribal groups differ in numerical strength, settlement history, geographic location & means of livelihood, access to natural resources, language, culture, human development, political empowerment and developmental aspirations. Further, each tribe or tribal group is an endogamous group, whose interaction with other tribal groups and the general population is limited.

After independence and adoption of Constitution of India specific policies for their development are being drawn up. The Constitution of India has been drawing up developmental provisions for promoting education and health and other developmental activities, the reservation provision for ensuring their representation and so on. Under the constitution Scheduled Areas are declared by the President of India after consultation with the state governors. These areas have been designated to protect the interests of Schedules Tribes including women regarding their land and other social issues and are governed through provisions of either Fifth or Sixth Schedules. State governors have special constitutional protective role in all the Scheduled Areas. They are empowered to make regulations prohibiting or restricting transfer of land from tribal's to non- tribal's and prevent exploitation.

Recognizing tribal's isolation and backwardness, and the need for state support, soon after India's independence provision was made in the Fifth Scheduled of the Constitution of India for the administration and control of Scheduled Area and Scheduled Tribes.

Until 1973, the Tribal Welfare Development Unit was one of the sub-units of the Social Welfare Department. In 1973, a separate Tribal Welfare Directorate was created with Pune as its headquarters. In 1985, a separate Tribal Ministry was formed and the Tribal Development Department (TDD) was reorganized in 1992. The main functions of the TDD are State Level co-ordination and monitoring of the Tribal Sub-Plan, and Supervision of the implementation of various schemes through Integrated Tribal Development Projects.⁴ The Tribal Development Commissionerate at Nashik is responsible for the implementation of the TSP. Commissionerate has four Additional Tribal Commisionarates under it: Thane, Nashik, Amravati and Nagpur. At present there are 29 ITDPs in Maharashtra and they are under the direct administrative control of the four Additional Commisionearates. The Government of India in recognition of the fact that there were some small concentrations of tribal population just outside the I.T.D.Ps, directed that in a group of villages having a population of about 10,000, if more than 50 Percent were tribals, the villages should be brought under the Modified Area Development Approach (MADA). Similarly, if two or three villages having a total population of 5,000 if more than 50 Percent were tribals, the same should be constituted into a clusters/Mini-MADA. In Maharashtra, there are 43 MADA Pockets and 24 Mini MADA/Clusters. There is still considerable overlap between the ATSP and the MADA and Mini MADA /Clusters. There are three tribes Viz., the Kolams (Yavatmal District), the Katkaris (mainly in Thane and Raigad Districts) and the Madia Gonds (Gadchiroli District), which have been notified as Primitive Tribes by the Government of India.⁵

Statement of the Problem:

Some researchers argue that the gap between tribal and non tribal has been widening and tribal exploitation has become more effective and increased after the implementation of tribal development plans. A.K. Sharma (1966) pointed out that, Government of India has not only failed to encourage the development of tribals but has actively maintained their under development.⁶ He also stated that the

laws and programmes have failed because of the attitudes of the powerful feudalities groups and non involvement of tribal in the development process.

Some researchers argue that the tribal sub-plan strategy (1975-76) has been change the attitude of the various government schemes from tribal welfare to tribal development over the period. TSP is basically an area development programme with focus on tribal development under which infrastructural development and family oriented programme are undertaken.⁷ But these do not commensurate to the expectations and investments made so far. These programmes did not have desired impact.

Over the years, the Central and State Government have been taking various initiatives for socio-economic upliftment of tribal population of the country. These efforts have brought out some improvements for scheduled tribes in terms of various indicators relating to literacy, health, livelihood, etc. as reflected in Census 2011 and other socio-economic survey reports. However there are still considerable gaps in the human development indices between scheduled tribes and general population.⁸

However some micro level studies of which focus mainly of the impact of development programs on tribal households indicate a mixed pattern. There were many reasons to the failure of tribal development programs like delays in the implementation of the programmes, lack of coordination at various levels etc.

It is seen from the review reports of various committees, working groups and research studies on the status of tribal communities that wide gaps exist between the scheduled tribes and general population in the basis of various socio-economic indicators. Several reports have also acknowledged the tardy implementation of the TSPs by the States/UTs and Central Ministries/ Department, lacunae in policy implementation, gaps in the allocation and utilization of funds as well as structural inadequacies at national, state, district, block and village levels.⁹

These issues and studies indicate that the nature of tribal problem is very complicated and the practical difficulties in implementation of tribal development programmes. The social and economic levels of the tribal communities are not homogenous. But they are at different levels of variability; tribal development cannot be uniform. The development schemes have to be devised in the light of socio-cultural factors and economic needs of the tribals in each region and same times each community. The significance of social, cultural factor cannot be ignored in formulation of schemes for their all round development.¹⁰

Above this background present research work is an attempt to study socio-economic conditions of scheduled tribe in Marathwada region. It is the comparative study of selected tribe i.e. Andh, Gond, Bhil, Kolam and Pardhan tribes which is resided in Marathwada region. It also studied tribal development programmes and their implementation, benefits to tribal community in this region.

Objectives of study:

The main focus of the study is to analyze the socio economic and living conditions of selected tribe in the tribal area of Marathwada region. This study addresses the specific objectives outlined as follows:

1. To study comparatively socio-economic characteristics of the scheduled tribes in Marathwada.
2. To study the patterns of employment, income level and to examine the level of indebtedness of the tribal households among selected tribes in the study area.
3. To study the implementation of tribal development program in Marathwada region.
4. To suggest appropriate policy measures for effectively implementation of tribal development schemes in Marathwada.

Hypotheses:

Followings are the hypotheses framed for the research work.

1. The socio-economic condition of scheduled tribes in Marathwada region is vulnerable.
2. Scheduled tribes in Marathwada, are at widely different stages of social as well as economic development and their problems are differ within their own groups.
3. Tribal development programmes have been implemented inefficiently in these areas.

Research Methodology:

The descriptive and analytical method has been used for this study. This study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary data has been collected with the help of field survey conducted through a structured questionnaire scheduled from 300 tribal families from selected tribes across the 03 districts in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. These districts were selected depending upon the higher concentration of selected tribes. As a whole 15 villages have been selected and from each village a number of 20 tribal households are selected from the selected tribes based on the stratified random sampling method. The survey collected data concurring socio-economic statues, income, education, employment, livelihood and poverty, taken from of households from each of selected tribes i.e. Andh, Gond, Bhil, Kolam and Pradhan tribes. As a whole a number of 300 households of selected tribes were selected from 15 villages of three districts in Marathawada region.

The secondary data were collected from census reports, reports of different welfare schemes implemented by government, form Tribal Development Commissionerate, from Tribal Development Department, District Census Handbook etc.... Thus prior research studies have been reviewed. For the analysis of the collected data, appropriate statistical tools have been used.

Profile of selected Tribes:

The main focus of the study is to analyse the socio economic and living conditions of selected tribe in the tribal area of Marathwada region. These tribes are Andha, Gond, Bhil, Kolam and Pardhan tribes which is resided in Marathwada region. It deals with historical background, socio cultural background of selected tribes.

Andh :

The name Andh is derived from Andhra Pradesh from where the tribe has migrated to the present habitat (Russell and Hiralal 1916)¹¹ now they believe that they are the original inhabitants of the regions. They are distributed in the Nanded, Parbhani and Yawatmal districts of Maharashtra and in the Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh¹². Their habitat frames a part of the Deccan plateau where extremely high temperatures, low rainfall, low humidity and scanty vegetation are common ecological

features. The population figure of Andhs living in Maharashtra is 74622. Marathi is spoken by the Andhs among themselves and with others. The Devnagari script is used. They cannot be separately identified on the basis of dress and ornaments. The Andh are classified as scheduled tribe in the Maharashtra, Demographic information and national status is available.

Andh tribe is a cultivating and hunting tribe confined to the hilly tracts, which include of the Northern part of Parbhani and Nanded and the western part of Adilabad. They appear to be a very remarkable people, with dark complexion, thick lips and prominent cheek bones¹³. They show, on the whole a marked aboriginal types of features, resembling that of the Gonds, while the fact of their entire occupation of many villages indicates traces of savage independence. Therefore the Andhs of Kini in Yewatmal where the study was made did not know whether they were a branch of Gonds as reported by Hassan¹⁴. On the other hand, their language, customs and religion are these of the Marath Kunbis, and merged with them. It has identified them as cultivators and hunters.¹⁵

Gond Tribe:

Gond lives all over central India i.e. in the states of Maharashtra and Odisha. Apart from Madhya Pradesh, Gonds are also found in Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Odish. They are the tribe in India. Mostly Gonds live around the Satupra Hills, Son-Deogarh uplands on the Bastar plateau and Garhjat Hills of northern Odish. Gonds believe in the equality of the human beings without the discrimination of higher and lower society. The village has typically several hamlets & houses which are made of hatch and mud have a varandha, living room for Gods and a Guest room¹⁶. Gond tribes are today mainly farmers. While some Gond communities have risen to the status of land owners, many are landless labourers. Herding cattle is a part of Gond tribe's occupation as part of their livelihoods.

Scholars believe Gonds settled in Gondwana, now known as eastern Madhya Pradesh, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries AD. Gond dynasties ruled in four kingdoms in central India between the sixteenth and mid eighteenth centuries.¹⁷ Maratha power swept into Gond land in the 1740s. They overthrew Gond rajas and seized most of their territory. Some Gond zamindaris (estates) survived until recently. However Gonds are similar to many tribal groups today in that they face severe economic hardships. Although some Gond groups own a great deal of land, others are classified as Scheduled Tribes, which means they need special social and economic help.

Bhil Tribe:

Bhils are popularly known as the bow men of Rajasthan. They form the largest tribe of the whole South Asia. The Bhil live in the forest, the hilly areas, and the plains in Maharashtra. The forest is the source of their livelihood. Yet the hilly ranges are considered the obstacles to their speedy progress¹⁸.

Bhils are mainly divided into two main groups the central or pure bills and eastern or Rajput Bhils. The central Bhils are found in the mountain regions in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujrat and Rajasthan. Maharashtra, they can be divided into Muslim and Hindu Bhils. Enthoven classified bill to Khandesh as the plain Bhills, hill and forest Bhil and mixed Bhil¹⁹. Bhils are divided into a number of endogamous territorial divisions, which in turn have a number of clans and lineages. Most Bhils now speak the language of the region they reside in such as Marathi and Gujarati. They mostly speak a dialect of Hindi. Bhils are divided into numerous tribes and sub tribes, including

the Barela, Bhilala, Garasia, Gameta, Mina, Tadvi, and Vasave. Many of these groups, however, see themselves as quite distinct from the Bhil community. The Bhils will not eat or smoke with the Mahars, Mangs, Chambars, Mochis, Dhoes& Bhangis²⁰.

The Bhils are mostly tribal in nature. In the part they acquired a reputation for a fierce sense of independence. Isolated from the rest of Indian society by their rugged environment Bhil groups have managed to preserve many of their ancient tribal customs. At the same time, close social and economic ties with their neighbors have exposed them to Hindu cultural influences.

KolamTribe :

Kolam are a designated scheduled tribe in the Indian states of Teleangana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. They belong to the sub-category particularly vulnerable tribal group (Primitive Tribe),²¹ one of the three belonging to this sub-category, the other being Katkari and Madia Gond. They are common in the Yavatmal, Chandrapur and Nanded Districts of Maharashtra and live in hamlets called pod. They speak the Kollami language, which is a Dravidian language.²² The Kolam are an endogamous group and are divided into twelve exogamous clans, called pedi. Kolam society was formerly made up of joint families, collectively responsible for farming.

Pardhan Tribe:

The Pardhan are a subgroup of the Dravidian who lives in central India. The traditional occupation of the Pardhan is that of being singers and musicians at festivals and important life ceremonies. Most Pardhan today are agricultural workers who cultivate food grain mainly. Some also make their living by weaving and producing bamboo articles.²³ The term Pardhan is of Sanskrit origin, and it means a minister, or his agent. There were instances when the Pardhan served the Gond rulers as ministers. Hirdaishah, a Gond King of Ramanagar, a place situated near Mandla, appointed Rai Bhagat Marabi Pardhan as his prime minister. The term Pardhan is sometimes interpreted by others to denote those people who live on food provided by others (Pardhanpar Palnewala).²⁴ The primary language of the Pardhan people is their own Pardhan language. Some Pardhan also speak Hindi, Marathi and Gondi language. The Pardhan marry within their caste but not in their own clan or gotra. The Pardhan practice Hinduism, worship & serve the gods of the Hindu pantheon. The main yearly holidays of the Pardhan people are Holi, Diwali and Nawratri.

Comparative Analysis of Socio-Economic Conditions of Selected Tribes

Researcher analyse the social and economic background of the selected tribes in the study area. We have examined the Tribe, sex composition, age composition, and economic characteristics to know the economic status by taking variables into consideration are occupation, land ownership, different sources of income, different levels of income, distribution of land holdings, cost of cultivation on seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and labour, cropping pattern, saving behavior, expenditure pattern, and sources of credit along with the trends of loans taken and so on.

Table No. 1**Population of selected Tribe**

Tribe	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andh	60261	76147	231871	295380	372875	474110
Bhil	575022	678750	993074	1344554	1818792	2588659
Gond	227564	331798	1162735	1442986	1554894	1618090
Kolam	43788	56061	118073	147843	173646	194671
Pardhan	32237	50910	98685	120836	126134	145131

Source: census 2011

According to the census of 2011, the main tribe in Maharashtra was the Bhils which constitutes 24.63% of the total tribal population of the state. Second largest tribe in Maharashtra was the Gond tribe which constitutes 15.40% of the total tribal population of the state. Andh tribe is one of the major tribal group in Maharashtra which constitutes 4.51% of the total tribal population of the state. Population of Pardhan tribe was 145131, which constitutes 1.38% of the total tribal population of the state. Kolam tribe belongs to the sub-category particularly vulnerable tribal group (Primitive Tribe) in Maharashtra which constitutes only 1.85% of the total tribal population of the state.

Education forms an important component in overall development of individuals, enabling them to greater awareness, better comprehension of their social, political and cultural environment and also facilitating in the improvement of their socio-economic conditions. Thus sex ratio is an important population characteristic that highlights the social attention provided to women. Table no 2 shows the compiles the present and comparative literacy and level of education of Selected Tribe. Thus it shows the tribe wise sex ratio, number of Household, Population (by Sax), Child Sax Ratio, Worker Participation Rate, Main worker and Marginal workers as per Census 2011.

Table No. 2**Selected Tribe-wise details**

Tribe	No of House Holds	Population			Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio	Literacy			W Pr.	Main W	Mar. W
		T	M	F			T	M	F			
Andh	100610	474110	243300	230810	949	928	72.8	82.5	62.7	51.4	89.1	10.9
Bhil	512708	2588659	1306793	1281866	981	960	52.6	61.1	44.00	52.1	86.7	13.3
Gond	378223	1618090	818955	799135	976	964	74.7	82.4	66.8	53.9	75.1	24.9
Kolam	46185	194671	98319	96352	980	943	71.1	79.4	62.7	53.6	86.0	14.0
Pardhan	38733	145131	73575	71556	973	938	81.2	88.5	73.6	50.5	80.2	19.8

Table no. 02 shown that the figures of sex ratio, child sex ratio, and literacy level, thus work participation ratio main and marginal workers. It's clearly seem that the literacy level of Pardhan, Gond and Andh tribe is comparatively is higher than Bhil and Kolam tribe. Thus work participation ratio was higher than 50%.

Historically, the economy of most tribes in India was hunting and food gathering and then subsequently based on subsistence agriculture. A large number of tribal population in rural areas of India is still dependent on forests for their livelihood, and therefore provisions for basic necessities like food, fuel, housing material, etc. are made from the forest produce in this forest based tribal economy. Some of them work as wage labourers. In recent years, they have taken to cultivating land on a sharecropping basis. Some of them are in government service and work as clerks, teachers and in other capacities. Large percentage of tribals living close to forest areas constitute the most disadvantaged section of society based on per capita income, literacy rate, health status and lack of access to basic amenities.

CONCLUSION:

It is seen from the study of tribal communities that wide gaps exist between the selected tribes on the basis of various socio-economic indicators. Studies have also found that the schemes for tribal development have not brought about any perceptible changes in the socio-economic lives of the majority of tribal people in the state. Many tribal people are not even aware of the tribal welfare programmes that they can benefit for successful implementation of schemes; tribal people should have greater access to the schemes.

Due to these facts that development schemes have to be devised in the light of socio-cultural factor and economic needs of the tribals in each region and sometimes each community. The significance of socio cultural factors, educational level cannot be ignored in formulation of schemes for their overall development.

Major Finding & Suggestion:

1. Study shows that the small size groups have high literacy rate compare with numerically large tribal groups.
2. The Study shows that the working participation rate is greater than general population in Maharashtra.
3. Working population of ST, indicated that the more than their 80 percent population engaged in cultivation and agricultural labour.
4. Basically Kolam household were inhabited in the forest area, while other tribal, lived in hilly area.
5. Maximum household of all selected tribes belong to lower income group i.e., below Rs 10,000 to Rs. 20,000.

6. Most of households worked as daily labour due to lack of job opportunity and low educational level.
7. Near about helf of the Andh, Pardhan, and Gond population were cultivators because at least they had some portion of land.
8. Maximum Kolam respondents were illiterate that reflects all about their socio-economic status.
9. It is found that educational level and household income was substantially lower among STs.
10. It found that agriculture and forest products were the principal source of income.
11. The main arising problem in the primitive Kolam tribe was that they are maximum illiterate and they lived in Hilly & forest area.
12. Gond speck gondi language, Kolam spock kolami language and Pardhan spock their pardhani language while Andh and Bhil tribe spock majoritily Marathi language.
13. Tribal People due to their lower living standard have not been able to keep pace with the modern society.
14. So it can be concluded that all the tribes are not same socio-economically but they have so much difference which reflect their life style, livelihood, habitat and beavertail pattern.
15. It confirms that though tribals are socially and culturally homogeneous, developmentally they are heterogeneous.

Due to these facts that development schemes have to be devised in the light of socio-cultural factor and economic needs of the tribals in each region and sometimes each community. The significance of socio cultural factors, educational level cannot be ignored in formulation of schemes for their overall development.

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