

A Socio-Economic miserable condition of the tribals in Chhattisgarh (A case study of Dhanwar, Surguja district, C.G.)

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Abstract: *The author intends to study the socio-economic conditions of the tribals residing in the remote hilly and forest areas, in the area of Dhanwar. The people are very poor economically, socially and politically. They are living hand to mouth. They depend mostly on the forest produce and agriculture for their livelihood. The author wants to attract the attention of the government officials for the upliftment and development of the tribals over there. The government programmes are almost nil except MNREGA. However, this Programme is also under the clutch of the corruption.*

I. Introduction

As per the census of 2011 the tribal population consists of 9.66% while it was 8.2% according to the census of 2001. The schedule tribes according to 2001 census were 31.8 percent of total population of Chhattisgarh and now it has gone up to 32%. The tribal population in Chhattisgarh is mostly concentrated in Bastar, Raigarh, Jashpur, Surguja, Koreya, Balrampur, Korba, Kanker, Dhamtari, Janjgir-Champa, Bilaspur, Mungeli, Kabirdham, Mahasamund districts. The schedule tribes live mostly in hills and dense forest area, which are not easily accessible. They are mostly backward, poor, illiterate and indebted. These people possess their own culture, way of life, source of livelihood, religious beliefs, which are quite different from other sections of the Indian communities. They have their own identity. Similar to other social groups, predominantly the men are the heads of the households in the tribal families in the study area.

Methodology

Taking all the surveyed facts and figures, into consideration, this present study outlines the following objectives –

Objectives

- To collect information and analyse them as per the situation of the area.
- To study the ground reality of the socio-economic conditions of the tribals.
- To suggest and recommend for future action plan.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the limited studies conducted on this line and in order to substantiate the objectives outlined above the following hypotheses were framed to test their validity.

- The participatory approach brings a difference in the impact of developmental program in terms of physical, social and economic growth among the people and in the target area.
- The alternative sources of earning generated through this program helps in bringing down the migration rate. There is a significance difference in the life style of the people through the implementation of the programme.

Research Design

The activities conducted in the study area, especially in the context of tribal development programme, still leave many questions unanswered. It is with this consideration and to gain more insights in the subjects, the present study is based on a Descriptive Design.

Sampling

While following a purposive stratified random sampling procedure the samples were taken 20 persons (Heads) from 5 villages each i.e. Dhanwarkala, Chandora, Champapur, Baada, Gobra to represent the Universe. There are 235 households in total in the above mentioned villages, and 100 households out of 235 HHs have been taken into study. The sample comes to 42.55% of the households under study.

Primary Sources

Individual Interview: The author has conducted a survey of 100 households with the help of surveyors taking 20 individual heads from each village. they were interviewed about their family status, their economic possessions and status, their educational and cultural life patterns etc.

- **Focused Group Discussion (FGD)**

The collection of data was made from the community with the help of Focused Group Discussion (FGD). It was aimed at collecting information from 15-20 people sitting together and sharing their opinions about the status of the villages.

- **Observation**

While collecting the data through the above methods, non-participant observation method was used to get more insights and to supplement the above data. It was more helpful during the site visit to understand the physical works by the people themselves.

Secondary Sources

The data from the secondary sources were collected on the concept and context of the developmental activities. Help was taken from the published books and journals, unpublished articles and documents. The records of the concerned Government Department at the District Level were also referred for the above purpose.

Limitation of the Study

The present piece of research has certain limitations which the author feels free to share with:

- The non-availability of the main people of the villages sometimes prolonged the process of data collection. The surveyors have to visit the same village again and again.
- During the course of FGD the dominance of the elite members was not allowing others to come forward and revealing the information. However, care was taken to ensure the participation of those people with a very low profile by structuring the discussion and inviting such members' view.

II. Demographic Profile of the Universe:

The universe comprises of 235 households of 05 villages in Dhanwar area, where the tribals are residing in the forests and hill tops. Their houses are scattered and mostly they are dependent on the forest produce for their livelihood. The Total population of the 05 villages is 1625, out of which 831 (51.13%) male population and 794 (48.87%) female members reside. The sex ratio of the total universe is 955, little higher than the national sex ratio i.e. 940 as per the census 2011.

Total no. of population of the universe

Villages	Total No. of Households	Total Population	Male Population	Female Population	Sex ratio
Dhanwar kala	52	418	214 (51%)	204 (49%)	953/1000
Chandora	50	345	175 (50.7%)	170 (49.3%)	971/1000
Champapur	40	396	200 (50.5%)	196 (49.49%)	980/1000
Baada	48	224	114 (50.89%)	110 (49.10%)	965/1000
Gobra	45	242	128 (52.89%)	114 (47.10%)	890/1000
Total	235	1625	831 (51.13%)	794 (48.87%)	955/1000

The Literacy level of the respondents:

The literacy level of the respondents has been found out to be very less. As the table indicates that 51% of the Head respondents are illiterate, while 24% of them have completed their primary schools, followed by 10% respondents have passed Middle schools. Only One (1%) respondent has managed to do his graduation. This shows that the literacy rate of the area, is very less and miserable.

Distribution of respondents as per their Literacy level

Village/Educational level	Illiterate	Primary School	Middle school	High School	Graduate	Post graduate	Total
Dhanwar kala	11	05	03	01	00	00	20
Chandora	10	04	05	01	00	00	20
Champapur	08	05	02	04	01	00	20
Baada	10	04	03	03	00	00	20
Gobra	12	06	01	01	00	00	20
Total	51 (51%)	24 (24%)	14 (14%)	10 (10%)	01 (1%)	00	100 (100%)

The economic-categorization of the households - The economic- categorization of the households was done on the basis of annual earning through different sources, and as a results 78% were found poor, followed by

medium category households (18.0%) and well-off households (4.0%). The occupation varies from food gatherers and landless to agriculturists.

Distribution of respondents as per economic status (Land holdings)

Villages	Poor	Medium	Well-off	Total
Dhanwar kala	14	5	1	20
Chandora	16	3	1	20
Champapur	12	6	2	20
Baada	17	3	0	20
Gobra	19	1	0	20
Total	78 (78%)	18 (18%)	4 (4%)	100 (100%)

Poor = landless farmers & farmers less than or equal to 1 acre of land.
 having 1.1 acre to 4.9 acres of land.

Medium = Farmers having 5 acres of land and above.
 Well-off = Farmers having 5 acres of land and above.

Housing Pattern of the respondents:

Distribution of respondents as per their nature of houses

Villages	kaccha	Semi-pacca	Pacca	Total
Dhanwar kala	11	08	01	20
Chandora	19	01	00	20
Champapur	18	01	01	20
Baada	20	00	00	20
Gobra	20	00	00	20
Total	88 (88%)	10 (10%)	2 (2%)	100 (100%)

From the above table it is very clear that 88% respondents have pure kaccha houses to dwell in, whereas 10% respondents do have semi-kaccha houses, while only 2% respondents have pacca houses. Since they live in most of the villages have been situated in the hilly and forest areas, so the people are forced to live in the kaccha houses. To construct a pacca house, there are plenty of problems.

III. Amusement and Festivals-

People do have the amusements and celebrate festivals like hariyali, naya khani, karma, etc. However, one of the most important feasts is Sondo, wherein the young ones come together in the “akhara”, a dancing place, and within that night, they decide to get married and live together for the whole life. Now-a-days the most common festivals like deepavali, holi, etc. also are celebrated by these tribals.

Health Profile of the respondents:

Distribution of respondents as per their types of sickness

Villages	Malaria	Cold & fever	Respiratory Problems	pneumonia	Diarrhea	Total
Dhanwar kala	12	04	01	02	01	20
Chandora	10	06	01	03	00	20
Champapur	18	01	00	00	01	20
Baada	15	03	00	01	01	20
Gobra	17	03	00	00	00	20
Total	72 (72%)	17 (17%)	02 (2%)	06 (6%)	03 (3%)	100 (100%)

Health- During the individual interview and interaction with the people through FGD, the researcher came to know that malaria, is a common health problem among the people. As many as 72% respondents accepted that people are victims of malaria, followed by cold cough and fever (17%). Some of the respondents also have rated respiratory problem (2%), pneumonia (6%), and diarrhea (3%) as found in the area.

Distribution of respondents as per treatment to different doctors & Places

Villages	Quack Doctors	Private Doctors	Mission Clinics	Government hospitals	Total
Dhanwar kala	04	01	15	00	20
Chandora	08	02	10	00	20
Champapur	01	01	18	00	20
Baada	06	02	11	01	20
Gobra	09	01	09	01	20
Total	28 (28%)	07 (07%)	63 (63%)	02 (2%)	100 (100%)

It is to be noted fact that in the area, there is a Mission, known as Dhanwar Mission, which has its own clinic, run by the nuns. This clinic is doing wonderful things in the line of health for the people. Most of the respondents (63%) have accepted that people do visit the Mission clinic for their treatment. Some 28% respondents have accepted that they go to quack doctors for the treatment while 7% respondents go to the private doctors and 2% respondents do visit the government hospitals either in Balrampur or in Ambikapur. In nutshell, people have become aware of their health and take the services of the Mission Clinics. Gradually, it is expected that all of them will come to the Mission for their needs.

Village level facilities Services- As per the FGD findings, on an average there are 1-2 local markets which are accessible for the villagers, typically within the range of 10 kilometers from the sample villages.

The most accessed services (by 80% of villages and above) are Angan wadis, primary schools, Public Distribution System.

Connectivity and Transport- The connectivity through transportation is very poor. Almost four villages out of 05 sample villages are having kacch road, with nalas (small streams) in between. Hence, during rainy season, they are cut off from the main market places and big cities.

Drinking Water- Study villages reported 22 open dug wells of which 45% were operational. Hand pumps seem to be next popular source of water, followed by stream water and tube well, the operational status shows that 95% tube wells and 50% hand pumps are functioning. The percentage of open dug wells was highest, as they were privately owned by the community. There are ponds in all the study villages and all of them are functional. The ponds are used mostly for taking bath and for the cattles for their drinking purpose and bathing.

During the summer season poor households, who do not have their own tubewells and wells, have to depend on the "Jharnas", "Nalas" and rivers for the drinking purpose.

Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)- A total of 90% of the poor households were involved in NTFP collection. The prominent NTFPs being collected were Tendu leaves, Mahua flowes and Mahul Patta, Mahua Seeds, Tendu fruits, Chironjee, Harra, Bheda, Amla, Gond, Honey, Imli, Chalroot and Sal. In the case of Tendu leaves, only 7% go to town markets while 93% sold in local village markets.

Migration- Almost a meager of 9% of households migrated to cities like Ambikapur, Balrampur, Surajpur, etc. Usually, poor people like to have the forest produce for their consumption and therefore rarely people migrate to other places for their livelihood. The tribals don't want to leave their community. They like to be united with jal, jangle and jameen in their own area.

IV. Summary and Conclusion

The study covers many issues that directly related with the socio-economic status of tribal community of Surguja district like their culture, social institutions, literacy rate, livelihood sources etc. The present study has shown that maximum tribal population was still illiterate and poor. It was found that food habits were almost same in all the villages. Maximum villagers were living in poor condition as most of them lived in a small and kaccha house. The sources of earning were still limited and they were very much dependent upon forest and agriculture, having mostly small land holding, labor work and migration.

The tribal community is still depending upon moneylenders for its domestic purpose and social liabilities. The asset formation was very much limited and confined to less than 2% population of the area the basic infrastructure facilities were not satisfactory. The living conditions became more critical during rainy season when connectivity of transport was very poor. The source of drinking water was mainly hand pumps and dug wells but in summer season villagers suffered from the crises of drinking water.

There is a need to improve literacy, health facilities, institutions and assets development. Thus, the study has shown that in spite of many developmental programmes, the economic standards of the tribals is still very low and therefore, there is a need for joint efforts and better coordination of all the stake holders who are working directly or indirectly influences the development of tribal community.

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