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**STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN- A MICRO LEVEL STUDY**

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**Abstract:** This present paper explores the status of tribal women in India as well as in Telangana State. The present study conducted on two tribal villages in Khammam district of Telangana state in micro level. This paper also examines that the nature and dimensions of change in the lives and status of tribal women in patriarchal society. Tribal women stand marginalized in the growing modern economy of the state. Socio-economic changes during the last few decades have introduced new gender and class issues into the purportedly egalitarian society of the tribal's. Further the study aims to, to explore socio-economic conditions of the selected women in the two villages, to assert to the work and income generated through the non-timber forest produce collected for their livelihood, to examine the status of tribal women on the basis of findings of the study. Though tribal women have lost some of their traditional rights, the gains they have made in the spheres of education, employment or personal mobility are significant compared to non-tribal women.

**Key words:** Egalitarian, Indigenous, Marginalized, NTMFP

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**Introduction:** Indigenous and tribal peoples represent about 8.6 percent of the Indian's population. The prevalence of extreme poverty is higher among them than other social groups. The tribal women, compose like any other social group, about half of the total population. Like others social groups, the tribal women are more illiterate than men and share problems related to reproductive health (Biswajit Ghosh, 2011).

In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non tribals.

Indigenous and tribal peoples represent about 8.6 percent of the Indian's population. The prevalence of extreme poverty is higher among them than other social groups. The tribal women, compose like any other social group, about half of the total population. Like others social groups, the tribal women are more illiterate than men and share problems related to reproductive health (Veena Bhasin, 2007)

**Objectives of the study:** the main objective of the study is to examine the status of tribal women in patriarchal society. Further the study aims to, i) to explores socio-economic conditions of the selected women in the two villages, ii) to assert to the work and income generated through the non-timber forest produce collected for their livelihood, iii) to examine the status of tribal women on the basis of findings of the study.

**Methodology:** The present study based on primary and secondary sources. The present study entirely depends upon primary source of data. The selected villages are Morutla & Erraigudem belongs to Tekulapally mandal of Khammam district. It is located 82 kms away from the district headquarters and 25 kms away from the mandal headquarters. 120 tribal women respondents selected for this study.

**Selected Villages:** Erraigudem is situated 25 km away from the headquarters of Tekulapally mandal. This village comes under Bodupadu panchayat. The total population of the village is 555. The entire agricultural land is 320 acres of this, 150 acres are patta and another 100 acres are assigned land. There are 150 cultivator households in the village. Morutla village, located in Tekulapally mandal is very near Tekualapally headquarters of Tekulapally mandal. The population of this village is 230. This village has 250 acres of arable land. Of this 150 acres are podu land. There are 40 cultivating households in this village.

**Table-1 Age wise particulars of the respondents**

| Age-wise    | Tekulapally Mandal |             | Total        |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
|             | Morutla            | Erraigudem  |              |
| 20-35       | 28 (46.67)         | 30 (50.00)  | 58 (48.33)   |
| 36-50       | 24 (40.00)         | 26 (43.33)  | 50 (41.67)   |
| 51-65       | 06 (10.00)         | 01 (01.67)  | 07 (05.83)   |
| Above 65    | 02 (03.33)         | 03 (05.00)  | 05 (04.17)   |
| Grand Total | 60 (100.00)        | 60 (100.00) | 120 (100.00) |

Source: Field study

Table: 1 indicate that 46.67 per cent of selected tribal women are in the age group of 20-35 years while it is lowest in the age group of below 36-50 years i.e. 40 per cent in morutla village, when compare with the percent of 50 in Erraigudem is highest in the age group of 20-35. 48.33per cent of selected total tribal women are in the age group of 20-35 years while it is lowest in the age group of below 36-50 years i.e. 41.67 per cent.

**Table-2: Education Particulars of the respondents**

| Education    | Tekulapally Mandal |            | Total       |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
|              | Morutla            | Erraigudem |             |
| Illiterate   | 38 (63.33)         | 41 (68.33) | 79 (65.83)  |
| Primary      | 14 (23.33)         | 10 (16.67) | 24 (20.00)  |
| Secondary    | 05 (08.33)         | 05 (08.33) | 10 (08.33)  |
| Degree       | 02 (03.33)         | 03 (05.00) | 05 (04.17)  |
| Above Degree | 01 (01.67)         | 01 (01.67) | 02 (01.67)  |
| Grand Total  | 60 (100.00)        | 60(100.00) | 120(100.00) |

Source: Field Study

Table-2 As high as 79 out of 120 selected women is illiterates that the percent of 63.33, 68.33 the selected respondents are illiterates in Morutla and Erraigudem villages. It can be seen that the 20 per cent of respondents could study up to primary, 8.33 per cent respondents have access to secondary education and 4.17 percent in degree level in selected respondents. Only 1.67 percent of tribal women get the opportunity in above degree. This clearly indicates the prevalence of low level of literacy rate among Tribal women. In spite of the aim of education for all practically is not implementation in tribal areas. There is a lot of gap in the women's education particularly compare with non tribal women.

**Table-3: Main occupation of the Husband's of the respondents**

| Occupation         | Tekulapally Mandal |            | Total       |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
|                    | Morutla            | Erraigudem |             |
| Agriculture        | 18 (30.00)         | 17 (28.33) | 35 (29.16)  |
| Agriculture Labour | 17 (28.33)         | 21 (35.00) | 38 (31.67)  |
| Forest based       | 22 (36.67)         | 20 (33.33) | 42 (35.00)  |
| Employee           | 03 (05.00)         | 02 (03.33) | 05 (04.17)  |
| Grand Total        | 60 (100.00)        | 60(100.00) | 120(100.00) |

Source: Field Study

It can be observe that the Table-3 that the main occupation of the husbands of the respondents in selected villages. It can be observed that as much as 42out of 120 selected respondents working as non agricultural labour while 31.67 per cent are agricultural labour who can be seen in all types of agriculture works. Agriculture is the occupation for 29.16 per cent. The employees are 5 per cent among them the highest proportion can be found in Morutla village. It is to be noted that 35.5 per cent of the husbands of the selected respondents are depends on forest and 15.6 per cent.

**Table-4: Earning of Tribal women selected villages  
(Income in Rs)**

| Particulars  | Earning per day |            | Earning per Annum |            |
|--|-----------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
|  | Morutla         | Erraigudem | Morutla           | Erraigudem |
| Agriculture  | 80              | 80         | 3500              | 3000       |
| Agri- Labour   | 60              | 55         | 2500              | 2200       |
| MGNREGS  | 100             | 100        | 5500              | 5500       |
| Total  | 240             | 235        | 11500             | 10700      |
| <b>Collection of Non timber Minor Forest Produce</b> |                 |            |                   |            |
| Mowa Flower  | 90              | 95         | 2100              | 2000       |
| Mowa seed  | 136             | 132        | 1300              | 1500       |
| Tendu leaves   | 100             | 90         | 4650              | 4600       |
| Honey  | 50              | 45         | 2000              | 1800       |
| Bambo sticks   | 30              | 40         | 1600              | 1500       |
| Forest fruits  | 90              | 80         | 900               | 800        |
| Gum  | 40              | 30         | 600               | 550        |
| Total  | 536             | 512        | 13,150            | 12,750     |

Source: Field Study

It can be seen from the above the table that the selected tribal women collected Mowa flowers, Tendu leaves, Forest fruits, Honey, Gum and Bambo sticks, from forest. That the tribal women are earning only Rs. 80 per day by doing work in agricultural sector. Thus the selected tribal women earn Rs.3, 500 per annum in Morutla and Rs. 3,000 per annum in Erraigudem by possessing agricultural land. It can be noticed that the tribal women getting Rs. 5,500 by Mahatama Gandhi Rural employment Gurantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in selected villages. It can be also observed that the selected tribal women are getting Rs. 13,150 Morutla, Rs. 12,750 per annum in Erraigudem by collecting of miner timber forest produces. In addition to paid work, tribal women perform unpaid work consists of domestic work and collection of forest produce for the survival of their households.

**Conclusion:** the role of women in the tribal community very crucial. It is the sole responsibility of

women to provide food security to entire family by working day to day out in the form of paid as well as unpaid work. The tribal people in India lack adequate food to maintain the family for the whole year. They find it difficult to afford their children to go school. They see children as an economic asset in the family and contribute to the family income by working along with the parents and with others. Although, education, the basic necessity of life, but matter of luxury for the tribal family (Singh S N, 2005). The present study relies that the lives of tribal women clearly show their sustenance become critical if they are delinked from forest because it provides livelihood and food security. The work generated by farms as well as non-form activities will not exceed in 2-3 months per annum. In the reaming period they are compelled to depend upon forests for their survival. The government should be providing employment generation programs in particularly in tribal women.

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