



## Social Economy of Scheduled Tribes - A study of Vizianagaram District

Dr.J.Rama Rao,

Associate Professor and Head, Department of Economics, Maharajah's Post Graduate College, Vizianagaram, AP

**ABSTRACT :** The present paper deals with the social economy of scheduled tribes in Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh state. The study reveals that more than 73 per cent of the sample households are male headed, 40 per cent of the heads of the sample households are agricultural labour and majority respondents opined that the major source of agricultural income and as significant for livelihood in the study area . In majority of the cases, the agricultural output is hardly sufficient to sustain the tribal household throughout the year. However a marginal quantity of agricultural producer oozes itself into the market, not because there is marketable surplus, but 20 because of their necessity either in lieu of loans taken from the traders in the previous years, or to meet the immediate hard pressing domestic needs. The study also depicts that among source of the incomes for the sample households, agriculture was the primary occupation which contributes more than 80 per cent of the households income ranges from Rs.10,000 to Rs.15,000 rupees per annum followed by selling minor forest produce and wage labour. The volume of indebtedness among tribal group's rangers between 65 to 85 percent. Indebtedness is the greatest scourge of the tribal economy. Borrowing is resorted to for various purposes. Heaviest borrowing is for seed, consumption, medicines and ceremonies etc. Usually the rates of interest paid are exorbitantly high, anywhere between 20 to 30 per cent of the loan per year. Hence the government should take necessary steps in order to promote the financial stability among the schedule tribes by offering better banking service by transfer of technology towards the economic development of the individual level and rural community as a whole for the development, as well all know that, development beings within the rural villages itself.

**Key Words:** Indebtedness, Medicines, Transfer of Technology and Resource

### INTRODUCTION

India has the second largest tribal population in the world next to African counties. Tribal's in India form the very segment of the weaker sections of the society with their traditional skills and resources. They live in remote and exclusive areas in the forests, on the hill-slopes and plateaus and generally in areas with poor natural resource endowment. This isolation has deprived

them out of the fruits of scientific and technological advances on one hand and it has led to their distinctive life-style, cultures and languages on the other hand. Age-old exploitation and repression of tribal's by the heartless moneylenders and other rested interests in different spheres of economic activities particularly in the field of credit and marketing have cut them off from the mainstream of socioeconomic development of the



country over the decades. Due to this, the protection has been envisaged under the Constitution of India to the tribal's by the Government of India. As a policy, Govt of India emphasized various steps which 19 prevent alienation of tribal's land, ensure fairness in marketing transactions of sale and purchase, avoid cheating by money lenders, liquor-vendors, Contractors etc., by building strong and sound infrastructural facilities in the tribal areas during the plan period. According to 2011 census, the tribal's in the country account for 8.6 per cent of the total population. It is estimated that the predominant tribal areas comprise about 15 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. At the same time, the tribal population in India presents a varied picture as some areas have high tribal concentration, whereas others have no tribal population at all. About 300 scheduled tribe communities speaking about 105 languages and 225 subsidiary languages are diffused along the length and breadth of the country. Each community, irrespective of its numbers has come to occupy a place of its own in national life, retaining its own identity and culture.

Andhra Pradesh has large concentration of tribal population. The state is the traditional home of 33 recognized Schedule Tribes, of which 30 communities inhabited 6,197 Scheduled Villages sprawling 30088sq.km. in the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari. The important tribes are the Khonds, Nayakpods, Koyas, Kondadoras, Valmikis, Bhagatas, Savaras, Jatayus, Gadabas, Yanadis and Chenchus. The scheduled area constitutes 11 percent of the total geographical area of the state. According to 2011 Census the tribal

population of the State of Andhra Pradesh is 26.31 lakhs which is 5.3 percent of the total population.

#### **Tribes in study area:**

The total Geographical area of the Gummalaksmipuram mandal is 401sq.km. in which the area covered by hills and forests in 20,706 hectares. The total tribal population of the mandal is 42,919 according to 2011 census. The major tribes in the mandal are Gadaba, Savara and Jatapu.

In this context, it is appropriate to have a study on tribal indebtedness and its impact on the day to day life of tribal community. Indebtedness is considered as one of the major problems of the tribal people all over the country. Irrespective of the occupation pursued by various tribes and their social structure, the problem of indebtedness is found to be very common.

The problem indebtedness is mainly associated with their agricultural practices adopted by them. The non-tribal money lenders offer them all kinds of credit liberally in order to take possession of the movable and immovable assets of the tribal

in case the tribes fail to repay and if the money was rapid it would invariably include heavy interest rates.

The tribal is identified as a regular debtor, his innocence, illiteracy, and ignorance were exploited and he can easily be duped and cheated by the various money lenders. His customs and traditions make him spend heavily on extravagant items like festival expenses. Further, his habits of drinking, smoking



and eating provide ample avenues for exploitations by the money lenders.

### Objectives of the Study:

The main aim of the study is to find out the Social Economy of Schedule Tribes in Gummalaxmipuram mandal of Vizianagaram District.

### The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the present socio-economic conditions of the tribes.
2. To examine the volume and magnitude of the debt.
3. To suggest suitable remedial measures to overcome.

### Methodology:

Vizianagaram district which is identified as one of the most tribal populous districts in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. It comprises of 6 tribal mandals namely; Gummalakhmipuram, Kurupam, Komarada, Makkuva, Pachipenta, Saluru and a Part of the Parvathipuram Mandal from which Gummalakshmipuram Mandal has been selected for the purpose of the study due to distinctive nature of having maximum number of tribal inhabitants and boarder mandal touching Odhisa state. On a random basis one village Panchayat was selected for the study. The purposive sample technique is adopted to identify all tribal households in the sample village and canvassed with a pre-designed questionnaire to obtain required information during August, 2018.

**Result and Discussion:** The situation of large difference in the levels of socio economic development of tribal

communities in India has always posed important issues before the tribal development planers and administrators. Therefore, efforts have been made under different Five-Year Plans to evolve suitable strategies and programmes for tribal development in India. Even then the life of the tribe's remaining more or less constant. In this context, the study focuses about socio economic conditions of the tribal households.

Age represents the effective workforce, decision making and understanding capacity of the individual. The classifications of age of head of the households of different sub-castes of tribes are presented in Table-1. As many as 73 percent of the households constitutes in the slot of 21-40 years which is considered as the most potential age for the productive work.

In the case of sub-cast wise Savaras constitute first place followed by Jatapu and Gadaba in the 21-40 age group according to the study. It is observed that the Savara and Jatapus are concentrated in the large number and Gadaba sub-castes are limited numbers of households. It is also found from the study Savara tribe is treated as a low caste among the tribes and Savara tribe is also treated as Primitive tribal groups as such governments and Non-Governmental organizations have been giving first priority to these tribal groups at the time of providing loans and welfare schemes.

Naturally in the whole process of rebuilding villages, education will have the most vital part to play, because it alone can prepare peoples mind to receive new ideas, and accept new tools, new



relationships and new forms of organization.

It is observed that the literacy rate of the head of the households is 43 percent, which is not far below the national average of 65.85 percent. Among all the tribal groups, the literacy rate is high (43%) in the Savara tribe followed by Jatapu (40%), and Gadaba (16%). It is mainly due to awareness on education and limitation of non tribes.

Sub-cast wise estimation of family members of the households in the study area is shown in the Table: 3. it reveals that the family size (4.54) is very close the nuclear family (4) in all sub-castes tribes due to adoption of family planning.

It is discernable from the Table 4 that the economy of the study mandal is pre-dominantly agricultural based with primitive agricultural operations, results in very marginal incomes. Nearly 38 % of the total households are marginal farmers followed by small farmers (18%) and other farmers (4 %). It indicates that 59 % of the inhabitants of the households owning agricultural land, unfortunately as much as 39 % of the land is dry (Table-5).

Different sources of average family income of households in the study areas are presented in Table-6. It is observed that the average family income of households is Rs 31,933/- in the study area which is far less than both state and national averages.

The economic status of the household shall be reflected mainly on the basis of the income and expenditure tally. Usually one can infer that an individual or a family shall not resort to

borrowings if the income exceeds expenditure, whereas as if it is otherwise it is certain that one has to seek financial assistance either from institutional finance or money lender. Therefore, the financial status of family or individual can be explained on the basis of the deficit or surplus income generated. It is crystal clear in the study that all the tribal groups have experience in only deficit income with a little variation among themselves (Table- 7).

In order to understand the expenditure pattern more specifically it's broadly categories into expenditure on food items (like Cereals, Dholli and Vegetables, Edible Oil, Milk & Milk products and Egg and Meat) and non food items (Like Clothes, Education, Medicine, Festivals, Smoke, Drinking of liquor and other). Not to speak of uncommon things the tribal community too apportioned 78.44 percent towards food items and the rest on non-food items. It is here one question oneself how to wipe of the gap between the income and expenditure, obviously one has to beg, borrow or steal. Thanks to the rich traditional background of tribal clean that they neither incline to beg nor resort to steal. Hence, the only way out left is to borrow which is explained in Table-8. It is a welcoming feature all most 77 percent of the total borrowings are from institutional finance. Thereby, they are not in the clutches of money lenders who charges exorbitant interest rate.

Indebtedness is a potent factor in the stagnant economy of the tribal's. That investment is a factor of prime importance for economic expansion is a very widely accepted tenet of economic theory. Investment depends on savings. However, interest on loans very nearly



polishes off the Adivasi's surplus which, had it been at hand, could have been used for investments in agriculture. So we find that as far as the traditional economic system of the Adivasi is concerned there is little likelihood of endogenous change in it. In this traditional economic system the outsider commercial element and the indigenous social institutions support each other to maintain the stagnant economy.

Clothing, ornaments, social ceremonies and payments of his debts eat up a great deal of the money he earns. Indebtedness is the greatest scourge of the Adivasi economy. Borrowing is resorted to for various purposes. Heaviest borrowing is used for seed, consumption medicine and ceremonies etc. Usually the rates of interest paid are exorbitantly high, anywhere between 20 to 30 per cent of the loan per year.

The table 8 also reveals that the volume of indebtedness among three tribal groups ranges between 25 to 47 percent. The Jatapu tribal community has borrowed more than the required amount to nullify the income and expenditure, while Gadaba community has borrowed only 25 percent of the required gap between income and expenditure.

Let us examine the various alternatives to come out of the debt trap either totally or partially lessening of debt burden.

The tribal community in the study area shall be relieved from the debt totally if at all they restrict their expenditure limited to purchase of cereals a basic food, cloth, education and medicine through come under non-food

items treated as necessary for social and healthy way life .

In order to relieve partially from the debt trap the consumption pattern should be changed to limited to expenditure on minimum needs like food and clothing as the shelter does not demand any price generally.

#### **Recent initiatives taken by the Ministry of Tribal Welfare:**

1. Recognition of forest Act 2006 will be administered by the Ministry of Tribal affair to protect interest of the Tribal's in forests.
2. The scheme of vocational Training Centres has been revised as vocational training in Tribal areas with effect from 01-04-09
3. During 2009-10 the ministry has founded 14 education complexes under the Scheme of strengthening education among schedule tribe girls in low literacy districts.
4. Under the scheme of grant- in- aid to voluntary organization during 2009-10. The ministry funded about 237 projects covering schools, hostels, libraries etc.
5. Under the scheme of development of particularly vulnerable Tribal groups, the Ministry released Rs.40.43 crore for 6 states.
6. Under the scheme of Market development of Tribal products/produce ministry released Rs.9.68 crores. But states have to take responsibility to give fruits of the schemes.



### 1. Strengthening Institutions:

In order to improve literacy amongst STs, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has taken following initiatives during the last one year:

- Campaign for 100% physical enrolment
- Special focus on low literacy tribes and districts for all interventions
- Constructions of Residential Schools & Hostels and upgrade existing facilities
- Development of Primers in Tribal languages along with regional languages
- Academic sessions to be in sync with Tribal Festivals
- Schools Management committee to engage requisite teachers.

### 2. Umbrella scheme for Education of ST Children:

The following schemes for education have been merged into the umbrella scheme.

- a) Establishing and strengthening of Ashram Schools.
- b) Establishing and strengthening of Hostels.
- c) Vocational training in tribal areas.
- d) Post-Matric Scholarship.
- e) Pre-Matric Scholarship.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above analysis is understood that the income and literacy levels of the tribes is very low. In spite of the various developmental programmes initiated to ameliorate the

living conditions of the tribes, the results are not only encouraging but also sign of development and their plight is still miserable. Hence, the policy makers and administrators (both Government as well as NGO's) should take necessary steps in order to promote the financial stability among the schedule tribes by offering better banking service by transfer of technology towards the economic development of the individual level and rural community as a whole for the development, as well all know that, development beings within the rural villages itself.



Table – 1: Sub-caste wise and age classification of head of the households

S.NO	Sub-Caste	Age Group			Total
		21-40	40 - 60	60 and above	
1.	Savara	23 (39.65)	7 (31.82)	-	30 (37.50)
2.	Jatapu	19 (32.76)	11 (50.00)	-	30 (37.50)
3.	Gadaba	16 (27.59)	4 (18.18)	-	20 (25.00)
Total		58 (100.00)	22 (100.00)	-	80 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicates Percentages to Total.

TABLE – 2: Sub – Caste Wise Classification of Households by Education

S. No	Sub-Caste	Illiteracy	Primary Level	Secondary Level	College Level & Others	Total
1.	Savara	11 (30.56)	13 (43.33)	6 (42.86)	-	30 (37.50)
2.	Jatapu	13 (36.11)	12 (40.00)	5 (35.71)	-	30 (37.50)
3.	Gadaba	12 (33.33)	5 (16.67)	3 (21.43)	-	20 (25.00)
Total		36 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	-	80 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicates Percentages to Total

TABLE – 3: SUB – CASTE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS BY AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE

S. No.	Sub-Caste	Male	Female	Children	Total	Average Family Size
1.	Savara	34 (36.96)	37 (39.36)	58 (33.33)	129 (35.83)	4.26
2.	Jatapu	35 (38.04)	36 (38.30)	65 (37.36)	136 (37.78)	4.53
3.	Gadaba	23 (25.00)	21 (22.34)	51 (29.31)	95 (26.39)	4.75
Total		92 (100.00)	94 (100.00)	174 (100.00)	360 (100.00)	4.50

Note: Figures in brackets indicates Percentages to Total



**TABLE – 4**  
**SUB – CASTE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLDS BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY**

S. No	Sub-Caste	Agricultural Labour	Marginal Farmers	Small Farmers	Other Farmers	Total
1.	Savara	10 (31.25)	13 (43.33)	5 (35.71)	2 (67.67)	30 (37.50)
2.	Jatapu	13 (40.63)	11 (36.67)	5 (35.71)	1 (33.33)	30 (37.50)
3.	Gadaba	9 (28.12)	7 (23.33)	4 (28.582)	-	20 (25.00)
Total		32 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	3 (100.00)	80 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicates Percentages to Total

**TABLE – 5: SUB – CASTE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSE HOLDS BY SIZE OF LANDHOLDINGS (Area in Acres)**

S. No	Sub-Caste	Land holding		Total
		Wet	Dry	
1.	Savara	38.00 (42.22)	26.00 (45.61)	64.00 (43.54)
2.	Jatapu	29.00 (32.22)	18.00 (31.58)	47.00 (31.97)
3.	Gadaba	23.00 (25.56)	13.00 (22.81)	36.00 (24.49)
Total		90 (100.00)	57.00 (100.00)	147.00 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicates Percentages to Total

**TABLE – 6**

**SUB – CASTE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY SOURCE OF AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME**

(Rs. Per year)

S.No	Sub-Caste	Source of Income				Total
		Agriculture	Business	Labour	Others	
1.	Savara	15700	5800	12000	-	33,500
2.	Jatapu	16500	6300	13500	-	36,300
3.	Gadaba	12300	4500	9200	-	26,000
Total		14,833	5533	11567	-	31,933





**TABLE – 7**  
**DETAILS OF PERCAPITA EXPENDITURE ON FOOD AND NON FOOD ITEMS**  
**(In. Rs)**

S. No	Sub-Caste	Per capita Expenditure on Food Items	Percapita Expenditure on Non Food Items	Total
1.	Savara	3725	7500	11225
2.	Jatapu	3450	6200	9650
3.	Gadaba	3390	6500	9890
Average Per Capita Expenditure		3522	6733	10255

**TABLE – 8**  
**SUB – CASTE WISE ESTIMATION OF DEBT PARTICULARS OF HOUSEHOLDS**

(As on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018) (In Rs.)

S.No	Sub-Caste	Local Money Lenders	Commercial Banks	Girijan Cooperative Societies	Total
1.	Savara	18,500 (24.03)	75,000 (29.41)	-	93500 (28.16)
2.	Jatapu	35,000 (45.45)	1,20,000 (47.06)	-	1,55,000 (46.69)
3.	Gadaba	23,500 (30.52)	60,000 (23.53)	-	83,500 (25.15)
Total		77,000 (100.00)	25,5,000 (100.00)	-	3,32,000 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicates Percentages to Total

### References

1. Naddem Hasnain, Tribal India Today Himalaya Publishing House, New Delhi.
2. Chandraiah, M and Rama Rao, J “Some Socio-Economic Conditions of Tribes - A Case Study in Srikakulam District,” Man and Life, Journal of social Research and Applied Anthropology, Calcutta.
3. Rama Rao, J “Impact of Aware on the life of Tribal people – A Case Study in Visakhapatnam District, M. Phil., Dissertation.
4. Andhra Pradesh Statistical Abstract 2014, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Hyderabad.
5. Aurora,G.S, Economy of tribal Village, Economic Weekly, Sept 26, 1964. Page, 1559.
6. Acharya, N.K, (2006): “Reservation for SC, ST’s, OBC’s” Fifty years of Andhra Pradesh CDRC: Page No: 461.
7. Chief Planning Officer, Viziangarm.
8. Annual Report 2015-16 of Ministry of Tribal Welfare