

## Demographic and Economic Status of Scheduled Tribes in Andhra Pradesh: A Study of Jatapu Tribe in Seethammapeta Mandal in Srikakulam District

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### Abstract

Most of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) live in interior areas and far away from the civilized society. Agriculture is the main occupation of tribes. The isolated location of the tribes from the main stream of life is hindering their all activities. Due to illiteracy among tribes, the money lenders and small traders to exploit them. In our study 75 per cent of the households were in the age group of 25 to 55 and majority of the heads of households (50%) are in the age group of 35 to 55 years. The sex-wise distribution of total family members of the selected households revealed that total female are relatively higher than total male. 55 percent of the households are living in their own houses and majority of them are living in thatched houses.

The socio-economic life of the households in the study area is much influenced by agricultural sector, among the selected households marginal farms and small farms are around 80 percent and the remaining are medium and large farms. The proportion of irrigated area in cropped area is only around 20 percent and the average size of irrigated area of all farms is only 0.67 acre. As a whole the analysis pertaining to demographic and economic conditions of the selected households' shows the process of transformation taking place in the living patterns of the selected households living in the villages in plain areas.

**Keywords:** Economic status; Scheduled tribes; Work force; Cultivation; Prices; Farmers.

### Introduction

The tribes generally have a group of families living together and these groups have pre-historic economy, with several rituals and customs. Certain tribal languages have no script except speech. They live in interior forest areas far away from the civilized world. They have slash 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. In general tribes are of peculiar type of people living all over the world. Agriculture is the prime and predominant occupation of tribals and the culture of the

tribal communities is reflected in their agricultural practices. The agro-climatic conditions and the resource potentialities differ from one tribal area to another. This is due to the nature of soil, fertility, availability of water etc. Due to prevalence of unemployment and underemployment, agriculture alone cannot sustain them throughout the year. So the tribals must rely on labour works and the forest produce which occupies and play an important role in their daily life. Hence the tribal economy may rightly be called as agro forest based economy. The isolated location of the tribes from the main stream of life is hindering their economic activities. The illiteracy among the tribals and the rich forest produce tempted the money lenders and small traders to exploit the tribals. 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.

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The growth rates of scheduled tribe population in Andhra Pradesh are 5.47, 2.24, 6.50, 2.79 and 3.01 for the years 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively. Except 1961 and 1991, the decadal growth rate of tribal population is more than the growth rate of general population. From 1951 to 2001 the tribal population has increased by five times but for the general population it is only 1.5 times.

The tribal villages are inhabited by different variety of tribes. The important tribes are Gonds, Andhs, Thothis, and Kolanies in Adilabad district. Koya, Konda Reddies, Naikpads in Khammam, Warangal and Godavari districts. Bagatha, Valmiki, Kondhs and Jatapus in the districts of north coastal Andhra Pradesh. Chenchus in the pockets of Mahaboob Nagar, Kurnool and Prakasam Distiricts. The social structure of the various tribal groups resemble with each other tribal groups. It is due to their similar clan organizati3ons. The social practices, customs, beliefs and code of conduct are very nearer to each other tribal groups. Almost all the tribal groups in Andhra Pradesh eat cooked food. Some tribes in higher community status generally do not accept cooked food from other tribal communities who have lower than their status. The tribal economy is with very poor economic conditions and almost intertwined with the social phenomena.

### Methodology

The primary data comprise of collecting information during the month of June and July of 2010 from the selected sample tribal households in the tribal areas the multi stage stratified random sampling method was used for the study. There were four stages in which sampling process was carried out. The first stage was selection of district, the second stage consisted of selection of mandal, the third stage consisted of selection of villages and the forth stage was of selection of households. Out

of the nine districts of Andhra Pradesh which have concentration of tribal population Srikakulam District was selected.

The second stage of sample consisted of selection of mandal. The selected Seethampeta is only the tribal concentrated mandal out of 37 mandals of Srikakulam district. Out of 37, 19 mandals had tribal population in Srikakulam district, with a total of 11, 9304 tribal population. Seethampeta alone is having 40, 189 tribal population (33.69 per cent of total tribal population of the district).

The third stage of sample consisted of selection of villages. The Seethampeta mandal consisted of 113 revenue villages and five uninhabited villages formed by 24 panchayats and 290 hamlets. To examine the socio economic conditions of prominent tribes in Srikakulam District *i.e.* Jatapu, the specific tribe population concentration was considered in the selection of villages. Specific tribe population with 80 per cent and less than 90 per cent in the respective panchayats were considered as criteria for selection. After identification of specific tribe concentration in the panchayats the Jatapu concentrated 10 villages were selected. To examine the differences in the living patterns of Jatapu tribe households in Plain and Interior villages, among the 10 selected villages purposively 5 villages Panukuvalasa, Manapuram, Pedduru, Pedarama and Valegaadda villages on road side plain villages of the Seethampeta mandal were selected. Similarly the remaining 5 villages Jayapuram, Kusumuru, Talada, Tadipai and Pedapolla were selected from the interior parts of the Seethampeta Mandal.

In the final stage from Jatapu concentrated villages a number of 20 households were selected from each selected village and as a whole from the selected 10 villages a total of 200 Jatapu tribe households were selected.

This paper deal with the demographic and economic status of Jatapu Tribes in Seethammampeta Mandal in Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh.

**Table 1: Age Composition of Head of Households**

Sl. No.	Village	Age Composition					Total
		Below 25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Above 55	
1	Selected villages in plain areas	13	25	28	23	11	100
2	Selected villages in interior areas	17	27	27	22	7	100
3	Total selected village	30 (15.0)	52 (26.0)	55 (27.50)	45 (22.50)	18 (9.0)	200 (100.00)

*Demographic and living conditions of selected Jatapu households*

In this section an attempt is made to conduct an in depth study to analyze the demographic conditions of the selected tribal households. The age composition of the family members help to assess the available work force in the family and its impact on production of the household. The field data show that nearly 75 per cent of the total sample households are in the age group of 25 to 55 years. Majority of the heads of households (50%) are in the age group of 35 to 55 years. In this regard significant differences are not found across villages. Village wise distribution of the heads of the household in age groups is presented in Table 1.

The age composition of the family members is presented in the Table 2. It can be seen that, the total number of family members of 200 selected households recorded as 833. Out of the total family members 58.46 percent of the family members of the households are below the age group of 35 years. The classification

also shows that more proportion of the family members of the selected households are in the age group of 25-35 years. On the total we can say that 62.90 percent of heads of the households are in the effective age-group 25-55. The average household family size is estimated at 4.16. The family size is relatively low in case of the households living in the plain areas when compared to the households living in the interior areas. Totally among the family members of households, children constitute 13.20 percent and old ages are 5.41 percent.

The information relating to sex wise distribution of family members is having relevance. The sex-wise distribution of family members is presented in Table-3. From the table it can be notice that, among the total family members (833) women (55.58%) were recorded more than men (44.42%). Among the family members of the selected households above the age group of 14 years are classified as adults. The workmen between age group of 25 to 45 are treated as effective work force. It can be observed from the table, in all the

**Table 2: Age Composition Of The Total Family Members**

S. No	Village	Age Composition						Total	Family size
		0-15	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Above 55		
1	Selected villages in plain areas	53	71	110	99	49	13	397	3.97
2	Selected villages in interior areas	57	83	113	98	55	30	436	4.36
3	Total selected village	110 (13.20)	154 (18.49)	223 (26.77)	197 (23.65)	104 (12.48)	43 (5.41)	833 (100.00)	4.16

Note: The figures presented in the parenthesis are percentages to total.

**Table 3: Distribution Of Family Members By Sex**

Sl. No.	Village	Male			Female			Grand Total
		Adult	Children	Total	Adult	Children	Total	
1	Selected villages in plain areas	117	57	174	155	68	223	397
2	Selected villages in interior areas	143	53	196	171	69	240	436
3	Total selected village	260 (31.21)	110 (13.21)	370 (44.42)	326 (39.13)	137 (16.45)	463 (55.58)	833 (100.00)

Note: The figures presented in the parenthesis are percentages to total.

**Table 4: Size Of The Family**

S. No.	Villages	Family size				Adoption of Family Planning by households
		< 5	0-7	7+	Total	
1	Selected villages in plain areas	29	52	19	100	48
2	Selected villages in interior areas	17	59	24	100	39
3	Total selected village	46 (23.00)	111 (58.50)	43 (18.50)	200 (100.00)	87

Note: The figures presented in the parenthesis are percentages to total.

**Table 5: Distribution Of House By Type And Electrification**

S. No.	Tribe/ village	Own house				Govt. house			Grand Total	Houses Electrified in %
		Thatched	Tiled	RCC	Total	Tiled	RCC	Total		
1	Selected villages in plain areas	36	12	6	54	28	17	45	100	55.80
2	Selected villages in interior areas	56	6	4	66	24	10	35	100	46.40
3	Total selected village	92 (45.50)	18 (9.0)	10 (5.0)	120 (59.50)	52 (26.50)	27 (14.00)	80 (40.50)	200 (100.00)	

Note: The figures presented in the parenthesis are percentages to total.

selected tribes proportion of male adults is lower (31.21%) when compared to female adults (39.13%). Out of the total family members, children constitute 29.66 percent.

Along with sex ratio, the size of the family will also influence the productivity of family. Table 4 presents the village wise distribution of the households by family size. It can be noted from the Table that 23.0 percent of the families have less than 5 members. 58.50 families were having less than 7 family members and 18.50 percent families recorded with more than 7 numbers of family members.

#### *Housing conditions*

Housing is one of the basic necessities of every human being, which constitute the protecting base for any individual and his family. An attempt is made to study the housing conditions of the households and the

data pertaining to it is presented in Table 5. From the table it can be observed that among all the tribals put together 198 households (55%) possess their own houses and 162 households (45%) are living in the government colony houses. The households are living in thatched (38.33%), tiled (37.42%) and the remaining are residing in the RCC roofed houses. Among all the households, the households living in villages in plain areas are relatively having more own tiled and RCC roof houses. The households living in villages in the remote areas are residing in the Government colony houses and more number of these households are living in the thatched houses. As a whole the housing conditions in the villages in plain areas are relatively in good condition. However, more efforts of the governmental agencies are still required in a big way to build pucca houses in the remote villages. The extent of electrification is only 50

**Table 6: Live Stock Particulars Of House Holds**

Sl. No.	Village	Bullocks	Cows	Buffaloes	Sheep/ Goats	Others	Total
1	Selected villages in plain areas	59	58	67	139	43	366
2	Selected villages in interior areas	35	41	56	83	21	236
3	Total selected village	94 (15.61)	99 (16.44)	123 (20.43)	222 (36.88)	64 (10.63)	602 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets refer to percentages.

**Table 7: Land Particulars Of The Selected Households**

S. No.		Wetland (in acres)	Dry land (in acres)	Total land (in acres)
1	Selected villages in plain areas	138.40	155.40	293.80
2	Selected villages in interior areas	70.05	214.25	284.30
3	Total selected village	208.45 (36.06)	369.65 (63.94)	578.10 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets refer to percentages.

**Table 8: Cropping Patterns**

Quantity in bags

Sl. No	Village	Paddy	Ragi	Maize	Pine apple	Ginger	Cashew	Total
1	Selected villages in plain areas	2,32,220	12210	300	1850	28820	16500	291900
2	Selected villages in interior areas	1,46,152	8995	284	640	24410	14500	194981
	Total	3,78,372 (77.71)	21205 (4.35)	584 (0.11)	2490 (0.51)	53230 (10.93)	31000 (6.39)	486881 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets refer to percentages.

**Table 9: Incomes From The Crop Production**

(Income in Rs.)

Sl. No	Village	Paddy	Ragi	Maize	Pine apple	Ginger	Cashew	Total
1	Selected villages in plain areas	329572	39450	900	4000	21600	234800	650322
2	Selected villages in interior areas	303800	18089	850	3870	15200	235200	597009
	Total	633372 (48.89)	57539 (4.03)	1750 (0.07)	7870 (0.30)	36800 (43.96)	470000 (2.76)	1247331 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets refer to percentages.

percent in the interior villages where it is more than 75 percent in the villages in plain areas.

#### *Live stock position*

The live stock particulars of the selected households are presented in Table 6. It is evident from the table that the total livestock in all the sample villages are 5 kinds. Among them cows constitute 16.44 percent and sheep and goat consists of 36.88 percent whereas bullocks constitute 15.61 percent and buffaloes constitute 20.43 per cent as regards distribution of livestock across the sample village, sheep and goats from the highest percent and all the different livestock categories are available more in case of households living in the villages in the roadside plain areas. The proportion of livestock availability is relatively low in case of households living in the interior villages. The lowest extent of live stock is recorded in the Tadipai and Talada interior villages and highest number of livestock is available in the Velagadda plain village.

#### *Agricultural patterns of the selected households*

The households living in villages in plain areas are undertaking very limited extent of Podu cultivation in the selected villages. It was noticed that out of 200 households covered in the sample nearly 15 percent households are dependent solely on shifting cultivation 40 percent of the households are dependant partly on shifting cultivation and partly on settled cultivation. Nearly 45 percent were dependent only on settled cultivation.

#### *Shifting cultivation*

Shifting cultivation is a system demanding hard and arduous labour coupled with risk to human life brought by wild life. Shifting cultivation is not only the major source of income to many households in the villages of the interior area but also provides ample scope for earning extra income by making bigger clearings when necessity arises for more funds to meet the expenses of a costly ritual like marriage ceremony or payment of an old debt. It is also used as a source of building a common

fund for the village. The unmarried youths too raise a common fund for their activities through shifting cultivation. Produce from the clearings cultivated collectively by the households and by the unmarried youths go to their respective common funds. Shifting cultivation is never a competitive undertaking. Nobody likes to make bigger clearings for accumulation of wealth. Further, it provides security at the time of food crisis caused by failure of crops in the plain and wet land due to drought or flood. In swidden cultivation, total crop failure does not occur, because a large variety of crops grown are harvested one after another within a period of 4 to 5 months. In the sampling interior villages it was found that the cultivation period and fallow period has become more or less equal i.e. 2 to 3 years of cultivation period is followed by 2 to 3 years of fallow period.

The scarcity of lands in the plains in relation to demand and their high prices put them beyond the tribals reach. It is also not easy for them to invest large funds on bullocks, fertilizers, labour charges and other agricultural instruments required for settled cultivation. On the other hand with the ashes of natural vegetation as manure and their own hard labour, they need to spend only a little for seeds in the system of shifting cultivation. Besides podu cultivation needs only a few simple implements like hoe, digging stick and axe all of which can be manufactured by cultivators themselves excepting the iron part which can be provided to them by the local black smiths in exchange of small amount of their produce. Shifting cultivation provides work to all members of a tribal family. Women take active part in cleaning podu land, breaking clod of earth, hoeing, dibbling weeding and reaping. The children right from a tender age helps their parents on all these activities. Plough cultivation in wet or dry lands involves clear division of labour which does not fit in with the traditional style of life and work of these people.

The details relating to the extent of farm assets of the selected households are presented in the Table 7. It is evident from the table that

in the total land of 578.10 acres of all the households 63.94 percent is dry land and the remaining 36.06 percent comprised of wetland. The average household holding arrived at 2.89 acres. The variations in the land holdings across villages are substantial. The households living in the interior villages possessed more extent of dry land where as the households living in the road side plain areas possess substantial extent of wet land. All the households living in the interior villages have less than 20 acres of wetland, whereas the road side plain villages' households had more than 20 acres of wetland.

The cropping patterns relating to important crops are presented in Table 8. It can be noticed from the table that the crop production (quantities presented in bags) of villages, about Paddy, Ragi, Maize, Pineapple, Ginger, Cashew and Red grams presented in the above Table. It is evident from the table that the major crop production of the tribals in these villages, come from the paddy cultivation. The households living in the roadside plain villages produce more than 80 percent. Even the rest of the interior villages the households produce more than 60 to 70 percent of paddy. The production of ragi crop is not taken up in one village, all other selected villages produce ragi, the production vary from 1 percent to 7 percent. Highest Ragi is produced in two of the plain villages. The pineapple is cultivated in only one village and its production is also negligible in the total crop produce of the village, it is only 1.57 percent. Ginger crop is taken up by all the villages. The interior villages produce more than 10 percent; all other villages produce less than 10 percent ginger in their total crop produce. Only 4 plain area villages have taken up cultivation of the cashew crop. The cashew production also varied from 0.58 per cent to 12.30 across the villages.

The extent of incomes received by the sample households from crop production are presented in Table 9. It is evident from the table that the households were receiving substantial income from the cultivation of paddy. The highest percentage of income of paddy is

receiving by the households in the plain area villages (about 88.39 %). Lowest extent is receiving by the households who are involved in podu cultivation in the interior villages (about 27% only). The other crop giving substantial income is the ginger, which is a commercial crop. The villages in plain areas where the paddy crop is the highest the cultivation of ginger is not found. Gingerly crop is taken up in all other interior villages in the total income the proportional contribution from ginger varies from 62 percent to 31 percent across villages in the total income from all crops. Two villages in plains are also deriving high income from Ginger; their income from ginger crop is more than 60 percent in their total income. Whereas the villages deriving substantial income from cashew crop are located in plain areas. As far as pineapple crop is giving substantial income in the study area. Only one plain village is producing the crop maize but its income is very meager.

### Conclusions

In the selected villages, there are variations in demographic and economic characteristics of the tribal households. These variations explain the variations in the levels of living and well being of the tribal households in the selected villages.

The selected Jatapu tribe in Seethammapeta mandal responded favorably towards the exogenous change agents. The degree of response towards these change agents is found higher in case of Jatapu tribe households who are residing in the villages in the road side plain areas which are having very close access to Seethampeta. The modern forces and change agents actively influenced the tribes in plain areas particularly in the road side plain villages the households responded to the imitative effect of these forces of change is felt through their changing food habits, type of family life style, material culture, social relations, political organization and rituals.

On the front of demographic and economic

analysis of the selected tribal households the findings relating to composition of the selected households shows that, nearly 75 per cent of the households are in the age groups of 25 to 55. The analysis pertaining to age composition of the family members of the selected households indicate that around 70 per cent of the family members are within the working range of 15 to 55. Children are at the extent of 25 per cent and old ages constitute only around 5 per cent of the total family members. The sex-wise distribution of total family members of the selected households reveal that total female are relatively higher than total male. Similarly the adult female are higher in proportion than men and children constitute early 35 per cent of total family members. The household average family size is 4.68 and the family size was relatively higher among the households living in the villages in the interior areas. The households with more than 7 members are 20 per cent in total households and they are more among the households living in the villages in the interior areas.

The housing conditions are in improving stage in the villages located in plain area. However, the housing conditions are relatively poor in the villages located in the remote areas and the extent of houses electrified are relatively limited in these interior villages. 55 percent of the households are living in their own houses and majority of them are living in thatched houses. 45 percent of the households who are living in the government houses majority of them are living in either tiled or RCC roof houses. The special efforts of governmental agencies are still required in this context to build colonies in the very interior villages.

The socio-economic life of the households in the study area is much influenced by agricultural sector, among the selected households marginal farms and small farms are around 80 percent and the remaining are medium and large farms. The average operational land holding of all the households is estimated at 3.30 acres and average net area sown of the households stood at 2.70 acres. The analysis of the farm activities indicate that

dry and wet cultivation under Kharif and Rabi seasons and Podu cultivation are in practice. It is identified that the tribal cultivators are growing non-traditional crops along with traditional crops. It is estimated that around 50 percent of acres of the gross cropped area is cultivated under Kharif and around 21.38 percent in Rabi seasons and nearly 29.62 percent of area is under Podu cultivation. The cropping pattern indicated that around 35 percent is under Paddy cultivation and the total area under cereals and millets of the gross cropped area is as high as 60 percent. The proportion of irrigated area in cropped area is only around 20 percent and the average size of irrigated area of all farms is only 0.67 acre.

The above analysis ultimately reveal that the Demographic and economic practices are different across the selected villages. The households in plain villages are able to move fast towards modernization process when compared to households living in the interior villages'. As a whole the analysis pertaining to demographic and economic conditions of the selected households' shows the process of transformation taking place in the living patterns of the selected households living in the villages in plain areas. The degree of responsiveness to modernity is still relatively low among the selected households living in villages located in the interior areas of the Seethampeta Mandal in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

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