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## **A study on socio-economic conditions of scheduled tribes**

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### **Abstract**

The legislative mechanism of the state had made strenuous efforts to uplift the status of tribal people in all the nooks and corners of the country and had achieved partial success. In spite of their efforts, the status of tribal people is pathetic and deplorable and the existing situation demands immediate attendance. Thus there is every need to evaluate the impact of developmental programs on the socio-economic status of tribal people and hence the present research study was conducted on Scheduled Tribes in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. This paper studies the concept of socio-economic status of scheduled tribes in the select study area and examines the impact of factors of development on the socio-economic status of the tribals. The paper further measures the relationship between the factors of development and socio-economic status of the tribals and suggests measures for uplifting the socio-economic status of the tribals in the select study area.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic conditions, scheduled tribes, descriptive research

### **Introduction**

In the wake of the scientific advancement of exponential magnitude that humankind has achieved during the past 150 odd years in comparison with what our forbearers did theretofore since the symphony of creation had closed full in man, the wide world we live in has been reduced, as it were, to a sprawling village sans frontiers. The hallmarks of this world are efficiency, productivity, technique, integration and prosperity. People belonging to different nations are engaged in a fierce struggle to attain socio-economic progress. But the absence of a level playing ground makes this struggle highly iniquitous and excludes the underprivileged sections of the society from taking advantage of the new blessings and choices of the fast moving world order. The creation of an egalitarian social order with equity for all sections of the society, free from any form of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sex or place of birth is the cherished goal of our nation enshrined in the constitution. Equity for the weaker sections of the society, therefore, is the moving spirit of the constitutional schema and permeates the same. The founding fathers of our constitution desired to secure justice, social, economic, and political for all citizens. They realized that the inequitable forces embedded in the socio-economic system and also political organizations, had resulted in deprivation and disadvantages for the poor and the weaker sections of the society. They, therefore, considered it necessary to provide specific safeguards in the constitution for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who, due to tradition and a combination of circumstances, were the most deprived, weak and vulnerable amongst the various sections of the society. The various safeguards and protective measures sought to ensure for them all round development and freedom from exploitation and social injustice so that they could form part of the mainstream of the society. Article 46 of the Constitution of India provides that "the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation". Thus the Constitution of India gives due recognition to the problems and aspirations of the tribals. The policy of reservation forms the central part of the social justice dispensation of the constitution. Reservation is meant to compensate for the unprecedented discrimination perpetrated against them from antiquity thereby empowering and integrating them with the mainstream society.

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The global initiative of placing people at the centre of development can proceed with added force through the empowerment of the peripheral socio-economic groups, especially the tribals. The Scheduled Tribes particularly the primitive tribes are placed in the most disadvantageous position in modern India. The backwardness of the tribe is attributed largely to their long isolation from the general society and their exploitation by the non-tribes. Tribals who have contributed to the richness of our culture and heritage have been neglected and isolated particularly during 19th and early 20th centuries. India started her large scale planned development planning in 1951. This development planning derives its objectives and social premises from the 'Directive Principles of the State Policy' set forth in the Constitution of India. The objectives of our development plans are to initiate a process of all round balanced development which would ensure a rising national income and steady improvement in the living standards. Ironically the backlash of these efforts resulted in the suffering of some tribals in the form of displacement and prompted the evolution of planned efforts for tribal development and suitable policies for the protection of their rights. These efforts have initiated the process of social transformation among them. Therefore in the present study an attempt is made to profile the changes in social and economic life in the context of a Primitive Tribe namely Chenchus, who are mostly spread in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

#### Review of literature

**Madhu Gundlupet (2002:06) [4] remarks:** "The tribes also suffer from certain genetic disorders and deficiency diseases specific to tribal areas such as GEPD and sickle cell anemia. Malaria, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases are other areas of concern. The nutrition status of tribes is not satisfactory according to the empirical data. The family planning programmes are also implemented in the tribal areas to certain extent. The brunt of family planning is borne by women, possibly because they have a higher stake in not becoming pregnant frequently and because men are not prepared to take equal responsibility for birth control, or possibly, because healthcare providers find it easier to target women". The tribal environment is also known for unsanitary environment which contributes to the proliferation of disease, leading to high morbidity rates, which reduces productivity and affects the earning capacity of individuals. The poor sanitary condition of ST households is highlighted by the Census Reports. The taps are the primary sources of drinking water for the tribes.

**Navada (2004:11) reports:** "The percentage of permanent houses for tribes is less than 40.0% according to the latest data. A higher percentage of rural STs live in semi-permanent houses (43.4) than urban STs (23.1) who live predominantly in permanent houses (66.9). The electrical connectivity is fairly high among ST households. According to the 2011 Census, about 70.0% of ST households in Karnataka had electricity as a source of lighting, compared with 78.5 per cent for all households and 68.5 per cent for SC households. In rural areas, STs depended on electricity (60.3 per cent) as well as kerosene (38.8), whereas urban ST households relied principally on electricity (80.6 per cent)". These high levels of connectivity indicate that state policies to provide electrical connections to ST households have paid off handsomely.

**Chandrashekar (2004:02) observes:** "The Tribal Sub-Plan was first introduced in 1976-77 when it was implemented in the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) in the districts of Mysore, Chikmagalur, Kodagu and Dakshina Kannada (including Udupi). In 1992, it was extended to all districts in the state. The objectives of the TSP are poverty alleviation, protection of tribal culture, education, healthcare and providing basic minimum infrastructure. Poverty alleviation includes programmes in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, horticulture, village and small industries as well as all employment-generating schemes such as Swarna Jayanthi Swarozgar Yojana (SJSY)". According to the Human Development Report (2005), programmes like free housing, drinking water supply, electrical connectivity, ashram schools, scholarships, free text books and uniforms, midday meals and poverty reduction programmes have benefited the tribes who had experienced serious economic constraints. Studies have reported that the tribal development programmes have not significantly enhanced the educational, health and economic status of tribes despite these initiatives. The magnitude of the problem is so great that a large percentage of Scheduled Tribe families is still poor and lacks access to resources that would improve their education and health status. The human development status of the Scheduled Tribes is more than a decade behind the rest of the population of the state and they are the poorest and most deprived of all sub-populations in the state. According to Mariswamy (2006:10) [7], the Department of Tribal Welfare earmarks three per cent of their plan budget for expenditure on tribal development in the state. The TSP funds were first pooled in 1991. In 'pooling', funds earmarked under TSP are partially or completely withdrawn from the department. The resultant corpus is then utilized to finance three strategic areas: housing, education (construction of hostels) and financing irrigation wells and pump sets under the Ganga Kalyan scheme.

**Suresh (2008:14) notes:** "Most of the tribal areas of Karnataka state are deprived of basic health care facilities. The tribes also suffer from food insecurity, ill-health and malnutrition due to poverty and unemployment problems. The crude death rate (CDR) is estimated at 8.50 which is again higher than 7.50 for the general population. The CDR is lower for STs than SCs (9.12) in the state. Most of the health indicators show deterioration in the health of women and children. The health status of the tribal population is not on par with the rest of the state's population. The infant mortality rate (IMR) of STs (64.37) is much higher than the state average (52.0); the IMR for STs is marginally lower than the IMR for SCs (64.74) and there is a marked difference between male (75.84) and female IMR (54.48)". Sambasiva Rao and Subrahmanyam (2007) observes that over the last few years the Self Help Groups becomes the best intermediary to move ahead towards tribal people participation and tribal women empowerment.

**Shinde (2012) laments:** "Their literacy rate is the lowest for all social groups and female literacy, which is a low 36.6 per cent when compared with the state average of 56.9, places ST women far behind a population that is, itself, disadvantaged to start with. There are disparities between ST students and others at every level and along all indicators of educational attainment: enrolment and retention in

primary education and subsequent participation in secondary and tertiary education. One bright feature is the fact that girls perform well scholastically once they clear the hurdles to the deceptively simple acts of first enrolling and secondly, being allowed to stay on in school”.

**Directorate of Tribal Development (2014:05) amplifies:**

“Poverty alleviation includes programmes in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, horticulture, village and small industries as well as all employment-generating schemes such as Swarna Jayanthi Swarozgar Yojana (SJSY). Pooling TSP funds under the TSP, departments’ earmark three per cent of their plan budget for expenditure on tribal development. However, as in the case of the Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes, some departmental schemes were not particularly relevant or effective and ended up being symbolic gestures to the development of STs. The TSP funds were first pooled in 1991. In ‘pooling’, funds earmarked under TSP are partially or completely withdrawn from the department. The resultant corpus is then utilized to finance three strategic areas: housing, education (construction of hostels) and financing irrigation wells and pump sets under the Ganga Kalyan scheme”. Mahantesh and Sedan (2014) [6] examined the role of self-help groups in the process of tribal development and stated that these groups had radically changed the micro-credit systems in rural areas. Tribals, who form a large percentage of rural agricultural labor, and subsistence farmers find it difficult to source credit from financial institutions and are likely to benefit from the SHG philosophy. Self-help groups promote savings and microfinance among members, but they also have other objectives such as social empowerment and gender equity. According to Anjanayya and Sreeramulu (2014:01) [1], the tribal community based organizations have also played a limited role in the community education, organization, participation and action for tribal development in the state. It is possible to make development works more effective and sustainable through an engagement with the local community, which has a better understanding than non-tribals, of its own socio-economic needs, traditions and culture. Their participation in programmes, funded by government and voluntary organizations builds confidence in the people to utilize the services thus offered and provides feedback for modification and re-orientation of programmes.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the socio-economic conditions of scheduled tribes in the selected study area.

2. To measure the relationship between the factors of development and socio-economic conditions of the tribals in the select study area.
3. To suggest measures for uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the tribals in the select study area.

**Hypotheses**

Based on the above objectives, the following alternate hypotheses were formulated and tested.

H<sub>1</sub>: Increased education levels have a significant impact on socio-economic conditions of the tribes

H<sub>2</sub>: Increased income levels have a significant impact on socio-economic conditions of the tribes.

**Tests used:** Pearson Correlation Analysis and ANOVA

**Research Methodology**

The present study adopted Descriptive and Analytical research design. Both primary and secondary data was used for conducting the research analysis. Primary data was collected by using selective random sampling technique and data was collected by using interview schedule method with the help of a structured questionnaire. The sample size selected for the study was 150 (involving both the genders—75+75) belonging to tribal mandals of Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. To draw the opinions of the respondents a 5-point Likert scale was used and in order to test the statistical significant of the proposed hypotheses, statistical tools like Pearson Correlation analysis and ANOVA test were applied.

**Data analysis and findings**

**Table 1:** Test of Reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.912	24

Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test was used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. The result from the table no.1 reveals that the cronbach’s alpha value is 0.912. As a general rule it is presumed that the alpha value near to 1 will have the more reliability. Hence it can be concluded that the framed questionnaire is more reliable and has statistical validity.

**Hypothesis-1**

H<sub>0</sub>: Increased education levels have no significant impact on socio-economic conditions of the tribes.

H<sub>1</sub>: Increased education levels have a significant impact on socio-economic conditions of the tribes.

**Table 2:** Correlation between Education Level and Socio-economic conditions of Tribes

		Education Level	Socio-economic conditions
Education Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.923**
	Sig. (2 -tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Socio-economic conditions	Pearson Correlation	.923**	1
	Sig. (2 -tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: If p-value is less than 0.05, reject the null hypothesis and accept an alternative hypothesis.

The calculated Pearson correlation value is .923 and p=0.000 (p<0.05) at confidence level of 0.01. Hence, the

null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is accepted.

**Hypothesis. 2**

H<sub>0</sub>: Increased income levels have no significant impact on socio-economic conditions of the tribes

H<sub>2</sub>: Increased income levels have a significant impact on socio-economic conditions of the tribes.

**Table 3:** Correlation between Income Level and Socio-economic conditions of Tribes

		Income level	Socio-economic conditions
Income Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.912**
	Sig. (2 -tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Socio-economic conditions	Pearson Correlation	.912**	1
	Sig. (2 -tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The calculated Pearson correlation value is .912 and  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ) at confidence level of 0.01. Hence, the

null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>) is accepted.

**Table 4:** Anova test results

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Education level	Between groups	72.84	2	36.432	331.218	.000
	Within groups	16.258	147	.110		
	Total	81.122	149			
Income Level	Between groups	66.364	2	33.182	310.112	.000
	Within groups	15.826	147	.107		
	Total	81.190	149			

The ANOVA test under Table- 4 reveals the significant relationship between the Socio-economic conditions of the tribes and their increased education levels, income levels. The F ratio from the F column reads like 331.218, 310.112, 295.070 and 365.189 and the value in the Sig. column (p-value) is 0.000 for all the variables and it is lesser than the alpha value (0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected.

**Result**

All the proposed alternate hypotheses were tested and their statistical significance was proved. Thus it can be inferred that the socio-economic conditions is having a significant relationship with the education level, income level, tribal development programs pertaining to tribal people.

**Conclusion**

Thus the study concludes by ascertaining the verified aspects of tribal development in order to probe in to the material aspects of socio-economic conditions of tribals. There is a certain relationship between the education levels of the tribals and their socio-economic concepts in their lives and the income levels have a significant impact on their economic wellbeing and allied aspects of their family life. Employment generation programs are having a bi-pronged impact on the socio-economic conditions of the tribals in terms of social emancipation and economic empowerment of tribal people. The tribal development programs aims at the concepts of social welfare, security and cultural promotion of the tribals followed by thrusting the economic viscosity of the tribal society at large.

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