



## AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SOCIAL-POLITICAL PERCEPTION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN KHAMMAM DISTRICT OF TELANGANA STATE

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### Abstract

*Scheduled Tribes (STs, indigenous people) are one of the most marginalised communities in the social and political dimensions. Social and Political marginalisation of STs due to historical injustices has compelled the Indian state to explore alternative means to ensure adequate representation for them by adopting a social and political reservation system. Social and Political reservation has, therefore, become their primary means of empowerment, wherein it has ensured the redistribution of political resources in favour of the marginalised communities. Against this backdrop, the present research paper highlighted that social and political dimension of Scheduled Tribes in Khammam district of Telangana State.*

**Key words:** *Scheduled Tribes, Social, Political and Empowerment.*

### Introduction

The tribes are the autochthonous people of the land who are believed to be the earliest settlers in the Indian peninsula. The term “tribe” originated around the time of the Greek city-states and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The Latin term “tribe” has since been transformed to mean, “Tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as a common ancestor”. The word “tribal” brings to our mind a picture of half-naked man and women, with arrow and spears in their hands, feathers on their heads and speaking unintelligible language, their lives often combined with myths of savagery and cannibalism. The exploitative mind-set of the mainstream society made these communities recede often into forests, hills and remote area, where they could continue to live in peace with natural unpolluted surroundings. The tribals are often characterized by their own language, heritage, love for freedom and self-identity. The so called civilized communities of the mainstream society branded them variously as native, uncivilized people, aboriginals, *Adivasis* (original settlers), *Vanabasi* or *Vanyajati* (forest dwellers), *Adimjati* (primitive castes), *Girijan* or *Pahari* (hill dwellers), *janjati* (folk communities), indigenous people etc. In India, they are generally called ‘*Adivasis*’ implying original inhabitants. However, under the constitution of India and people belongs to various tribes have been specified as “Scheduled tribe”. All over the world tribal’s continue to live in the continents of Africa, Asia, North and South America and Australia. In the present work, the word tribes or tribals is being used synonymous with Scheduled Tribes.

### Tribes in India

India is the second largest country in the world having considerable number of tribal population next to Africa continent. There are 705 different tribal communities spread all over India. Total population of scheduled tribe is 8, 43, 26,978 as per the Census 2001 which accounts for 8.2 per cent of the total population of country and cover about 15 per cent of the country’s area. Majority of the scheduled tribe population live in rural areas and their population is 10.4 per cent of the total rural population of the country. As per 2011 census the tribal population of the country is 10, 42, 81,034 which forms 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country recorded 23.7 per cent growth rate during the period between



2001 and 2011. The Constitution of India does not define Scheduled Tribes as such. Article 366 (25) refers to scheduled tribes as those communities who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution.

### **Review of literature**

**Lankati Mahesh L., et al (2017)** conducted a study and concluded that Telangana state is very rich in the variety of cultures that represent all stages of human progress. It has Chenchus, as primitive as those who lived in Stone Age, Gonds, Andhs and Bhils, Koyas and KondaReddis are still found inclined to indulge in shifting cultivation [4]. Mostly they are found in the highland of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam districts and also in Nallamala Plateaux of Mannanur and Farahabad of Mahaboobnagar districts. Yerukala tribe women are indulged in traditional profession of fortune telling. Pradhans in Adilabad district recite mythologies, folk tales and songs of their gods and goddesses at various festivals, ceremonies and fairs for which service they are paid in cash or kind.

**Lal S and Devanna S (2016)** “Socio-economic development of primitive tribes: an empirical study in Adilabad district”. A study results on the socio-economic development of primitive tribes in Adilabad district of Telangana showed that majority of the respondents of the study area were illiterates, adopted nuclear family system and had own houses. Majority of the respondents were farmers, followed by agricultural labourers. As they had no skills in modern agricultural practices, they practiced mono cropping pattern. The respondents acquired the modern inputs and financial assistance from Integrated Tribal Development Agency. Majority (87%) earned income less than 1500 rupees per month and they spend the money mostly on food. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the government policies and schemes and standard of living of the tribal’s.

**Naik BR. (2016)** “A Socio-Economic Condition of Scheduled Tribes: A Case Study of Selected Villages in Adilabad District, Telangana State.” The study revealed that the literacy rate in the study area is 72 per cent. The Lambada community recorded highest literacy rate, whereas the Kolam community recorded the lowest. Regarding the income levels, the Lambada community recorded the highest and the Kolam community recorded the lowest. Among all the five sub-caste communities in the study area, the Lambada community was very well developed. The recommendations given in the study were to provide more welfare schemes and employment opportunities to improve the well-being of the tribal communities.

**Lalitha P (2014)** “Tribal Diversity in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana: A Comparative Analysis”. The results of a comparative analysis of the tribal diversity in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana districts depicted that Warangal district of Telangana was dominated by Lambdas (46%) and Vizag district of Andhra Pradesh was dominated with Valmikis (37%). Educational status was much better in Vizag than in Warangal. In terms of child immunization, both districts have shown almost same statistics. Ninety four (94) per cent of the respondents in Visakhapatnam district were seasonal wage earners, whereas in Warangal district, 82 per cent were seasonal wage earners. The approximate monthly consumption expenditure on food items is more in Warangal than in Vizag. In terms of land holdings, majority of them hold very small lands which are ancestral in nature. Non-institutional indebtedness is high in Warangal than in Vizag. In both areas, people were aware of government programmes, and the percentage of people who availed these programmes increased drastically from 2012.

**Kumar PR., et al.(2013)** “Socio-economic status of schedule tribes in Andhra Pradesh”. A study aimed to find out the socio-economic status of scheduled tribes in Vizanagaram District of Andhra Pradesh



state found that majority of the sample households were male headed and worked as famers and agricultural labourers. The income range of famers was Rs. 6000 to Rs. 10000 rupees per annum, and labourers earned lesser than that. There was a decline in the sex ratio in this community, and families had a preference for son. As they had no other sources of income, they tried to take loans and the institutions took advantage of this and charged higher interest rates (3 per cent). The researchers recommended that, government should take measures to promote the financial stability among the schedule tribes by offering better banking services and transfer of technology.

### **Need for the study**

The Scheduled Tribes are the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within these tribes and tribal communities which have been declared as such by the President through a public notification. Primitive traits, geographical isolation, distinct culture, shy of contact with others and economically backward are the essential characteristics of these communities. Hence, the governments have been implementing various developmental schemes for overall development of the Scheduled Tribes in drought-prone area. So, the present study taken up by the researcher and covers all dimensions of Scheduled Tribes culture, social background, Political empowered, health and educational empowerment in one of highest population district like Khammam district of Telangana State.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the conceptual framework of Scheduled Tribes
2. To analyze the socio-political perception of STs
3. To draw the conclusions

### **Area of the study**

For the present study, the research investigator was selected two Mandals of Khammam District which is the first in Scheduled Tribes population in Telangana state. According to 2011 census report, the Khammam District has a total population of 27,97,370, among this the district has a tribal population of 7,65,565 which is about 23.29 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribes population of the state and about 27.37 per cent of the total population of the Khammam District. The research investigator was studied about 300 sample respondents from two selected Mandals of Khammam District.

### **Research design**

The present study was focusing on Khammam district and also selected two mandals from this district. To explore the area such as Socio-Economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribes in Khammam with the findings of the study can be utilized by the other Researcher for further scientific investigation of the problem. Descriptive Research Design have employed in this study to analyze the Socio-Economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribes.

### **Sampling**

In this study the research investigator has taken a study of two selected Mandals namely Tekulapalli and Gundala from Khammam District and also selected 300 sample respondents through “**Systematic random Sample method**”. Total Scheduled Villages in both Mandals are arranged in alphabetical order of the households depends on the strength of the tribes, the researcher to pick at list of ten households from each Village considered minimum 10-20 households.

**Tools for study / Interview Schedule:**The Interview Schedule consists of number of questions on the Socio-Economic, Educational, Health, Political and Agricultural status of the respondents through personal interview method.



### Data collection

The present study has been focusing on both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through Interview-Scheduled from the selected 300 sample ST respondents from the Khammam district of Telangana State. And also secondary data was also collected from various sources like official records, libraries, periodicals, websites, published and unpublished theses/dissertations, census reports, e-journals, dailies, and internet etc.

### Data Analysis method

The data was analysed through univariate and bivariate tables. Graphical representations, bar diagrams, pie-diagrams has prepared and also applied for simple statistical techniques like percentages, averages, mean and weighted averages for proper analysis.

### Results and Discussions

**Table -1,Family background of the selected Scheduled Tribes in the study**

| S.N | Background of family     | Frequency | %     |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Agriculture background   | 144       | 48.00 |
| 2   | Agricultural labour      | 102       | 34.00 |
| 3   | Business/self-employment | 30        | 10.00 |
| 4   | Service                  | 24        | 08.00 |
|     | Total                    | 300       | 100   |

Source: Field Survey

Family background of the select ST households is furnished in table 1. Family back ground, as a matter of fact, is a basic unit that brings recognition to the individuals who hail from such families. It is observed from the table that 48 per cent of the ST households in the study were from agriculture background and the remaining households come from agricultural labour 34 per cent, business/self-employment 10 per cent and only eight per cent from the families belonging to service background. From this, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents in the study are from the agriculture and agriculture labour families. Besides, it can also be said that majority of the population bank upon their livelihood on agriculture and probably the same is also seen in case of ST households in the study area.

**Table-2,Particulars of earning members in STs Families**

| S.N | Earning members | Frequency | %     |
|-----|-----------------|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Two             | 153       | 51.00 |
| 2   | Three           | 63        | 21.00 |
| 3   | Four            | 33        | 11.00 |
| 4   | Five and above  | 51        | 17.00 |
|     | Total           | 300       | 100   |

Source: Field Survey

The particulars of earning members in selected Scheduled Tribes families in Khammam district of Telangana State. The present table shows that among 300 sample respondents, 51 per cent of the respondents families have two earning members, 21 respondent families have three earning members, four earning members was reported in 11 per cent of the respondents and five and above earning



members were shows in 17 per cent of the Scheduled Tribes families in the study area. Majority of the respondents, i.e., 72 per cent of them 2-3 earning members in their families.

**Table-3,Particulars of house ownership of selected Scheduled Tribes**

| S.N | Ownership  | Frequency | %     |
|-----|------------|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Owned      | 90        | 30.00 |
| 2   | Government | 201       | 67.00 |
| 3   | Rented     | 09        | 03.00 |
|     | Total      | 300       | 100   |

Source: Field Survey

The particulars on the ownership of the sample respondents have been observed from the above table. It is evident from the table that 30 per cent of the sample respondent have own house, 67 per cent of the sample Scheduled Tribes have government sanctioned house and rest of the respondents have been living in rented houses and it is reported 3 per cent in the study area. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of the select households have their house sanctioned/constructed by the Govt. under the scheme NTR housing scheme and Rajiv Swagruha. It is, therefore, inferred that majority of the ST households availed the housing schemes of the Government and can further be concluded that the select respondents had fully utilized the Government housing schemes.

### Membership in various Associations

Holding membership in various associations by the STs Respondents is a clear indication that their exposure is found high and influence of such associations can be found very progressive impact on their socio-economic conditions. As regards this, a question was designed and sought their opinion on their membership. It is noticed that 45 ST respondents in the study representing 15 per cent have disclosed that they do not have membership in any association. About 67 per cent have said that they have membership in self-help groups which are confined to village and Mandal level associations. Only six respondents have stated that they have the membership in the Associations working at district level. It is quite disheartening to notice that no ST household in the district has the membership either in the State or National level associations. It signifies the fact that majority of the STs and their household members have exposure and identify mostly at mandal level or district level Associations which are working for the welfare and development of STs. They are not bothered about association at top 1 level because of inaccessibility. A separate Ministry/Commission for ST are playing important role in conducting awareness camps.

**Table-4, Membership in various positions by the STs**

| S.N | Membership     | Frequency | %     |
|-----|----------------|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Village level  | 201       | 67.00 |
| 2   | Mandal level   | 30        | 10.00 |
| 3   | District level | 18        | 06.00 |
| 4   | No membership  | 45        | 15.00 |
| 5   | Not answered   | 06        | 02.00 |
|     | Total          | 300       | 100   |

Source: Field Survey

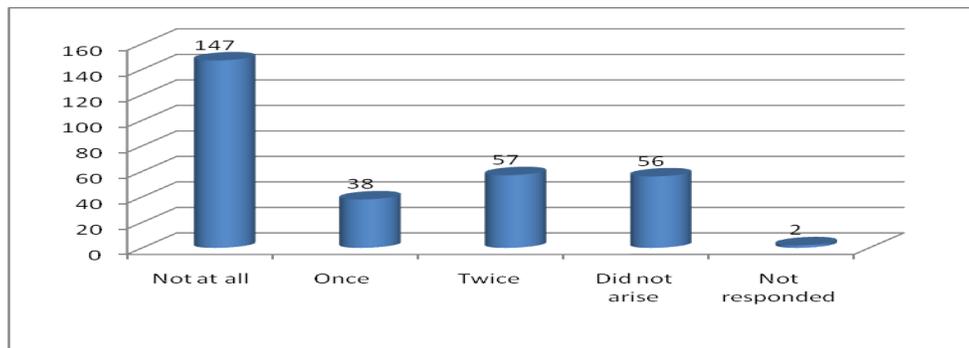


**Table-5, Ill treatment of upper community people on STs**

| S.N | Level of importance | Frequency | %     |
|-----|---------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Not at all          | 147       | 49.00 |
| 2   | Once                | 38        | 12.70 |
| 3   | Twice               | 57        | 19.00 |
| 4   | Did not arise       | 56        | 18.70 |
| 5   | Not responded       | 02        | 00.70 |
|     | Total               | 300       | 100   |

Source: Field Survey

A question is also addressed to the respondents to know whether they have any incident or experience of ill-treatment by the people of upper castes. The details are collected and furnished. Out of the three hundred respondents in the study, as many as 147 representing 49 per cent have stated that they were not at all ill-treated. While 19 per cent of the ST respondents under the study elicited that they are ill-treated by the upper caste people twice in their life. 12.70 per cent have told that they were ill-treated once in their life. About 18.70 per cent have asserted that such ill-treatment by the other upper caste people has not taken place in their life. However, 95 out of 300 respondents have stated that they are ill-treated in one form or the other, once or twice. This speaks out the fact that one –third of the total ST respondents even now, unfortunately, are being ill-treated by the upper castes people in the Khammam district.



**Table- 6, Level of importance given to the select STs by the Political parties**

| S.N | Opinion  | Frequency | %     | Weighted average |
|-----|----------|-----------|-------|------------------|
| 1   | High     | 42        | 14.00 | <b>0.70</b>      |
| 2   | Moderate | 168       | 56.00 |                  |
| 3   | Low      | 90        | 30.00 |                  |
|     | Total    | 300       | 100   |                  |

Source: Field Survey

The details on the importance given to ST respondents by political parties are shown in Table above. It is noticed from the Table that 56 per cent of the respondents stated that they are recognized and the political parties have accorded moderate importance while 30 per cent have said that they are given low importance when compared. Only 14 per cent of the respondents have said that the political parties



have given them high recognition and importance. It established that majority of ST families are not important to politics in their day to day life.

**Table-7, Level of satisfaction about the provisions supplied by the government fair price shops**

| S. N | Level of satisfaction | Frequency | %     | Weighted average |
|------|-----------------------|-----------|-------|------------------|
| 1    | Highly satisfied      | 114       | 38.00 | <b>0.78</b>      |
| 2    | Moderately satisfied  | 120       | 40.00 |                  |
| 3    | Not satisfied         | 66        | 22.00 |                  |
|      | Total                 | 300       | 100   |                  |

Source: Field Survey

After ascertaining the type of ration cards being used by the respondents in the study area, the researcher tried to know their level of satisfaction about the provisions supplied by the governments' fair price shops. The data reveal that 120 respondents out of 300 stated that they are moderately satisfied with the provisions of the fair price shops and 38 per cent opined that they are highly satisfied while 22 per cent negatively stated that they were not satisfied. On the whole, 78 per cent of the respondents opined that they satisfied. However, more than one-fifth of the respondents were not at all satisfied because of the attitudes of fair price shop dealer and technology used for measurement.

### Conclusions

Scheduled Tribes are one of the most marginalised communities in the social and political dimensions. Social and Political marginalisation of STs due to historical injustices has compelled the Indian state to explore alternative means to ensure adequate representation for them by adopting a social and political reservation system. Social and Political reservation has, therefore, become their primary means of empowerment, wherein it has ensured the redistribution of political resources in favour of the marginalised communities. According to the present study, some of Scheduled Tribes are not empowered socially and political due to unaware of various developmental schemes, low education, less access, and so on. Hence, the government will take necessary action for upliftment of weaker section especially for Scheduled Tribes.

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