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Socio-economic status of tribal farmers of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka and their level of awareness about agriculture: A case study

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Abstract

The study reveals the socio-economic status of Tribal Farmers of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka state. The study area was Yallapura taluk of the Uttara Kannada district. The information was collected on the basis of personal interview to each of the farmer through a questionnaire. A total samples of 235 farmers were selected randomly from three villages viz., Savane, Honnahalli and Hadlikere of the Yallapura taluk during 2016-18. The study revealed that they are very poor farmers with low literacy rates and poor knowledge about agricultural methods. They grow only rice, arecanut, betelvine and vegetables without any awareness about their improved management practices. By introducing facilities of modern technology through Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) programme, their socio-economic standard can be increased.

Keywords: Baseline, socio-economics, tribal, tribal sub plan, Yallapura

Introduction

Uttara Kannada is located between 13° and 15° North latitude and between 74° and 76° East longitude in the Western Ghats section of Karnataka. Its high rainfall supports lush forests, which cover approximately 70% of the district. The district has a tropical climate. It has a well-defined rainy season of about five months distributed between June and November when the south west monsoon brings most of the rainfall and the climate remains hot and humid. The major crops grown in the district are rice and areca nut along with a great diversity of other crops viz., coconut, sugarcane, cocoa, cashew, mango, banana, pineapple, sapota; vegetables include onion, radish, cucumber, cauliflower, brinjal, sweet potato, amaranth; spices include pepper, cardamom, ginger and nutmeg.

The district has total population of 14.37 lakhs (1,437,169) with total of 369 families live on road side or without any roof cover in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. The literacy rate of the district is 84.06 per cent

Yellapur is a Town Panchayat city in district of Uttara Kannada, Karnataka. The Yellapur Town Panchayat has population of 20,452 of which 10,250 are males while 10,202 are females. The literacy rate of Yellapur city is 89.56 per cent higher than the state average of 75.36 per cent. In Yellapur, male literacy is around 93.34 per cent while female literacy rate is 85.80 per cent Yellapur Town Panchayat has total administration over 4,805 houses to which it supplies basic amenities like water and sewerage facilities. It also authorized to build roads within Town Panchayat limits and impose taxes on properties coming under its jurisdiction.

The tribals are socio-economically backward as compared to the non-tribals. A tribe is a social group usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization (Winick, 1956) [9]. Xaxa (2001) [10] rightly specified that tribes in India are not a homogeneous category because of dissimilarities among themselves in respect of the regions, languages, physical features habit and habitats etc.

Under Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) Project study was conducted in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka where lives an ethnic group of tribal people having distinct physical features resembling with 'Negroid' race showing that these were once African Negroes called as "Siddis" (Lobo, 1984) [4]. Murdock (1953) [5] classified Sidamo tribes of Ethiopia into 7 groups, Siddis belongs to one of the major groups called Ometo.

According to Kamath (1985) [3] the 'Siddis are the descendents of African Negroes, brought to India by voyagers like the Arabs, the Portuguese and the Dutch. Shah *et al.* (2011) [8] conducted a genomic study to understand the population history of the Siddis, showed their link with Africans, Indians and Europeans (Portuguese), confirming the belief about their origin. As per the assessment of Roy *et al.* (2015) [6], the Siddis population in India is about 50,000 of which 10,477 are located around Yellapura, Haliyal, Ankola, Joida, Mundgod and Sirsi taluks of Uttara Kannada district and in Khanapur of Belgaum district and Kalghatgi of Darwad district in Karnataka. Shivamogga district is to the South East of Uttara Kannada district. Most of the Siddis's settlements are found either on the slopes of the Western Ghats, having thick forests and valleys crowded with spice and areca nut plantations on the undulating plateau situated to the East of the Ghats (Lobo, 1984) [4]. Most of Siddis have settled homes in the forest. Yellapur taluk has maximum number of Siddis settlements. Each settlement has minimum of 5 houses and maximum number is about 40 houses. A group of 8 to 10 such settlement within the range of 10 km. form a village Sangha and these 3 to 4 village Sanghas constitute a cluster Sangha. Presently, there are 9 clusters comprising 28 village Sanghas. Out of 9 Clusters, 5 clusters are present in Yellapura taluk namely, 1. Idagundi cluster in Yellapura taluk, 2. Kotemane cluster in Yellapura taluk 3. Gunjavati cluster in Yellapura and Kalghatgi taluks 4. Arbail cluster in Yellapura, Mundgod talukas 5. Arbail cluster in Yellapura, Ankola and Sirsi taluks. Generally, the Siddis of Yellapura and Ankola are speaking Kannada and Konkani language. Main resources of livelihood of Tribal of Yellapur taluka is agriculture and secondary occupations are forest labour and honey collection. Majority of the Siddis live in rural areas and doing agriculture. To enhance their income, they are also working in arecanut gardens and cutting trees for forest contractors.

The concept of Tribal sub Plan (TSP) and its counterpart, the Special Component Plan (SCP) emerged in National Fifth Five year plan (Das, 2005) [1] with objectives of poverty alleviation, protection of tribal culture, education, health care and providing basic minimum infrastructure. Poverty alleviation includes programme in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, horticulture and small industries as well as all employment generating schemes. The study area was selected where majority of tribal farmers were residing and their livelihood based on agriculture. The present study was focused on collection of information regarding agriculture and socio-economic status of tribal farmers residing in the forest area. This information is mandatory for any economic development programmes for the tribals. Since, the tribals are mostly residing in forest and hilly areas, farming is somewhat different as well as difficult and less profitable as compared to main agricultural land. The findings of this study revealed the socio-economic status of the tribal farmers.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted with a sample of 235 farmers of three different villages of Yallapura taluk of Uttara kannada district. A multistage purposive cum random sampling design was followed for selection of the respondents. The investigation was carried out with various problems faced by the tribal farmers in Savane, Honnahalli and Hadlikere villages of the Yallapura taluk. The data were collected by personal interview method during 2016-18, as conducted in Tinsukhia, Assam (Sikha *et al.*, 2017) [7]. After completion of survey, a total of 235 filled in questionnaire were received and were analysed to find out the socio-economic condition of the tribal farmers of the blocks.

Collected baseline data were analysed to find out the perception of tribal farmers about agriculture, pest and diseases and their management of cultivated crops like paddy, chilies and brinjal and also their socio-economic condition. Based on this, five Awareness Training Programmes were conducted to tribal farmers on integrated pest management in rice and vegetable crops at following tribal camps.

1. Akkemala tribal camp of Ponnampet taluk during March 26th 2018.
2. Dodaresheme tribal camp of Ponnampet taluk during March 27th 2018.
3. Honnalli tribal camp of Yallapura taluk during April 16th 2018.
4. Hadlikere tribal camp of Yallapura taluk during February 06th 2019.
5. M.R.C.P tribal camp of Shikaripura taluk during February 07th 2019.

Results and Discussion

The baseline information revealed that the agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the most the tribal's of the area. The land holdings of the tribal farmers were very small and maximum up to one acre. However, as per the notification of the

Forest Right Act-2006, each family of the forest dwellers or tribals have the right up to four hectares of forest (Hareesha and Rani, 2009) [2]. In the present study, it was observed that the tribals are socio-economically backward as compared to the non-tribals of the studied area. Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the overwhelming majority of the tribal population. So as to eradicate the problems of tribal people, it is necessary for the policy makers to identify and quantify the socio-economic factors which are inhibiting their growth and development. The tribals owing to their life style and community habits and habitats have not been able to keep pace with the modern society. Tribals are not as advanced as the people of rest of India. Their knowledge about of the farming and animal husbandry was very poor. Even they didn't know about varieties, pest and diseases management. Because of their life style, innocent and shy nature, they are unable to keep pace with modern society. The information collected as baseline is given in table 1.

Table 1: Baseline information at Savane, Hadlikere and Honnahalli village, Yellapura taluk

Sl. No	Component	Results		
		Savane village	Hadlikere	Honnahalli
1	Average Population of the village	70	75	90
2	Total area of the Village	50 acres	95	150
3	Number of house holds	15	20	35
4	Average Family Structure	Nuclear - 72.3% Joint - 27.7%	Nuclear – 75.0% Joint – 20.6%	Nuclear – 60.1% Joint – 32.6%
5	Average Educational Status of Family Members	Illiterate - 60% High School - 30% Graduate - 7%	Illiterate - 70% High School - 15% Graduate - 5%	Illiterate - 85% High School - 10% Graduate - 1%
6	Power supply for agriculture use	No	No	No
7	Power supply for commercial use	No	No	No
8	Power supply for home use	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Source of Water for drinking	Ponds	Ponds Tap water	Ponds
10	Mode of Transportation	Carts driven by animals Bus Auto	Carts driven by animals Bus Auto	Carts driven by animals Bus Auto
11	Major Land Holdings	Landless-89.9% Small-10.1%	Landless-95% Small-5%	Landless-85% Small-15%
12	Source of Irrigation	River end, ponds, Pools- 2.5%	River end, ponds, Pools- 2.5% Tanks – 1.5%	River end, ponds, Pools- 5%
13	Farm Mechanization	Nil	Nil	Nil
14	Livestock	Cow	Cow	Cow
15	Source of Agricultural Information	State Agriculture department (rarely) and relatives	State Agriculture department (rarely) and relatives	State Agriculture department (rarely) and relatives
16	Sources of Credit Supply	Landlords	Landlords	Landlords
17	Cropping Pattern	Rice, Arecanut, Beetle vine, chilli	Rice, Arecanut, Beetle vine, chilli	Rice, Arecanut, Pine apple, Brinjal, Drumstick
18	Plant Protection	Unaware about use of Chemicals	Unaware about use of Chemicals	Unaware about use of Chemicals
19	Marketing System of Agricultural Produce	Nil	Nil	Nil
20	Soil type	Laterite	Red sandy	Sandy loam
21	Knowledge about IPM	2.6%	3.0%	5.0%

Present baseline survey revealed that the average populations of Savane, Hadlikere and Honnahalli villages are 70, 75 and 90 respectively. The majority of the farm families were nuclear in all the villages. As per the education status of the villagers the illiterate percentage was observed 85 per cent in Honnahalli which is a bit more than the Hadlikere and Savane village (70 and 60%) respectively.

The major occupation of the tribal farmers was agriculture working as labour under land lords. Majority of the land holdings are landless 89.9 per cent, 95.0 per cent and 85.0 per cent and Small 10.1 per cent, 5.0 per cent and 15.0 per cent in Savane, Hadlikere and Honnahalli village, respectively. The cropping pattern of the studied area includes both *rabi* and *kharif* crops in which more than 50 per cent of the total area is covered by rice. In all the three villages rice and areca nut are major crops, whereas, vegetables like chilli, brinjal, drumstick were grown in Honnahalli village. The sources of irrigation available in all the villages were river end, ponds etc. Likewise, the livestock population only includes cow in all the villages. The major source of agricultural information in the studied area was obtained rarely from State Agriculture department and most of the time they get from relatives. However, no source of credit supply was observed in these villages. Use of plant protection measures to save the crops from pests and diseases was lowest in all the villages.

With this baseline information, conducted awareness training programme to tribals at Savane, Hadlikere and Honnahalli villages, created awareness on pest and disease identification

and management and also given information regarding entrepreneurship of mushroom cultivation, value addition of food products, beekeeping, mass multiplication and production of bio-agents. The critical inputs *viz.*, bio-agents (*Trichoderma*, *Pseudomonas*, *Bacillus*, *Paecilomyces*), fungicides (carbendizim), insecticide (Chloropyriphos), nematicide (carbofuran), pheromone traps, spawn seeds were also distributed during training programme.

Tribal farmers expressed their satisfaction regarding the training programmes which were first of their kind in their tribal camps. For the first time, awareness has been created among the tribal farmers regarding pest, diseases and their management. They understood how to differentiate between pest and diseases and nutritional deficiencies. They came to know about importance of crop nutrition and their deficiencies. They became also aware of critical inputs like bio-agents, pheromone traps, carbofuran, fungicides and insecticides, their application in crop fields to save the crops from the menace of pest and diseases. Tribal farmers were well acquainted with mushroom cultivation, integrated farming systems, bee keeping, vermicomposting, preparation of Bordeaux mixture, value addition of products and importance of balanced nutrition for children, pregnant women and elders and about protected cultivation.

Conclusion

The information collected through baseline survey of present study revealed that the livelihood and socio-economic status

of the tribals can be improved by taking following measures:

- Educational facilities should be provided for the tribal people.
- Positive steps should be taken to check the exploitation of tribals.
- Good, reliable transport and communication facilities should be provided.
- Multiple cropping and intercropping should be actively encouraged.
- The government must make major moves to create permanent assets with tribal farmers and provide infrastructural support for meeting input, credit and marketing needs.
- Extension agencies must visit the villages to interact with farmers and training should be provided to the tribals for different income generating activities.
- Suitable steps should be taken by the Government so as to educate the tribal farmers about the importance of crop loan and crop insurance facility.
- The role of middle men should be minimized for more benefit to the farmers.

If all the suggestions mentioned above are implemented in the tribal villages, the development of those backward areas can be seen in near future. By introducing facilities of modern technology, their socio-economic standard can be increased. Thus, this weaker part of the society can be turned into the huge mass of human resource. However, further studies are required to know more about them.

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