

Assessing the Status of Scheduled Tribes Women in District Jammu (J & K)

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INTRODUCTION

Ecologically, the tribal households are far from homogenous; they display a diversity of high order. The areas of tribal concentration have been usually described as the forest and hilly areas of the country. Their ignorance and the long sightedness of the money lenders play with the tribal lives. Inclusive growth is the essence of developmental strategy across the economies (Khwaja, 2009). Since the introduction of economic reforms in early nineties, there has been greater focus of development and planning towards enhancement of human well-being (Pritchett & Woolcock, 2004) and reduction in inequalities along with growth of per capita income especially targeting vulnerable social groups, viz. STs, SCs, etc. This well-being encompasses individual attainment in the areas of education, employment, health care, nutritional level and amenities like electricity, water supply, sanitation, housing, etc. besides guaranteeing them their civil rights and protection against atrocities or crimes. The scheduled tribes since ages have been victims of socio- economic exploitations (Barr, 2001; Gaechter, Herrman, & Thoeni, 2004; Henrich et al., 2001), and have been relegated to low income generating occupations, inferior trades, unhygienic environment and unclean menial occupation.

The Scheduled Tribes are tribes notified under Article 342 of the Constitution, which makes special provision for 'tribes, tribal communities, parts of, or groups within which the President may so notify'. There is no definition of a tribe in the Constitution but one may distinguish some characteristics that are generally accepted: self-identification, language, distinctive social and cultural organisation, economic under development, geographic location and initially,

isolation, which has been steadily, and in some cases, traumatically, eroded. Many tribes still live in hilly and/or forested areas, somewhat remote from settlements. Exploitation of forest-lands by both the British and the zamindars resulted in the clearing of huge tracts for commercial crops such as tea, coffee and rubber and allowing contractors to fell trees in the very heart of the forest. These actions deprived the tribal people of their livelihoods because many of them were hunters and gatherers of forest produce. The interaction with the outside world brought the tribal people face to face with problems they were not equipped to cope with, such as alcoholism and sexually transmitted diseases (Holm & Nystedt, 2008). In the post-Independence period, while the Constitution protected the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and accorded them reservation in the legislature, educational institutions and government jobs, other 'development' activities, such as the construction of large dams or the sale of timber, led to the further marginalisation of some tribes. The scenario is therefore a mixed one. It may be necessary to use natural resources to improve the living conditions of the people of the state, but it must be done in a manner that is sensitive to ensuring the protection of the environment, which provides a livelihood to tribal people.

Apart from the Scheduled Tribes, there are 75 indigenous groups in India known as 'Primitive Tribal Groups'. The Tenth Plan of the Central Government observes that these vulnerable communities have experienced a 'decline in their sustenance base and the resultant food insecurity, malnutrition and ill-health has forced them to live in the most fragile living conditions and some of them are even under the threat of getting extinct'.

State wise Scheduled Tribe population and decadal change by residence : 2011 (TOTAL)							
State	India/State	Scheduled Tribe population 2011			Decadal change 2001-2011		
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
	INDIA						

		104,281,034	93,819,162	10,461,872	23.7	21.3	49.7
	Jammu & Kashmir	1,493,299	1,406,833	86,466	35	33.4	67.9

SCHEDULED TRIBES

Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to Scheduled Tribes as those communities, who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. This Article says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes. The list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific and a community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State. The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled Tribe is an ongoing process. The essential characteristics, first laid down by the Lokur Committee, for a community to be identified as Scheduled Tribes are –

- a) Indications of primitive traits;
- b) Distinctive culture;
- c) Shyness of contact with the community at large;
- d) Geographical isolation; and
- e) Backwardness.

Tribal communities live, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas. Tribal groups are at different stages of social, economic and educational development. While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life, at the other end of the spectrum, there are certain Scheduled Tribes, 75 in number known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), who are characterised by:-

- a) Pre-agriculture level of technology;
- b) Stagnant or declining population;
- c) Extremely low literacy; and
- d) Subsistence level of economy.

DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBES

The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs and the number of individual ethnic groups, etc. notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705. The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribal’s from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population. The constitution of India, Article 366(25) defines scheduled tribe as “Such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to the scheduled tribes (S.T) for the purpose of this constitution. In article 342, the procedure to be followed for specification of a scheduled tribe is prescribed. However it does not contain the criteria for the specification of any community as

scheduled tribe. An often used criterion is based on attributes such as: Geographical isolation, Distinctive culture, Shyness of contact with community at large and socio-economic backwardness. The constitution also assigns special status for scheduled tribes. The scheduled tribes constitute 8.2 % of the Indian population as per 2011 census. There are 533 scheduled tribes as per notified Schedule under Article 342 of the Constitution of India in different States and Union Territories of the country with the largest number of 62 in the State of Orissa. India is second largest country after South Africa having large population of scheduled tribes. The total population of scheduled tribes in India is 84,326,240 out of total population of 1,21,01,93,422 (as per census 2011).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The traditional Indian society has remained for ages, as hierarchically frozen and segmented into differentially ranked caste groups on the notions of purity and pollutions. Thus, the Indian caste system based on the notion of purity and pollution believed that the Scheduled Tribes were impure and polluted. As a result, they were forced to live outside the village/town proper and suffered from discrimination in all walks of life. Scheduled Tribes are lagging behind occupationally, educationally and politically. They also suffered from socio-economic and cultural disabilities. It is an accepted fact that after the Independence, a small number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes have benefited from the ‘protective discrimination’ regarding education, employment in government departments, and politics. These persons are placed in different and probably better socio-economic positions like the persons of other castes. There are also men in the lower castes who have either been upwardly mobile earlier, or are upwardly mobile now, or getting equipped for upward mobility in the foreseeable future. The constitutional measures help them to achieve higher status in the class structure, but they do not guarantee any improvement in their caste status. The members of the new middle class might have achieved certain social status in the class – structure due to changes in their social, economic, occupational and interaction positions. It is, however, still unclear whether it affects their status in the caste hierarchy. It is, thus, important to examine the changes in their socio-economic, education, occupation and political awareness status. After more than 60 years of independence, it

is pertinent to ask what has been the impact of the policies of the government on the socio-economic conditions of those belonging to the Scheduled Tribes. There have been a considerable number of empirical studies on the Scheduled Tribes in India since independence. Apart from such studies, many social scientists have elaborately analyzed the changing status of Scheduled Tribes in India.

However, most of these studies are either based on secondary data or localized when some primary data have been collected. Each of these covered some limited aspects of development in a certain region. No comprehensive study based on primary data and covering multiple aspects of improved status has been undertaken so far. The earlier studies reveal that the pace of change is rapid in urban areas whereas the change is slow or absent in rural areas.

In view of the above, the overall aim of the present study is to examine the present status of the Scheduled Tribes Women in the District Jammu of state J&K in India in terms of education, occupation and social status. This study is unique because this is a micro level study. No study has been yet conducted on these lines in J&K.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives are formulated for the proposed study:

- To study the improvement of Socio-Economic and Political conditions of Scheduled Tribes Women in district Jammu of state J&K in India.
- To study the Educational & Health aspects of Scheduled Tribes Women in district Jammu of state J&K in India.
- To study the impact of Developmental Programmes on the Scheduled Tribes Women in district Jammu of state J&K in India.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study will be delimited to the district Jammu only.

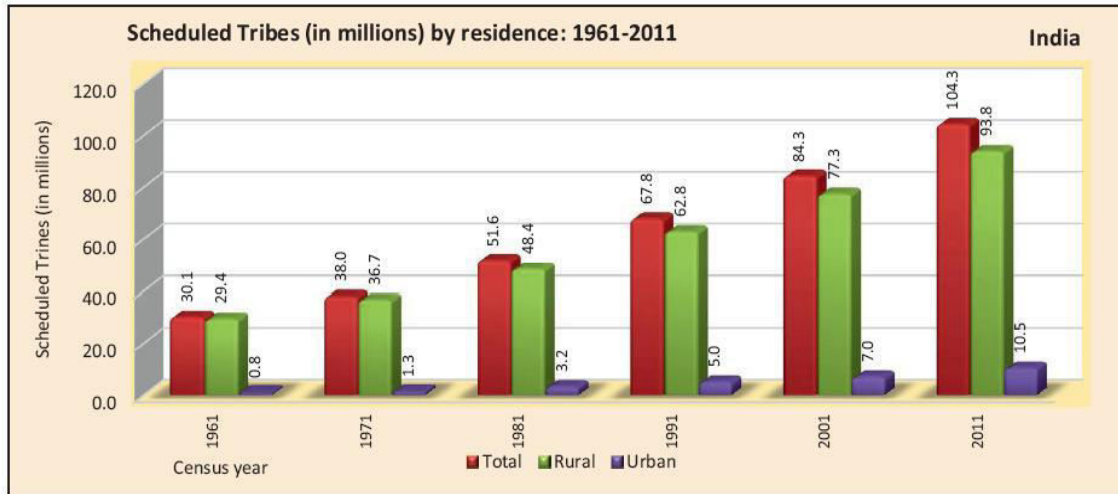
- The study will be further delimited to group Scheduled Tribes Women only.
- Further, only 100 respondents of Scheduled Tribes Women will be selected for the present study.

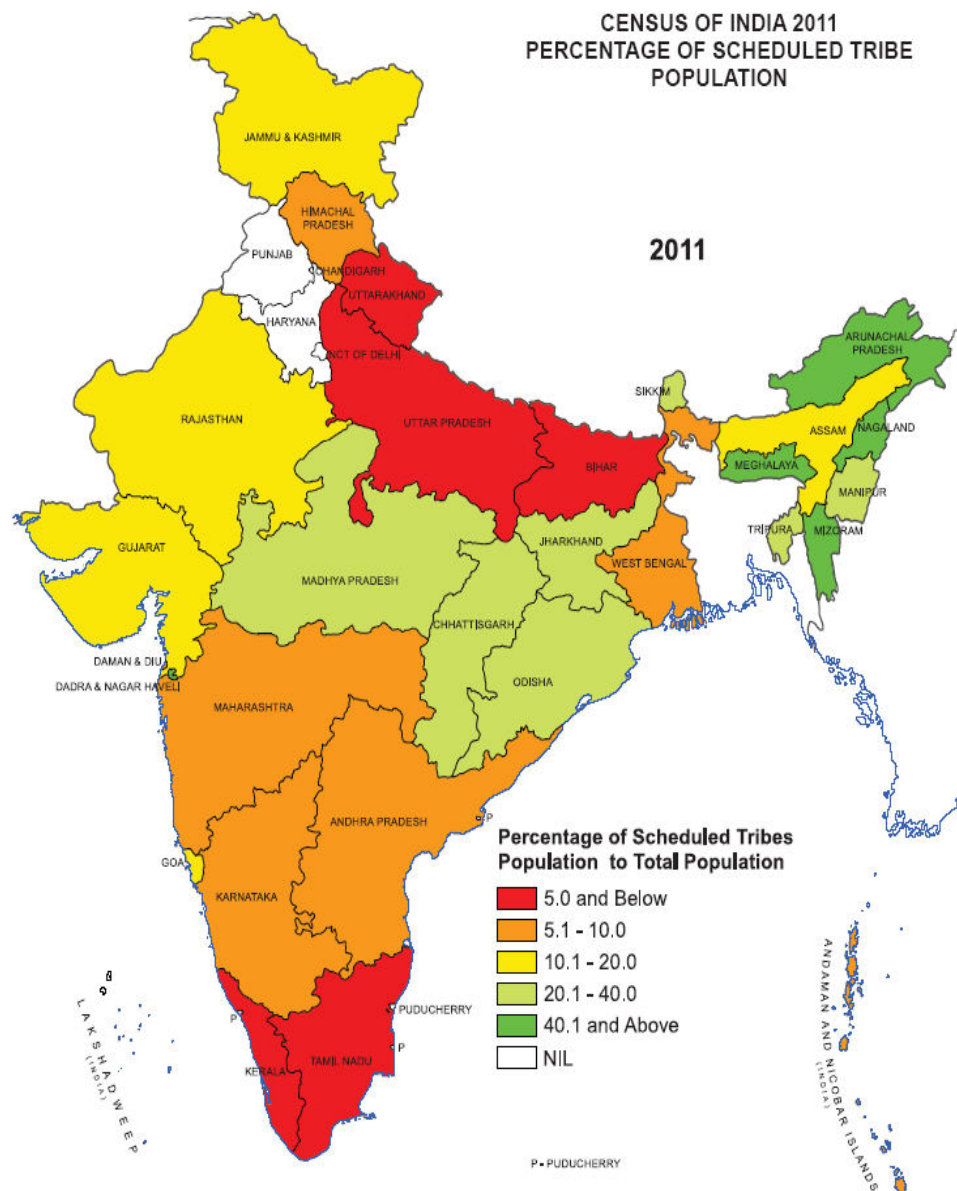
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study will be designed to undertake the study on status of Scheduled Tribes Women in Jammu district of J&K state in India. The researcher wanted to study around 100 Scheduled Tribes Women of Jammu District in J&K. The researcher will select the list on the basis of simple random sample survey. The list of the Scheduled Tribes families will be picked up from the Gram Panchayat Office. On the bases of respondents' answers, the questionnaire will be filled. In this study, the structured interview schedule will have been prepared to measure the status of Scheduled Tribes Women in Socio-Economic, educational and Political areas. Primary data will be taken from the 100 respondents of Scheduled Tribes Women by canvassing interview schedule. The Investigator will directly interview all the respondents to enquiry about their socio-economic-political and educational, health and development programmes.

A secondary source of Data will be collected among the various official records. The secondary sources constitutes the studies conducted on Scheduled Tribes will be taken and the data given by these studies also support this present study. The data collected in previous studies will have also made use in this study. In this study, graph below reveals the ST population and decadal change by residence: PERSONS from 1961-2011. The data will be analysed by using simple statistical tools such as 'averages' and 'percentages'. The analysed data will be used to prepare the report from which inferences will be drawn and conclusions will be arrived.

Scheduled Tribe population and decadal change by residence : PERSONS





SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study will pave the way for other researchers to conduct similar studies in any districts, any states and any countries to bring to limelight the status of Scheduled Tribes. Following recommendations are to be considered:

- 1) It is suggested to develop a comprehensive policy on tribal development, which derives inputs from people at the grass root level to ensure sustainable development that is ecologically sound, people oriented, decentralised and culturally acceptable.
- 2) Ensure that the collection and collation of disaggregated data to enable benchmarking and monitoring.
- 3) Conduct a rapid survey of the health status of the tribals and prepare region-specific and tribe-specific health plans.

4) Relax norms for primary health centres and sub-centres in tribal areas and make allowances for geography and population.

5) Encourage nutrition security by promoting kitchen gardens.

6) Ensure 100 per cent antenatal care coverage and immunisation of women and children. Provide secondary and tertiary care, transport facilities for emergency services and obstetric care.

7) Ensure greater access to education through convergence of the services of several departments: Education, Rural Development and Labour to monitor child labour, track dropouts and provide local employment to their parents.

8) Include tribal culture, traditional knowledge systems, tribal history and vocational skills training in the school curriculum.

9) Involve tribals in biodiversity conservation; encourage them to grow fruit trees on degraded

forest-lands; allow sustainable harvesting of the non-forest produce for their livelihood, without endangering the biodiversity of the forest.

10) Encourage need-based economic activities that use locally available raw materials and assist in marketing of finished goods.

11) Provide more budgetary support for the promotion of the welfare of the tribal population and promote organic farming.

12) Empower tribals at village level to participate effectively in Gram Sabhas, by promoting community based organisations.

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