

Assessment of Tribal Education and Employment in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The education of tribal students plays a key role in the socio-cultural and economic development of a nation. Higher education also helps them to develop cognitive skills, knowledge of various disciplines, communicative skills, critical thinking abilities, broad mindness and knowledge of flexible modern labour. Thus, the educational aspirations level of tribal students is an important factor for achievement in their lives. The paper aims to find the various factors affecting the educational employment status of tribals. Higher education is critical for the economic development of the nation. Without education and employment of the backward groups national development cannot be achieved, tribals are a natural national concern and their education is an important aspect of the inclusive growth of the nation. Higher education and employment support them in improving skills, critical thinking, reasoning, employability, and making them independent. Participation of tribal students in higher education and employment is very few in comparison to other social groups. Increasing their level of educational and employment aspirations in is dire essential.

Keywords: Education, Employment, Assessment, Tribals, Chittoor District, AP.

1. Introduction

Around one-tenth of India's total population belongs to Scheduled Tribes (STs), who predominantly reside in rural areas (90%) and in pockets across the country— mainly in forest, hilly and mountainous areas— in approximately 20 per cent, of India's geographical area. A little more than three-fourth (77%) of the STs resides in seven Indian states, namely Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The Lambadis also known as Banjaras or Sugalis are one of the major tribes of Tribes of Andhra Pradesh. They are found mostly in Telangana and Rayalaseema districts. They constitute the chief immigrant tribe in Chittoor District and have settled down particularly in Punganur and Palamanertaluks. They speak Lambaded into a number of Tandás each with a headman after whom the Tanda is named. Lambadis are wanderers in forests. They live by selling firewood and also by engaging themselves as labourers. They are good cow-herds and excellent

breeders of bull. The traditional professions of the Lambadis are gradually declining and some of them have settled down in villages as cultivators.

The disadvantaged communities that have mostly stayed on the fringes of development make up India's Scheduled Tribes. Since education is viewed as the sole way to help these marginalized communities, the government's decades-long efforts have paid off, as seen by the educational achievements amongst tribals. The government has made significant investments in educating the Scheduled Tribes. The government's investments in education have to significantly improve the academic performance and opportunities for the Scheduled Tribes. By providing access to quality education, the government should help empower these communities to break the cycle of poverty and marginalization. Then, the future looks brighter for the tribal people, with increased prospects for economic and social advancement. While there has been a little progress, there are still barriers and challenges which need to be addressed to ensure that all individuals have equal access to quality education.

Therefore, focusing on the education of tribal is the need of the hour and a step towards building a more equitable and advanced society. Even with the government's best efforts to enhance their quality of life through development initiatives and welfare programs, many tribal communities continue to struggle with issues like access to education, healthcare, and work opportunities (Nagi, 1998). Ensuring inclusive growth and reducing poverty in India requires policymakers to persistently attend to the particular needs of these marginalized groups. Education is the only instrument that has brought about a change in the tribal way of life and it will also determine what lies in the future (Ambasht, 1970). This paper assesses the educational and employment status of sugalis in the study area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic characteristics

Demographic characteristics are keys to the priority area's vulnerability and adaptive capacity. For example, the presence of young children raises unique education and health issues. The next step is to relate the demographics of the priority area to national-level information. The demographic profiles includes age, education, type of family,

Age

Age is an important factor which determines the physical ability to work.. Age is very important factor besides the active participation in innovative activities and risk taking ability. To understand the working age group, it is necessary to classify the respondents according to their age. The age-wise classification of sample respondents has been made and presented in the Table 1.

Table 1
Age of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	26-35 Years	144	36
2	36-45 Years	112	28
3	Above 45	144	36
Total		400	100

The table portrays that out of 400 respondents 144 respondents (36 %) belong to the category of 26- 36 of age group, 122 respondents (28%) belong to the category of 36-45 years of age group and the remaining respondents are in the age group of above 45 years. By and large, it is concluded that majority of the respondents (36 %) belong to the category of 26- 3 of age group.

2. Gender

Gender is a foundational component of demographic profiling, essential for analyzing population structures, socio-economic trends, and equity. It determines sex ratios, influences mortality and migration patterns, and highlights disparities in power, resource access, and economic participation. Accurately mapping gender enables better targeted policies, health interventions, and marketing strategies The Gender of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Gender of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	301	75
2	Female	99	25
Total		400	100

The table reveals that 301 respondents (75.25%) are males and remaining 99 respondents (24.75%) are female. Above all, the sample comprises majority of the males.

Marital Status

Marital status demographic profiles are essential for analyzing population structure, labour force participation, and social well-being. They guide policy-making, healthcare planning (e.g., mortality, morbidity risks), market segmentation for consumer goods, and understanding household formation. This data helps track social changes, economic trends, and legal rights. Marital Status of the respondents is shown in the Table 3

Table 3
Marital Status of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Married	321	80
2	Single	32	8
3	Widow	42	11
4	Divorced	5	1
Total		400	100

Regarding marital status of the respondents, 321 respondents (80%) are married, 42 respondents (11 %) are widows, 32 respondents (8%) are single and 5 respondents (1%) are divorced. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (80%) are married.

Type of House

The type of house shows the opulence and social status of the people. Lofty buildings show pride of place in the society. The details of housing type of the respondents are presented in the Table 4.

Table 4
Housing Type of Respondents

Sl. No.	Type of House	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hut	0	0
2	Thatched	16	4
3	Concrete	384	96
Total		400	100

It is noticed from the table that 384 respondents (96%) are having concrete houses provided under the government schemes and a very few respondents (4%) are having thatched houses (4%). It is perorated that 96 per cent of the respondents are having concrete houses provided under the government schemes

Income

Income is the tonic and tablet of the human beings. Higher the income higher will be comforts and luxuries and smooth life. Income of the respondents has been presented in the Table 5.

Table 5
Income of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
1	Rs.5000 – 8000	192	48
2	Rs.8001 - 12000	160	40
3	Rs.12001- 15000	24	6
4	Above 15000	24	6
Total		400	100

It is observed from the table that 192 respondents (48%) have income between Rs. 5,000 and Rs.8,000 and 160 respondents (40%) have income between Rs.8,001 and Rs.12,000 and a few of the respondents having income more than 12,000. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (48%) have income between Rs.5, 000 and Rs.8, 000.

Educational Status

Education is the fourth necessity for man after food, clothing and shelter, in today's competitive world. Education is indeed a powerful tool to combat the cutthroat competition that man is faced with at every junctures in life. The importance of education in India is indeed rising with passing time. Education is a dimension of mind. It is an expansion of the horizon of understanding. It is the central process through which other changes in society are brought about. Education, formal, and informal improves awareness for better life and generates positive impulses for socio-economic advancement. It controls the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of the people and influences the economic destiny of the family. Hence, the literary status of the sample heads of the households is presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Educational Status of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	10	210	53
2	Inter	94	24
3	Degree	83	21
4	PG	13	2
	Total	400	100

The table explains the educational status of 210 respondents (53%) have up to SSC qualification, followed by 94 respondents (24 %) have are Intermediate qualification, 83 respondents (21 %) are Degree holders and remaining of 13 respondents (2 %) are Post-graduates. By and large, it is concluded that majority of the respondents (53%) have up to SSC qualification. Backwardness, low income and poor facilities are the major reasons for low literacy rate.

Factors affecting Higher Education

Education is prime factor of human life and development. All the people cannot pursue higher education owing to various factors affecting their higher education and tribals have no exemption. The factors affected in pursuing the higher education by the tribals are furnished in the table 7

Table 7
Factors affecting educational aspirations of tribal students in higher education

Sl. No.	Components	Frequency of Responses (in percentage)
1	Student characteristics	68.4
2	Parental factor	84.72
3	Peers and teacher	80.1
4	Collegiate experiences	58.99
5	Factor of personal performance	69.16

The table 6 depicts the various factors affecting the educational aspirations of tribal students in higher education and their frequency of responses in percentage. The factor student characteristics include percentage in last semester; choice and reason for choosing colleges, and reasons for pursuing higher education. On the basis of the analysis of data, 68.4 percent of scheduled tribe students are affected by their characteristics. Parents, peer groups and teachers are the most influencing factors in the educational aspirations of tribal students in higher education which affect 84.72 and 80.1 percent of tribal students respectively. 58.99 percent of tribal students responded about their collegiate experiences like asking questions in class, searching books in the library, discussing with teachers, attending seminars and workshops, discussing with friends, interpersonal relationships, curriculum, organizational learning, teaching strategies, academic and administration, technology and student service affect their educational aspirations. The factor of personal performance affects the educational aspirations of about 69.16 percent of tribal students in higher education. This factor includes their hope to complete the

highest qualification, type of job and occupation preference. Among all the above factors the parental factor affects the highest number of tribal students' educational aspirations.

EMPLOYMENT

The status of employment reflects quality of employment, where regular jobs with better earnings and adequate social security benefits are considered relatively better quality of employment as compared to self-employment and casual work. Occupation is an activity which gives life supporting amenities. The occupation of the respondents has been presented in the table 8.

Table 8
Employment of the Tribal Respondents

Sl. No.	Employment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Cultivation	131	32.71
2	Agricultural Labour	186	46.91
3	Casual Labour in Agriculture	54	13.42
4	Livestock Rearing/Fishing	3	0.82
5	Minor Forest Produce	7	1.68
6	Government Employees	11	2.64
7	Employees in Private Firm	3	0.77
8	Business	2	0.41
9	Others	3	0.64
Total		400	100

The tribal are still engaged in agriculture, which is significantly higher than other social groups. On the other hand, the presence of tribal in high productive sectors such as manufacturing and services such as finance, business and communications is low as compared to other social groups. In particular, the share of tribal employment has increased either in low paid casual work in construction sector, and public administrative, health and education jobs, which may be due to some participation in public sector or government jobs due to reservation policy. The occupational distribution also confirm the earlier findings as they involvement more in traditional occupations such as skilled type of agricultural work and fisheries and low paid and manual jobs in services sector. Majority of tribal are still involved in low productive agriculture and other low paid work also reflected from their high level of incident of poverty. The two important individual-level indicators are gender and level of education.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of employment and livelihood among tribal shows that land has been the fundamental basis of livelihoods among tribal in India. However, many of them are forced to migrate out to urban areas due to low agriculture productivity, and lack of other remunerative employment opportunities at their native places. In addition, the high incidence of poverty and deprivation compared to other social groups also reflecting that a large number of both tribal male and female join the workforce. The analysis also suggest that they are employed at the bottom rung in the labour market mainly in low earnings self-employment activities and low paid casual labour work. One interesting trend reveals, the participation of tribal in public sector jobs has increased over the years, which may be due to government reservation policy. Quality of education, the key to gain footing in the labour market,



holds the key to success and needs attention as the tribals are still heavily dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods

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