

Employment, income and consumption pattern of tribals in Nashik, Maharashtra

P.N. SHENDAGE, K.L. JADHAV* AND D.M. GAIKWAD

Department of Agricultural Economics, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, AHMEDNAGAR (M.S.) INDIA

ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to examine the employment, income and consumption pattern of the sample tribal households from Igatpuri Tahsil of Nashik district of Maharashtra, where; the special category of tribals viz. Mahadeo koli and Thakar are predominant. The data for the agricultural year 2004-05 on relevant aspects of the study were obtained by personal interview with sample respondents with the help of a specially designed pretested schedule. The data collected were analysed by adopting tabular method and regression analysis. In estimated employment function, the regression coefficients of gross cropped area and number of earners were positive and highly significant. This indicated that the increase in gross cropped area by one hectare and addition of one earner would increase gross employment of tribal households by 27.45 days and 24.49 days, respectively. The selected four independent variables have jointly explained 78 per cent variation in the gross family employment. The gross cropped area in hectares, number of earners, capital assets excluding value of land, well and residential house, working capital and total annual employment were positive and highly significant. It indicated that the increase in these factors would result to boost the gross family income of the tribal households. The estimated family consumption function showed that regression coefficients of annual gross family income, family size and capital assets were positive and highly significant. It indicated that consumption expenditure was positively related with these three variables.

Key words : Employment, Income, Consumption, Tribals

INTRODUCTION

After fifty eight years of independence the development in economic, social, educational and political sectors generally visible, but the tribal community are far behind and unaware of these developments. The tribal communities are under the burden of poverty, illiteracy, superstitions and various addictions. They are slaves of old traditions and customs and this is a great hurdle in the way of their development. They are even not able to express their pains, sorrows and also their identities, feelings etc. which are under a prolonged dormancy.

Government has started various developmental programmes to bring tribals in the mainstream of life. The development activities involve education and economic development as means of livelihood. Unfortunately, both these means are not available to the aboriginal tribals for the simple reason that they are inhabitants of the hilly areas with no means of communication. This has resulted in continuation of their aboriginal habitat and also the traditional life. This leads to poor economic conditions. In addition, they face the problem of starvation during the lean season and even they do not have sufficient clothes to wear.

It is pointed out that the tribal agriculture is not able to provide sufficient employment to them. Alternative sources of employment opportunities besides agriculture are also scanty. As a result, it leads to a low level of income. The vicious circle of poverty and backwardness is closely associated with the unemployment and

underemployment prevailed in the tribal region.

The role of agriculture in the employment of rural population is of crucial importance. Developmental programmes of scientific agriculture with diversification could help in removing unemployment to some extent. Less availability of subsidiary occupations in tribal areas is one of the major causes of underemployment. Various secondary occupations viz., bee keeping, poultry, dairy, honey collection and rural industries etc. could also help in increasing their level of income. The unwillingness of tribals to move out and leave the pastoral surroundings for employment is also one of the hindrances in the development of tribals in the state. This limited employment and income opportunities to the tribal population have resulted into low standard of living.

The income level of tribal population is low and inadequate to meet their consumption needs. It compels them to live in the manner as their scanty income permits. They are living in hilly and forest areas and naturally doing hard work resulted into high nutritional requirements. It is very difficult for them to have nutritious and sufficient diet. They generally consume cheap and easily available food items like cereals and forest produce. In monsoon season, they may remain half starved for 2-3 months and try to compensate their needs by consuming roots and tubers from forest areas. Thus, the low level of income results its twin effect of mal-nourishment and under-nourishment, which ultimately reduces in their work efficiency. Since independence several tribal development programmes implemented in the country has helped to