



RESEARCH PAPER

An analytical study on role of tribal women in wage based livelihood activities in southern Rajasthan

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Abstract : Tribal women constitute half of the work force among tribals in India. They play substantial and crucial role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and considered as an economic asset in their society. The tribal women work for about 8 to 10 hours per day in agriculture and allied activities. They collect the forest produce viz., anola, custard apple, aritha, date palm, jatropha, plant leaves, firewood, bamboo, gum, wax, honey, fodder, fruits, vegetables and sell these products in the local market and nearby villages and exchange the produce for their daily requirements through barter system. Besides engaging themselves in a variety of activities both on the farm and at home, the tribal women also contribute to the family income through their wage earnings. The present research is an attempt to see the information regarding role of tribal women in wage based livelihood activities in Rajasthan. The study was conducted in three districts of Rajasthan state namely Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara. The research findings revealed that Majority of the respondents jointly did selection of working hours (68.18%), distribution of responsibilities such as looking after the household work in their absence (59.09%) and selection of working place (59.09%). More than half of the respondents were jointly engaged in selection of working months and utilization of income (56.36%) and work selection (54.54%) with overall pooled mean per cent score 74.74.

Key Words : Analytical study, Role, Tribal women, Wage, Livelihood activities

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INTRODUCTION

Tribal women constitute half of the work force among tribals in India. They play substantial and crucial role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and considered as an economic asset in their society. They are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization

swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. The general perception about women's work reveals that women are primarily involved in works related to household and family responsibility, child care, family food security, caring cattle and supplementing family's subsistence economy. Land and forest, remain primary resources on which the tribal women depend for fulfilling most of such responsibilities. The tribal women work for about 8 to 10 hours per day in agriculture and allied activities. They collect the forest produce viz.,

anola, custard apple, aritha, date palm, jatropha, plant leaves, firewood, bamboo, gum, wax, honey, fodder, fruits, vegetables and sell these products in the local market and nearby villages and exchange the produce for their daily requirements through barter system. Besides engaging themselves in a variety of activities both on the farm and at home, the tribal women also contribute to the family income through their wage earnings. The present investigation was undertaken with the objective to information regarding role of tribal women in wage based livelihood activities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present investigation was conducted in three districts of Rajasthan state namely Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara which were selected purposively because these three districts having high concentration of tribal population (Census, 2011). Two panchayat samities from each district and two villages from each Panchayat Samiti were selected randomly. Total 110 respondents were selected. Interview schedule was developed by the investigator. Interview technique was used for data collection. Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data on the basis of their general background information and information regarding role of tribal women in wage based livelihood activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

Background information of the tribal women:

This section includes the information related to personal variables of the respondents *i.e.* age, education, marital status, family structure and occupation. Information pertaining to these is presented in Table 1.

Age:

Data in Table 1 reveal that 40.90 per cent respondents belonged to the age group 31- 45 years whereas around one third of them were in the age group of 46-60 years and only 27.27 per cent respondents were 18-30 years old.

Marital status :

Table 1 portrays that less than half of the

respondents (45.45%) were married rest of them respondents were widow (31.81%), unmarried (27.27%) and none of the respondents were divorced.

Education:

Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents (72.72%) were illiterate. Out of the literates, 27.27 per cent were able to read and write. This may be due to their poor economic condition and social environment which prohibited them to upgrade their education. Further,

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by their personal variables (n=110)

S. No.	Personal variables	Frequency	Per cent
A.	Age		
	18-30 years	30	27.27
	31-45 years	45	40.90
	46-60 years	35	31.81
	Above 60 years	0	0
B.	Marital status		
	Unmarried	25	27.27
	Married	50	45.45
	Widow	35	31.81
	Divorced	0	0
C.	Education		
	Illiterate	80	72.72
	Read/write	30	27.27
	Primary school	0	0
	Middle school	0	0
D.	Occupation		
	Non-wage earner	0	0
	Wageearner	90	81.81
	Farming	20	18.18
	Service sector	0	0
E.	Family structure		
	Family type		
	Nuclear	92	83.63
	Joint	18	16.36
	Family size		
	Small (upto 4)	8	7.27
	Medium (upto 5-8)	20	18.18
	Large (8 and above)	82	74.54
F.	Land holding		
	Landless	90	81.81
	1.0 to 2.5 acres	20	18.18
	2.6 to 5.0 acres	0	0
	5.1 to 10.0 acres	0	0

there are poor educational facilities in the tribal areas and the schools are located at faraway places.

Occupation:

Table further portrays that majority of the respondents (81.81%) were involved in wage earner and 18.18 per cent were involved in farming.

Family structure:

Visualization of Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents (83.63%) were from nuclear family and rest of them (16.36%) belonged to joint family. Regarding the size of family, table further reveals that only 7.27 per cent of the respondents had small family and 74.54 per cent had large family whereas 18.18 per cent respondents had medium family. This is mainly due to tribal families preferred to lead an independent family life. The nuclear family is the ultimate basis of the tribe. Generally as soon as a person gets married, he builds a new house in the village and lead an independent life with his wife and newborns.

Land holding:

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents (81.81%) were having no land whereas only 18.18 per cent of the respondents had 1.0 to 2.5 acres land.

Role of tribal women in wage based livelihood activities:

Regarding role of tribal women in different activities related to wage based livelihood, Table 1 depict that the 31.81-48 per cent of the respondents were performing different activities independently. Majority of the respondents jointly did selection of working hours (68.18%), distribution of responsibilities such as looking

after the household work in their absence (59.09%) and selection of working place (59.09%). More than half of the respondents were jointly engaged in selection of working months and utilization of income (56.36%) and work selection (54.54%). Mean per cent score of the respondents for these activities ranged between 65.90 to 72.72 which indicates the active role of tribal women in wage based livelihood activities.

The findings of the present study are in accordance with the findings of Dave (2019) ; Patra (2018); Borgohain and Akand (2011); Chauhan and Nikulsinh (2011) and Singh (2010) who reported that tribal women play an important role in farm and non-farm livelihood activities. They are the main managers of household work and also play an important role in families livelihood security.

Conclusion :

From the findings it can be inferred that they are performing most of the activities in agricultural and allied activities like land preparation, sowing, harvesting, knowledge and skill oriented activities like raising livestock and post-harvest activities, collection of minor forest produce, processing, storage and marketing. They have a major share in contributing to the family income. The study reveals that the women were jointly involved in use of income, selling and purchasing of items with men whereas daily family expenses and their personal needs were generally taken independently by women. Tribal families are more orthodox and traditional taboos are creating lots of problems but women manage everything very smoothly in the household as well as outside household work. They always work harder for earning livelihood for their family and in taking care of children, and working inside home. Tribal women play a

Sr. No.	Activity	Role					MPS
		Independent		Joint with other family members		Nil	
		f	%	f	%	f (%)	
1.	Work selection	50	45.45	60	54.54	0	72.72
2.	Distribution of responsibilities	45	40.90	65	59.09	0	70.45
3.	Selection of working months	48	43.63	62	56.36	0	71.81
4.	Selection of working hours	35	31.81	75	68.18	0	65.90
5.	Selection of working place	45	40.90	65	59.09	0	70.45
6.	Working as labour	110	100	0	0	0	100
7.	Management of cash earned	48	43.63	62	56.36	0	71.81
Pooled MPS							74.74

vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the various walks of life like education, employment and good health. For growth and development of tribal women, there is need to educate and facilitate them to boost up their productivity which is not only important for their empowerment but for overall socio-economic development of the tribal areas.

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