

ROLE PERFORMANCE OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE - A STUDY IN AGENCY AREA OF EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

K. Suman Kalyani, V. Krishnamurthy, C. Chandrasekhar Rao
and N. Aruna Kumari

Central Tobacco Research Institute,
Rajahmundry – 533 105, India

Received : 16-08-2010

Accepted : 01-09-2010

ABSTRACT

Tribal women constitute half of the work force among tribals in India. Tribal women are discriminated, though they make enormous contribution to the agriculture and allied sectors. They have very little access to the knowledge and skills of modern farm technologies and related resources. The objective of the present study is to ascertain the work participation rate, their contribution to the family income and role performance of tribal women. A sample of 100 tribal farm women twenty five each from four panchayaths viz. Thallapalem, Pedagedada, Bornagudem and Thantikonda) of two agency mandals (Rampachodavaram and Rajavommangi) in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh were selected based on stratified random sampling procedure. The tribal women work for about 12 to 15 hours per day involving in agriculture and allied activities. The tribal women collect minor forest produce like Amla, Soapnuts, Shikakai, Adda leaves, Hill brooms, Firewood, Bamboo, Gumkaraya (Kovela gum), and sell these products in the nearby shandy and exchange the produce for their daily requirements through barter system. Results reveal that the work participation rate and role performance of tribal women in agriculture and allied sectors is high as compared to their male counterparts and contribute lion's share to the family income. The study revealed that lower the economic status of the family, the higher will be the contribution towards their family income.

Key words : Tribal women, Agriculture, Participation.

INTRODUCTION

The tribal population of Andhra Pradesh is 41.99 lakhs constituting about 6.3 per cent of the total population of the state. The tribes of Andhra Pradesh present a fascinating diversity with its variegated socio-cultural traditions and diversified occupations. The scheduled areas extended over 31,485 sq. kms about 11 per cent of total area of the state distributed in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, viz. Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Khammam, Warangal, Adilabad and Mahaboobnagar districts. In East Godavari district the tribes occupy interior and agency areas covering seven mandals viz. Rampachodavaram, Maredumilli,

Y.Ramavaram, Devipatanam, Gangavaram, Addateegala and Rajavomangi spreading over 559 villages.

The tribes follow primitive methods of agriculture which is known as Podu cultivation and Shifting cultivation. The tribal women constitute about half of the tribal population. In developing countries women in tribal and rural areas are often considered as 'invisible farmers'. Besides engaging themselves in a variety of activities both on the farm and at home, the farm women also contribute to the family income through their wage earnings. At about 90% of the tribal women are engaged in

agricultural activities. Tribal families possess small holdings along with goattery unit and one or two cattle. They depend solely on minor forest produce during lean period in agriculture. They collect the forest produce *viz.* amla, soapnuts, shikakai, adda leaves, hill brooms, firewood, bamboo, gumkaraya, and sell them to the nearby shandy and exchange the produce for their daily requirements through barter system. The present study has taken up with the following objective.

Objectives:

The objectives of the present study are to ascertain the work participation rate of tribal women, their contribution to the family income and their role performance in agriculture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A sample of 100 tribal farm women, twenty five each from four panchayaths *viz.* Thallapalem, Pedagedada, Bornagudem and Thantikonda) and two agency mandals (Rampachodavaram and Rajavommangi) in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh were selected based on stratified random sampling procedure. The data was collected by using a pre-tested interview schedule containing questions regarding work participation rate, contribution to the family income and role performance of tribal women in agriculture and allied activities. A 15 point scale was developed to test the role performance in which there are high (11-15), medium (6-10) and

low (1-5) score categories. The data were analyzed and tabulated by using percentages and based on the degree of performance. The results are discussed in the following tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results discuss about the work participation rate, contribution to family income and role performance of tribal women in comparison to tribal men.

It is evident from Table-1 that the average no. of working hours per day for a tribal woman is 16.8 where as it is 12.1 for tribal man. The work participation rate is equal (33.3%) for both the men and women. The participation of women was found to be high in agriculture and allied activities except in horticulture. On comparison to men, the rate of work participation of tribal women was more in agricultural labour (27.7%), cattle/sheep rearing (41.6%), collection of minor forest produce (25.0%) and allied activities (25.0%) where as in men the participation rate in these activities was low i.e. (16.6%), (33.3%), and (8.3%) respectively. Only in horticulture, the participation rate of men was high (12.5%) when compared to women (8.3%). The results revealed that the tribal women work harder and longer than men, as the number of working hours and work participation high.

Tribal families depend on two to three sources of income for their livelihood along with

Table 1 : Work participation of tribal women.

Occupation	Average no. of working hours / week		Average no. of working days / year		Work participation rate (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	30	30	120	120	33.3	33.3
Agrl. labour	18	36	60	100	16.6	27.7
Cattle/Sheep rearing	21	28	120	150	33.3	41.6
Minor forest produce	-	04	30	90	8.3	25
Horticulture	12	06	45	30	12.5	8.3
Allied activities	04	14	30	90	8.3	25
Average working hours per day	12.1	16.8	-	-	-	-

agriculture. The results indicated that the tribal women contribute major share towards family income than men. Thus the tribal women are endowed with several activities starting from agriculture, collection of MFP, cattle rearing, labour works and horticulture, and contribute more to the family income. The lower the socio-economic status of the family, the higher is the contribution of women towards their family income.

The role performance of tribal women in various agricultural operations *viz.* weeding, application of fertilizers, nursery raising, transplanting, harvesting, winnowing and storage of grain was found to be high.

The work performance of tribal women was found to be high in post harvest product management i.e., grain storage (90%) followed by transplanting (68%), nursery raising (58%), application of fertilizers (58%), weeding (56%) and winnowing (50%). The work performance of men was found to be high in ploughing (72%) followed by harvesting (52%), winnowing (48%), threshing (46%), transportation (42%), fertilizer application (22%) and pesticide application (14%) where as the participation of women is low in these activities.

Table 2 : Contribution of Tribal Women for Family Income.

Occupation	Annual Income (in Rs.)	
	Men	Women
Agriculture	5, 000	5, 000
Horticulture	3, 000	2, 000
Cattle/sheep / poultry	2, 000	6, 000
Ag. Labour & Allied Works	5,000	17, 000
Total annual contribution	15,000	30, 000

Live stock play an important role for the economic up-liftment of the tribal families. The tribal women rear the cattle and the major work is being carried out by women only. The details pertaining to the role performance of tribal women in cattle rearing are presented in Table-4. It is clear that the role performance of women is high in almost all the activities *viz.* milching (88%), care and management (70%) and grazing (48%) when compared to men.

Minor forest produce forms a major source of income in many tribal communities. Women and children are almost exclusively involved in collection of minor forest produce, processing, storage and marketing. They collect forest products *viz.* shikakai, soap nuts, hill brooms, adda leaves, tendu leaves, mahua flower, honey, gum, tamarind,

Table 3 : Participation and Role Performance of tribal Women in agriculture.

Activity	Degree of Performance					
	Male			Female		
	High (%)	Medium(%)	Low(%)	High(%)	Medium(%)	Low(%)
Agriculture						
Ploughing	72	14	14	36	30	34
Weeding	12	16	72	56	24	20
Application of fertilizers	22	26	52	58	30	12
Nursery raising	12	20	68	58	26	16
Transplanting	10	12	78	68	22	10
Pesticide application	14	16	30	12	08	20
Harvesting	52	32	16	50	34	16
Threshing	46	34	20	32	46	22
Winnowing	48	36	16	50	14	36
Loading & unloading	42	32	26	32	28	40
Storage of grain	08	12	16	90	08	02

Table 4 : Role Performance of Tribal women in cattle rearing.

Cattle /sheep rearing	Degree of performance					
	Male			Female		
	High(%)	Medium(%)	Low(%)	High(%)	Medium(%)	Low(%)
Care and Management	08	02	90	70	25	05
Milching	04	14	82	88	12	-
Grazing	60	12	28	48	32	20

Table 5 : Role Performance of Tribal women in Minor Forest Produce.

Minor Forest Produce	Degree of performance					
	Male			Female		
	High(%)	Medium(%)	Low(%)	High(%)	Medium(%)	Low(%)
Procurement	10	30	60	75	25	-
Processing	10	40	50	84	16	-
Marketing	30	30	40	80	15	-

roots, tubers, fuel, fibre etc. The results reveal that 75% of the female are engaged in procurement of MFP while it is only 10% in men. 84% of the tribal women involve high in processing and 80% of the tribal women involve high in marketing the produce while it is only 50% and 40% among tribal men respectively.

CONCLUSION

Results revealed that the work participation rate and role performance of tribal women in majority of agricultural activities is high in comparison to their male counter-parts. The tribal women also

contribute a major share to their family Income. The lower the socio-economic status of the family, the higher will be the contribution of women towards their family income. The work load of tribal women can be reduced by involving other family members in sharing agriculture and allied activities. Capacity building programmes, introduction of drudgery reducing agricultural implements, training in improving knowledge and skills will help the tribal women in a long way in performing their roles effectively for improving the quality of their life and involving them in the national main stream.