

# **Economic Status of Tribal Women: A Case Study of Southern Chhattisgarh**

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**ABSTRACT:** The scheduled tribes constitute a small proportion of the total population of the country and they are marginalized from the society in many respects. Provisions made in the constitution have brought about changes in their position but still they are confronted with a number of challenges. Tribal women in India are hardworking than tribal men and they contribute significantly towards their family income but their income generating sources are limited. Economic status is an important role in characterize the life and behaviour of an individual. It is, therefore, essential to analyze the economic status of the tribal women and to understand the pattern of relationship between tribal women and local environment. The present paper discuss as the status of tribal women of southern Chhattisgarh in terms of their education, health, occupation, Income, employment and savings pattern. The status of tribal women is found to be lower than not only that of women in the general population but is also lower than the status of tribal men. It is characterised by over-work, invasion of sexually exploitative market forces in tribal society, illiteracy, high fertility and high malnutrition. Hence, this paper is based on Primary data and survey conducted in based southern Chhattisgarh (Bastar and Dantewara district of Chhattisgarh) state, to study the economic status of tribal women.

**KEYWORDS:** Economic Status, Tribal Women, Southern Chhattisgarh

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious way of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the different walks of life like education, employment, good health and economic empowerment. Empowerment enables women to take control over their lives and builds self-confidence and self-reliance. Economic Profile is an important role in characterize the social life and behaviour of an individual. Therefore, there is a need for economic empowerment of tribal women in order to overcome inequality, discrimination and exploitation.

The tribal women being economically poor and socially backward live at a low level of scale of the quality life. Thus the tribal women often face the problems of food in security, malnutrition, lack access to health care services and education and the victim of domestic violence and rape. The extensive reach of women agency is one of the more neglected area of development studies, and most urgently in need of corrections. Nothing, arguing is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political economic and social participation and leadership of women. This is indeed a crucial aspect of "development as freedom" (Sen, 2006 : 203).

Nussbaum (2000) has suggested that increases in basic capability are essential for promoting the well-being of the poor women in any society. This suggestion is relevant for promoting the empowerment and well being of the tribal women as well. And the main objective of this paper is to study the influence of economic factor and economic status of tribal women of southern Chhattisgarh.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To analyze the factors influencing the economic empowerment of tribal women in the study area.
2. To identify the constraints of economic status of the tribal women.
3. To suggest the suitable plan to achieve the goal of economic empowerment of tribal women.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A district which have the tribal population more than 65% (according to census 2001) have been selected for the study of tribal women economic status. Southern part of the state comprises of selective district out of which two districts, namely Bastar and Dantewara have been selected for the study of tribal women empowerment.. Twelve (12) village from the two district of southern Chhattisgarh have been randomly selected for sample study.

### IV. STUDY AREA

Bastar and Dantewara district jointly occupies the Southern most part of Chhattisgarh State. Both district jointly extents between 17<sup>0</sup>45' N to 19<sup>0</sup>45' N latitudes and 80<sup>0</sup>18'E to 82<sup>0</sup>10'E longitudes (Fig – 1)

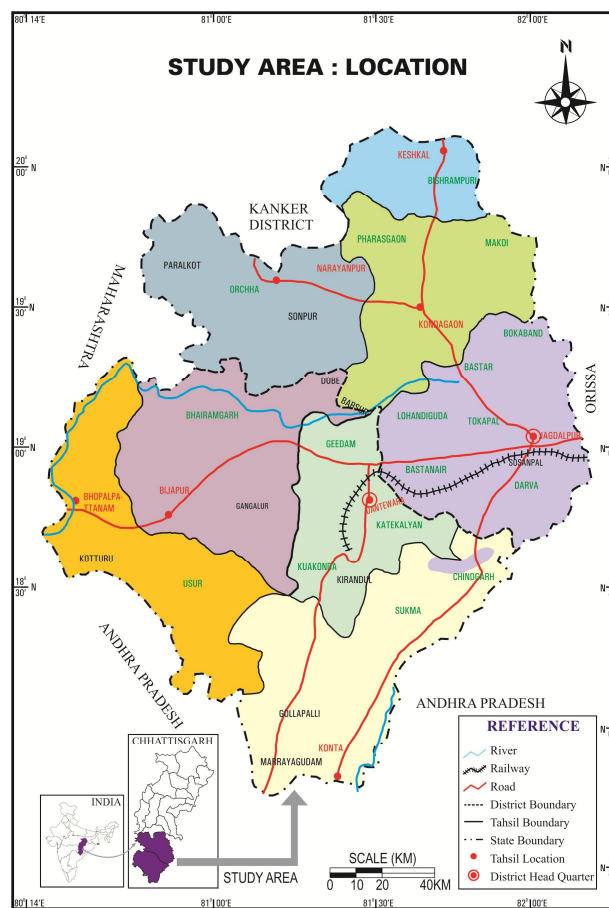


Figure : 1  
**Fig. 1 : Location map of study area**

Tribal population of the study region consist 70.29 percent (2001 census) of total population. Bijapur tahsil with 81.80 percentages, has the highest concentration where as in the Jagdalpur tahsil tribal population is 62.05%, lowest

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**Table – 1 : Study area, distribution of Male-Female and ST population.**

Sl. No.	Tahsil	Population		Total Population	Male	Female	% of ST Population
		Rural	Urban				
1.	Keshkal	155320	0	155320	77096	78224	73.35
2.	Narayanpur	108606	0	108606	53988	54618	76.16
3.	Kondagaon	309193	26898	336091	166713	169378	68.83
4.	Jagdapur	603533	103123	706656	352004	354652	62.05
5.	Dantewara	194987	51991	246978	122183	124795	70.33
6.	Bijapur	141738	0	141738	70827	70911	81.80
7.	Bhopalpattanam	98904	0	98904	49727	49177	81.21
8.	Konta	231445	0	231445	113765	117680	80.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total of the Study Area</b>	<b>1843726</b>	<b>182012</b>	<b>2025738</b>	<b>1006303</b>	<b>1019435</b>	<b>-</b>
		<b>91.01%</b>	<b>8.98%</b>				

Source : Census 2001

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### **ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA:**

Investment in the human capital health and education of women and girls is presented as a key way forward as witnessed by the MDGS. The logic is that educated, healthy women are more able to engage in productive activities, find formal sector employment, earn higher incomes and enjoy greater returns to schooling than are uneducated women...; (WBGDG, 2003 : 6) which remunerated work is important for women, it is important to remember that women still undertake the bulk of unpaid work in the home, household plot, or family business. They have the primary responsibility for caring for children and older people as well responsibility for undertaking activities such as collection of water and firewood. Women play the key role in the 'care economy', which not only provides care to the 'young', old and the sick, but also is vital for ensuring a productive work force. As this work is not remunerated, it is undervalued and lies outside general conceptualisations of the economy. Women engaged in paid work often face a double work day, since they may only be 'allowed' to work as long as their domestic duties are still fulfilled. This means women are time poor and the time burden may impact on their health and well being. To alleviate this burden and free women to enter paid work, daughters may be taken out of school to cover the domestic work, with related negative impacts on their education and ability to seek remunerated work in the future.

In this paper, author attempted to understand the different aspects of social and economic conditions of respondents. The main features of the socio-economic profile are age-composition, caste-composition, occupation composition, age at marriage, imcome, saving pattern and family background of respondents.

#### **EDUCATIONAL STATUS :**

Education is an important dimension in an individual's life. It empowers one with the capacity to take rational decisions and analyze what is good and bad in a more realistic and pragmatic manner along with job opportunities and livelihood.

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**Table No. 2 : Educational Status of the Sample Tribal area**

Sl. No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	89	34.36
2	Primary	122	47.10
3	Middle	38	14.67
4	High School	9	3.47
5	U.G.	1	0.38
6	P.G.	0	0
7	Vocational	0	0
8	Others	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Field Survey, 2007-2009.

Table No. 2 shows that 34.36% respondents are illiterate, 47.10% respondents have primary education, 14.67% have middle school education and only 3.47% respondents have high school education. Data indicates that educational backwardness of tribal women.

### V. OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Occupation is an important indicator of the economic status of the individual. The nature of occupational structure determines the individual, personality and standard of living.

**Table No. 3 : Occupational Status of the sample tribal women in the study area.**

Sl. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Agriculture	109	42.08
2	Forest material collection	78	30.11
3	Fishing	13	5.01
4	Folk treatment	7	2.70
5	Agricultural labour	29	11.19
6	Social Work	12	4.63
7	Trade	8	3.08
8	Others	3	1.15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Field Survey, 2007-2009

Table No. 3 indicates that 42.08% of the respondents are working in agriculture sector. And 30.11% women working for forest material collection while 5.01% respondents are in fishing and 11.19% respondents are agricultural labour. The study shows that majority of respondents are from agriculture background and other respondents have different kind of jobs.

#### **Income of the sample tribal women in the study area :**

The income of a person in general, is an indicator of his/her economic status. And the economic status of a person will impact on his /her attitude.

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**Table – 4 : Annual Income of the sample women**

Sl. No.	Income in Rs.	Frequency	Percentage
1	Upto 2000	12	4.63
2	2001 – 6000	19	7.33
3	6001-10000	98	37.84
4	10001-14000	59	22.77
5	14001-18000	43	16.60
6	18001-22000	16	6.17
7	Above – 22000	9	3.47
8	No response	3	1.15
	Total	259	100.00

Source : Field Survey, 2007-2009.

Table no. - 4 indicates that 4.63% of the respondent have annual income upto Rs. 2000, 7.33% respondents annual income is from Rs. 2001-6000, 37.84% of respondents annual income is Rs 6001-10000, 22.77% of the respondents are earning annual income is Rs. 10001-14000 and 3.47% of the respondents are earning annual income of above Rs. 22000.

### VI. SAVINGS PATTERN OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

The Savings is also indicator of the respondents economic status.

**Table No 5 – Savings Pattern of the sample respondents in the study area.**

Sl. No	Savings	Frequency	%
01	Savings at home / husband	42	16.21
02	Savings at village head	29	11.29
03	Bank	78	30.11
04	Chit Fund	23	8.88
05	L.I.C.	41	15.83
06	Other	9	3.47
07	No. Savings	37	14.29
	Total	259	100.00

Source : Field Survey, 2007-2009.

Table No 5 Shows savings of the respondents also the awareness of the savings. Data indicates that 30.11% (Maximum) respondents wish to savings at bank and 16.21 sample respondent shows their interest to savings at home / husband.

### VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As it has been pointed out, low levels of economic activity and living conditions below the poverty level is a major problem faced by the tribal women.

- (i) A practical way to dealing with this problem can be to provide skills and training for women which will help them in building up of self help groups. Awareness can be created through effort to empower these women.
- (ii) The state should emphasise the importance of skills formation and development programmes for the benefit of tribal women.
- (iii) The local government officials and NGOs should be involved for organizing the SHGs among tribal women and to encourage to take-up self employment activities outside the tribal habitats and settlements.
- (iv) Health care services and health insurance is necessary.
- (v) Institutional financial assistance including micro finance is an urgent need.
- (vi) Overall development of the tribal study area is necessary.

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## VIII. CONCLUSION

If women are economically strong it creates leadership and decision making power. Constitutions safeguards to tribal women provided opportunity to enjoy more freedom and power than ever before in the study area. So, there is a strong need of economic empowerment in the study area.

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