

FUNCTIONING OF WEEKLY MARKETS IN TRIBAL AREAS OF TELANGANA

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Abstract: The tribal lives in subsistence economy, sells their marketable surplus and buys essential commodities in the weekly market, locally known as 'shanthas'. The regulated marketing system is not suitable in tribal areas. Hence, they are depending on weekly market for their trading and also recreational centres. Where lot of tribal people make it a point to definitely attend the weekly market on week days to eat, drink and make a jolly trip on the weekends. Usually tribals have various kinds of disputes such as land, matrimonial problems and others that are settled at weekly markets. The present paper focuses to understand the importance of weekly marketing activities in tribals' areas and also to know the socio-economic conditions of buyers and sellers who participate in weekly markets. For selecting the sample stratified random sampling technique is used to select the respondents. In the present study two tribal dominated districts are selected namely Khammam and Adilabad. 152 samples are selected from each district, out of it 120 are buyers and 32 are sellers, while giving equal importance to all the parameters. Four weekly markets are selected from each district and from each weekly market 30 buyers and 8 sellers are selected. It is concluded that the weekly markets generate employment opportunities to rural tribals in a large number and hereby resulting improved earnings and better economic status among the tribals in the surrounding villages. Hence, it is suggested that the government should provide minimum amenities at the weekly market.

Key words: Shanthas, Exploitation, Employment, Communities, Tribals

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INTRODUCTION

Scheduled Tribes (2011 Census Report) 104,281,034 represent 8.6% of the total country's population. There are about 654 ST communities throughout India and 75 of the STs are most backward and termed as "Primitive Tribal Groups"¹. The essential characteristics of these communities are primitive traits, geographical isolation, distinctive culture, shyness of contact with communities of other areas and backwardness. Tribals are living in remote and exclusive areas of thick forest, hill slopes, and lack of facilities. They heavily depend on forest resource for their livelihood in terms of food, material and money. The tribal lives in subsistence economy, sells their marketable surplus in the weekly market, locally known as 'shanthas'. But unfortunately, the tribal are unaware of the marketing intelligence due to lack of adequate information and exposure, falls an easy prey to the powerful segment of traders in the 'shanthas'. The working of marketing system in the tribal areas, thus, it appear to be unregulated which continues to be a dominating reason for keeping tribal economy depressed. Despite the volume of production has been increasing in few areas. But, mere increased production has no meaning unless the tribals get remunerative price for the produce in the market. Weekly market, the only marketing channel in the tribal areas and which doesn't promise for suitable price for tribal produce.

¹Ch.Parandamulu (2012)"The Socio-Economic Conditions of Tribal Women in India & Need for their Empowerment", The Indian Journal of Social Science Research, Vol.1, No.2, March, 2012, pp 146-149.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the importance of weekly markets in Telangana.
2. To know the socio-economic conditions of buyers and sellers who participate in weekly markets.

METHODOLOGY

This study is prepared based on secondary data and primary data. The primary data has been collected through properly well-designed schedule. Two type of schedules are used one for seller another for buyers. The present study stratified random sampling technique is used to select the sample. In the present study two tribal dominated districts are selected namely Khammam and Adilabad. 152 samples are selected from each district, out of it 120 are buyers and 32 are sellers, while giving equal importance to all the parameters. Four tribal dominated markets are selected from each district and from each weekly market 30 buyers and 8 sellers have been selected for the study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is confined to cover the functioning aspects of weekly markets in tribal areas of Telangana and also studies the socio-economic conditions of buyers and sellers who participate in weekly markets.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to select districts of Khammam and Adilabad. However, inferences and conclusion are to elicit for entire Telangana state.

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

Tribal population of the Telangana State according to 2011 Census is 32.87 lakhs which constitutes 9.34% of the total population of the state. Scheduled tribes literacy rate is 49.51 as against State literacy rate of 66.46%. There are 32 Tribal groups living in the State which include 4 PVTGs (Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups-earlier known as Primitive Tribal Group). The Dominant tribal groups in the State are Lambadas with a population of 20,46,117, Koyas-4,86,391, Gonds-2,97,846, Yerukalas-1,44,12². The Government has accorded high priority for accelerated development of Tribals by implementing socio-economic development schemes. The major focus is on Education, Economic support and land based schemes. As regards their status by and large, a sizeable number of tribals (47%) are groaning under poverty and their living standard is minimal, except the Lambadas who relatively enjoyed the lion's share of benefits from state assistance. Besides, the fact at a majority of primitive tribes did not get benefits under united Andhra Pradesh is a classic example to argue that the new and smaller state is going to address their issues in a focused manner as the administration comes closer to them³.

WEEKLY MARKET AS A TRADING CENTRE TO TRIBALS

The Weekly markets are the only sources for them to conduct their buying and selling business. The poor tribal farmers, sells their cultivated agriculture produce and gathered forest produce in weekly market. The Weekly markets are

² Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Telangana, Hyderabad, 2015.

³ Reddy, M.Gopinath and K.Anil Kumar (2010); "Political Economy of Tribal Development: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh", February, working paper no 85, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad.

generally held in nearby villages which are very accessible to the tribal hamlets and thandas which are usually located in the range of 10-20 kilometres. Tribals not only sell their produce and earn, but also they depends on weekly markets for their essential needs for their survival. Hence, the income earned by doing this business is accordingly allocated to their home requirements, purchase of agricultural inputs, children's education and other developmental activities.

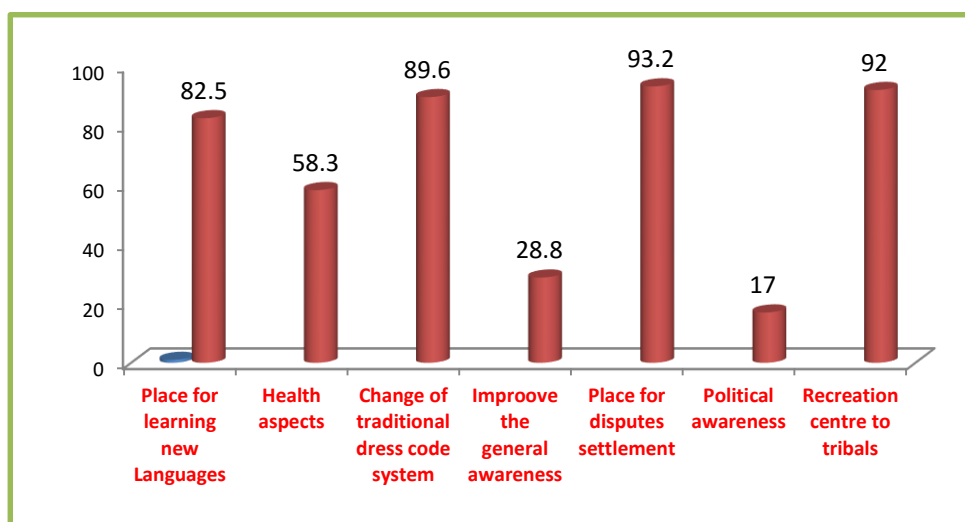
In fact, the weekly markets have become the source of meeting place for the tribals. Tribals of different clan get together at the weekly market and share their views, thoughts and get aware of various developmental issues in the mainstream society. In addition to this, the tribal people also new developments, dressing trends, way of talking, like language and presenting and promoting style during selling and buying their produce. There is a chance to get awareness about various things among themselves. Tribal people not only learn the new developments and get the aware of various trends and issues in the main stream society but also they use the weekly markets as their meeting points for disputes settlements. And it is also regarded as the best places for the tribal population to learn about the socio-political issues and political developments going on in the society. Weekly markets are also said to be the recreational centres, where lot of tribal people make it a point to definitely attend the shantha on week days to eat, drink and make a jolly trip on the weekends.

WEEKLY MARKETS GENERATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By hosting the weekly market in surrounding villages' tribals get employment opportunities. It is observed from the field survey 22.7 percent of the tribals are depends on selling business. This business requires small investment and without any requirements of infrastructure and there is a chance to get high returns. Moreover, they do not have the required education qualification to get employment. Majority i.e., 86 percent of the tribal sellers deals with vegetable, fruits, fish, meat, tobacco, livestock, bamboo products, aurvedic medicine and local made produce and also a few of the tribal sellers selling urban based produce. A majority of the tribals have chosen to vend in order to have a regular source of income. A few numbers of sellers doing this business seasonally as a secondary occupation for earning additional income. Their main occupation is agriculture but in order to earn additional income rather than main occupation doing this business. Weekly markets generate employment in large number and hereby resulting improved earnings and better economic status among the tribals.

Figure 1.1

The Tribal People Views on Awareness by Visiting Weekly Markets



Source: Field data

It has been observed from the table that 93.2 percent of tribal people have agreed to have attended the weekly markets mainly to meet together and get their disputes settled. Usually tribals have various kinds of disputes such as land, matrimonial problems and others that are settled at weekly markets. Similarly, the statistics from the table also reveal that 92 percent tribal people came to weekly market for trading and recreation. About 89.6 percent of tribal agree that they changed their traditional dress system by observing changing trends in the weekly markets. About 82.5 percent tribal respondents have agreed to have learned new language by attending weekly markets regularly. However, a meagre of only 17 per cent tribals have accepted that weekly markets have helped them gain political knowledge, while about 28.8 per cent have agreed to have improved their general knowledge and general awareness about the society by attending weekly markets. Coming to healthcare aspect, more than 58 per cent tribal population come to weekly markets to get their health checkups. It is concluded that the weekly market hosting in tribal areas, directly influence on tribal social status such as Learning new languages, health awareness, change the traditional dress system, improve the general awareness, political awareness and recreation to tribal people.

Demographical profile of the sellers and buyers

Description	Buyer	Seller	conclusions
Age	41.9% of buyers belong to the age group of 40-60 years, 37.2% in the age group less than 40 year and 21% of the buyers are above 60 year of age.	43.8% of the sellers aged between 40-60 years, the less than 40 years age sellers are 37.4% and 18.8% sellers were in the old age who were more than 60 years.	Both the buyers and sellers belong to same age group, who involved in weekly markets.
Gender	74.6% of the buyers are male and 25.4% of female buyers.	The sellers 60.2% of the male. While 39.8% of the female.	While comparing both the male and female, buyers and sellers, male domination is very high in both the cases. But in case sellers, female sellers are more than the buyers' participants.
Married	The 91.5 % of tribal buyers were married and 4.2% of tribal buyers were unmarried and widower/widow also participated in weekly markets	82.8% of sellers was married, 13.3% of sellers were widow/widower and 3.9% of unmarried sellers involved.	Buyers were more married than the sellers. The more number of sellers are widower/widow participants while compared with buyers.
Education	67.5% of the buyers were illiterate, 24.4 of buyers were studied up to secondary level, 4.4% higher level education and 3.8 of Intermediate education	57.8% of sellers are illiterate, 36.6% of the sellers studied up to secondary level, 6% of respondents have studied inter level education and only one seller is graduate.	Buyers are more illiterate than the sellers.

Size of the family	68.5% of the buyers have 4-6 family members, 26% of buyers have less than four members and 5.5% of buyers have more than six members.	59.4% sellers have 4-6 family members, 33.6% of sellers have less than four family members and 7% sellers have above six family members.	While compare to family size, most of the buyers belongs to joint family, sellers are nuclear family.
Housing condition	62.3 % of tribals were having pucca houses, 30.6% of having semi pucca houses and 7.1% buyers were living in hut.	72.7% lived in pucca houses, 16.4% are semi pucca and 10.9% of sellers are living in hut.	sellers have pucca houses than the buyers
Electricity facility	97% of tribal buyers having electricity facility in their houses 3% of tribals are using solar power system for lighting in their houses	98.1% of sellers having electricity facility and 1.9% of sellers are using solar power system for lighting in their houses	Both buyers and sellers have electricity facility.
Sanitation facility	33 % were using toilets facility and 67% are using open forest area for their routine toilets	64.1 % of sellers having sanitation facility and 35.9% of them do not have sanitary.	Sellers have toilets facilities more than buyers.
Fuel using for cooking	The 48.3% of the tribal buyers is using firewood for cooking food, 39.2% of tribals have gas as well as firewood and 12.5% of tribal buyers are using gas for their routine cooking.	45.3% of sellers having gas connection, 31.3% sellers are using firewood and 23.4% of sellers are using both gas and firewood for cooking food.	Sellers have more gas connections than the buyers.
Annual income	56.7% of the buyers' annual income is above Rs.300000 and 40.6% of tribal buyers under range income between Rs.100001-300000 and 2.7% are less than Rs.100,000/-	46.2% of the sellers' annual income ranging from Rs. 300,001-400,000, 42.9% of sellers annual income is above Rs. 400,000/- and 8.6% of sellers are earning is less than 100,000/-	Sellers have more annual income than the buyers

Table-2

The tribal people view on transport cost, sale & purchase prices in weekly markets

Description	Compare to regular market						Total	
	Reasonable		Low		High			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Transport cost	90	37.5	150	62.5	0	0	240	100
Purchase price	67	28	140	58	33	14	240	100
Sales price	200	83.3	30	12.5	10	4.2	240	100

Source: Field data of buyer respondents

Transportation:

As majority of tribals live in the forest and remote hamlets where non-availability of transportation facility. During the weekly market days because of the availability of public and private transport facilities the cost of carrying the good slashing drastically when compared to the regular markets. It is found that, 62.5 percent tribal respondents said that transport cost is low and 37.5 percent expressed that it is reasonable. Non- shandy days the tribals said that they have to hire vehicle personally to carry the goods which cost high fares and cannot bear them.

Purchase and Sale prices

Generally, tribal purchase essential commodities from local sellers and also from GCC DR depots in weekly market. Majority i.e., 58 percent of the respondents' their opinion on purchase price that price of the commodities is very low when it compared to regular market and retails shops and 28 percent of tribals expressed that prices offered is reasonable in weekly markets. At the end of the market timings the sellers sells their produce at cheaper rates as compared to earlier hours sale prices because they do not want to carry their produce to their houses because of heavy transportation charges, loading and unloading charges and fear of spoiling the produce in transportation and also by storing the produce for longer time. Therefore, the buyers and sellers both will be benefited. "This is a win-win situation".

About 83.3 percent of the tribal is opinion on sales prices of agricultural and forest produce is reasonable and 4.2 percent respondents expressed that prices are high when compared with regular market. GCC is offering Minimum Support Prices for several agricultural produce and minor forest produce.

Conclusion

It is inferred that both the buyers and sellers belong to same age group, who involve in weekly market. When compared to male and female buyers and sellers, male domination is very high in both the cases. But in case of sellers, female sellers are more than the female buyers. It also observed that most of the buyers were married than that of the sellers but it is found that the female sellers are widows from tribal communities. Most of the buyers belong to joint family and they are illiterates and they don't have even toilet facilities. Whereas most of the sellers have pucca houses and they have minimum facilities like electricity, gas connections, toilet and drinking water tap connections then that of the buyers and few of them also have solar lighting facility. While compare to the annual income among sellers and buyers, sellers are having better annual income than that of buyers.

It is concluded that the weekly markets generate employment opportunities to rural tribals in a large number and hereby resulting improved earnings and better economic status among the tribals in the surrounding villages. By hosting these markets in tribals and non-tribals people gathering, it is directly influences on tribal social status such as learning new languages, health awareness, change the tradition dress system, improve the general awareness, political awareness and recreation centre to tribal people. Hence, it is suggested that the government should provide minimum amenities at the weekly markets of tribals in the state of Telangana.

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