



ISSN: 0975-833X

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SOME SELECTED TRIBES IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA

^{1,*}Biswajit Pal, ²Arunasis Goswami and ³Subhasish Biswas

¹Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, West Bengal State University, Barasat, Kolkata-700126

^{2,3}West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences, 68, K.B. Sarani, Kolkata-37

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th January, 2015

Received in revised form

17th February, 2015

Accepted 10th March, 2015

Published online 28th April, 2015

Key words:

Socio-Economic,
Tribal,
Livelihood.

ABSTRACT

The present study about socio-economic status of four different tribes of West Bengal was conducted with the objective to know the present socio-economic status of different Tribal sub castes. The study was conducted in four Blocks in two purposively selected districts of West Bengal. In each Block data were collected from one Tribal sub caste. From each tribal sub caste 100 numbers of samples were collected so the total sample size were 400. After the collection of data it was analyzed statistically to get the result. In the result it, was found that the four tribal sub castes under study were very much different socio-economically. Santhal and Toto had multi dimensional livelihood options where as Sabar and Oraon basically worked as labor. Among all the tribal sub castes under study, Sabar had low socio-economic status among them as well as their literacy level were also very low. Their life style, livelihood, habitat had so much differences which reflect and behavioral pattern.

Copyright © 2015 Biswajit Pal et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Socio economic aspects ' is often discussed in broad term as satisfaction of needs, feelings of well-being, good or bad working conditions, and other indicators. Such a conceptualization of it encompasses all the material aspects of human life, and may extend beyond to cover the physical and psychological dimensions. It covers diverse and innumerable human need. Human needs at the elementary level may include essentials of survival like drinking water, perpetuation needs, shelter and warmth. A tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture. Tribal people are primitive residents of our country. But, it is a glooming fact that even after six decades of independence, the tribes of our country are drowned in several problems. In those problems, it is very interesting to other people to know how they live like that poor condition. Which thing & matter, incidents are driven factor of that purpose.

The study was conducted in focus on socio-economic status of some tribes in West Bengal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in two agro-climatic zones of West Bengal i.e. Red laterite and Terrain. Purulia district from Red laterite zone and Jalpaiguri district from Terrai zone were

selected purposively on the basis of high density of tribals. Four Tribal sub castes were Santhal, Sabar, Oraon and Toto for the study. Santhal and Sabar were selected for their large population and Oraon and Toto were selected for their small in number and special socio-cultural characteristics. Kasipur and Manbazar-I block were selected randomly for collection of data from Santhal and Sabar respectively from Purulia district. Kalchini block was selected randomly for collection of data from Oraon and Birpara-Madarihath block were selected purposively for collection of data from Toto. 100 respondents were selected from each tribal sub caste so total sample size of the study was 400. Data were collected through personal interview with the help of pre-tested structured interview schedule. After proper tabulation data were further analysed statistically to get the results.

RESULTS

In the Table 1, we discussed about the general socio-economic condition of the tribal sub caste under study. From the table we find that maximum of the respondents from all the groups fall under middle age group which is 31-50 years. The number of respondents are minimum from aged groups. Maximum of the respondents from the each tribal sub caste excepting Oraon are hindu but in case of Santhal and Sabar, 23 % and 4 % respondents are having their own tribal region respectively. Mainly most of them replied that the tribal religion name is Sarna. Only 24 % Oraon were Hindu but rest of them are Christian (76 %).

*Corresponding author: Biswajit Pal,

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, West Bengal State University, Barasat, Kolkata-700126.

Table 1. Percentage analysis of socio-economic variables of different tribal groups

Variables	Category	Santhal	Sabar	Oraon	Toto
Age	20-30 yr	10.0	11.0	22.0	21.0
	31-40 yr	31.0	38.0	27.0	38.0
	41-50 yr	38.0	17.0	27.0	27.0
	51-60 yr	17.0	23.0	13.0	10.0
	Above 60 yr	4.0	11.0	11.0	4.0
Religion	Hinduism	77.0	96.0	24.0	90.0
	Muslim	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Christian	0.0	0.0	76.0	8.0
	Tribal religion	23.0	4.0	0.0	1.0
	Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Gender	Male	46.0	74.0	56.0	83.0
	Female	54.0	26.0	44.0	17.0
Variables	Category	Santhal	Sabar	Oraon	Toto
Marital Status	Married	89.0	91.0	90.0	88.0
	Unmarried	6.0	6.0	8.0	7.0
	Widow	4.0	3.0	2.0	4.0
	Divorced	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Category	Landless	39.0	91.0	72.0	38.0
	Marginal	57.0	6.0	21.0	53.0
	Small	4.0	2.0	7.0	8.0
	Medium-large	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Source of income	Agriculture	78.0	10.0	17.0	66.0
	Animal Husbandry	13.0	4.0	15.0	7.0
	Service	5.0	3.0	66.0	7.0
	Business	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
	Others	1.0	82.0	0.0	18.0
Family income	Below Rs.2000	81.0	84.0	74.0	70.0
	Rs. 2001-5000	12.0	12.0	22.0	13.0
	Rs. 5001-8000	4.0	2.0	4.0	9.0
	Rs. 8001-10000	1.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Above Rs. 10000	2.0	2.0	0.0	3.0
Occupation	Labour	44.0	87.0	73.0	39.0
	Caste Occupation	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
	Business	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
	Independent	4.0	3.0	6.0	11.0
	Cultivation	50.0	9.0	19.0	47.0
Education	Illiterate	13.0	70.0	19.0	42.0
	Can read only	0.0	2.0	1.0	17.0
	Can read and write only	3.0	6.0	9.0	7.0
	Primary	19.0	10.0	23.0	21.0
	Middle	42.0	8.0	35.0	3.0
	High School	21.0	4.0	11.0	10.0
	Graduate & above	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Family type	Nuclear	55.0	65.0	67.0	89.0
	Joint	45.0	35.0	33.0	11.0
Family size	up to 5	28.0	45.0	29.0	60.0
	More than 5	72.0	55.0	71.0	40.0
Variables	Category	Santhal	Sabar	Oraon	Toto
House type	No House	4.0	2.0	52.0	0.0
	Hut	12.0	64.0	13.0	6.0
	Katcha House	52.0	28.0	19.0	37.0
	Mixed House	26.0	5.0	12.0	29.0
	Pucca House	6.0	1.0	4.0	28.0
	Mansion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Land holding	Landless	38.0	85.0	73.0
Below 0.33 Acre	47.0	4.0	22.0	38.0	
0.34-1 Acre	10.0	9.0	5.0	13.0	
1 Acre-4 Acre	2.0	2.0	0.0	6.0	
4 Acre to 10 Acre	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	
Above 10 Acre	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

There was random selection in case of gender. During survey data were collected from 46 % male sample from Santhal tribe, 74 % male sample from Sabar tribal, 56 % male sample from Oraon tribe and 83 % male sample from Toto tribe. It is clear that most of the respondents in case of Sabar and Toto are male. Data were randomly selected from maximum number of married samples from the four selected tribes but data were also collected from 4 % Santhal, 3 % Sabar, 2 % Oraon and

4% Toto widow or widower. Data were also collected from 1 % Santhal and Toto divorced respondents. Maximum Santhal respondents (57 %) and Toto (53 %) were marginal farmers, Sabar (91 %) and Oraon (72 %) are landless. 39 % santhal and 38 % toto are landless. 4 % Santhal, 2 % Sabar, 7 % Oraon and 8 % Toto are small land holders. Source of income of maximum respondents are agriculture in case of Santhal and Toto. 66 % Oraon respondents' source of income is service.

They are mainly tea garden workers. 13 % Santhal, 4 % Sabar, 15 % Oraon and 7 % Toto earn from animal husbandry. Maximum Sabar respondents earn as an daily labour. Maximum respondents of all tribal sub caste belong to lower income group i.e. below Rs. 2000. 12 % Santhal and Sabar, 22 % Oraon and 13 % Toto have monthly family income group of Rs. 2001 to Rs. 5000. Only 2 % Santhal, Sabar and 3 % Toto have high family income group which is more than Rs. 10000. Most of Sabar (87 %) and Oraon (73 %) are labour but in case of Santhal and Toto labour are 44 % and 39 % respectively. About half of the Santhal (50 %) and Toto (47 %) are cultivators. 1 % Santhal and 2 % Oraon respondents choose caste occupation for their livelihood. 4 % Santhal, 3 % Sabar, 6 % Oraon and 11 % Toto have their own occupation. 1 % Santhal, Sabar and Toto and 2 % Oraon are involved in business. Maximum of the Sabar respondents are illiterate (70 %). 42 % Toto, 19 % Oraon and 13 % Santhal are also illiterate. 19 % Santhal, 10 % Sabar, 23 % Oraon and 21 % Toto completed primary schooling. A large section of the Santhal (42 %) and Oraon (35 %) completed middle school. Only 21 % Santhal, 4 % Sabar, 11 % Oraon and 10 % Toto completed High schooling.. Only 2 % Santhal and Oraon are graduate. All of the randomly selected tribal sub-caste under study have nuclear family i.e. Toto (89 %) followed by Oraon (67 %), Sabar (65 %) and Santhal (55 %).

More than half of the Santhal respondents (72%) have effective family size more than 5 followed by Oraon (71 %), Sabar (55 %) and Toto (40 %). More than half (52 %) Oraon tribe have no house because most of them are tea garden labour and usually stay at tea garden quarter provided by tea garden owner. Maximum of Sabar (64 %) live in hut followed by Oraon (13 %) and Santhal (12 %). 29 % Toto live at mixed house but 28 % of them have pucca house whereas 26 % of Santhal respondents' family live in mixed house and only 6 % of them live in pucca house. Elite section of Sabar (85 %) are landless followed by Oraon (73 %), Toto (42 %) and Santhal (38 %). Near about half of Santhal respondents (47 %) have below 0.33 Acre or 1 Bigha land. In case of Toto it is 38 % and Oraon 22 %. 13 % Toto have land between 0.33- 1 Acre (1 to 3 Bigha) followed by Santhal (10 %), Sabar (9 %) and Oraon (5 %). Only 6 % Toto respondents have land holding between 1 Acre to 4 Acre (3 Bigha to 12 Bigha) but in case of Santhal and Sabar it is only 2 %. 3 % of Santhal respondents had land more than 4 Acre but in case of Toto it was only 1 %. Randomly selected tribal respondents have no land holding more than 10 Acre (30 Bigha).

DISCUSSION

From the study we found that most of the respondents from all tribal categories are middle aged it refers that most of the effective respondents from the tribal are fall under middle age categories. Most of the Oraon were converted Christian. Sarna was the main religion of Santhal and Sabar. Most of the Sabar and Toto respondents were Male but in case of Santhal and Oraon near about half of the respondents were female. Most of the respondents of all category were married. Only 1 % Santhal respondents were divorced. It reflects that divorced and separation are not likely with the tribal culture in study area. Most of the Sabar and Santhal respondents were landless.

Basically Sabar respondents were inhabited in the forest area where personal land acquisition were not permitted, where in Oraon community in the study area basically lived in the tea garden or surrounding so they did not have any land in that area. Most of the Oraon respondents' source of income was service as most of them were engaged as tea garden labours. Maximum respondents of all tribal sub caste belong to lower income group i.e. below Rs. 2000. Only 2 % Santhal, Sabar and 3 % Toto had high family income group with more than Rs. 10000. 7 % Oraon and 8 % Toto were small land holders and basically most of them acquired river side vested land. Most of the Sabar respondents worked as daily labour due to lack of job opportunity and low education level. Near about half of the Santhal and Toto were cultivators because at least they had some portion of land. Maximum Sabar respondents were illiterate that reflect all about their socio-economic status. More than half of the respondents of all category were from the nuclear family and that was maximum in Toto tribe. More than half Oraon respondents did not have any house because mainly they lived in quarter provided by the tea garden authority.

Nagda (2004) stated that the literacy among the tribal of Rajasthan was extremely low which affect the health status. Joung *et al.* (1995) also observed the positive relation between education and health. According to the measure of SES (Socio-Economic Status) by Liao *et al.* (2004), it was found that education level and household income was substantially lower among minority communities. The result showed that Santal tribe was having sufficient quantity of land for staying. The present study also supported the fact. Moitra and Choudhuri (1991) found that agriculture and forest products were the principal sources of income in Santals of Rajmahal Hills, Bihar. The data showed that few Santal respondents were also involved in multiple occupations, which helped them to be in high-income group (More than Rs.2000/month). Mahapatra (1997) observed that Christianized tribal people have been given facilities for education, health and co-operative services, so that they become healthier, more educated and economically more prosperous than others. The main arising problem in the primitive Toto tribe was that they are diminishing due to lack of population. The present study also showed that the effective family size was minimum in Toto and maximum in Sabar. The numbers of child in the family were minimum in Toto and maximum in Santal.

Conclusion

The socio-economic status of four tribal sub castes under study were different. It reflected that their education level and income level were different i.e. most of the Sabar respondents were illiterate and lived in confined forest area and did not have sufficient source of income where as Santhal and Toto depend on agriculture as their major livelihood and their literacy and income level were higher than other tribals sub caste under study. Oraon mainly work as tea garden labour for their livelihood and most of them were converted Christian. They mainly lived in tea garden quarters provided by tea garden authority but their economic level were much poorer than Santhal and Toto. Only Santhal and Toto have multidimensional occupation level and they utilize that for

their livelihood. So it can be concluded that all the tribal sub castes are not same socio-economically but they have so much differences which reflect their life style, livelihood, habitat and behabirial pattern.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank INSPIRE Program division of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, for their financial support during course of my study.

REFERENCES

Joung, I M., Meer, J. B. and Mackenbach, J P. 1995. Marital status and health care utilization. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 24:569-575.

Liao, Y. Tucker, P. Okoro, C A. Giles, W H. Mokdad, A H. and Harris, V B. 2004. REACH 2010 Surveillance for health status in minority communities...United States, 2001-2002. *MMWR. Surveillance Summaries*. 53(SS06):1-36.

Mahapatra. L K. 1997. Social change in Tribal society in Eastern India- Supplement of Professor Trak Chandra Das' Analysis 1961. *J. Indian Anthropol. Soc.*, 32(4): 201.

Moitra, A. and Choudhuri, R P. 1991. Food habits and anthropometry of two tribes of Rajmahal Hills, Bihar. *Indian Journal of Medicl Research*, 94:64-70. PMID: 2071187 [Pub Med-Index for MEDLINE].

Nagda, B L. 2004. Tribal Population And Health In Rajasthan. *Stud. Tribes Tribals*, 2(1): 1-8, pg 1-8.
