



The Role of Sellers in Tribal Areas of Telangana A Socio-Economic Survey

KEYWORDS

Sellers, tribal agency areas, weekly markets, communities

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ABSTRACT *The sellers are the most important components forming the central level of the mechanism of weekly markets; in fact, they are the controllers of the periodic marketing system. A large gathering of individual sellers always invites potential buyers in the market. The present paper studies socio-economic status of the sellers' and role of the seller in the tribal markets for procurement of MFP/AP and supply of daily needs. And also discusses about the nature of trading activities and availability of infrastructure facilities in weekly markets. The present study relied both secondary and primary data. The primary data collected from seller respondents through well designed schedule in selected tribal agency districts in Telangana. It concluded that the weekly markets held commonly in the areas where the tribal population is more. The selling is a self employment business to the sellers with small investment and without any requirement of infrastructure like building/shops and there is a chance to get more returns. Sellers can take their produce to one location rather than having to go from door to door. They can see how much of a particular product is on offer; compare the quality of their produce with that of other sellers, and set their prices accordingly.*

Introduction

The term 'tribe' denotes a group of people living in primitive or barbarous conditions. Article 366(25) of Indian constitution refers scheduled tribes as those communities who are scheduled in accordance Article 342 of the Constitution. This Article says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes. The essential characteristics, first laid down by the Lokur Committee, for a community to be identified as Scheduled Tribes are –

- Indications of primitive traits;
- Distinctive culture;
- Shyness of contact with the community at large;
- Geographical isolation; and
- Backwardness

Tribal economy is mainly an agricultural economy. The tribals depend upon utilization of the natural resources to get their sustenance.

Telangana with a population of 351.9 lakhs (according to the 2011 census) accounts for about 3.6% percent of the total population of India. Telangana has a sizeable Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. The SC population is 54.3 lakhs and the ST population is 32.8 lakhs, which constitutes 15.4% and 9.3% percent of the total population. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of tribal population in total population from 2.81 percent to 9.34 percent for last three decades i.e. 1991 to 2011 census. But in case of general population drastically decreasing from 47 percent to 16.35 percent. As per 2011 census the literacy rate among the tribal's 49.51 percent is found to be far below the overall literacy of the state (65.11%). The female literacy rate among the tribal's is far lower 20.5 percent as compared with overall female literate rate (39.44%) of the state. In Telangana state 32 tribal sub groups in Telangana state out of them five tribal groups are Lambadas, Koyas, Gond, Yerukala and Pradhan

are dominated around 91 percent of tribal population. The Lambadi sub group constitutes the largest component of around 62 percent, of the entire tribal community in Telangana.

Role of the seller in tribal markets

The rural people are largely depends upon periodic markets for the sale transactions of AP/MFP that takes place in a retailing process at regular interval of a given time and place. These markets are responsible for establishing the grass root level networking of trade systems throughout the developing world.

The seller plays a vital role in tribal agency areas for procurement of commodities and supply of daily requirements to tribals. Basically tribal lives in forest and hill area, those places don't have proper transport, communication facilities. Even though some places are developed these facilities. But the permanent marketing facilities are not available in tribal villages for their trading. Even though few shops are available in tribal village they are not satisfy completely the tribal needs and also charge high rate. If the permanent shops will open in tribal area shops cannot run successful, because very less population (around 200-300) lives in each village. It is observed that the permanent market system is not suitable for agency people. Therefore, sellers are came to agency area every week end and arrange a temporary stall display their commodities in proper manner and offer the commodities for sale and also purchase produce in a pre-determined particular place and time of the day.

In weekly market starts business at morning and it remain open till evening. The seller comes from various places of towns, nearby villages and also from other neighboring states like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Especially from Maharashtra sellers visits in Adilabad district and Andhra Pradesh sellers visits in Khammam and Mahabubnagar district in Telangana state. At morning hours sellers made temporary sheds with plastic covers and sticks or either use umbrella and arrange their items properly display

in an attractive manner. In these weekly markets sellers' offers different variety of items to sells rural and urban based commodities. Buyers visit shandies after 10 AM onwards to till evening. After completion of their trading, majority of the sellers return back to their respective place, and a few number of sellers are stay at shandy place only.

On the shandy day, about 200-600 sellers set shop selling, dress materials, accessories, household items, groceries, vegetables and fruits, meat, condiments, candies, baked items, cane products and cloth and nylon bags, flowers, and the list goes on. "Almost everything is available here," the town's residents say with a sense of pride. These traders have to pay a nominal entry fee to set shop in the sprawling shandy. They pay entry fee range from Rs. 10-150 to the Gram Panchayat/contractor. An average, the shandy hosts about 6,000 buyers. Generally, it is observed peak hours of the weekly markets in Adilabad, Warangal and Mahabubnagar are 2-5 PM. But peak hours of the business Mulakalapally market in Khammam district and Katapur market in Warangal district is from 3:00 to 7:00 PM.

Objectives of the paper

1. To study the Socio-Economic status of sellers who participate in selling activities.
2. To study the role of sellers for purchase of MFP/AP and supply of daily requirements in tribal agency areas of Telangana.
3. To evaluate the nature of trading practices adopted by sellers in tribal areas.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference between tribal and non-tribal age group of sellers who participants in shandies.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female of tribal and non-tribal sellers.
3. There is no significant difference between tribal and non-tribal sellers regarding procurement of stocks.

Methodology

The present study is prepared based on both primary as well as secondary data.

Size of the sample: In the present study, the sample size is 128 sellers.

Selection of the Sample: The present study was carried out in four tribal (agency area) dominated districts namely: Khammam, Adilabad, Warangal and Mahabubnagar of Telangana state. In the entire agency area of four districts 93 weekly markets are held in different places. Out of 93 weekly markets 16 are selected for the present study. From each of the district four shandies and 32 seller respondents are selected randomly. Again each weekly markets eight seller respondents are selected. Thus the total sample was around 128 sellers in tribal areas. The details of the sample selection as follows:

Table 1.1
District and shandy wise sample selection

Districts	Sellers Sample	Weekly Markets Place	Market Day	Sellers Sample
Khammam	32	1. Mulakalapally	Monday	8
		2. Venkatapuram	Tuesday	8
		3. Aswaraopeta	Thursday	8
		4. Tekulapally	Saturday	8

Adilabad	32	1. Utnoor	Sunday	8
		2. Indravali	Monday	8
		3. Shapore	Tuesday	8
		4. Echoda	Monday	8
Warangal	32	1. Kothaguda	Friday	8
		2. Katapur	Sunday	8
		3. Pasra	Tuesday	8
		4. Gudur	Wednesday	8
Mahabubnagar	32	1. Ambrabad	Thursday	8
		2. Mannur	Wednesday	8
		3. Achampeta	Tuesday	8
		4. Kondanagul	Monday	8
Total	128			128

Source: Field data

The respondents are selected based on the availability and willing of sellers to provide the necessary data, the sample unit selection will be carried out following random sampling techniques.

Socio-Economic status of sellers: The socio-economic characteristics of the sellers of the sample shandies of Telangana state have been discussed in the following paragraphs with a view to study their selling practices.

Table 1.2

The Demographic Characteristics of Sellers							
Characteristics	Responses	No. of Respondents					
		Non-tribal		Tribal		Grand total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
You belong	Tribes	0	0	29	22.7	29	22.7
	SC	24	18.8	0	0	24	18.8
	BC	64	50	0	0	64	50
	OC	11	8.6	0	0	11	8.6
	Others	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age group	Young age less than 40	37	28.9	11	8.6	48	37.5
	Matured age 40-60 yrs	47	36.7	9	7.1	56	43.8
	Old age above 60 year	15	11.7	9	7.1	24	18.8
Gender	Male	66	51.6	11	8.6	77	60.2
	Female	33	25.8	18	14	51	39.8
Marital Status	Married	87	67.9	19	14.9	106	82.8
	Unmarried	5	3.9	0	0	5	3.9
	Widower/widow	7	5.4	10	7.9	17	13.3
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	54	42.2	20	15.6	74	57.8
	Informal	9	7	5	3.9	14	10.9
	Primary	13	10.1	1	0.8	14	10.9
	Secondary	17	13.3	2	1.5	19	14.8
	12th Standard	6	4.7	0	0	6	4.7
	Higher education	0	0	1	0.8	1	0.8
Size of the family	Less than four children	34	26.5	9	7.1	43	33.6
	Four-six children	62	48.5	14	10.9	76	59.4
	Above six children	3	2.3	6	4.7	9	7
Do you have children	Yes	91	71	25	19.6	116	90.6
	No	8	6.3	4	3.1	12	9.4
What they are doing	Below the school age	12	10.3	4	3.4	16	13.8
	Studying	56	48.3	10	8.6	66	56.9
	Completed education	9	7.8	2	1.7	11	9.5
	Uneducated	0	0	1	0.86	1	0.86
	Employed G/P	14	12	8	6.9	22	18.9

Source: Field data

Caste wise sellers: In the above table it shows that the caste wise distribution of the sellers attending weekly market. It indicates majority (50 percent) of the sellers are Backward Class (BC) while (18.8 percent) Scheduled Caste and (22.7 per cent) sellers are Scheduled Tribes. And (8.6 per cent) sellers are (OC) other caste.

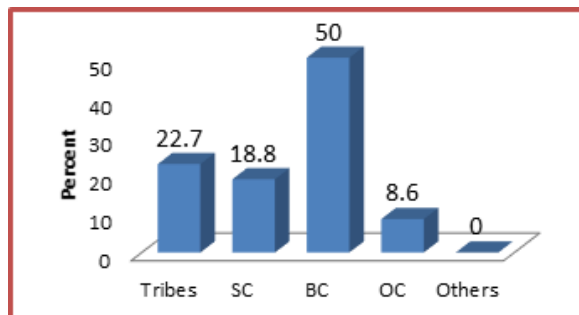


Figure -1 Category wise sellers in weekly markets

Age distribution: The Sellers age groups under the present study have been placed in three groups viz. the young age group, the mature age group and the old age group. The young age group consists of the Sellers who were less than 40 years of age. 48 (37.4%) sellers belonged to this category. The sellers aged between 40-60 years were placed in the matured age group. 56 (43.8%) sellers belonged to this group. 24 (18.8) sellers were in the old age group who were more than 60 years of age. This goes to say that young and sufficiently matures people to attend the shandies. The reasons for the young people to attend the shandy are that they could withstand the stress and strain of having to carry the produce from their home to the shandy. Perhaps it is also because they are more enthusiastic to visit the shandy.

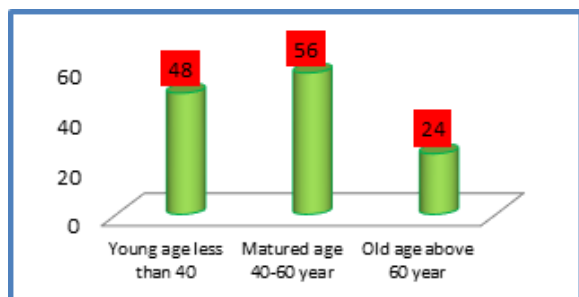


Figure -2 Age distribution

There is no significance difference between tribals and non-tribals age group of sellers who participants in weekly markets. The Chi-square test was calculated value is (10.894) and table value is (12.592). Hence, null hypothesis is accepted, therefore there is no significance difference between age groups of tribal and non-tribal sellers.

Gender distribution: The results show that the gender wise distribution majority of the sellers 60.2% of the male, indicating their pre-dominant presence. While 39.8 per cent respondents are female. Out of 77 male respondents among these 11 respondents are tribal sellers. Out of 51 female respondents, 18 respondents are tribals. Total number of tribals sellers is 29 out of this 18 sellers are tribal women.

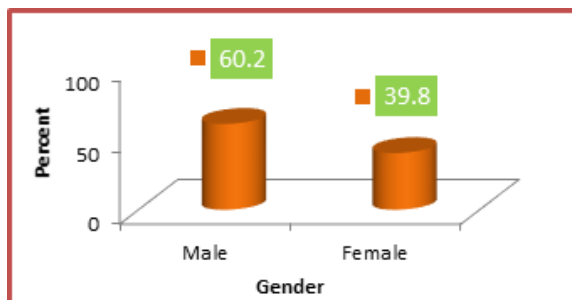


Figure-3 Gender distribution

To study the gender factor in participate in the shandy, tribal & non-tribal, male and female Chi-square test has been calculated. The table value (7.815) is less than calculated (16.263). Therefore null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that there is significance between male & female participate of tribal & non-tribal sellers. It indicates the mostly tribal sellers are female but in case of non-tribal are male respondents.

Marital status: The majority i.e., (82.8 percent) of sellers under study was married and 3.9 percent of respondents are unmarried. The incidence 13.3 percent of respondents are widowhood and divorced. In case of tribal's 8 percent and 5 percent in non-tribal's are widowed/ diverse.

Education level: In Education status majority (57.8%) of the respondents are illiterate. Among these 42.2 percent of non-tribal and 15.6 percent of tribal respondents were illiterate who are engaged in selling activities. 36.6 percent of the respondents studied up to secondary level education. In case of tribal sellers 4.7 percent and 17.1 percent non-tribal sellers were up to secondary level education under study. Among the non-tribal's 6 percent respondents have studied Intermediate level education but there is no 12th standard among tribal sellers. Among the tribal seller only one respondent is Graduate who is engaged in selling and there are no graduates among the non-tribal respondents.

Size of the family: It can be observed that 7.5 percent of tribal sellers have less than four family members, while 26.5 percent of non-tribal sellers are have less than four family members, 48.5 percent of non-tribals and 10.9 percent of tribals have 4-6 family members, and 2.3 percent of non-tribals and 4.7 percent of tribals have more than six members of family. It indicates that the majority of the sellers adapted nuclear (Individual) family mechanism. A few of the tribal sellers still adapted joint family system.

Seller Children: It is observed that 91 percent of sellers have children and only 9 percent of seller's doesn't have children. Most of the sellers have 2-3 children and their children are going to school/college, in case of non-tribals 48.3 percent and 8.6 percent of tribals respondents under the study are studying. It is observed that their children working as employee in private and public sectors i.e., 12 percent of non-tribals and 6.9 percent of tribals. Out of 11 children completed higher education's 2 children are tribal sellers. One tribal child is uneducated but in case of non-tribals there is no one is uneducated. It is observed that the overall 56.9 percent children are studying, 13.8 percent of children are below the school age groups and 18.9 percent of the children working as employees in private and government sectors.

Nature of trading activities

Several varieties of commodities are brought for sale in the market places which includes food grains, vegetables, fruits, spices, ornamental goods, bangles, stationary items, cloths, readymade garments and other finished/manufactured goods. These market places serve as convenient channels for distribution of agricultural and other products and for providing services of artisans and craftsmen.

Table 1.3

The category wise procurement of stock						
Category	How do you procure the stock				Total	%
	Marketable surplus of own production	Purchase from producers/wholesaler of same shandy/village	Purchase from producers/wholesaler of other shandy/village	Urban markets		
Tribes	13	3	2	11	29	22.65
SC	0	3	3	18	24	18.8
BC	9	4	8	43	64	50
OC	2	0	0	9	11	8.55
Total	24	10	13	81	128	100
Percent	18.8	7.8	10.1	63.3	100	

Source: Field data

The selling traders get the supplies of their stock normally from four sources. Viz own production, same shandy at wholesale rate, other shandies or villages and urban wholesale market. The table 4.5 indicates that the largest number of selling traders i.e. 63.3 percent depend upon the urban wholesale markets for the supplies of their stock. Sellers who depend on their own production, which accounts to 18.8 per cent, follow it. About 7.8 per cent of sellers procure their stock from same shandy at wholesale price and 10.1 per cent of sellers receive their merchandise from other shandies or villages. Most of the traders buying from urban markets reported that the smaller and immediate supplier is depended on nearby small towns.

To study the procurement stock factor to participate in the shandy, tribal and non-tribal traders Chi-square (correction) test has been calculated. The table value (16.919) is less than the calculated (23.856). So, null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significance change between tribal and non-tribal to procurement of stock. Majority of the tribal sellers are procuring their own cultivated produce and collected forest based produce.

Table 1.4

Category wise products sellers in weekly markets						
Products	Category wise sellers				Grand total	
	Tribes		Non-tribes			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Vegetable	10	7.8	19	14.8	29	22.7
Fruits	5	3.9	4	3.2	9	7
Readymade dresses	0	0	16	12.5	16	12.5
Spices	1	0.8	9	7	10	7.8
Food items	1	0.8	8	6.2	9	7
Kitchen items	0	0	2	1.6	2	1.6

Cosmetics	0	0	10	7.8	10	7.8
Others	12	9.4	31	24.2	43	33.6
Total	29	22.7	99	77.3	128	100

Source: Field data

On weekly day sellers are selling different types of products such as vegetable, fruits, readymade dresses, spices, food items, Cookeries, kitchen items (cookeries), cosmetics etc. Type of products brought to the weekly markets for sale depends on the invested capital of the sellers. Traders selling vegetable do not have to invest heavy amounts since they procure the commodities locally and sold the products during the markets hours. Again tribal sellers who brought perishable commodities like meat and fish brought by them are in limited quantities. It has been seen from the table that 22.7 percent sellers engaged in selling vegetables followed by readymade dresses (12.5%), Cosmetics (7.8%), spices (7.8%), fruits (7%), food items (7%) and kitchen items (cookeries) (1.6%). It is observed that the above table 33.6 percent of sellers selling others products. Its means meat, fish, liquor, livestock, agricultural inputs seller, medicine, forest based produce, pot, tobacco and bamboo baskets sellers are under this category.

Table 1.5

Investment wise profit earned by sellers in each weekly market										
Capital invested per shandy	How much profit earned per each shandy								Grand total	
	Less than Rs.100		Rs.101-500		Rs.501-1500		Above Rs.1500			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Less than Rs.1000	2	1.6	9	7	3	2.3	0	0	14	10.9
Rs.1001-5000	1	0.8	18	14	15	11.7	0	0	34	26.6
Rs.5001-15000	0	0	8	6.3	34	26.6	4	3.1	46	35.9
Above Rs.15000	0	0	1	0.8	23	17.9	10	7.8	34	26.6
Total	3	2.4	36	28.1	75	58.5	14	10.9	128	100

Source: Field data

Above table shows the investment wise profit earned by sellers in each weekly market. The majority of the tribal sellers are depending on their own capital because they are dealing with their own products. This requires very less investment for their business. But in case of non-tribal sellers, they are depending on their own capital and wholesaler credit facilities as well for dealing their business activities. By observed that the sellers are invested less than Rs.1000 in their business, these category sellers earning average profit is 7 percent of respondents are ranging between Rs.101-500 and 2.3 percent of sellers is ranging between Rs501-1500. Only 1.6 percent sellers earned less than Rs.100 profit per week. If the sellers are invested between Rs.1001-5000 they are earned 14 percent of sellers earning between Rs.101-500 and 11.7 percent respondents are getting average profit between Rs.501-1500. But only one seller is earned less than Rs.100 for this category. If the sellers are invested between Rs 5001-15000, they earning 26.6 percent respondents between Rs.501-1500, 6.3 percent are earning between Rs 101-500. And above Rs.1500 earning sellers is 3.1 percent. If the sellers are invested above Rs.15000, they are earned majority respond-

ents i.e.17.9 percent between Rs.501-1500 and 7.8 percent respondents are earning above Rs.1500 per weekly market.

Conclusion

Especially, weekly markets held commonly in the areas where the tribal population is more. On the basis of the interaction with the sellers it may be ascertained that majority of the sellers were prompted to take up selling profession because of employment. Few were ancestral business, which was done by their father or fore father etc. Moreover, they do not have the required education qualification to get employment and also these businesses does not huge require amount in order to start the business. This is self employment business to the sellers, with small investment and without any requirements of infrastructure like buildings/shops and there is a chance to get huge returns.

The sellers come from different places and set a temporary stall and offering commodities to buyers in weekly markets. Generally they are used weights and measures like standard, country, approximation, piece rate etc. They sell their produce on cash basis only but rarely do they sell their produce on credit basis. Majority of the sellers do not sell their stock/produce completely in a single market. Unsold stock/produce store in their own/rent house and also keeps him at shandy place. Majority of the respondents expressed that the infrastructure facilities in the market are decreasing and no efforts have been made to improve the infrastructure facilities. In the weekly market there is a huge competition among the co-sellers. This leads to reduce the price of the produce. In the end of the market timings the sellers sells their produce at deep cheaper rates as compared to earlier hour's sales price because they doesn't want to carry their produce to their house because of heavy transportation charges, loading and unloading charges, and fear of spoiling the produce in transportation and also by keeping the produce for longer time. This is the win – win situation for both sellers and buyers. Buyers will benefits from the above situation.

Markets, on the other hand, provide a location where all buyers and sellers can meet. Consumers can see the range and prices of produce on offer and make choices based on their preferences and income. Sellers can take their produce to one location rather than having to go from door to door. They can see how much of a particular product is on offer; compare the quality of their produce with that of other sellers, and set their prices accordingly. In order to achieve such benefits, however, markets must be situated in locations acceptable to both sellers and buyers. Existing market sites or places where buyers and sellers meet informally on a plot of land at the side of the road. Increase retail competition in a convenient place, where farmers can meet with consumers. Traders who buy produce from farmers for transport to urban markets experience significant costs in travelling from farmer to farmer to buy small quantities. Farmers are also at a disadvantage because they are more or less forced to accept the price the trader offers. They cannot compare the price they are offered with the prevailing local price because there is no comparable market. Even if they have access to information about the prices in urban markets they cannot really use that knowledge to negotiate with traders because they have no realistic idea of the costs faced by the traders in travelling to their farm or village.

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