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INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE OF TRIBALS IN MELGHAT REGION OF MAHARASHTRA INDIA

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made in the present investigation to study income, employment and consumption expenditure of tribals in Melghat region of Maharashtra. The study area was Chikhaldara and Dharani tehsil of Amravati district were purposively selected for the study because the highest concentration of tribal population. The data were collected through personal interview from tribal farmers with the help of pre tested interview schedule. A total sample of 200 tribal farmers was selected randomly from 10 villages of two tehsil during 2020-2021. Simple tabular analysis was used to study income, employment and consumption expenditure of tribals in Melghat region revealed that for overall, income from MGNREGA contribute 31.46 per cent of total income. Overall total income of tribal farmer was Rs.95092.48. Overall working members were 861 which were engaged in various employment sources. Average days for crop production was 72.25 for male, 76.83 for female and 15.03 days for children. Average days for MGNREGA was 57.90. Tribal spend 54.76 per cent of their income for the other necessities of life. Overall average expenditure of tribals was Rs.61684.09.

Keywords : Tribal farmers, Consumption, MGNREGA, Employment, Income.

Introduction

Tribe is a group of families or communities linked by social, economic, religion or blood ties and usually having a common culture and a recognised leader. The term tribe is used in many different contexts to refer to a category of human social group. The predominant usage of the term is in the discipline of anthropology. Like other societies, tribal society is also not static, rather is quite dynamic, but the rate of change in tribal society is very slow. That is why they have been backward and poor in comparison to other people. Since they have been materially backward and economically poor, attempts have been made by the Government to develop them. Today the Government of all places of the world is paying special attention towards the development of the tribal, i.e., one finds the existence of induced or planned changes in tribal society.

Tribals of Melghat region

Melghat comprising the two tehsils that are Dharani and Chikhaldara, located on the northern part of Amravati district stretches across a vast expanse of forest and a tiger reserve. In the following decade, Melghat drew a lot of attention from the media as well as NGOs, activists, researchers, medical practitioners, and committees set up by courts to tackle malnutrition and child deaths in this region. This remote hilly region includes nearly 320 villages inhabited by the Korku tribe that represents 89.30 per cent of the region's total population. The tribal groups in the region, especially the Korkus, are the typical examples of deprivation and poverty. Although the practices and way of living are still traditional, shifts in the domain of livelihood and economic activity are prevalent among the Korkus. The backwardness in the spheres of socioeconomic and development domains is evident among the Korkus. The Melghat region, where Korkus form a majority, is famous for the higher rate of malnutrition and child

mortality. The empirical evidence attributes these as the result of the sociocultural and economic circumstances of the community. The complexity of the problem is underlined when the recent reports indicate that there are 6,000 deaths during the past 6 years, due to malnutrition and starvation. As they keep on wandering from one place to other, these tribes are in lack of education, which makes their survival difficult. So, they are forced to continue with this tradition of moving from place to place in search of work, which hurdles them to fit into the settled society. This does not allow them to fit into the settled society they are forced to continue with this tradition of moving from place to place in search of work. Thousands of families belonging to these tribes wander from place to place and stay in temporary structures.

Being the hilly area, it is very difficult to develop irrigation sources for the development of tribal agriculture. It is believed that the workers from tribal families remain unemployed for a considerable period during a year. As a result, the tribal economy remained stagnant due to inadequate employment and income opportunities. This has badly affected the consumption level in view of their poor economy to procure quality food. The facilities such as road, electricity, medical care and technical know-how for agriculture and employment opportunities are lacking in the region which can be fulfilled by the development schemes felt necessary for upliftment of tribal community.

The tribal expenditure is more on non-food items than the food. Among them health expenditure of the tribal people is a good sign but all other aspects like clothing, education and celebration has lot of inequality. The conditions of the tribal people are improved but still there is a need in the area of education especially which in terms provides income there by a scope to consumption.

Materials and Methods

Methodology and data source

The present study is an attempt to study income, employment and consumption expenditure of tribals in Melghat region. The present study was undertaken in Melghat region of Amravati district as the melghat is major tract of tribal population. Two tehsils of Amravati district namely Chikhaldara and Dharani were purposively selected for the study because the highest concentration of tribal population. From each tehsils five villages were selected randomly. In all total 200 tribal farmers were selected at randomly for the present study. From each village 20 tribal farmers were randomly selected. The details of selected sample are given below.

Table 1: Details of selected sample of Melghat region

Sr. No.	Selected Districts	Name of Village	No. of Sample
1.	Chikhaldara	1. Bhutrum	20
		2. Sumita	20
		3. Simori	20
		4. Domi	20
		5. Karanjkheda	20
2.	Dharani	1. Talai	20
		2. Takarkheda	20
		3. Baspani	20
		4. Diya	20
		5. Tingrya	20
Total			200

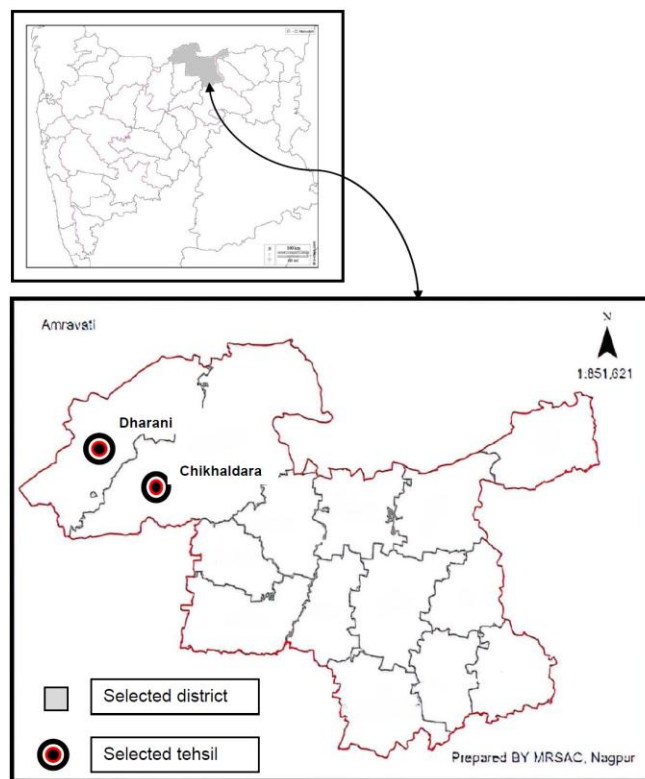


Fig. 1: Map of Amravati district with selected tehsils

The present investigation was based on the primary data. The data on various aspects of the study were collected from personal interviewed with the help of specially designed scheduled. The data pertains to the year 2020-21.

Income, Employment and Consumption expenditure of tribals

A simple tabular method of analysis was used to estimate the average annual employment of a male, female, child and per worker separately. The per family annual gross income from different crop and livestock enterprises and consumption expenditure of different size groups of sample households was

estimated separately for the proportion of expenditure incurred on different consumption items.

Results and Discussion

Income, employment and consumption expenditure of selected tribals

Income pattern, employment pattern and consumption expenditure of tribals were studied. It is clear that how they produce, how much they produce and how they utilize it.

Income pattern of selected tribals

Income received from the different sources was estimated and presented in this part of chapter. Tribal generated their income by taking lots of efforts. They get less wages according to their work and that is why they are not economically strong. Tribal families involved in farming, livestock activities, hired labour wages, business and services, forest produce collection and other sources of income. The overview of income generated by tribal families is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Annual gross family income of selected tribals (Rs.) (Figures in parentheses indicate the percentages to total)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Chikhaldara	Dharani	Overall
1	Crop Production (Agriculture)	22295.10 (24.26)	51861.43 (53.17)	37078.27 (39.00)
2	Horticulture (Vegetable)	4795.11 (5.22)	4390.00 (4.50)	4718.28 (4.96)
3	Livestock activity	2629.05 (2.86)	2142.11 (2.20)	2633.33 (2.77)
4	Wages of human labour	8318.00 (9.05)	11180.00 (11.46)	9749.00 (10.25)
5	Income from forest produce	7382.90 (8.03)	6485.00 (6.65)	6933.95 (7.29)
6	Business and services	2895.00 (3.15)	2701.00 (2.77)	2798.00 (2.94)
7	MGNREGA	42172.95 (45.88)	17659.53 (18.11)	29916.24 (31.46)
8	Others	1421.50 (1.55)	1109.33 (1.14)	1265.42 (1.33)
	Total	91909.61 (100.00)	97528.40 (100.00)	95092.48 (100.00)

From Table 2 presented that, the income pattern of selected tribal families from Chikhaldara tehsil obtain 24.26 per cent of income from the crop production and 5.22 per cent from horticulture (vegetable cultivation). From livestock they generate 2.86 per cent. Selected tribal families from Dharani tehsil obtain 53.17 per cent of income from the crop production and 4.50 per cent from horticulture (vegetable cultivation). From livestock they generate 2.20 per cent. The overall income pattern of selected tribal families from both tehsils obtain 39.00 per cent of income from the crop production and 4.96 per cent from horticulture (vegetable cultivation). From livestock they generate income 2.77 per cent.

The income from others farm, which included the hired wages i.e. Rs. 9749.00, which contributed 10.25 per cent of total income.

Tribals generate income from the MGNREGA in both tehsils. Tribals in Chikhaldara tehsil generate i.e. 45.88 per cent income from MGNREGA. For overall,

income from MGNREGA contribute 31.46 per cent of total income. Overall income from forest production contribute 7.29 per cent of total income. The average income of tribals in Chikhaldara and Dharani tehsil was Rs.91909.61 and Rs.97528.40, respectively.

Employment pattern of selected tribal families

Tribal belonging to working group were engaged in various employment activities including cultivating crops on their own farm as well as on others farms activities (hired human labour), livestock activities, non-farm activities like forest produce collection and they are also engaged in the government service, private jobs and business (viz. tailoring, shopkeeper, etc.). The information regarding the type of activities and employment in different activities are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 represents the employment pattern of sampled tribal families. It is observed from Table 5.14 the total working member were 420 and 441 from

Chikhaldara and Dharani respectively. As overall working members were 861. Out of which 447 were male, 374 were female and 40 were children. The average number of days for crop production on owned farm worked out to 72.25 days, 76.83 days, 15.03 days of male, female and children, respectively. It showed that, the tribal got more employment from crop production. The average number of days for crop production on others farm worked out to 10.46 days, 13.39 days, 4.70 days of male, female and children, respectively. The total number of days required for livestock activities was 9.18 days.

The average days engaged in MGNREGA were 57.90 days and total 444 tribals engaged in the scheme.

The tribals from Chikhaldara tehsil were engaged mostly in the MGNREGA. The total tribals from Chikhaldara tehsil engaged in MGNREGA were 313. It could be concluded that, tribals got employment from government scheme too with the earning of good amount of wages, as well as the tribals engaged in business and services. It is observed that, 3 tribals from Chikhaldara and 4 tribals from Dharani tehsil, total 7 tribals were engaged in business/service and the average employment days in business/services were calculated 289.29 days. Other activities give the average employment of 25.29 days in which 28 tribals were engaged.

Table 3: Annual employment pattern of selected tribal families (Numbers).

Sr. No.	Particulars	Chikhaldara		Dharani		Overall	
		Total No.	Days	Total No.	Days	Total No.	Days
1	Working members	420	-	441	-	861	-
a	Male	218	-	229	-	447	-
b	Female	181	-	193	-	374	-
c	Children	21	-	19	-	40	-
2	Crop Production						
A	On owned farm						
a	Male	215	72.74	225	71.79	440	72.25
b	Female	181	77.08	193	76.60	374	76.83
c	Children	21	16.14	19	13.79	40	15.03
	Sub total	417	165.96	437	162.18	854	164.11
B	On others farm						
a	Male	215	9.22	225	11.64	440	10.46
b	Female	181	11.52	193	15.13	374	13.39
c	Children	21	5.71	19	3.58	40	4.70
	Sub total	417	26.45	437	30.35	854	28.55
	Total crop production	-	192.41	-	192.53	-	192.66
3	Livestock	19	9.95	19	8.42	38	9.18
4	Forest produce collection	100	26.96	95	27.78	195	27.36
5	MGNREGA	313	57.38	131	27.28	444	57.90
6	Business/ services	3	351.67	4	242.50	7	289.29
7	Other	19	27.00	9	21.67	28	25.29

Child employment in selected tribal families

Child employment is banned in India. To force child to work is also illegal and it is a crime. Though it is a banned but for the income generation children in

the Melghat region have to work for earning the money for livelihood. The information on child employment is given the Table 4.

Table 4 : Child employment in selected tribal families (Numbers)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Chikhaldara		Dharani		Overall	
		Total No.	Days	Total No.	Days	Total No.	Days
A	Crop production						
1	On owned farm						
a	Crop production	21	16.14	19	13.79	40	15.03
b	Livestock activity	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Sub total	21	16.14	19	13.79	40	15.03
2	On others farm						
a	Crop production (wages)	21	5.71	19	3.58	40	4.70

b	Livestock activity	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Sub total	21	5.71	19	3.58	40	4.70
	Total crop production		21.85		17.37		19.73
B	Forest produce collection	7	23.46	5	21.06	11	22.20

Table 4 revealed that 21 working children from Chikhaldara tehsil and 19 from the Dharani tehsil were engaged in crop production on owned farm. Total 40 children were engaged in crop production. The average days employed in crop production for children were 15.03 days. While number of employed days for crop production on others farm (wages) were 4.70 days. On an average 11 children were engaged in the forest produce collection and average days employed for them were 22.20 days.

Consumption and expenditure pattern of selected tribals

Consumption and expenditure pattern of tribal totally depend upon day to day income generated by them. They don't have more savings as they earn the income. They spend their income on their necessities. Therefore, expenditure of tribal is directly related to income generation. The figure of item wise consumption expenditure gives the idea regarding the standard of living of the selected tribal households. The details of consumption expenditure pattern of tribal families is given in Table 5.

Table 5: Per family average annual consumption expenditure of selected tribals (Values:Rs.)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Chikhaldara		Dharani		Overall	
		Owned	Purchased	Owned	Purchased	Owned	Purchased
1	Food items						
A	Rice	5963.90 (20.74)	1032.00 (1.73)	5230.11 (18.94)	1396.50 (2.19)	5597.01 (19.86)	1214.25 (1.97)
B	Wheat	6247.53 (21.73)	758.00 (1.27)	7252.31 (26.27)	1152.00 (1.81)	6749.92 (23.95)	955.00 (1.55)
	Total Cereals	12211.43 (42.47)	1790.00 (3.00)	12482.42 (45.21)	2548.50 (3.99)	12346.93 (43.81)	2169.25 (3.52)
C	Pulses	3678.15 (12.79)	1880.13 (3.16)	4125.28 (14.94)	1761.67 (2.76)	3901.71 (13.85)	1820.90 (2.95)
	Total Food Grain	15889.58 (55.27)	3670.13 (6.16)	16607.70 (60.15)	4310.17 (6.76)	16248.64 (57.66)	3990.15 (6.47)
D	Edible oil	-	2617.39 (4.39)	-	2952.18 (4.63)	-	2784.79 (4.51)
E	Meat/Eggs	6735.57 (23.43)	1916.62 (3.22)	4857.95 (17.59)	4279.13 (6.71)	5796.76 (20.57)	3097.88 (5.02)
F	Milk & milk products	-	558.50 (0.94)	-	596.50 (0.93)	-	577.50 (0.94)
G	Tea	-	578.60 (0.97)	-	885.01 (1.39)	-	731.81 (1.19)
H	Sugar	-	1810.16 (3.04)	-	1986.35 (3.11)	-	1898.26 (3.08)
I	Vegetables and Fruits	3482.79 (12.11)	1322.27 (2.22)	2867.30 (10.38)	2459.93 (3.86)	3175.04 (11.27)	1891.10 (3.07)
	Total Food Items	26107.94 (90.81)	12473.67 (20.94)	24332.95 (88.13)	17469.27 (27.38)	25220.44 (89.49)	14971.47 (24.27)
2	Non-food items (tobacco, gutka, alcoholic drinks etc.)	-	4281.89 (7.19)	-	4560.81 (7.15)	-	4421.35 (7.17)
3	Input (seed, fertilizer, plant protection, etc.)	2642.63 (9.19)	7410.79 (12.44)	3278.59 (11.87)	8092.18 (12.68)	2960.61 (10.51)	7751.49 (12.57)
4	Livestock maintenance	-	990.00 (1.66)	-	534.50 (0.84)	-	762.25 (1.24)
5	Other Necessities						
J	Clothing	-	7235.53 (12.15)	-	8245.19 (12.92)	-	7740.36 (12.55)
K	Housing	-	1875.77	-	2366.37	-	2121.07

			(3.15)		(3.71)		(3.44)
L	Fuel and Lighting	-	19538.11 (32.80)	-	15645.81 (24.52)	-	17591.96 (28.52)
M	Education	-	1120.23 (1.88)	-	1507.78 (2.36)	-	1314.01 (2.13)
N	Medical	-	2185.08 (3.67)	-	2430.85 (3.81)	-	2307.97 (3.74)
O	Other miscellaneous	-	2460.11 (4.13)	-	2944.24 (4.62)	-	2702.18 (4.38)
	Total other necessities	-	34414.83 (57.77)	-	33140.24 (51.95)	-	33777.54 (54.76)
	Total	28750.57 (100.00)	59571.18 (100.00)	27611.54 (100.00)	63797.00 (100.00)	28181.05 (100.00)	61684.09 (100.00)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentages to total)

It is revealed from the table 5 that per family overall annual expenditure worked out to be Rs.61684.09. The major expenditure incurred on fuel and lighting (28.52%), input (12.57%) and clothing (12.55%) respectively. The table also indicated that the expenditure on total food grain was 6.47 per cent of the total expenditure which is very less because almost all selected tribals used farm food for home consumption except maize. Also each farmer grow kitchen garden in that they cultivate vegetables required for home consumption in addition to this in Monsoon season, they may remain half starved for 3 to 4 months and try to compensate their needs by consuming roots and tubers from forest area. Hence expenditure made on total food grain is very less (Shendage et al. 2009). The expenditure made on meat and eggs was 5.02 per cent. Almost all tribals are non-vegetarian in a month 4-5 times they eat non-veg. they use barter system for meat and eggs among friends and neighbors.

The alcohol consumption is very common among the tribals for both men and women. The presence of alcohol is usual in all festivals and celebrations. The locally made alcohol named Mahua is widely used by tribals. The use of tobacco in the form of bidi, cigarette and smokeless tobacco items is prevalent among the tribals. The expenditure on these non-food items were 7.17 per cent of the total expenditure.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of selected tribals the expenditure incurred on purchase of seed, fertilizer and tillage operation is Rs.7751.49 i.e. 12.57 per cent. In other necessities, the villages in Melghat are lack basic infrastructure and transport facilities therefore most of the tribals use two wheelers as a mode of transportation and hence the expenditure on fuel is major contribution after food in total expenditure i.e. 26.07 per cent. However the expenditure on clothing, housing, education were 12.55 per cent, 3.44 per cent and 2.13 per cent respectively. Tribal communities practice different types of

traditional healing practices. The traditional medical practitioner using vegetable, animal and mineral substances and certain other methods based on the social, cultural and religious backgrounds as well as the prevailing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs regarding physical, mental and social well-being and the causation of disease and disability in the community. Traditional healers used different medicinal formulas from various natural substances (animal, mineral and vegetable). They have extensive knowledge on the use of plants and herbs for medicinal and nutritional purposes. They use locally available medicinal herbs. They have also faith on divines and worships for cure of ailments. Sometimes they approach primary health care center nearby village therefore the expenditure on medical is very low 3.74 per cent of the total expenditure. Thus the hypothesis that the income and expenditure level of tribals is low is accepted.

Conclusion

The income of tribal farmers is low but participation in the MGNREGA increases with increase in the income. The wages for agricultural laborers are not promising. Therefore for many families, work in MGNREGA. Also collect the forest products for getting money. The major products they collect from forest include Tendupatta, Mahua, honey etc. Consumption expenditure pattern of tribal totally depend on day to day income generated by them. They don't have more saving as they earn the income they will spend it on their necessities. Therefore consumption expenditure of tribal is directly related to income generation. The expenditure on total food grain was less because almost all selected tribal used farm food for home consumption except Maize. Also each farmer grow kitchen garden in that they cultivate vegetables required for home consumption. They spend less on food items like milk and milk products and other necessities like education. So there consumption

pattern is still bad. Their nature and lack of proper awareness also badly affects their consumption pattern. The expenditure on fuel is major contribution in total expenditure because the villages in Melghat region are lack in basic infrastructure and transport facilities therefore most of tribals use two wheelers as a mode of transportation.

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