

Abstract

Introduction:

Social geography of the country presents a clear ecological demarcation between the tribal and non-tribal habitats. While the non-tribal communities of the country are clustered and concentrated in the agriculturally suitable river valleys, flood plains, productive lands and deltas, the tribal communities are settled, clustered and concentrated in the agriculturally unsuitable hilly, forested and dry regions of the country. Due to the age-old natural resource base particularly forests, and in the absence of alternative economic avenue for sustenance, the tribes had to adopt sedentary agriculture as their mainstay livelihood in an ecological setup that is primarily unsuitable for the purpose. An investigation is done in the Chhota Udepur district located in eastern part of the State to ascertain the reasons behind the lower level of agricultural prosperity of tribal regions. The researcher has attempted to find the factors affecting the agricultural land use and human resources for the backwardness in farming and also their interwoven outcomes. The study focuses on the changing scenario of the tribal society and economy within the contemporary dynamics of Indian polity. The study aims at investigating different perspectives of farming in tribal areas and their effects on livelihood in the region. The study takes support of secondary data, primary investigation and case studies.

The Research Problem:

The present study examines and analyses the major constraints of the tribal farming at macro and micro levels with generalisations and, contemplates a few solutions which could open the vistas for further research.

Objectives:

This study has set the following objectives for the study:

- a) To study the land use changes in the tribal areas of Gujarat.
- b) To study the changes in work participation in the tribal areas of the State and the study region.
- c) To develop an understanding of the prevailing agricultural practices in the tribal areas of Gujarat, specifically in the study area.
- d) Assess the consequences of the current agricultural practices on tribal economy and society.

- e) To examine the prospects of ameliorating tribal livelihood.

Hypothesis:

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

- I. The dependence of the tribes on their immediate surroundings (geographical milieu) has substantially reduced.
- II. Lack of alternative economic avenues and dependence on agriculture has left a large segment of the tribal population impoverished and has compelled them to migrate seasonally to the nearby urban areas in search of employment opportunities.
- III. Traditional tribal cultural activities have changed under the influence of urbanization and industrialization.

Study Area:

The present study focuses on Vadodara district and Chhota Udepur district (which was a sub-district of Vadodara district before 2013).

Methodology:

To establish the population parameter and to substantiate secondary data with primary findings multi stage cluster sampling method has been adopted in the study. Cluster method is used as the population is large and scattered throughout the eastern part of the State. More than one variable is used for grouping thus, the methods of primary investigation can be called as divisive polythetic clustering. The primary focus of the research is on changes in land use and work participation.

Tools and Techniques:

The proceedings of the study “Problems and Prospects of the Agriculture in the Tribal Areas of Gujarat: With Special Reference to Vadodara” have been examined with secondary and primary sources of data. Different statistical techniques, cartographic methods and thematic maps have been used at different units of analysis like state, district, *taluka* and village.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

The RRA method was used in this study to closely interact with the local communities particularly women, to seek ground level information directly from them, to develop understanding about various issues pertaining to their life and livelihood, and to learn from them. The exercise was conducted with a purpose of involving particularly the female segment of the target population and gather indigenous knowledge.

Organisation of The Study:

The study is arranged in eight chapters. To understand the objectives and conclude with tested hypothesis these chapters are being classified in different segments. Major findings and conclusions of the chapters in this thesis are as under:

Chapter One includes description of research problem, objectives and hypotheses of the study. Methods of acquiring data, its analysis, representation and testing of the proposed hypotheses have also explained in this chapter.

The **second chapter** explains the physical background of the study area.

Third chapter includes descriptive analysis of socio-economic status of tribal occupation and livelihood patterns of the 12 predominantly tribal districts of eastern Gujarat have been assessed in the chapter.

Chapter four deals with *taluka*-wise cropping pattern in the Chhota Udepur district. Due to physiographic differences, availability of irrigation facility varies across the *talukas*.

Chapter five describes characteristics of tribal labour and their participation ratio. Withdrawal of female workers as main workers is an outcome of additional income generation from the periodic migration of marginal farmers.

In **chapter six**, findings from the field survey are described along with testing of hypothesis. This particular segment of the study analyses spatial pattern of tribal farming and its characteristics. Relation between different variables and outcome has been examined and hypotheses have been tested.

Chapter 7 deals with the observed gaps in the facilities offered and the benefits appropriated by marginal farmers or agricultural labourers.

The **eighth chapter** summarises mainly with the note of conclusions and suggestions.

Conclusion:

Tribal culture as well as tribal farming, both are intrinsically interwoven with the geography, particularly the physical base of the habitat. Apart from physical background of the tribal farming, there are many socio-economic conditions which influence the tribal economy. The study comprehends the equation between land holding and farmers in the tribal region of Gujarat. The researcher expects success in solving the problems of the tribes through the adoption of a holistic approach involving parameters of Geography.