

# Tribal Working Women in Organized Sector: A Sociological Study in Raichur District

<sup>1</sup>Dyavamma & <sup>2</sup>Dr. Laxman Kawale

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar Department of Sociology Gulbarga University Kalaburagi: 585 106 Karnataka (India)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor Department of Sociology Govt. Degree College & P.G. Centre Kalaburagi: 585 105 Karnataka (India)

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### \*Corresponding Author

Email: archanamholkar@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

The Scheduled tribes or tribes are isolated caste or community groups earlier living in forests and hilly areas. Each of the tribe has its own unique features and social culture. Due to their conventional and orthodox culture, tribes are away from civilized societies. Now, due to decrease in forests, they are migrated to villages and towns. By gaining from the Government welfare schemes, few of the tribes are getting education and employment. Many of the women belonging to scheduled tribes are also working in the Government sector. As their social culture is entirely different, but educated and employed, it is essential to know whether their social culture has been changed. Hence, a sociological study of tribal working women in Raichur district of Karnataka was made. The paper described details of the study.

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## 1. Introduction

The Scheduled Tribes (ST) are the most neglected sections of the Indian society have been subjected to economic exploitation and social discrimination for ages. The age-old exploitation and repression of the tribal have cut them from the mainstream of the socio-economic and educational development. This state has been largely responsible for their abject poverty, illiteracy and overall backwardness. Due to geographical isolation they have been alienated from the rest of the community as a result of which they have been forced to lead a life of economic and social subjugation.

A tribe is a group comprising families, alone or generations, having its own customs, occupying a specific geographical territory and being independent of, or having little contact with, the dominant national society of the country in which they live (Goodland, et al, 1982). Scheduled Tribe communities especially those residing in interior and inaccessible areas have had a very raw deal. Interior habitations of tribes are small in size, scattered, and sparsely populated. Most of the predominantly ST habitations are bereft of basic infrastructural facilities like transport and communication.

In tribes, the women's problems mainly arise out of under-utilization of their time and labour and development strategies that are insensitive to the requirements of women. Areas of particular concern in the development and welfare of tribal women are women's access in the development and welfare of tribal women are women's access to resources, low literacy rates, high levels of fertility, lack of community services and inadequate state interventions. Barring a few instances, women do not have access to resources such as land, credit, training and counseling that would improve their standard of living. There are no specific interventions targeted to improve the access of tribal women to these resources.

Realizing the under-development of tribal women, the Government has encouraged their education. Further, there is

reservation for these women to get jobs in Government sector. As such, many of the tribal women are working in organized sector jobs. Though earning good income from their salaries, tribal women are facing many of the problems and challenges. Few of them are getting higher status, whereas others are caught in role conflict problems. Hence, it is essential to study the social issues of tribal working women and the present study is an attempt in sociological study of tribal women in Raichur district of Karnataka.

## 2. Objectives of the Study:

The present study is made:

- ❖ To explore the age group and education of tribal working women in Raichur district.
- ❖ To study the marital status and social issues of tribal working women.
- ❖ To know whether employment has provided family decision making authority and brought higher status and respect for tribal working women.

## 3. Scope and Research Methodology:

As discussed above, the present study is made in Raichur district of Karnataka. The authors were referred research papers, journal articles, books, research reports, etc on the education and employment of tribal women. Based on the same, theoretical background is derived. The study is mainly based on the field survey and due to limited time frame, 250 tribal working women in Raichur district were surveyed using questionnaires. The tribal women surveyed belongs to different tribes such as Valmiki, Gonda, Hakki-Pikki, etc and these women are working in different Government departments such as North East Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NEKRTC), Gulbarga Electricity Supply Company (GESCOM), Education Department, Revenue Department, Degree Colleges, Government Hospitals, Police Department, Income Tax Department, Agriculture Department, District

Administration, Banks, etc. The collected primary data is analysed, interpreted and discussed as under.

#### 4. Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion:

The collected primary data on different social issues from the tribal women are analysed, interpreted and discussed as under.

##### 1. Age of the Tribal Working Women:

Generally, a woman joins to their jobs after 18 years of age and retires at 60 years. The age determines the knowledge, experience, work expertise, etc. Hence, the primary data was collected from the tribal working women on their age-group and presented in the following table.

**Table No. 1. Age of the Tribal Working Women**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
18 to 30 Years (Young)	61	24.4
31 to 50 Years (Middle)	132	52.8
More than 50 Years (Old)	57	22.8
Total	250	100

Age of the tribal working women covered under the study disclosed that, 132 (52.8%) are between 31 to 50 years followed by, 61 (24.4%) are between 18 to 30 years and the remaining 57 (22.8%) are of more than 50 years respectively.

##### 2. Educational Qualifications:

When the statistics are analysed, it is found that, there is lower education for tribal women. Due to their lower education, they are working in lower rank jobs. Like age, the education decides about the knowledge of the tribal working women. That is, if the tribal women are more educated, then there will be more knowledge and then there may be higher ranks of jobs. The collected primary data on the educational qualifications of the tribal working women is analysed and discussed as under.

**Table No. 2. Educational Qualifications**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Up to Primary	27	10.8
Secondary	96	38.4
Pre-University/ Under-Graduate	48	19.2
Graduate/ PG	79	31.6
Any Other	--	--
Total	250	100

The educational level of the tribal working women shows that, 27 (10.8%) have completed just primary education, 96 (38.4%) have completed secondary education, 48 (19.2%) have completed pre-university or under-graduation and 79 (31.6%) have completed graduate or post-graduation.

##### 3. Marital Status:

When sociological study is made, marital status of the respondents plays significant role in determining social culture. In this regard, the collected primary data on marital status of tribal working women is shown in the following table.

**Table No. 3. Marital Status**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Unmarried/ Single	--	--
Married	222	88.8
Divorcee/ Separated	08	3.2
Widow	20	8.0
Total	250	100

It is noted that, almost that is, 222 (88.8%) of all the tribal working women are married and living with their husbands, 08 (3.2%) are divorcees or separated from their husbands and 20 (8.0%) are widows.

##### 4. Nature of Family:

When the women are working, they preferred to live in nuclear families as there is more responsibility and work in joint families. Even few of such working women would like to live in joint families, as they may concentrate on outside work more, leaving household work to other family members. The primary data collected on the nature of family of the tribal working women is disclosed as under.

**Table No. 4. Nature of Family**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Joint	97	38.8
Nuclear	153	61.2
Total	250	100

On the nature of family of the tribal working women, 97 (38.8%) are living in joint families, whereas 153 (61.2%) are working in nuclear families.

##### 5. Number of Children:

As the tribal working women are married, it was asked to them to furnish the number of children and collected information is presented in the following table.

**Table No. 5. Number of Children**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
None	33	13.2
1-2	165	66.0
3-4	52	20.8
5 or more	--	--
Not Applicable	--	--
Total	250	100

Above table made it clear that, 165 (66.0%) of the respondents have 1 to 2 children followed by, 52 (20.8%) have 3 to 4 children and the remaining 33 (13.2%) have no children respectively.

##### 6. Decision Making Authority in Family:

Gender inequality is prevailed in family and society and such inequality is more among backward communities like scheduled tribes. Gender inequality is expressed in families in terms of female's non-participation in family decision making. Hence, the information was collected from the respondents on the decision-making authorities in their families and tabulated as under.

**Table No. 6. Decision Making Authority in Family**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Parents/ Parents-in-Law	63	25.2
Husband Only	84	33.6
Husband and Self	72	28.8
Self Only	15	6.0
Any Other	16	6.4
Total	250	100

On the family decision making, of all the tribal working women, 63 (25.2%) have stated that their parents or parents-in-law are making family decisions, 84 (33.6%) have expressed that only their husbands are making family decisions, 72 (28.8%) have mentioned that they are making the family decisions along with their husbands, only 15 (6.0%) have remarked that they are making their family decisions and 16 (6.4%)\_ have opined that other persons such as children are making their family decisions.

**7. Status of Working Women Compared to Housewife in Family and Society:**

As the tribal women surveyed are working in organized sector, they are earning salaries. As such, they have economic power and their standard of living is also higher compared to housewives. Still, it is essential to know their social status and respect compared to housewives. In this respect, the primary data was collected and shown in the following table.

**Table No. 7. Status of Working Women Compared to Housewife in Family and Society**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Higher	147	58.8
Equal	90	36.0
Lower	13	5.2
Total	250	100

The status of working women compared to housewife in family and society in family and society as stated by tribal working women revealed that, 147 (58.8%) have stated that the status of working women is higher, 90 (36.0%) have expressed that it is equal and only 13 (5.2%) have mentioned that working women have lower status compared to housewives.

**5. Discussion and Conclusion:**

As discussed above, tribal women have gained education and employment in Government offices. But it is highlighted that, majority of them are working in lower posts such as Class-III and Class-IV posts rather than higher ranks. Surprisingly, it is emphasized that, though many of the tribal women are managing their offices efficiently, they don't have authority to make family decisions. It shows that, the gender inequality is prevalent in the families of many of the tribes. Still as revealed from the study, working tribal women are getting more status and respect in family and society. It shows that, there is achievement of gender equality among tribal families due to women's employment. It is suggested to tribal working women to gain more authority to make family decisions. For this purpose, more education is also essential for tribal women.

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