

## “A Study on Agrarian Problems With Reference to Tribal Cultivators in Chandrapur District of Maharashtra”

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### Abstract

In the 21<sup>st</sup> era of growth and development, the agriculture is the mainstay of livelihood for the cultivators in India. Majority of farmers are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture business and about 65 percent of populations are directly involved in this enterprise. Among those farmers, most of them belong to Tribal Communities from remote corner of the state which are untouched and are living in underdeveloped condition. The Chandrapur district in Maharashtra comes under the tribal region and considered as downtrodden region. The annual incomes of farmers in Chandrapur District are too limited to meet their ends, eventually forcing them to commit suicide or changing their attitude towards ancestral business. In 2004-05 more than 50 percent of famers in Chandrapur district are under the poverty line. The researchers tries to reveal the development of agriculture and livelihood of farmers in chandrapur district of Maharashtra.

**KEYWORDS:** Agriculture Inputs, Agricultural problems, Livelihood, Income.

### INTRODUCTION

India has a geographical area of 328.73 million hectares; of which reported area for land use is 306.04 million hectares. The net area cultivated is about 142.60 million hectares i.e. about 46.6per cent of the total reported area. Since nearly 50 million hectares of area is sown more than once,the cropping intensity works out to 135.1. Forests account for about 68.97 million hectares i.e. 22.5percent of the total reported land area. Also nearly 13.97 million hectares are cultivable wastelands and 9.91 million hectares are fallow lands. Only about 30 percent of the total cropped area is irrigated and the remaining area is rain fed. The available statistics further shows that only about 66 percent of the gross cropped area is under food crops and nearly 34 percent area under non-food crops. Cereals and pulses account for nearly 52.93 per cent and 12.64 percent of the total area respectively. Fruits and vegetables occupy nearly 4.24 percent of area. (Haque 2003)

At present, almost all the technologies have been developed to meet the every needs of our human society.But on the other hand the primitive farmer's i.e 'Tribal Farmer' is still struggling for their existence in India.Eighty per cent of her vast populations live, directly or indirectly, on income derived from agriculture. But to say that India lives by agriculture does not mean that India is agriculturally advanced. In spite of various scheme and programs, massive expenditure on tribal welfare programs in

India, millions of tribal farmers at grassroots level are succumb to the pressure of indebt, poverty, mal-nutrition etc. As rightly said by the Debar Commission in 1961 was that “Problem of economic development for the bulk of the tribal’s cannot be solved unless that resources of land, forests, cattle wealth, cottage and village industries are all mobilized in an integrated basis.” The development of the agriculture sector depends on industries such as power, fertilizers and machine tools. Two major components of agricultural development strategy have been initiated i.e Subsidies on inputs and minimum support price for output. Although the agricultural sector have done a notable development in the last few years, problems of rural indebtedness and the exploitative practices of the village moneylenders are still become prey in most underdeveloped region.

The overall conditions of tribal region in India are just pathetic. Nearly two decades have been spent on the development of tribes. Eighty per cent of her vast populations live, directly or indirectly, on income derived from agriculture. As the development policies were not reaching or having any impact on the most backward tribes, an effort was made to further classify the most backward and underprivileged as “**Primitive Tribes.**”

#### **TRIBAL LIVELIHOOD IN CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA**

In Maharashtra, there are 1,05,10,213 reported as Scheduled Tribe, of which 53,15,025 are males and 51,95,188 are females showing an addition of 19,32,937 during 2001-11. The growth rate for ST population during 2001-11 stands to be 22.5 percent and their proportion in total population is 9.4 percent against 8.9 percent in 2001 (2011 Census).

As per 2011 census, 64.82 % population of Chandrapur districts lives in rural areas of villages. The total Chandrapur district population living in rural areas is 1,428,929 of which males and females are 726,106 and 702,823 respectively.

<b>Area Of the District</b>	<b>11,443 sq. Km</b>
<b>Area Under Cultivation</b>	<b>413000 hect. In 2000-2001</b>
<b>Area under Irrigation</b>	<b>146276 Hect in 2006-07</b>
<b>Land under NA use</b>	<b>132000 Hect</b>
<b>Wasteland</b>	<b>115 Hect</b>

**TABLE-1.AGRICULTURE IN CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT**

In fact most of the cultivators from particular areas are untouched and in underdeveloped condition. Among those cultivators majority are of Tribal Communities from remote corner of the state. The annual incomes of tribal peoples are too limited to meet their ends, eventually forcing them to commit suicide or changing their attitude towards ancestral business. In 2004-05 more than 50 percent of households (Agricultural labour) were under the poverty line. There are various solvable reasons might be social,

socio-economical and attitudinal, and need to study in details for the upliftment of the tribal cultivators.

The different tribal communities have been found to dwell in the different patches of the talukas engaged in the cultivation practices. However their dependence on the forest and their adoptability even in adverse condition made them unique forest dwellers. Different tribes like 'Mana', 'Gond', 'Kolam' and 'Pardhan' are found to be sustaining their livelihood on the farming and forest. Particularly 'Mana' tribe can be observed in Warora, Chimur, Nagbhir, Sindewahi, Bramhpuri, Bhadravati, Mul, Saoli and Chandrapur. Thus, majority of tribes are deprived from various schemes, facilities or any provision or even from the education facility. Majority of 'Kolam' tribe is found to be in Jiwati, Rajura, and Korpanataluka. In Saoli, Mul, Gondpipri, Pombhurna, Warora and Rajura the concentration of 'Gond' tribe can be observed.

The core of Gond tribe is confined to Chandrapur and Gadchiroli district and its periphery in adjoining districts of Nagpur and Bhandara. The high tribal concentration above 24.56 percent were categorized, especially in the district of Chandrapur, where the forest is very thick and on the plains, the roads are un-communicable, tribals like Gond, Kolams, Madias, Halba, etc. can be found. So far they have remained mostly illiterate and backward, and are concentrated in one region. The fragment periphery of this group is found in the districts of Nagpur, Bhandara, and Wardha.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

As agriculture is the very primitive business, various traditional and indigenous techniques are attached with the farming and also with cropping pattern which is being low productive. Thus the Study of project targets towards orthodox cropping patterns and to evaluate measures to cope with it.

The Researcher conducted the research study in agriculturally less progressive region i.e tribal region consisting 160 villages of Chandrapur district. Though the Chandrapur district is known for its tribal habitation, but almost tribal farmers are located in the either vicinity of or in the buffer zone and core zone of the forest TATR. The villages from the remote corner of the district have been surveyed in the clusters and 165 tribal farmers which were interacted and replied through questionnaires on representative basis among the farmers group with whom the subsequent discussion was made.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- 1. To study the agricultural inputs in relation with resources:**
- 2. To study the budgeting and financial assistance:**
- 3. To study the cropping pattern and indigenous knowhow.**

Analyses were made on the basis of the questionnaire which was filled by the respondent's i.e. tribal farmers in Chandrapur District.

### Financial Assistance:-

Since long time, Indian farmers have been facing a number of socioeconomic problems, such as harassment by moneylenders, inability to repay debts following crop loss, inability to get medical treatment for the family, etc. The problem is compounded by lack of positive and cooperative support from banks especially in the face of inclement weather and market fluctuations. Economic plight of farmers might be illustrated with the fact that a farmer having as much as 15 acres of land and hence considered a well off farmer in Vidarbha, with an average income of Rs 2700 per acre per annum, had an income just little more than what he would have earned the legal minimum wage for all 365 days of the year.

The reasons for such a pathetic state of farmers include below average rainfall, heavy load-shedding, lack of small irrigation projects, poverty, pressure of private moneylenders and banks, ignorance of ancillary occupations for raising income, employment problem of the farmers' children, decreasing interest of the young generation in farming, rapid urbanization, apathy and lack of political willpower toward welfare and development of the region, etc. Cumulative effect of all these is evident on the psyche of the people of Vidarbha in general and farmers in particular. Farmers are hence prompted to turn to local moneylenders (sahukars) who charged them a much higher rate of interest. In fact moneylenders proved to be the most common and easy source of loans for the farmer (28.4%) followed by loans procured from relatives (22.93%) while only 3.94% turned to land development banks.

Among 164 household visited and interviewed tribals only 28 farmers have not debt the loan for cultivation. These 28 farmers replied the reason of not having the loan that, they have joint 7/12 and repayment is the issue among family members and private moneylenders charge more than 25% interest rate. Lacking irrigation only kharip cultivation is a source of income, rabi cultivation is not possible creating problem of payment of debt, farmers of Huma, Nagbhir stated. Most of the tribals in the district cultivating on the encroached forest land and struggling for land right have official problem of 7/12 in burrowing loan from banks. Therefore the private moneylender or 'Sahukar' proves easiest and quick way for financial assistance without bothering the highest interest rate to meet demand of agriculture input for season. Very few tribal farmers had loan from co-operative banks.

### Tools & Implements:

The tribal farmers in Chandrapur District arousing with some of simple tools and implements that is easily available at local level for various farm operations. These are made by the local specialists or carpenters and blacksmiths. Agriculture related traditional implements existing in tribal areas by the way of craftsmen are diminishing fast and at present it is difficult to get carpenter, blacksmith etc. at village level.

Sr.No.	Local Names	English Names	Uses and operation
1.	Naagar	Wooden plough	For ploughing i.e. tillage operations
2.	Wakkhar/Dawara	Harrow	For harrowing and weeding
3.	Wila/Vira/Era	Sickle	For reaping, weeding
4.	Bandi	Bullock cart	For transportation
5.	Datya		To clean the harrow

6.	Kurhadi	Axe	To cut the wood
7.	Phawada	Spade	Collecting/maintaining soil
8.	Topale/Dale/Dala	Bambo basket	Caring grains,seeds
9.	Dholi	Bambo basket	Storing grains/seeds
10.	Tiphan	Sowing harrow	For sowing seeds
11.	Sarata	Hollow pipe of bamboo	For sowing seeds
12.	Tutari	--	To guide and control bullocks during cultivation
13.	Tutya	---	To make the implements free from soil/mud during cultivation

**Table 2: Local Agricultural Implements used by Farmers**

The labour requirements for collecting indigenous raw materials and fabricating farm implements are rather high, readymade goods are therefore on rampant in the market. Farmers too are not willing to purchase the traditional material due to easiness, superior quality and facilities available with new technology. Incorporation of implements like Tifan (sowing harrow), ropes, bullock carts (iron made) made it common in the society. Cheap availability of farm implements and less earning results in diminishing traditional skill of blacksmith and carpenters.

## CONCLUSION

Being subsistent farmer most of the tribal farmers in Chandrapur District live under abject poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and Zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders. Indebtedness is almost inevitable since heavy interest is to be paid to these moneylenders.

Multiple growth of insurgent situation lead's to pathetic condition of tribal farmers such as unemployment, fragmentation of land, poverty etc. the study reveals the fact that the tribal farmers in Chandrapur region don't have any economical back-up to sustain the recurrent losses from farming. They are always in need of financial assistance. No emphasis was given to equity and justice, ecological stability and environmental sustainability while considering the tribal welfare. Indigenous knowledge practiced by tribals is diminishing gradually. It appears that tribal farmers have become an outsider or homeless. Also tribal Farmers have poor bargaining powers.

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