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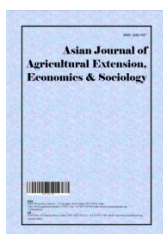
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Participation of Tribal Youth in On-Farm and Off-Farm Activities

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Background: More than 50.00 percent of India's current population is below the age of 25 years and it highlighted the importance of youth in the country's development. The study on tribal youth is an essential exercise in comprehending and combating their various problems as tribal youth belonged to disadvantage social groups and suffer from many crippling problems that retard their development.

Methods: The study was under takes in Dhanora and Etapalli tahsil of Gadchiroli district. 140 tribal youth were selected from 14 villages of 2 tahsils, an exploratory research design of social research was used and the data were collected with the help of a structured and pretested interview schedule.

Results: The findings revealed that the majority of tribal youths regularly participated in land preparation viz, ploughing of land (72.14%), spreading of FYM (63.57%), and leveling of land (52.14%), and occasionally participated in harrowing (52.14%) and crushing (50.00%), they were regularly participating in transplanting (73.57%), sowing activities (63.57%) and occasionally seeds treatment (70.00%) and selection of seeds (57.86%). The majority of them occasionally participated in intercultural operations. The majority of tribal youths regularly participated in off-farm activities, Temdu patta cutting (60.71%) and collection of Mahua flowers and fruits (53.57%).

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1. INTRODUCTION

The youth constitute a numerically dominant potential, resourceful and also adventurous segment of the population in our country. More than 50.00 per cent of India's current population is below the age of 25 years and over 65.00 per cent up to the age of 35 years. Majority of them lives in rural areas. The population in the age group of 15-34 years increased from 351 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. Current predictions suggest a steady increase in the youth population to 464 million by 2021. By 2020, India set to become the world's youngest country with 64.00 per cent of its population in the working age group [1]. Tribal youth is defined as a person in the age group of 15 to 35 years belonging to any tribal community. Youth population in India with the age group of 15 to 35 years is around 43,02,28,000 (35.56%) of the total population. Out of this, 70 percent (301 million) are urban youth. As a majority of youth comes from the rural area, they are considered the nation builders of tomorrow more than 50 percent of the total population below the age 25 [1].

According to the government of India, the tribal population is 104.3 million in India, which is 8.6 percent of the total population. Out of which youth contributes 50 percent, Maharashtra contributes 10.1 percent of the tribal population of India. 930 villages are 100 percent tribal population, 3,760 villages constitute more than 90 percent tribal population, and 4,836 villages constitute more than 75 percent tribal population 6,738 villages constitute more than 50 percent tribal population and 10,257 villages constitute more than 25 percent tribal population. Gadchiroli district constitutes 4,15,306 tribal populations which are 38.17 percent of the total population [2].

The study on tribal youth is also essentially an exercise in comprehending and combating their various problems. The tribal youth as a disadvantaged social group suffer from many crippling problems that retard their development keeping them relatively backwards and marginalized in the growing economy, thus paving the path of dissension and social unrest of which the tribal states have a better experience. The young people might lack

experience but they tend to be highly motivated and capable of offering new ideas or insights. India has the second largest concentration of tribal population after the African continent. The tribal population of India is more than 8.00 per cent of the total population; however, in Maharashtra, it is over 9.00 percent of the state population.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study the participation of tribal youth in on-farm and off-farm activities.

The present investigation was carried out in the Gadchiroli district of the Vidarbha region as having the highest population of tribal. From the Gadchiroli district, two tahsils Etapalli (66,596) and Dhanora (58,748) were purposively selected as both the selected tahsils had the highest population of tribal people. Seven villages were selected from each tahsil thus a total of fourteen villages were selected. From each selected village 10 tribal youth (between age group 15-35) and who have a minimum of 1.00 acres of land holding were selected randomly. Thus, from selected 14 villages of Etapalli and Dhanora tahsils 140 tribal youth were selected randomly, out of these 128 were male and 12 were female youth. Thus, these total of 140 tribal youth were considered as respondents in the present investigation.

Participation was defined as the active involvement of tribal youth in different on-farm and off-farm activities. For its measurement teacher-made scale was developed. It was measured on three point continuum as Regular participation, Occasionally participation, and Never participation by assigning scores 2, 1, and 0 respectively.

On the basis of obtained score of each of the respondents, a further Participation index was developed as follows and they were categories on the basis of equal interval method.

$$\text{Participation Index (PI)} = \left(\frac{\text{Obtained participation score}}{\text{Obtainable participation score}} \right) \times 100$$

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Participation of Tribal Youth in Different On-Farm Activities

The data depicted in Table 1, regarding the participation of tribal youth in on-farm activities, revealed that the majority of the tribal youth regularly participated in land preparation viz., ploughing the land (72.14%), spreading of FYM (63.57%) and leveling of land (52.14%), followed by clod crushing (45.51%), preparation of nursery (45.51%) and harrowing (40.71%), respectively. The data further stated that majority of the tribal youth occasionally participated in land preparations viz., harrowing (52.14%) and clod crushing (50.00%), followed by preparation of nursery (45.71%), leveling of land (43.57%), spreading of FYM (30.71%) and ploughing the land (24.29%). This clearly indicated that the tribal youth had either occasionally or regularly participated in land preparation.

The data from Table 1, revealed that the majority of the tribal youth regularly participated in sowing activities viz., transplanting (73.57%) and sowing (63.57%). The data further stated that the majority of the tribal youth occasionally participated in sowing activities viz., seed treatment (70.00%) and selection of seeds (57.86%), followed by broadcasting (43.57%), sowing (34.29%) and transplanting (25.71%). Further, it was observed that the tribal youth have never participated in broadcasting (45.00%).

The data from Table 1, found that one-third of the tribal youth were regularly participated in intercultural operations viz., application of fertilizers (35.00%) and preparation of channel/furrow for irrigation (33.57%). The data further stated that about majority of tribal youth have occasionally participated in intercultural operations viz. disease management (72.86%) and insect-pest management (72.14%), followed by irrigation (62.86%), preparation of channel/furrow for irrigation (62.14%) and application of fertilizers (55.71%), respectively. This indicates that the majority of tribal youth were occasionally participated in intercultural operations.

Regarding Harvesting and Post harvesting activities it was observed that, more than half of the tribal youth regular participated in harvesting and post-harvest activities viz., harvesting (52.14%), followed by threshing (46.43%), the

respondents were regularly participated in transportation farm produce (12.14%), marketing (11.43%), storage (10.00%) and grading/processing (05.71%). The data further stated that majority of tribal youth were occasionally participated in harvesting and post-harvest activities. Storage (72.14%), marketing (56.43%) and transportation farm produce (54.29%). This was followed by threshing (47.14%), harvesting (45.71%) and grading/processing (13.57%). This clearly indicated that the majority tribal youth were not regularly participated in marketing, storage and grading/processing these activities.

In the case of animal husbandry activities, it was observed from Table 1 that, over one-fourth of respondents (28.57%) were regularly performing goat rearing activities, whereas only 37.14 and 29 percent of respondents occasionally participated in care of sick animal and grazing of animal activity, respectively. The majority of tribal youth were not participated in feed & fodder purchasing (89.29%), care of Animal breed (82.86%), feeding of animals (79.29%), grazing of animals (67.14%), goat rearing (60.71%) and care of sick animals (57.86%), respectively. It clearly indicated that majority of respondents never participated in animal husbandry activities.

In case of other agriculture related activities, it was observed that nearly one-fourth of the tribal youth were regular participated poultry farming (22.14%), followed by fish farming (16.43%) and fishing (10.71%), respectively. Whereas only (22.86%) of tribal youth were occasionally participated in fishing activity. This indicated that tribal youth very less participated in others agriculture related activities.

3.2 Participation of Tribal Youth in Different Off-Farm Activities

The data from Table 2, it was found that majority of the tribal youth were regularly participated in forest production viz., Tendu patta cutting and collection (60.71%), followed by Mahua flower/fruits collection (53.57%). The tribal youths were regularly participated in off farm activities such as labour (12.14%), driving and transportation (11.43%), service and educational activity (10.00%) respectively. The 07.14 per cent respondents also regularly produced the handicraft material and also done Bamboo cutting (02.12%). Tembrun fruit collection, Aonla/Hirda collection and selling and Forest works as labour very few respondents are regular. It was further observed that majority of the tribal youth

occasionally participated in forest production activities viz., Forest works as labour (64.29%), followed by Mahua flower/fruits collection (42.86%), Tendu patta cutting and Collection (34.29%), Aonla/Hirda collection and selling (26.43%), Charoli collection (25.00%), Tembrun fruit collection (23.57%), Hunting (13.57%) Production of handicrafts (11.43%), Bamboo cutting (09.29%) and Honey collection and selling (07.86%), respectively. This indicated that more than half of the tribal youth are regular participated in Tendu patta cutting and Collection

and Mahua flower/fruits collection while majority of the tribal youth were occasionally participated in forest works as laborer.

3.3 Overall Participation of Tribal Youth in On-Farm and Off-Farm Activities

From Table 3, it was revealed that more than half of the tribal youth (51.42%) had medium level of participation in on-farm and off-farm activities, followed by low (39.29%) and high level (09.29%) participation.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to frequency wise participation in on-farm activities

Sl. No.	On-farm activities	Participation of respondents (n=140)		
		Regular	Occasionally	Never
A) Land preparation				
1	Ploughing the land	99(72.14)	36(25.71)	05(03.57)
2	Clod crushing	64(45.71)	70(50.00)	06(04.29)
3	Harrowing	57(40.71)	73(52.14)	10(07.15)
4	Levelling of land	73(52.14)	61(43.57)	06(04.29)
5	Spreading of FYM	89(63.57)	43(30.71)	08(05.72)
6	Preparation of nursery	64(45.71)	64(45.71)	12(08.58)
B) Sowing activities				
1	Selection of seeds	51(36.43)	81(57.86)	08(05.71)
2	Seed treatment	20(14.29)	98(70.00)	22(15.71)
3	Sowing	89(63.57)	48(34.29)	03(02.14)
4	Broadcasting	16(11.43)	61(43.57)	63(45.00)
5	Transplanting	103(73.57)	36(25.71)	01(00.71)
C) Intercultural operations				
1	Preparation of channel / Furrow for irrigation	47(33.57)	87(62.14)	06(04.29)
2	Application of fertilizers	49(35.00)	78(55.71)	13(09.29)
3	Weeding	18(12.86)	68(48.57)	54(38.57)
4	Irrigation	32(22.86)	88(62.86)	20(14.29)
5	Insect-pest management	22(15.71)	101(72.14)	17(12.14)
6	Disease management	29(20.71)	102(72.86)	09(06.43)
D) Harvesting and Post-Harvest activities				
1	Harvesting	73(52.14)	64(45.71)	03(02.14)
2	Threshing	65(46.43)	66(47.14)	09(06.43)
3	Transportation farm produce	17(12.14)	76(54.29)	47(33.57)
4	Storage	14(10.00)	101(72.14)	25(17.86)
5	Grading/ processing	08(05.72)	19(13.57)	113(80.71)
6	Marketing	16(11.43)	79(56.43)	45(32.14)
E) Animal husbandry activities				
1	Animal breeding	05(03.57)	19(13.57)	116(82.86)
2	Feeding of animals	04(02.86)	25(17.86)	111(79.28)
3	Care of sick animals	07(05.00)	52(37.14)	81(57.86)
4	Feed and fodder purchasing	08(05.71)	07(05.00)	125(89.29)
5	Grazing of animals	05(03.57)	41(29.29)	94(67.14)
6	Goat rearing	40(28.57)	15(10.72)	85(60.71)
F) Others agriculture related activities				
1	Fishing	15(10.71)	32(22.86)	93(66.43)
2	Fish farming	23(16.43)	12(08.57)	105(75.00)
3	Poultry farming	31(22.14)	11(07.86)	98(70.00)

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to frequency wise participation in off-farm activities

Sl. No.	Off-farm activities	Participation of respondents (n=140)					
		Regular		Occasionally		Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Labour work	17	12.14	75	53.57	48	34.28
2	Construction of roads/ buildings	11	07.86	60	42.86	69	49.28
3	Driving /Transportation	16	11.43	13	09.29	111	79.29
4	General store/ Kirana shop	06	04.28	02	01.43	132	94.29
5	Cycle/Motorcycle repairing shop	03	02.14	00	00.00	137	97.86
6	Pan/Supari shop	07	05.00	02	01.42	131	93.57
7	Tailoring	07	05.00	06	04.28	127	90.71
8	Electrician	05	03.57	03	02.14	132	94.28
9	Service	14	10.00	00	00.00	126	90.00
10	Education	14	10.00	04	02.86	122	87.14
11	Tadi selling	10	07.14	23	16.43	107	76.43
12	Selling of liquor	03	02.14	13	09.29	124	88.57
13	Musician (<i>Wajantri</i>)	06	04.29	22	15.71	112	80.00
A) Forest production							
1	Tendu patta cutting and Collection	85	60.71	48	34.29	07	05.00
2	Mahua flower/fruits collection	75	53.57	60	42.86	05	03.57
3	Bamboo cutting	03	02.12	13	09.29	124	80.57
4	Tembrun fruit collection	02	01.43	33	23.57	105	75.00
5	Production of handicrafts	10	07.14	16	11.43	114	81.43
6	Aonla/ Hirda collection and selling	02	01.43	37	26.43	101	72.14
7	Charoli collection	00	00.00	35	25.00	105	75.00
8	Honey collection and selling	00	00.00	11	07.86	129	92.14
9	Huntting	00	00.00	19	13.57	121	86.43
10	Forest works as labour	01	0.71	90	64.29	49	35.00

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their overall participation

Sl. No.	Participation	Respondents (n=140)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	55	39.29
2	Medium	72	51.42
3	High	13	09.29
Total		140	100.00

The findings of present study are similar with findings of Suman Verma [3] and Tekale et al. [4] who reported that majority of respondents had medium level of participation.

4. CONCLUSION

From the present investigation, it can be concluded that, the tribal youth actively participated in on-farm activities as it is a core occupation for their livelihood, their participation in on-farm activities like land preparation, sowing, intercultural operations, harvesting, and post-harvesting activities is highlighted remarkably

and express their role in these activities. While in the case of off-farm activities, they mainly engaged in the collection of forest products such as Tendu pattas and Mahua flowers as it is a predominant activity in their locality. While their participation in other off-farm activities was were negligible.

With this background, the effort should be taken by the extension personnel and policymakers to make on-farm activities more productive, and motivate the tribal youth to take part regularly in on-farm and off-farm activities. Extension personnel can organize various training and

programmes for tribal youth related to on-farm and off-farm activities so that tribal youth can be benefited from it.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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