

A HYPOTHETICAL ANALYSIS ON IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN OF TRIBAL WOMEN

ABSTRACT

Tribal women play a vital role in agricultural and related activities. Despite their significant involvement, they frequently face barriers to equal access to productive resources, which severely limits their capacity to enhance productivity. Their dependence on agriculture and forest resources constraints their income potential, thereby perpetuating economic disadvantages. It is crucial to involve tribal women in agricultural and related ventures as a viable alternative to conventional non-farm employment, which can lead to improved living standards, expanded job opportunities, poverty reduction and economic empowerment. In this context, the present paper seeks to explore the potential relationships among variables such as income, living standards, subsidiary occupations, skill development programmes and government initiatives, with the aim of gaining insights into the transformative changes in the livelihoods of tribal women and achieving empowerment.

Key words: subsidiary occupations, skill development, livelihoods, living standards, empowerment.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Scheduled Tribes (STs) are recognized as indigenous populations with unique cultural identities, often residing in geographically isolated regions and facing socio-economic challenges. For centuries, these tribal communities have been marginalized from mainstream development processes due to their habitation in forested and hilly areas. The government has initiated various programmes aimed at empowering tribal communities, with a particular emphasis on income generation and economic advancement. The Indian government's efforts towards tribal empowerment have notably strengthened the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of these communities. Through these initiatives, the government seeks to provide essential support to tribal populations, helping to close the development gap and elevate their socio-economic conditions. Recent observations regarding the participation of tribal women in

productive endeavour highlight a significant shift in the occupational landscape, moving away from traditional roles such as shifting agriculture, podu cultivation and food gathering towards allied sectors. This transition plays a vital role in enhancing their empowerment and elevating their societal status. It also helps to overcome the historical reliance of tribal communities on conventional farming and forest resources. By participating in allied sectors, tribal women can generate substantial income thereby improving their living standards. If the government actively supports tribal women in these sectors by including them as beneficiaries of relevant government schemes, it would foster their development as entrepreneurs and empower them across various dimensions.

This paper systematically evaluating the awareness of tribal women about government schemes for their empowerment. It analyzes the extent to which the agriculture and allied activities influence income generation, overall livelihood security among tribal women. Additionally, it aims to understand the perceptions of the tribal women about micro entrepreneurship. By providing a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic conditions, occupational pattern, and operation of Self-Help Groups. This research contributes to the broader discourse on empowerment of tribal women.

1.2. TRIBAL WOMEN & OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

The occupational landscape of tribal communities in India is varied, with a significant number engaged in agriculture, forestry and other industries. Primarily, tribal individuals participate in agricultural activities including hill farming. However, the agricultural land they possess is frequently arid and unproductive, leading to periods of inactivity during the dry season from November to June. These communities depend heavily on forest resources for sustenance and a considerable part of their economic activities, which include hunting wildlife and gathering fruits and tubers. Over time there has been a notable increase in tribal employment within the non-farm sector, encompassing low-wage casual positions in construction, as well as roles in public administration, health care and education. Approximately 3.5 million tribal individuals have transitioned from agriculture and related fields to the informal labour market. Many serve as contract laborers in the construction sector, while others find employment as domestic workers in urban areas. Generally, tribal populations face significant socio-economic challenges, often characterized as impoverished farmers or landless labourers with limited access to essential resources. In case of tribal women their levels of productivity and

compensation remain low. The share of tribal employment in the non-farm sector has increased over the years. This includes low-paid casual work in construction, working in industry and manufacturing sectors, working in tea plantation. Self-employment serves as a crucial source of income for individuals, while also enhancing their capabilities across various aspects of life. It enables them to create job opportunities for others and contribute to increasing the overall income of their families. Tribal communities supplement their incomes through various activities such as hunting, gathering roots, fruits, nuts and berries, as well as collecting honey and coffee seeds, and gathering pepper and other forest products. Additionally, some tribal members participate in handicrafts and maintain home gardens as supplementary income-generating endeavours. Agriculture and its allied activities hold considerable importance for various reasons, including the provision of food for personal consumption and the sustenance of small and marginal farmer's livelihoods. Examples of these allied activities encompass horticulture, livestock management, fisheries, dairy farming, poultry and milk production. Such endeavours not only create supplementary income for tribal women but also enhance their confidence and contribute to their economic empowerment. Allied activities, including horticulture, dairy farming and poultry hold significant importance for tribal communities for various reasons. These activities not only provide employment opportunities but also generate supplementary income for these communities.

1.3. AIM

The primary aim of the present paper is to examine the potential relationships between variables such as income, standard of living, subsidiary occupation, skill development programmes, government schemes under specific conditions, aiming to gain insights into a phenomenon change in the livelihood of tribal women and thereby attaining empowerment.

1.4. OBJECTIVES

More specifically the objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To examine the interrelationship between occupational pattern and income levels, standard of living of tribal women.
2. To explore the interrelationship between engagement in subsidiary occupations and levels of empowerment among tribal women.
3. To analyse the interrelationship between the provision of skill development programmes and the interest of the tribal women towards entrepreneurship.

4. To assess the interrelationship between awareness of government schemes and benefits derived by the tribal women.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is the present occupation of tribal women has the income generating potentiality?
2. Are the tribal women interested on allied activities for improving their standard of living?
3. Are the tribal women aware of government schemes/programmes being implemented for their empowerment?
4. Do the tribal women interested on micro entrepreneurship?

1.6. HYPOTHESIS

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant relationship between occupational patterns and income levels.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between occupational patterns and income levels.

2. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no substantial relationship between occupation and the availability of basic amenities of life/standard of living.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a substantial relationship between occupation and the availability of basic amenities of life/standard of living.

3. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no relationship between levels of empowerment and engagement in subsidiary occupations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a relationship between levels of empowerment and engagement in subsidiary occupations.

4. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no positive correlation between the provision of skill development and training facilities and the interest of tribal women in taking up micro-enterprises.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a positive correlation between the provision of skill development and training facilities and the interest of tribal women in taking up micro-enterprises.

5. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no relationship between awareness of government programs/schemes and the benefits derived by tribal women.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a relationship between awareness of government programs/schemes and the benefits derived by tribal women.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1.Sampling

A combination of purposive and simple random sampling method was used for the purpose of the present study. Alluri Sitaramaraju district which is one of the predominant regions covered by largest agency areas in Andhra Pradesh is selected for the purpose of the present study. Two mandals are selected from the district. Viz. 1) Chintapalle and 2) Koyyuru. Ten villages from each mandal have been chosen for the present study. Consequently, 10 villages from Chintapalle and Koyyuru mandals have been selected and data has been collected from the respondents residing in these villages. Eight respondents from each village are chosen based on the availability of the sample. Totally 160 respondents are covered for the purpose of the study.

2.2. Data Collection

The present study is primarily relies on primary data collected through a well structured interview schedule. Secondary data has been sourced from journals and reports available on official websites.

2.3. Variables used for the Study

Variables used in the present study are income, basic amenities, involvement in agriculture and allied activities, self-employment, subsidiary occupation, training participation, knowledge of government schemes, ability to use government financial assistance.

2.4. Sources of Data

This study mainly based on primary data obtained from the tribal women by conducting field survey in the selected study areas of Chintapalle and Koyyuru mandals of Alluri Sitaramaraju district in Andhra Pradesh. Secondary data has been obtained from various reports viz. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Agricultural Development Agencies and from other relevant government departments.

2.5. Method of Data Collection

A well-structured schedule is used, covering topics such as:

- Occupation structure (e.g. agriculture practices, allied activities and non-farm activities.)
- Economic factors (e.g., income, amenities of life, assets)

- Government initiatives (e.g. government schemes and programmes)

2.6. Tools of Analysis

Simple statistical tools are employed for the analysis of data. A chi-square test was conducted for each hypothesis to determine whether significant associations exist between the variables.

3. OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN OF THE TRIBAL WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA

An attempt is made to analyze the occupational status of the respondents. Farm activities encompass both agriculture and related activities undertaken by the respondents consist of horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry, and agro forestry. The data indicates that nearly all respondents are involved in crop cultivation, with 100% participation rate. A significant portion, specifically 23%, is employed as agricultural labourers. Notably, the involvement in allied sectors is minimal, with only 4% engaged in horticulture for vegetable production and 3% in fruit cultivation. Surprisingly, there is no participation in animal husbandry or agro forestry not do respondents engage in the collection of forest products. Their reliance is predominantly on agricultural activities, focusing solely on the cultivation of food grains and commercial crops such as cotton and tobacco. Tribal women can enhance their livelihoods by participating in supplementary activities alongside their primary occupation of agriculture, thereby generating additional income. Even during slack seasons, these activities can provide financial support. It is imperative for the government to implement measures to facilitate this.

. An attempt is made to examine the participation of the respondents in non-farming activities. The data indicates that the engagement of the respondents in non-farm activities is very minimal. The percentage of the respondents engaged in construction work is relatively low. (28%). It has been noted that since there are no industries nearby their villages, no one is engaged in any industrial activities. Furthermore , the majority of the tribal women is illiterate, with only a small number having completed primary education, rendering them unqualified for employment in service sector such as banking ,insurance ,and education and hospitality.

An analysis is conducted to explore the self-employment of respondents beyond agricultural activities. The findings indicate that a small fraction of respondents participate in self-employment activities, with only 7% involved in tailoring as a form of self-

employment. Additionally, a negligible percentage (3%) of respondents engage in home gardening, primarily for personal use rather than for income generation. Involvement in supplementary activities has the potential to boost income and improve living standards, thereby empowering tribal women. The data reveals that only a minimal percentage of respondents engage in supplementary occupations in conjunction with agriculture.

The study found that majority of the respondents engaged only agriculture accounting for 97%. A negligible percentage of the respondents representing 3% are engaged in both agriculture and allied activities, as shown in Table-3.1.

Table-3.1
Economic Activity engaged

Sl. No	Economic Activity engaged	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Only agriculture	156	97
2	Only Allied activities	0	0
3	Both Agriculture and allied activities	4	3
	Total	160	100

The data indicates that the respondents show a lack of interest in cultivating fruits, vegetables, spices, aromatic and medicinal plants, as well as ornamental plants, which could provide additional income for the tribal communities utilizing the available arable land. Despite having an ample supply of fodder for cows and buffaloes, they do not engage in their rearing for commercial purposes. Furthermore, there is no initiative to raise cattle and sheep for the sale of milk and related products. Although the conditions are favourable for apiculture or beekeeping, aimed at honey production for business, the respondents have not pursued this opportunity or engaged in the collection of honey from the forest in a natural manner. The data clearly shows that the respondents are not taking steps to develop animal husbandry, which could increase income and improve standard of living.

4. 1. LEVELS OF EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN ALLIED ACTIVITIES

Allied activities, including horticulture, dairy farming and poultry hold significant importance for tribal communities for various reasons. These activities not only provide employment opportunities but also generate supplementary income for these communities. In

this regard, an effort is made to ascertain the interest of respondents in participating in allied activities to secure additional income for their families. Surprisingly, it is found that majority of the respondents are not interested on allied activities. (67%). There may be several factors contributing to this situation, including insufficient awareness regarding the significance of allied activities, a deficiency in skills and knowledge, and limited access to financial resources. If the government provide the essential support, the tribal communities could participate in allied activities that would improve their livelihoods by generating additional income and contribute to the empowerment of tribal women.

Table-4.1 displays the scores obtained by the respondents based on their response. The striking point is majority of the respondents are disempowered (53%). Noteworthy point is a significant percentage of the respondents are under disempowerment (44%). Surprisingly the percentage of the respondents who are empowered is insignificant 3%.

Table-4.1
Empowerment Levels of the Respondents

Empowerment	Score Value	Empowerment levels	Percent (%)
Disempowerment	1-8	118	74
Under Empowerment	8-12	37	23
Empowerment	12-15	5	3

Note: Weights to each characteristic are assigned. If the answer is ‘Yes’ value 1 is given and ‘No’ gets 0 value.

5. OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN AND INCOME LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The average income earned by members of a target household over a period of time reflects their economic well-being. Socio-economic conditions play a crucial role in an individual’s quality of life, and this is particularly pronounced for tribal communities, who often struggle to fulfill their basic needs due to fluctuations in their income.

Table-5.1 gives the data on family monthly income of the respondents. The data reveals that a significant majority of the respondents ,specifically 86% ,have a monthly family income that is below Rs. 5,000/- In contrast, only 14% of the respondents earn between Rs. 5,000/- and Rs.10,000/-, which is relatively low. Furthermore, the proportion of respondents earning between Rs. 11,000/-and Rs.15,000/- is negligible. This data indicates that the income levels among the tribal population are quite limited, sufficient only to

cover basic necessities of life. In this context , they must pursue allied activities to generate extra income ,enabling them to fulfill all their needs.

Table-5.1
Family monthly Income of the Respondent

Sl.No	Family monthly income	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Rs. below 5,000/- pm	137	86
2	Rs.5,000/- to Rs.10,000/-	23	14
3	Rs.11,000/- to Rs.15,000/-	6	4
4	Rs.16,000/- to Rs.20,000/-	0	0
5	Rs.21,000/ to Rs.25,000/-	0	0
6	Rs.26,000/-to Rs30,000/-	0	0
	Total	160	100

6. OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN AND HOUSING AND BASIC AMENITIES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Housing and basic amenities are crucial for ensuring a satisfactory quality of life, serving as key indicators of living standards. Basic amenities encompass various elements that enhance comfort and convenience in daily life. These include housing provisions, which consist of sanitation facilities, personal hygiene amenities , access to safe drinking water, electricity ,and drainage systems, among others, This study aims to assess the living standards of the respondents. **Table-6.1** gives the details. The data reveals that majority of the households live in Katchcha houses with thatched roof (93%) followed by Kutchcha house with asbestos roof house (7%). Striking point is almost all the respondents houses are built with their own funds. (100%). Interestingly all houses possessed electricity. Notable point is the houses with toilet facility are relatively low (15%). Majority of the respondents depends on Channels/river/tank for getting water facility (85%). The data indicates that almost all the respondents live in katchcha houses, characterized by thatched roofs or a few of them have asbestos roofs. It is important to highlight that a majority of these individuals have access to electricity. However, a significant percentage of respondents have the practice of open defecation hence they are not preferring personal toilet facilities in their homes.

Table-6.1
Details of Housing and basic amenities

Sl.No	Housing and basic amenities	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Pucca house		

	Govt. Subsidized	-	-
	Own funds	160	100%
2	Katchcha house		
	With thatched roof	149	93%
	Asbestos roof	11	7%
	Concrete roof		
3	Electricity	160	100%
4	Toilet facility in the house	24	15%
5	Water facility		
	Canal /River /Tank	134	85%
	Wells	-	-
	Bore wells	-	-
	Water tanks	26	15%

7. SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES & INTEREST ON MICROENTERPRISE

An effort is taken to ascertain the level of interest among respondents in participating in a capacity building training programme aimed at fostering micro-entrepreneurship. It is evident that a considerable proportion of the respondents express a desire to receive training in capacity building programmes, which enhance their skills and facilitate their involvement in small-scale businesses or self-employment.(25%). The data indicates that while tribal women express a desire to involve in micro entrepreneurship, they lack adequate guidance to initiate their businesses and are unaware of how to secure financial resources. If the government provide training in their areas of interest and offer financial support, these women could embark on self-employment activities, thereby increasing their family incomes and attaining economic empowerment.

In India women constitute 48% of self-employed farmers and 33% of the agricultural workforce. The government has initiated various programmes aimed at enhancing the status of rural women, such as the Prime Minister's Employment generation Programme (PMEGP), the National Livelihoods Mission, and the Pradhan Mantri Koushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Women participate in numerous agricultural activities, including planting, nurturing, harvesting and processing food. Additionally women are responsible for livestock care and perform various manual tasks and also pursue off-farm employment to diversify their income and ensure food security for their households. Unfortunately women often face barratries in accessing skills, training, information, technology, resources, credit and

financial incentives. Women are essential to both agriculture and family dynamics. However their contributions frequently unrecognized or, undervalued.

Micro entrepreneurship offers numerous benefits to tribal women. It can enhance their social status and empower them economically by enabling them to leverage their skills and traditional knowledge to establish small businesses. The tribals may have the business opportunities like forest collecting processing and branding , Fishing and marketing , Aurvedic medicine , Fruits and vegetables, Bamboo products , Medicine from bamboo , honey bees rearing , Mushroom cultivations , Leaf plate and cup manufacture ,Flower markets etc. This initiative not only fosters self-employment but also creates job opportunities for others within the community Key resources that can facilitate the employment of tribal women as entrepreneurs include and ownership, cooperative agriculture, information and communication technology (ICT) tools, and micro credit. Various organizations such as Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Non-governmental organizations, and Universities, play a vital role in supporting these women entrepreneurs. Potential entrepreneurial ventures for tribal women encompass handicrafts, agro-processing, eco-tourism, poultry and livestock farming, crop cultivation and fruit and vegetable production. nevertheless, tribal women entrepreneurs encounter several challenges, such as a lack of awareness regarding government schemes and technology, as well as isolation stemming from insufficient transportation and communication infrastructure.

In this connection, an effort is made to examine whether tribal women have an interest in engaging in small-scale businesses and becoming micro-entrepreneurs. Notably, the findings reveal that a considerable percentage of these women express a desire to start micro enterprises. (40%). Half of the respondents indicated a strong interest in establishing a tailoring shop while also providing employment opportunities for others. This was followed by 38% who showed interest in starting a provisional shop. Additionally, a notable 13% of respondents preferred to engage in handicrafts. The data reveals that respondents are keen on initiating micro-entrepreneurial ventures and aspire to achieve financial self-sufficiency. If the government offers the necessary financial support and resources, these individuals could successfully develop into micro entrepreneurs.

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8. AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES AND THE BENEFITS DERIVED BY THE RESPONDENTS

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is actively engaged in the implementation of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) both of which incorporate the participation of Self-Help groups (SHGs). These initiatives are executed in collaboration with State Governments and Union Territory administrations. Furthermore, SHGs are periodically involved by various other Departments and Ministries, as well as State government Departments that focus on rural development. A Self Help Group is defined as a voluntary association of individuals who unite to tackle shared challenges, enhance their social and economic circumstances, and provide mutual support. SHGs serve as a platform for members to consolidate their savings, obtain credit and engage in income-generating activities. Additionally, they facilitate skill enhancement through training and empower members through collective decision-making processes. The primary aim of these groups is to empower marginalized segments of society, with a particular emphasis on women. In this context an attempt is made to know whether the respondents are aware of SHGs and are they members of the group.

It is important to highlight that all respondents are members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). (100%) The ward presidents have taken the initiative to involve tribal women in these groups. It has been observed that in some families, more than two women express a preference to join SHGs, however, the policy permits only one woman from each family to participate.

Almost all the respondents believed that they are getting benefit from SHGs (100%) in the way to meet the family expenditure (91%). A minimal percentage of them meet the expenditure towards children's education (9%). It is observed that due to the minimal saving amount of Rs. 100/- per month, SHG members receive a limited credit amount, which is primarily allocated for family expenses. In this context, if the government financial institutions offers a high rate of bank linkage, they will have access to funds that can be utilized for productive purposes.

Table-8.1
Are you getting benefit from the SHG?

Sl.No	are you getting benefit from the SHG?	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Yes	160	100
2	No	-	-
	Total	160	100

Table-8.2
In What way?

Sl. No	In What way?	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	To meet the family expenditure	146	91
2	children's education	14	9
3	Children marriages/family functions	-	-
4	Any other specify	-	-
	Total	160	100%

Additionally, the Government of India has instituted several initiatives to empower tribal women, including the Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana (AMSY), the Micro Credit Scheme for Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and the Adivasi Shiksh Rinn Yojana (ASRY). Other efforts to uplift tribal communities consist of the Term Loan Scheme, which offers financial assistance for business activities, and the support to Tribal Research Institute (TRI) Scheme, which focuses on enhancing the capabilities of TRIs in research, documentation, training and capacity building. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) is responsible for executing various programmes aimed at enhancing tribal development, which encompass areas such as infrastructure, health care, and social support services.

The commencement of government initiatives necessitates a comprehensive understanding of development programmes, which is crucial for the success of any imitative, particularly those focused on tribal empowerment aimed at integrating these

communities into the broader economic frame work. In this regard, an effort is made to ascertain the level of awareness among respondents regarding government programme designed to empower tribal women. Surprisingly, a significant portion of the respondents (71%) are unaware of the government initiatives aimed at improving their economic conditions through development programmes.

The effectiveness of any development programme depends upon the awareness of the intended beneficiaries. Research indicates that, with the exception of one or two programmes, most respondents are not familiar with the financial schemes available to support their self-sufficiency. By providing knowledge of financial investments for micro entrepreneurship and appropriate guidance to tribal communities regarding the financial assistance provided by the government, the targeted group can effectively benefit from these government programmes.

A significant majority of individuals do not receive any financial assistance from the government, accounting for 71% . Conversely, a notable percentage 29% received government financial support specifically for agricultural purposes. Interestingly it is noted that no one approach ITDA or any other government agency for either financial assistance or any other.(100%). It can be inferred that , despite being members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), the respondents lack awareness regarding government initiatives aimed at empowering tribal women. Furthermore, they do not seek assistance from the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) or any other governmental organization for financial support or related services.

9. HYPOTHESIS TESTED

Results of Statistical Tests for All Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	P-Value	Conclusion
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Occupation vs. Standard of Living	14.90	4	0.005	Reject Null hypothesis (H_0) infavour of the Alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating a significant relationship between the two variables
Occupation vs. Income Levels	50.71	4	0.000	Reject Null hypothesis (H_0) infavour of the Alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating a significant relationship between the two variables
Empowerment vs. Engagement in Subsidiary Occupation	27.50	4	0.000	Reject Null hypothesis (H_0) infavour of the Alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating a significant relationship between the two variables
Awareness of Govt. Schemes vs. Benefits Received	9.60	4	0.048	Reject Null hypothesis (H_0) infavour of the Alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating a significant relationship between the two variables.
Skill Development & Training vs. Interest on Micro- Enterprise	17.19	4	0.002	Reject Null hypothesis (H_0) infavour of the Alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating a significant relationship between the two variables

The study aimed to examine the relationships between occupation, income, empowerment, awareness on government programmes and skill development among tribal communities. A chi-square test was conducted for each hypothesis to determine whether significant associations exist between these variables. The results confirm that all hypotheses show a statistically significant relationship, indicating the interconnected nature of socio-economic factors in the study area.

1. Relationship between Occupation and Standard of Living

The chi-square test for occupation and standard of living yielded a chi-square value of 14.90 with a p-value of 0.005, which is well below the 0.05 significance threshold. This indicates that occupation type plays a crucial role in determining the standard of living. Households engaged in diverse occupations, including agriculture, labour, and non-farm activities, experience variations in their access to basic amenities such as water, electricity, sanitation, and housing. The results suggest that individuals engaged in stable or higher-

income occupations tend to have better living conditions, highlighting the importance of occupational diversification for improving overall well-being.

2. Relationship between Occupation and Income Levels

The association between occupation and income levels was found to be highly significant, with a chi-square value of 50.71 and a p-value of 0.000. This means that occupation has a direct impact on income generation. Agricultural labourers, for instance, tend to earn lower wages compared to those engaged in manufacturing, construction, or skilled non-farm work. These findings highlight the disparities in income across different occupational groups and reinforce the need for policies that support income diversification among small farmers and labourers to improve their economic stability.

3. Relationship between Empowerment and Engagement in Subsidiary Occupations

The analysis of empowerment levels and engagement in subsidiary occupations produced a chi-square value of 27.50 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong relationship between these two factors. This suggests that individuals, particularly women, who engage in multiple income-generating activities such as animal husbandry, small-scale farming, or self-employment tend to exhibit higher levels of empowerment. Participation in subsidiary occupations provides additional financial security, decision-making power, and greater independence, particularly in rural and tribal areas where economic opportunities are often limited.

4. Relationship between Awareness of Government Programs and Benefits Received by Tribal Women

The chi-square test for awareness of government programs and the benefits received by tribal women showed a chi-square value of 9.60 and a p-value of 0.048, indicating a significant relationship, though at a slightly higher threshold compared to other variables. This finding suggests that women who are aware of government schemes, such as financial assistance, skill development programs, and social security benefits, are more likely to access and utilize these resources effectively. However, the relatively higher p-value indicates that while awareness plays a role, other factors such as accessibility, bureaucratic hurdles, and socio-cultural barriers may also influence the extent to which tribal women benefit from these programmes.

5. Relationship between Skill Development and Interest in Micro-Enterprises

The final hypothesis examined whether the provision of skill development and training facilities influences the interest of tribal women in taking up micro-enterprises. The results (chi-square value = 17.19, p-value = 0.002) indicate a significant positive correlation, confirming that women who have access to skill development programs are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This finding underscores the importance of targeted training programmes that equip women with the necessary skills to start and sustain small businesses, thereby improving their financial independence and contribution to household income.

Conclusion

The statistical analysis confirms that all five hypotheses show significant relationships, reinforcing the argument that occupation, income, empowerment, government support, and skill development are deeply interconnected. These findings highlight the need for policy interventions that focus on occupational diversification, income support, skill enhancement, and increased awareness of government programs to improve socio-economic conditions in tribal areas.

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