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SOCIOECONOMIC ATTRIBUTES OFTRIBAL PEOPLE PRACTISING JHUM CULTIVATION IN TRIPURA

Sanchita Roy[1], Dr. Mahesh Singh[2]

[1,2]Department of Agriculture, Maharaja Agrasen Himalayan Garhwal University, Pauri Garhwal, (India)

Abstract

Jhum, also known as shifting agriculture, is the predominant land-use method in India's north-eastern area. Local communities have access to a social safety net since Jhum agriculture methods are typically productive and efficient because they make effective resource utilization and ensure environmental integrity and food security. It is an environmentally and economically sustainable kind of agriculture as long as population growth rates are modest and the Jhum cycle (coppice phase) is long enough to maintain ecological balanHowever, the cultivation cycle has been reduced as a result of population expansion, an increase in the demand for arable land, and the emergence of a younger generation of farmers. This has significantly impacted the quality of life and ecological sustainability in numerous areas. The research sample's economic characteristics were shown to have substantial positive connections with several socioeconomic status measures and, by implication, involvement.

Keywords: *Socioeconomic attributes,ShiftingCultivation,Jhumia,Tribal people,Tripura*

1. Introduction

The primary issue tribal groups in India confront is how to earn and maintain a living. Tribal groups, such as gatherers, may be found around the globe, including in many regions of India, pastoralists, and shifting farmers who inhabit distinct settings, engage in a variety of subsistence activities. Numerous changes have occurred concerning area use, access, security, and resource extraction, and these modifications have significantly impacted people's ability to maintain sustainable lifestyles without prioritizing sustainable replacement.In the highland regions of Northeast India, shifting cultivation or Jhum is a prevalent style of agriculture that is typically productive, makes effective use of resources, and has sustained enormous populations. Jhum cultivation accounts for 85 percent of Northeast India's total agriculture. Every year, over 26,000 households engage in shifting agriculture (Jhum), & Jhum provides food for roughly 143,000 individuals [1]. It has developed from an archaic practice through system backups of resource development that guarantees ecological preservation and food and nutrition security, consequently giving the local community a sense of security. [2].Tribal members do not just practise jhum for their sustenance. The agricultural production mix of perpetual and seasonal crops used in Jhum farming enables progressive harvesting, ensuring year-round food and nutrition security and providing the required nutritional and food choice diversity. The research study revealed[3] that the availability of Non-Timber Forest Products acts as an effective food supplement and source of income when food inventories are low.To preserve their livelihoods, farmers must strike a balance between food production and revenue creation; a combination of on- and off-farm activities aids in achieving this equilibrium[4]. For the connection to be beneficial for people's way of life, local communities must have access to forest supplies and expertise in using such resources. Jhum requires the choice of location, cutting and burning, accompanied by farming activities within one or three months and going to follow for certain intervals for the soil to regenerate. This paper aims to correlate livelihood status with the socioeconomic attributes of tribal people.

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2. Methodology

The study was done in the Gomati area in the Indian state of Tripura. The Gomati district has three subdivisions. Udaipur has three blocks, whereas Amarpur and Karbuk each have two blocks. Two villages were selected from each of these seven blocks in the Gomati district based on the most significant number of persons engaged in Jhum agriculture. Ten farmers were chosen randomly from each of the fourteen designated villages, bringing the total number of responders to 140.

2.1 Analyzingthevariables

To provide livelihood security, livelihood status is operationalized as the status of tribal farmers in terms of their capacities, assets, activities, and coping mechanisms for Jhum agriculture[5-6].The association between the livelihood situation of farming households, including their behavioural, physiological, and communicative traits, was determined using statistical and correlation analysis. Furthermore, the influence of personal, socioeconomic, psychological, and communicative aspects of farmers on the livelihood status of tribal farmers was determined using regression analysis[7].

3. Results and discussion

A. Resources

I. Natural Resources

Table 1 shows that 53.6% of the tribal members were happy with the amount of the land, and 3.6% were delighted. This is because they had free access to additional land to raise just 27.1% of farmers reported being less content with their poultry units, while 72.9% reported being more comfortable. With their livestock unit were because their livestock units lacked a solid framework.

II.Social Resources

The vast majority of agricultural producers (84.3%) were ecstatic about being able to depend on neighbours.

III. Human Resources

More than three-quarters of them (77.9%) were less content with the educational level of family members, yet they were all satisfied with the quality of domestic labour. In addition, almost three-fourths (72.1%)

IV. Physical Resources

The infrastructural facility is less satisfying to upwards of half (52.9%) of farming households (better roads, lighting, tools, and houses).

V. Financial Resources

Due to lower annual income and the fact that the majority of tribal members are small and marginal farmers, the majority of tribal members (72.9%) are less satisfied with their savings (72.9%) than farmers (86.4%) who have access to credit thanks to Self-help organizations in the area provide self-financed services.

B. Activities

Only 6.4% of tribal people are extremely pleased, and 54.3% are content with the profits they receive from selling Jhum goods, which include forest-based (honey, fruits) and non-forest-based products.

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C. Coping strategies from stress

82.14 % of farmers are less happy to prepare and sell bamboo-made goods due to a lack of bamboo and limitations from the Ministry Of environment and forests, as well as a reduction of 85% in producers happy to work in specialized occupations like weaving and tailoring due to a problem with the market.

Table 1: Socioeconomic attributes of the tribal people(n=140)

Statements	**Less Satisfied F(%)**	**Satisfied F(%)**	**Highly Satisfied F(%)**
A. Resources			
I. **Natural Resources**			
Land size	60(42.86)	75(53.57)	5(3.5)
II. **Social Resources**	-		
Ability to call friends or neighbours	-	22(15.72)	118(84.28)
Community Support(if necessary)	-	16(11.42)	124(88.58)
III. **Human Resources**			
Participants in the family's education	110(77.86)	36(22.14)	-
Families' abilities	8.5(5.71)	27(16.43)	110(77.86)
Endurance or wellbeing	13(9.29)	26(18.57)	101(72.14)
IV. **Physical Resources**			
Infrastructure (road, irrigation, electricity etc.)	74(52.86)	46(32.86)	20(14.28)
V. **Financial Resources**			
Stocks of money	102(72.86)	38(27.14)	-
Access to credit (household)	19(13.7)	12(86.43)	-
Family members associated with Jhum cultivation	74(52.85)	66(47.14)	-
B. Activities			
Satisfactory income(selling Jhum products)	55(39.28)	76(54.29)	9(6.43)
Satisfactory income(selling timber and non timber products)	115(82.14)	25(17.86)	-
C. Coping strategies from stress			
Income(making and selling bamboo products) under stress conditions	115(82.14)	25(17.86)	-
Weaving or Tailoring(under stress conditions)	119(85)	21(15)	-

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Table 2: Contribution of independent variables on livelihood status of Jhumias (n=140)

Sl. No.	Independent variables	Regression coefficient(β)	Std. Error	'value	F=13.785 R^2=0.542
1	Age	-0.047	0.019	-0.714^{NS}	**Significant at 0.01 level, *Significant at 0.05 level, NS Non-Significant
2	Number of older relatives or family size	-0.140	0.382	-1.829^{NS}	
3	taking part in human	0.151	0.415	2.202*	
4	Area under Jhum	0.703	0.313	9.520**	
5	Fallow period	0.101	0.247	1.644^{NS}	
6	Livestock possession	0.095	0.031	1.400^{NS}	
7	owning material goods	0.037	0.185	0.552^{NS}	
8	a focus on credit	-0.044	0.214	-0.651^{NS}	
9	Collaboration in extensions	-0.027	0.219	-0.380^{NS}	
10	involvement of the media	-0.008	0.290	-0.116^{NS}	

As seen in **Table 2**, the study's discovered independence factors are taken into consideration for 54.2% of the variation in the tribal people's means of subsistence. The number of family members participating in Jhum and the area under Jhum had a favourable, substantial link with livelihood status. Because Jhuming is the primary employment of tribal people, raising their livelihood status would be facilitated by factors such as the region covered by Jhum and the total number of family individuals participating in Jhum, according to the 't' test criterion.

4. Conclusion

The livelihood position of indigenous people was shown to be favourably and strongly correlated with education. The tribal people value and appreciate those who are educated among themselves and have a higher socioeconomic standing in society. Additionally discovered favourably and strongly correlated with farmer livelihood status were the area under Jhum and yearly revenue. A good correlation between the fallow season and farmers' livelihood was also discovered.The findings showed that livelihood status had a positive and substantial association. This could be due to the fact that more cosmopolitan tribe members interact with the outside world, which may have enlarged farmers' perspectives. As a result, it will make it easier to improve their financial situation. Additionally, it was shown that material possessions were positively and strongly associated with farmers' subsistence levels. If a farmer has more resources, they will have more luxuries in their home, which will inevitably affect the state of their livelihood.

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