

# TRIBAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - A Case Study in Rampachodavaram

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**Abstract:** The tribal communities are specified with the criteria of geographical isolation, distinctive culture, backwardness, shyness to contact with others as they are far away from other community in hilly areas. But now a day's far away from city, living in hilly regions is not a hurdle as there is a number of transportation means. Government have initiated with many facilities, schemes, scholarships and so on for the development of the tribal community. Tribal women play a vital role in development of tribal areas. Development includes social, economical, educational, technological, hygiene environment, healthcare and empowerment. Women now days are aware about their rights and responsibility, improved means of living, self-reliance, self-esteem and self-confident. This study has made an attempt to highlight the empowerment of tribal women in Rampachodavaram, Andhra Pradesh. The literacy level, their participation in economic and commercial sector is considered in the study. They have immense knowledge in various schemes sanctioned by the Government.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, self-reliance, self-esteem, self-confident, socio-economic development, hygiene environment, literacy rate, technological development.

## INTRODUCTION

Most of the populations in India lives in villages and far-flung remote areas. Though every region in India is connected with cities now, still it possesses its own peculiar traditional ethos. Most of the rural communities/Tribal's are still devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water, health care, ample transportation, etc. But the lack of education in many of the rural belts of India is proving fatal and acting as the breeding ground for social vices, evils and paving the way to anti-social/national activities. Education enhances ones competence level to cope up better in physical and social environments. Bourdieu, an educational sociologist refers it to as cultural capital and argues that it is the dominant culture known as "cultural capital" because, via the educational system it can be translated into wealth and power, which rural community is usually devoid of despite possessing abundant resources and man power. It can transform the rural/tribal communities of India by: Ensuring the upward social mobility among people, by liberating them from caste, groups and superstitious beliefs. Further education will ensure opportunities for functional employment thereby empowering rural folk for more economic opportunities, growth and development and can thus lead to the change in the whole map of poor and downtrodden rural landscape.

The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half of the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Undoubtedly, the programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of tribal's, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life. The impact of development planning needs to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of not only the socio-economic system but the entire ecosystem. Against this backdrop, the present paper reviews the emerging perspective in the context of the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women and changing paradigms of development.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Keeping the above analysis, literature pertaining to the present topic has been reviewed and analysed here. A study conducted by Manikyamba.P (1989) entitled 'Women in Panchayat Raj Structures' is an examination of the working of PRIs in general, the role of women as beneficiaries and benefactors in the socio-economic and political process of development, assessing the role of women presiding officers of the PRIs. She was of the view that given the opportunity, talented and interested women can play very effective leadership role politics. Sivanna,N (1990) in an empirical study dealing with the PRS under the Act of 1959 argues that, the involvement of women members in PRIs was not up to the expected mark. He observes that, although there are statutory provisions to ensure their representation, their socio-economic conditions are not conducive to their effective involvement. The book Panchayati raj in India (Rural local Self Government) written by B.S. Khanna (1994), is an extensive book which analyses the development of panchayati raj system. In the first part the author gives the general review of the development of panchayat raj system particularly in the national perspective like heritage, Self Government during the first decades, and community development programme, genesis of panchayati raj and growth of the panchayati raj and Ashok Mehta Committee Recommendations, present position of PRIs and also conferment of Constitutional status, steps towards the implementation of panchayat raj system in India. In the second part the author reveals that panchayati raj in the various states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, the author has concentrated on Karnataka and he has made 2 case study also like Tumkur and D.K. In Karnataka rural environment, panchayatraj in first phase, main features, Mandal Panchayat Samiti, and also Zilla Parishad, and system of work of the panchayatiraj and also reveals the dissolution of P.R. Bodies. In the third part the author is giving the description of conclusion and some suggestions and he divided the states like First Category and Second category states and Third category states, while concluding he has given some suggestions which may be incorporated as measures in the future for achieving desirable improvements in panchayats. Susheela Kaushika's(1995) study of PRI in action and the challenges to women's role focuses on specially the experience of women in election process, the hardship and obstacles they undergo and the kind of support in terms of remedial measures to overcome etc. Shakuntala Narasimhan(2000) her study on the empowerment of women reveals that though many of panchayats women are illiterate and poor and come from backward community, many of them have proved their metal and won action as able administrators.

Socialization is synonymous with education. Margaret Mead (1943) defines, education as the cultural process, the way in which each newborn human infant is transformed into a full member of a specific human society. Both these definitions indicate one aspect - socialisation or education is a cultural process in which inculcation of norms, values attitudes morals and skills, the members of the society ensures continuity in each generation with regard to various aspects of society. Today education a powerful agent of social change. It unlocks the door to modernisation. It also paves a sure road to economic modernization and progress.

### **OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study is

- To study the literacy rate in the tribal community.
- To empower the women by starting income generating activities.
- To create awareness on skill development programme and self employment opportunities.
- To explore the various success achieved by tribal women in promoting socio-economic empowerment.

This study is based upon secondary data which was collected from the published sources, news papers, magazines, journals, articles, available literatures and websites.

### **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

#### **Distribution of Tribes in India:**

The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribal's from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population. The sex ratio for the overall population is 940 females per 1000 males and that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males. Broadly the STs inhabit two distinct geographical areas – the Central India and the North- Eastern Area. More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), Maharashtra (10.08%), Orissa (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86%). The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh). More than two-third of the ST population is concentrated only in the seven States of the country, viz. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. There is no ST population in 3 States (Delhi NCR, Punjab and Haryana) and 2 UTs (Puducherry and Chandigarh), as no Scheduled Tribe is notified.

#### **Literacy Rate:**

According to the Census figures, the literacy rate for the STs in India increased from 47.1% in 2001 to 59% in 2011. Among ST males, literacy rate increased from 59.2% to 68.5% and among ST females, literacy rate increased from 34.8% to 49.4% during the same period. The literacy rate for the total population has increased from 64.8% in 2001 to 73% in 2011. Thus, there is a gap of about 14 percentage points in literacy rate of STs as compared to the all India literacy rate. The ST female literacy rate is lower by 15 percentage points as compared to the overall female literacy rate in 2011. The details are given below in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Literacy Rate among STs and all Social Groups**

Year	Scheduled Tribes			All Social Groups		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	13.83	3.16	8.33	40.40	15.35	28.30
1971	17.63	4.85	11.30	45.96	21.97	34.45
1981	24.52	8.04	16.35	56.38	29.76	43.57
1991	40.65	18.19	29.60	64.13	39.29	52.21
2001	59.17	34.76	47.10	75.26	53.67	64.84
2011	68.50	49.40	59.00	80.90	64.60	73.00

*Source: Office of the Registrar General, India*

### **SCHEDULED AREAS IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

The whole state of Andhra Pradesh constitute with the following tribal areas:

- Visakhapatnam Agency area 1 [excluding the areas comprised in the villages of AgencyLakshmiapuram, Chidikada, Konkasingi, Kumarapuram, Krishnadevipeta, Pichigantikothagudem, Golugondapeta, Gunupudi, Gummodukonda, Sarabhupalapatnam, Vadurupalli, pedajaggampeta].
- Sarabhupathi Agraharam, Ramachandrarajupeta Agraharam, and Kondavatipudi Agraharam in Visakhapatnam district.
- East Godwari Agency area 2 [excluding the area comprised in the village of Ramachandrapuram including its hamlet Purushothapatnam in the East Godavari district].
- West Godawari Agency area in West Godavari district.  
 Inserted by the Madras Scheduled Areas (Cesser) Order, 1951  
 Inserted by the Andhra Scheduled Areas (Cesser) Order, 1955
- Data includes the Submergence of Sch. villages of 7 mandals from Khammam district to the A.P. State (as per Reorganization Act, 2014): Nellipapaka, Kunavaram, Chintoor and V.R.Puram n East Godavari district and Burgampad, Kukunoor and Valaipadu in West Godavari district. Decadal growth rate of scheduled tribes and sex wise percentages to gender wise general population of Andhra Pradesh from 1961 census to 2011 census is represented in table 2. From the table it is clear that the total population has a gradual increase from 1961 to 2001, but in 2011 the population has reduced drastically. Same is in the case of ST population also. The percentage of ST male, female population to total population specifies an increasing trend from 1961 to 2001 census, but shows a fall in 2011 census. From this it can be inferred that there is decrease in population of tribes. This might be because of awareness of health, child care, empowerment among the tribal communities.

**Table 2. Decadal growth rate of scheduled tribes and sex wise percentages to gender wise general population of Andhra Pradesh from 1961 census to 2011 census**

Year	Total Population			Scheduled Tribes			% of ST	% of ST	% of
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male Pop to total Pop	Female Pop to total Pop	ST Pop to total Pop
1961	18161671	17821776	35983447	670368	654000	1324368	3.69	3.67	3.68
1971	22008663	21494045	43502708	840022	817635	1657657	3.82	3.80	3.81
1981	27108922	26440751	53549673	1618689	1557312	3176001	5.97	5.89	5.93
1991	33724581	32783427	66508008	2142817	2056664	4199481	6.35	6.27	6.31
2001	38527413	37682594	76210007	2548295	2475809	5024104	6.61	6.57	6.59
<b>2011</b>	<b>24829848</b>	<b>24745923</b>	<b>49575771</b>	<b>1361597</b>	<b>1378322</b>	<b>2739919</b>	<b>5.48</b>	<b>5.57</b>	<b>5.53</b>

*Source: Census of India 2011* \* Data includes Submergence of Sch. villages of ST population from Khammam district to the A.P. State (as per Reorganization Act 2014)

### TRIBAL WOMEN IN RAMPACHODAVARAM MANDAL

Rampachodavaram Mandal of East Godavari district has total population of 39,351 as per the Census 2011. Out of which 19,185 are males while 20,166 are females. In 2011 there were total 10,554 families residing in Rampachodavaram Mandal. The Average Sex Ratio of Rampachodavaram Mandal is 1,051. As per Census 2011 out of total population, 25.3% people lives in Urban areas while 74.7% lives in the Rural areas. The average literacy rate in urban areas is 84.5% while that in the rural areas is 55.8%. Also the Sex Ratio of Urban areas in Rampachodavaram Mandal is 899 while that of Rural areas is 1,109. From the table 3, data of Rampachodavaram Mandal can be interpreted. The population of Children of age 0-6 years is 4220 which is 11% of the total population. There are 2086 male children and 2134 female children between the age 0-6 years. Thus as per the Census 2011 the Child Sex Ratio is 1,023 which is less than Average Sex Ratio 1,051 of Rampachodavaram Mandal. The total literacy rate is 63.15% of which male literacy rate is 62.03% and the female literacy rate is 51% in Rampachodavaram Mandal.

**Table 3. Data of Rampachodavaram Mandal**

Data	Total	Male	Female
Children (Age 0-6)	4,220	2,086	2,134
Literacy	63.15%	62.03%	51%
Scheduled Caste	1,090	571	519
Scheduled Tribes	31,206	15,136	16,070
Illiterate	17,166	7,285	9,881

From Table 4, religion wise spread of population in Rampachodavaram Mandal can be interpreted. Out of the total population Hindus constitute about 96.46% (37,959), Christians about 1.86% (732), Muslims are 1.53% (601) and other religions hold only 0.15%.



**Table 4. Religion-Wise Population**

Religion	Total	Male	Female
Hindus	37,959	18,494	19,465
Muslims	601	286	315
Christians	732	368	364
Sikhs	3	2	1
Buddhist	5	3	2
Jain	1	0	1
Other religion	0	0	0
No specified religion	50	32	18

Urban/Rural population of Rampachodavaram mandal can be analyzed from Table 5. As per Census 2011, there are total 2,485 families under Rampachodavaram Mandal living in urban areas while 2,485 families are living within Rural areas. Around 25.3% of total population of Rampachodavaram Mandal lives in Urban areas while 74.7% lives under Rural areas. Population of children (0 - 6 years) in urban region is 943 while that in rural region is 3,277. Out of total literacy rate 84.5% are from urban area and 55.78% from rural area, which is not considerably less. This shows how the rural people are conscious toward the importance of education.

**Table 5. Urban/Rural Population**

Particulars	Total	Urban	Rural
Population	39,351	9,952	29,399
Children (Age 0-6)	4,220	943	3,277
Scheduled Caste	1,090	780	310
Scheduled Tribes	31,206	4,472	26,734
Literacy	63.15%	84.5%	55.78%
Sex ratio	1,051	899	1,109

Female population in Rampachodavaram mandal is engaged in various income generating activities. They work on par with men in all the sectors. Table 6, reveals the participation of women in agricultural and industrial sector. Out of total population, 21,045 were engaged in work activities. 79.6% of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 20.4% were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 21,045 workers engaged in Main Work, 1,714 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 11,628 were Agricultural labourer.

**Table 6. Working Population**

Particulars	Total	Male	Female
Main workers	16,753	9,606	7,147
Cultivators	1,714	1,218	496
Agriculture labourer	11,628	6,031	5,597
Houshold industries	151	109	42
Other workers	3,260	2,248	1,012
Marginal workers	4,292	1,873	2,419
Non workers	18,306	7,706	10,600

## CONCLUSION

By the place name Rampachodavaram, it is assumed that, it is a remote, rural area, tourism spot. Though Rampachodavaram mandal mainly holds rural area the literacy rate and working women population is more. From all the above tables it is clear that women are equally empowered when compared to men. There are many cases where, in the developed areas birth of girl child is prohibited, but here the growth rate of girl child is increasing. Because of the literacy, women are aware about various programme and schemes introduced by the Government for their upliftment in the society. There are various organisations like NGOs, SHGs, which encourage women and get them involved in self employment. Through these organization women are getting empowered socially, economically, technologically and politically.

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