

Understanding mobility among tribal population: A study in Andhra Pradesh, India

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Introduction

One important aspect of population is the study of migration arising out of various social, economic or political reasons. For a large country like India, the study of movement of population in different parts of the country helps in understanding the dynamics of the society better. At this juncture of the economic development in the country, especially when many states are undergoing faster economic development, particularly in areas, such as, manufacturing, information technology and service sectors, and data on migration profile of population has become more important. (Census of India, 2001). India is a very heterogeneous society divided into so many castes and tribal communities. The population belonging to these scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) are relatively socio-economically backward. There are some 573 communities recognized by the government as Scheduled Tribes and therefore eligible to receive special benefits and to compete for reserved seats in education, jobs and legislatures. They range in size from the Gonds (roughly 7.4 million) and the Santals (approximately 4.2 million) to only eighteen Chaimals in the Andaman Islands. Central Indian states have the country's largest chunk of tribes and taken as a whole, they roughly constitute 75 percent of the total tribal population of India.

Data on population mobility in India is very scanty. Census is the only source of information which provides information on few aspects of migration in every ten years. Migration by caste and tribe is not provided by the census. Among the various states of India, Maharashtra stands at the top of the list with 2.3 million net migrants, followed by Delhi (1.7 million), Gujarat (0.68 million) and Haryana (0.67 million) as per 2001 Census. Andhra Pradesh is at 13th position for the total volume of net migration followed by Bihar. There are very few studies which focus exclusively on tribal migration only. A study from Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh shows that tribal women migrate on large proportion in search of jobs. They use migration as a survival strategy to escape out of abject poverty. Thousands of tribal women and young girls migrate from their hinterlands in the tribal areas to urban centers mainly in search of employment. They are new to the city life style and environment and find it difficult to make adjustment with the changed situation and environment. They have to face a number of problems in the cities after the migration. Moreover, the non-tribal in the cities exploits them both financially and sexually. A large majority of migrant tribal women are in the age group of 24 to 47 years and the tribal girls in the age group of 16 to 23 years. They face problems like difficulty of communication in local language, getting accommodation and employment, education of children, local contacts, and adjustment with city life and environment etc. Circular and seasonal migration in India is particularly high among the poor, scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs) and Muslims. In the tribal districts of southern Madhya Pradesh, 65% of households included migrants (Mosse et al., 1997). In tribal dominated state of Jharkhand, a study of twelve villages found that one-third of the households had at least one member migrating out from the village in search of jobs. Short-term and seasonal migration was higher among socio-economically poorer groups, involving over 80% of the landless and 88% of illiterate people. Migration among SCs and STs was nearly twice that of upper castes (15% of the SC/ST households compared to 8% of upper caste households) (Dayal and Karan, 2003). In Rajasthan, 95% of the migrants congregating at Chakoris (recruiting points) are Dalits (people belonging to lower caste) originating from the district of

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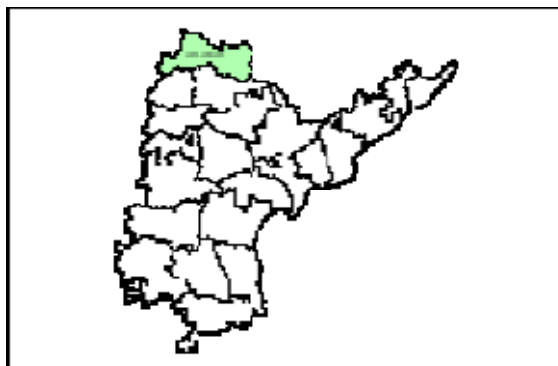
Bhilwara, Ajmer, Tonk and Kota of Rajasthan (Jagori, 2001). There is extremely high rate of migration among tribals from the relatively backward southern part of Rajasthan who migrate to Gujarat to work in seed cotton farms and textile markets (Kate Bird and Deshingkar, 2009).

Census provides few characteristics of migration including proportion of rural and urban migration. But it does not provide data on tribal migration. So, it becomes important to study dynamics of tribal migration. The available literature is also scanty. So, against this background a study was proposed to understand the migration pattern of tribal population in Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh. The state is located in the southern part of India along the coast of Bay of Bengal of the Indian ocean. The study conducted by the an agency (report of the MAAS-CHRD, 2008) shows that people from Maharashtra and Adilabad used to migrate for earning their livelihood. But no specific enquiries were done. No background data was available for migration among tribal population in Adilabad. Adilabad is the northernmost district of Andhra Pradesh which is a border district and shares borders with the districts of Nanded, Yavatmal and Chandrapur of Maharashtra from 3 sides and Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh from other side. The aim of the present study was to understand the migration and mobility patterns and causes of migration among the tribals of Adilabad district.

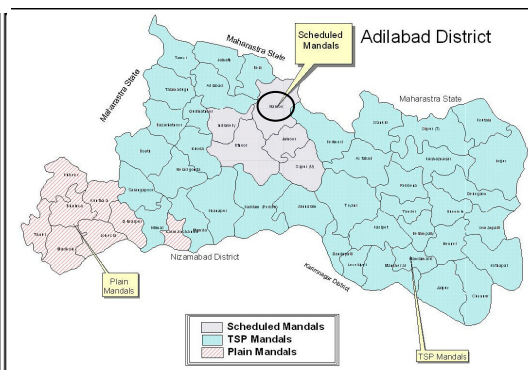
Locale of the study

The study was carried out in one of the tribal dominant Narnoor Mandal (Tehsil) of Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh. The 2001 census placed the population of Adilabad at 2.48 million. Currently, 42% of the total area of the district is covered by forests and 70% of the population is dependent on agriculture and allied activities (Census of India, 2001). Adilabad district has the highest concentration of scheduled tribe population after Khammam among the 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh. Of the total population of the district, 53% live below the poverty line, 17% of the total population belong to tribal communities, whereas 22% of its rural population is tribal(Census of India, 2001). The tribals in the district are mostly represented by three major tribes viz. Gonds (52%), Lambadas (22%) and Kolams (8%). The literacy rate of the district is 53%.The literacy rate among the tribal population is about one-fourth of the general population. In the district, out of the total 52 Mandals(administrative sub-divisions), 16 are tribal dominant Mandals where tribal proportion is more than 25%(Report ITDA, Adilabad 2007).

Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh



Narnoor Mandal in Adilabad





Map of Narnoor mandal showing Gadiguda area

Data and methods

The primary data from the field was collected using qualitative methods. Before starting the actual field work the initial field visit was made for selection of the villages for the study. Initial field visit was made during the month of October, 2008. During first approach to the area, different key persons in the villages like Sarpanch, Vice-Sarpanch, local leaders, school teachers, field health staffs of Primary Health Center (PHC) and sub-center, Medical Officers and health staffs in the PHC, head of tribal community (Patel) were contacted to seek information about migration and mobility pattern in the area. It also helped in identifying key informants (KI). During this visit community members were also contacted and information was sought through informal talks. Field notes were also made which were then detailed out as a daily Field-diary. These initial field visits gave researcher an idea about the area as well as helped in searching villages for the actual data collection. It was a challenging task since area was in-accessible and difficult to reach due extremely poor transportation facility. There was no transport facility in some villages. Later on a report was prepared based on the experiences of this field visit and after a gap of two weeks; the actual data collection was planned. Three different qualitative tools namely focus group discussion(FGD), key informant interview (KII) and mobility mapping were used in gathering the necessary information from the field. The details are given in the following table.

Details of data collection work:

Methods adopted	Total number	Gondi language	Kolami language	Marathi language
Focus Group Discussions	6	3	1	2

Key Informant Interview	6	4	--	2
Mobility Mapping	6	4	--	2

The FGDs were conducted as per time convenience of the respondents. They were informed in advance about discussions. All FGDs were conducted in a closed room (wherever possible) to avoid external disturbance and to maintain confidentiality. All FGDs were facilitated and recorded by trained persons. A total of 6 FGDs were conducted out of which three were in Gondi language, one in Kolami and two in Marathi language. All key informant interviews(KIIs) were also conducted as per informant's convenience of time and place and confidentiality was maintained. A total of six KIIs was conducted out of which four was in Gondi language and two in Marathi language. Similarly out of the six mobility mapping, four was conducted in Gondi language and two in Marathi language. All the FGDs and KIIs were conducted after the respondents' informed oral consent and were tape-recorded with their prior permission. With recording, notes were also made for each interview. During the data collection field-diary was maintained by every researcher on a daily basis in the field. The everyday issues which were not recorded in the FGDs and KIIs were noted down by the researchers. After conducting interviews they were transcribed and translated to English. The analysis was done using MaxQDA package (software package for analyzing qualitative data).

Results and Discussion

Tribal Economy

The main occupation of people in Gadiguda area is agriculture which is rain fed. The main yields in the farms are cotton, red-gram, soya, millet etc. Only Kharif crops (crops grown during summer season) are grown due to unavailability of water throughout the year except in rainy season which is brought by the South-West monsoon. The main crops grown are cotton and millet. Majority of the people who participated in the study own agriculture land. Few of them work as laborers and few were engaged in subsidiary occupation like carpenter etc. By March month people complete their farm work.

Migration for survival

The agricultural season lasts for about 6-7 months and no work is available in the farms during the remaining period of the year. So, the people migrate to neighboring districts of Maharashtra State viz. Chandrapur, Gadchiroli. The main purpose for going to these places is availability of work. These districts have large yield of chili and there is a shortage of labour in those areas. So, they call women from Adilabad to work in the chili field. Women can do the chili picking work faster than men. That is why they are preferred than the men. The main occupation of people in this area is agriculture."We are doing farming bur the yield is less. After doing hard work when the yield from the crops is less and insufficient for our survival, it becomes difficult to live in the villages. That is why we migrate to other areas searching for jobs"(FGD, men).

When there is no agricultural season, people migrate to some villages of Maharashtra like Chenai, Mukudband, Kaval etc. These villages have large yield of chilly and ground nuts. Few people go to Karnataka also. December to May is the migration season. "In December and January month (Satti, Poos Mahina) we go to other village to work. We return back to our villages 2-3 days before Holi festival "(FGD, women).All people don't migrate but few members of the family stay back and look after the home. Large number of people from villages migrates to different areas of Maharashtra during this lean

period of the year. Generally the millet yielded in the farm is kept for eating and cotton is sold at the textile mills of Adilabad and Narnoor. Sometime people from these mills come here and take the cotton. *"We go to Chenaya village, Parshoda and Burshoda village. We go to do this work in Maharashtra. We go to different areas of Maharashtra like Dhanora, Chennai, Paradoi (FGD, Men)".* Some people go for collecting honey in the forests. They roam in the jungles and stay there. Traditionally Kolam tribe is involved in winnowing work. Though it has declined over the period, but still some Kolam people of Gadiguda are involved in this business and they go for selling the things to Adilabad. *"Earlier wood was available in the forest on large extent. So, I also used to do that work. But now we don't go to collect wood as the forest cover has declined. Hence, I only do farming. Earlier I used to make wheels of bullock cart, tatty etc. out of the collected wood"*(FGD, men).

Migration for aspiration

In most of the study villages the education is available till 4th standard. So, for higher studies they migrate. For further studies children have to migrate to nearby town. Many children also go to the adjacent mandal called Jhari. Parents send their children to the school with the thought that they would get employment. Earlier girls' proportion in education was less as compared to boys but now they are also started getting educated. *"What I think is that, all the parents should understand the advantages of education. Example is if we sow cotton crop in the farm we add fertilizer for more production. Similarly we think about education and our children's future. Education here acts like a fertilizer enhancing the skill and in getting a better job. If we sow cotton crop and do not use fertilizer, the desired crop production does not come. So, parents are also interested to send their children to schools and colleges for the study. If parents do not show interest to send their children for study, what teacher will do? So, parents should think about their children's study."* (KI, ex-Sarpanch) In most of the cases children migrate for education within the Mandal but after 10th class they have to go to cities like Hyderabad. The proportion of children going to Hyderabad is less. Children return back to their villages during vacations. Parents are showing interest in children's studies. They are aware of importance of educating their children. *"We send them to improve their knowledge. We are illiterate so we don't have knowledge. It should not affect them. We wish that our children should study well and stay happily"*. (FGD, Woman). *"It's our responsibility to send children to schools. This depends on our wish. We earn rupees 15 to 20 per day. If they are interested in studies then they should go to school. Otherwise we ask them to go to the agricultural field"*. (FGD,men). *"We tell them to go to school/colleges to learn new technology. Learning doesn't give them government job but they can get work in the companies also"*(FGD in Kolami language). Overall awareness about the importance of children's education is increasing and the tribal people are coming forward but yet their proportion is less. Still the Kolam tribes are comparatively less aware about the importance of education. One key informant explains reason for it as: *"It's like growing trees. If one gets educated others take inspiration from them and go. But when there is no tree at all, how can others trees grow?"* (KII, Sarpanch, 24 years, B.A.) It implies that nobody from Kolam tribe took initiative in getting education. That is why subsequent generation is not inspired for education. Though awareness in education has increased but it is still in its infancy. This is the first generation which is studying in secondary schools and colleges. Proportion of children going to the college is still less. Most of the children stay in the hostels provided by government and few of them stay in rented rooms. Children till 10th class get hostel facility in the school itself. But children going to the college at Hyderabad stay by hiring rooms. Very less proportion of children goes to private schools for studies since they can't afford costs of private schools. Some Nongovernmental organizations like M.V. Foundation are also trying to raise the educational status of tribal by providing education to drop out children.

Pilgrimage (Jathara)

Tribal people have their own deities and they have faith in their Gods. For every important work they worship God. Worshipping God is an important aspect in their life. Gond and Kolam tribes have clans and each clan has its own deity. Each clan celebrates its deity's festival which is called Jathara. But all tribes mostly take part in that celebration. Jathara is a kind of recreation for them. The period of Jathara is during the month of January and February. This period is ideal for them since there is no farm work. They also sell cotton and other farm yield and have money. It is the joyous time period for them. Tribal people mainly go to places like Narnoor, Keslapur, Shampoor, Badi, Sirpur etc. Other pilgrimage places are Basar, Thirupathi, Vemulavada, Dhramapuri and Hyderabad. The deities worshipped are Khamdeo in Narnoor, Nagoba in Keslapur, Budung dev in Shyampur etc. Khamdeo is a deity of Todasam clan; Nagoba and Budung dev are deity of Mesram clan. People from Gadiguda also visit these places in large proportion. These Jatharas remain for continuous period. It starts on full moon day in the month of January. Narnoor is about 20-25 kilometers away and Keslapur is 50-55 kilometers away. Most of the people go by walk to visit these places. It takes 2-3 days for them to reach Narnoor. It takes 7 days to reach to Keslapur. These people leave their houses by taking grocery with them. Then on the way they make a halt near any village which falls on the way. They make tents and stay there for night and next day morning they move ahead. Nowadays due to availability of transport facility, people have started visiting by bus or jeep or auto. But still significant proportion of people goes by walk to pilgrimages. Few people also go by bullock carts. Jathara at Keslapur is like a big festival for tribal people in which thousands of people remain present. Since last few years government arranges meeting in this place and addresses tribal people and give kind of update about the developmental activities for tribal population of that area. "People make a halt during Jathara and that place is called as *Vathun*. Nowadays government arranges drinking water facility during the time of Jathara. First they worship '*Nagbidi*' (snake deity) and worship with gram and Jaggary. Then they roam for while and take food. They cannot return back without performing the worship"(female KI). People go to jathara from village and worship god. They purchase metal pot, plates and other vessels and things for children. Some people watch movies on theaters for whole night and stay at the same place. Next day morning they roam in the Jathara. Their stay at Jathara place differs from one day to seven days. People go to Jathara place by walk from their home but they don't feel tired. Nowadays the transport facilities have improved, so they face fewer problems. In the earlier days the prevalence of diseases like diarrhoea, cholera etc. was very high during the period of Jathara. But now it has reduced since government also pay attention and arrange for clean drinking water facility. "*There is no health problem every time we drink available water in the village and eat good food which is prepared at home. But when we go to jathra we prepare food at open places, surroundings are also not good and hygienic. Most of the times, we get contaminated water. But during that time we remain glad as we all are in festive mood. So, we drink any available water. We do not bother whether it's clean or not. We need water for preparing food in open place. So, we use that. Dust falls into the food while preparing food at the open place. We eat that food and sleep on the floor under the open sky. If water is available we take bath, otherwise we don't take bath. So we suffer from diseases like diarrhea, cold, fever, and headache etc.*" (KII, Ex-Sarpanch). This interpretation gives the reason for getting diseases. People make a halt at open places which lacks personal and surrounding hygiene which makes them vulnerable to water borne diseases. The Jatharas are arranged during summer season and there is severe water crisis during this period.

Disease causing agent: Tribal's perspective

Earlier tribal people did not use chemicals in agriculture. Nowadays they use chemical fertilizers like DAP and urea in the farms and get higher yield. Presently they take hybrid millets, green gram, cow-beans and black gram. These are yielded with the use of chemicals and fertilizers. With that the incidence of diseases is also increasing due to the eating of chemical mixed food. In the past if they get fever then it

used to get cured immediately. They used to pray God after which get cured. But now-a day they pray God but it does not cure. During that time the incidence of disease was very less. Earlier if somebody gets disease then he used to take herbal medicine and gets cured immediately. Now-a-days if one falls sick, everybody gets infected by it. Now-a-days new diseases are occurring. The fault is in the food. If there is fever for a day, the person skips food and gets cured soon. Earlier no hybrid grain was there but now we get hybrid millet. Now they eat more rice. Oil was also extracted from the seed using manual machines. Now they get it in packets which are processed in industries. If any disease persists for 3 days or more then they go to the doctor and take treatment. Government doctor does not remain available in most of the times. Whenever a patient comes to the government doctor, the patient is given two tablets for any kind of ailment which does not cure the disease. But private doctors always remain available and give better treatments like injections, saline, tablets because of which the patient gets cured soon. The major health problems faced by the tribals in Gaduguda are fever, vomiting, loose motions and stomach pain. Tribal people don't take immediate treatment for any ailment. Still many people prefer herbal medicines since it remains available in the vicinity. If not then they go to the nearby public health facility. During last year the incidence of the diseases was more. People suffered from vomiting, loose motions and malaria. Generally, people seek health care after 2-3 days of the onset of the disease. Primary Health Center(PHC) is available at Gadiguda. People generally go there for treatment. There are three health sub-centers in the area but none of them has its own building. In the case of serious conditions, the patients are either taken to the Community Health Center (CHC) at Utnoor which is about 50-55 kilometers away or to the District Headquarter hospital at Adilabad which is also equidistance. Many tribal people also seek health care treatment from the RMPs (Registered Medical Practitioners) or quacks. Many RMPs visit to the villages and give injections and tablets and charge rupees 25-30 from each patient. Tribal people also have belief that injections can cure disease earlier than medicines. The government health facility remains far away and most of the times there is no presence of doctor or other staff there. So, the people prefer to go to RMPs who are readily available and also charge less money. But the RMPs are not properly trained and also do not have valid qualification for treating patients. Most of the cases, they are educated up to I 10th or 12th class. Then they practice under any qualified doctor. Afterwards they start practicing on their own as RMPs.

Health seeking behavior & mobility

According to the local inhabitants most diseases are water borne and vector borne starting during the month of August and September (Sraavan and Bhava months). During the last one year the government has started paying attention towards this area. Many new health schemes like emergency service (phone number:108), mobile clinic(phone number: 104)and Rajeev Gandhi insurance scheme etc. have been initiated by the government in recent times. Some of them migrate to Maharashtra for work. If they fall ill at the destination place, then few of them seek treatment from the same place. But few of them also refer to return back to the native place. People go for work to their farms which are far away from their houses. So, they carry food and limited water with them. But the drinking water is not sufficient for the whole day. So, they drink contaminated water available in the local ponds, tanks, springs etc and fall sick In most of the villages there is no provision of safe drinking water

Leisure time activity

Adult people generally remain busy with routine work. In the morning they go to farm after taking breakfast. Men go early to the farm. Women after completing household chores go to the farm by carrying lunch with them. People work whole day in the farm and return back in the evening. In the evening they watch TV or listen to radio. Elder people are not interested to watch TV. Rather they sit together and talk. Young people generally watch movies on TV. Nowadays Television has become common everywhere. So, people get opportunity to watch movies. Most of the people watch Telugu movies. Elder people watch religious movies while young people watch commercial movies. Since Gadiguda is a area bordering with

Maharashtra, TV programs in Marathi language are also preferred. Children go to school in the day time and after coming home in the evening they play games. Few children and educated people read newspaper. Usually newspapers are not available in the villages. But if somebody goes to the town, then he purchases it from the market. In few villages newspaper is available and children read it for their elders. Usually elder persons don't go to other distant places but youths go to other places to watch movies. They have to go to Narnoor or Adilabad . Now-a-days VCDs are easily available due to which people are also watching movies at home in Gondi language.

Influence of media

Due to the influence of mass media, tribal people have become more aware of the events happening outside the village. The younger generation is more influenced by the movies. Few incidents happened in the villages in which boys and girls fell in love, eloped from the village due to resistance from the families and got married. These marriages were inter-tribal marriages and village people accepted them later on. Elders stated that young people watch television till late night. So, their life style, food habits and sleeping timings have changed. By watching Telugu movies tribal people are influenced by Telugu language. Now impact of Telugu language is seen over the original tribal dialect. Their dressing pattern has also changed due to the influence of electronic media. Few young boys roam in the village by making hairstyles of the hero in the movie. Comparatively less influence of movies is seen among the girls than the boys.

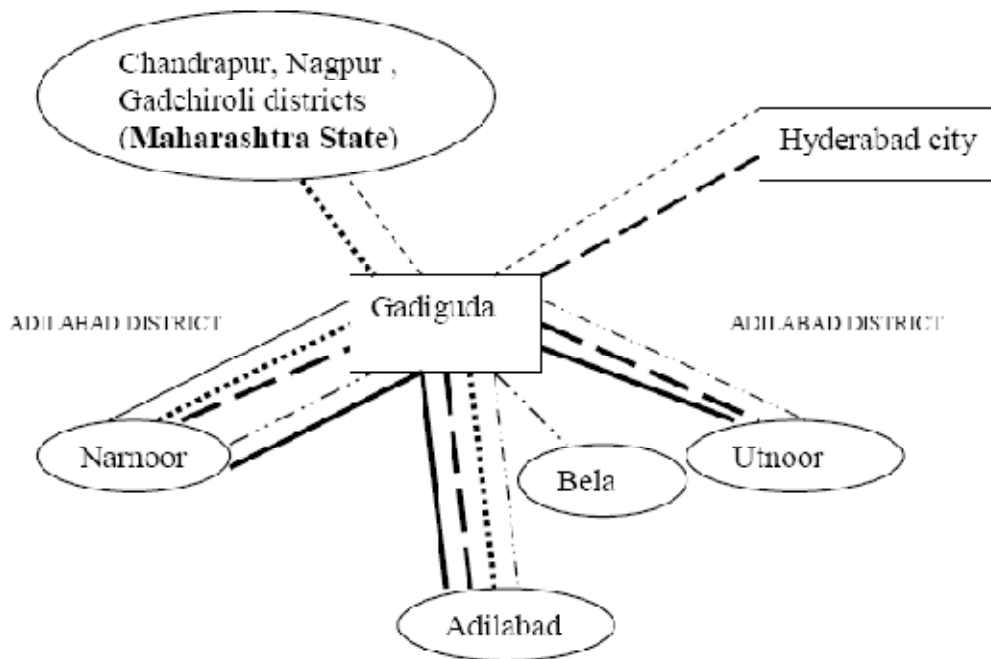
Marriage

The girls migrate to their husband's house after marriage which is very common among all tribal groups found in Gadiguda area. Educated people look for legal age of marriage of boys and girls. But if parents are illiterate, then they go for their children's marriage at an early age. If the groom is economically weak then he stays at his in-law's place for some period and work in their agricultural farms. Afterwards either in-laws give him a piece of land due to which he settles down there permanently or he goes to his own native village. Generally behavior of boys and girls, economic situation of the family etc. are taken into consideration while choosing brides and grooms for marriage. Both arranged and love marriages are found to be practiced among the tribal community.

Migration and change

Migration gave tribal people an exposure to the outside world. They learnt the language, customs of other surrounding cultures. They want to educate their children. Earlier the instruments used for agriculture were made up of wood but now it is made up of iron. New techniques have been used for better yield in the farm. Television, radio and cell phone also gave them exposure to the outside world. They are learning new techniques as well as customs. People work in their farm for about half the year. But after agricultural season is over and there is no work, they migrate to neighbouring areas Maharashtra for employment. Many people migrate to villages of Chandrapur and Nanded districts of Maharashtra. This helps them to continue with their income and improve their economic condition to some extent. Earlier tribal people were largely dependent on forest for earning their livelihood. People used to eat fruits, roots or Mahua flowers etc. But in the present days due to the dwindling forest resources and restriction by the government in cutting forests, the livelihood of tribal community has been restricted. That is why they are in search of alternative means of livelihood.

MOBILITY MAP OF PEOPLE OF GADIGUDA AREA



Work: -----

Health: - - - - -

Recreation/ Jathra:

Shopping/Market: _____

Education: _____

Social gathering:

Summary and Conclusion

The study of tribal mobility in Gadiguda area shows seasonal migration pattern among tribal population. Women migrate on large proportion in a group accompanying few men and children. These destination villages are located at a distance of 50-100 kilometers. Most of the migrants reach the destination by walking. The available literature on internal migration suggests that it is predominantly men who migrate. But this study shows that it's predominantly women who migrate to other places for the purpose of work. The main push factor for migration is lack of employment opportunities in the locality. People work under government sponsored EGS scheme under which they are provided work for three months in year. But until now this scheme does not seems to be quite successful in bringing down unemployment and poverty. The young generation is looking forward to the cities like Hyderabad for better employment opportunities. The illiterate people prefer to migrate seasonally to other rural areas or towns searching for employment. But those who are educated prefer to migrate to the cities and want to settle there permanently. Educated people don't have employment opportunities in the villages.

Tribal people of Gadiguda area believe in God very much. Each village has deities as well as each clan has its own God. People celebrate Jathara for satisfying the God and their own mental satisfaction. Now-a-days they also go to other Hindu pilgrim places like Tirupathi, Pandharpur and Basar etc. This belief system is due to the influence of Telugu and Marathi cultures. But still tribal people have maintained their cultural identity. Declining forest resources and restriction in cutting trees have forced the tribes to seek alternative means of livelihood. If they do not migrate otherwise they will fall into deep poverty. Exposure to outside world due to migration has influenced the culture and customs of the tribal population. The study shows that there is a need to strengthen the poverty reduction government sponsored programs like EGS so that they get employment for most part of the year. There is a need to create more employment opportunities, better educational and health care facilities which will reduce distressed migration and improve the living standard of the tribes.

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