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Matangini Soren

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Veterinary & A.H. Extension Education, W.B. University of Animal & Fishery Sciences, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Arunasis Goswami

Professor, Department of Veterinary & A.H. Extension Education, W.B. University of Animal & Fishery Sciences, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Sukanta Biswas

Associate Professor, Department of Veterinary & A.H. Extension Education, W.B. University of Animal & Fishery Sciences, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:

Sukanta Biswas

Associate Professor, Department of Veterinary & A.H. Extension Education, W.B. University of Animal & Fishery Sciences, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Study on socio-economic and communication characteristics of Santal women in relation to livestock farming in jungle Mahal area of the state West Bengal, India

Matangini Soren, Arunasis Goswami and Sukanta Biswas

Abstract

“Jungle Mahal” (lit. jungle estate) was a district formed by British possession, located in the area called Jungle Terry for better control to rule over the natives called tribal. Although there is no demarcating land border, the area of Bankura, Purulia, West Midnapore, and Jhargram districts of West Bengal is still colloquially referred to as “Jungle Mahal”. The study was conducted in purposively selected 04 districts of the West Bengal, from where one block and from each block one village was selected randomly to frame the investigative study. From each village, 50 Santal women were randomly selected, which form a total of 200 respondents for the study. Data was collected and tabulated by using a predesigned semi-structured interview schedule and analysed with statistical tools for better interpretation of different Socioeconomic and communication characteristics of the Santal women’s for better interpretation and specific conclusion of the study. The study highlighted different socio-economic and communication characteristics of the respondent in selected area to draw specific recommendation to do something better as per their need in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Santal, women, jungle mahal, socio-economic, communication, livestock

Introduction

“Jungle Mahal” & “Backwardness” are the two sides of the same coin since time immemorial. In West Bengal “Jungle Mahal” indicates mainly the jungle terry of West Midnapore, Jhargram, Bankura & Purulia districts. Tribals are the indigenous people of the forest, and “Jungle Mahal” is no different. The tribes are the autochthonous or native people of the land, who are believed to be the earliest settlers in the Indian Peninsula. They are generally called *Adivasis*, implying original inhabitants. Santals are the Astro-Asiatic-speaking Munda ethnic group of tribes and, are the largest tribe in West Bengal and Jharkhand. Santal women not only contribute to the total half of the tribe's population but also to the economic and social valuation. Santal women are the most active creatures doing their day-to-day family welfare as well as contributing to the living standard of the aboriginals. As per the Census 2011, the Tribal population In West Bengal is near about 52,96,963, which constitutes 5.8% of the state's total population. There are about 40 distinct tribal communities present in West Bengal. Santal Tribes is the largest and consists of about 52% of the state's total tribes. Santal is also the main resident of “Jungle Mahal”. The Tribal population in India is near about 104 million constituting 8.6% of the total population which is the highest in the world. Every community has its own way of meeting the basic needs for the existence of members failing which they are threatened with extinction. Nature here comes forward and joins hands with tribal to fulfil their needs fashioned of course in their way depending on their customs, traditions, demographic structures, etc. The livelihood of the Santals revolves around the jungle they live in. Over millennia these people learned to live in harmony with nature, apart from this they are also engaged in hunting and cultivation. They do farming using their livestock. Livestock farming is an integral part of the Santal economy. A fresh look at the changing pattern of an environment as well as livelihood needs to be fitted together with developmental efforts. The prosperity and growth of any community depend on the status and development of their women. Women not only cover half of any population but also influence the growth of the remaining half. The critical role in the economic as well as social transformation is pivotal. In Tribal societies, women are more important than other groups of social community.

The Santal Women are active participants in their day-to-day family life as well as the economic activities of their family but remain unrecognized socially. They contribute to Agriculture as well as livestock farming by raising poultry, goats, cows and buffaloes, pigs, and sometimes sheep in their backyards. Various Government and non-government organizations have implemented programs to improve their livelihood. In this context, the present study was conducted 'To find out the socio-economic and communication characteristics of the Santal women in relation to Livestock farming in the Jungle Mahal area of the state of West Bengal, India'.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in the state of West Bengal. To form the sample population, four Districts i.e. Bankura, Purulia, West Midnapore & Jhargram were selected purposively. From each district, one block was selected randomly and from each block, one village was taken purposively where Santal population were settled. From each village, 50 Santal women were randomly selected, which form a total of 200 respondents to frame the sample size for the study. The data was collected by using a predesigned semi-structured interview schedule by the researcher using individual questionnaire methods. The collected data was tabulated and analysed with statistical applications like percentiles and frequency for analysis of different variables of Socioeconomic and communication characteristics and compared for better interpretation to arrive specific conclusion of the study.

Results and Discussion

In present study, the data were analysed in two parts i.e. Socio-economic and communication characteristics of the Santal Women in relation to livestock farming in Jungle Mahal area of the state West Bengal, India. Table-1 depicts the Socio-economic variables in the four cited Jungle Mahal districts in West Bengal. The analysed data revealed that the majority of the respondents were the middle-aged group between 26- 50 years old in Bankura district (48%), in Purulia districts (46%), in Jhargram district (48%) and West Medinipur (62%). Young age group (Up to 25 years) respondents in Bankura district 12%, Purulia district 8%, Jhargram district 10% and in West Midnapore 2%. The elderly (51 years and above) responded in the Bankura district 40%, in the Purulia district 46%, in the Jhargram district 42% and invest Midnapore 36%. The data showed that the majority of the respondents were married in all the districts including 58% in the Bankura district, 60% in the Purulia district 58% in the Jhargram district and 62% in the West Midnapore district. No divorced respondents were found in the study. The unmarried respondents in Bankura district were 30%, in Purulia district 18%, in the Jhargram district by 24% and in West Midnapore were 20% consequitively. The widow respondent consists of 12% in Bankura district, 22% in Purulia district, 18% in Jhargram district, and 18% in West Midnapore. The study revealed that the gross family income of majority of the respondents' were between Rs.2001- 5000/- which is 52% in the Bankura district, 84% in the Purulia district, 68% in the Jhargram district and 70% in the West Midnapore district. No such respondents were there, whose family income was below Rs 2000/-, The family income between Rs.5001-10000/- where prevailed 24% in the Bankura district, 10% in the Purulia district, 18% in the

Jhargram district and 16% in the West Midnapore district. The gross family income of the respondents shows above Rs.10001/- where 24% in Bankura district, 6% in Purulia district, 14% in Jhargram district and 14% in West Midnapore district. The benefit under the MGNREGA scheme was used occasionally within the respondent, where 58% in Bankura district, 62% in Purulia district, 52% in Jhargram district and 52% in Medinipur district. Simultaneously, 42% in the Bankura district 38% in the Purulia district 48% in the Jhargram and West Midnapore district did not at all receive any benefit from the scheme MGNREGA under the study area.

The study depicted that the majority of the respondents studied in middle school in the districts, which was 32% in the Bankura district 36% in the Purulia district 44% in the Jhargram district and 56% in the West Midnapore district. Illiterate respondents were 30% in the district of Bankura, 34% in the district of Purulia, 24% in the district of Jhargram and 26% in the district of West Midnapore. The study also depicted that, 06% in the district of Bankura, 12% in the district of Purulia, 10% in the district of Jhargram and 2% in the district of West Midnapore where the respondents were primary educated, Whereas 12% of the respondent in the Bankura district 12% in the Purulia district 14% in the Jhargram district and 12% in the West Midnapore district were educated with high school education followed by no educated women with graduation were found within the respondent.

Similarly, 74% of the respondent in the Bankura, 68% in the Purulia, 76% in the Jhargram and 86% in west midnapore district belongs to nuclear family followed by 26% in the Bankura, 32% in the Purulia, 24% in Jhargram and 14% west midnapore were belong in the joint family. Small family size respondents were 68% in the Bankura, 62% in the Purulia, 68% in the Jhargram and 74% in the West Medinipur district, whereas the medium family size respondents were 20% in the Bankura district, 24% in the Purulia district, 22% in West Midnapore district and 24% in Jhargram district large family size group revealed in Bankura district 12% in the Purulia district 14% in the Jhargram district 10% and lowest 02% in the West Medinipur district. The study depicted most of the respondents having kutcha houses with 40% in the Bankura district, 64% in the Purulia district, 48% in the Jhargram district and 52% in the West Midnapore district, following the mixed house respondents 30% in the Bankura, Purulia, and West Midnapore district and 34% in the Jhargram district, successively pucca house Respondents were 26% in the Bankura district 6% in the Purulia district and 16% each in the Jhargram and West Midnapore district. No respondents were found to have mansions.

The study also revealed that, every single respondent was blessed with a house and only 4% in the Bankura district and 2% of each of Jhargram and the West Midnapore district respondents belonged to having a hut. The study emphasizes 32% of the respondents taken a loan, out of which 18% from institutional and 14% from SHG and others in the Bankura district, whereas 34% of respondents were taken a loan, out of which 10% from institutional and 24% from SHG and others in the Purulia district and 30% respondents in the Jhargram district taken loan, which was 12% from institutional and 18% from SHG and others. The respondent from West Midnapore were taken the lowest loan, which was 28% out of which 12% is institutional and 16% from SHG and others

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of District-Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram & W. Midnapore (04) in terms of Frequency & Percentage (%) distribution in W.B., India.

Variables		Bankura		Purulia		Jhargram		West Midnapore	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Age	Young(Upto25 Yr)	6	12	4	8	5	10	1	2
	Middle(26-50 Yr)	24	48	23	46	24	48	31	62
	Elderly (51yr&>)	20	40	23	46	21	42	18	36
Marital Status	Married	29	58	30	60	29	58	31	62
	Unmarried	15	30	9	18	12	24	10	20
	Widow	6	12	11	22	9	18	9	18
	Divorced	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gross Family Income	Below Rs 2000/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rs. 2001-5000/-	26	52	42	84	34	68	35	70
	Rs5001/-10,000/-	12	24	5	10	9	18	8	16
	Rs 10001-	12	24	3	6	7	14	7	14
Benefit Under MGNREGA	Not At All	21	42	19	38	24	48	24	48
	Occasionally	29	58	31	62	26	52	26	52
Education	Illiterate	15	30	17	34	12	24	13	26
	Can Read Only	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
	Can Read & Write	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Primary	3	6	6	12	5	10	1	2
	Middle	16	32	18	36	22	44	28	56
	High School	6	12	6	12	7	14	6	12
Family Type	Graduate &>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Nuclear Family	37	74	34	68	38	76	43	86
Family Size	Joint Family	13	26	16	32	12	24	7	14
	Small(Up To-5)	34	68	31	62	34	68	37	74
	Medium(5-7)	10	20	12	24	11	22	12	24
House Type	Large(> 7)	6	12	7	14	5	10	1	2
	No House	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hut	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2
	Kutcha House	20	40	32	64	24	48	26	52
	Mixed House	15	30	15	30	17	34	15	30
	Pucca House	13	26	3	6	8	16	8	16
Loan Taken	Mansion	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Yes	16	32	17	34	15	30	14	28
Loan Type	No	34	68	33	66	35	70	36	72
	Institutional	9	18	5	10	6	12	6	12
	Non -Institutnal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	SHG & Other	7	14	12	24	9	18	8	16
Loan Amount	Pvt. Money Lendr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<10000/-	5	10	3	6	3	6	3	6
	10001-20000/-	4	8	8	16	4	8	0	0
	20000/-50000/-	2	4	3	6	3	6	5	10
>50000/-	5	10	3	6	5	10	6	12	

Table-2 depicts the Communication Characteristics of the Santal Women in relation to livestock farming in Jungle Mahal area of the state West Bengal, India

The result of the study revealed that, the maximum numbers of respondents were members of one organization, which elaborately depicted that, 60% in Bankura and Jhargram, 58% in the Purulia and 64% in the West Midnapore district. No participation was found at 36% in the Bankura and Purulia district, 32% in the Jhargram 26% in West Medinipur district. The study depicted that, 28% of the respondent in Bankura district always listen to others, 26% most often listen to others, 38% often listen to others and 8% sometimes listen to others, while 38% always listen to others, 6% often and sometimes listen to others in the district of Purulia, whereas 38% always listen to others, 42% most often listen to others, 12% often listen to others and 8% sometime listen to others in the Jhargram District and 38% always listen to others, 40% most often listen to others, 10% often listen to others and 12% sometimes listen to others in the district of West Midnapore. The study found that, 22% of the respondents always

encourage others to raise questions, 34% most often encourage others to raise questions, 38% often encourage others to raise questions, 6% sometimes encouraged in the district of Bankura, whereas, 18% always encouraged, 62% most often encourage, 20% often encourages others to raise questions in the district of Purulia. The study again revealed that, 20% always encouraged, 50% most often encouraged, 28% open encouraged and 2% sometimes encouraged others to raise questions in the district of Jhargram, followed by, 16% always encouraged, 50% most often encouraged, 32% often and only 2% Sometime encouraged others to raise the questions in the district of West Midnapore. The study found that 14% always, 28% most often and often and 20% sometimes and 10% never initiate a discussion in the district of Bankura, whereas 14% always, 44% most often, 18% often, 12% sometimes and 12% never initiate a discussion in the district of Purulia, whereas 12% always, 36% most often, 24% often, 14% some time and 14% never initiate a discussion in the Jhargram district, as well as 14% always, 38% most often, 24% often, 8% sometimes and 16% never

initiate a discussion in the West Midnapore district. The study also signifies that, only 4% of the respondent always, 18% of the respondents most often, 28% of the respondents often, 44% sometimes and 6% of the respondents never evaluate the problem in the district of Bankura. Only 12% of the respondent most often, 40% often, 48% of the respondents sometimes evaluates the problems in Purulia district. In Jhargram district, only 2% always evaluate, 12% most often evaluate, 40% often evaluate and 44% sometimes evaluate the problems while in West Midnapore district, 2% always evaluate, 14% most often, 34% Often evaluate and 48% sometimes evaluate the problems.

In regards to information-seeking behaviour, 68% of respondents sometimes and 32% often used KVK to collect information in case of Bankura district, whereas in Purulia district, 40% respondents never used KVK, 54% sometimes collected data from KVK while 6% often collected data from KVK. The study again showed that, 72% of the respondents sometimes collect data from KVK or from extension personnel in Jhargram district, while 16% of the respondents often collect data from KVK or extension personnel. Besides that, 84% of the respondents sometimes in Midnapore district. The study also depicted that most of the respondents in each of the districts, occasionally had taken extension participation through group contact, which was 72% in the Bankura

district, 8% in the Purulia district, 78% in the Jhargram district and 72% in the West Midnapore district. It also exhibits that, the lowest nos. of the respondents' participation in the educational tour in each of the districts which is Bankura district respondents 30% occasionally had taken participated in an educational tour, 6% in Purulia district, 18% in Jhargram district and 16% in the West Midnapore district occasionally taken participation in the educational tour. The study again revealed that, the respondents from Bankura often received data from Gram Sevak which was 44% in case of Purulia district and respondents collected data from Gram Sabha often near about 54% and 52% often collected data in the district of Wes Midnapore from Gram Sabha and 50% in case of Jhargram district. In regards to University experts, maximum number of respondents were never exposed to any university expert for updating information under the information seeking behaviour of personal Cosmopolite variable, only 4% in Bankura district, 2% in each of Jhargram and West Midnapore districts were exposed to University experts. In regards to personal localite variable in information-seeking behaviour, the study revealed that, most of the respondents like to get information from their family members' relatives' trains, and neighbours as their communication networks in the study area.

Table 2: Communication Characteristics of District-Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram & W. Midnapore (04) in terms of Frequency & Percentage(%) distribution in W.B., India.

Communication Variables		Bankura		Purulia		Jhargram		West Midnapore		
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Social Participation	No Participation	18	36	18	36	16	32	13	26	
	Member of 1 Organ.	30	60	29	58	30	60	32	64	
	Member of >1 Organ.	2	4	3	6	4	8	5	10	
Communication Skill	How often do you listen to what others say?	Always	14	28	19	38	19	38	19	38
		Most Often	13	26	25	50	21	42	20	40
		Often	19	38	3	6	6	12	5	10
		Some Time	4	8	3	6	4	8	6	12
		Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	How often do you encourage others to raise questions?	Always	11	22	9	18	10	20	8	16
		Most Often	17	34	31	62	25	50	25	50
		Often	19	38	10	20	14	28	16	32
		Some Time	3	6	0	0	1	2	1	2
	How often do you initiate a discussion?	Always	7	14	7	14	6	12	7	14
		Most Often	14	28	22	44	18	36	19	38
		Often	14	28	9	18	12	24	12	24
		Some Time	10	20	6	12	7	14	4	8
	How often do you illustrate a point by Ex. & anecdote?	Never	5	10	6	12	7	14	8	16
		Always	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2
		Most Often	7	14	10	20	8	16	7	14
		Often	8	16	19	38	13	26	14	28
	How often do you summarize points made?	Sometime	33	66	21	42	28	56	28	56
		Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Most Often	11	22	6	12	10	20	13	26
	How often do you analyse and evaluate the problem?	Often	19	38	26	52	23	46	23	46
		Some Time	20	40	18	36	17	34	14	28
		Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Always		2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	
How often do you take in a pervasive tone with moderate pitch & with proper gesture?	Most Often	9	18	6	12	6	12	7	14	
	Often	14	28	20	40	20	40	17	34	
	Some Time	22	44	24	48	22	44	24	48	
	Never	3	6	0	0	1	2	1	2	
How often do you take in a pervasive tone with moderate pitch & with proper gesture?	Always	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	
	Most Often	18	36	25	50	20	40	20	40	

		Often	16	32	16	32	19	38	17	34	
		Some Time	16	32	6	12	11	22	13	26	
		Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Personal Cosmopolite	KVK/ Extension Personal	Never	0	0	20	40	6	12	0	0	
		Sometime	34	68	27	54	36	72	42	84	
		Often	16	32	3	6	8	16	8	16	
		Most Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Never	0	0	5	10	0	0	0	0	0
	BLDO/ Vety. Officer	Some Time	36	72	42	84	41	82	41	82	
		Often	12	24	3	6	8	16	8	16	
		Most Often	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	
		Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Gram Sevok	Sometime	22	44	12	24	17	34	19	38	
		Often	22	44	27	54	25	50	26	52	
		Most Often	6	12	11	22	8	16	5	10	
		Never	0	0	23	46	9	18	4	8	
	Fishery Expert	Some Time	45	90	27	54	39	78	44	88	
		Often	5	10	0	0	2	4	2	4	
		Most Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Never	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	
	Bank Personnel	Some Time	20	40	14	28	17	34	20	40	
		Often	16	32	30	60	25	50	22	44	
		Most Often	14	28	3	6	8	16	8	16	
		Never	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	
	Panchayet Personnel	Some Time	29	58	25	50	30	60	30	60	
		Often	10	20	21	42	13	26	13	26	
		Most Often	11	22	3	6	7	14	7	14	
Never		8	16	0	0	4	8	3	6		
Input Dealer & Others	Some Time	33	66	27	54	34	68	41	82		
	Often	9	18	8	16	6	12	6	12		
	Most Often	0	0	15	30	6	12	0	0		
	Never	46	92	50	100	48	96	49	98		
University Experts	Sometime	2	4	0	0	1	2	0	0		
	Often	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2		
	Most Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	Never	4	8	3	6	4	8	5	10		
Personal Localite	Family Members	Some Time	22	44	18	36	24	48	29	58	
		Often	23	46	24	48	19	38	15	30	
		Most Often	1	2	5	10	3	6	1	2	
		Never	4	8	3	6	4	8	5	10	
	Relatives	Sometime	35	70	31	62	35	70	37	74	
		Often	11	22	14	28	11	22	8	16	
		Most Often	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	
		Never	11	22	6	12	8	16	9	18	
	Friends	Some Time	17	34	16	32	17	34	20	40	
		Often	6	12	10	20	8	16	7	14	
		Most Often	16	32	18	36	17	34	14	28	
		Never	4	8	3	6	4	8	5	10	
	Neighbour	Some Time	4	8	0	0	2	4	2	4	
		Often	22	44	15	30	16	32	14	28	
		Most Often	20	40	32	64	28	56	29	58	
		Never	31	62	38	76	32	64	30	60	
	Mass Media Resources	Radio	Some Time	19	38	12	24	18	36	20	40
			Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Most Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Never	14	28	3	6	6	12	6	12
		Television	Sometime	12	24	24	48	20	40	22	44
			Often	7	14	7	14	5	10	2	4
			Most Often	17	34	16	32	19	38	20	40
			Never	30	60	44	88	37	74	36	72
News Paper		Some Time	16	32	6	12	11	22	13	26	
		Often	2	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	
		Most Often	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	
		Never	46	92	50	100	48	96	49	98	
Farm Literature		Some Time	2	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	
		Often	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	
		Most Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Never	14	28	13	26	9	18	5	10	
Exhibition/		Never	14	28	13	26	9	18	5	10	

	Krishi Mela	Some Time	31	62	34	68	36	72	39	78
		Often	5	10	3	6	5	10	6	12
		Most Often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Demonstratn	Never	35	70	32	64	34	68	34	68
		Sometime	13	26	18	36	15	30	16	32
		Often	2	4	0	0	1	2	0	0
Most Often		0	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	
Extension Participation	Group Contact	Regular	9	18	6	12	9	18	12	24
		Occasional	36	72	44	88	39	78	36	72
		Never	6	12	0	0	2	4	2	4
	Training Programme	Regular	7	14	3	6	6	12	7	14
		Occasional	18	36	23	46	19	38	20	40
		Never	25	50	24	48	25	50	23	46
	Demonstration	Regular	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Occasional	10	20	15	30	11	22	10	20
		Never	40	80	35	70	39	78	40	80
	Field Visits	Regular	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2
		Occasional	11	22	12	24	16	32	19	38
		Never	37	74	38	76	33	66	30	60
	Group Meetings	Regular	13	26	9	18	14	28	17	34
		Occasional	30	60	41	82	33	66	30	60
		Never	7	14	0	0	3	6	3	6
	Exhibition	Regular	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Occasional	5	10	9	18	4	8	1	2
		Never	45	90	41	82	46	92	49	98
	Education Tour	Regular	0	0	0	0	0	00	0	00
		Occasional	15	30	3	6	9	18	8	16
		Never	35	70	47	94	41	82	42	84

Conclusion

This study concludes that, the socioeconomic development in the study area cannot be achieved until and unless the above cited socioeconomic as well as communication characteristics of the Santal women respondents cannot be improved with systematic as well as strategic approach for their livelihood improvement in relation to livestock farming in the functional area of the study. So, to go a long way to achieve maximum benefit for better socio-economic status of the pro-poor rural tribal women folk should be addressed judiciously in relation to improved livestock farming in sustainable way.

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