



*International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)*  
*A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal*  
*ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)*  
*Volume-II, Issue-I, July 2015, Page No. 233-238*  
*Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711*  
*Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>*

---

## **Sustainment of Traditional Practices towards Sustainable Agricultural Growth and Allied Practices by Women: An Observational Study of Itda Parvathipuram Region**

**Mr. K. Bhavani Shankar**

*Asst. Professor (C), Department of Sociology, Nizam College, Hyderabad, Telangana, India*

### **Abstract**

***“Go back to your traditions- See, Think, and Practice.”***

*Andhra Pradesh was among the very few states in the country, which indicated green revolution to be the major reason of disaster in agriculture sector, especially in respect of rice, in the 1970s. In last decade or so, farmers' suicides have increased in Andhra Pradesh. Short term and long-term factors are responsible for farmers' suicides and agrarian crisis. The green revolution in the 1960s and 1970s has been greatly facilitated by the availability of good irrigation infrastructure. However, the existing systems have deteriorated over time and addition to the capacity has been negligible due to the decline in public investment. Disappointed with the western knowledge of practice and excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides that has finally led to crop destruction and decreasing soil fertility. To find a soluble solution, the researchers, policy makers, scientists and the government through various projects and support of NGOs are going back to age-old practices of Indian agriculture practices.*

*For the encouragement of Traditional Science and Technologies (TSTs) are on with a new ray of hope. Again with a positive notion of keeping the traditional cultivation techniques alive and to pass on to next generation and towards the upliftment of rural and tribal communities for sustainable Development.*

*The paper attempts to high light the 'Tribal Women's Role and Participation towards Sustainable agriculture with traditional practices like: Seed conservation, Use of Farm Yard Manure and nature methods of spraying techniques that has been looked as model development towards agriculture.*

***Overview: challenges and gender considerations.***

---

**Introduction:** Talks on sustainable agricultural growth and implementations of various programmes for the encouragement of Traditional Science and Technologies (TSTs) are on. Again, with a positive notion of keeping the traditional cultivation techniques alive and to pass on to next generation and towards the upliftment of rural and tribal communities for sustainable Development.

Andhra Pradesh was among the very few states in the country, which heralded Green Revolution, especially in respect of rice, in the 1970s. Agriculture sector recorded a modest growth of around 2.5% to 2.7% per annum in the last two decades. In the last five years (2000-05), growth of GDP in agriculture was less than one per cent per annum. In last decade or so, farmers' suicides have increased in Andhra Pradesh, because of agrarian crisis. Short term and long-term factors are responsible for farmers' suicides and agrarian crisis. Short-term measures are important as relief to

*Sustainment of Traditional Practices towards Sustainable Agricultural Growth and ..... K. Bhavani Shankar* farmers but taking care of factors like sustainable land and water management practices, infrastructure in rural areas, increase in credit from formal institutions, research, and extension, strengthening marketing etc. is important for reducing crisis in agriculture. Agriculture and allied practices includes irrigation development and water management.

The Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh mentioned four deficits regarding agriculture and agricultural practices in India. These four deficits are: (a) public investment and credit deficit (b) the infrastructure deficit (c) the market economy deficit (d) the knowledge deficit. Well, to some extent with logical analysis proves it true with respect to three reasons, but it would be unfair to agree with the knowledge deficit. This observational study clarifies that the tribal community are still preserving rich indigenous knowledge.

**Lessons from Green Revolution:** In India Green Revolution program was commenced with plant breeding, irrigation development, and financing of agrochemicals. No doubt that the Green revolution in the 1960s and 1970s has greatly made it possible of collaborating to imported wheat seed and semi-dwarf rice variety to strike the brink of mass famine. However, over time, the existing systems have deteriorated and in addition to the capacity have been negligible due to the decline in public investment. Further, after much thought provoking it was realized that introducing any new agricultural technology into an unequal social system could not remove or reduce hunger unless it answers how the technology is going to benefits the society without hampering the agro system. In addition, if the very technology destroys the root source for future production by corrupting or by degrading the soil, and in turn generates pest and weed problems, it becomes both ecologically and economically unsustainable. The myth of Green Revolution is the increase in grain yields reduces nations hunger. A higher yield means more income for poor farmers, curbing poverty, and more food-less hunger. By the 1970s, 'this revolution' was well received, along with new seeds - accompanied by chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and, for the most part, irrigation. This start slowly replaced the traditional farming practices of millions of Third World farmers. Indian farmers are no exception. This movement has spread the disease called 'Land Degradation' in India due to excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides. Thanks to the new seeds, tens of millions of extra tons of grain a year are being harvested. But has the Green Revolution actually proven itself a successful strategy for ending hunger? In a major 1986 study of World Bank on World Hunger it was concluded that a rapid increase in food production does not essentially result in food security - that is, less hunger. In a simple language if the poor don't have the money to buy food, increased production is not going to help them.

**About Parvathipuram ITDA Project Area and Tribal Community:** Parvathipuram is a town, Municipality and Division in Vizianagaram district in of Andhra Pradesh. As per 2001 India census, Parvathipuram with a population of 49,692. Males constitute 50% of the population and females 50%. Eight mandals come under Integrated Tribal Development Agency-abbreviated as ITDA Parvathipuram. They are GummaLaksmi Puram, Kurrupam, Parvathipuram, Komarada, JMvasala, Makkuva, Taluru, and Pachapemta. The total number of tribal communities recognized by the government as Scheduled Tribes is 572 in number. Scheduled Tribes are those tribal communities who have been listed so by the President of India in keeping with Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution. The ST population constitutes 6 per cent of the country's ST population. The total population of Andhra Pradesh, as per the 2001 Census, is 76,210,007. Of which, 5,024,104 (6.6 per cent) are Scheduled Tribes (STs). Of the total ST population, 92.5 per cent are residing in rural areas. Savara, Jatapu, Gadaba, Konda Dora tribes chiefly and few others in Parvathipuram ITDA. The project area is endowed with a generally good climate, productive soils, and rich biodiversity

*Sustainment of Traditional Practices towards Sustainable Agricultural Growth and ..... K. Bhavani Shankar* and is subject to less demographic pressure than exists on the plains. The project area comprises wide plains, hills and narrow valleys. The areas where podu cultivation is practiced often have steep slopes.

**Observed changing characteristics of Tribe community:** The hill tribes' territory is surrounded by fruit bearing trees, agricultural fields and forest. The wealth of these tribes is forest and agro forestry resources. They interact with the physical environment of forests and hills. In general forests and tribes are two faces of a coin that are inseparable. Further, existence and development of one depends on the other. These tribal communities mainly live in Scheduled Areas, or those outlying areas of hill-locks.

Tribal areas reveal a high degree of land alienation. Non-tribals have invaded tribal protected areas. Deforestation, mainly due to exploitation of forests for industrial purposes, is another manifestation of resource displacement. This has resulted in decreasing access to forest resources by tribal communities. With increasing globalization and privatization, the land rights of tribal areas is under even greater threat since these are regions, which have a high natural resource base and has tremendous potential to meet multiple market demands.

**Role of Tribal women in sustaining traditional practices:** Women's status varies significantly from one region to another. Almost in all frontiers of human societal pursuits economic, educational, scientific, legal, political, official, political and religious sphere Indian women suffer profoundly. Women enjoy relative freedom within their society. However, traditional tribal societies are undergoing a rapid change with the mainstreaming policy of the Indian government. For the tribal communities the process of becoming a part of the mainstream has meant a declining control on their resources and erosion of their cultural heritage. The major issue affecting the tribal's in India is displacement not merely displacement by large projects but resource displacement, thus violating the basic survival rights of tribal communities.

Before knowing the significant role played by tribal women the study attempts to highlight the nature of these women. These women are illiterate, living in isolation, are cut off from the main stream, experiencing political, economic, and social discrimination. Tribes as such and more so women are spiritually linked to their lands. Women are the main workers in land than men. Right from water fetching to sowing seeds to ploughing women are involved. Sum total of India distinguished with uneven gender disparities.

**Role of tribal women** in the observational study area is not limiting to the economic activities, but her role in non- economic activities also. Women play an important role in their household economy. They work in most operations of all sectors of the local economy and for longer hours each day than men. In addition to the domestic and reproductive activities associated with household maintenance they also collect and gather free goods especially fuel, fodder and water. Tribal women are generally noted for the wealth of indigenous knowledge. Commonly seen Cultivation Practices in Parvathipuram ITDA

In this region, one can see all the three folds of cultivation practices. They have dry land, wet land irrigation and shift cultivation called 'PODU' in addition to waste and forest land. The waste and forest lands in a tribal locale are commonly used by all the residents for grazing their cattle. The ratio of Dry land, wet land Podu 30:20:50. Podu plots are found on the hill slopes and tops where certain extent of forest lands degraded and discarded. In some tribal settlements terrace cultivation is also found on the hill terrains which also falls under wet category. The major portion of wet land cultivation in the agency area is seen by the sides of hill streams, where plain landscape is available. Majority of the tribal farmers also grow the paddy crop in wetlands. Mixed cropping pattern

*Sustainment of Traditional Practices towards Sustainable Agricultural Growth and ..... K. Bhavani Shankar*  
spraying of 3-4 varieties of seeds together like pulses, millets Jowar, Red gram, Ragi and oil seeds is a dominant feature in both dry and podu cultivation.

### **Conservation Cultivation Practices:**

- **Restoration of traditional seed:** No wonder one can see a tribal women ploughing, sowing seeds, weeding and harvesting. As most of the agriculture related work is carried out by women; women also play an important role in conservation of traditional local variety of seed. The tribes still use the local variety of seeds and seedlings in all kinds of farms. No doubt with the government is encouraging and supplying hybrid variety of seed and tribal men are tempted towards it; it is due to the tough resistance of the tribal women in safeguarding the traditional seeds. These women conserve by mixing the seeds with red soil, cow dung and neem powder. This also protects the seed from pests. These seeds are acclimatized to local condition. It is also pest resistance and promotes bio-diversity. The seeds are stored in bamboo bins, under the soil or in big clay pots for future use.
- **Use of Natural indigenous sprayers:** These women in group take the pain of preparation of natural sprays using Cow urination, extracted juice of neem leaves, Panchagavya, and Dhanajivamurutham, and few other medicated plants that ensures biodiversity and is also safe for using. One can easily see around 30% of farmers in these regions using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These farmers are settled closer to the road side and not in the interior parts of the hill-locks. In the interior region it is amazed to find zero use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in spite of its wide spread awareness.
- **Extensive use of Farm Yard Manure FYM:** These tribal Women take special interested in preparation of FYM. Cattle dung/ sheep/goat dung and green manure compost are used for fertile the soil in these farming. To protect and increase the fertility of the soil. Regular sheep penning also helps to optimum the fertility of the soil. 5-6 women prepare FYM that would cater the bigger size of the land. So, it is collective work Participation.
- **Unique way of preserving the Forest area:** As these tribes believe in existence of ancestral spirit and periodically worship them too. In this regard certain portion of the forest area is unhampered and untouched. It is the women who collect firewood for fuel, who would resist cutting trees from these zones even in extreme worst condition.

**Allied Practices:** With the intervention of Government Projects and NGOs strengthening women and formation of Self Help Groups SHGs, has helped to bring in widespread change and in sustaining the traditional cultivation practices. These agency women are more vocal and active in development activities. This training process is aimed at developing the entrepreneurial capacity of the tribal youth particularly because the tribal communities are being gradually displaced from the natural resources. Formation of Mahila Sangha and special training to women folks has proved to sustain and reduce the use of chemical fertilizers. Mahila Sanghas are now working out modules and are participating in various workshops and are taking up projects on test bases.

1. **Shifting from Podu cultivation:** 'Podu' also known as shift cultivation is significant for the biodiversity of crops. It has the diversity of cultivation practices. Crop rotations, intercropping, and other sustainable agricultural practices are a part of the inherited knowledge system of the Podu farmer. However, it is also one of the reasons along with deforestation and its ill-effects have been further aggravated by big dam projects, mines and industries, which not only acquired and destroyed forests that tribal communities had preserved for centuries but also displaced the communities themselves, destroying their

*Sustainment of Traditional Practices towards Sustainable Agricultural Growth and ..... K. Bhavani Shankar*  
culture, society and livelihoods. With the training orientation in horticulture, and commercial crops; 10% of them have shifted from traditional practice of 'podu Cultivation' and are going with 'Cashew cultivation' and are also trained in cashew processing unit. This has helped them financially. They are also undergoing training in trained in marketing without the middle man Soil conservation interventions, involving use of techniques such as earthen bunds, gully-controlling works, and irrigation channels and contour terracing, were instrumental in reducing the area under *podu* cultivation and enabled cultivation of horticulture and intercropping of pulses with other crops.

2. **Vermicomposting Training Programme:** Introduction of vermicompost training in Vermi compost and are practicing the use of vermicompost along with FYM. The MPDO. Parvathipuram of Vizianagaram district has proposed the vermicompost training programme in association with local NGOs.
3. **Handmade paper making training programme:** Andhra Pradesh Government in association with local NGOs and University is imparting training to tribal women in handmade paper making with banana stem pulp as decentralized mode of production with low cost technology. The trainees are able to produce good quality of hand made paper and various products such as pen stands, ornamental boxes, pen and brush holders, folders, paper bags, visiting cards, greeting cards and scribbling pads and conference material etc.

**Conclusion:** Participatory approaches and right awareness programmes is able to achieving amazing results and at the same time preserving the rich traditional practices and sustainability. Tribal women of ITDA Parvathipuram have proved in safeguarding the indigenous practices and passing on to next generation. Wonders in agricultural sector and sustainability could be achieved if government, Universities and NGOs work in understanding with the tribal community in knowing the traditional practices in scientific ways and also introducing the changes that would conserve the ecology and the tribal community.

## Reference:

- Barik, S.K (2012): Are tribal women empowered: understandings from Sustainable Tribal Empowerment Project (STEP) and IKP in ITDA Paderu of Visakhapatnam districts, Andhra Pradesh, Elixir Soc. Sci.46 (2012) 8323-8327, May [http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1359808817\\_55%20\(2013\)%2012830-12837.pdf](http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1359808817_55%20(2013)%2012830-12837.pdf)
- Barik, S.K (2012): Micro Credit for Empowerment of Micro People: A Study of SHGs in Paderu Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Andhra Pradesh, Elixir Fin. Mgmt.48 (2012) 9437-9441, July
- Gopinath Reddy M. and K. Anil Kumar, 'Political Economy of Tribal Development: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh', Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad. <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/internet/Documents/political%20ecy%20cess.pdf>
- NABARD (2002): "Impact of Self Help Groups (Group Processes) on the Social/Empowerment Status of Women Members in Southern India" by MYRADA
- NABCON,(2004): "Diagnostic Study report of SHGs in Agency Areas of Andhra Pradesh", Submitted to STEP, Visakhapatnam
- Rao.B.A, Barik.S.K, Sharath.A and Rani.K.B.D.S (2008): "Are Tribal Women Empowered: Understandings from Sustainable Tribal Empowerment Project (STEP) and IKP in ITDA

- Sustainment of Traditional Practices towards Sustainable Agricultural Growth and ..... K. Bhavani Shankar Paderu of Visakhapatnam Districts, Andhra Pradesh*”, Paper presented at the National Seminar on Human Development And Social Exclusion, Department of Economics, Andhra University, 6th & 7th October, 2008
- SERP, (2002): “Progress Report, Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project”, Hyderabad, India
- SERP, (2006): “Progress Report, Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project”, Hyderabad, India
- SERP, (2007): “Progress Report, Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project”, Hyderabad, India
- STEP (2007): “Annul Progress Report”, ITDA Campus, Paderu, Visakhapatnam, A.P
- Stuart, G., & Kanneganti, S. (2003). Embedded cooperation: Women’s thrift cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh. Faculty Research Working Papers Series, Harvard University.
- Swain B.R (2007): “Can Microfinance Empower Women? Self-Help Groups in India”, ADA Dialogue, Department of Economics, Uppsala University, N037 May 2007, pg. 61-82
- Yamanoorappa Yenkoba Talavar and Manikamma Nagindrappa, ‘Critical assessment of the scheduled tribe Women Empowerment in present social order’, Reviews of Literature, Volume 2, Issue 2, Sept 2014. <http://reviewsofliterature.org/UploadArticle/133.pdf>

\*\*\*\*\*