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## Excluded among the excluded: status of tribal women in Telangana

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**Abstract:** *In the process of planned development in India, the different segments of the population uplifted their socio-economic condition by utilizing the educational, occupational and other infrastructural facilities provided by the central as well as state governments. However, certain segments of the population like schedule caste and schedule tribe population were excluded and highly exploited in the process of industrialization and urbanization. The most vulnerable and excluded group in the process is Schedule Tribe population in general and in particular the tribal women. They are the most excluded among the excluded. Against this background the study analyses through the tribal literatures in which way they are excluded in the process of development. The literature review reveals that the factors like mean age of marriage and fertility, sex ratio, literacy and work participation rate can better reveal the status of tribal women. The study covers only the tribal population of Telangana state of India (as it is newly formed in 2014 from the state of Andhra Pradesh and no study conducted on status of tribal women). Further, Scheduled Tribes also constitute about 9.34% (the tribal women constitutes 4.5%) of the total population in Telangana state. The information was gathered from Census of India reports, social development report, National Family and Health Survey report and Statistical Year Book of Telangana. This paper analyze the status of women among the scheduled tribes in Telangana state. Frequent comparisons made by using the factors like mean age of marriage and fertility, sex ratio, literacy and work participation rate to the tribal women with other segments of the women population. Through the analysis, the study portrays the backwards of the tribal women in terms of literacy, mean age of marriage and fertility. The tribal development policies need to keep eye on the above factors to uplift the status of tribal women in the state of Telangana.*

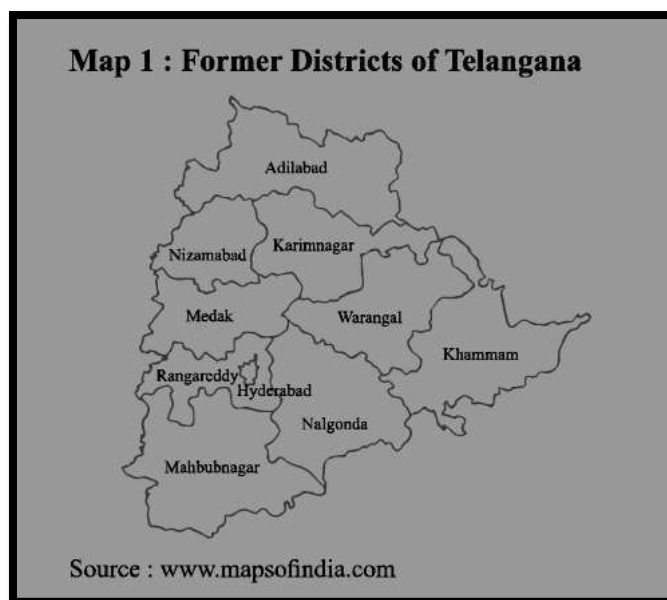
**Keywords:** *Tribal women; Social exclusion; Literacy; Sex ratio; Work participation*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to throw light on the status of tribal women in the wake of state reorganization of Telangana from Andhra Pradesh. In most tribal societies woman holds a high and honorable place and shows proudly free about the country-side, in field and forest she works in the happy companionship with her husband. Women's contribution in tribal economy has been emphasized by several authors (Veena Bhasin, 2017; Sen, 1982). However, recently changes have been noticed among tribal women due to contact with non-tribal cultures, changes in the subsistence patterns and impact of agricultural technology and industrialization. The tribal social system has been affected by the entry of non-tribal into tribal areas. Women are drawn into factories, mining, construction labor and are sexually and economically exploited. The influx of non-tribal has led to deforestation and land alienation resulting in growing proletarianization of tribal women, rendering them subject to wage exploitation and even flesh trade (Venkata Rao, 2001). For the development of tribal, focus has been on agriculture, animal husbandry, small scale and cottage industries and provision for institutional credit. Various schemes taken up under these are mostly aimed towards men. Tribal women who constitutes nearly half of the population, and who are partners to men, do not figure much as beneficiaries. In agriculture and dairying where women do most of the work, the trainings, demonstrations, education tours, etc., are oriented towards men. Land is distributed to men and loans, inputs, etc., are given to them. Women are assumed to be associated with or assisting their menfolk who own the land and hold the decision making power. Theoretically, it is possible for a women to get institutional finance. But unable to fulfill the formalities, even a widow having children may go for local credit. Since the developmental personnel are mostly men and are oriented towards men their interaction with women is minimal and women beneficiaries receive little attention. In this process women lag behind men in having access to information, technical knowledge related to improved methods and other services. Role of women is not only of importance in

economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. The tribal women, as women in all social groups, are more illiterate than men. Like others social groups, the tribal women share problems related to reproductive health. When primary and secondary subsistence activities are counted, women work more than men.. Further, in their own world women have a freedom, and a self-expression. With the onset of development programmes economic changes are taking place but tribal women remain traditional in their dress, language, tools and resources, because they grow food crops rather than cash crops.

Further, tribal societies are self-sufficient (though not strictly in economic front). Self-sufficiency means they need not to interact with non-tribal societies for their social, cultural and physical existence. This very nature of tribal people kept themselves away from the rest of the other societies. The tribal people had crude form of trade relations with non-tribal world, but that was not sufficient to penetrate their social core. Thus, it is quite clear that exclusion of tribal societies was a self-imposed criterion. Contrary to this fact, the caste societies were the integral part of Hindu caste system. The Scheduled Castes, generally the lowest in the social rank, have socio-cultural and economic dependency on other caste groups. Thus, exclusion of such societies is due to its social customs, work attachment and legendry mandated by social authorities present among the greater Hindu society. Social exclusion theory says that human beings are socially constituted and as such are product of culture, social apparatus and their environment and then they can never take responsibility as individuals for their own marginalization. But it can be argued that though individuals are products of their social circumstances they do have space in which they can make decision about changing these circumstances. Thus, in totality, social exclusion denotes the following characteristics of a society at large or individuals at least. i) Inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life. ii) Distance and alienation from a so called mainstream society. iii) Isolation from major societal mechanisms which produce or distribute social resources (Sonawal, 2008). The perceived and manifested exclusions are mostly due to the fact that the other part of the society think them not suitable to be in the same line of interaction. From these two explanations one can draw the difference of exclusion: Tribal groups are excluded groups because they are not a part of the greater traditional Hindu society. At best they may be termed as the parallel segments in a different domain. Scheduled Castes, on the contrary, a part and parcel of the greater Hindu society, are excluded as neglected parts thereof. Therefore, it is opined that in the nation building process, while the Scheduled Castes need uplifting in social status, the tribal societies need a meaningful integration and positive inclusion. The present study focus on the ways the tribal groups particularly the tribal women are excluded in the process of development when compare with the other segments of the Telangana state.



The tribes in India usually reside in hill areas, forests, near the seas, and in islands. Their life style is quite different from non-tribals (Preet, 1994). It is not that their societies are static, but the pace of social change in tribal society is very slow. Since they are materially and economically backward, attempts have been made by the Government to develop them. Today, the governments in all countries are paying special attention to development of the tribes (Nithya, 2014). Though our national leaders and constitutional makers are committed to uplift the tribal people, a desired level of development has not been achieved yet (Chandra Guru et. al., 2015). In the light of above observations, the paper critically sets the following objectives.

1. To study the determinates of status of tribal women in Telangana state.
2. To compare the status of tribal women with other sections of the women in Telangana state.
3. To assess the gaps and suggest suitable remedial measures for improvement of tribal women.

The present paper is mostly based on secondary data from various research studies including census data, committee reports on tribals, annual reports of tribal welfare ministry, statistical handbook of Telangana state, social development report, and also National Family and Health survey reports.

## **2. SCHEDULE TRIBES IN TELANGANA**

Telangana is newly formed state in India with a geographical area of 1,12,077 square kilometers and located on the Deccan Plateau and lies in the southern region of India.. It is the twelfth largest state in terms of area in India. The state is surrounded by Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. At the time of formation of the Telangana State in 2014, it consisted of ten districts (see Map 1), namely Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Medak, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda and Khammam. As per 2011 census, total population of the state is about 3.50 crore. Majority of the population in the state reside in rural areas and mainly depend on agriculture for their livelihood. In order to bring administration closer to the public and to ensure the benefits of development and welfare schemes the state was re-organised its districts and formed 31 districts in 2016. Apart from the existing 10 districts 21 new districts were created, which are (see Map 2): Bhadrachal, Jagtial, Jangaon, Jayashankar, JogulambaGadwal, Kamareddy, KumuramBheem, Mahabubabad, Mancherla, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Nagarkurnool, Nirmal, Peddapalli, RajannaSircilla, Sangareddy, Siddipet, Suryapet, Vikarabad, Wanaparthy, YadadriBhuvanagiri, and Warangal Rural. The Schedule tribe population is distributed in all the districts of Telangana State. Nevertheless their proportion to total population is higher in the district like, Mahabubabad(37.80%), Bhadrachal (36.66%), Adilabad (31.6%) and KumuramBheem (25.91%). However, the present study analyzed the data on the basis of the original ten districts of the state for which information is available.



The scheduled tribes or otherwise referred as original inhabitants (Adivasi's) portrayed as one of the most economically deprived and marginalized groups when compare with the other segment of the population. They live in remote and isolated regions and engage in primitive occupations, animism and nomadic habits. They constitute about 9.34% of the total population or 31.77 lakh in Telangana state (Statistical Year Book of Telangana State, 2015). About 89.05% live in rural areas and 10.05% live in urban areas. Their literacy rate is 49.51 as against State literacy rate of 66.46. There are 32 Tribal groups living in the State which include 4 PVTGs (Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups) viz., Kondareddies, Chenchus, Kolams and Thoties living in Khammam, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Ranga Reddy, Adilabad Districts. The dominant tribal groups in the State are Lambada with a population of 20,46,117, Koyas - 4,86,391, Gonds - 2,97,846 and Yerukalas - 1,44,128. Among these tribes, Chenchus are considered as primitive as those who lived in Stone Age (Satyanarayana, 2014). In Telangana their presence is more in and around the river valleys and forests areas. In order to understand the socio-cultural conditions of the tribal communities, they identified region-wise as under.

1. Gond - Kolam Region
2. Koya - Konda Reddi Region
3. Chenchu Region
4. Plain Areas

**The Gond - Kolam Region** falls in the hills and forest region of Adilabad district north of Godavari river. The main tribes inhabiting the region are: Gonds and Naikpods and their dependent communities Pardhans and Thotis. Kolams, Andhs and Bhils also live side by side to the above communities. Among these tribes women play a significant role in all socio-economic and religious activities at the level of the household but they are not given a status commensurate with their role. As per 1981 census the female literacy rate is 1.25 percentage.

**The Koya - Konda Reddi Region** runs down Adilabad district further south east side along the river Godavari through the districts of Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam giving shelter to the Koyas and Konda Reddis. Further tribal people settled in this region popularly known as konda Rajulu. Patrilocal system in practice and women contribute to the family income and control family expenditure. They play an important role on social functions, rituals and in religious matters.

**The Chenchu Region** is the forested belt of Nallamala Hills north of Krishna river in the districts of Mahaboobnagar and Nalgonda. The Chenchus also live in and around the Vikarabad forest region of Rangareddy district. They practice patrilocal residence and eldest male member in a family takes care of property and supervise the family affairs. the average age of marriage is 14 to 18 years for girls. Marriage are arranged through negotiation and by elopement. Women supplement the family income by undertaking various tasks such as road construction and wood cutting, besides household work such as collecting fuel, bringing potable water and cooking.

Communities such as Lambada (Banjara / Sugali), Yerukala and Yanadi living in the **plain areas** have also been being treated as tribes from 1976 onwards. They came to this region for the first time from north (Bellari) with Mughal contingents as commissariat carriers. The Lambadi women take part in economic activities, social functions and rituals. As per the 1981 census the literacy rate is 9.94 for male and 1.88 for female.

In the year 2003 the communities of Nakkala and Dhulia were also treated as Scheduled Tribes. Further the Government of Telangana has announced that it will consider the communities such as Boya Valmiki and Mathura Lambadas can be included in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

### 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on the status of tribal women in India conducted by various scholars at macro level (K. Mann, 1987; J.P. Singh, N.N. Vyas and R.S. Mann, 1988; Chauhan, 1990; Dutta, 2012; A. Mitra, 2008; Veena Bhasin, 2017 ) provides insight on determinants of status of tribal women. The major determinant are work participation rate, level of income, employment, education, health and fertility, sex ratio, age at marriage, mortality, life expectancy, nutritional status, maternal and child health care practices, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.,. However few studies (Basu,

1993; Balgir et.al., 1998; G. Naresh, 2014; Ratna Sarkar, 2016) conducted at micro/state level focused on single determinants like health and economic status. Thus the study of tribal women at micro/state level cannot be ignored. It becomes important because the problems of tribal women differ from a particular area to another area owing to their geographical location, historical background and the processes of social change (Chauhan, 1990).

The status of the tribal women, in general usually depends on the economic roles they play. They have a much higher work participation rate than non-tribal women. Gupta (1993) in his edited volume analyzed the status of tribal women in Tripura state. The various aspects such as laws, customs, economic role, status, risks, gender dimension and stages of tribal economy. Dutta (2012) gives a detailed note on problems with education of tribal women in India and recommends the inclusion of Tribes for sustainable growth. Against this background, the study focused on the status determinant of tribal women in Telangana state like literacy, sex ratio, age at marriage and fertility rate and work participation rate.

#### 4. POPULATION OF SCHEDULE TRIBE IN TELANGANA STATE

**Table 1:** Proportion of scheduled tribe population to the total population in Telangana (2011)

Sl. no.	Districts	Sex-wise STs population		Total	Percentage of STs		
		Male	Female		to total population	Rural to total STs population	Urban to total STs population
1	Mahabubnagar	1,87,035 (51.35%)	1,77,234 (48.65%)	3,64,269 (100%)	8.99	94.81	5.19
2	Rangareddy	1,12,768 (51.55%)	1,05,989 (48.45%)	2,18,757 (100%)	4.13	61.20	38.80
3	Hyderabad	25,556 (52.22%)	23,381 (47.78%)	48,937 (100%)	1.24	-	100.00
4	Medak	86,574 (51.23%)	82,411 (48.77%)	1,68,985 (100%)	5.57	92.79	7.21
5	Nizamabad	95,679 (49.59%)	97,262 (50.41%)	1,92,941 (100%)	7.56	96.04	3.96
6	Adilabad	2,47,472 (49.91%)	2,48,322 (50.09%)	4,95,794 (100%)	18.09	93.40	6.60
7	Karimnagar	53,495 (50.11%)	53,250 (49.89%)	1,06,745 (100%)	2.83	86.52	13.48
8	Warangal	2,68,976 (50.69%)	2,61,680 (49.31%)	5,30,656 (100%)	15.11	91.59	8.41
9	Khammam	3,26,225 (49.69%)	3,30,352 (50.31%)	6,56,577 (100%)	25.18	91.52	8.48
10	Nalgonda	2,03,876 (51.71%)	1,90,403 (48.29%)	3,94,279 (100%)	11.30	92.90	7.10
	Total	16,07,656 (50.59%)	15,70,284 (49.41%)	31,77,940 (100%)	9.08	89.05	10.95

Source: Statistics Hand book (2017), Department of Economic and statistics, Hyderabad.

The above table reveals the sex-wise population of Schedule Tribe and their proportion to total population in Telangana state. Further the table also reveals their rural and urban proposition. The table reveals there is no significant difference in sex-wise population. However, except the schedule tribes lives in Hyderabad city, rest of them mostly concentrated in rural areas. The above table shows the proportion of scheduled tribe population to total population across the different district in Telangana state. According to 2011 Census data (Table 1, column 6), scheduled tribes are highly concentrated in the Khammam (25.18%), Adilabad (18.09%) and Warangal districts (15.11%). The invasion of Adivasi land and territories began mostly during the nizam period and continued extensively during the post-nizam period. Large parts of the land occupied by the scheduled tribes were claimed by the state in order to build new roads, dams, industries, and infrastructure. As a result, many districts have witnessed significant out-migration of tribes and in migration of other groups. With the extinction of forests and wildlife, many tribes have shifted their occupations from hunting and gathering to agricultural activities. The vast majority of the tribal population is engaged in the primary sector and work as cultivators and agricultural laborers. With the disappearance of many traditional crafts, many tribes are resorting to newer occupations. The tribes are predominantly non-vegetarian. They eat pork, beef, rice, and wheat and drink alcohol. The different tribes speak

diverse languages and dialects with the vast majority of them being bilingual. Most of the tribes have a patriarchal form of society while a few tribes follow the matrilineal mode of family structure and inheritance patterns. Despite the heterogeneity found among the different tribes, they all display some common characteristics in their family and social values. In general, all tribes display absence of occupational specialization, lack of hierarchy in their social structures, absence of consumerism, and very close ties to nature and their environment. Although the Adivasis have co-existed among the Hindus in all the regions, they have for the most part preserved their social and cultural practices (Satyanarayana, 2014).

### 5. SEX RATIO AMONG TRIBAL WOMEN

The sex-ratio (number of females per 1000 males) is an important indicator of female status and autonomy within the family and society. A balanced sex-ratio indicates less gender discrimination and better care and treatment of female infants. Among the general population in India, there has always been a tendency to favor boys over girls (Kishor, 1993), and the sex-ratio among the Hindu population has been favorable to males. According to the census 2011 data there is a declining trend in child sex ratio across all categories. The national average has dipped to 919 in 2011 from 927 in 2001. The decline in child sex ratio of STs is higher—it has declined from 973 to 957. Table 2 shows the child and female sex-ratio among the other caste, schedule caste and schedule tribe based on 2011 census data bifurcated from Andhra Pradesh census data for Telangana State.

**Table 2:** Child sex-ratio and female sex ratio for other caste, scheduled caste, and scheduled tribe of Telangana state

Sl. no.	Districts	Child Sex ratio			Female sex ratio		
		ST	SC	Other caste	ST	SC	Other caste
1	Mahabubnagar	872	953	927	940	988	958
2	Rangareddy	885	964	931	915	994	951
3	Hyderabad	824	932	914	952	1019	988
4	Medak	911	970	952	1017	1075	1036
5	Nizamabad	922	942	953	1003	1012	998
6	Adilabad	956	935	926	995	1014	1007
7	Karimnagar	918	939	935	973	1002	1001
8	Warangal	881	946	929	1013	1013	1004
9	Khammam	961	992	936	934	1002	986
10	Nalgonda	841	959	932	977	1008	985
	Average	906	954	932	940	988	958

Source: Statistics Hand book (2017), Department of Economic and statistics, Hyderabad.

When compared with average child sex ratio with other caste groups (other caste-932; Schedule caste-954) and schedule tribe reported low child sex ratio (906). The same reflected among the female sex ratio. It shows that possible social and physical proximity with Hindus among tribal groups in discriminating against girl's child. However, when we analyze with district-wise data child sex ratio is very low in Hyderabad (824) and Nalgonda (841).

### 6. LITERACY AMONG TRIBAL WOMEN

Literacy is considered to be a powerful tool in determining the position of women in any society.

Literacy leads to social, cultural, and economic development. Additionally, it gives women more autonomy and freedom. In many tribal societies, especially in matrilineal societies, female literacy and higher female labor market participation are encouraged and women's economic contribution gives women greater autonomy and involvement in family and social activities. The female literacy rate among tribal population is far lower (39.44 per cent) when compared to overall female literacy of the other castes groups (61.59 percent) and schedule caste (49.9 per cent) (2011 Census). Table 4 shows the female literacy rate of other castes, schedule caste and schedule tribe's population.

**Table 3:** Female literacy rates for other caste, scheduled caste, and scheduled tribe of Telangana state (2011)

Sl. no.	Districts	Literacy rate among Female belongs to		
		Other caste groups	SC	ST
1	Mahabubnagar	48.05	37.65	30.44
2	Rangareddy	72.42	56.56	45.87

3	Hyderabad	80.15	71.07	62.08
4	Medak	54.34	44.32	32.04
5	Nizamabad	54.68	43.52	34.25
6	Adilabad	54.74	48.8	41.37
7	Karimnagar	56.33	50.27	42.19
8	Warangal	60.02	52.89	38.96
9	Khammam	60.78	55.08	43.67
10	Nalgonda	57.97	50.49	35.56
	Total	61.59	49.9	39.44

**Source:** *Statistics Hand book (2017), Department of Economic and statistics, Hyderabad.*

Although the literacy rate for scheduled tribe women is generally quite low, it varies significantly by different regions of the Telangana state. The above table compares the female literacy rates for the different segment of the population for the year 2011. Although tribal women lag behind the total population in most district, the literacy rates is higher in Hyderabad as it is 100 percent urban area. The lowest in Mahabunagar and Medak districts. Pradhan and Sanjay Kumar (2011) describe that despite special initiatives like Ashram schools, introducing vernacular at primary level, and teaching in local dialects, the tribals are still lagging behind the non-tribals. Under such circumstances, the government and policy makers should put best efforts to improve their educational status.

#### **Age at marriage and fertility rate among tribal women**

The practice of marrying girls at a young age is quite common in many parts of India. In the erstwhile undivided Andhra Pradesh too, child marriage persisted despite strong institutional interventions to prevent it. Because of early marriage, girls lose their access to education and employment. These impact negatively on their decision making capacities in their homes and in turn on their development. The median age at first marriage is 18.8 years among women age 20-49 years and 24.3 years among men age 25-49 years. More than one-fourth (26%) of women age 20-24 years got married before the legal minimum age of 18 (NFHS-4, 2015-16). These data show that early marriage is still quite common in Telangana. As a result, women at a very early age are exposed to social responsibilities as well as health risks in terms of early pregnancies, abortions, early age deliveries, and child mortality, for which they are often not physically or mentally prepared.

**Table 4:** *Caste-wise female age at marriage of the Telangana state*

Caste	Age at marriage
SC	15.51
ST	15.48
OBC	15.91
Others	15.75
Average	15.74

**Source:** *Kalpana Kannabiran (2017)*

The study conducted by KalpanaKannabiran (2017) in Telangana by collecting primary data from 716 respondents of which 17.9% were from Scheduled Tribes reveals that the mean age at marriage was 15.74 years for Telangana. Among OBC group reported a higher age at marriage (15.9 years) than the other three social groups (Others: 15.75 years, SC: 15.5 years and ST: 15.48 years). The study also reported that only 16 percentage of schedule Tribes aware of the legal age of marriage of female.

**Table -5:** *Caste-wise fertility rateof the Telangana state (2015-16)*

Caste	Fertility Rate
SC	1.72
ST	1.79
OBC	1.77
Others	1.93
Average	1.71

**Source:** *NFHS-4(2015-16)*

The total fertility rate (TFR) in Telangana is 1.8 children per woman, implying that the state is well below the replacement level fertility of 2.1 children. Fertility in urban areas, at 1.7 children per woman, is lower than in rural areas by 0.2 children per woman. Fertility in Telangana does not vary greatly by religion and caste/tribe, but does vary by schooling (NFHS-4, 2015-16). Women with no schooling have 2.2 children per woman, almost one-half of a child more than women with 12 or more years of schooling (1.8 children per woman).

## 7. WORK-PARTICIPATION RATE OF TRIBAL WOMEN

The work participation rate (total workers as percentage of total population) of the scheduled Tribes population is 49.30 percent which is much higher than that for the general population (37.46). This is primarily due to very high participation rates among the scheduled Tribe women. In case of males, the work participation rate of the scheduled Tribe population (51.55%). But the female work participation rate among the scheduled Tribes is 43.71 per cent as against 22.25 per cent for the total population for the country. The female work participation rate is generally quite high in most of the states and union territories. Among the major states, the highest female work participation rate among the scheduled tribes is found in undivided Andhra Pradesh (50.63%) and the lower in west Bengal (27.43%) the Schedule Tribe population is largely rural based which has a higher work participation rate than the urban population. Secondly, the scheduled Tribe population may be engaged predominantly in such activities as forestry, which are female oriented. Thirdly, because the extremely poor literacy level of scheduled tribe women, the school going population would be much less thereby increasing the participation of younger girls in economic activity.

Work participation of ST women is the highest in the country and the participation of men is even better. Work participation rate of ST women is 43.5, whereas national average (for general population) is 25.5. Though the overall work participation rate decreased from 25.6 to 25.5, it is increased in urban areas.

**Table – 6:** Worker participation rate of the Telangana state

Caste	Worker participation rate		Total
	Rural	Urban	
ST	57.9	41.8	56.5
SC	54.1	39.2	51.1
OBC	52.6	38.2	48.7
Others	47.1	33.1	41.2
All groups	52.1	36.4	47.6

**Source:** Social Development Report (2017)

When it comes to labour force participation – available for involving in any livelihood making activity – the rate of participation is the highest in the ST community across the social groups in the state as well as at national levels. The work participation rate of STs (both male and female) in Telangana is found to be higher than the national average, similar to that of all social group average. The high work participation is not necessarily due to abundance of employment opportunity in the state, it could be that out of economic necessity as many family members including the children had to participate in work for their effort to meet their family subsistence. Also, given their highly labour-intensive with very low productivity under primitive modes of production require more labour than otherwise in a better mode of production (Venkar Narayanan, 2015).

## 8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study focused on the status determinant of tribal women in Telangana state like literacy rate, sex ratio, age at marriage and fertility rate and work participation rate. The tribal women in Telangana state which constitute 4.5% to the total population their socio-economic development is big question mark. The data analyzed from the various secondary sources reveals that except the schedule tribes lives in Hyderabad city, rest of them mostly concentrated in rural areas. They are highly concentrated in the Khammam (25.18%), Adilabad (18.09%) and Warangal districts (15.11%). Further, the analysis reported low child sex ratio and female sex ration among schedule tribes signifies the discrimination against girl's child. However, when we analyze with district –wise data child sex ratio, it is very low in Hyderabad (324) and Nalgonda (841).



In many tribal societies, especially in matrilineal societies, female literacy and higher female labor market participation are encouraged and women's economic contribution gives women greater autonomy and involvement in family and social activities. The female literacy rate among tribal population is far lower (39.44 per cent) when compared to overall female literacy of the other castes groups (61.59 percent) and schedule caste (49.9 per cent) (2011 Census). The median age at first marriage is 18.8 years among women age 20-49 years and 24.3 years among men age 25-49 years. More than one-fourth (26%) of women age 20-24 years got married before the legal minimum age of 18 (NFHS-4, 2015-16). These analysis shows that the age are exposed to social responsibilities as well as health risks in terms of early pregnancies, abortions, early age deliveries, and child mortality, for which they are often not physically or mentally prepared. The total fertility rate (TFR) in Telangana is 1.8 children per woman, implying that the state is well below the replacement level fertility of 2.1 children. Fertility in urban areas, at 1.7 children per woman, is lower than in rural areas by 0.2 children per woman. Fertility in Telangana does not vary greatly by religion and caste/tribe, but does vary by schooling (NFHS-4, 2015-16). Women with no schooling have 2.2 children per woman, almost one-half of a child more than women with 12 or more years of schooling (1.8 children per woman).

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These facts raise cause of concern at the policy level and it needs policy attention to improve the tribal women condition in rural Telangana by strengthen ashram schools with hostel facility and scholarships.

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