



Poverty, Food Security and State Entitlement in Jharkhand: A Case Study of Savar Community in East Singhbhum

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Poverty is one of the main problems which have attracted attention of economists and social scientists. Since the independence India Government has made poverty reduction a priority in its development planning. Policies have focused on improving the poor standard of living by ensuring food security, promoting self-employment through greater access to assets, increasing wage employment and improving access to basic social services. Even after more than 60 years of independence India still has the world's largest number of poor people in a single country.

The present paper discusses the sources of livelihood, food security level and state entitlement of Savar community in East Singhbhum of Jharkhand. The Savar is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in Jharkhand. The main findings are adult literacy rate is very low and female literacy even worse. Their main/primary sources of livelihood is forest based income such as wood and timber collection from forest and sale it in nearest markets. Savar are reported to have very high levels of food insecurity in the sample with relatively less percentage of households taking three meals a day throughout the year. Savar tribe are highly food insecure in the period of April to June and September. The content of pulses and fat is very low for all households in their food grains. Their access to Government welfare and development programmes is very poor and community participation rate in these programmes also very low.

Key words : Child Health, Primitive Tribes, State Entitlement

Introduction

Poverty is one of the main problems which have attracted attention of economists and social scientists. Poverty in India is a major issue. Since the independence India Government has made poverty reduction a priority in its development planning. Policies have focused on improving the poor standard of living by ensuring food security, promoting self-employment through greater access to assets, increasing wage employment and improving access to basic social services. Even after more than 60 years of independence India still has the world's largest number of poor people in a single country.

The Human Development Report 2010 measures poverty in terms of a new parameter, namely Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which replaced the Human poverty Index (HPI) used since 1997. The MPI indicates the share of the population that is multidimensional poor adjusted by the intensity of deprivation, in terms of living standards, health and education. According to this parameter, India with a poverty index of 0.283.

Poverty easily coexists with food insecurity and is the main cause of hunger and malnutrition. Poverty exists when there is lack of income, productive malnutrition, homelessness, inadequate housing, unsafe environment, social discrimination and many more factors. It is well

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documented that most of families in the world spend 80 percent of their total income on food grains. Further, people often fail to eat enough food only because they do not have sufficient purchasing power. Prof Amartya Sen states that the cause of hunger in India currently are the wide prevalence of poverty and inability of a large section of the population to buy food or to establish entitlement over an adequate amount of food. Food security exists when all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security has three components: Availability of Food (*both quantitative and qualitative*), Access to Food (*economic and social*) and Absorption of Food in the body.

A study by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative using a MPI found that there were 53.7% population living in poverty in India, Jharkhand ranks a very low 20 among 21 states in terms of Multidimensional Poverty Index. Jharkhand is considered to be one of the most food insecure and vulnerable states in the country. M.S. Swaminathan Foundation has reported Jharkhand as a most food insecure region. In Jharkhand approximately 40 percent people live below poverty line. According to 55th round of NSSO, 10.46% of all households in Jharkhand faced seasonal food insecurity. The data also revealed that around 2.5% of the households face chronic food shortages. There are many areas in Jharkhand where, during hunger season, people reduce their consumption of cereals. Malnutrition and hunger continue primarily because poor resources base and low access to resources. The condition of Primitive Tribal Groups in Jharkhand is particularly pathetic because they are basically landless and agricultural worker.

In the above mentioned background, the present paper discusses the sources of livelihood, food security level and state entitlement of Savar community in Jharkhand. The Savar is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in Jharkhand. Jharkhand currently has 32 scheduled tribal groups out of which nine have been designed as PTGs. The nine primitive tribal groups living in the most remote regions are the most excluded groups amongst the tribal. It may be mentioned that, in identifying a tribal community as PTG, the Government has used three criteria (i) Pre-agricultural level of technology (ii) Low level of literacy rate and (iii) Stagnant or diminishing population.

Methodology

The paper is based on a study of *Traditional child rearing practices and modern child health seeking behaviour of the selected tribal communities in Jharkhand*, conducted by University Department of Economics, R.U. Ranchi and supported by UNICEF, Jharkhand. First stage, one district randomly selected out of four districts where Savar community exist from the list of JTWRI survey. Second stage, two blocks randomly selected out of seven blocks where they exist in East Singhbhum district and third stage five villages randomly selected from Patamda block and three villages randomly selected from Potka block. All Savar households taken from selected sample villages. Multiple methods were used to data collection and information through Household interview, Village Schedule and Focused Group Discussion with the community. Data was collected during December 2008 to March 2009.

Brief Profile of the Sample Tribe

The Savar is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in Jharkhand. Savar also known as Hill Kheriya, currently live in scattered way in East Singhbhum, Sarikela-Kharsanwa, Palamu and Godda. Savar primarily concentrated in East Singhbhum and minimum in Godda. They

are scattered in 4 districts, 11 blocks and 211 villages in Jharkhand. The settlement is sprinkled and isolated. Majority they live in top of the hill or in nearest part of the forest areas. The huts of Savar are small their walls are made of mud or wooden logs, or bamboo splits, with thatched their huts have one living room which is used for cooking, dining, living, sleeping, storing etc. The Savar were earlier basically food gatherers and hunters.

Table : 1
Population Trends of Savar tribes in Jharkhand

Year	Savar
1941	1645
1961	1561
1971	3409
1981	3014
1991	4264
2001	6004
2003	9949

Sources: 1941-1991 Oraon, P.C (2003) *Land and People of Jharkhand*, JTWRI, pp 6-7
2001 Special Tables for SC / ST Jharkhand, Census of India, 2001
2003 figures from PTG survey, JTWRI, 2003

Population Trends of Savar Tribes in Jharkhand

Savar are numerically very small reporting population of less than 10000. Savar constitute about 2.68 percent of the total PTGs population in Jharkhand.

Sample Areas Profile

The study was undertaken in 8 Savar villages in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. East Singhbhum is a one of the developed district in Jharkhand in terms of literacy rate and industrial areas. Patamda block is situated 30 kms in north side and Potka block is situated 25 kms in south side from district headquarters. Some of the villages were situated very close to forests and some others were situated top of the hills.

Table : 2
Sample Village Name and Number of Household

District	Block	Village	No. HH
East Singhbhum	Patamda	Gobarghusi	40
		Pogda	41
		Bota	20
		Opo	15
		Kadamjhore	10
	Potka	Tangrain	15
		Mithaijhorna	11
		Jambani	6
		Total	158

Average population size per household is 4.5. Sex ratio of the Savar community reported a favourable. Male and female literacy rate is 33.7% and 21.9 % respectively as compared to the all Savar community average 25.39 and 10.7 percent in Jharkhand. Male literacy rate is

very low and the female literacy rate even worse. Their adult education level is also very poor. Only 7.43 male and 3.94 female complete secondary education and only 3.3 percent male and 3.9 percent female get university education.

Table : 3
Demographic features of Sample Households

No. of Sample Village	Sample No. of HH	Total Sample population	Average population size per HH	Sex Ratio of the Sample HH	Literacy rate of the Sample Population		Overall literacy rate of Saver community in Jharkhand		
					Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
8	158	705	4.5	1088	33.7	21.9	25.3	10.7	18.0

Source: Primary data and PTG survey, 2003, JTWRI, Govt. of Jharkhand.

Table : 4
Level of Education above 18 years of the Sample HH

Nursery		Primary School		Middle School		High School		University	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
12.39	11.84	64.46	75.00	12.39	5.26	7.43	3.94	3.30	3.94

Livelihood and food security status of the Sample Households

The Savars were earlier basically food gatherers and hunters. They collected various edible roots, short leaves, fruits, flowers in their forest ecology, which they continue to do about 80 percent of their economy continues to depend on the forest. Fruits are collected generally by female and very often assisted by male members. The Savars also collect lac, gum and resin from the forest. Gum and resin are separated from trees like asan, dawatha, townkiin, char etc. For generation to generation they have been practicing collection of honey in the forest. They collect it round the year. The wax is also sold. The Savars are expert in climbing trees. The Savars were expert hunters but now-a-days hunting is limited. They are not fully dependent on hunting. As per the traditional system men can take part in hunting. Hunting is taboo for women. All males above the age of 10 can participate in it. A hunting party is guided by a Sikari Laya (the hunting leader). The hunting tools of the Saver are bow and arrow. They are basically a landless community.

Majority of the households (72.45%) primarily depends on forest. They collect forest produce like edible roots, shoots, flowers, fruits, seeds, etc. 15 to 20 years ago they were number of fruits and roots collect from forest such as Char, Kendu, Mango, Jamun, edible roots, etc. Forest was their main source of food but at present they suffered due to loss in forest areas. Due to fast depleting forest, now their main occupation is daily wage labor, and selling fuel wood. They depend primarily on wood collection from forest and sale it in nearest markets. Savars live in a highly exploitative market structure. Saver women are expert in broom-making and basket-weaving with bamboo and other forest grass and they sell it in nearby village or market. But they are not paid sufficient money/cereals for these items due to less demand because of introduction of plastic items. Average landholding of the sample households is 0.23 acre. Saver tribe holds minimum land or landless and their land quality is very poor.

Table : 5
Occupation of the Sample Tribe

Tribe/sex	Savar
Male	Wage labour, fuel wood selling , basket making
Female	Collection of forest products , broom making

Table : 6
Male and Female Primary Occupation

Agriculture		Salaried job		Service		House keeping		Labour		Wood Selling		Broom/Rassi Making		Animal Husbandry	
Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.	Main	Sec.
4.27	10.16	0.26	-	0.8	-	1.06	1.35	13.36	59.32	72.45	6.44	3.47	19.32	1.6	3.38

Food Security

Savar are reported to have very high levels of food insecurity in the sample with relatively less percentage of households taking three meals a day throughout the year. Only 29.11% households food availability three square meals and 68.98% households food availability two square meals a day throughout the year. 65.18 percent households don't eat at noon and 31.64 percent households don't eat night due to lack of food grains. Savars have reported a food deficit throughout the year as some of the families facing food shortages in some months, April to June most crucial months for Savar because these months they are highly food insecure. Their major food item or food habits mar bhat or Pani Bhat all times throughout the year. Food is primarily rice some sags and vegetables, occasional meat products. The content of pulses and fat is very low for all the households. In food scarcity months the Savar consume wide range of roots and also seasonal fruits. Alcoholism is quite rampant. Besides rice beer they consume locally brewed liquor affecting their health. Children, pregnant women and lactating women take almost identical food. Only 15.18% households facing seasonal food habits. Their major source of drinking water is hand pump and 19.62 percent households drink Jharna water.

Table : 7
Food Availability and Security of Sample Household's % of HH

Food Times (square meal)	No. of HH
2	68.98
3	29.11

Access to Social Security Programme

Accessing ICDS services (Anganbari Centre)

A very low percentage of children were attending ICDS centres in the sample villages. Growth monitoring charts were not available. The malnourished children were not identified and referred in many cases and a number of reasons were given during the field work, children were also not going in majority of cases. Some of the important barriers identified were :

- Many centres were in the main hamlets were reported to be at distance 2 kms or more where the small children could not go regularly.

- THR ration was irregular and insufficient. Mothers converge on the day of distribution of THR the days also designated for immunisation.
- People did not want their children to be weighed for the fear of evil eye/ buri nazar.
- Weighing machines and charts have started arriving only recently.
- Very low involvement of the community, taken as external institution.
- Lack of supervision due to non availability of supervisors in the remote areas.

Table :8
Shortage of food (% in Terms Total No of Shortage Responses)

Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	5.88	3.92	32.35	29.41	14.70	3.92	3.92	3.92	0.98	0	0.98

Table :9
Food Habit of the Sample HH (%HH)

Time	Nothing	Basi Bhat	Mar Bhat	Dry Rice	Roti & Veg.	Rice & Veg.	Rice & Pulses	Murhi	Hadhia
Morning	2.53	19.62	63.29	1.26	0.63	6.96	0.63	0	0
Noon	65.18	0	25.31	0.63	0	8.86	0	0	0
Evening	65.82	0	24.68	0	0	0	0	0.63	3.79
Night	31.64	0	32.91	19.62	2.53	13.29	0	0	0

Table : 10
Sources of Drinking Water (% in terms of HHs)

Hand Pump	Well	Jharna
59.49	18.35	19.62

Table : 11
Anganbari (3-6years) (In % out of total (3-6) Years Population)

Name of Tribe	Going	Not Going
	Male	Female
Savar	56.25	35.29
		55.88

81.64 percent households have Antodaya card but they are not getting ration regularly. Only 7 to 8 months get ration during the whole year but entry in the cards for 12 months by ration dealer. 68.35 percent households have Indira Awas but at present condition of the house are poor. 62.65 percent households have MNREGA cards. Total working days were 1669 during the 2007-08 financial years. Average work days per households were 10.56 days during this period.

Table : 12
Having Social Securities (In % out of Total HHs)

Antodaya	BPL	New BPL	Anna purna	Old age Pension	Indira Awas	Voter Card	Job Card	Kambal	Mosquito Net	Solar Larten	Patta
81.64	3.16	8.22	3.16	8.86	68.35	44.93	62.65	62.02	39.87	16.45	24.68

Table : 13
Working under NAREGA (In % out of Total HHs)

Tribe	Had Demanded	Road Construction	Earth Work	Tree/Scrub Cutting	Bank A/C	Work Days	Amount (Rs)Saber
3.79	67.16	25.37	2.98	33.54	1669	144074	

Livestock and other Assets

Only few households have buffalo. Share of hen and goat was 91 percent out of the total livestock's. Their access to modern equipment is very also very poor. Nobody have T.V and mobile phone out of 158 households. So, from these micro indicators we find this community live without modern scientific equipment. They have no access to latest information and knowledge. These community one of most deprived community in Jharkhand as well as in India.

Table : 14
Live Stock (In % out of Total Stock)

Cow	Bull	She_Buffallo	He_Buffall	Goat	Pig	Sheep	Hen	Duck
0	2.75	1.99	0.61	32.16	0	0.15	59.72	2.29

Table : 15
Other Assets (Total number)

Cycle	M. Cycle	Radio	T.V.	2 in 1	Camera	T.M.I.	Mobile
32	3	16	0	0	0	3	0

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined recent evidence on food security status, state entitlement of Savar community in East Singhbhum of Jharkhand. The main findings are as follows. The Savar is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in Jharkhand and they are most deprived section in our country. One, Adult literacy rate is very low and female literacy even worse. Their main/primary sources of livelihood is forest based income such as wood and timber collection from forest and sale it in nearest markets. Savar are reported to have very high levels of food insecurity in the sample with relatively less percentage of households taking three meals a day throughout the year. Savar tribe are highly food insecure in the period of April to June and September. The content of pulses and fat is very low for all households in their food grains. Their access to Government welfare and development programmes is very poor and community participation rate in these programmes also very low. The big question is why some tribal community stand today in this stage in our country after 64 years of independence and post economic reforms.

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