

A Study on Socio-Economic Characteristics of Gavalis and their Inter Correlations*

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Abstract: The study was conducted in Dharwad Taluka involving 120 Gavalis. The study revealed that majority of the Gavalis were middle aged (65.00%), illiterate (55.00%), marginal holders (48.00%), have large sized family (55.00%) with medium level of income. Inter-relationship was observed among the variables such as education, family size, land holding, herd size, annual income and social participation.

Introduction

Among various types of tribal people living in different parts of India, 'Gavalis' form an important tribe. These tribal Gavalis mainly inhabit the forested upper plateaus of the western ghats of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa. Traditionally Gavalis are the buffalo keepers.

The study of tribal Gavalis give a very interesting and revealing account of the historical changes in their life style, occupation and their animal holdings. Half a century ago all the gavali families were restricted to the western ghats of Maharashtra. In those days each 'Gavali' family could maintain herds of 60 to 80 animals of which at a time 15 to 20 could be yielding milk so that, the Gavali family could have even during worst times of the year, 30 to 50 litres of rich buffalo milk daily. They did not market the milk directly, but curdled it and sold the butter, ghee at weekly village markets. The butter was

exchanged for paddy, ragi, oil, cloths, jewellery etc.

As a result of urbanization spread rapidly in the country. The Gavalis and most of other tribals who did not get in to the mainstream of change, naturally got isolated with in narrow confines, preserving to some extent their ancient patterns of living (Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, 1978).

The tribals, now do not want to remain in isolation, on grounds of neither false prestige nor the spiritual superiority of their ancestors. The tribals are gradually raising to a more higher and advanced cultural and social-life and may be expected to raise to some standards of living as the rural people of the same area has got (Kumkumzumdar, 1973). And Gavalis are not exceptional to this phenomenon.

Keeping this in view the present study was conducted with the following objectives:

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1. To findout the socio-economic characteristics of Gavalis
2. To know their social-participation and
3. To understand the inter-correlationship among socio-economic characteristics of Gavalis.

Material and Methods

The present study was conducted in Dharwad taluk of Dharwad district. Totally 120 respondents were selected from Nine selected villages, following random sampling procedure. These respondents were contacted and interviewed personally and information related to their socio-economic conditions, were elicited with the help of structured and pretested schedule.

Age, formal education, land holding, family size, herd size, annual income and social participation, were selected as the indicators of socio-economic status. The respondents were then categorised into suitable number of categories on the basis of each of these attributes. Further person product movement correlation coefficient was employed to work out the inter-correlation among the attributes.

Results and discussion

The results of the present study is discussed and presented and as under:

The data presented in table 1 indicated that majority of the respondents (65.00 per cent) were middle aged, followed by old aged (25.00 per cent) and young

aged (10.00 per cent). The most probable reason that could be attributed to this observation is that old aged Gavalis, due to their inability and weakness associated with old age are taking up the laborious job of dairying, on the other hand, most of the young Gavalis, due to modernisation and attraction of other less laborious and clean jobs and strong urge to undergo education are naturally not interested on the dairying which they considered as laborious and less profitable.

It is obvious from the results of Table 1 that might be because of the reason that majority of them belonged to middle aged group, who could not undergo education during their childhood, because of the unfavourable conditions prevailing at that time.

Majority of the Gavalis contacted (80.00 per cent) were either having no land or had land upto 3.2 acres (marginal). This observation can be attributed to their historical backgrounds i.e., they were migrated and settled to Western Ghats and their existing economic status, restrict them from owning more land, (Gadgil and Malhotra, 1981).

Majority of the respondents (54.00 per cent), were from big families (more than 10 members per family) which could be attributed to the area they inhabit and occupation they take up. As reported earlier, Gavalis mostly inhabit and Western Ghat areas which are not suitable for small families, therefore in order to face the threats to life by wild animals and other drastic conditions, the Gavails naturally favour big sized families. Further, the occupation in which they are engaged could also be advanced as the reason, because

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their Socio-economic characteristics.

		n = 120	
Sl. No.	Socio-economic characteristics	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Age		
	a. Young (upto 30 years)	12	10.00
	b. Middle (31 to 50 years)	78	65.00
	c. Old (above to years)	30	25.00
	Total	120	100.00
2.	Education		
	a. illiterate	67	55.83
	b. Read and Write	55	29.17
	c. Primary	16	13.33
	d. High School	2	1.67
	Total	120	100.00
3.	Land Holding		
	a. Landless	26	21.67
	b. Marginal (0 to 3.2 acres)	58	48.33
	c. Small (3.20 to 7.29 acres)	20	16.67
	d. Medium (7.2 to 11.20 acres)	14	11.67
	e. Big (above 11.20 acres)	2	1.66
	Total	120	100.00
4.	Family Size		
	a. Small (upto 4 members)	23	19.17
	b. Medium (5 to 50 members)	32	26.67
	c. Big (more than 10 members)	65	54.76
	Total	120	100.00
5.	Herd size		
	a. Marginal Herd size (upto 5 animals)	13	10.83
	b. Small (6 to 10 animals)	37	30.83
	c. Medium (11 to 15 animals)	47	37.50
	d. Large (16 & above)	25	28.50
	Total	120	100.00
6.	Annual income		
	a. Low (upto 5000)	16	13.33
	b. Medium (5000 to 10,000)	66	55.00
	c. High (above 10,000)	38	31.67
	Total	120	100.00

Table 2. Distribution of respondents to their social participation.

Organisation/ Institution	Member	Per cent	Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
			No.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Panchayat institutions	8	66.67	1	0.83	7	5.83	112	93.33
Farmers co-operative society/dairy co- operative society	4	3.33	-	-	4	3.33	116	96.67
Local informal organisation i) Gavali chairman	9	7.50	93	77.50	18	15.00	9	7.50

Table 3. Inter-correlation among selected socio-economic characteristics.

Variables	X ₃	X ₂	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇
Age (X ₁)	-0.348 ^{NS}	-0.1944*	-0.1639 ^{NS}	0.1182 ^{NS}	0.0940 ^{NS}	-0.1669 ^{NS}
Education (X ₂)	0.2201*	-	0.1118 ^{NS}	0.1589 ^{NS}	0.1244 ^{NS}	0.2366**
Land holding (X ₃)	-	-	0.2531**	0.2879**	0.5158**	0.2502**
Family size (X ₄)	-	-	-	0.3313**	0.5056**	0.1057 ^{NS}
Herd size (X ₅)	-	-	-	-	0.4067**	0.2387**
Annual income (X ₆)	-	-	-	-	-	0.1013 ^{NS}
Social participation (X ₇)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table value at 5% - 0.174

* Significant at 5% level.

** Significant at 1% level.

NS - Non significant.

dairying is well known for its labour intensiveness.

About 68.00 per cent of Gavilis were having small (6 to 10 animals) to medium (11 to 15 animals) herd size, which

could be attributed to their low economic status and gradual decrease in the availability of grazing land.

Sixtyeight per cent of the respondents had an annual income of up to

Rs. 10,000 which the remaining 32.00 per cent had annual income of more than Rs. 10.00 which reflects the low economic status of the Gavalis. These findings are in agreement with the results of Annon., 1974. The plausible reasons for general low economic status of Gavalis might be due to the high dependence ratio, the traditional ways of rearing animals and their exclusive dependence on dairying as main source of income.

It could be observed from the Table 2 that 93.00 and 97.00 per cent of the respondents never participated in the activities of panchayat institutions and Co-operative societies, respectively. On the other hand, majority of them (78.00 per cent) regularly participated in the activities of their own local informal organisations. This finding gives sufficient clues regarding the social interaction of the Gavalis. It could be inferred from the above finding that, the Gavalis mostly preferred their own local and informal organisations for social interaction and exchange of thoughts than the co-operative to grant subsidies and important buffaloes in large numbers.

The data presented in table 3 with respect of inter-correlation among the characteristics of respondents indicated that age was negatively and significantly correlated with education, the results are in line with the findings of Waghore and Waghmore (1987) while other variables studied were not significantly related with it. It is quite obvious that it is significantly related with it. It is quite obvious that it is only youth who attach greater importance to education and aspire for higher education. Hence, the negative correlation between age and education. Age did not exhibit significant relationship of their age, the respondents had similar levels to land

holdings, family size, herd size, annual income and social participation.

Education was positively correlated with landholding, and social participation in line with Waghmore and Waghmore (1987) while family size, herd size and Annual income were not influenced by education. This implies, as the education level of the respondents increases, the land holding owned by them, and their participation in social organisations also increases. The could be attributed to the fact that an educated person due to his higher education in a better position to acquire and manage large sized land holdings and also his higher educational status gives him special privileges in the social organisations compelling them for increased social participation.

Land holding was positively correlated with family size, herd size, annual income and social participation which is quite logical that an increment in one or all these attributes results in possession of more and more land.

Family size was positively related to land holding, herd size, and annual income thereby meaning as the size of the family increases the size of the herd maintained by them, land owned and annual income obtained also increases which is self explanatory.

Herd size was positively influenced by land holding, family size, annual income and social participation. This is quite evident, because with the increase in family size, social participation, land holding and annual income. Individual will naturally go for large sized herds as all these factors favour large scale rearing of dairy animals.

Annual income was positively influenced by land holding and herd size,

which is quite common phenomenon, as with the increase in land holding and herd size, a person will naturally earn more income.

The inter-correlation analysis (Table 3) revealed that education, land holding, and herd size, significantly influenced holding and herd size increase, a person would participate more and more in social organisations. This phenomenon is justified by the fact that individuals with big farms and herds and higher education form the central part in social organisations and they naturally participate more in the activities of such organisations.

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