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Socio-economic status of marking nut decorticators in Washim District

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-economic status of marking nut decorticators tribal from twelve villages of Malegaon tehsil, Dist: Washim, Maharashtra. The research focuses on the living conditions, employment patterns, health challenges, and income levels of individuals involved in this occupation. Through interviews with 120 respondents, it was observed that the majority (60.83%) belonged to the lower socio-economic category. Results indicated that all 120 workers were women (100%), predominantly illiterate (34.16%), with low income upto 58,000/- Rs. and small landholdings (1.01 to 2 Ha). The occupational hazards include physical strain and health issues such as back pain, neck pain as reported by almost all the respondent i.e 100 per cent. Improving access to education, healthcare, and better working conditions are necessary to uplift this marginalized group.

Keywords: Marking nut decorticators, tribal, socio-economic status, occupational hazards, drudgery

1. Introduction

The tribal population of India, officially recognized as Scheduled Tribes (ST), often resides in remote areas with limited access to modern amenities. These communities, representing about 8.6 per cent of India's population, are economically and socially marginalized. Agriculture is the primary occupation of most tribal people; however, for many, secondary occupations like marking nut decortication provide supplementary income.

Marking nut decortication, a manual process carried out predominantly by tribal women, is an integral part of the rural economy in some parts of Maharashtra, particularly in Malegaon tehsil of Washim district. This occupation involves extracting the seed from the marking nut (*Semecarpus anacardium*), which has multiple uses in traditional medicine and industrial processes. Despite its economic significance, the socio-economic conditions of these workers remain largely underexplored.

This study aims to assess the socio-economic status of marking nut decorticators in Washim District, with specific focus on their demographic profile, economic conditions, health challenges, and employment patterns.

2. Methodology

An exploratory research design was used for this study. The research was conducted in 12 villages of Malegaon tehsil, Washim District of Maharashtra, the selection of villages is as based on their significant tribal population involved in marking nut decortication. A total of 120 female respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via structured interview using a pre-tested schedule. The variables studied included age, education, landholding, income, family size, and occupational health challenges. Statistical methods such as frequency distribution and percentages were used to analyze the data.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Age: The study revealed that maximum number (47.50%) of respondents were young (below 35 years), with 34.16 per cent in the middle-aged category (36-50 years) and 18.34 per

cent above 50 years. These results indicate a workforce primarily composed of younger individuals.

Table 1: These results indicate a workforce primarily composed of younger individuals

Sr no	Age	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Young (Up to 35 Years)	57	47.50
2	Middle (36 to 50 Years)	41	34.16
3	Old (Above 50 Years)	22	18.34
	Total	120	100.00

3.2 Education

A significant portion (34.16%), of the respondents were illiterate while 20.83 per cent had attended middle school, 19.16 per cent attended primary school and 18.33 per cent had secondary education. None of the respondents was found in higher education category. This highlights the educational backwardness in the tribal areas, which impacts their socio-economic mobility.

Table 2: Education

Sr. no	Education	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	41	34.16
2	Primary school	23	19.16
3	Middle school	25	20.83
4	Secondary school	26	18.33
5	Higher secondary school/ Junior college	09	07.52
	Total	120	100.00

3.3 Gender

All respondents (100%) were female, reflecting the gendered nature of this occupation.

Table 2: Respondents

Sr. no	Gender	Respondents (n =120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Female	120	100.00
2	Male	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00

Socio-Economic Status of Marking Nut Decorticators tribal

I) Occupation

A) Occupation of family head

Regarding occupation of family head it was observed that, relatively more number of respondents (68.34%) involved in agriculture related daily wage earning, 20.00 per cent of them involved in agriculture, 10.00 percent of them involved in agriculture as farming, 09.16 of them involved in agriculture + allied activities, only 01.66 per cent of them involved in agriculture + business activities.

B) Occupation of family members

Regarding occupation of family members, it was observed that, majority of the respondents (68.33%) involved in daily wage earning i.e marking nut decortication, 31.67 per cent of them involved in agriculture+ wage earner.

II. Family education

Data presented in below Table, indicates the average family education, relatively high per cent (34.16%) of the respondent family educated up to middle school, followed by 18.34 per cent educated to secondary school, 14.16 per cent educated to

primary level, and 12.50 per cent found in higher secondary education, 17.50 were illiterate. None of the family educated up to graduate and post graduate level.

III. Annual income of family members

Regarding annual income, near about half (50.83%) of the respondent families earn between Rs 58,001 to 1,01,000/- of annual income followed by 31.66 per cent earn upto Rs 58,000/- and 09.16 per cent had earnings between Rs.101,001/- to Rs. 1,44,000/-05.83 per cent had Rs 1,44,001 to 1,87,000/- and 02.50 per cent had above Rs. 1,87,001/-

IV. Land holding

From the below Table, about (68.33%) respondent had small landless followed by 20.00 per cent of small and 10.00 per cent of marginal size of land holding. Only 01.67 per cent respondents had semi-Medium size of land holding. None of the respondents had large size of land holding.

V. Type of land holding

It was observed from the Table that (19.67%) possessed rainfed type of land holding and 12.00 per cent of them possessed Irrigated type of land holding.

VI. Type of cultivation

It was observed from the Table that, those who had land holding out of almost all (100.00%) of the respondents had settled type of cultivation.

VII. Cropping pattern

It was seen from the Table that, more than half (19.67%) of the respondents followed seasonal cropping pattern and 12.00 per cent of them followed multiple cropping pattern.

VIII. Family attributes

A) Type

The data from Table revealed that, more than half (77.50%) of the respondent tribal farmers were belonged to nuclear type of family and remaining 22.50 per cent of them belonged to joint type of family.

B) Size

More than half (67.50%) of the respondent had small size of family with upto 4 members in the family, while 32.50 per cent respondent tribal farmers had medium size of family with 5 to 7 members in the family.

IX. No. of earning members in the family

From Table below, it is revealed that, majority (73.33%) of respondent family had up to 2 earning members, followed by 23.33 per cent of them had 3 to 4 earning members and 03.34 per cent had above 4 earning members in the family.

X. House holding

A) Type of house

More than half (50.83%) of the respondents had metal sheet roof/ mixed houses, 25.83 per cent of them had hut/mud walled houses, 18.34 per cent of them had tiled and bricked walled houses and 05.00 per cent of them had concrete houses.

B) Ownership of house

It was observed from data presented in Table that, cent per cent (100%) of the respondents had own houses.

Table 3: Indicator wise analysis of socio- economic status of marking nut decorticators tribal

Sr.no	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
I	Occupation		
	A) Occupation of family head		
	• landless labour (wage earner)	82	68.34
	• Agriculture + Wage earner (labour)	12	10.00
	• Agriculture (Farming)	24	20.00
	• Agriculture + Allied occupation (Goat farm/Poultry/Sericulture/Fishing/Forest product collection)	02	01.66
	• Agriculture + Business/Independent profession	00	00.00
	• Agriculture+ service (Job with monthly salary)	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
	B) Occupation of family members		
	• Landless labour (Daily wage earner)	82	68.34
	• Agriculture +Wage earners (Labours)	38	31.67
	• Agriculture (farming)	00	00.00
	• Agriculture + allied occupation (Goat farm/Poultry/Sericulture/Fishing/Forest product collection)	00	00.00
	• Agriculture+ Business/Independent profession	00	00.00
	• Agriculture + Service (Job with monthly salary)	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
II	Education of family head		
	• Illiterate	21	17.50
	• Primary education (1 st to 4 th std)	17	14.16
	• Middle education (5 th to 7 th std)	45	37.50
	• Secondary education (8 th to 10 th std)	22	18.34
	• Higher secondary education (College 11 th to 12 th)/ Diploma (Technical or nontechnical)	15	12.50
	• Graduate	00	00.00
	• Post Graduate and Above Post Graduate	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
III	Annual income of family members		
	• Up to Rs.58,000/-	38	31.66
	• Rs.58,001 to 1,01,000/-	61	50.83
	• Rs.1,01,001 to 1,44,000/-	11	09.16
	• Rs.1,44,001 to 1,87,000/-	07	05.83
	• Rs. Above 1,87,000/-	03	02.50
	Total	120	100.00
IV	Land (ha)		
	• landless	82	68.34
	• Marginal (Up to 1.00 ha)	12	10.00
	• Small (1.01 to 2.00 ha)	24	20.00
	• Semi medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha)	02	01.67
	• Medium (4.01 to 10.00 ha)	00	00.00
	• Large (Above 10.01 ha)	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
V	Type of land holding		
	• Landless	82	68.34
	• Rainfed	23	19.67
	• Irrigated	15	12.00
VI	Type of cultivation		
	No cultivation	82	68.34
	• Shifting	00	00.00
	• Settled	38	31.67
VII	Cropping pattern		
	No cropping	82	68.34
	• Seasonal/Single cropping	23	19.67
	• Multiple cropping	15	12.00
	• Biannual cropping	00	00.00
	• Orchards	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
VIII	Family Attributes		
	A) Type		
	Nuclear family	93	77.50
	Joint family	27	22.50
	B) Size		
	Small (Up to 4 members)	81	67.50

	Medium (5 to 7 members)	39	32.50
	Large (8 to 10 members)	00	00.00
	Very large (above 10)	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
IX	No of earning members in the family		
	1) Up to 2	88	73.33
	2) 3 to 4	28	23.33
	3) Above 4	04	03.34
	Total	120	100.00
X	House holding		
	A) Type of house		
	Hut/Mud walled	31	25.83
	Metal sheet roof / Mixed house	61	50.83
	Tiled and brick walled	22	18.34
	Concrete	06	05.00
	B) Ownership of house		
	Rented house	00	00.00
	Own house	120	100.00
	Total	120	100.00
XI	Material possession		
	Low (upto 535.36)	93	77.50
	Medium (535.36-650.08)	27	22.50
	High (Above 650.08)	00	10.84
	Total	120	100.00
XII	Livestock possession		
	• No livestock possession	00	00.00
	• Fishery	00	00.00
	• Poultry	56	46.66
	• Goat/ sheep	38	31.66
	• Cow/Bufaloes	31	25.83
	• Bullocks	12	10.00
	(note- Multiple response)		
XIII	Farm implements and equipment's		
	• Low (Upto 380.52)	78	65.00
	• Medium (380.53-443.52)	42	35.00
	• High (above 443.52)	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
XIV	Irrigation facility		
	• No source/Rainfed	23	19.66
	• Well/ Tube well	15	12.50
	• 3) Farm pond	00	00.00
	• 4) Canal/Dam	00	00.00
	• 5) River/Ponds	00	00.00
	Total	120	100.00
XV	Social and cultural participation		
	• No Participation	00	00.00
	• Participation in caste panchayat	12	10.00
	• Participation in traditional activities (Folk dance, bhajanmandls)	92	76.66
	• Local leader (Mukhia)	06	05.00
	• Wide public leader	00	00.00
	• Priest	00	00.00
	• Member of NGO	00	00.00
	(note- Multiple response)		
XVI	Benefits obtained from Governments		
	A) For educational development		
	• Tribal Ashram School for children	52	43.33
	• Scholarship for children education	46	38.33
	• Hostel facility for children	38	31.66
	B) For economic development		
	• Beneficiary of electric/diesel pump set supply scheme	12	10.00
	• Beneficiary of PVC/HDPE pipe supply scheme	13	10.83
	• Beneficiary of Gharkul yojana	54	45.00
	• Beneficiary of subsidy provided by government	62	51.67
	• Beneficiary of skill development scheme	00	00.00
	• Beneficiary of registration of tribal candidate under employment exchange	00	00.00
	• Beneficiary of supply of milch animals/Goat units /poultry farming business	14	11.66
	• 8) Beneficiary of Enterpreneurial Development Training Programme (EDTP)	00	00.00

	(note- Multiple response)		
XVII	Marketing pattern		
	• Local market	42	35.00
	• Taluka market	29	24.16
	• District market	00	00.00
	• APMC	17	14.16
	• Govt purchase Center	00	00.00
	• Maharashtra State Tribal Development Corporation Limited (MSTDCL)	00	00.00
	• Out of state	00	00.00
	(note- Multiple response)		
XVIII	Personal achievements/ Rewards		
	• No awards	120	100.00
	• Award in bravery	00	00.00
	• Award in society	00	00.00
	• Award in Agriculture	00	00.00
	• Award in sports	00	00.00
	(note- Multiple response)		
XIX	Source of saving		
	• No saving	34	28.33
	• Hard cash (Home)	77	64.16
	• Bank	41	34.16
	• Form of jewelry (Gold/silver)	28	23.34
	• SHG	23	19.16
	• In post/ Insurance policy	00	00.00
	(note- Multiple response)		
XX	Access to credit		
	• Money lenders	32	26.66
	• Relatives or friend	38	31.66
	• Local SHG	17	14.16
	• Cooperative society	28	23.34
	• Banks	05	04.16
	(note- Multiple response)		

XI. Material possession

It was observed from data presented in Table that, Maximum (77.50%) of the respondents concentrated in low category of material possession, 22.50 per cent of them concentrated in medium category of material possession.

XII. Livestock possession

From the Table, it is known that, majority (46.66%) of the respondents had backyard poultry (chicken) as a livestock, followed by 31.66 per cent, 25.83 per cent and 10.00 per cent of them possess goat/sheep, cow/ buffaloes, bullocks, and as their livestock respectively.

XIII. Farm implements and equipment

It was observed from Table that, maximum (65.00%) of the respondents belonged to low category, 35.00 per cent of them belonged to medium category.

XIV. Sources of irrigation

From above data Table, it was observed that, 19.66 per cent of the respondents had no source of irrigation, while 12.50 per cent of them had well/Tube well as their source of irrigation.

XV. Social and cultural participation

From above Table it was cleared that, cent per cent (76.66%) of the respondents participated in their traditional activities, followed by 10.00 per cent in caste panchayat, while 05.00 per cent act as a local leader.

XVI. Benefits derived from government

A) For educational development

From table, regarding educational development 43.33 per cent of the respondents takes the benefit of Ashram school for their children's education, followed by 38.33 per cent take benefit

of scholarship and 31.66 per cent take benefit of hostel facilities for their children's.

B) For economic development

About 45.00 per cent of them take benefit of Gharkul yojana, followed by 10.83 per cent, 51.67 per cent, 10.00 per cent, 11.66 per cent take benefit of PVC/HDPE pipe supply scheme, subsidies, Electrical/ Diesel pump set supply scheme and Milch animals/Goat/ Poultry supply schemes.

XVII. Marketing pattern

Regarding marketing pattern from Table, it was observed that 74.16 per cent of the respondents sold their agricultural produce in local market, followed by 53.33 per cent, 35.00 per cent, 27.50 per cent, 24.16 per cent, 18.33 per cent sold their agricultural produce to taluka market, district market, MSTDCL, APMC, Government purchase center, respectively.

XVIII. Personal achievements/ Rewards

It was observed from Table that, cent per cent (100%) of the tribal respondents had not received any awards/ rewards.

XIX. Source of saving

Data presented in above Table illustrates that, 64.16 per cent respondents had hard cash as a source of saving, while 34.16 per cent, 23.34 per cent, 19.16 per cent of them had Bank, Jewellery, SHG as a source of saving and 28.33 per cent of them had no saving.

XX. Access to credit

From data presented in Table, it was observed that, 31.66 per cent receives credit from their friends or relatives, while 26.67

per cent, per cent, 23.34 per cent, 14.16 per cent 04.16 receives credit from money lenders, banks, Local SHG, Cooperative society respectively.

3.6 Socio-Economic Status

Based on the socio-economic indicators, 60.83 per cent of respondents had very low socio-economic status, and 20.83 per cent were categorized under low socio-economic status. Only 18.34 per cent achieved a medium status, with none reaching high or very high socio-economic levels. This underscores the need for significant interventions to improve the livelihood of marking nut decorticators.

Table 4: Socio-economic status

Sr no	Socio-economic status	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Very low (up to 04.69)	73	60.83
2	Low (04.70 to 07.84)	25	20.83
3	Medium (07.85 to 10.99)	22	18.34
Total		120	100.00

4. Conclusion

Marking nut decorticators in Washim District, primarily women, face severe socio-economic and health challenges. Their limited access to education and healthcare, coupled with the physically demanding nature of their work, restricts their ability to improve their economic standing. There is an urgent need for targeted programs that provide educational opportunities, healthcare services, and safer working conditions. By addressing these issues, it is possible to improve the quality of life for these marginalized communities and uplift their socio-economic status.

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