

CASE STUDY ON ADIVASI LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY IN BEESPURAM AND NIMMALPADU VILLAGES, VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT

Background to the District

Visakhapatnam district is located on the eastern shore of India in the northern part of the state of Andhra Pradesh. It lies between 17°15' and 18°32' northern latitude and 83°30' and 83°54' eastern longitude. It is bordered on its north in part by the state of Orissa and in part by the Vizianagaram district, on the south by East Godavari district (both of Andhra Pradesh), on the west by Orissa and on the east by the Bay of Bengal. Geographically it can be divided into two strips—the thin coastal strip of land and the interior called the plains division, and the hilly areas of the Eastern Ghats in the north and west called the Agency division. The coastline is broken at points by bald-headed hills. While the altitude in the plains division is about 75 m that of the hills extends to an average of 900 m with the highest altitude being 1,615 m. In terms of climatic conditions, while the coastal regions have a warm climate, as one moves towards the hilly areas the temperature lowers as a result of the altitude and vegetation. The annual rainfall that the district receives is 1,202 mm, primarily from the southwest monsoon that accounts for more than 70 percent of the rainfall. The northeast monsoon, and the summer and winter showers contribute the rest. The Agency and inland areas receive rainfall from the southwest monsoon while the coastal regions are more favoured by the northeast monsoon. The district lies in the river basin of the Thandava, Varaha, Sarada and Gosthani rivers and the larger rivulets flowing through it include Meghadrigedda and Ghambheeragedda.

The geographical area of the district is 11,161 sq km which is 4.1 percent of the area of the entire state. Of this only 36.45 percent is arable land. Of the arable area, the net area sowed forms 27.2 percent while cultivable waste and fallow (current and old) lands constitute about 9.2 percent (during 2006-07).

More than one-third of the land i.e., 39.53 percent is covered by forests. The remaining is distributed between 'barren and uncultivable land' 11.7 percent and 9 percent is 'land put to non-agricultural use'. Administratively the district is divided into three revenue divisions and 43 mandals.

The population of the district is 38.32 lakhs as per the 2001 Census and this constitutes 5 percent of the population of the state. The district has a population density of 343 per persons per sq km; however, the Agency area has a lower density than the plain areas. Fifteen adivasi communities reside in the Fifth Schedule area of Visakhapatnam district and include the Bagata, Gadaba, Goudu, Kammara, Konda Dora, Khonds, Kotia, Kulia/Mulias, Mali, Manne Dora, Mukha Dora, Porja, Reddi Dora/Nooka Dora/Mukha Dora, Rona/Rena/Rana and Valmiki communities. They comprise 14.55 percent of the entire districts population. These tribal populations live in hill-top villages or hamlets, many of which are very remote and difficult to access.

The case study discussed is of two adivasi communities, the Nooka Dora and Konda Dora tribal groups, residing in the villages of Beespuram and immalpadu in Ananthagiri mandal of Visakhapatnam district. The Nooka Dora numbers 29,680 while the Konda Doras are a population of 179,334 (figures as per the 1991 Census). The case study looks at the livelihoods, food security, and income and expenditure patterns of these tribal people. A total of 39 personal interviews using a questionnaire were conducted in two villages—20 from Beespuram and 19 from Nimmalpadu—to collect the required data. The Nimmalpadu village comprises smaller hamlets and the interviews were conducted in the hamlets of Karakavalasa and Rallavalasa.

Source: *Impacts of Government Policies on Sustenance of Tribal People in the Eastern Ghats - by Samatha*