

**SOCIAL VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN AND
COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES (CPRs): A
STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO PUDUKKOTTAI
DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU**

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SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCTION

The Common Property Resources (CPRs) provide sustenance for the rural poor in many esteems. The vital land resources representing CPRs include village pastures, rangeland, community forestry, watershed borders, wastelands etc., which provide not only grazing space for livestock, but also a number of products to the human society such as fuel, fodder and food items, particularly during the raining season (Jodha et al., 2012). Issues pertaining to CPRs are varied in nature and its magnitude.

A study by Jodha (1986) in seven states of India's dry regions concludes that the CPR area declined in some states by 31 percent to 55 percent. These changes clearly indicate that the decline of the CPR area as a percentage of the total village area and the increase in population pressure on CPRs. Increased population pressure is widely considered a key contributor to shrinkage and depletion of common property resources (Jodha 1985). The well known fact is that the CPRs reduction and CPR dependence are forced to face problems; life sustenance of rural households is a question. Common property resources have been a significant source of income and employment, especially during stress periods. As a matter of fact, any degradation of such resources would be critical for the poorer sections, predominantly women in the rural pockets of India in general and rural areas of Tamil Nadu in particular.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Rural areas in general and rural villages in particular are considered as the backbone of the Indian economy. Rural transformation for rural development through

different developmental programmes of the country is a strategy designed to improve the economic conditions of the people living in this country. However, there is an unbalanced development in the Indian economy. Most of industries is confined mostly to urban and semi-urban areas, resulting in the migration of people from rural to urban areas, which in turn leads to urbanization and other social problems. It is observed that there are excessive requirements for rural development than that of what actually one could think of. Among them, access of CPRs by the rural population in general and the rural women in particular occupies a key place in the rural sector.

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the various social problem faced by the rural women in access to CPRs in Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu across social groups as well as the people living in poverty in the study village. Actual problems of the rural women, with regard to access to CPRs for the daily livelihood requirements have been assessed through the primary survey, as even the data obtained from the secondary sources are useful in lending a snapshot view of the availability of different types of CPRs in rural areas and which tend an interest to further research in the area of rural development through gender development.

The present study would be vital not only to plan the equitable access of CPRs by all social classes with augmentation to locally available natural resources, besides being helpful in managing and conserving the available limited CPRs in the rural areas. The present study looks critically at the endowment of CPRs at the national, state and at the local level and the factors causing depletion of such vital resources to make a plan for a socially acceptable and environmentally sound policy for the rural areas. Further, the study would be helpful to develop an integrated CPR utilization and management system and suggest suitable policy which is vital for rural areas and for the future too.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Common Property Resources (CPRs) play several roles in rural poor livelihood sustenance in general and rural women in particular. “Rural common property resources (CPRs) are broadly defined as resources to which all the members of an identifiable community have undeniable user rights. In the Indian context, CPRs include community pastures, community forests, waste lands, common dumping and threshing grounds, watershed drainages, village ponds, and rivers and rivulets as well as their banks and beds (Jodha 1989)”.

Jodha et al. (2012) find that in recent decades, the CPRs are declining rapidly in different parts of developing economies including India. The important driving factors behind these rapid reductions are weakening of communities’ collective concerns, actions to protect and conserve the CPRs and the public policies and programmes influenced by economic globalization. Further, they point out that at the macro levels in recent years; climate change has created greater risks for the survival and usability of CPRs. The consequences of climate change include the decline of crops and non-crop products in the respective villages.

Thorough research is the need of the hour to identify the CPRs and thereby ensure the rural population, poor women in particular who have access to CPRs. CPRs have been a vital avenue of revenue, especially during the periods as seasonal employments are absent. Hence, it may be argued that any degradation of such vital resources would be critical for the poorer sections, particularly to the rural women in the resource scarce areas. In addition, the ecological balance maintained by the CPRs can never be compromised. Evidences support that the CPRs have declined both quantitatively and qualitatively across the regions. These changes would affect directly the dependents very primarily the women and children in the rural pockets of Tamil Nadu.

OBJECTIVES

Keeping in view the above aspects, the following broad objectives have been framed for the study.

1. To identify the categories of CPRs available in the study area;
2. To explore the socio-economic aspects of sample women in the study area;
3. To determine the extent the poor women benefit from CPRs for their livelihood sustenance;
4. To examine the relationship between Women poverty and CPRs use in the study area;
5. To estimate the extent of degradation of CPRs and its impact on women's livelihood in the study area;
6. To investigate the factors causing degradation of CPRs in the study area and
7. To suggest suitable policy measures for the proper management of CPRs in relation to women's livelihood in the study area.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the quantity and value of material collection from CPRs by the women among social groups in the study village.
2. There is no significant difference in quantity and value of material collection from CPRs by the women who belong to APL and BPL.
3. There is no relationship between the total quantity of CPR collected and the total fuel value of CPRs, total trips of fuelwood collection and the distance travelled for fuelwood collection.
4. There is no significant difference in the contribution of CPR income to the HHs income of a family among social groups in the study village.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Far long, the common property resources have been contributing a lot the rural village economics. The local populations, in general, and rural poor women, in particular, endure on these vital resources to a large extent. The CPRs provide a lot of materials to the human society such as fuel, fodder, timber, manure, fruits and medicinal herbs and so on. Also, they maintain the ecological balance by means of averting soil erosion, deforestation and siltation. Due to increased pressure from both human and livestock population, the per capita availability of CPRs has been coming down rapidly. There are a number of studies carried out by social scientists across the country. But, still there is a lack of research studies on many intricate issues. For instance, Beck and Ghosh (2000) in a study of seven villages in West Bengal show that CPRs contributes 12 percent of the poor household income and fuelwood and fodder are the most important CPRs accessed by the poor in the study villages. Women and girl children are mainly responsible for the collection of materials from CPRs. In these seven villages access to CPRs by the poor has declined quite drastically and in all the villages, poor households have been drastically excluded from these critical resources. The study found that the main causes of their keeping out are agricultural intensification, commoditization of CPRs, environmental degradation and population growth.

A study by Iyengar (1989) in Gujarat reveals that increasing human and livestock populations lead to rapid decline in the CPRs and greater demands for their principle products such as fuel and fodder. Further, it is assessed that 15 percent of the total households in a village where agricultural activities are good, but not very promising, 7 percent of the households in the poor agricultural situation and 25 percent of the households in the good agricultural activity villages depend on the CPR land for income- generating activities. Majority of the CPR land-based activities

are undertaken by the landless or marginal landholding households when other employment opportunities are non-existent. These activities add to the income of the household, but it is difficult to assess the contribution to the total income of the households.

At the international level, Thomas-Slayter and Bhatt (1994) in Nepal reveal that rural women and children render their work in all aspects and they are not able to access their necessities due to their daily workload which has restricted their mobility, lessened or erased their leisure time, and resulted in girls dropping out of school. Scarcity of fodder and fuelwood has meant that women and girls travel long distances and spend much time foraging for household and livestock needs. Women experience significantly increased workload, diminished mobility, and little involvement in household resource-allocation decisions. Rural Nepalese women, compared to men, are already overburdened with labor-intensive farm work and time-consuming domestic responsibilities.

METHODOLOGY

In order to draw meaningful results from the analyses of data, an appropriate sampling design has to be adopted. The selection of the suitable and more appropriate statistical tools of analysis has to be done with care for substantiating the results empirically and also to arrive at appropriate conclusions and policy options of the study. In sum, a proper research design is inevitable to conduct the research in the desired and perfect direction. Hence, this chapter describes the sources of data, both secondary and primary, sampling design adopted and the tools of analyses of the present study.

SOURCES OF DATA

The present study is based on secondary data as well as primary data. Both primary and secondary data have been collected from various sources.

Secondary Data

For this study, the secondary data for India and study state of Tamil Nadu was collected from the Season and Crop Report of India from 1950 onwards in various issues, the State of Forest Reports (SFI), the reports of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government records, especially Nine-Fold Land Use Classification have been used. The secondary data regarding the number of households in the area, different types of land utilization pattern have been collected from the District Statistical Handbook of Pudukkottai district. Further, the data regarding CPRs, different types of encroachment of CPRs have been collected from the Village administrative records like 'A' register, 'G' return and *Poramboke Adangal* in the Andakkulam revenue village. In addition to that, publications, journals, magazines and websites were also utilized for the present study.

Primary Data

In the present study, utmost care has been taken to reduce non-sampling errors and the researcher has also paid much attention to reduce the response error. Further, the purpose and need of the study were well explained to the sample women respondents to gain their co-operation and confidence, so as to make them furnish the required information. The primary data was collected through discussions with the respective women respondents with the help of a pre tested interview schedule containing all relevant queries. Besides, several informal discussions also were made with aged native women folk and administrative officials to elicit certain historical information regarding the use and access pattern of CPRs by the women, in

particular, and village people, in general. The primary survey for the present study was carried out in six months during June 2018 to November 2019.

Sampling Design

The stated objectives have been realized through a systematic approach starting with a primary household survey in the Andakkulam revenue village which is situated in Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu. Multistage sampling procedures have been implemented to choose the sample village in addition to purposive and stratified sampling methods. To realize the set of objectives, one district in Tamil Nadu was selected for the present study, namely Pudukkottai being a dry district. Multistage sampling design was used for selection of the study village right from the district to sample village.

Criteria was adopted for selection from district to sample village which is based on the percentage of availability of CPRs, in general, and common lands, in particular, categories of CPRs, dependence and usage of CPRs by the villagers, in general, and women and children, in particular, were further short-listed.

One fourth of the households from the total households were chosen for this study, which reflects the degradation of CPRs and its impact on women's livelihood sustenance in this study village.

Of the total selected 295 sample households were equally distributed by 25 percent of each social groups and it comes to 56 SC households, 58 households were MBC and 181 households were BC. Household survey was conducted in the study village with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule containing all relevant questions.

Process of sample selection in the study village of Andakkulam

S. No	Name of the hamlet	No. of HHs in the study village				Sample selected from the Universe			
		Community of HHs				Community of HHs			
		SC	MBC	BC	Total	SC	MBC	BC	Total
1.	Andakkulam	50	28	451	529	12	7	112	131
2.	Panavayal	57	0	0	57	14	0	0	14
3.	Paravayal	55	0	0	55	14	0	0	14
4.	Pillayarpati	0	4	30	34	0	1	8	9
5.	Kurinsampatti	48	0	30	78	12	0	8	20
6.	Ayavayal	0	4	35	39	0	1	9	10
7.	Pudukkudiyampatti	0	0	60	60	0	0	16	16
8.	Sempatti	3	37	28	68	1	9	7	17
9.	Kalingarayanpatti	0	0	38	38	0	0	9	9
10.	Kadiyapatti	0	102	0	102	0	25	0	25
11.	Pongalapatti	12	37	15	64	3	9	4	16
12.	Sathinipatti	0	20	38	58	0	5	9	14
Total		225	232	725	1182	56	58	181	295

Source: Record of District Statistical Office, Pudukkottai district as per census 2011. The Panchayat Record of Andakkulam in 2015.

Pudukkottai district consists of 3 revenue divisions, thirteen blocks under 12 Taluks and 763 revenue villages. One taluk from 12 taluks was selected from the district for the study, based on sampling procedures namely Kulathur taluk. The selected taluk Kulathur consists of four blocks, of which one block was selected such as Kunnandarkoil. The selected block consists of 17 revenue villages, of which one revenue village was selected from 17 revenue villages based on the above set criteria.

Tools and Techniques

For the analysis of the collected data and testing the proposed hypotheses, the following statistical tools were applied for the study. Statistical tools such as simple percentage analysis, averages, coefficient of variation, correlation coefficient, regression, independent sample 't. test and ANOVA used to establish relationships between theoretical variables and to empirically probe the linkage between women and CPRs. In addition, the qualitative information in this realm have also been utilized in a discerning the pattern of use and access to CPR by women and children evolved over a period of time. The collected data was processed with the computer by using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) and the analysis also made by SPSS for the study purpose.

CHAPTER SCHEME

The discussion and analyses made in the present study have been presented in eight chapters as follows:

The first chapter presents a general introduction, scope of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the chapter scheme

The conceptual framework and a brief review of earlier works on Women and CPRs is given in the second chapter to have an idea about the research works already undertaken.

In the third chapter, the methodology and profile of the study area are presented.

The fourth chapter discusses the status of CPRs at the macro and micro levels based on the secondary sources of information

The fifth chapter discusses the socio-economic conditions and the benefits derived by the women from CPRs in the study village of Andakkulam.

The six chapter deals with the interlinkages between women in poverty and CPRs in the study village of Andakkulam

The seventh chapter deals with the social vulnerability of women and CPRs in the study village of Andakkulam

The last chapter consists of the summary of the findings and suggestions along with the conclusion of the present study briefly.