

THE INFLUENCE OF PVTG POLICIES ON KOYA WOMEN: A STUDY IN
TELANGANA

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Abstract:

The Koya tribe, classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Telangana, India, faces multifaceted socio-economic challenges that impact women's empowerment. This paper investigates the influence of PVTG policies on Koya women, analyzing their effectiveness in enhancing socio-economic conditions, health, education, and empowerment opportunities. Data were collected through qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, including surveys and interviews with Koya women, community leaders, and policymakers.

The findings reveal that while PVTG policies have made strides in addressing basic needs such as education and healthcare, significant gaps remain in implementation and accessibility. This paper contends that cultural barriers, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient awareness of rights hinder the full realization of these policies among Koya women. Moreover, it highlights the need for tailored interventions that respect the unique cultural context of the Koya community while promoting gender equality.

This research contributes to the existing literature by offering insights into the intersection of tribal policies and gender empowerment, with implications for policymakers seeking to enhance the lives of marginalized women in India.

Keywords: Koya Women, PVTG Policies, Telangana, Women's Empowerment, Tribal Communities, Socio-Economic Development

1. Introduction

The Koya tribe, recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), is primarily located in the forested regions of Telangana, India. This classification is part of the Indian government's initiative to identify and support tribes that are at a higher risk of social and economic marginalization. PVTG status is granted to tribal communities that demonstrate characteristics such as low population numbers, extreme poverty, and a lack of integration into the mainstream society (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021). The Koya tribe, characterized by its distinct language and cultural traditions, faces numerous challenges that significantly affect the lives of its members, particularly women.

The socio-economic conditions of Koya women are shaped by various factors, including entrenched gender roles, limited access to education and healthcare, and socio-economic disparities prevalent in tribal areas. Women, who are often the primary caregivers and responsible for household management, frequently experience barriers in accessing resources and opportunities that can enhance their socio-economic status. According to a study by Ved and

Vartak (2019), tribal women in India face systemic challenges due to patriarchal attitudes and socio-cultural constraints that limit their mobility and decision-making power.

Moreover, the introduction of PVTG policies aims to empower these women by improving their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The Government of India has implemented various schemes and programs designed to uplift PVTGs, including scholarships for education, health care initiatives, and skill development programs (Sharma & Kumar, 2021). However, despite these efforts, studies indicate that there remains a significant gap between policy formulation and effective implementation at the grassroots level (Dutta, 2020).

This paper aims to examine the influence of PVTG policies on the lives of Koya women, evaluating how these policies have contributed to their empowerment and identifying the barriers that still hinder their progress. Recognizing the critical role that women play in the development of their communities, it is essential to focus on their specific needs and challenges to ensure that policies are both inclusive and effective.

2. Literature Review

The literature on particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) in India highlights the socio-economic challenges and disparities these communities face, especially concerning women's empowerment. Research indicates that tribal women's access to resources, education, and healthcare remains limited due to traditional gender roles and socio-cultural norms. According to Mahapatra et al. (2020), tribal women in India often contend with patriarchal structures that restrict their social mobility and economic independence, further perpetuating cycles of poverty.

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of government policies aimed at supporting PVTGs. For instance, Das (2019) analyzed various tribal welfare programs and found that while they are designed to uplift marginalized communities, the implementation of such policies often falls short due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of awareness among the target populations. Furthermore, Kumar and Singh (2021) emphasized the need for greater community involvement in policy formulation and implementation, as this inclusion can lead to more culturally sensitive and effective initiatives.

In the context of Telangana, specific research has focused on the Koya tribe. For example, Rao and Reddy (2021) explored the historical marginalization of the Koya community and highlighted the critical role of education in empowering Koya women. However, despite the policies implemented, gaps remain in practical application, which affects women's enrollment and retention in educational institutions.

Literature also discusses the positive impacts of targeted interventions. A study by Kaur et al. (2018) found that skill development programs tailored for tribal women have shown promising results in improving their economic status and self-esteem. However, these programs often do not reach the most marginalized due to infrastructural barriers and cultural resistance.

Thus, while existing literature demonstrates a growing recognition of the unique challenges faced by Koya women and PVTGs more broadly, it also underscores the necessity for continuous evaluation of policies and their outcomes to ensure that they effectively empower these communities.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to comprehensively analyze the influence of PVTG policies on Koya women. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of both statistical trends and individual experiences, facilitating a more holistic view of the impact of these policies.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews conducted from September to December 2023. The survey instrument included structured questionnaires designed to gather quantitative data on socio-economic indicators, education levels, healthcare access, and employment status among Koya women.

- **Quantitative Component:** A sample of 200 Koya women was randomly selected from various villages in the Khammam and Warangal districts of Telangana, known for their significant Koya populations. The survey was administered in the local language to ensure comprehension and relevance. Questions focused on demographic information, educational attainment, employment status, and access to government welfare schemes.
- **Qualitative Component:** In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 women who participated in the survey, along with key informants such as community leaders and local officials involved in the implementation of PVTG policies. These interviews aimed to explore personal narratives and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of policies and the barriers faced in accessing resources.

Sampling Method

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation from different socio-economic backgrounds within the Koya community. The survey aimed to include women from various age groups, educational backgrounds, and employment statuses to capture a comprehensive view of their experiences.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software packages, generating descriptive statistics and inferential analyses to identify trends and correlations. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of key themes and insights related to the lived experiences of Koya women.

This mixed-methods approach provides a robust framework for understanding the complexities of the intersection between PVTG policies and the socio-economic realities of Koya women in Telangana.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a critical component of understanding the impact of PVTG policies on Koya women in Telangana. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, this section presents the findings from the data collected through surveys and interviews. The analysis consists of two main components: descriptive statistics that summarize the quantitative data, and thematic analysis that showcases the qualitative data derived from interviews.

4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the survey of 200 Koya women were analyzed using statistical techniques to evaluate the socio-economic status, educational attainment, healthcare access, and employment trends of the respondents. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns and correlations that demonstrate the influence of PVTG policies.

1. **Demographics:** The survey data revealed a diverse demographic profile of Koya women. Below is a summary of the demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Koya Women (N=200)

Demographic Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age Group (Years)		
18-25	75	37.5
26-35	80	40.0
36-45	30	15.0
46 and above	15	7.5
Educational Attainment		
Illiterate	100	50.0
Primary Education	50	25.0
Secondary Education	30	15.0
Higher Education	20	10.0
Employment Status		
Employed	60	30.0
Unemployed	140	70.0

Source: Field Study

Explanation: This table presents the demographic characteristics of Koya women surveyed. It reveals a predominantly young population, with over half of the respondents being illiterate and a high unemployment rate of 70%. The educational attainment highlights a significant gap in education, which is critical for understanding the challenges faced by Koya women.

2. Access to Education

Table 2: Access to Education Among Koya Women

Educational Level	Number of Participants (N=200)	Percentage (%)	Government Support Received
Enrolled in School	80	40.0	Yes (30), No (50)
Not Enrolled	120	60.0	Yes (20), No (100)

Source: Field Study

Explanation: This table illustrates the access to education among Koya women. It shows that while 40% are enrolled in educational institutions, a significant 60% are not, and highlights the limited government support these women receive. This lack of enrollment is indicative of broader systemic issues affecting educational access, such as socio-economic barriers and cultural factors.

3. Access to Government Schemes

Table 3: Access to Government Welfare Schemes

Scheme Name	Awareness (%)	Utilization (%)	Satisfaction (%)
Educational Scholarships	60	40	30
Healthcare Programs	70	50	45
Skill Development Training	55	30	25
Employment Generation Schemes	65	20	15

Source: Field Study

Explanation:

Table 3 outlines the awareness and utilization of various government welfare schemes among Koya women. While awareness is relatively high for healthcare programs (70%), the utilization rates are low, particularly for employment generation schemes (20%). Additionally, satisfaction levels are also low, particularly for skill development training (25%), indicating potential issues in the implementation and accessibility of these programs.

4. Healthcare Access

Table 4: Healthcare Access Among Koya Women (N=200)

Healthcare Access	Service Access (%)	No Access (%)	Trained Medical Personnel Available (%)
Antenatal Care	60	40	30
Immunization for Children	50	50	25

General Services	Healthcare	65	35	40
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Source: Field Study

Explanation: This table-4 captures the access to healthcare services among Koya women. A significant percentage lack access to antenatal care and immunization services, further highlighting the ongoing gaps in healthcare provision for tribal communities. The presence of trained medical personnel is notably low, which suggests systemic issues in healthcare delivery within the tribal regions.

5. Employment Data

Table 5: Employment Status and Type of Employment of Koya Women (N=200)

Employment Status	Number of Women (N=200)	Percentage (%)	Type of Employment (N=60)	Percentage (%)
Employed	60	30.0	Agricultural Work	50
Unemployed	140	70.0	Handicrafts	30
			Other (e.g., domestic work)	20

Source: Field Study

Explanation: This table provides insights into the employment status and types of employment among Koya women. It is significant that only 30% of respondents are employed, with agricultural work comprising the majority, which is often characterized by informal and low-wage labor. Additionally, an unremarkable 70% of Koya women remain unemployed, presenting an area of concern for policy interventions aimed at boosting economic independence.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews with Koya women and community leaders were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to the influence of PVTG policies. The analysis highlighted several key themes:

- **Barriers to Education:** Many respondents expressed that economic constraints and cultural norms often hindered their access to education, despite government efforts to provide scholarships. A recurring sentiment was the prioritization of male education over female education, rooted in traditional beliefs.
- **Health Awareness and Accessibility:** Interviews indicated that while some women were aware of healthcare programs, geographical barriers and inadequate infrastructure limited their access to essential services. Many expressed a desire for more mobile health units to reach remote areas.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Women shared mixed experiences regarding skill development programs. While some benefited from training, many noted that the lack of local job opportunities rendered their new skills underutilized. Community leaders

emphasized the need for local entrepreneurship support to create sustainable employment options.

Table 6: Themes from Qualitative Interviews

Theme	Description
Barriers to Education	Economic constraints and cultural norms limiting girls' educational access.
Health Accessibility	Limited access to healthcare due to infrastructure and awareness issues.
Economic Empowerment	The effectiveness of skill training programs and local employment challenges.

Source: Field Study

Explanation:

Table 3 summarizes the key themes extracted from the qualitative interviews. Each theme illustrates the multifaceted challenges faced by Koya women and their perspectives on the influence of PVTG policies. The qualitative insights complement the quantitative findings, painting a fuller picture of the socio-economic hurdles confronting this community.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses illustrates the multiple layers of challenges faced by Koya women concerning PVTG policies. While some efforts have been made to improve access to education and healthcare, systemic barriers and socio-cultural factors complicate these advancements. As the findings demonstrate, there is a crucial need for enhanced policy implementation that directly addresses the realities faced by Koya women in order to foster genuine empowerment.

5. Findings

The findings of this study are drawn from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, highlighting the interplay between the implementation of PVTG policies and the lived experiences of Koya women in Telangana. The results underscore the multifaceted challenges these women face and provide insights into the effectiveness of existing policies.

5.1 Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis revealed significant insights into the socio-economic status and access to welfare schemes among Koya women.

- **Socio-Economic Status:** The majority of the respondents were between 26-35 years old, indicating a potentially productive age group that remains underutilized in the workforce. With 70% of Koya women lacking formal employment, there is a pressing need for targeted job creation initiatives that empower this demographic.
- **Education:** The low levels of educational attainment were alarming; 35% had no formal education, and 40% had only completed primary education. This lack of educational opportunities severely limits the potential for economic advancement and highlights the need for enhanced educational programs specifically designed for Koya girls.

- Government Welfare Scheme Awareness and Utilization:** High awareness levels of government schemes like healthcare programs (70%) contrasted sharply with low utilization rates. For example, only 20% of women utilized employment generation schemes despite a 65% awareness rate. This discrepancy suggests that while policies exist, barriers to access—such as lack of information on how to apply or systemic bureaucratic hurdles—remain significant obstacles.

Table 7: Comparison of Mean Scores on Empowerment Indicators

Indicator	Mean Score (1-5 scale)	Standard Deviation
Participation in Community Decision-Making	2.5	1.3
Access to Financial Resources	1.8	1.2
Quality of Education Attained	2.1	1.4

Source: Field Study

Explanation:

Table 4 presents the mean scores for various empowerment indicators based on a 1-5 scale, where 1 represents very low empowerment and 5 represents very high empowerment. The low scores indicate that Koya women feel they have limited participation in community decision-making and access to financial resources, further emphasizing the need for interventions aimed at enhancing their empowerment.

5.2 Qualitative Findings

Key themes emerged from the qualitative data, which further elucidate the quantitative findings by providing personal narratives and context:

- Barriers to Education:** Many women cited financial struggles as the primary barrier to their education. Traditional gender roles often result in families prioritizing boys' education over girls', perpetuating cycles of disempowerment. A common sentiment expressed was that women lacked the support necessary to pursue further education.
- Health and Well-Being:** While awareness of healthcare programs was high, the lack of adequate healthcare facilities and transport impeded access. Participants expressed frustration over the limited availability of health camps in their areas and the absence of follow-up care for maternal health services, which are crucial for their well-being.
- Economic Participation:** The qualitative data showed that although some women had received training from skill development programs, many faced challenges in applying their training due to the lack of local job opportunities. Interviewees emphasized the need for support in starting small businesses or cooperatives to create sustainable income.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness and limitations of PVTG policies concerning Koya women. The data reveal a clear need for increased attention to the socio-economic barriers that these women face.

6.1 Implications for Policy

The persistence of low educational attainment, limited economic opportunities, and healthcare accessibility highlights that while PVTG policies have been implemented, their effectiveness is undermined by several systemic issues. Policymakers must prioritize community engagement to ensure policy designs are relevant and that resources reach those who need them most.

1. **Enhancing Educational Access:** There is an urgent need for programs that specifically target the education of girls within the Koya community. Scholarships, mentorship programs, and awareness campaigns can help shift cultural perceptions, encouraging families to invest in girls' education.
2. **Improving Healthcare Infrastructure:** Access to healthcare must be improved through the establishment of mobile health units and community health centers that cater specifically to the needs of PVTGs. Training local health workers can also enhance community engagement with health services.
3. **Support for Economic Empowerment:** Initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and skills training must also include support structures, such as micro-financing and business development services, to help Koya women translate their skills into sustainable livelihoods.

7. Conclusion

The study has illuminated the significant influence of PVTG policies on Koya women in Telangana, revealing both progress and persistent barriers. While there is a degree of awareness regarding available government schemes, the low utilization and satisfaction rates point to underlying systemic issues that must be addressed.

The Koya women's narratives underscore the importance of culturally sensitive and community-oriented approaches to policy implementation. To fully realize the potential of PVTG policies, there must be a concerted effort to enhance educational opportunities, improve healthcare access, and create economic empowerment pathways specifically tailored for Koya women. Only through such targeted actions can the cycle of disempowerment be broken, ultimately leading to a more equitable society for Koya women and their communities.

In conclusion, this research not only provides insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by Koya women but also serves as a call to action for policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders to collaborate in developing more effective and inclusive strategies that uplift marginalized women within tribal communities.

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