

Gender Differentials in Participation of Tribal Adolescents in Various Activities

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ABSTRACT The present study was undertaken with the objective to study the participation of male and female tribal respondents in the various activities related to domestic, arts and handicrafts, music and social. The study was carried on 150 males and 150 females selected from Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti and Bharmaur subdivision of Chamba district. The respondents were administered self-structured interview schedule in consultation with five judges. Weighted mean scores were calculated to make the sex comparisons which revealed that boys had more participation than girls in agricultural operations animal grazing, milking of animals and marketing of produce whereas girls participated more in household chores, animal care, sibling care and fetching of water. As far as arts and handicrafts was concerned, boys had more participation in drawing and painting activities, girls had more participation in arts and handicrafts activities like weaving, embroidery, traditional craft and stitching. Boys participated more in fairs and festivals and wore traditional dress on occasions than the girls had more participation in music and local dance. Regarding social interaction both boys and girls had friends and enjoyed the friends' company. Boys were playing more outdoor games and girls were playing more indoor games

INTRODUCTION

Due to difficult geographical locations, the tribals settled in hills, far off places could not change themselves at par with others. The social changes and development could not affect them. They remained isolated for centuries together. There are number of such tribes spread over all the states of India including the State of Himachal Pradesh.

A large part of Himachal Pradesh is covered by snow clad peaks of the Himalayas and as such there is low density of population. The inhabitants literally live in the lap of nature. Because of their near total isolation from the mainstream for centuries, these inhabitants have preserved their traditional culture in its pristine glory. In spite of many invasions from foreign forces, the glimpses of the age-old culture of our country can still be seen in these areas. The original character of the culture and traditions has more or less stayed intact and has remained free from any large scale acculturation. Himachal Pradesh has a number of tribal communities such as Kinnauras, Lahaulas, Pangwals, Swanglas, Khampas, Bhots/Bodhs Jads, Lambs, Gujjars and Gaddis.

The period from Late Childhood to Adolescence is the age of cultural development when they have high energy and interest to experience and explore various activities. It is essential that

adolescents be diverted to various activities to get proper expression to their energies. The constructive activities help in their personality development otherwise either they will involve in destructive and harmful activities or develop submissive personalities. So keeping this in mind, the present study was undertaken to know the gender differences in participation of tribal adolescents in different activities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The adolescents selected for the study belonged to the three tribal communities of Himachal Pradesh. The three tribal districts of Himachal Pradesh represent the tribal population namely Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur and Bharmaur subdivision of Chamba district were selected for the study. A self-structured interview schedule was administered to collect the data. The data were analysed using frequency and percentages and weighted mean scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tribals are fond of dance, music participating and celebrating festivals. These interests and hobbies add colour to their isolated and quiet life.

Domestic: Table 1 shows that as expected half of the females (53.33%) were doing household chores whereas nearly one-third of males (31.33%) were involved in household chores always whereas half of the males (50.67%) and less than half of the females (40.67%) performing household chores sometimes. Majority of the males (75.33%) and females (64%)

were involved in animal care sometimes however more number of females (27.33%) were always performing animal care activities than the males. Males performed (40%) agricultural operations always as compared to their counterparts (28.67%) whereas more number of girls (62.67%) as compared to half of the boys (52.67%) were involved in agricultural operations sometimes.

Table 1: Participation of tribal adolescents in various activities

S. No.	Variable	Sex	Always	Sometimes	Never	Weighted mean score
<i>1. Domestic</i>						
a)	Household chores	Male	47 (31.33)	85 (56.67)	18 (12.00)	2.19
		Female	80 (53.33)	61 (40.67)	9 (6.00)	2.47
b)	Animal care	Male	26 (17.33)	113 (75.33)	11 (7.33)	2.10
		Female	41 (27.33)	96 (64.00)	13 (8.67)	2.19
c)	Agriculture	Male	60 (40.00)	79 (52.67)	11 (7.33)	2.33
		Female	43 (28.67)	94 (62.67)	13 (8.67)	2.20
d)	Sibling care	Male	29 (19.33)	56 (37.33)	65 (43.33)	1.76
		Female	44 (29.33)	75 (50.00)	31 (20.67)	2.09
e)	Fetching water	Male	37 (24.67)	76 (50.67)	37 (24.67)	2.74
		Female	51 (34.00)	74 (49.33)	25 (16.67)	3.19
f)	Fetching fodder	Male	39 (26.00)	86 (57.33)	25 (16.67)	2.00
		Female	33 (22.00)	82 (54.67)	35 (23.33)	1.99
g)	Animal grazing	Male	34 (22.67)	83 (55.33)	33 (22.00)	2.01
		Female	18 (12.00)	87 (58.00)	45 (30.00)	1.82
h)	Milking of animals	Male	0 (0.00)	76 (50.67)	74 (49.33)	1.51
		Female	2 (1.33)	63 (42.00)	85 (56.67)	1.45
i)	Marketing of produce	Male	24 (16.00)	96 (64.00)	30 (20.00)	1.96
		Female	14 (9.33)	90 (60.00)	46 (30.67)	1.79
<i>2. Arts and Handicrafts</i>						
a)	Weaving	Male	18 (12.00)	70 (46.67)	62 (41.33)	1.71
		Female	13 (8.67)	93 (62.00)	44 (29.33)	1.79
b)	Embroidery	Male	2 (1.33)	37 (24.67)	111 (74.00)	1.27
		Female	7 (4.67)	86 (57.33)	57 (38.00)	1.67
c)	Traditional craft	Male	3 (2.00)	45 (30.00)	102 (68.00)	1.34
		Female	6 (4.00)	55 (36.67)	89 (59.33)	1.45
d)	Stitching	Male	0 (0.00)	12 (8.00)	138 (92.00)	1.08
		Female	27 (18.00)	77 (51.33)	46 (30.67)	1.87
e)	Drawing and painting	Male	37 (24.67)	89 (59.33)	24 (16.00)	2.09
		Female	30 (20.00)	95 (63.33)	25 (16.67)	2.03
<i>3. Music</i>						
a)	Music	Male	95 (63.33)	44 (29.33)	11 (7.33)	1.89
		Female	92 (61.33)	52 (34.67)	6 (4.00)	2.57
b)	Participation in local dance	Male	62 (41.33)	76 (50.67)	12 (8.00)	1.67
		Female	70 (46.67)	68 (45.33)	12 (8.00)	2.39
c)	Traditional dress and jewellery	Male	28 (18.67)	106 (70.67)	16 (10.67)	2.08
		Female	10 (6.67)	109 (72.67)	31 (20.67)	1.86
d)	Fairs and festivals	Male	100 (66.67)	47 (31.33)	3 (2.00)	2.65
		Female	98 (65.33)	42 (28.00)	10 (6.67)	2.59
<i>4. Social Interaction</i>						
a)	Having friends	Male	68 (45.33)	82 (54.67)	0 (0.00)	2.45
		Female	73 (48.67)	65 (43.33)	12 (8.00)	2.41
b)	Enjoyment with friends	Male	63 (42.00)	68 (45.33)	19 (12.67)	2.29
		Female	63 (42.00)	77 (51.33)	10 (6.67)	2.35
c)	Playing indoor games	Male	28 (18.67)	86 (57.33)	36 (24.00)	1.95
		Female	38 (25.33)	98 (65.33)	14 (9.33)	2.16
d)	Playing outdoor games	Male	102 (68.00)	45 (30.00)	3 (2.00)	2.66
		Female	22 (14.67)	28 (18.67)	100 (66.67)	1.48

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

About half of the males (43.3%) and one-fifth of females were never involved in sibling care but this activity was performed by more of the girls (50%) as compared one-third males (37.33%) sometimes. Those doing regularly were 29.33 per cent girls and 19.33 per cent boys. One-fourth of males (24.67%) and one-third females (34%) were always fetching water from outside whereas half of the male and female respondents were sometimes involved in this activity. Fetching fodder for the animals was performed sometimes by more than half of the respondents (57.33% males and 54.67% females). One-fourth (26%) males were performing it most of the times and 22 per cent of girls doing most of the time. Grazing of animals was never performed by one-fifth of males (22%) and nearly one-third females (30%). More number of boys (22.67%) performed it always as compared to 12 per cent girls. Milking of animals is the area which was never performed by nearly half of the males (49.33%) and more than half of females (56.67%). It was performed sometimes by half of males (50.67%) and less number of females (42%). Marketing of produce was always done by only 16 per cent males and 9.33 per cent females. Sixty four per cent males and 60 per cent females performed it sometimes and remaining 20 per cent males and 31 per cent females did it never. In this regard Woods(1975) reported that most school girls had less free time than their brothers because of household responsibilities. Upreti and Upreti(1982) also observed that boys were encouraged to be aggressive and outgoing while girls were taught to be domestic and concerned with personal relations

Further weighted mean scores were obtained on the individual items to make the sex-wise comparison. Regarding involvement in domestic activities, boys had more participation than girls in agricultural operation, animal grazing, milking of animals and marketing of produce whereas girls participated more in household chores, animal care, sibling care and fetching water.

Arts and Handicrafts: The tribals have known handicrafts and artifacts that promise great attraction as antiquities and decoration pieces. This aspect of the tribal culture is getting crushed out of existence by the pressures of modern modes, ways and accessories. Table 1 shows that weaving was done sometimes by more females (62%) and 46.67 per cent males whereas 41.33 per cent males and 29.33 per cent females never

performed this activity. Similar findings were reported by Chauhan(2000) that in Himachal Pradesh Gaddi tribal women contributed more than their counterparts in the utilisation of woolen products at home, their form and design and in handloom weaving.

Three fourth males (74%) and 38 per cent females never did embroidery whereas more females (57.33%) than males (24.67%) performed this activity sometimes. Traditional articles were never made by 68 per cent males and 59.33 per cent females whereas nearly one-third males (30%) and 36.67 per cent females performed this activity sometimes. Stitching as expected was domain of the females performing it (51.33%) sometimes whereas majority of males (92%) and 30.67 per cent females never performed it. Drawing and painting was performed always by both males (24.67%) and females (20%) however, nearly 59.33 per cent males and 63.33 per cent females sometimes performed it.

Weighted mean scores in arts and handicrafts participation showed, boys had more participation in drawing and painting activities, girls had more participation in arts and handicrafts activities like weaving, embroidery, traditional craft and stitching.

Music: Dancing in India is as old as her civilization. In the Rigveda, we find frequent references to dances and musical instruments. The tribals are also involved in folk dances and songs. Folk dance, fairs and festivals, betrothal, marriage, religious worship all provide the people an occasion to pour out their emotive feelings, give expression to the devotional fervour or to recall the hoary legends and traditions.

The perusal of results in Table 1 shows that more than half of the respondents (61-63%) had interest in music always whereas one-third of females (34.67%) and 29.33 per cent males had interest in music sometimes. Approximately, half of the females (46.67%) and 41.33 per cent males always participated in local dance whereas half males (50.67%) and less than half females (45.33%) reported their participation sometimes. The number of respondents who never participated in music and dance was very low. Traditional dress and jewellery was worn by majority of the people sometimes as reported by 70.67 and 72.67 per cent males and females, respectively whereas nearly one-fifth of males (18.67%) and 6.67% females reported it as worn always. More than half of males and females (65-

67%) participated in festival always whereas nearly one-third males (31.33%) and 28 per cent females reported their participation sometimes and the number of respondents who did not participate was negligible. This study is also akin to Debbarmann (1991), Kakati (2003) and Madhvilatha and Uma (1995) who reported change in life style, dress pattern and food habits among the tribals.

On calculating weighted mean scores the study revealed that boys participated more in fairs and festivals and wore traditional dress on occasions than the girls whereas girls had participation in music and local dance.

Social Interaction: The tribal India lives in the hills, forests and isolated regions. Himachal Pradesh is covered by snow clad peaks of the Himalayas and as such there is low density of population. The inhabitants literally live in the lap of nature. The higher areas of Himachal Pradesh are far flung and as such only the hardy and preserving people can live there. The tribal people of the State live in mountainous terrains of the Himalayas. Table 1 shows that nearly half of the respondents had friends always whereas half of the males (54.67%) and 43.33 per cent females had friends but only sometimes. Similar number of males and females (42%) enjoyed their friends' company always whereas nearly half of males (45.33%) and half of females (51.33%) enjoyed the company of their friends sometimes.

Indoor games were played always by 18.67 per cent males and 25.33 per cent females and more than half (57.33%) males and 65.33 per cent females were playing indoor games. Whereas a majority of the males (68%) and one-tenth of females (14.67%) were playing outdoor games always and little less than one-third males (30%) and one-fifth of females (18.67%) were playing outdoor games sometimes.

Regarding weighted mean scores on the item-social interaction, both boys and girls had friends and enjoyed the friends' company. Boys were playing more outdoor games and girls were playing more indoor games.

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