

Media Representation and Tribal Vulnerabilities: Analyzing the Challenges Faced by Alluri Sitaramaraju District's Tribal Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to tribal communities in the Alluri Sitaramaraju district, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities in healthcare, education, and economic stability. This study examines the role of media in addressing these challenges, focusing on how media coverage—or the lack thereof—impacted public perception and policy responses during the pandemic. Tribal areas, often marginalized in mainstream media, faced significant hardships, including limited access to healthcare, disruptions in education due to the digital divide, economic losses, and the erosion of cultural practices. The media's role was critical in disseminating information, advocating for tribal rights, and highlighting the specific needs of these communities. However, coverage was often constrained by the remoteness of tribal regions and a focus on urban areas, leading to underreporting of the pandemic's impact on these vulnerable populations. This abstract outlines the study's exploration of the intersection between media, tribal communities, and public health, with a view to understanding the gaps in coverage and identifying ways to promote more inclusive media practices that could influence better policy-making in future crises.*

Keywords: Representation, Tribal Communities, Alluri Sitaramaraju District, COVID-19 Pandemic Healthcare Access, Digital Divide, Economic Hardship, Cultural Impact, Social Isolation, Policy Response