
A Study on Soci-Economic Situations of Banjara Tribes in Uttarakannada District

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Abstract

The Banjara community people from the north-western belt of India. Now they have spread out all over India. According to J. J. Roy Burman; the name Laman was popular long before the name Banjara, and Laman Banjaras originally came from Afghanistan before settling in Rajasthan and other parts of India. They are originally from the independent province called Goa in Afghanistan. Banjaras were traditionally suppliers of bullock and salt merchants. Colourful is the one word that comes to mind when we think of this enthusiastic tribe of India. They live in settlements called Tandas. Urdu, Telegu, Kutni and Lambadi are amongst the popular languages spoken here. Ugadi is the most famous festivals celebrated by Banjara tribes of India. Festivals like Holi and Diwali are also indulged in with added interest. Banjaras speak Gor Boli; also called Lambadi, it belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of languages. Most Banjaras today are bilingual or multilingual adopting the predominant language of their surroundings.

Socio-economic profile is an important indicator to characterize the social life and behavior of an individual. The traditional Indian value system has placed heavy emphasis on prestige with old age. The elderly were the centers of authority and the most respected members of the family. These days, due to change in the family structure, the elderly are not given adequate care and attention by their family members. Old age usually brings with it diminished participation in productive and economically gainful work. Moreover, not only resources of the elderly, but their need - patterns also undergo change. Many of the problems confronting the elderly can be traced to the loss of income which is due to total or partial withdrawal from occupation and the loss of social status enjoyed while in occupation. The aim of the study is to determine the socio-economic status of the Banjara tribes and to know the factors responsible for changes which are taking place among the Lambani Community. The study is also aims to understand the cultural and educational condition in the same. 50 samples are taken; 25 male respondents and 25 females for the study. Interview schedule is used. Both the primary and secondary methods are used and the study is descriptive in nature.

Keywords: Bangara tribes, socio economic condition, tradition and customs, life style, and community.

INTRODUCTION

India is a land of variety, the seventh largest and the second most populous nation of the world. It contains the largest variety of human types in the whole world. It could rightly be called an “ethnological Museum”. Many divers’ races with different cultural background came to India and merged with the Indian population. According to a study about population three are about 613 tribes in India. Each tribe has its individual culture and the tribal cultural background is different from the cultural background of the caste system. Some of them are very backward, leaving in huts. Some families are residing in cities enjoying modern facilities where as some of them are still in remote villages and in forests.

Lambani lead a simple life and mainly inhabit the western Indian states include Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. A part of this tribal community is also found in the northern region of Karnataka. The Lambani tribe of India speak a language which is believed to have been originated in the state of Rajasthan. Though it has no script, it is a living language. Lambani tribes keep moving from place to place. Noticed usually in groups, people of this tribal community earn their daily bread by selling cloths and ornamental things. When they inhabited the forest region of the southern India, they were also referred to as the bee keeping caste.

CONCEPT LAMBANIES

The Banjara (also called Gor, Lambadi, and Gormati) are a community usually described as nomadic people from the north-western belt of the Indian subcontinent (from Afghanistan to the Rajasthan) now spread out all over India. Lambadi or Goar-boali, also called Banjari, is a language spoken by the once nomadic Banjara people across India and it belongs to Indo-Aryan group of languages. The language does not have a native script.

SOCIAL LIFE OF LAMBANIS

Social life of Lambanis is quite interesting. There are number of nuclear families rather than joint families among Lambanis. After marriage; the new couple establish a new family and live together. It has become a tradition among Lambanis in many places. The Lambanis are Patriarchal. Though the head of the family appear possessing more status outside the family, there is equality between husband and wife. But men take decisions in the family and women are not allowed to take any decisions. Monogamy is the accepted system of marriage among Lambanis. But polygamy is also found among them. Widow remarriage is rarely found, no child marriage is found. ‘Nayaka’ of the Thanda plays an important role during marriage even now. The position of the Nayaka is hereditary. A secretary looks after the all affairs of the Nayaka being his close associate. He is also known as ‘Kharabari’ this post is also hereditary.

SOCIETY DISTRIBUTION

Banjaras can be found all over India but their population is concentrated in the states of Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana. As of 2012 study there are 1.1 million Banjaras in Karnataka.

The Banjara people were transporters of goods such as salt, grains, firewood and cattle. During the 19th century, the British colonial authorities brought the community under the purview of Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and thus curbed their movement. The stigma attached to this continued until 1952 when the Act was abolished by the newly independent India.

CLASSIFICATION

In some states of India, they are listed as Other Backward Classes (OBC) in India's system of positive discrimination while in other states they are categorised as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the state Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, they are OBC. In the state of Tamil Nadu they are Backward Classes (BC) and in Karnataka they have been categorised as Scheduled Caste since 1977.

NATURE OF HOUSING

As the Lambanis were nomadic people they were not settled anywhere properly in the initial stage. But they were used to live together with their bullocks near forest or outside the main village. Their main purpose was to lead life through trading food grains. Gradually, they took agriculture and settled nearby forests in temporary settlements called 'Thandas'. Their traditional style of constructing houses was longer than width and square this style is still continued among Lambanis. The common houses where in Lambanis live is called 'ZUPDA' in their language. And those who have capacity to build middle type houses, they construct better houses such houses are known as Male. ZUPDA is oblong in shape whereas male type is normally square. But today constructing a house is purely depending upon the economic capacity of the people. They are economically becoming well by doing different occupations and hence modern type of houses is being built by them. According to the below table, 76% of them are living in tiled houses, 4% in Hut, only 6% in RCC house and 2% in Sheds. It is well known that the nature of depicts their standard of life and this standard of life depends upon the economic condition.

LAMBANI TRIBALS KEEP TRAVELLING

People of Lambani tribes keep moving from place to place. Noticed usually in groups, people of this tribal community earn their daily bread by selling clothes at local markets and on beaches. When the Lambani tribe inhabited the forest region of the southern India, they were also referred to as the bee-keeping caste.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARD

Education is the main key through which anybody can open all channels of life. Education is very important in every one's life. Hence, Central and State Governments have given more emphasis for education of the Scheduled caste children. Government has opened residential schools, Ashram Schools. It is evident from the above table that, there are number of literates and going to government educational programmes. Day by day the literates and educates number is also increasing. The educated ratio of men is more than the ratio of women.

ECONOMIC LIFE OF LAMBANIS

The Lambanis were engaged in trading salt, Beatle nut, food grains etc. Long time they were supplying food grains during Mughal and British period for their army and cattles were used to carry these goods. They had to travel in dense forest and deep valleys hence they had a big herd of cattles. They use to go to forest to bring firewood from the forest and leading their life by selling firewood. Majority of them were working as coolies in construction, only a few of them had taken up other activities to lead their life.

PROBLEMS OF LAMBANIS

Lambani tribes are isolated by the modern society, they are not given more importance to get developed and well settled in their life. Their traditional art is getting diminishing by the lack of opportunity and identity given to it. The other hand influence of modern media, wide range of technological growth also is the main reason behind this problem. Problems of getting educational facilities are also the challenge to the Banjara people because they are basically migrants. Low socio-economic status is making them not able to face the problems at the family and socially developed. Due to the lack of education and social importance they are facing challenge preserving their language. Their migrating life is also making them not able to get the modern facilities to have a value life.

CONCLUSION

Even though Lambanis are facing various problems they are not united or organized to solve their problems. Hence all India level organizations such as Dhadi and Banjara are trying continuously to organize the Lambani community people. Since there is no proper organization among them exploitation, atrocities, and cultural marginalization is continued. Therefore, Educated Lambanis, social reformers, Govt, representatives etc are needed to look in to their issue. Banjaras are nomadic tribes found in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal. It is important to bring them all together in a same platform for the overall development of the community.

Their occupations are gathering of forest products and agriculture. Economical support by the government is needed to strengthen their life. An importance to their education also can develop their economic condition. By encouraging them for the small scale industries, have employment in the urban area and stop migrating from one place to other can make the Banjara community get developed educationally, economically and in their life.

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