

Contemporary Socio-Economic Scenario of The Sahariya Tribe in Rajasthan (With Special Reference to The Saharian Youth)



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Abstract

As in the other states of India, in Rajasthan too, the rural development can be apparently seen through its villages and panchayat samitis. India's largest state by area, Rajasthan also stands out in economic performance. Over the past 20 years it has grown faster, and achieved a greater reduction in poverty than any other low income state in India. It is now at a crossroads and faces serious challenges to sustaining rapid and inclusive growth.

Indeed, the conditions in rural areas are more difficult at a time when the environment in urban areas is not yet conducive to rapid growth and job creation in the manufacturing and services sectors. Rajasthan uses its inherent strengths in agriculture, manufacturing and services to promote less water-intensive forms of agriculture, labor-intensive manufacturing and a more diverse offer of tourism. Both its growth performance and its record on poverty reduction distinguish it from India's other low-income states.

While the state has made progress in improving water management through micro- and drip-irrigation and promotion of less water guzzling crops, water resources are increasingly stressed as consecutive droughts have put growing pressure on groundwater. In addition to agriculture, poverty, inequality, gender discrimination, caste-hierarchy, public health etc. are still some of the burning issues in rural Rajasthan that need to be sorted out for the sake of a positive social transformation.

The paper surveys the development in the tribal world of Rajasthan in particular, and produces a comprehensive picture of the youth of the Sahariya tribe. The results reveal that the Saharian youth is passing through several socio-economic changes.

Keywords: Contemporary, Scenario, Sahariya, Tribe, Youth, Emerging Changes, Main Stream, Development.

Introduction

Rajasthan has vast physical, geographical, demographical and socio-economic diversity. There are 12 categories (several sub-categories) of schedule tribes in Rajasthan, and constitute 13.5 % (2011) of the total population of the state. Among the total tribal population 94.09% are rural and 5.90% are urban. The southern part of state includes 5 tribal dominated districts i.e. Dungarpur, Banswara, Pratapgarh, Udaipur and Rajsamand. These areas are hilly and covered by thin forest, and population is scattered. (Meena, 2014)[13]. (Shahnawaz and Singh 2014) reported that the measure of under-nutrition in terms of height/length-for-age (stunting), weight-for height/length (wasting), and weight-for-age (underweight) for children younger than five year of age in predominantly tribal block Jhadol of Udaipur, show severe undernourishment among the children in this part of Rajasthan.

Change is inevitable. It applies to the tribal world as well. As the other things are changing fast with the passage of time, the tribal world of India too is changing and is on the path of progress and development. There is an incredible structural transformation in the values, norms, traditions, customs, modes of living and behavior of the tribal people who seem to be ready to meet the main stream of development. It will not be an exaggeration to say about the tribal people that the impact of modernity has put their identity at risk. Mightbe, their original features get extinct.

As per the 2011 census, the scheduled Tribe population of Rajasthan state is 9,238,534. Out of twelve tribes scheduled for the State,

it constitutes 93 per cent while Garasia, Damor, Dhanka and saharia together form 6.60 per cent of the total ST population. Six tribes, Bhil, Meena, Naikda, Kathodi, Patelia, Kokna and Koli Dhor along with the generic tribes constitute the remaining 0.3 per cent of the total tribal population.

The Saharias, Baigas, Meenas, Bheels, Garasias, Bharias, Hill Korbas, Abujhmaris are some of the popular primitive tribes in India. In Rajasthan, there are several tribes, such as, Bheels, Garasias, Meenas, Saharias etc. Obviously, The Saharia is the primitive tribe of Rajasthan which is known for its peculiar culture. Being in the grip of modernity, the members of the Saharia tribe are facing eco-cultural and other socio-economic problems.

The members of the Saharia tribe live in remote places and have long been untouched by education and other forms of development. The tribe as a whole with its specific socio-cultural features attracts all those who take keen interest in life and in the changes that are occurring in the tribal world. Though under the various government policies, they are on the path of progress and development, they are still too poor, and poverty forces them to control their economic desires.

The word 'Sahariya' has been derived from the Arabic word 'Saharia' which means jungle or woods. According to a common belief, the Saharias are the aboriginals of desert land of Rajasthan. According to another belief, the word 'Saharia' is derived from the Persian word 'Sehra' which means desert.

Venkatachar believed the Saharias to have migrated from the west to India from sahara region. At present, the Saharias are scattered all over India, and enjoying their life amidst the changes that are occurring. Sour, Sonr, Sahariya, Seharis, Soria, Sor, etc. are some of the names they are known after in the various states of India. In Bundelkhand they are called Rawat, while in Malwa they are called Sor or Sonr.

Originally and basically, they live in cluster formed of huts on some hillock. However, they have now started settling down in plains where they live in hamlets called 'sahrana' separately with the members of the other castes. Hills, jungles, stream nearby etc. are some of the common features of the village where the members of the Sahariya tribe dwell.

Socio-Economic Status Scenario of The Saharian Youth

The Sahariya is one of the most important tribes of Rajasthan. Historically, socially and culturally, it occupies a distinct place, and has ever since attracted the scientists and anthropologists and sociologists to study its specific features. The Baran district of Rajasthan is especially known for the Sahariya tribe which resides chiefly in Kishanganj and Shahbad Panchayat Samiti of the Baran district.

As far as the social life of the members of the Sahariya tribe is concerned, it is too backward. Hence, the youth finds himself amidst poverty, penury, ignorance and hardships. Generally, the women are confined to the four walls of the house where they keep themselves busy with household

work and other works that fall in the cottage industry in order to make living.

The clan plays a vital role in the marriage-arrangements, and the clan of both the parents are rigidly observed. However, exceptions to it are also there. Traditionally speaking, the main occupation of the Sahariya tribe relates to sale of wood. The Saharians deal in the medicines prepared from gum, honey etc. They also deal in the herbal medicines.

The educational status of the Saharian youth is too low. However, with the launch and introduction of the various welfare and development schemes meant for the welfare of the tribals, the youth has started rethinking about him, and has started changing his life through education and career.

The contemporary socio-economic trends among the Saharian youth reveal that they are ready to shift from their traditional occupations to the modern ones for the sake of better earning and life. Modernity, materialism, technology advancement have affected them tremendously during the recent years. It is evident that they have an access to modern means of recreation, means of communication and to the use of the latest technologies. It reveals that the Saharian youth of Rajasthan is on the track of education, career-building, abolition of superstitions through the adaptation to the contemporary materialistic environment.

Objectives of The Study

1. To study and reflect the contemporary scenario of Rajasthan
2. To concentrate the tribal communities of Rajasthan
3. To explore the changes occurring in the tribal world in Rajasthan
4. To study in particular the Sahariya tribe
5. To produce the picture of the peculiar culture of the Sahariya tribe
6. To find out the causes of the socio-economic development in the tribal world of the Sahariya tribe
7. To make a focus on the emerging changes in the Saharian youth
8. To explore the causes and effects of the socio-economic changes in the youth of the Sahariya tribe
9. To make an interpretation of the cause and effect relationship of the issue in consideration
10. To produce the emerging contemporary picture of the Saharian youth

Review of Literature

Mallikharjun Rao Kodavanti, Hari Kumar Rachakulla, Kodavalla Venkaiah & Ginnela N V Brahmam (2005), in their work entitled Nutritional Status of Saharia – A Primitive Tribe of Rajasthan, explore and report that the Saharia is one of the most backward tribes of Rajasthan. The incidents of starvation deaths among Saharia tribal are very common. The study reveals that a majority of the households are nuclear families. About 81% of the male head of the households and 96% of their female counterparts are illiterate. The major occupation of the head of the household is either agricultural labour or

other labour (82%). The intake of protein, calcium, iron, thiamin and niacin were comparable to the recommended allowances, while the intake of other nutrients such as total fat, energy, vitamin A, riboflavin, vitamin C and free folic acid were below the recommended levels. About 85% of the mothers discard colostrum, mostly because of the traditional practice. The observations highlight the need for strengthening health and nutrition programmes in this area.

Madan mohan Mahawar & D P Jaroli (2007), in their research on Traditional knowledge on zootherapeutic uses by the Saharia tribe of Rajasthan, India, survey that the Sahariyas in Rajasthan have a great traditional knowledge related to the use of different animals and animal-derived products. It was found that The zootherapeutic knowledge was mostly based on domestic animals, but some protected species like the peacock (*Pavo cristatus*), hard shelled turtle (*Kachuga tentoria*), sambhar (*Cervus unicolor*) were also mentioned as medicinal resources.

Surabhi Srivastava (2016), in her study entitled Indigenous Tourism Development: Case Analysis of Saharia Tribes, emphasizes that with the increasing demand for ecotourism, eco-tourism is now a great source of livelihoods for local inhabitants as it also adds importance to local traditions and cultures, and can also directly generate revenue for environmental conservation and management. As in the other countries of the world and India, in the tribal areas of Rajasthan too, ecotourism and tribal development are complementary to each other. Rajasthanian tribes, with their specific features, form the mirror of cultural and historical legacy of the state. A primitive tribal group Sahariya, resides in south eastern part of State. The districts of Rajasthan, such as, Baran, Kota, Dungarpur and Sawai Madhopur are known for the Sahariya tribe. The economy of tribals continues to be predominately agriculture with small landholding and irrigated area. These communities have higher incidence of illiteracy, malnourishment and poverty, and face social and geographic isolation. However, now there is a tremendous change in it.

B.L. Nagda (2017), in Tribal Population And Health In Rajasthan, surveys the various aspects of the tribal world of Rajasthan including their demographic structure, mortality rate, conditions of living and working, health issues and mortality rate of women etc. The study finds the tribals to be sons of soil as they live with close association of Nature. The study finds out that the tribals are, hunters, forestland cultivators, minor forest product collectors and isolation lovers and dwellers. The impoverished economy affects population growth, literacy, sex ratio, pregnancy procedure and health care. About 12.4 percent of the total population of Rajasthan belongs to scheduled tribes, and five districts namely, Banswara, Udaipur, Jaipur, Dungarpur, and Sawai madhopur have two third of the state's tribal population.

Suman Rana & Wairokpam Premi Devi (2017), in their jointly written research paper entitled A Review on Educational Status of Scheduled Tribes of Rajasthan, survey the emerging changes in the

educational status of the tribals in Rajasthan. The study finds that the STs are geographically secluded, socioeconomically isolated, marginalized, communities of India, illiterate or less educated despite several efforts from the government through programmes/schemes. The present study is based on government reports, i.e., Census and it is meta-analytical in nature. The study clarifies the educational status of ST population in Rajasthan that in spite of high enrolment in all levels of education, literacy is quite low in comparison to the other categories. They have even the lowest transition rate from primary to upper primary level and secondary to higher secondary level of education. The dropout rate is also high among them.

Vandana Singh Kushwah, Rashmi Sisodia & Chhaya Bhatnagar (2017), in their research paper on Magico-religious and social belief of tribals of district Udaipur, Rajasthan, survey the blind faith of the tribals of Rajasthan in superstitions and sorcery. The study finds that the tribal people maintain strong ties with animals at both the material and spiritual level. Study reveals that traditional people depend on local therapies either magico-religious or natural ones in absence of awareness, modern medical facilities, expensive drugs, and poor transportation. However, the use of animal material in such practices is on a decline.

Veena Bhasin (2017), in her study on Way of Life Among the Sahariya of Rajasthan, highlights the techno-economic adaptations among the primitive tribe - Sahariya of Rajasthan, the efforts of government and other agencies to raise the economic standards of Sahariyas and their critical evaluation. The study finds out that with the advancement of technology and times, the members of the Sahariya tribe in Rajasthan, and particularly the Saharian youth have started accepting the techno-economic adaptations for the sake of better living and more earning. In this regard, the efforts of the government are appreciable.

Hypothesis

1. Rajasthan is the home of several primitive tribes and cultures
2. Garasia, Meena, Saharia, Bheel etc. are some of the major tribes of Rajasthan that form its tribal world.
3. Sahariya tribe is a primitive tribal group of Rajasthan
4. The Sahariya tribe has its own primitive culture
5. Modernity has caused risk to the primitive culture of the Saharias
6. The Government has launched several schemes for the welfare and development of the tribal society.
7. Reservation policy is making the youth career-conscious and is bringing them closer to education opening several vistas and opportunities of jobs to them
8. Process of Sanskritization is also working in the Saharian tribal world and is motivating the Saharian youth to imbibe the culture of the upper Hindu castes to enjoy a good social status.

9. The Saharian youth is ready to give up the little traditions that bound them for a long time
10. The Saharian youth is ready to accept modernity for the sake of better living and better survival in the world.

Methodology

The paper is a comprehensive study based on the secondary data and observation of the changes and transformation associated to the tribal society of Rajasthan at large, and especially of the Saharian youth that seem to be ready to give up their original cultural features for the sake of enjoyment of modernity and materialistic life. For the purpose of the study, all the steps of social research prescribed by the eminent social scientists were observed. After the selection of the title, a feedback about the Sahariya tribe was taken in the form of the secondary data from a few selected research papers available on the various internet sites. Obviously, the contents supplied a satisfactory feedback on the selected problem. Then, the relevant and irrelevant contents were separated, classified, analyzed and finally interpreted. Throughout, the focus was on the contents that revealed the socio-economic transformation in the Saharias, particularly, in the Saharian youth; causes of the socio-economic transformation and effects of these transformations on the life of the Saharian youth.

Findings & Conclusion

1. Rajasthan is the home of many of the tribes, such as, Meenas, Garasias, Saharias etc.
2. Under the government schemes, the tribal world of Rajasthan is changing fast which can be noticed through the awareness in the people for their rights, education, health, environment etc.
3. The contemporary scenario of the Saharias in Rajasthan is mixed which witnesses the impact of modernity and materialism on the members of Sahariya tribe, and especially on the Saharian youth.
4. The tribal communities, whether they are Meenas, Garasias, Bheels or Sahariyas, are too backward, and most of them still find their life amidst beggary and ignorance
5. The tribal world of Rajasthan including the world of the Saharias, is changing fast where there can be seen the wave of development ready to change their destiny.
6. Some of the major changes that are occurring include the readiness of the Saharian youth to join the main stream of development through education, career, modernity
7. The changes are being brought about under the Five Year Plans and other schemes meant for the development and welfare of the tribal people
8. Construction of roads, highways, underpasses, government buildings, railway lines etc. have made the Saharias free from the remoteness
9. The Reservation Policy links the Saharian youth to education and government jobs
10. The means of communication has made them free from isolation
11. Process of Sanskritization, modernization, urbanization and globalization has brought them closer to the other cultures and other people, and have enabled them to enjoy their life as blissfully as others do.
12. Some of the causes of the socio-economic development of the tribal world of the Sahariya tribe in Rajasthan and its youth include the poverty and penury, ignorance, cut off from the main stream of development in the nation
13. The government schemes under which the youth of the Sahariya tribe in Rajasthan is changing its destiny, has filled its life with beautiful colours
14. The changes that have occurred in the world of the Saharian youth, have brought both the positive and negative changes.
15. The positive changes include education, awareness and getting and availing job opportunities
16. The negative changes include chiefly readiness to give up original features of the primitive culture.

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