
Nomadic Tribes and Deprived Castes: A Social Perspective

Ms. Madhuri Pawar

Asst. Professor

Department of English

Vivekanand College, Kolhapur (Autonomous)

Abstract:

The present research paper attempts to study the life of Nomadic Tribes and Deprived Caste from a social perspective. It throws light on some vital social, cultural, economical and educational issues regarding them. India is a culturally diverse country in which people live with socio-cultural background. This paper tries to develop a deep insight into their problems because these communities are kept away from social recognition and major developmental program of the state. So that it has created a sort of confusion among them, resulting in various types of problems such as psychological, cultural and social disturbance.

Key Words: Nomadism, Deprivism, Displacement, Malnourishment, stigma etc

Introduction:

India is not only an ordinary country but a democratic country which is based on social and humanistic perspectives. We live in a society which is deeply structured by different communities. Indian constitution has given safeguard to all citizens and focused on different sections of society which considered Castes, Tribes and Backward Classes. They are living with diverse socio-cultural background. Historically, these people had been put under different social categories such as Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes. These Nomadic Tribes and Deprived Castes are an integral part of the Indian society. But these tribes have not been included in any of these general categories. These are not just neglected section but complex one. These communities have a long history of marginalization, neglect oppression and colonial rule. If we think about the condition of these communities, their problems are not only grounded in today's world but also deeply rooted in history.

History:

The history tells that 31 August is celebrated as 'Vimukt Jati's' day in India. After de notification in 1952, 200 communities were included in it, which came from diverse social background. As a result, inhuman caste practices led many social groups to embrace a nomadism. Their way of life perceived as a challenge to the modern state by British Colonial rulers. They have suffered injustices at the hands of the society, as these communities were on the move as cattle- grazers, transporters, food grains, musicians, mat-basket sellers, fortune tellers. The Colonial state saw itself as conducting a civilizing mission who believed in a fixed society. But they had a troubled experience of nomadism back in their own country. They suppressed these tribes and caste and declared them as 'Criminals' under Criminal Tribes Act(CTA) in 1871. There was no real positive change in their lives because they were stigmatized as criminal communities. They denied their basic rights, right to work, voting etc. These hardships and harassments to these communities adversely affected on their life style and sustenance. The present research paper tries to develop a deep insight into a various problems faced by these communities. The study addressed various socio-economic issues concerning them with a human rights perspective.

Commission Efforts:

The Nomadic Tribes and Deprived Castes are the most neglected and marginalized sections of the Indian society. They are victims of stigma, social negligence and exploitation

for centuries. Even after so many decades of Independence, they lack the most basic amenities of life. After understanding the cruel condition these communities in the early 21st century, the Central Governments made some attempts to bring them under the one administrative category in 2014 and the National Democratic Alliance Government set up a National Commission for these communities. They tried to understand their problems scientifically by consulting experts in the areas of anthropology, sociology, social work, media and social activism. They found the cause for the decline of their traditional occupations, atrocities, human rights, violations and gender issues.

Definitions:

- A) **Nomadism:** For the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995), the word nomad means, ‘ a member of a group or people who move from one place to another rather than living in one place all the time.’
- B) **Deprivism:** The word deprivism means ‘a situation in which people suffer from a severe and damaging lack of basic material and cultural benefits’.

These communities have a traditional- social background in the past and their claim is supported with authentic historical evidence. They have lost each and everything in their life. So they are unprivileged to take advantages of the development programs; their life continues as it is. It shows the large number deprivation from the gains of planned development. These communities in the margin of the political system who don't have any permanent residence, no identification, no voting. As a result, they are known as denizens of the nation without the rights of citizenship. They have been carried a social stigma that is the label ‘ criminal’, ‘untouchable’ and ‘beggar’ attached to them.

The present paper focuses on the socio-cultural, economic factors which are reflected on their real level of development of these communities in a given social set up. In order to understand their plight of living, we need to consider their social, cultural, historical and economical background.

1) Language and Religion:

As observed earlier, these communities have their own dialect who converse among themselves in their own language while with others they speak in the popular local common language. Every tribe has their own fixed language for communication in which they speak.

2) Displacement:

It has become a major burning issue of these communities. They are considered to be illegal occupants by Government agencies and communities. And as a result, their families remain under the constant fear of being displaced which resulted in the loss of their live hood and it creates disruption in children's education, disturbance in their day today life and in their mentality. Their live hood requires moving frequently and they become unable to send their children in schools. Instead of going to school, they help to earn money by doing some little work, begging on the streets. Therefore, there is need to create a health awareness among them that they will take benefits of Governments facilities.

3) Housing:

Housing is the one of the major concern of these communities for centuries. Most of them have been wandering in the past to earn something for their existence. Most of them had never a home or a settlement after understanding their plight , Government tried to give them

a small places to live but, overall condition is horrible , because they don't have their own houses to live and still keep to survive. That's why it becomes very difficult to live in a small place with 6 to 8 members. Not even they have facilities of drainage system as they use public toilet. They have no access of drinking safe water. These are vulnerable to various infections.

4) Family Pattern:

These families live in a small tents, bands, kinship and community which play a very significant role in their day to day dealings. Their family pattern varies depending upon the live hood pattern of communities. Quite a few of them have joint family pattern and some them have nuclear. Their life becomes very hard and difficult surrounded by the people within their family. The circumstances are full of trauma, violence, agony and turbulence from which they most suffer.

5) Health Problems:

Living in a small place or in a tent with the number of people and having less facilities, they become victim of their health problem. Most of these communities go to Government hospitals for their treatment due to lack of money. They are very poor and have to earn daily income in order to survive, approaching these local Government hospitals which seems always crowded and time consuming. Wasting maximum time in hospitals leads to considerable loss of income. This is why many people have no option to go there.

Some of them have faith in home remedies. A lot of superstitious prevail in these communities. Due to poverty and ignorance, they do their treatment through black magic and jadu tona which creates the various problems of health disorders. Therefore, there is a need to create a awareness about health among them.

6) Economic Aspect:

Their lives depend on the animals. These are the good sources of producing milk, butter, meat and wool etc. Some people indulge in food gathering and collecting foods. Their plight is so worse due to loss of patronage, emergence of new communication and enactment of different laws by the state. Many of them have become 'criminals' in the eyes of law and wider society. As a result, they have taken for begging, prostitution, raw picking and other immoral activities for their existence. They become homeless and dependent on the mercy of others.

7) Human Rights:

These communities have been unprivileged from human rights. Here is need for their development. We need to think more innovatively for providing those 'dignified' live hoods. These communities are subjected to atrocities everyday by society. They have no ration card, not included name in the voters list and not have legal shelters. When they venture out to meet their basic needs, they face daily harassments. They don't have any land or the movable property. In such a dismal scenario, there is the question of demanding basic needs arise for living.

8) Educational and Occupational Status:

Education is a mirage to these communities. It appears that these communities are largely illiterate and those who are educated are educated only up to the 10th class. They have poor access to education due to the problem of live hood security and sustenance. Children are victims of earning at early age. They are not motivated to attend the school because of poverty and the lack of citizenry rights. Under the prevailing circumstances, they don't take proper benefits of literacy due to low income.

Majority of the people are poor and they cater to the lower and middle level peasantry. However, today their live hoods have become unlawful because of misplaced and unthoughtful policies. As a result, their traditional occupations have become now demeaning and disrespectful. They are totally away from technical skills, knowledge about environment, medicinal herbs and education.

9) **Violations and Public Atrocities:**

It shows that these communities are victims of stigma and prejudice for centuries. The society is still not ready to accept them as equal. They are labelled as criminals and they are facing the various problems since British Rule. They are subjected to atrocities everyday by the police, civic, revenue administration. Many of these atrocities go unnoticed as they are never reported. Media is the strongest enhancers of stigma which gives wrong reports and it makes readers to believe that these people are criminals by nature.

In a way, they are helpless victims of the wronged past and present due to falsehood by dominant group. Today, the law and revenue are the major culprits in perpetuating violations and atrocities on these communities. So they are disadvantaged in all respects and become an easy prey of these false things. They encounter many a humiliation for their basic needs.

10) **Marginalisation:**

It is the core of exclusion from fulfilling needs of social lives. They are marginalized who have little control over on their own life. They are stigmatized and have negative public attitudes. So having less opportunity, they make less social contributions and develop less confidence and become isolated. As a result, they get little access of resources such as education, health services, infrastructure, housing and income. They may experience multiple forms of marginalization that are racism, sexism, poverty that always have been neglected by the society and may face huge discrimination in access to public places. They are unprivileged from hotels, canteen, cinemas, shops and malls so on. The exclusion and discrimination have badly affected on their lives. Consequently, it has resulted in dropping out of school, leaving their jobs, not good facilities etc.

Conclusion:

In this way, it has been estimated that the South Asia has known as the world's largest Nomadic Tribes and Deprived Caste who really hard worker and courageous. They undertake maximum burden of their societal practices on their live hoods. It shades light on their most horrible conditions due to the stigma and the community evil practices. The social neglect, discrimination and prejudiced attitude of mainstream society which make them the most marginalized in society.

REFERENCES:

- 1) Balland, D. "Nomadism and Politics: The Case of Afgan, Nomads in the Indian Subcontinent" Studies in History, 1991
- 2) Balkrishna Renke Report of 'National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes', Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India, 2008
- 3) Dreze, J. "For Basic Education to All" Frontline :India, 1999