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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF BANJARA COMMUNITY IN KALABURAGI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The term “Banjaras” may be defined as, “Those people who have been well known tribe of commodity carriers who are found all over western and southern India” (Thurston and Chary, 1987). It is estimated that more than 50 lakhs population in India belongs to Banjaras, of which 18 lakhs are living in Andhra Pradesh, 9.5 lakhs are living in Maharashtra, 8.7 lakhs are living in Karnataka and 5 lakhs are living in Madhya Pradesh. In Karnataka, the Lambani population is sparsely distributed in Dakshina Kannada (0.05%), Mandya (0.12%), Kodagu (0.02%), Uttara Kannada (0.71%), Kolar (0.86 %), Bengaluru urban (0.57%) and Mysore (0.93%). They are found in large scale in Gulbarga (20.22%), Bijapur (15.42%), Shimoga (10.07%) Gadag (9.25%), Bellary (9.18%), Chitradurga (7.95 %) and Dharwad (3 to 4 %) districts. Banjaras originally belong to Rajasthan and they were Rajputs who migrated to southern parts of India for trade and agriculture. They settled down in the southern or central area of the country and slowly loosened contacts with Rajasthan, and their original community.

KEYWORDS: Socio-economic Conditions , Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) , educational, cultural and political conditions.

INTRODUCTION

The British Government enacted the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) in 1871 and it applied to entire north India and extended to Madras Presidency in 1911 which degraded the name of Banjara tribe. As a result, the tribe was restricted by the British Government with severe restrictions and rigorous punishment. After independence, the Government of India de-notified Banjara community as a criminal tribe. As the Banjara tribe was fully backward, as per the Constitutional provisions, reservations were provided to Banjara tribe in education and employment. In Karnataka, though Banjaras are tribes, they are provided reservation under scheduled caste group. It is estimated

that there is 3,12,000 Banjara population is living 150 Tandas of Gulbarga district (Naik and Naik, 2012).

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The Government has taken many of the measures to improve and develop the socio-economic conditions of many of the backward castes and tribes. Even the Government has initiated many of the welfare schemes for the welfare of Banjara tribe. Still, it is highlighted that the Banjara tribes are backward in Karnataka in general and Gulbarga district in particular. So far, none of the study was made to focus the socio-economic conditions of the Banjara tribe in Gulbarga district. Hence, the present study is proved as important to look into the socio-economic, educational, cultural and political conditions of Banjara-Lambanis living in Tandas of



Gulbarga district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is made:

- 1.To look into the social conditions of the Banjara tribe living in tandas of Gulbarga district.
- 2.To study the family structure, socio-religious culture and celebrations of Banjara tribe.
- 3.To look into the economic conditions of Banjara tribe.
- 4.To study the development of Banjaras in terms of education and participation in modern employment.
- 5.To study the entertainment, literature and cultural conditions of Banjara tribe in Gulbarga district.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology plays significant role in determining different stages of research work. The present study is made on socio-economic conditions of Banjara tribes in Gulbarga district. After deciding upon the subject, the researcher, in consultation with the research supervisor went through the available literature on Banjara tribe. A review of literature revealed that there were practically no studies were made on Banjara tribes in Gulbarga district. Then the researcher contacted and had discussion with the experts on the subject such as executive members of Banjara Associations, Banjara Gram Panchayat Members, and Academicians from Banjara tribe, etc. The proposal or statement of the problem was finalized on the basis of discussion with these experts, who are experts in the field to provide the knowledge and information needed for the present research work.

Sources of Data:

Three sources of data were to be collected from the researcher as under.

1. Secondary Data:

The secondary data on the origin, social culture, economic conditions, entertainment, literature, religious practices, etc of the Banjara tribe was collected from the leading research journals, books, web sites, etc. These data sources formed for understanding the theoretical concepts for the present study.

2. Statistical Data:

The different statistical reports published by the Government departments such as Department of Social Welfare are referred to collect the statistical data on the tandas, Banjara population, facilities that are available at tandas, etc.

3. Primary Data:

Collection of Primary data is an important step in every research study. The researcher visited household and huts of Banjara tribals located at different tandas of Gulbarga district. Primary data is also collected from the respondents through interview schedules. It is observed that a great majority of the respondents are illiterates and low-educated, the researcher personally interacted with the each of the Banjara person (respondent) and collected information on their personal, socio-economic, educational, cultural, religious, literature oriented and political conditions in Tanda.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

- 1.As discussed in methodology, total 400 Banjara people were interviewed to collect the primary data for the present study. Of which, 69.25% are males and 30.75% are females. It is noted that due to their under-development, traditions and conventional culture, many of the females were hesitated to provide information for the survey. As such, few of the females were surveyed to collect the primary data.
- 2.Age-wise distribution of respondents disclosed that, 17.50% of the Banjara people surveyed are between 18 to 25 years, 28.50% are between 26 to 40 years, 33.00% are between 40 to 50 years and remaining 21.00% are of more than 50 years. It shows that, more middle aged Banjara people are surveyed for the present study.
- 3.Educational qualifications of the respondents revealed that, 20.75% of the respondents have not went to schools and are illiterates, 35.75% have completed only primary education, 24.25% have completed secondary education, 14.00% have completed pre-university or under-graduation and only 5.25% of the respondents have completed graduation or post-graduation. It shows that educational development among Banjaras is lowest and it may be due to lack of educational infrastructure in tandas.
- 4.Marital status of the respondents shows that, 85.75% of all the respondents are married and living with their

spouses, only 5.75% are widows and 8.50% are divorcees or separated from their spouses.

5.Occupations of all the respondents shows that, 23.25% are unemployed or housewives, 21.25% are working in agriculture and animal husbandry, 4.25% are working in organized sector, 32.25% are working in unorganized sector and 19.00% are engaged in small business or trade. It is concluded that the individual occupations of majority of the respondents is unorganized sector including agriculture or even few of them are unemployed.

6.Of the respondents who are living in places other than tandas, 2.50% are living in villages, 3.50% are living in towns, 3.00% are living in Gulbarga city and it is not applicable to 91.00% of the respondents as they are living in tandas.

7.Only 12.75% of all the respondents have agreed that the status of women among Banjaras is higher to males compared to other castes and tribes, 24.00% have mentioned it as equal to males and the remaining majority that is, 63.25% of the respondents have agreed that status of women among Banjaras is inferior or lower to males compared to other castes and tribes.

8.Only 34.00% of the total respondents have emphasized female education, 42.50% have emphasized for good family life for females and 23.50% have opined that females should work outside.

9.Surprisingly, it is emphasized that, 23.00% of the total respondents have agreed that child marriages are prevailed among Banjaras, whereas 41.50% have not agreed to the same and 35.50% have not expressed their opinions on the same.

10.78.00% of all the Banjara people surveyed have agreed that they accept and give dowry during their children's marriage, whereas only 10.25% have not agreed to the same and 11.75% have not expressed their views on the same.

11.22.75% of all the respondents have agreed that they are getting more benefits by grouping Banjaras under scheduled castes, 56.50% have opined that they are getting only meager or no benefits for the same and 20.75% are not at all aware about the same.

12.All the Banjara people covered under the study are eating non-vegetarian food. It shows that, they are following food habits of Banjara tribe.

13.54.75% of all the Banjara people are drinking liquor, whereas only 23.50% of the respondents are not drinking liquor and 21.75% are rejected to express their views on the same.

14.On the level of satisfaction in marital and social life, 27.75% of the respondents have expressed that they are fully satisfied, 43.50% have stated that they are satisfied to a greater extent, 18.00% are somewhat satisfied and only 10.75% have mentioned that they are not satisfied in their marital and social life.

CONCLUSION:

The study revealed that meager numbers of Banjara people were gained benefits from social welfare facilities and schemes and they got educated and settled in urban areas. As described already, Banjara culture is unique as they drink local liquor and eat non-vegetarian dishes during festival seasons. The literature of Banjara tribe is different. The folk culture of Banjaras has revealed by their costumes, customs, language, festivals, dances, songs, etc. Of course, Banjara culture is rich and needed to be developed. It is suggested to the Government to increase reservation in sanctioning houses to Banjara tribals through different schemes such as Ashraya Yojana, Dr. Ambedkar Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana, etc. Further, it is essential to open schools, at least to provide primary education and primary health centre to provide basic health care facilities to Banjaras living in Tandas of Gulbarga district.

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