

A RESTUDY OF A TRIBE-CASTE VILLAGE/ FRINGE VILLAGE IN UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT: The history of the study of the Indian Village in an effective fashion begins with the intensive survey work connected with British attempt to collect land revenue in the late 18th century. In Anthropology, a restudy is likely to emphasize the importance of variables not emphasized in first enquiry. Restudy helps a researcher to bring new ideas and gives new insight to earlier work. The paper highlights the concept of acculturation transculturation, and detribalisation

KEYWORDS Restudy, Acculturation, Transculturation, Detribalisation.

INTRODUCTION

The specific characteristics of the Indian Village were its autonomous existence its self-sufficiency in the economic systems of the production and consumption homogeneity and smoothness in mutual relationships and a collective consciousness about the village as entity. The immutability or resistance to change attributed to Village Communities offered a kind of theoretical base or rationalization for the colonial administration which claimed to stand for change and modernity. 'Rural Reconstruction' was therefore adopted as policy and developmental goals after independence and measures like the abolition of Zamindari, along with tenurial rights were the steps which had been initiated on the eve of independence. Majumdar working on culture change situations in India as presenting rich and varied materials on cultural dynamics. In his ethnography Majumdar firmly brings out that some primitive cultures are dynamic and change. He also focuses on the ways which help to hold their own against heavy odds and discovers that there were a support them in their change. Therefore he felt that the strategy for tribal development lay in conceptualizing a creative or generative adaptation and counter wholesale cultural invasion from outside. He writes about the base of a culture which he finds to be reluctant of the interaction of four crucial variables which are arranged in order of importance, were Man, Area or Resources and Co-operation(MARC)Majumdar viewed the villages as "the pulse of India" that can be felt in villages in spite of the fact that the villages did not offer "one social pattern; there are great variations in climate, topography and in population and therefore the Indian villages as we often speak of it is a misnomer" (1958:1).

Keeping all the above mentioned things in mind Majumdar selected a tribe-caste village, *Chitaura* near Duddhi block, district Sonbhadra. It had a mixed population and situated in a remote area.

A Restudy is aimed at it because this work of Majumdar was published posthumously and also in Hindi, therefore it never received any attention from the world of social sciences.

Majumdar's *CHHOR* is holistic village study observing the brought about by the process of a peaceful kind of interface and what he calls 'trans-culturation' and thus creating more or less, a continua. Thereby, the parameters of a '*Chhor Culture*' as a concept for the cultural study of this region have been developed by him, identifying some distinguishing characteristics.

The ethnography of the village has been divided broadly into three themes. Firstly, the social and economic organization, inter-caste relations, kinship and family, life cycle rituals and religious beliefs and practices, historical account of migrants and the exploitation of people at their hands. Leadership and panchayats and village faction is the second aspect; and planned change evaluation of *Community Development Programme* and reformist movements among the people is the third theme.

CONCEPT OF RESTUDY

Social Anthropology, as a discipline focusing on intense emic data gained inductively from long term association with small communities has always attached particular importance to village studies. Due to an intensive involvement of the anthropologist with the site they study, it is common for them to re-visit the sites they or someone else originally studied. The re-studies of villages studied earlier not only provides academic rigor in theoretical terms but also offer a dynamic understanding of processes of change and continuity in the villages restudied. In Indian settings, numerous re-studies have highlighted the nature of socio-economic change that has swept the village away and how wider forces are at work in transforming the faces of Indian villages.

In Anthropology, a restudy is likely to emphasize the importance of variables not emphasized in first enquiry. Restudy helps a researcher to bring new ideas and gives new insight to earlier work. A younger researcher may approach the restudy from a completely new angle and use different methods of investigations, resulting in an account so different from the earlier findings. Another aspect of restudy can also be when an initial researcher restarts his work, a mutual trust and respect establishes between a researcher and an informant that provides a favourable climate for a study.

The dimension of time as instrumental in auguring social change was conceptualized from and in turn, formulated a fresher field of enquiry that came to be called as re-studies and long-term field researchers.

Re-studies infuse a longitudinal perspective to the study of societies and their transformation along comes numerous aspects associated with re-studies-types, nature, methodological and theoretical nuances, ethics, reflexivity issues on reliability and validity and so on.

Re-studies have marked their strong presence ever since their inception as a dynamic disciplinary endeavour; however the focus in present time is more intense owing to wider implications of longitudinal studies in terms of both theoretical and applied interests in the field of humanities.

OBJECTIVES

- To find out the tribe caste relation, in their multiple aspects which regarded as of great importance in village studies.
- To assess the process of trans-culturation and mutual influences over to each other, whether it is one sided or both sided.
- To compare the socio-economic status of villages in their socio-political life.
- To find out whether tribal were exploited by other migrant caste or not.
- To examine the retention of tribal identity during the course of Acculturation

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data can be collected through the following ways-

Observation- This method implies the collection of information by way of investigator's own observation without interesting the respondents. The information obtained relates to what is currently happening & is not complicated by either the past behaviour or future intentions or attitudes of respondents.

This method is no doubt an expensive method but is very useful in some specific situation during the data collection. The observational method can further provide confirmation & accuracy to the data obtained from the Interview.

Personal Interview- The investigator follows a rigid Procedure & seek answers to a set of pre-conceived questions through personal Interview. This method of collecting data is usually carried out in a structured way where output depends upon the ability of interviewer to a large extent. Structured Interview is applied to data collection which helped the researcher to obtain reliable information of their aim & objective of topic.

Schedule- Schedule is the tool or instrument used to collect data from the respondents while interview is conducted. Schedule contains questions, statements (on which opinions are elicited) and blank spaces/tables for filling up the respondents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature is very important aspect of proposed because it is that medium which provides requisite direction to proposed research work. Madan(2013) pointed out that Mujumdar in his ethnographic studies dealt with contact of culture at unequal level and then, comparative evaluation of the health and development of such cultures.

In India anthropologically oriented village studies became popular through the works of the theoretically sophisticated anthropologists like Morris Opler, Oscar Lewis and Mckim Marriot, who used the high level scientific methodology developed by Redfield and others.

CHHOR KA EK GAON is basically a village study done by Majumdar which is a mix study of Tribe and caste.

Village studies in India historically goes back when Sir Henry Main(1861) advocated that land was originally held in common by groups of people. A more complete study of the Indian village was depicted in his book, published ten years later.

Rev. Lal Bihari Dey (1874), describes Indian village life in a village Kanhanpera, West Bengal.

Sir George Griesson (1926) describes factual data on the material culture related to rural life of Bihar. Some more important works on Indian villages are F.L. Brayn (1927) and Strickland's (1936), discussed community development programmes with a view to bringing the improvement of Indian rural societies. "These studies of the economic life of the village brought about a very gloomy picture of Indian rural society." (Vidyarthi 1978:7).

W.H. Wisner (1936) and in (1930) depicts the impact of the caste system on the total way of life of the villagers.

S.C. Dubey (1955), based on the field enquiry conducted in a South Indian Village, Shamirpet depicts an integrated and comprehensive picture of village describing the historical, geographical and sociological perspectives of village life.

M.N. Srinivas (1955), pointed out a process of social change in upward direction which he termed as Sanskritization.

Kathleen Gough (1960) in her paper describes different caste groups and discusses the unity of the Individual caste groups as well as of the village as a whole.

S.C. Dube (1955) outlines the social structure of a mixed village. Dewara, as well as the social symbiosis of the different tribal, cast-Hindu and Muslim groups who inhabit the village.

H.S. Dhillon (1955) is based on the field data collected from a single caste village Haripura in the Mandya District of the then Mysore state. Here he delineates the factor responsible for the formation of six factions in the village and the leadership pattern, symbolized by a group having its own leader, of the village.

G.N. Carstairs (1957) mentioned as the outstanding and pioneering work on the socio-psychological study of Indian Villages. D.N. Majumdar (1957) describes intercast relationship, religious beliefs and practices, leadership, factionalism and economy of a village.

Oscar Lewis (1958), has analysed the Jajmani system, factions and festivals of village Ramapur. He compares Rampur with Tepoztlan, a Mexican village to show the different cultural forms of peasant society.

F.G. Baily (1960) attempts to discover the interaction of political organization of the tribal system with its non-tribal counterpart.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

- The presence of a number of castes as well as tribes creates a situation where there are no stabilized among them- as if there was no equilibrium- the different castes assuming importance at different times. Therefore no castes can achieve dominance because combinations of other castes frustrate such attempts.

The living standards of different castes and tribes do not show much difference.

- In a fringe village a continuous and not easily perceptible kind of a trans-culturation is facilitated not only the tribal communities adopt cultural traits from their advanced caste neighbours, the vice-versa also happens, especially in case of rituals, festivals etc.
- While in other village, which are not fringe villages, wealth social status, etc. greatly contribute to village politics and factions here the government's patronage provides the lead, in a way and its controls are far more effective.
- In the villages, migrations bring about a new value system because the migrants have to orient themselves to the value system and aspirations of the original inhabitants and this makes the caste norms elastic, leading to a symbiotic pattern of living.
- A significant feature of tribe caste relations in fringe villages is that the migrant caste population initially gives a lot of respect and precedence to the leading tribal families and leaders but in the course of time the migrant caste groups set about exploiting the tribals, grab their land and erode their status & influence.

- Here comparatively more of tolerance is seen in the social behaviour, rituals, religious beliefs etc. This awareness and tolerance brings about some intensity and width of participation in social sciences.
- Even though tribals adopt some of the customs and rituals of the migrant caste population, acculturation does not lead to a loss of tribal identity. The tribals are able to retain their own caste norms on the tribals. The continuance of tribal structures, tribal practices, rituals and kinship terminology etc. in the fringe village is indicative of this situation.

Around mid 20th century, village studies came to be known as an important area of intellectual Concern of Anthropologist from their earlier studies on tribal or primitive communities. Most of the village studies were made in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and central India. The villages were selected on the basis of their being multi-caste village. In this village studies, hardly any scholar except Dr. D.N. Majumdar has made their village studies in tribal caste village. During this period, Majumdar undertook studies of a caste village, tribal village and tribal caste village, later being the “*CHHOR-KA EK GAON.*” This report is proposed to focus on the Professor Majumdar’s least known in fact almost unknown work “*CHHOR*” which is a tribe caste village study in Sonbhadra district of southern UP. It was carried out in village *Chitaura* near *Dudhi*- A Tehsil town of Sonbhadra district in the year 1995-97. Why such tribe caste village studies is called as “*CHHOR*”. It becomes important to know, it’s *Chhor* is synonymous with fringe and the term fringe connotes clearly certain features as like its geographical location because it is farthest border of UP and it shares its border with Palamu district of Jharkhand and Sarguja of Chhattisgarh, Bihar, MP. Until independence it was a partly excluded area under which the Government of India Act. 1935. There was a special kind of government “Zamindari”. In 1950, though the tribes in this area 13 in number were scheduled as scheduled caste not scheduled tribes, now they have attained the status of scheduled tribes in January, 2003. Thus it can be said that this area is on the fringe in almost every sense geographically as well as its ethnic composition of population.

Broadly speaking about “*CHHOR*” it is a rich ethnographic account of this mixed village as well as an evaluation of the impact of Community Development Programme. Mainly it is the study of the village life documenting the culture of tribes and old migrants. Hindu caste in this area, Acculturation, symbiotic living and social dynamics of village life as also the change envisaged and actually achieved by planned development programme.

As pointed out by Madan(2013;1983), Majumdar in his ethnographic studies dealt with contact of culture and the manner in which they change through such contacts of the culture at unequal level and then a comparative evaluation of health and development of such cultures.

Among Indian village studies, Majumdar’s ‘*Chhor*’ is more of a holistic village observing the dynamics of the relevant cultural traits of the tribes and caste and thus documenting the cultural change brought about by a process of a peaceful kind of interconnection. In this study, there has been taken up an examination of two concept advanced by M.N. Srinivas- Sanskritization and Dominant Caste. *CHHOR* however shows the process of Acculturation which is a two way traffic, both tribe and caste are influenced from each other. This gives to a pattern of community living in the fringe area with significant cultural implications. Dominant caste is another concept of ‘Majumdar’s *Chhor*’ is very critical of this concept because it has no validity in areas like Duddhi, where there was a specific kind of government called Zamindari existed.

So Majumdar had developed ‘*Chhor*’ as a concept for analyzing the integrated way of living, thinking, feeling or as a constellation of parts, such as material culture, occupation.

Thus *CHHOR* emerges as a very-important dimension of holistic village studies of the mid 20th century, taken up by Anthropologists. But at present this village study has been completely ignored by all the authors reviewing and commenting upon this. So it becomes necessary to restudy this Majumdar’s great work on village study and also to examine its role in modern days.

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