



Professional Changes Among the Barbers: A Study of Udupi Taluk

Manohara¹, Rajesh², Vishalakshi M³ and Ramprasad S⁴

¹Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Kukke Sri Subrahmanyeshwara College, Subrahmanya, Karnataka.

²Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Govt. First Grade College and Center for P. G studies Thenkanidiyur, Udupi, Karnataka

³Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Govt First Grade College, Uppinangady, Karnataka.

⁴Lecturer, Department of Sanskrit, Kukke Sri Subrahmanyeshwara College, Subrahmanya, Karnataka.

Abstract:

There is a need to identify the effects of modernization on barber community. This paper is undertaken to understand the professional changes among barbers' community and its impact on the traditional barber skilled community. Barber community people are engaged in traditional caste-based occupation. Due to the modernized pattern of skill and new trend in the society, now a days this occupation become professionalized and advanced in its method of performance. Occupation of barber replaced with professional skill, which provide an opportunity to all people those who have interest to continue this as their profession. This paper finds the challenges of barbers in the field of job market and problems related to skills. There is a need to provide the skill training and social security to the barber community.

Keywords: Barbers, Modernization, Professional Changes

1. Introduction:

Barber is one of the traditional caste-based occupation in India. This caste group is identified with their own community's name, which is differ from region to region. Barber occupation is completely depending on skills related to work. Due to the impact of modernization, there has been drastic changes in this occupation. Especially, technical skill-based work with advanced method of performance at present. It has become profession with advanced skills. Because of modernization, traditional barber community facing various subjected challenges on this occupation. Profession of barber may bring changes in improving the condition of people. But nowadays this occupation creates an opportunity to work for all people without any caste barrier. The barbering profession has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by evolving trends, modernization, and new approaches to hairstyling. Traditional barbers may face several challenges in adapting to these changes and preparing themselves for the modernized profession of barbering.

1.1 Meaning

A barber is one whose occupation is mainly to cut, dress, groom, style and shave men's and boy's hair. A barber's place of work is known as barbershop. Barbershops are also the places of social interactions and public forums. They are the locations of open debates, voicing public concerns and engaging citizens in discussion about contemporary issues.

1.2 Origin of the word barber

The word barber derived from the Latin word “barba” meaning beard. A barber is a professional who shaves, trims beards, and cuts all kinds of hair. They are significant community professionals who are owned, cared for, and supported by the community. Their line of work requires them to use tools like clamps and blades, among other things. Barbering is the practice of shaving, trimming beards, cutting hair, coloring hair, washing, conditioning or doing similar tasks on a person's hair, as well as massaging the face and scalp with oils, creams and lotions using one's hands or tools. Hairdressing is the practice of styling, dressing, arranging, bleaching, and waving in addition to barbering. Barbering is a very ancient profession, which is associated with the use of combs, towels, knives, blades etc.

1.3 Geographical Distribution of barber community

The barber community in Karnataka is commonly known as Savita Samaj. The Savita's are located throughout India. Large numbers are in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Each region has different name of Savita. They are called Raja in Panjab, Kuleen in Himachal Pradesh, Khawas in Rajasthan, Sainsamaj in Haryana. The diet of Savita usually consists of wheat, rice, lentil, maza and seasonal food. The literacy rate of Savita is low, many leave school due to poverty or lack of schools and colleges.

1.4 Barber community in Karnataka

Savita Samaj or Barber community is one of the backward castes in Karnataka. They are predominantly found in entire state of Karnataka. Most of the barbers are migrates from Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. In Karnataka, they are also called by different name like Nayanaja Kshatriya, Hajam, Hadpad, Nhavi, Nadig, Mangala, Chouriya, Navaliga, Napita, Bhandary, Bhajantry, Kavutian, Kelasi etc.

Hairdressers or Barbers provide a personalized hair design to their customers who cut style and color their client's hair. Workers employ a wide range of cutting, styling, coloring techniques and processes in order to achieve their client's desired hairstyle. Commonly, dangerous items and chemicals are used in this process, for instance, use of cutthroat razors in hair cutting and shaving, chemicals to color hair and to change the structure of hair. Therefore, the workers should be highly trained and skilled in employing the above items.

1.5 Social problems among barber community

In villages, Nayindas very less populated community. Other caste people always target them. They do not have any kind of power to face upper caste people. Due to the breakdown of joint families, barbers migrated from one place to another. Majority of them migrated from villages to city. This migration leads to so many problems

among them. Due to the migration, they are facing the housing problems in cities. In urban areas many upper castes people hesitate to invite the Nayindas to their home and don't want to take food, which is prepared by them. They are educationally too backward. Illiteracy is the major problem, which is pulling back them in the professional competition. They do not give much importance to the education. The boys are studying up to only primary level, because they give importance to learn their traditional occupation.

1.6 Major challenges of barber community

- Unskilled and unprofessional barber's inability to hire, retain skilled and professional,
- Inability to stay-up- to date with the latest trends
- Lack of constant power supply.
- Absent of state cosmetology or barbering license.
- Lack of customer retention techniques.
- Lack of modern equipment.

1.7 Social organization among barber community

Every community in India has its own method to regulate the relationships among its members to deal with disputes. Barbers have formed a community association of their own. This association is called Savita Samaj. This association is trying to mobilize the community members for political gain. According to Dravidian Encyclopedia (1993, 36.1) a council of elders presided by the headman Gurikara, regulates that affair of the community. The headman and his four of his assistants are entitled to receive complaints and one of them who receive the complaint convenes the meeting of the council in house. In case of difference of opinion among the members of the council, the majority decision is adhered to. This council settles all disputes arising in the community. For minor offences, they settle disputes arising out of property matters, petty quarrels, and divorce cases-imposed punishments, fines and social boycott. Now, the council's authority has diminished. The village panchayats have taken over the work according to the rules of the government in planning and implementing welfare and development measures. The community associations are active at taluk, district and state levels.

Kelasi's also constituted different type of caste council in South Canara district. A council of elders presided over by the headman; Gurikara regulates the affairs of the community. Moktesars assist the headman. The headman and four of his assistants are receiving the complaints and one of them who receives the complaint convinces the meeting of the council in some house. This council settles all disputes arising in the community. In case of difference of opinion among the members of the council, the majority decision is adhered to. This council settles all disputes arising in the community. For minor offences, compensation is the punishment, while in serious offences, heavy fines and even expulsions from the caste are restricted too (Dravidian encyclopedia vo.II:330).

The Universe and Sampling

Selected Barbers in Udupi Taluk and used simple random sampling method.

2. Objective of the Study

- To understand social and economic conditions of barbers.
- To know the barber's profession as important profession.
- To understand the changes in the profession.
- To know the challenges of the profession.

3. Motivation for the Study

Barber community is socio economically backward in various aspect of social life because they still dependent on traditional occupation skill called hairdressing. This occupation also identified as caste occupation in social view. Due to modernization small amount of development identified in barber community. Still facing several problems related to their occupation such as lack of skill, health problems, social position and challenges related to professional changes in occupation. This situation among barber community inspired me to study on their occupational changes and understand their problems.

4. Limitation of the study

- Though the investigator has been able to collect information and present in the report, there were some limitations he faced in due course.
- In a limited period, exhaustive research work could not be undertaken.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 5.1: Age

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 20-30 | 07 | 14% |
| 2 | 31-40 | 15 | 30% |
| 3 | 41-50 | 20 | 40% |
| 4 | 51 above | 08 | 16% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.2: Educational Status

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Illiterate | 06 | 12% |
| 2 | Primary | 29 | 58% |
| 3 | High School | 12 | 24% |
| 4 | Graduate | 03 | 06% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.3: Types of family

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Nuclear Family | 33 | 66% |
| 2 | Joint Family | 17 | 34% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.4: Housing Pattern

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Tiled | 29 | 58% |
| 2 | Sheet | 01 | 02% |
| 3 | RCC | 20 | 40% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.5: Opinion on caste-based occupation

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Traditional Occupation | 23 | 46% |
| 2 | Unemployment | 01 | 02% |
| 3 | Profitable | 26 | 52% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.6: Income of Respondent

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 500-1000 | 10 | 20% |
| 2 | 1001-1500 | 32 | 64% |
| 3 | 1501-2000 | 05 | 10% |
| 4 | 2001 above | 03 | 06% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.7: Year of Experience as a Barber

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 0-5 Year | 02 | 04% |
| 2 | 6-10 Year | 06 | 12% |
| 3 | 11-15 Year | 11 | 22% |
| 4 | 15 above | 31 | 62% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.8: Methods of Obtaining Barber Skills

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|---------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Training | 27 | 54% |
| 2 | Own Experience | 02 | 04% |
| 3 | Traditionally | 21 | 42% |
| | Total | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.9: Methods of Barber Skill

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Traditionally | 05 | 10% |
| 2 | Modern | 45 | 90% |
| | Total | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.10: Economic Conditions of Barber

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Poor | 00 | 00% |
| 2 | Lower Middle Income | 09 | 18% |
| 3 | Middle Income | 11 | 22% |
| 4 | Higher Middle Income | 27 | 54% |
| 5 | Rich | 03 | 06% |
| | Total | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.11: Changes in barber occupation

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Innovative Style of Hairdressing | 08 | 16% |
| 2 | Advance Technology | 12 | 24% |
| 3 | Infrastructure | 12 | 24% |
| 4 | Price of Hairdressing | 13 | 26% |
| 5 | Skilled Barbers | 05 | 10% |
| | Total | 50 | 100% |

Table 5.12: Reason for no caste bar in Barber Profession

| Sl. No. | Particulars | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Changes in caste based on profession | 05 | 10% |
| 2 | Modern Fashion (Parlors) | 13 | 26% |
| 3 | Anybody Can Learn Skill | 19 | 38% |
| 4 | Financial Support Start Business | 13 | 26% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Above table shows that among 50 respondents, 5 (10%) of them are professionally changed barber service because there is no caste bar in barber occupation, 13(26%) of them says that it will become fashion of modern society, 19 (38%) of them says anybody can learn without caste bar, and 13 (26%) of them says barber profession financially support family. The data shows that majority 38% of the respondents says barber skill become fashion in modern society and wider scope in this occupation.

6. Major Findings

- Majority of the respondents (40%) are between the age group of 41-50.
- Majority of the respondents (58%) are qualified primary education.
- Majority of the respondents (66%) are belonging to nuclear family.
- Majority of the respondents (58%) are living in tiled house.
- Majority of the respondents (52%) are opining that, changes in barber profession is profitable.
- Majority of the respondents (64%) are earning around 1001-1500.
- Majority of the respondents (62%) are having experience above 15 years in barber profession.
- Majority of the respondents (54%) obtained barber skill through training.
- Majority of the respondents (90%) are following modern methods of barber skills in occupation.
- Majority of the respondent's (82%) financial investment for the barbershop is 10000-15000.

7. Suggestions

- Need to provide training for barbers related to modern skills and trends.
- It is necessary to take developmental actions on barber community to improve socio-economic background.
- Government should provide financial assistance for barber community to support their occupation.
- Need to create awareness on removal of caste-based occupation view among the people.
- Need to provide subsidy for costly equipment.
- Government should provide certain kind of medical support for barber community.

8. Conclusion

Barber community is socio-economically backward in society. In this study, identified that traditional pattern of occupation leads to lower income, on the other hand due to professional changes in their occupation they face many challenges in society in order to sustain their profession. Modernization and advancement of technologies leads to professional changes among the community, because no one interested in traditional methods. There are two views of barber problems, one of that is accepting the changes in order to survive life; another one is financial investment, maintenance of shop and competition in providing good services to customers. Nowadays maintaining the barbershop is not easy. Government must take certain kind of development actions, so that barber community get some kind of help for improvement of their conditions. Government must focus development activity based on financial support and provide skill-training programmes.

References:

1. Evanston, III: Northwestern University Press, 1966.
2. Drum Magazine 1951-53, Gender and History Vol. 13, No.1 (April 2000)1-20.
3. Desai, Gaurav, *Subject to Colonialism: African Self- Fashioning and the Colonial Library* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).
4. Diawara, Manthia. *In search of Africa* (Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1998).

