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# Emerging Trends in Development Research

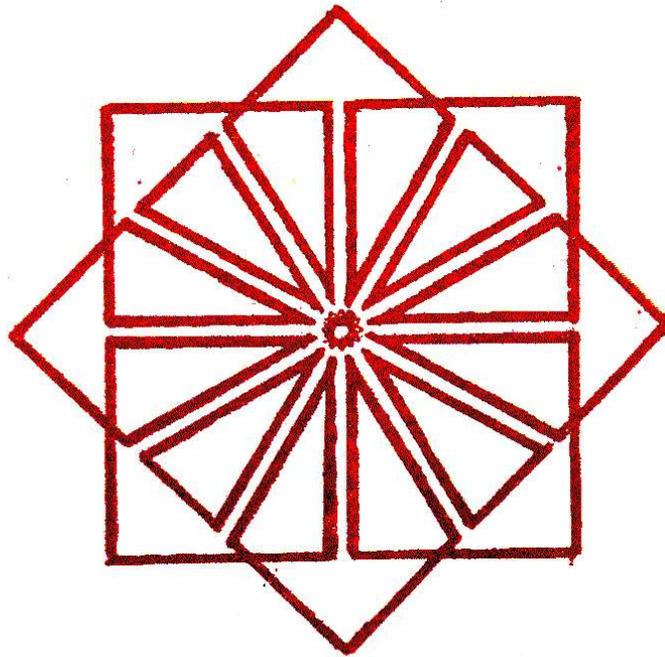
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# EMERGING TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

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## **Globalization, New Communication Technologies and Education among the Muslim Minorities in India**

**Virendra Pal Singh**

**Roopa Rani. T. S.**

Globalization in its present form is a process, which has implications not only for social and cultural institutions of developed countries but are also transforming the social fabric of developing societies like India. New communication technologies are facilitating the process of globalization and socio-cultural scenario is changing at a faster rate in these societies. Education is one of the institutions, which not only transmits the cultural heritage of a society but also intervenes in the process of social transformation. The new media technologies particularly Internet has brought significant changes in the field of education, both formal and informal. This new communication technology can be used in inducing the process of social change in India. The present paper explores the possibilities of the application of new communication technologies in promoting education of the entire population in general and Muslim minorities in particular, who have been lagging behind in the field of education.

At the most general level, globalization refers to a process of change, which affects all regions of the world in a variety of sectors including the economy, technology, politics, the media, culture and the environment. According to Held et al. (1999: 2) 'globalization may be thought initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual'. There is a general agreement among the scholars on the 'interconnectedness' dimension of the process of globalization. But they differ from each other on other dimensions of globalization. The commentators on globalization can be identified into three broad categories: hyperglobalisers, skeptics and transformationalists.

Hyperglobalizers believe that globalization represents a new epoch in human history, in which all types of relationships are becoming integrated at the global level, transcending the nation states

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and making it increasingly irrelevant. Ever-increasing cross-border flow of capital, commodities, people and ideas are a defining factor of the new age. Hyperglobalisers can be further divided into two sub-categories: *positive* hypoglobalizers, mainly those who advocate for open, global markets and believe that these will guarantee optimal economic growth and will, in long run, bring about improved living standards for everyone (Ohmae 1991,1995); and *negative* hypoglobalisers, mainly critical theorists and neo-marxist scholars (Martin and Schumann 1997, Reich,1991, Beck 1997, Schnapper 1994, Wiseman 1997, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1996), focused upon negative impacts of globalization in a critical manner and rejected the notion of globalisation in its totality.

The skeptics who also focus on economic aspects of globalisation argue that there is nothing new about this international economic integration. It is comparable to the period preceding to First World War. They generally prefer the term 'internationalisation' to globalisation (Hirst and Thompson 1996, Weiss 1997). They also argue that the role of the nation-state remain as strong as ever.

Transformationalists, however argue that globalisation is the central driving force behind the major economic, cultural, social and political changes that are affecting virtually all the world's people today. Globalisation is seen as the overall consequences of closely inter-linked processes of change in the areas of technology, economic activity, governance, communication and so on. Developments in all these areas are mutually reinforcing or *reflexive*, so that no clear distinction can be drawn between cause and effect. Transformationalists regard contemporary patterns of cross-border flows (of trade, investment, migrants, cultural artifacts, environmental factors, etc.) as without historical precedent. Such flows integrate virtually all countries into a larger global system, and thus bring about major social transformations at all levels. Thus, the process of globalization is not confined to economic and political concerns of these societies. Its impact can also be observed in the field of mass media communication and other social and cultural institutions of the society.

New communication technologies such as satellites, cable television, wireless telephony, the Internet and computers are bringing about noticeable changes in Indian society. *Communication technology* includes the hardware equipment, organizational structures and social values by which individuals collect, process and exchange information (Singhal and Rogers 2001: 31). The new communication technologies have certain characteristics that are similar in some respects to those of both interpersonal and mass media communication, but that are different in many other respects. Interpersonal communication consists of face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals. The message flow is from one to a few individuals, feedback is immediate and usually plentiful and the messages are often relatively high in socio-emotional content. In contrast mass media communication includes all those means of transmitting messages that enable a source of one or a few individuals to reach a large audience. Some type of hardware equipment is always involved in mass communication, feedback is limited and delayed, and the messages are often relatively low in socio-emotional content. The *new media* integrates the characteristics of both interpersonal and mass communication. Communication that occurs through these media often links two individuals or a small number of people. In this sense, the new media are like interpersonal communication, in

that the messages are targeted to specific individuals (de-massification). But interactive communication through the new media is somewhat like mass media communication in that hardware equipment is necessarily involved. Information exchange via the new media is *interactive*, meaning that the participants in a communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in, their mutual discourse (Singhal and Rogers 2001: 31; Mc Quail 2000 : 128).

Interactive technologies of communication are at the heart of the communication revolution that is occurring in India. The computer and its various application in satellite and cable television, telecommunications and the Internet are the main driving force of communication revolution taking place in India.

These interactive communication technologies are transforming the educational institutions in a significant manner. The present paper examines the impact of globalization and new communication technologies on education in India.

Education is an important measure in the process of development. Education raises the level of consciousness by bringing change in the personality and attitude of a person and sensitizing individuals to the larger social needs and issues, namely, status of women, religion, politics, and general awareness. Educationists, for imparting education to the people in the distant and remote corners of the country were using different communication technologies, which provided a wide range of media to choose from: print media, audio-visual aids, radio, television, broadcasting and telecasting, teleconference, satellite communication, fax, telephone, teaching-mail etc., besides face to face interactive programmes like personal contact programme and week-end programmes for instructional delivery and effective two-way communication to the distance learners. But these programmes were, however, less interactive. The advent of computer and Internet has opened up new avenues of interactivity among any set of individuals from any part of the world, at any point of time. Computers and the Internet can break barriers of geography, which have existed since time immemorial. Computers and Internet as a new form of educational technology is undergoing a rapid expansion and it offers an interactive and user-friendly approach in imparting information to the learners. It increases the interest of the user in addition to providing consistency, privacy, and reduced learning. Multi-media technologies can be of multiple uses both in the formal and non-formal settings. It can not only motivate the students and increase their interest in their learning process in formal educational set-up but also can be of great use in providing e-services in remote rural and urban setting. It offers an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching and students' learning experiences, greater opportunity to learners for revision, in-depth thinking and integration. Computer and Internet can also be effectively used to promote education at various levels - *primary*, *secondary* and *higher*, not only among the general population but it can also be effectively used for reducing further marginalisation of the disadvantaged social groups of Indian society with appropriate interventions.

The most important characteristic of the Internet is that it has blurred the notion of time and space, in the sense that the communication through Internet can take place in a fraction of a second connecting two or more people at the same time from any corner of the world, which has

important implications for social processes both for the developed and developing societies. In case of the developing societies, globalisation and privatisation may marginalize some sections of the societies such as SCs, STs, women, rural population and minority groups like the Muslims. Therefore, some specific measures are required to protect the interests of these social groups.

One of such measures is the application of new communication technologies such as internet, computer and mobile phone at the mass level both in the rural and the urban areas of India. By empowering people with access to computing and the Internet, we can create a bottom-up revolution across India. These connected computers themselves will not work wonders, but they will open up people, especially the young, to new ideas and new worlds. They will make people learn new skills, which could be harnessed in a myriad of different areas. For example, farmers could use the connected computers to get commodity prices faster, or get information on new agricultural techniques. The youth would get details on job opportunities across the state. The district administration could get details of problems in near real-time. The eligible could search for matrimonial matches across adjacent villages and towns. The voters would communicate their concerns to the politicians and bureaucrats electronically. The village officials could share governance best practices faster among their counterparts elsewhere.

Many of these and other activities could doubtlessly be performed without computers. But there is a pain in those processes. That is where technology can make a difference. Computers have been the disruptive innovation of the past two decades. And yet, they have barely made a difference to the lives of people in most of the developing societies of the world. But now, the time has come to take computers and allied technologies to every town and every village of the world. Only through such a mass-scale deployment can we create a platform on which can be layered other programmes whose power can now be amplified dramatically. From primary education to adult literacy, from providing a two-way flow of information to enabling transactions, from increasing governance transparency to reducing corruption, from jobs to marriages, computers can indeed be the boon for the contemporary societies. *But by themselves, computers will do little.* There is a need of major applications to make a difference, especially *changes in government's processes.* By making computing available to every citizen, they will force a seismic change through the lines of governance. They will become the platform, which can be built upon to layer a whole range of different services.

India can become one of the first markets to try out a set of new ideas as Indians have the requisite technology skills to put together the solutions. This can also help in bridging the possible digital divide (among the rural and the urban, the advantaged and the disadvantaged, the majorities and the minorities) to be created by the new communication technologies along with the forces of globalization and privatization. So far, much of India's IT industry has focused outward – making India as a destination for outsourced services. We should also now be looking inwards, and suggest working ideas for the development of the villages and the disadvantaged groups. Some initiatives in this direction have already been taken by some governmental and non-governmental organizations

in the form of pilot projects for the development of the villages, throughout the world as well as in India.

Bridging the digital divide through technology has been the focus of many initiatives worldwide. Madanmohan Rao (2003), provides a summary of various such projects in his report on the IT Summit 2002 held in Nepal:

***Examples from other countries include:***

- *FarmNet* (for agricultural workers in Uganda).
- *Nabweru and Buwama telecentres* (for economic empowerment of women in Uganda).
- *Rural Multipurpose Community Telecentres* (libraries and online centres in Benin, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda).
- *MahilaWeb* (for information sharing about women and gender in Nepal).
- *Pakissan* (for farmers in Pakistan).
- *PeopLink* (artisans portal for 22 developing countries).
- *Tortas* (e-commerce portal for homemade cakes made by Peruvian women).
- *Bankilare* (a community network in Niger).
- *Across Borders* (connecting Palestinians in refuge camps).
- *MarketWatch* (price information service in Mongolia).
- *NairobiBits* (Web services centre for slum children in Kenya).
- *Street Children Telecentre* (for IT skills in Ecuador).
- *Mountain Forum* (for knowledge sharing on mountainous region communities in over 100 countries on topics like renewable energy, agro-industry, potato research).
- *Virtual Souk* (for underprivileged artisans in the Middle East and North Africa).
- *Multipurpose Community Telecentres* (in four farming and fishing villages of northern Mindanano in the Philippines).
- *GrameenPhone* (in Bangladesh).
- *HealthInfo* (for IT among health workers in Ethiopia).
- *Village Leap* (for selling scarves made by Cambodian women).
- *Metrocomia* (outsourced Web services centres in about a dozen countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia).
- *Communications Boat Project* (to bring IT tools via boats to Amazonian communities).
- Malaysia has come up with a number of “demonstration applications” such as Project Cybercare for providing Internet access and educational resources among 26 networked orphanages and a telecentre called *e-Bario* has also been set up for the Kelabit ethnic community in rural Sarawak.

***Examples in India include:***

- **TaraHaat** (for e-marketing in rural areas).
- **AkashGanga** (for dairy cooperatives in Gujarat).
- **Warna Wired Village Project** (for sugarcane farmers in Maharashtra).

- **HoneyBee Network** (documenting grassroots innovations for knowledge on sustainable natural resource management).
- **Gyandoot** (community centre network in rural Madhya Pradesh).
- The **National Informatics Centre** is proposing a “Rural Studio” initiative for developing reusable software components and services for the rural development sector, and IndianVolunteers.org networks volunteers interested in such initiatives.
- Kerala is rolling out an “**e-governance grid**” via a network of information kiosks providing sales tax forms, income certificates, domicile certificates, ration card forms, and company registration.
- **Bhoomi** is project launched by the Government of Karnataka to create a service to computerize land records and make them available to the people at a nominal fee of Rs.15.
- The Andhra Pradesh Government has launched ‘**eSeva**’ with the aim providing “One-stop non-stop service” to the citizens offering a wide spectrum of services ranging from Payment of Utilities Bills, Certificates, Permits / Licences, Transport Department Services to Reservation, Passport Applications and Downloading of Forms.
- ‘**Information Village**’ project set up by the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, in Pondicherry for the purpose of providing information for the rural people on prices of agricultural inputs (such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides), and outputs (rice, vegetables), markets (potential for export), entitlement (the multitude of the schemes of the central and the state governments, banks), health care (availability of doctors and paramedics in nearby hospitals, women’s diseases), cattle diseases, transport (road conditions, cancellation of bus trips), weather (appropriate time for sowing, areas of abundant fish catch, wave heights in the sea), etc.
- **Drishtee** - an organizational platform for developing IT enabled services to rural and semi-urban populations through the usage of state-of-the-art software, which enables include access to government programs and benefits, market related information, and private information exchanges and transactions. This builds upon the Gyandoot project of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Project ‘e-Chaupal**’, setup by the ITC across the agricultural belt in India to offer the farmers all the information, products and services they need to enhance farm productivity, improve farm-gate price realisation and cut transaction costs. They can also access latest local and global information on weather, scientific farming practices as well as market prices at the village itself through this web portal - all in Hindi. Choupal also facilitates supply of high quality farm inputs as well as purchase of commodities at their doorstep.
- **Warana Wired Village** was conceived as a pilot project to bring benefits of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to rural India. Warana is a cluster of seventy villages, forty-six from Kolhapur and twenty-four from Sangli district, in the Western State of Maharashtra, India. There are several cooperative societies actively working in Warana complex like Sugar Cooperative, Dairy Development Society, Cooperative Bank, Women’s Cooperative Society, Super Market, Educational Institutions, etc. Sugarcane is the major

crop of this area and most of its production in Kolhapur and Sangli districts is processed at the Warana Sugar Co-operative factory. Each village has about 200-300 farmers registered as members of various cooperative societies.” (More, from a discussion paper by DP Bobde, A Deb, RR Rane.)

- **Media Lab Asia:** MLA, a joint initiative of MIT Media Lab and the Indian Government, is doing a number of projects in the areas of World Computer with a goal to create a sustainable digital ecology that maintains traditional values and community while opening economic and expressive opportunities.
- **Sustainable Access for Rural India:** SARI is a project in the villages of Madurai district in Tamil Nadu to offer voice and Internet services that aims at identifying and providing appropriate access technologies and applications that will be of use to the local community. Possible applications are school education, farmers’ commodity market information, e governance, local commerce, etc.
- **FRIENDS and Akshaya:** Kerala’s FRIENDS (Fast Reliable Instant Efficient Network for Disbursement of Services) centres accept all utility bills, taxes and fees pertaining to the participating departments and offer quality services to the citizens.
- **Mahiti Shakti Kendras:** Started in the Panchmahals district of Gujarat, the Mahiti Shakti Kendras became a single-window clearance for forms and other information that people in small towns and villages may require. Information pertaining to ongoing schemes like those under the District Rural Development Agency and District Planning Board have also been made available.
- **Setu:** An initiative by the Maharashtra government for setting up citizen facilitation centres across the state is Setu with an aim to create foundation for citizen centric e-governance, at district headquarters and subsequently at taluka headquarters by offering single window clearance of 83 important certificates, quick redressal of public grievances, common registry of letters, petitions for all sections of the office.
- **Akashganga** based in Gujarat with the objective to spread information technology among rural masses among identified milk cooperative society beginning with computer and software in regional language, weighing scale, card reader & instrument to integrate the full process. Also developed was an accounting system (Rojmel) to automate and integrate their accounting function in the system.
- **Sristi** (Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Innovations) a non-governmental organisation setup to strengthen the creativity of grassroots inventors, innovators and ecopreneurs engaged in conserving biodiversity and developing eco-friendly solutions to local problems.

When we take a look at Indian projects, some of them have been major successes. However, they are all pilot projects, almost all meant for the rural population. Major interventions have to be taken to draw up large-scale projects, so that not only all the 6 lakhs villages of India are connected together and provided with the benefits of the e-networking, but also other marginalized sections

of the societies such as SCs, STs, women, and minority groups like the Muslims are uplifted. However, one can gain insights to achieve this, from the successful pilot projects.

### ***New Communication Technologies in Promoting Education among Muslim Minorities***

The educational level of an individual has a direct relationship with his or her socio-economic background. It is evident from a number of studies that those having high socio-economic background have better chances of getting educated in comparison to those from low socio-economic level. This is one of the reasons of heavy dropout rates at primary and secondary levels of education and most of the dropouts are from disadvantaged groups. As globalisation and privatisation leads to a capitalist mode of production, the class inequality will also increase. Therefore, there may be chances of more and more dropouts in near future as the education in capitalist oriented societies might become more expensive. Under such circumstances, appropriate interventions both by the state agencies as well as by Non- Government Organizations (NGOs) are required to promote education, right from the grass-root level (primary level). Some steps in this direction has already been taken by Indian government in the form of universal and compulsory educational programmes like 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' etc. Internet technology can be used for achieving the afore-said aim of primary education more effectively.

In India there are 180 million Muslims constituting about 16 per cent of total population. Out of which nearly 80% are uneducated and almost 75% live in abject poverty. Roughly speaking, around 70 % of the Muslim population resides in the rural areas while the remaining 30% inhabit the urban areas. Thus, they constitute a large segment of those Indians who continue to suffer due to lack of proper education. This state of theirs, is due the apathy showed to all the modern positive changes, which opened up new vistas of growth since independence. Comparatively speaking, while other communities took the lead in acquiring modern education, entering new professions, and started progressing, Muslims lagged behind, mainly due to their revivalist tendencies in the early part of 20th century, as they emphasized only on the importance of religious studies and failed to comprehend the importance of modern secular education, thereby ignoring it. Moreover, modern (read Western) education was then perceived as a threat to Islamic values and therefore, they preferred sending their children to *madrasah* for *dini talim* (religious education) instead. Muslims took to modern education as late as the 1970s (Ahmed [www.manipuronline.com](http://www.manipuronline.com)), and not very seriously with low enrolment in schools and heavy dropout rates.

One discernible trend is that Muslim students enrolment is relatively better till the high school level, thanks to the government's policy of free primary education (not necessarily for its quality), but the gap between the Muslims and other communities become wider and more pronounced when we move upwards i.e., from the lower to the higher levels of education. Over this, the drop-out rate, which implies leaving the school or college mid-way before attaining the requisite level, among the Muslim students is significantly higher than other communities with the result that the number of Muslim students as a percentage of the total keeps on declining as the level of education goes up. The highest drop-out takes place at the middle level, i.e. class X, class XII, and graduation. In the rural areas, Muslim students do not even reach beyond the stage of

vernacular literacy and sadly, they often suffer from reverted relapsed illiteracy. In some states the condition of Muslims is so pathetic that literacy level is on an average 10 per cent less than the national level: in states like Bihar illiteracy level is as high as 98.1 per cent in rural areas compared to 21.8 per cent in Kerala. In J&K, the percentages of illiteracy among Muslims in rural and urban areas are 86.9 per cent and 43.2 per cent respectively. The ninth Plan document itself concedes that the Muslims, their women and girls included, remain educationally backward and their traditional institutions like 'madarasas' are yet to adopt the modern syllabus to get integrated into the mainstream education (Hasan, 2001).

One of the common explanations endorsed by one and all on the educational backwardness of Muslims in general is that Islam is trapped in a 'time warp', i.e. insusceptible to change, hence against modern education. This is a gross misconception, which need to be dispelled. Islam never impaired the educational advancement (Ahmed [www.manipuronline.com](http://www.manipuronline.com)). Rather than religious, the educational backwardness of the Muslims can be explained from the way they perceive modern education and the socio-economic condition in which they find themselves. Muslims in the past failed to comprehend the scope and meaning of education. To the lowest strata of Muslim society, education did not seem to serve their functional needs and hence is not prioritized. One of the most important impediment, but generally underscored, in the Muslims' educational progress is their socio-economic condition. It becomes pertinent to analyze succinctly the socio-economic condition of the Muslims. Their socio-economic setting is strikingly rural based who subsist in age-old agro-oriented and artisanal pursuits. One does not find much change in the Muslims' economic structure even after independence. Agriculture, sedentary and subsistence, is the mainstay of almost 80 percent of the Muslims. To supplement their income they also engage in varied allied activities like animal husbandry, fishing, plantation farming, and handicraft activities. Over the years, agriculture-which accounts for the largest sector of Muslim employment has not been able to adjust to the increasing population. All these and more, the educational infrastructure, especially private, in Muslim dominated areas is quite weak compared to others. And the few have low quality of education as shown by indicators such as students-teachers ratio, educational qualification of the teacher, and their efficiency and the general facilities available at the institutions like library, laboratory, and sports facilities.

Bringing education to their doorsteps is a major challenge for the educationists in India. The major barriers to lack of access and equity, identified in the context of Indian Muslims are poverty, class, gender etc. that raise questions regarding equality, space and diversity. The question of providing social opportunity and public policy needs are to be answered first, keeping in view the poor economic development of the community. Lack of basic education, social vulnerability, poor gender relations, population, and poor health care - all of these have contributed in keeping the community backward.

Ahmed ([www.manipuronline.com](http://www.manipuronline.com)) suggests some points to be considered for the development of Muslims such as, (a) To survey and prepare research reports on the educational and economic conditions of Muslims and appraise and impress upon the state authority about the

gravity of the situation. (b) To conduct seminars, workshops, symposia for training, exchange, and communication of ideas. (c) To persuade well-to-do families and voluntary organizations to adopt schoolgirls and contribute in cash or kind for their education. (d) The state *Wakf* Board should play a more active role by keeping education on their priority list. This newly constituted apolitical body has socio-economic development schemes for the Muslims. It has started taking some initiative in the educational sphere by giving scholarships and other incentives but, it fails to earmark enough money as the Board suffers from financial crunch. (e) Muslim organizations should also play a key role in making the Muslims realize that modern education is linked or rather the panacea for the overall economic development and individual prosperity. (f) As we are well aware that general education has not been able to meet the growing demands of the modern economic development, so emphasis should also be given to vocational education to meet the skilled and middle level manpower needs of the growing sectors of the state economy. (g) To launch HIV/AIDS awareness camps through IEC (Information, Education and Communication) programs. Muslims have so far not done anything in this regard. Seeing the growing morbidity and mortality rate among the Muslim youths, it is imperative to take up steps on war footing to control and contain HIV/AIDS and drug abuse problems. (h) Last but not least, the state government needs to develop data to monitor the progress of Muslim participation in education, scholarships, jobs, bank loans, and anti-poverty programs, as their emancipation becomes a key step in the overall development of the state.

The analysis shows the real magnitude of work that needs to be done in order to uplift the Muslims from the mire of ignorance. They can progress and play a constructive role and defend their rights only if they strive to improve their educational status. When this is the situation, making Muslims e-educated is a much bigger challenge to the country.

#### *'e-education' of Muslims*

Only by unlocking the gates of access and equity can the dream of universal education in India be materialized. The barriers to access and equity faced by Muslim Indians require a better understanding if at all any strategy formulated to educate them is to be a success. So, due attention must be paid to the various barriers specifically highlighted in the context of access and equity in relation to Indian Muslims. An holistic approach must be adopted to widen the access of the Indian Muslims to education and development. Training and capacity building of the community must be given top priority if at all we are to succeed in removing barriers to access and equity. Cooperation of the public at large must be sought for the above.

The chasm that exists between the technology *haves* and as technology *have-nots* has been termed the digital divide by many social scientists. The digital divide refers to the differential access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (Khan, 2000). With the advent of computer and electronic media, the communication revolution is fast changing the nature of work and education style and the trend is towards Open Education System. The computer literacy movement, that the world is witnessing, is required to be extended to rural people. As the majority (about 70 per cent) of our population is still living in rural areas and majority of the Muslim

minorities are congregated either in rural areas or sub-urban areas, it is a challenge for the governmental and the non-governmental organisations to provide access to reach the people and places hither to unreached. Although printed material is still the most popular and flexible medium of instruction, new technologies such as teleconferencing and computer interactivity, will obviously play a key role in open education system. In the present environment of fast growing Information Technology, many learners will use the Internet to interact with their tutors by e-mail, study materials can be arranged on CD-ROM or the World Wide Web (www). Hence, there is a need or challenge on the part of the society to fully exploit the computer network with Internet facilities to offer online programmes and to bridge the digital divide between the majorities and the minorities like the Muslims.

Bridging the digital divide in the field of education is a challenge for the society, which can be undertaken both by the governmental and non-governmental organisations as the immediate task to provide digital opportunities to its learners by establishing computer net work connecting a main headquarters with all the blocks and the villages of a particular region with internet and telephone connections. When the disparity in the availability, access and use of communication technology facilities is removed, then large sections of people will have access to the communication network. Some organisations have started taking initiative in this direction and insights can be taken from them in order to remove the rural-urban disparity as well as the majority-minority disparity, in the field of education as well.

There are several projects centred around Education. These include:

- **Headstart:** It is a project in Madhya Pradesh to provide “computer-enabled education and development of basic computer skills for all students in Primary Schools and Middle Schools through the 7000 Jan Shiksha Kendras (cluster resource centres) located in Middle School premises in 48 districts. It will equip every Jan Shiksha Kendra in the state with computer hardware and multimedia software. It repositions the JSK as a media unit capable of providing computer-aided education for the children of the middle school in which the JSK is located and familiarization to computers to all children in primary schools through simple demos and games to excite their imagination. So far, about 2,700 Headstart centres have been set up.
- **AP Schools:** In 2002, the Andhra Pradesh government contracted with NIIT for setting up 663 modern computer classrooms with over 8,000 computers and implementation of computer education in high schools to educate over 300,000 students. The five-year project was worth Rs 155 crore, averaging Rs 90 per student per month.
- **Vidya Vahini:** The Indian government has launched a project called Vidya Vahini to provide for IT and IT-enabled education in 60,000 schools in India over three years (India has about 1.1 million schools), as part of a Rs 6,000 crore project. A pilot covering 150 schools is currently underway. Each of the schools would be provided with a computer lab. The computer lab will also be equipped with Internet, Intranet and television to facilitate video-conferencing, Web-broadcasting and e-learning.

· **Community Learning Centres (CLC):** CLCs are being set up by the Azim Premji Foundation in rural Karnataka, with the objectives of attracting children to schools, creating excitement in and around the school, Simplifying difficult concepts, thereby making learning exciting and fundamentals strong and building a Sound foundation to IT literacy. A CLC has about 6-8 computers in a Government Higher Primary School, used by children of that school during school hours for learning curriculum through interactive games and exercises. They are used by the community before or after school hours and during holidays. So far, about 90 CLCs have been set up.

*(Source: Jain, 2003)*

These are some of the successful small-scale educational projects concentrated on the general population as a whole. Just a couple of projects have come up till date, which are working directly for the e-education of and providing e-facilities for the Muslims like the Akshaya project in Kerala, which is already discussed above.

### ***Some suggestive measures***

For effective functioning of the e-system, Regional Centers can be established at various places that should be made functional and strengthened with various digital facilities. Professional Training can be provided to some selected people as trainers, on Internet based e-teaching and e-learning, Thus, providing e-literacy to the minorities on one hand and also providing employment to a number of people, on the other.

Today Internet based e-learning is the fastest growing segment (Rastogi, 1998). With trained “software tutors” at hand, we can re-engineer its organizational structure and plan to create a culture of continuous web-based and live distance e-teaching and e-learning that accelerates the access to open education, especially to the minorities.

In Open Education System, it is easier to transmit knowledge to the people in remote areas by organising “Mobile Study Centre” along with a “Mobile Computer Laboratory”, rather than transport people to the place of knowledge. Further, the community access points, like Community Halls, Public Libraries, Public Gardens, Grama Panchayats, etc. are the ideal places to make technology services accessible to the rural and disadvantaged people. Thus providing e-education to all, providing access to the world of knowledge to all and also providing e-education to the neglected minorities at their doorsteps.

All these have to be done at the village level, if the intention is to uplift the Muslim population as nearly 70% of the Muslim population resides in the villages, as said earlier. So it is very important to link up rural development with minority development for the betterment of the all the groups.

According to Jain (2003), “ today, the village is singularly isolated. It is not part of a larger community. Its interaction with the external world is quite limited. In a sense, it is an idyllic world, unspoilt by modernity. Yes, villages can now watch TV, talk on phones, and get newspapers and magazines. But by and large, the village voice is silent, except when it comes to the ballot box.

What is needed is an interactive solution, with the villagers having a say in what they do and how they grow”.

What is needed is for the village and its people to have greater access to new opportunities. Even as the nation moves ahead, the village for the most part has remained an island of its own. This is what has to change. The village needs to become a self-sustaining unit, and at the same time integrated with the rest of the ecosystem. The underlying idea is to use the solution to put more power and responsibility into the hands of the local community at the village, by providing them with the right technology and information they need to make decisions.

There are three key ideas in using technology to transform Rural India. First, set up a TeleInfoCentre in every village. Next, network these TeleInfoCentres to create a Village InfoGrid to ensure a peer-to-peer communication network between villages. Finally, computerise key government operations in an eGovernance initiative, starting with those that can have the greatest impact for the villagers and for the minorities like the Muslims.

Lets start-off with this vision in mind and lets see how far this would be successful in promoting equality of education and access, thus breaking the barriers for an undivided (without any sorts of disparities) India and thus uplifting the so-called ‘downtrodden’, making this term sound useless. Lets make India, ‘Shining India’, in the real terms, curbing the ill-effects of globalization and privatisation, making efficient use of the New Communication Technologies to improve the Education and thereby lifting-up the status of the Muslim Minorities in India. However, to make the e-revolution very successful in the case of Muslims, full scale developmental actions and interventions as suggested by many Ahmed (2003) have to be implemented both by the governmental and non-governmental organizations successfully. This has to be combined with the inspirational actions for the *e-revolution*.

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## **Education, Occupation and Communication : A Study of Social Change in a Fishing Community of South Gujarat**

**Parvez A. Abbasi**

Education is an institution by which society transmits cultural traits and socializes its members for differential social roles. The upcoming generations of the society are trained to participate in various social and economic activities. Education is a means to determine the occupation of an individual and also promotes to adopt new technological means related to various aspects of life. Durkheim (1956:71) looked education as the action exercised by the preceding generations upon those who are yet not ready for social life. Its objective is awaking and developing physical, moral and intellectual statuses among the children. This action takes place in every society but its forms and contents differ with respect to its diversity and complexity. Hence, the stages of social development and change in a given society determine the nature of education.

In modern society education seems to be an important condition for obtaining membership of an occupational milieu. And its exposure provides a situation where rationalization of an idea crystallizes in different aspects of life. Education and diversifications in occupation through market mechanism and communication are viewed by the Dhanagre (2003 : 20-21) as key factors for economic growth.

In developing societies most people have faith in education as a means of upward mobility. It is this faith that seems largely contributing for the phenomenal growth in education. And to promote education, different loan programmes have been established to assist those who could not afford the higher education. That's why poverty removal programmes have been focused on training and educating the poor to help them rise out of economic disabilities. Underlying all these steps is the assumption that education leads to upward mobility and diversification of occupations.

Earlier, a considerable number of sociologists supported this view. Blau and Dancan (1967), argued that if the children from the large families could get as much education as children from small families, their existing occupational disadvantage would massively disappear. The assertion among the sociologists that education leads to upward mobility was so widespread that the presidential address of the annual meeting of American Sociological Association in 1971 stressed much on political action to increase opportunities for underprivileged to acquire education, so that they too might become upwardly mobile. But this has been questioned by Collins (1979) as he argued that increasing educational opportunities for underprivileged create a situation where they are encouraged to spend more money on education but after completing, they do not have an

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additional earning ability. Thus, the increased education is not necessary condition to better occupation. However, factors other than occupation have greater influence on what occupation people opt and what they earn.

In the present study, an effort is made to understand interrelationship between education and use of communication technology on the diversification of occupation in the context of change in a traditional bound society of south Gujarat region. The study has been conducted in two villages of Umargam Taluka of Valsad district situated in the region of South Gujarat. Earlier the district of Valsad consisted of eight Talukas namely. Navsari, Chikhali, Vasada, Valsad, Dharampur, Pardi, Umargam and Gandevi. But recently the district has been bifurcated into two districts by creating Navsari as a new district. Hence, currently, there are only four Talukas in the district of Valsad which includes Valsad, Dharampur, Pardi and Umargam.

### **Umargam Taluka**

Total area of Taluka is about 362 square kilometers which includes 58 villages having their 51 village Panchayats. The Taluka headquarter is well connected with rail and road as western railway passes through of its Mumbai – Delhi route. It is also linked with national highway of Mumbai – Ahmedabad. The Umargam is a coastal town of Arabian sea. Two villages which have been studied are integral parts of the Taluka.

The Umargam Taluka upto 1956 was the integral part of Bombay under the district of Thane. But when the state of Gujarat on 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1960 was formed as a separate state, the taluka came under the Gujarat State. The Machhi community was given the status of scheduled caste when the taluka was the part of Bombay. But till 1985 they had not been given the status of reservation. When the Baxi commission was implemented, they came under the backward category. Most of the parts of Taluka forms island. The people of community are hard working and risk taking but they do not work in the field, their hard working activities are restricted in the sea, that's why they are commonly known as Dariya Kheduto (sea peasants). They are emotionally and religiously attached with Dariya and their deity also lives in the sea which is known as 'Darya Peer'. They worship 'Darya Peer' and offer coconut and flowers before commencing any auspicious activities. Even before proceeding for fishing they take the blessing of the Peer for their safe return and for much quantity of fish during the fishing chorus. The moment when husbands start for fishing, the wives put their Mangalsutra to the Daryapeer till the safe return. According to this practice the lives of the husbands are given in the safe custody to the 'Peer'. The change which has been occurring in this generation old practice has the bearing with the technological usages. The fishing community is divided into four endogamous groups. They claim that they are the decedents of Rajput Varna and originally belong to Saurashtra region of Gujarat. When Mahmood of Ghazani attacked repeatedly during 772 AD at Somnath, they were demoralized and took shelter in the dense forest of south Gujarat. As they were from the higher order of the Varna hierarchy. They did not use the forest animal as their food stuff. Only they used forest wood in preparing the boats. As they looked upon the sea animals as their food stuff, hence, they started with sailing boats and catching fish as their means of livelihood.

### **Khattalwad Village**

The dominant group of the village consists of two endogamous groups of fishing community namely Mittana and Godhara. Both groups are locally known as Machhi. Total number of households of the village in 1830. Of which about 678 houses belong to Machhi. And rest of them belongs to Kamada, Valjara, Dubla, Mahavansi and Gohil. All of them belong to tribal community except two Mahavansi and Gohil. The Mahavansi is a schedule caste while Gohil hells from Kshatriya Varna. A door to door census counts the total population of the village 6697. Most of the land of the village is covered under reserved forest. Agriculture products and operations are less hence in the village there are three fair price shops supplying essential commodities to the villagers particularly, grains, sugar, salt and kerosene oil.

On educational front, there are four primary schools and one intermediate school. One library cum reading room renders its services to the students. Dena bank opened its branch in the village to provide banking facilities in the village. Postal services are also available by its sub - post office unit of Post and Telegraph Department. Health services are being provided by a primary health centre. The industrial scenario of the village is reflected by a small scale industry of spectacle frame manufacturing unit and a handloom unit. There are seven saw mills promoting wood work in the village. There is a well developed market which provides sell and purchase of essential commodities. The fish market is the focal point of economic activities in the village where fish are sold by the Machhi community.

#### **Nagrol Village :**

A door to door census records about 7697 persons in the village which form 2124 houses. Of which 981 belongs to the Machhi community. And remaining houses belong to Baria, Bhandari, Dubla and Varli. All are the tribals. Only a few houses belong to Parsi community. There are three fair price shops. Banking and postal facilities are also available in the village. A sport club provides training of various sport activities to the children of the village as well as a zymkhana is also working in the village. There are three primary, two intermediate (one for English and another for Gujarati medium) schools. To encourage art, one Lady Tata Technical Institute, One Fine Art college and drawing college are functioning in the village. There is a well developed marketing centre where essential commodities as well as fish are sold and purchased. Telecom exchange and bus depot. (state transport) facilities are also available in the village.

Samples were drawn from four endogamous groups of Machhi community, namely : Naliya, Mittana, Godhara and Mangela. And at all levels, one cluster each of group was taken for the field study. Outward approach (Mayer, 1960) was followed as significant controlling pattern of occupational similarities and differences affecting the group and this was interrogated in depth. The design covered 100 families amongst 25 from each endogamous group. However, quantitative data were collected through unstructured interview while qualitative information was gathered by undertaking observations.

The data regarding the level of education among the Naliya Caste (see table 1) indicate that out of 222 individuals of 25 studied families a bit less than half (98) had the middle level of schooling while a bit more than one forth (66) achieved the primary education. And less than one tenth (15) respondents had intermediate as well as higher education (20). Interestingly, illiterate also occupies same representation (19). Only four respondents have got technical training which

fall in the category of “Others”. While the 161 individuals of Mittana Caste show the tendency where a bit less than one fifth (32) respondents belong to the middle level of education and same situation is with the illiterate respondents (32). A bit more than half of the respondents (94) fall in primary educational category while other remaining categories of intermediate, higher and other have their single individual in each. The Godhara caste of Machhi community which includes 154 individuals, represents that a bit more than one third respondents (54) fall at middle level of schooling while a little less than half of the respondents (71) have the primary level of schooling. Illiterate category is represented by more than one fifth of respondents (29). Other categories representation is almost negligible with 1 and 0 individuals. But the middle schooling of this caste with comparison to others three castes is striking as it represents only 03 individuals.

<b>Table 1 : Level of Education Among the Machhi Community</b>				
<b>Level of Education / Caste</b>	<b>Naliya</b>	<b>Mittana</b>	<b>Godhra</b>	<b>Mangela</b>
Illiterate	19	32	29	15
Primary	66	94	71	63
Middle	98	32	54	51
Inter	15	01	03	07
Higher	20	01	01	06
Others	04	01	00	02
Total	222	161	158	144

Source : Data collected by self.

The educational categories of Mangela caste of Machhi community consist of 144 individuals of the sample clearly indicate that more than half respondents constitute the primary levels of education and a little less than one third of the total sample falls under the category of middle level of education. And a less than one tenth of the total respondents represent the illiterate categories while intermediate, higher and others categories of the education levels are represented by 07, 06 and 02 individuals respectively.

The facts related to level of education reveal that except Mittana all castes of Machhi community are concentrated upto the middle level of education and equality in the primary education is visible among all four castes. The aspiration towards the higher education is negligible. It can be explained in the context of the traditional occupation of the Machhi community as the fishing operations do not require much education, as the involved mechanism of fishing activities are associated some sort of highly skilled works which can be achieved by the involvement of the fishing operations as casting of net in sea water, judgment of fish sole and storing of fish for long period etc. Hence, higher education does not attract them to achieve it, on the contrary it makes

them disable in doing hard skilled labour work. Consequently, majority of the individuals of the all four castes directly or indirectly is associated with the traditional occupations.

<b>Table : 2 – Distribution of Occupation Among the Machhi Community.</b>				
<b>Occupation / Caste</b>	<b>Naliya</b>	<b>Mittana</b>	<b>Godhra</b>	<b>Mangela</b>
Fishing	49	43	34	30
Selling of Fish	02	00	01	27
Making & Selling Nets	01	01	29	00
Service	10	03	05	06
Other Occupation	04	05	07	05
Total	66	52	76	68

Source : Data Collected by Self

As data indicate that out of 76 individuals of 25 families of the Naliya caste, 59 respondents are opted the fishing while only 02 of them are dependent on selling of fish and one in making and selling the net in local market. Other than traditional occupation there are only 14 persons. Of which 5 individuals are involved in cottage industry as an automobile mechanic and as travel agent. Out of total only 14 individuals are engaged as employees in government and private sector.

Innovation of technology viz; mechanization of fishing boats, fishing devices have given a situation where education does not seem as the determinate factor of diversification in traditional occupation. Rationalization of ideas in traditional bound society like Machhi is much influenced by usages of technology rather the degree of education. The Data related to education indicate that much concentration of the community is upto the eight years of schooling.

Occupation is an important indicator of social position. The position of an individual in occupational hierarchy gives an idea of the social status of the individuals in a given situation. In developing society like India where traditional social occupational structure is passing through a transitional phase, it is relevant to analyze occupational diversification in both traditional and modern sectors. Given to the low level of education, mostly diversification took place in traditional sector as this sector requires skills, hard labour and use of technology. The availability of all these in the Machhi community has resulted a situation where instead of giving up their generations old occupation, they have intensified their traditional occupation. As it is apparent from the facts that out of 922 fishing boats, there are 889 mechanized and 33 non mechanized boats. The mechanized boats also differ according to technology and capacity viz - (a) the trawler is biggest fishing boat whose length is 40 and breadth 15 feet while the depth of this boat varies from 12 to 13 feet. The engine of the boat is of 102 horse power which is operated by diesel oil and is used for a week fishing programme. The fuel capacity of the boat is 1500 liters and the consumption is 15 liters per hour. 15 khalasis (helpers) are supposed to work during the fishing on the basis of division of labour. About 90% fish of export variety are fished out by the use of this boat. The cost of the boat is Rs. 12,00,000/- ; (b) Gillnet boat is moderate one which costs Rs. 6,00,000/-. This boat is used to catch seven species of the fish namely Dada, Gour, Plawa, Bangada, Nanamusi, Magara and Pomplet. Ten khalasis are usually work. The fuel storage of this boat is 1000 liters and the boat is

used for a month long fishing operation; (c) Masava is a smallest mechanized boat and is meant for permanent fishing of four hours duration at a time covering 70 kilometers fishing site. It consumes 40 liters of diesel in a day. The cost of this boat is Rs. 2,50,000/- and it is used for fishing Bombay Dak which has no export value but is supplied in the local market.

Selling of the caught fish is intensified by the use of communication technology. Looking the quantity and varieties of fish, the negotiation is done with the traders by cell phones and even before reaching the coast, terms and conditions are fixed. Hence the fish are delivered quickly to the traders. The communication technology is useful in saving the storage costs of the fish. Which in turn gives more profit. Advertisements of traders which appear in news papers, local channels and on net are consulted for more and more profit. Thus, the mechanization of boats, use of fishing technology and communication mode have strengthen the profit on the one hand and weaken the risks on the other which put together contributing to the rationalization of their thinking. Consequently, the 'Daria Peer' who was the sole authority and his blessing was seen as the reward of life and livelihood, exposure of technology and communication in the fishing chorus have generated such kind of undercurrents where work ethos has more significance than the reward of 'Dariya Peer'.

The Machhi community of the Umargam Taluka of the South Gujarat region display a peculiar ethos, they had as they claim genetic connection with Rajputs of Saurashtra who were the ruler. It is reported when Mahmood of Ghazana repeatedly attacked right from 772 AD at Somnath, they were demoralized and enemas migration took place form Saurashtra to the region of south Gujarat. Dense forest of the region gave them suitable shelter. And at first instance the forest wood was used for making boats and sea coast has provided them the means of livelihood through boating and fishing. When new means of transportation were came into being with the induction of Railways and roadways, boating had lost the transportation, they adjusted with changed situation and involved in fishing. Long association with Pathan, Mughal and Dutch uptill the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century generated among the community a hard self respecting attitude which is still reflected in their life style. Diversification of occupation on the traditional line with the use of technology and communication resulted in self generated economic growth. The present study has been conducted at specific time and place yet its interconnections with region covering about thousand years of historical events are meaningful in understanding Machhi ethos of hard working and risk taking people intimately connected with the fish, sea and market retaining their identify.

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## Micro Credit Self Help Groups: An Alternative Development Paradigm

Smitha Raj

Capital deficiency is one of the forces acting in the vicious cycle of poverty. One of the components of this deficiency manifests as the inaccessibility of credit amongst the poorer section of population. The preconditions necessary to access the formal financial markets are such that the poorer section of the population is automatically excluded. The poorer clients do not fit into the mould of 'safe and profitable' borrowers and also the products offered by the formal financial institutions does not match their needs. In case of borrowing, neither can the poor provide enough collateral to obtain a secured loan nor can they provide evidence for a continuous stream of future income with which they can promise to repay their loans. In case of deposits, the surplus the poor might have will be too meager to be attractive for the formal financial institutions. Besides, the bureaucratic setup in those institutions and the associated paper works appears far too complicated and unintelligible to the often illiterate poorer clients. On the demand side, the poorer clients require smaller and immediate loans for various purposes including consumption. They also prefer a flexible repayment schedule. These requirements are not met by the products being offered by the present formal financial institutions.

This effective exclusion means that the poor are left at the mercy of informal sources like money lenders, landlords, usurers etc who are known to charge absurdly high rate of interest and on terms that 'give rise to an elaborate structure of coercion –economic and non economic' (Swaminathan and Ramchandran 2005: XXII). One solution that could potentially address these problems was provision of Micro credit.

This paper tries to examine the problems associated with financial markets in the context of poorer clients and the role of micro credit in effectively tackling the problem. Of the various channels which are currently being used to deliver micro credit, the Self Help Group channel is the most important in India. Therefore the paper also tries to examine the theoretical framework in which they function as well as their operational problems. Recent developments in the form of NABARD sponsored SHG-Bank Linkage programme is also discussed in the paper.

### **Part I: Problems of the Financial Markets.**

Problems like Moral Hazard, Adverse selection, Enforcement Problem and information asymmetry can be identified in all financial market.

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Moral Hazard refers to the presence of incentives for the individuals to act in ways that incur costs that they do not have to bear (Dictionary of economics: 2001). The problem refers to the situation in a financial contract when the borrower refuses to honor the debt commitments because he / she loose nothing by doing so. This problem is more pronounced in the credit markets for the poor since the have no collateral to loose.

Adverse selection refers to the problem of selecting exactly the wrong kind of borrowers by the lenders. The 'lemon market' situation arises where in the borrowers with greater risk appear more attractive to the lender because they will accept an expensive debt contract, that is agree to borrow at a higher rate of interest. At the same time the riskier project has a greater chance of failure endangering the principle part of the loan too.

Enforcement problem refers to the inability of the lenders to coerce / compel a delinquent borrower into honoring the debt contract. This problem encompasses the efficiency of the legal machinery and the legislations governing the financial markets. In the absence of appropriate legislations, there is not much a lender can do in case the borrow refuses to pay up.

Information Asymmetry arises when one of the parties to the debt contracts has more information than the other. Typically the borrower has more information about his financial position than the lender. There is always a chance that the borrower is fudging the documentary proofs about his ability to repay loans.

Apart from these recognized problems there are a few more exclusive problems to be found in credit markets if it were to catering to the poorer population. They are the higher costs of servicing loans, absence of insurers and risk aversion on the part of the borrowers (Hulme and Mosley 1996: 16).

Smaller loans, generally availed by the poorer clients are likely to carry a higher rate of interest so that the higher cost of screening and processing loan applications, higher delivery charges, higher cost of writing and enforcing contracts are all factored in. The economies of scale is tilted against smaller loans and hence the poorer clients which gives rise to the ironical situation of the poorer clients paying a higher interest rate than those who still can afford it.

The poor borrowers are financially more vulnerable than the better-offs. A number of exogenous risks right from natural calamities like drought and floods to accidents like fire and market linked risks like recession affect them. Apart from these risks personal ill health and health problems of family members too affect them. Insurers who can compensate the borrowers and the lenders in case of non repayment of loans, due to such exogenous affliction are also absent in such a market. Hence the risk of default from non-willful defaulters is also left uncovered. There is also a tendency of risk aversion on the part of borrowers even in situations where the expected value of their profits outweighs the expected cost of their investment, including interest and insurance payments (Hulme and Mosley 1996: 16).<sup>1</sup>

These problems act in consonance so as to make the formal credit markets inaccessible to the poorer clients. It is in this backdrop that Micro Credit emerged as a one stop solution that promised to overcome all these problems and provide credit access to the poorer clients.

The Task force on Supportive and Regulatory Framework for Micro Finance in India defined Micro Credit as, 'the provision of thrift, credit and other financial services and products of very small amounts to the poor in rural, semi urban or urban areas enabling them to raise their income levels and improve living standards' (NABARD. [www.nabard.org/roles/microfinance](http://www.nabard.org/roles/microfinance)).

Micro credit promises to alleviate poverty by providing the poor with the crucial access to credit markets, increase employment opportunities (more so self employment opportunities), build formal financial institutions that can penetrate the clientele and regions hereto uncovered by the existing institutions. Empowerment of women is also an added advantage when women are involved in micro credit initiatives. Micro Credit appears to be a single solution to various developmental problems.

### **Channels for Delivering Micro Credit:**

There are various channels for delivering Micro Credit. These models being heterogeneous in operation differ from programme to programme. They can however be broadly classified into the following groups.

- **Individual Loans:** In this model individuals avail micro loan facility from micro financial institutions. Generally such loans are backed by guarantees offered by two or more solvent individuals. The SEWA bank in Ahmedabad is the best example based on this model. Various cooperatives also function on similar lines but the loans that they offer are generally much bigger in quantum.

- **Grameen Replications:** In this model, a few people come together to form a group and start saving a predetermined amount of money. Subsequently they apply for credit. The staff of agency which promotes the group is involved actively in organizing meetings, book keeping, tracking repayments etc.

- **Self Help Groups (SHGs):** This is by far the most popular model in India. Though this model resembles the previous model, it has a different mode of functioning in the sense that it is more democratic and there is a collective decision making. In this model a promoting agency (Banks, NGO, and Government bodies) will facilitate group formation. A group of 14- 20 members is formed. Members are required to save a certain predetermined sum. After accumulating a critical sum of money, members are eligible for loans. The loans can be funded from the internal resources of the group or may be availed from a formal financial agency like bank. The SHG-Bank linkage programme promoted by NABARD one such model.

## **Part II**

### **Theoretical Premise of Micro Credit Self Help Groups.**

Micro Credit Self Help Groups are characterized by certain features that distinguish them from other parties in the formal financial markets. These features provide the theoretical justifications for the formation and operation of these groups. Unlike the usual debt contract which involves a borrower and a lender, the Micro Credit Self Help Groups involve a group of people having the entity of a single borrower. These features are discussed below.

**Group lending and Joint Liability:** Unlike a bilateral loan contract between two individuals, group lending entails a contract between a lender and a group of individuals acting as a single borrower. This contract is resorted to in the absence of physical collateral. The group as a whole assumes the responsibility of honoring the debt contract in case of defaults by its member(s). This contractual clause is designed to prevent defaults by holding the whole group jointly responsible for individual members.

**Peer Monitoring:** Peer monitoring refers to the group members monitoring each other's repayments. The members actively and continuously evaluate each others performances and force willful defaulters into repaying their loans by threatening to impose social and economic sanctions.

**Dynamic incentives:** This refers to progressive access to bigger and bigger loans upon successful repayment of previous loans. Hence the borrowers have an incentive of getting bigger loans if they successfully repay their previous loans.

**Social Sanctions:** These are the non monetary sanctions that are imposed on delinquent member(s) by the other members of the group. The formal financial institution will be able to impose only monetary and legal sanctions on defaulters, but in case of smaller loans these sanctions are not feasible. In such circumstances, social sanctions prove to be very effective.

These factors act together to ensure a system where lending to poorer clients becomes a profitable proposition. Joint liability replaces individual liability and individual group member's terms of repayment becomes conditional on the repayment performance of other group members (Ghatak 1999: 27-50). Not only does joint liability reduce the problem of moral hazard but also ensures self-selection of group members. That is the selection of group members by borrowers themselves. Borrowers members are expected to be better equipped with information than a possible formal lender, about each other's projects. This means the problems of asymmetry of information and adverse selection are addressed while the groups are formed. Self selection also implies that groups are formed by people from similar background, possibly in the same locality. This homogeneity while group formation makes enforcement cheaper and more effective. Therefore most of the problems of financial markets are addressed in this model of credit delivery. The problems of high costs, absence of insurers are yet to be addressed. This model does not provide of reducing the cost of delivery. There is much scope for innovative and less expensive financial products.

#### **SHG-BANK Linkage Project:**

The SHG-Bank Linkage is an ambitious project currently being implemented all over India. It is under this programme that Self Help Groups are being formed in great numbers. There are other state level programmes which are promoting the formation of SHGs like Stree Shakti in Karnataka, but at the national level, this linkage project is the most important programme. The sheer size of the programme makes it one of its kinds in the world. The programme involves Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and cooperative Banks along with various Non Government Organizations. The programme has benefited at least 1.6 million people. Starting with about 225 SHGs in 1992-93, about 1,079,091 SHGs were linked to various banks till March 2004 (table 1). The cumulative amount of bank loans disbursed till March 2004 was about Rs 3,904 crores. But the per capita loan still remains paltry at a little over a thousand rupees.

Source: Economic survey and NABARD annual reports. Various issues.

Three different models of linkage are currently being promoted. In Model I, the Banks promotes the formation of the SHG. The groups are eligible for loans after they save regularly for a period of six months. In the Model II, groups are formed by NGOs and other promoting agencies. The

groups are again eligible for loans after they save regularly for a certain period of time. Banks provide credit facilities directly to the groups. In the Model III, the groups are promoted by the NGOs, Banks will finance NGOs identified as 'good' by the lead bank of the districts/ NABARD for further on lending to SHGs. By far the second model is the most popular model with over 80% of the total loans disbursed through this model of linkage.

Many financial agencies are involved in this programme viz, Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Banks. Commercial banks are the most important agency with over 50% of the total loans disbursed from this particular agency. The ubiquitous cooperatives lag behind and its potential remains under-utilized.

#### Progress of SHG-Bank linkage

Year	Cumulative no of SHGs linked	Cumulative bank loan (in crores)	No of families reached (in lakhs)	Per capita loan (in rupees)
1992-93	220	0.29	-	-
1993-94	620	0.36	-	-
1994-95	2122	1.79	-	-
1995-96	4757	3.62	-	-
1996-97	8598	4.68	-	-
1997-98	14317	11.92	-	-
1998-99	32995	34.24	-	-
1999-00	114775	136	19	715.78
2000-01	263825	288	45	640
2001-02	461478	545	78	698
2002-03	717360	1022	-	-
2003-04	107909	1856	167	1111.37

A survey of state-wise distribution of the programme shows that the programme is concentrated in southern region. 62% of the total SHGs linked (674,356 out of an all India aggregate of 1,079,091) and 78% of the cumulative loans (Rs 30,739 million out of an all India aggregate of Rs 39,042 million) disbursed were in the southern region which includes Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Andhra Pradesh alone has about 385,576 SHGs linked to the banks out of an all India aggregate of 674,356. Similar pattern is to be found in cumulative loans disbursed with Andhra Pradesh cornering about Rs 17,283 million out of an all India aggregate of Rs 39,042 million. This is attributed to the presence of civil society institutions in Andhra Pradesh and historical presence of Micro financial institutions.

The Programmatic success of Micro credit is evident the way number of SHGs and quantum of loans are increasing but there are a few issues that need to be addressed sooner or later.

*Regional Concentration:* Southern states constitute the area with highest linkage but the poverty figures of these states are much better than other states. Poor states like Bihar (58.8% poverty) and Assam (61.7% poverty) are hardly active in this programme. This means that the better off population with access to other sources are benefiting from this programme more than the poorest segment. Apart from the regional concentration, the extent to which the programme is benefiting the poorest is still to be known.

*Small loans:* The quantum of per capita loan disbursed is just about a thousand rupees. This is too meager to be of any impact either on the employment scenario or poverty alleviation. More over

many field studies have reported that consumption accounts for the most prevalent usage of Micro Loans. So Micro Credit as a development strategy still appears a far fetched idea.

*Debt Trap:* Since Micro Loans are mostly being used for consumption purposes, income generation is not possible, hence the chances that the borrowers entering debt trap are more likely.

*High Interest rates:* Micro Loans are far more expensive than other loans offered by the formal agencies. Interest rate charged is found to be any where between 24 % and 36%. Whereas a normal housing loan carries an interest rate of less than 10% in any Public sector Banks. That is the poor are being made to pay a higher rate of interest than those who can still afford a more expensive loan.

*Role of NGOs:* In the linkage project, the second model is the most popular one with NGOs intermediating between the bank and the SHG. The cost of forming, grooming and linking the group to the bank is borne by the NGO. Therefore the exact cost incurred is not reflected in the interest rates being charged. As it is the interest rates are high, if the NGOs withdraw from the programme or if they start charging a fee for their services, the cost of credit will be too high for this programme to be an effective tool for poverty alleviation. More over NGOs are civil society institution. They are not answerable either to the banks or to the groups. This lack of transparency and accountability not only raises questions about their role in this programme but also points out the possibility of collusion and corruption.

*Beneficiaries:* Though the programme is intended to address the credit needs of the poorest, there is no way to make out the actual beneficiaries. The model is built upon the assumption that the loans being micro in size will attract only the poorest and the better offs would be automatically excluded. But this assumption is again problematic. Post liberalization, banks are retreating from the rural areas in a big way. The number of commercial branch banks has reduced from 35,206 in 1991 to about 32,283 in 2003. While during the same period the number of urban branches has increased from 11,344 to about 15,135 and metropolitan branches from 5,595 to 9,516. The banks are gradually shifting towards more lucrative areas. In credit deprived rural areas, there is a distinct possibility of the better offs to participate in the programme to access financial services. Moreover the current Target oriented Expansion of Micro Credit Programmes is bound to be inefficient and problematic in the long run. Caution should be exercised in promoting groups and only genuine groups should be identified for lending.

Micro Credit promises a lot. But it is also fraught with problems of its own. The current emphasis on Micro credit Self Help Groups as an alternative development paradigm is definitely myopic. This approach at best can be just one of the sources of credit for the credit deprived sections of population. It is in no way a replacement to strategies emphasizing employment generation backed by the government. Also programmes like employment guarantee, food for work are much more effective options than reliance on stand alone programmes like Micro credit. Even where Micro Credit is found to be effective in creating employment and in poverty alleviation, markets are found to play a crucial role. In the absence of necessary infrastructure and access to markets, this strategy is too weak to produce effective results. It seems to reiterate the idea that financial services do not create economic opportunities; they only enable people to take advantage of existing economic opportunities created through other interventions. Investments in social, economic and physical infrastructure is a far more effective way to address the problem of poverty than a singular emphasis on Micro Credit SHGs. It might be not because of its effectiveness and advantages

that Micro Credit SHGs are expanding at the rate it is, but might be because of the sheer inability of large masses of people to secure enough credit elsewhere. This is definitely not a long term solution and more less an alternative development paradigm.

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## **Status of Baiga Tribal Women in Madhya Pradesh**

**Prahlad Mishra**

The present paper is divided into three parts. First part deals with the status of women in society. Second part is related with the normative functioning of family, which governs the position of its members in its traditional setting. Third part illustrates the fact found through observation in tribal Mandla, a source to explain the status of the Baiga tribal women in Madhya Pradesh.

### **1. Status of Women in Society**

Gender is classified into male and female. These together constitute an entity called human society. These units equally share biological reproduction and cultural enrichment of society. Men and Women in pace of civilization have differently responded with the external forces as a stimulus. Altekar (1956) in his analysis of Hindu civilization found feudal norms responsible for withdrawal of 'caste women' from the economic activities, where as Myrdal (1960) observed those women's role confined to house making had avoided the competition in market situation. These views illustrate the scenario of feudal as well as industrial societies from where middle-class women have withdrawn themselves from active participation in market economy to keep the employment system alive. This withdrawal has social repercussion on the position of women in society.

### **2. Normative Functioning of Family**

Family in its organizational form promotes the individuals for social activities. Through normative functioning of structural parts a system in society is maintained. For example, family in its either forms of matrilineal and patrilineal descent-groups are identical (Schneider 1961) in its role. In both the cases, authority follows along the male line, with a provision where group placement of persons run through the line of women in matrilineal descendent group but not in patrilineal society. The structural differences between these two lines of placement of persons in society decline with the changing pattern of economy from plough to industrial one. Thus, social honour, right over goods and services, and ability to secure way became the subject matter of study when confined to study of social structure in society. Comparing male with female status its frame, of reference Beauvaire, (1953) found that contrary to men - women have lower level of materials to handle on biological ground and womanhood requires dependency. On the other hand, women interplay between marriage and profession and aesthetic pleasure and motherhood. But these are not always a necessary condition for social-identification of women in different societies. Gore

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(1988) perceived the equality of male and female status as product of historicity where civic equality and participative opportunity have been a parameter for mobilization of these units in national movement. Equality in right is related with legal, political, economic and social aspects of life. Except social right, which is a part of primary structure, all other factors are the part of secondary structure of the society. Further for the change in relationships, education is a necessary for the change in value system for entering in the competitive market.

### **3. Status of the Baiga Tribal Women**

Alvin (1986: 235-238) observed women position in Baiga society that is very sound. Though, Baiga is patriarchal and priestly tribe and men are ascendant. Yet women have great freedom in community. They choose and change husband on their will. They may dance in public, own property, may drink and smoke and eat in presence of their husbands. In Baiga genesis women do stabilize and not shake the world. Baiga women may have a position of priestesses and Gunia but usually drop the profession due to fear of taunt as witchcraft. Women play active roles in social ceremonies and rituals. Possibility of practicing witchcraft has given them strong position in community. Further they are exorcists, herbalists and have knowledge of love magic and jungle medicine. Women and men fetch water and go for fishing together. For agricultural land they clear and fire the jungle. Women enjoy more sexual freedom than men and rarely take responsibilities of her act.

With these positions in community women have high prestige by observing blood purity of the caste. Baiga are divided into ten endogamous groups known as Jati i.e. Binjhar, Bharatia, Dudh-Bhaina, Gond Waina, Kathbhaina, Konuwan or Kundi, Kurka-Baiga, Narotia or Nahar, Riaibhaina, Sawat-Baiga. Jati or caste is further divided into Garh and Goti. Garh is a territorial division and considered as exogamous sept. Goti or Gotra is a totemic group. Marriage within Jati is allowed but not within Garh and Goti. There are twelve Garh and sixteen Goti. It is believed that concept of Goti is borrowed by Baiga from Hindu neighbour especially the Gond tribe which is considered by Baiga as their older brothers. All castes of Baiga avoid Garh strictly for marriage relationships while occasionally restriction on Goti is relaxed. Though marriages outside the Jati and inside the Goti is considered crime, Unmarried boys and girls normally avails sexual liberty within the community but not the married once. Even marriage between cross cousin, grand-parent and grand children or others belonging to these generations are allowed.

Bride price is paid as married women are considered an economic asset or help to the family where they go after marriage. Within given sexual freedom in community, marriages have little meaning as far biological act is concerned but it is necessary for social recognition which provides new status to the newly married couples. Motherhood is always awaited. In form of newly born child it is believed that re-birth of a family ancestor has taken place. Parents show their respect with Jiv (soul) of the child. Jiv is recognized with physical symbols found on body of the child. In process, help of Gunia (local magician) is sought.

Divorce for married women is easy. She can obtain it by breaking a straw in presence of elders in village. Remarriage for divorced and widow is easy too. Love and elope marriages with in the Jati is culturally approved. There is no stigma attached with all these as marriages depend on will of the individuals. On the other hand, married women are custodians of Jati-purity. She can not eat with any one outside the tribe and also avoid eating with any one outside their own sub-tribe. Married women have responsibility to watch the activities of married as well as unmarried women. On a fault gossiping starts and messages are communicated to members of family

concerned who through Jati Panchayat is declared ex-communicated for a temporary period. Family is not taken into mainfold of community till the head of household gives a feast with liquor to clan or members of the village. Amount of fine depends on the nature of crime done by the defaulter. Intensity of crime in sexual activities are more linked with married individual than the unmarried one.

Divorced women have right to possess gifts and ornaments provided by their parents during the marriage. Widow can retain a share of her husband property. That remain her after she remarries. Remaining other parts of properties are equally shared among sons and daughters. Married daughter can claim a share in her parent property if she spend money on funeral ceremony of her parents. Even adopted son or daughter has right to share the deceased property.

Baiga women directly contribute in the income of house- hold, she utilizes her services in cutting the crops, fire the jungle for agricultural land, making the basket and collecting the honey and produces of jungle like fruits, roots, Harra and others for selling it in market and for family consumption. They have knowledge of herbs and do priestship in villages from where they got money for her services. Women actively do work in forest department especially for construction works i.e. digging the well, making the road and collecting the Tendu leafs. These types of services are helpful to add further the income of the house-hold.

Baiga women are not only the economic assets to family. But, they also fulfil the aesthetic need of the community. For making her personality charming they have tattooing. It is a kind of skin eroticism. Tattoos are made on her body accordingly to the age. Triangular decoration is made on her forehead when girl is about five-year-old. Peacock and basket (Dauri) on breast and arms before her adolescent. Turmeric root (Gath) when girl reaches puberty. Other parts of body are tattooed especially the back, legs, knees and thighs etc. after her marriage. These tattoos are being patterned through symbols recognized by the community. As fishes are only made on legs. Before the marriage expenses on these decoration are met by girls parents and after marriage by her in-law. These tattooing are considered as a cloth for body in lifetime and symbols for life after death through which 'Jiv' of individuals are recognized by their kin's and relatives. On the other hand, it is only ornaments that remain permanent with the women. Tattooing has functional meaning for women as it is an expression of her richness, self projection, powerful devices for sexual stimulus and to attract men-folk of community towards her.

Data gathered through technique of non-participant observation in Mandala district covering Tahsil of Mandala, Niwas and Dindori reveal that baiga way of life is changing slowly with the impact of urbanization, commercialization and industrialization processes. Development programmes initiated by state and central Government have also been felt affecting the attitudes of Baiga people to an extent especially in the sphere of health and formal education.

Baigas have started doing settled cultivation on the place of shifting one. To an extent they have accepted the centre law imposed upon them for agricultural activities. To a larger extent they have dropped animals and birds killing in jungle under the pressure of forest rules. Still their earning depend more on forest produce and selling it in markets for money. Such activities are more manifested in Mandala Tahsil followed by Niwas and Dindori. Further, exposure with formal schooling, health education, cash money and lust for modern ornaments, dressing, hair cutting, and recreation by seeing cinema, listening radio for songs have followed the similar route to approach the communities.

Demographic structure of the Baiga tribe is unique. Data based on field survey indicate that normal family size of Baiga contains five to six members. More boys are born than girls are. Infant mortality rate among boys are more in comparison to girls in the first five years of life. Among girls it is more between age of six to eleven years. But between the age of twelve to thirty years, girls become more numerous than boys. It is the age when women are more wanted in community for marriage as well as for performing household duties. The imbalance of sex ratio in this age group is the main cause of polygamy that is still observed in Baiga community. Men survival are found more after the age of thirty-one and above than women. It makes high - ratio of men compare to women in the aged old community.

The average Baigas are suffering with mal-nutrition. Facts found in Baiga-chak of Dindori Tehsil highlight that most of the settlement of Baiga villages are in barren-land. Only crops like Kodo, Kutaki etc. are produced and even that are not in -sufficient amount. Forest produces supplement their diet. Forest rules prohibit them to kill the animals for eating. The shifting cultivation has also been banned. That has reduced their average produce of food grains. Alternative diet has not yet been introduced to them. It has direct bearing on their life expectancy. More death is due to ill feedings to the younger children and women during her motherhood period. Health protection totally depends on herbs. The medicine values of herbs have not yet been scientifically proved. High illiteracy, ill health and lack of educational facilities are commonly found in the area. People adopt the modern-medicine half heartily and have more faith in Gunia (magician) and local Baidyas for the cure of diseases. Trained doctors are even not available readily at the time of sickness. Primary health centre are still not fully equipped nor the sufficient medicine are available there. Even trained Dai are not available within the approachable distance. Change found in health protection is now ranging from own herbal knowledge to Baidhya to Government doctor for meeting their health needs.

For educating the Baiga, formal schools are opened. Schools attract children, Nomination in schools are recorded high and actual attendance in classes are low. From field investigation it is found that most of the school going children are doing domestic work. They collect food grains and forest produces in the seasons. Male and female are working either in fields or in construction work. The house-hold activities are performed by these children who are above the age of ten years. The drop out cases of students' start more from the age of eight years and above.

Due to this constrain formal education among Baiga has not yet even increased from five percent to above in Baiga chak. The literacy rate is found comparatively more in boys than the girl child is. Their ratio is approximately three to one in most of the places. Under the state rules, high school pass Baigas belonging to younger generation are appointed in tribal areas as primary teacher. Simultaneously 'Agan-Bari' programmes are also started in the villages that attracts younger children but not with high success.

These mentioned facts highlight the attitudes of traditional Baiga about the formal programmes initiated to them from state and central Governments. Their age-old style of life is fully dominant upon them. Formal education is expressive to market situation that has brought minor changes in Baigas pattern of life. Status of women is raising more with their exposure and links made with urban centre than the village only. Mention can be made of kinship structure where high demand of educated and service doing girls are more wanted for marriage relation among younger generation in the community than the girls who have knowledge of domestic

works only. On the other hand, it is also found that Baiga traditional way of life is sound enough in most of the above mentioned cases. What are still needed to introduce the alternative economic opportunities to raise their economic standard of life in the society.

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## **Village Woodlots and Their Problems: A Study of South Gujarat**

**Vipul J Somani**

India, which is second largest country in terms of population in the world, has almost half of its total land classified as wasteland. Out of the total land mass of nearly 329 million ha 189 million is cultivated. Most of the uncultivated land is degraded or wasted and is owned collectively by village panchayats/communities and by Government. In India world's 15% population resides in world's 4% geographical area. To feed the increasing population more and more land is brought under cultivation. This directly affects the area of forest. Whereas, under ideal conditions 33% of the land should be under forest cover, India has only 21% and day by day there is decrease in the area due to various factors including illicit felling, for fuel, timber, developmental activities etc.

Forests are ecologically as well as economically important. It has long-term effects on improving soil fertility, moisture conservation, reduction in temperature, increase in precipitation, reduction in soil erosion, soil and water conservation, reduction in desertification etc. In rural society forests are the major source of fuel wood, fodder timber and minor forest produce and plays a vital role in rural economy.

Apart from this, Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) and National Commission on Agriculture (1976) has emphasized on the role of forests on increasing the agricultural productivity (Verma, 1993). According to the report of National Commission on Agriculture, the use of cow dung as fuel is considered as directly responsible for the reduction in agricultural productivity. Deforestation for various purposes has reduced the availability of fuel wood in the rural area. This has led to the use of cow dung as fuel instead of using it in agriculture as manure. Another major contributory factor of the rural development is employment generation at local level. Animal husbandry and dairying activities in rural areas can generate employment opportunities. To overcome these and other hurdles in rural development like reduction in soil fertility due to erosion, reduction in ground water resources, environmental imbalance, etc. Social Forestry Project was launched in India.

Gujarat has an area of 19.6 million ha which constitute 5.96 % of the geographic area of the country. The land use pattern indicates 9.89 % of its area under forests that is far less than the national average (GOI, 2000) Out of the total forest area 71.26 % is legally classified as reserved forest, 5.14 % is protected forest and the percentage of unclassified forest is 23.6.

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Looking at the land use pattern and change in the consumption pattern, it was felt that there will be crisis for fuel wood and other problems associated with the degradation of the forest. In Gujarat, far ahead of recommendations of National Commission on Agriculture (1976), various steps were taken in this direction since 1969-70. In Gujarat an extension forestry wing was started in 1969-70. The forest department started for the first time any work outside the forest by taking up the work of avenue plantation in 1969 in two districts Vadodara and Ahmedabad. The state was first to initiate Village woodlot in 1972 at Nandol Dahegam in Ahmedabad district. It was also the first state to raise school nursery in 1974 at Kamalpur Village of Ahmedabad. The state was also first in raising Farm Forest in 1973 in Ahmedabad district (Mehta, 1998). Since then (1969-70) to 1979-80, various types of forests were raised on 52773 hector of land. This work was appreciated Nationally and Internationally. Moreover, looking at the great scope for rural development in Social Forestry, monetary support was extended from national and International agencies. With the monetary support from the World Bank during 1980-81 to 1991-92, in two phases, a total area of 2,78,528 h was brought under tree plantation. Later on during 1993-94 to 1995-96, 75,183 h land was afforested. From 1996-97- 2000-01, Japan Government under its OEPD project has extended monetary support for forestation programme under the Integrated Forest Development Programme (GOG, 2002).

Under Social Forestry, various plantation programmes like strip plantation, village woodlots, restoration of degraded forestlands, restoration of farmlands, fodder development, rural fuel scheme, etc. were included. Amongst all these, Village Woodlot is of prime importance. Under this scheme tree plantation is carried out on wasteland, particularly on the grazing land with the objectives of satisfying the needs of fuel, fodder and small timber at local level, generate employment opportunities locally for rural poor, to conserve the environment, to generate income from the mature forests that can be utilized for rural development works carried out by Village Panchayat etc.

Thus, Village Woodlot Scheme can play an important role in rural development and in satisfying primary needs of rural poor at local level. In Gujarat, from 1969-70 to 1995-96, Village woodlots have been raised in 1,08,035 h of land. This programme is still continued.

The above facts regarding forestation program in Gujarat are a matter of pride and prestige as far as the physical targets are concerned. However, it seems that the basic problems of rural areas with regard to fulfilling the needs of fuel, fodder and small timber are not solved. Therefore, it is necessary to find out, whether or not this scheme is successful in achieving its basic objectives, if not, find out the reasons there of and suggest practical solutions for making it successful. Thus, it is very essential to evaluate the Village Woodlot Scheme. In past, Katar Singh and Viswa Ballabh (1989), Verma (1993), DFID (1994) and Saxena (1997) had carried out studies on the evaluation of social forestry programmes. The main findings of this study suggest that the success of the scheme depends upon the factors like perception among people about forests, people's participation, selection of species, benefits obtained from plantation, strategies for distribution of benefits, etc. The weakest section of the society mainly utilizes wastelands or pasture, a common property resource. After plantation, such people will not be able to extract the resources from such area. Thus, they will be deprived of their primary needs as far as fuel and fodder is considered. Therefore, while distributing benefits such weaker section should get priority otherwise they may create a situation which will hamper the successful implementation of the scheme. As village

Panchayat also gets benefit out of this scheme, the Panchayat members in general and sarpanch in particular can play an important role in the success of this program.

Since 1993 this programme was not evaluated in Gujarat and after this a lot of work in Social Forestry was undertaken in the state it was considered worth while to examine the benefits received from the programmes with the following objectives:

To find out level of understanding about the scheme and people's participation and steps to be taken for getting people's participation,

Whether the tree species selected are in accordance with the objectives of the scheme? Whether the people accept such species? What is the role of people in selection of species to be planted for village woodlot?

What benefits are obtained from the woodlots and how much of it is passed on to the people? To whom the benefits are passed on? Do the benefits reached to whom it should have reached? If not what should be done to do so?

Whether the procedure for getting permission to cut the mature forest is simple? Whether the sarpanch face any problem in obtaining permission? If so what are the suggestions of sarpanch's to simplify the procedure?

During the present study a humble attempt is made to evaluate the village woodlot scheme implemented during 1986-1990, by obtaining elaborate information and scientifically analyzing it. It is also attempted to gather information regarding problems associated with implementation of the scheme and to make this scheme more successful in achieving its basic objectives, practical suggestions are made.

### **Methodology**

In Gujarat Village woodlot scheme is implemented by District Rural Development Agency through Social Forestry Department. This scheme was implemented in all the districts of the state. Under this scheme more work was done in the five districts of South Gujarat namely Surat, Valsad, Bharuch, Navsari and Narmada. Undertaking study in an area where more work is done will help in better understanding the factors responsible for success and limitations of the scheme. Therefore the scope of the study was restricted to the five districts of South Gujarat mentioned above. Of these five districts, Navsari and Narmada are recently formed and their activities are included in the remaining three districts. However, due to the limitations of finance, time and physical facilities, the present study was limited only to the Surat district.

For the present study plantations raised during 1986-1990 were selected for evaluation as these plantations are now ready to deliver the benefits or the benefits are already delivered.

#### *Selection of Talukas*

In Surat district there are 13 talukas, which can be classified in to tribal (9) and non-tribal (4) talukas. DRDA, Surat sponsored Village woodlot Scheme was implemented in 210 villages of 12 out of its 13 talukas by Social Forestry Surat Division. For the present study all the villages belonging to 112 talukas of Surat district were selected.

#### *Selection of Villages*

As stated earlier, in Surat district in 210 villages belonging to 12 talukas village woodlots were raised. In order to give equal representation to all talukas, it was decided to select 15% villages of the total. Accordingly there will be a total of 32 villages of which 21 villages will be

from the tribal talukas and 11 villages of non-tribal talukas. However, since the numbers of villages of non-tribal talukas are less as compared to tribal talukas, it was decided to have 20% villages from the former. To have totally unprejudiced selection, a list of villages was obtained from the DRDA, Surat. The villages were then arranged according to their respective talukas and in the order of getting sanctions for raising woodlots. From the list so prepared of 210 villages 35 were selected randomly.

#### *Selection of Beneficiaries*

People who are personally involved in the woodlot raising activity can provide accurate and factual information and opinion regarding the scheme. This view was kept in mind while selecting the beneficiaries as respondent. However, it was not possible to include all the beneficiaries for the present study due to the limitations stated earlier. Therefore, it was decided to select a few beneficiaries from each of the selected villages for the present study.

To select the beneficiaries, the primary condition was to have a list of such people. Such a list could be with the Social Forestry Department, who had carried out the activities for raising the wood lots. Unfortunately the request to provide the list of people who had obtained employment during the work was turned down. Similarly the concerned Gram Panchayat of the villages could not provide us with the list. It was therefore, decided that the researcher would visit each village and identify the beneficiaries. Of these, the first five were selected as respondents for the present study.

In this way, there has to be a total of 165 respondents belonging to 35 villages. In five of the selected villages the researcher could not find the persons who were actually involved in the tree raising activity. So the study presented here describes the opinion and information gathered from 150 respondents belonging to 30 villages of 12 talukas of Surat district.

Along with the beneficiaries, opinions of the heads of local self-government, the Sarpanch who plays an important role in this scheme are also recorded.

Also, information and opinions were sought from the officers and concerned staff of DRDA, Surat, Social Forestry Division and the Talati cum Secretary of the respective village Panchayat. Statistical data and other secondary information were gathered from the Government and other publications.

### **Major Findings**

#### *1) Information received from Sarpanch:*

The local self-governments play a crucial role in implementing any scheme for rural development. Head of village Panchayat is, therefore, considered as a key person in proper implementation of any scheme of rural development. During the present study, information and opinions from the sarpanchs of 35 villages were sought. Following paragraphs deal with the summary of the information collected.

#### *A) Socio-economic background:*

1. Of the total 35 sarpanchs 23 were male and 12 were female. They were belonging to various social backgrounds as Scheduled Tribe-15, Scheduled Cast-2, Other Backward Class -4, and Upper caste-14.
2. With increase in age, in case of female sarpanchs, there seems to be decrease in the interest in the political activities.

3. All the sarpanchs are literate!
4. The female sarpanchs are more educated than their counterparts.
5. Majority of the sarpanchs (57.14 %) are farmers.
6. Thirteen out of 35 sarpanchs have secondary source of income.
7. Six sarpanchs live below poverty line!

*B) The Scheme and its beginning:*

1. Majority of the work under this scheme was done during 1986 to 1990.
2. Mass communication media has played a role in disseminating information regarding the scheme.
3. During the implementation of the scheme sarpanchs were not enthusiastic. The staff of Social Forestry Department took majority of the decisions. Forest officials were the key persons to decide any thing and everything regarding the scheme. The Sarpanchs were given the idea that a particular sum of money will be given to the panchayat after the plantation are cut. The decision to plant the trees on common land (Gauchar) was not taken in the Gram Sabha except in two villages, even though it was mandatory. Instead the decision was taken by the Sarpanch or Sarpanch and the members of village panchayat.

*C) Selection of site and area under plantation:*

1. With an average of around 6 h per village, a total of 208 h of land was brought under plantation in 35 villages.
2. Majority of the woodlots have an area between 2-5 h.
3. In tribal villages plantation was done on more area than non-tribal villages.
4. Around 75% of the woodlots are irrigated.
5. In 65% of the villages, more plantations could not be done due to unavailability of land.
6. Woodlots are mainly (80%) raised on the Panchayat land.
7. The selection of site and the area to be put under plantation was decided by the forest officials.

*D) People's participation:*

Of the selected 35 villages only in two the decision of raising village woodlot was taken by Gramsabha. In majority of the other villages the sarpanch and the members of the Panchayat decided this. Only in one case it was decided by the sarpanch alone. In two villages the sarpanchs were forced to take decision by forest officials.

*E) Selection of Species:*

1. In majority of the woodlots Eucalyptus and Casuarinas were planted.
2. In majority of woodlots selection of species were done by the staff of Social Forestry Department.

*F) Benefits and Distribution of Benefits:*

1. All the sarpanchs showed ignorance about the procedure of distribution of benefits and identification of beneficiaries. Moreover, from the woodlots, availability of fuel, fodder and small timber is very meager. Therefore, it was not equally distributed. Also, sarpanchs were ignorant about who will distribute it. In many cases, this has led to the wastage of fodder and fuel.

2. In only four out of 35 villages, the Panchayat could get income from the woodlots. In such villages excellent developmental works were done. All the villagers equally enjoy the benefits.

*G) Cutting Woodlots:*

1. About 40% of the sarpanchs are ignorant of the process of getting permission for cutting the matured woodlots. Another 20% has wrong information and only two had complete information.
2. Of the total 35 woodlots, eight had sought permission for cutting and six of them got it. Remaining two are waiting to get it for the last two years. It takes on an average two years to get permission. Sarpanchs has to personally visit the district headquarter several times in this connection. They have to face a lot of difficulties in getting it.
3. After cutting, in 80% of the cases, it took more than one years time to get the money from the forest department. In remaining cases where forest officials took personal interest, the money was released within one month.
4. Almost 80% of the sarpanchs were satisfied with the income obtained from the woodlots.

*H) Difficulties:*

In majority of the villages (68.8 %), the people had faced no difficulties due to tree plantation in otherwise common area from where they use to collect fuel and fodder!

*I) Opinion:*

1. Around 27 sarpanchs opted to give their opinion after the completion of the scheme that is final cutting of the woodlot and receiving the money from it.
2. When asked about the fulfillment of the objectives of the scheme 71.4% preferred to answer after the completion of the scheme.
3. Only 25 out of 35 Panchayat wants to replant woodlots in their villages.

***II) Information collected from the Beneficiaries:***

The major objectives of the woodlot scheme are to make local population self sufficient with regard to there needs of fuel, fodder and small timber. The success of this scheme can be evaluated on the basis of benefits received from the scheme by the beneficiaries. Below given is a brief summary of the findings analyzed from the information obtained from the beneficiaries in selected villages of Surat district.

*A) Socio-economic conditions:*

- 1) About 52% of the family heads of the beneficiaries are illiterate. Within the family the percentage of literacy in female is more (75.3%) as compared to males (53%).
- 2) More than 90% of the beneficiaries are belonging to scheduled tribe.
- 3) About three fourth of the beneficiaries are landless labors.ar number (74%) of the beneficiaries lives below poverty line (BPL).

*B) Perception:*

Since three fourth of the beneficiaries are illiterate, landless and living below poverty line, their perception about the scheme can be prejudged. Accordingly not a single beneficiary knew about the objectives of the scheme and the implementing agency. Moreover, their participation in taking decision about raising woodlot on their panchayat's common land is also negligible. More

than 74% beneficiaries knew that apart from getting temporary employment they were not going to get any benefits from the scheme.

**C) Availability of fuel, fodder and small timber:**

According to the beneficiaries selected for the present study, there is marked increase in the availability of fodder. However, it could not be quantified. As far as the fuel and small timber is concerned, it's premature to say anything as nearly 75% of the woodlots are yet to be harvested.

*a) Utilization of the land:*

Nearly half (48%) of the beneficiaries were using the woodlot land as pasture. They did not use it for any other purpose.

*b) Difficulties and their solutions:*

Most of the beneficiaries (85.33%) did not face any difficulties after tree plantation in their grazing land. This is not surprising because in the study area there are many alternative sources of fodder and fuel available. Those who faced problems of fuel and fodder solved it either by illegal cutting of trees or by allowing their cattle to graze in the plantation area. None of them purchased fodder and fuel from the market.

*c) Selection of Species:*

1. Almost all (98%) of the respondents knew about the species planted in their villages. However, none of them were consulted before selecting the species planted in their respective villages.
2. Casuarina, Eucalyptus and subabool dominated in most of the woodlots.
3. Nearly three fourth (74%) of the respondents were satisfied with the species selected for plantation.

*d) Benefits, Beneficiaries and Distribution of the Benefits:*

1. More than 78% beneficiaries were satisfied with the distribution of fuel wood and fodder. Even though none of them had received it, they believed that the benefit had reached to those who deserved it.
2. There was increase in the employment opportunity. Males (95) received more employment as compared to females (55).
3. In the selected woodlots, from the day of inception of the scheme to the day of collection of information for the present study, a total of 26,751 manday's employment was provided.
4. Almost three fourth (72.67%) beneficiaries accepted that apart from employment generation, other benefits were also obtained from this scheme.

*e) Participation:*

1. All the respondents agreed to the fact that for raising woodlots, participation of all the villagers is necessary.
2. Almost three fourth (74.3%) believe that people of their village had co-operated during the implementation of the scheme.
3. Respondents were ambiguous in replying to the question "How to increase people's participation".

*f) Opinion regarding the scheme:*

Almost all (145) beneficiaries were of the opinion that after maturity of the present woodlot, in future new plantation should be done on the same land. Of these 145, 113 opined so due to employment generating potential of the scheme.

From the above-mentioned findings, it appears that the scheme is successful in achieving its basic objectives. The respondents even though have not received anything except employment

says that the benefits have reached to those who deserved! We should not forget that most of the respondents were living below poverty line! The sarpanchs were also found to be satisfied with the scheme.

However, actual field observations indicate a totally different picture. First of all, there is still shortage of fuel wood and fodder. Majority of the woodlots are yet to mature, even after 10 years of plantation with irrigation. These and other observations pose following questions before the investigator:

1. Whether the basic objectives of the scheme, making local people self sufficient with regard to fuel, fodder and small timber, are achieved or not?
2. Why in majority of the cases (more than 65 %), the wood lots did not mature even after 9-10 years of plantation even though there was irrigation facility available?
3. Why none of the respondents knew about the objectives of the scheme? So is true with sarpanchs. If they do not know about the objectives How do they know whether the objectives are fulfilled or not?
4. Why people did not participate in selection of species to be planted?
5. Why people were not involved in the decision making process even though the procedure for implementing the scheme says to do so?
6. What is the procedure for getting permission for cutting the mature woodlot? Why it takes more than one year to get such permission?
7. Why the sarpanchs and respondents do not know about the benefits, beneficiaries and distribution of benefits?

The answer to the above questions lies in the fact that for implementing such a people oriented noble scheme, a very efficient extension work is expected from the Social Forestry Department. In fact the department has a special Extension Branch and some of its staff is called Forest Extension Assistant (FEA). Most of the schemes of the department are people oriented and participation of villagers is essential in such schemes. Therefore the extension wing is very important for the department. The FEA's are the key persons in successful implementation of such schemes. They assure not only fulfillments of physical targets but also the actual objectives of the scheme.

Unfortunately, it seems from the present study, in the selected villages of Surat district, that the work done under the village woodlot was more towards fulfilling the physical targets. It appears from the findings of the present study that the villagers and the Panchayat members were not briefed about the scheme in a joint meeting called 'Gramsabha'. Only in one out of 35 villages such a meeting was called. The participation of villagers in the selection of species is zero. They do not know about the benefits, beneficiaries and distribution of benefits. Though it is mandatory to call a joint meeting of elected members of village Panchayat, villagers, staff of forest department and other officials associated with the implementation of scheme, before the actual plantation work starts, it was not followed. To us it appears that, it this negligence, which is responsible for the part success of the scheme. The negligence at the level of raising plantation is also evident from the fact that almost 75% of the plantations were irrigated; still after a period of 9-10 years they could not reach the maturity.

It is expected that the staff of social forestry department in general and FEA in particular provide guidance to the Panchayat in obtaining permission for cutting the mature woodlots. But the findings indicate that it takes more than two years to do so.

All in all, during the present study, in area selected, there seems to have a lacuna in the extension work supposed to be done by the Social Forestry Department. However, it is very difficult to generalize these finding for the whole state of Gujarat, as the study area was very small comprising of only 35 villages of Surat district. To have a better understanding of the problems and status of the woodlots in the state further study is necessary.

Similar results were recorded by Saxena (1997), DFID (1994), Katar Singh and Vishwa Ballabh (1989) and Varma (1993). In all the above mentioned research work the common findings says that, institutional arrangements to involve participation in the planning and management of community plantations were not developed and consequently area targets were achieved at the expense of other village uses, notably communal grazing. Saxena (1993) attributed the reasons for failure to the lack of ability to involve local people in the plantation programme, wrong choice of species and unclear land tenure. The failure to define, establish and publicize the rights for marketing and allocating benefits to the community led to the failure of their participation.

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## **Development Communication and Social Change: The Case of Baiga Tribe in Madhya Pradesh**

**Prahlad Mishra**

The aim of the present paper is to understand the process of development communication and social change in India. After independence, conscious efforts have been made by launching five year plans to bring out the desired social change in society. Understanding of this process is addressed by a term 'Development communication' to describe the directed societal change at local and national level. Before proceeding further one has to ask, what is development communication? Development communication is a concept as well as a process (Jamias 1975). As a concept it implies a planned, guided and directed social change in a society. As a process, it is explained in terms of objective, programs, movement and process (Sinha 1976).

### **Objective of National Policy of Development**

Under the national policy of development, five years plans were launched in 1952 to address the over all development of society. First three five years plans were mainly focused on economic development of the country. Later, social development was perceived as a basis for national economy. Education, health, housing, sanitation and others like communication and development of infra structure were given central place in different five years plans. National consensus for socio-economic development of people belonging to weaker sections of society was built and supported through constitutional provisions and their representation was ensured in assembly and parliament. Articles 46, 275, 335, 15, 16, 19 etc. in Indian Constitution safeguard the interest of weaker section and provides social and economic justice in favour of these sections including the tribal section of Indian society (COI 1988). These provisions are becoming meaningful with the pace of education and political development in country.

### **Process of Development and Social Change**

The democratic process of development in the country manifested through the introduction of statutory panchayat. It provides power to people at the grassroot level. Panchayat elections define the concept of morality that is different from traditional one. Cooperation and competition among different sections of community are observed in the process. Elected members achieve political status and action taken by them for development are legally recognized. Parallel to this

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institution traditional panchayats namely caste-Panchayats and village Panchayats constitute generally by village elders became legally non-recognized. People are free to accept or reject its decisions. Moral sanctions of traditional institutions are repressive in its nature. The dialogue between repressive and restitutive law (Durkheim 1933) based on normative values of society are under debate in developing countries. Categorization of societies on cultural basis are vague. Social scientists of developing countries gradually have recognized it. They have redefined modernization (Sharma 1980) and given concepts of 'captive mind' (Alatas 2004) and 'indigenisation' (Atal 2004) to understand the dynamics of developing society.

### **Tribal Movements In India**

British Government during its rule in India scheduled the people living in forest. These people later called scheduled tribes. Most of scheduled tribes are now engaged in settled agriculture. The corporate life of scheduled tribes is very strong. Culturally their personality is well balanced but their economic condition is very poor. Previously they were practicing 'slash and burn' pattern of agriculture. At that time hunting system was also in practice. Currently they are exposed to market system. This system operates on calculation ability.

Tribal are mostly uneducated. Inefficiency of mathematical calculation some times become exploitative and has been recognized as a major factor for their rampant poverty. Local landlords, forest contractors, Banias and money lenders are exploiting them from a long time. History of British rule in India (Mukherjee 1950) reveals the fact that Government had harshly tackled the tribal agitations against the forest laws (1864) colonial authority in India was under the tremendous pressure to revive economy of Britain generated due to the demands of industrialization and the wars (1914-1918, 1938-1942). The shortage of raw materials for British industries, demands of manpower for supply to army, rapid movement for suppressing the revolts in subjugated countries and finally to meet the demands of people for development of infra-structure were the major causes for enactment of different laws to control and handle the people in India. Establishment of schools, hospitals, churches, expansions of post-offices and railways, construction of dams and roads are the resultant of it. Tribals of North hills and Western coast of India responded with joining the forces in British army. Tribals of East, West and South coasts took the jobs in hospitals, churches and schools. Tribals in middle India engaged themselves in construction works of unskilled nature. Under the supervision of Britishers roads, railway lines, bridges and dams were made by these tribals. Forest produces and high quality of wood logs were exported from India to foreign countries. British Government uses man-power of tribal by making the rules for outing the tribal from forests.

After the independence of India (1947), provisions of Indian Forest Act (1865) were changed a little (GOI 1982). Revival of history was seen in vain. Demands for development were put in the first priority. Present agitations of scheduled tribes are being tackled through extending the facilities to them. Community Development Programme and establishment of blocks for tribal welfare are institutionalized. These blocks concentrate on activities to meet the economic, education health and communication needs of tribal. Emergence of local leadership was promoted through the introduction of Panchayati Raj System. Along with five years plans, centre and state governments are providing monetary assistance for construction of schools, panchayat building and roads.

Establishment of cooperatives, centres for training and Tribal Research Institutes are directly involved in tackling some of the major tribal problems. Institutional set-up is promoting employment opportunity, animal husbandry and expanding cottage industries related with agriculture and forest produces along with the activities of primary health care, safe drinking water and other helps to needy people in different social schemes i.e. Rajiv Gandhi Mission, DWCRA etc. are launched in tribal areas.

### **Baiga Tribe in Madhya Pradesh**

Two types of Baiga are found in Madhya Pradesh. Munda-Baiga and the Choti-Baiga, those who cut their hair of head are called Munda-Baiga and who do not cut hair of head are known as Choti-Baiga. Munda-Baigas are found mostly in plain areas while Choti-Baigas prefer to live in hilly track of mountains or in deep forest. Choti-Baigas are furious in nature and uses arrows and bow for their survival. They consider themselves king of jungle. Axes are common weapon used by both kinds of Baigas. Naga-Baiga are the ancestor of all Baigas. Choti-Baigas consider themselves as representatives of Naga-Baiga who remain half naked through out the life. Both kinds of Baigas are found in Baiga-Chak, Dindori district and some part of Ramgarh area of Mandla District of Madhya Pradesh. Baigas are divided into different sub-tribes and they further divided into different Garh and Goti ( Gotra ). During marriage-relation Garh and Goti are observed and that play decisive role in kinship relation. Marriages in similar Ghar and Goti are avoided and considered incestuous. It is totally prohibited by Baiga jurisprudence (Mishra 1996).

For Baigas there is no difference between mental and physical world. Dream for them is as true as a living thing in awakened state of mind. They never feel deprived for not having things of their civilized world. Their psychic-structure make them happy. They do not consider any difference between conscious and unconscious mind. Sub-conscious is a trans-stage that unite conscious and unconscious world. They perceive all the things in totality. That makes the life of Baiga easy. In Baiga community no one is ugly and neither one is bastered. Divorce and remarriages are common. Keeping more than one wife is no offence. Having sexual lust before marriage is paradoxical but community pardoned the person by charging some amount of money as a fine. Married women are custodian of society and have responsibility for continuity of this world. Baigas believe in spirit that is abstract in nature. It lives in human body and after death of body transform into an abstract form. Death is considered abnormal while birth is a normal phenomenon. Normally rebirth is a birth of spirit of the relative who by regulative law born in the same family. Spirit of an ancestor is reborn in the same descendant family that is recognized through the symbols found on the body of a newly born child. In this context practice of tattooing in Baigas become meaningful. It is considered a cloth of body in present life and a symbol of recognition for relatives after the death (Elvin 1986). Mental construct of Baiga life operates always in circle in which past, present and future is defined and redefined depending on the situation in which they are living.

### **Development and Social Change in Baiga Community The Case of Baiga Chak**

Baigas are considered Baidyas. Few Baidyas are expert and have knowledge of herbs and magic and used it to cure physical and mental illness in tribal locale. Their services are on high demand in tribal communities. As most of the Baigas are living on or below poverty line and are uneducated, they in illness approach first to these Baidyas. By virtue of their quality they are

recognized as traditional leader of their community. In Baiga Chak Primary Health Centre (PHC) are established. Doctors are usually visiting the centre. Chronic patients come for their treatment to these centre. They are treated free of cost. Medicine prescribed for treatment are normally distributed. Records of it are kept in Centre. Patients do not intake these medicine usually. They complain that intake of Allopathic medicine make them more sick. Headache are common complain. Query highlights that Allopathic medicine require rich diet and that is not available to these poor patients at home.

The social and cultural life of Baigas are very rich. Ceremonial occasions are linked with birth of a child, marriage and death. Festivals are linked with seasonal cycle mainly the agricultural crops. All festivals and ceremonies of Baigas start with drink and dining and end with dance. Baigas are habitual drinkers. Access drinking of alcohol makes them lazy. Alcohol made of Mahua is called country liquor. Mahua liquor has central place in Baiga's social, economic religious and cultural patterns of life. Without offering the liquor to deity at first no worship can be completed. The habits of drinking though make their personality culturally balanced but in poverty ridden society alcohol has adverse effect on their health, economy and education. Mention can be made of school going children who during the summer season avoid to go at school. They prefer to collect Mahua in the forest that is used for food as well as for making the liquor used through out the year.

Baigas who are living in non settled villages avoid to live near the approachable roads. When forest road is made up-to their hamlet they usually leave the place in night and went some where else to settle. Baigas of roaming hamlet always keep distance from outsiders including local government officials. Interference in personal life is always avoided by local Baigas while forest officials have upper hand in forest areas. Forest officials are custodian of forest laws that is misinterpreted by forest dwellers. Resistance and mal practices are normally found in Baiga land.

Under the scheme of planned development Baiga Vikas Pradhikaran (1976) was established. The chana Block of Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh is emerged as main centre for Baiga development. Baiga of this area has attracted people of different walk of life and professions to observe the change. Different programmes of development are launched here. Effect of these programme over a period of time have been recorded by Government and Non Government agencies. Results are encouraging. Health, education, agriculture, communication, cooperatives, housing, employment, forestry, training centre, animal husbandry, cottage industries etc. are all concentrated in Baiga Chak. Field observations indicate that Baiga have started settled cultivation. They have legal hold on land for agriculture. Non-tribal can not purchase the land of a tribal by law. Tribal Blocks encourage animal husbandry and cottage industries. Subsidy is provided on bank loans. Cooperative society provides food grains on cheaper rates. Beside these, Tribal Health Centres have trained personnels to take care of health in these areas. Housing facilities are made available and hand pumps have been installed and provisions for electricity supply to tribal areas have also been made. Along with these permanent programmes different schemes related to child and mother care are also launched.

Analysis of data gathered through field observations in Baiga region indicate that there are interactions between formal and informal institutions. Personnels belonging to government and semi-government agencies and leaders of Baiga community in interaction have agreed upon

to solve some of the major problems faced by the Baiga community. Schools and health care centres inspite of its respective humanistic values have little attraction from the Baiga population. Schools are not much attractive places for Baiga children. After ten years of age drop out cases among girls are found more in comparison to boys. Variation in level of education between boys and girls have have given rise to gender discrimination in Baiga community. Considerable number of educated boys of Baiga community feel deprived of having no choice but to marry an illiterate girl as to have his life-partner. Program for women health care are less known to women in comparison to male members who are also significantly less in number. Channels of communication for development and inflow of information are still going through interpersonal communication rather than institutionalized set up made for this purpose. Marketing as an institution is taking place in Baiga Chak. That has promoted interaction of tribals with outsiders. Money lending practices in a concealed way has started by the non-tribal traders via the weekly markets taking place in the region. Customary laws and legal laws are coexisting in Baiga community. Traditional authority ceased to operate and become helpless in such offences which are reported to police. It creates a tension and mutual distrust between government authorities and Baiga community.

### Conclusion

Development communication is a continuous process. Planned development schemes of Indian Government have resulted to transcend tribal local loyalty into a broader unit that is nation state. Slowly but steadily institutionalized measures are promoting the communicative integration (Landecker 1951) in Baiga community. Efforts are needed to create mutual understanding and trust between government officials and Baiga along with leaders, politicians, forest contractors, administrators, social scientists who are more or less linked with understanding of tribal development and nation building in India.

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## **Rishikas in Rig-Veda: An Uninformed Indian Women Ideal**

**Ruchi Ghosh Dastidar**

India has a long tradition of story telling. Unlike the west where history is recorded, storytelling was the traditional method of keeping our past alive. These stories therefore give interesting details of human society and psyche and are a part of our social experiences and to that extent social history. Let's start with a story from our hoary past, it may be familiar to some, nonetheless it is relevant here.

Munikumar Galav, arrogant disciple of sage Vishwamitra, insists on giving his Guru Vishwamitra gurudakshina, even though the sage wants nothing. In exasperation Vishwamitra asks for 800 white ashwamedhi horses with black ears to boot. Only 600 such horses exist in Aryavarta, three kings owning 200 each. People advise Galav to go to King Yayati, who now lives in an ashram, but has a prodigious reputation for generosity. Yayati gives him his daughter Madhavi obviously to help Galav. Madhavi beautiful and accomplished is blessed with two boons: she can renew her virginity and youth whenever she wants and each son she bears will be a chakravarti. So Galav gives her away to one horse-owning king after another for just one year in return for the 200 ashwamedhi horses they possess. She in turn gives them each a son. Still they are 200 short. So Madhavi is then offered to Vishwamitra for a year and he dispenses with the last 200 horses.

Roles women played in society and the images we have of them develop not simply from the exigencies of biological and social institutions but are deeply rooted in the myths and the legends and the religion of the culture. Ghadially(1988). Clearly Madhvi is not allowed to develop relationships and is denied emotional attachments.

The males, full of themselves, preserve their "reputations" — Yayati for generosity, Galav for his gurudakshina pledge. Galav is insensitive to her moving from harem to harem, leaving a son behind each time. The end is peculiar, Yayati holds a massive swayamvar; one wonders why since he has already gifted Madhav to Galav. The three kings attend the swayamvar with their sons by Madhavi, hoping to attract her favour. Meanwhile Galav has become a bit uptight and doesn't want to participate in the swayamvar (she has lived with his guru, so how can he take her now?) Finally Madhavi taking her own decision walks out on the swayamvar.

Yayati is the ancestor of the puru dynasty, the fore father of rishi Vedvyas, who is credited with giving the Rigved its present form.

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Disparity in the social roles of men and women is in all societies. Our perception of women, women's roles, virtues and vices have been the subject of lively discussions since times immemorial. In fact literature is raft with images of women and these images do inform social expectations, especially religious literature in a traditional and religious society like India is influential. However we see only two images of women mostly –one venerated, eulogized and immortalized wife/mother and the other hated, shunned and condemned image of a witch/loose character women. This “anthology has emanated from our growing realization that cultural ideas, symbols, values and mores have played a crucial role in the creation of women images and the reinforcement of gender dichotomies.” Jain and Mahajan, (1996). Clearly the dominant theme is way beyond fertility rites and is marriage and the control of women within patriarchy.

*Ahalya, Draupadi, Kunti, Tara and Mandodari tatha  
Panchakanya smaranityam mahapataka nashaka”.*

The above shloka “seems like an aberration to the practice prevalent in the society as it records a very interesting deviation from the stereotyped image of the revered women of the epics and more so when we all know that these women were not only very much married women but strangely had “known” more than one man in their life.” Saroj Thakur(2001) Clearly this is meant as a warning to those who may transgress.

The Adikanda account is typically frank regarding Ahalya's conscious choice to satisfy her curiosity. The sole beautiful woman in creation, she is the eternal feminine responding characteristically to the ardent, urgent, direct sexual advances of the ruler of heaven who presents such a dazzling contrast to her ascetic, aged, forest-dwelling husband. Mortal woman welcomes the intimate touch of heaven's immortal, driven by an irrepressible curiosity for varied and unusual experiences and a willingness to take risks for this that marks the feminine..... It is a fine instance of the interlinking of the anima and the animus.

Ahalya is attracted to Indra precisely because she projects her animus on to him. For Indra, Ahalya is the anima personified because she is creation's loveliest mortal woman. This is a mutually reinforcing, irresistible mutual attraction. Although prior to this encounter Ahalya has already had a son, Shatananda, by Gautama yet her womanhood remained unfulfilled. The kanya is not just mother but also beloved and this aspect had not been actualized in her relationship with Gautama. As the first kanya not born of woman, she has the courage to respond to the call of her inner urge, but is unable to challenge the sentence pronounced by patriarchal society. When Ahalya protested that she could not recognize the disguised Indra and was not guilty of willful wickedness, Gautama prescribed that he would take her back but only after Rama had purified her. We witness here a male backlash that condemns the woman as soiled.(ibid).Gautam, Vishavamitra are sages mentioned in the Rigved .According to a school of thought the stories in the purans although compiled at a latter point of time are actually **concurrent** to Rigvedic times.

Patriarchal culture has given a masculine definition of women's ideals and images. Wadley speaks of duality of women in Hindu ideology identified with nature; control of her sexuality decides her benevolent or malevolent nature. The peculiarity being that throughout history these two stereotypes have been reinforced by archetypes. Fergusson, (1973). Why is it that no other images come to our minds when we try and comprehend Hindu women? Indeed are there any other images available in our literature and past?

Images from the **Mahabharata** and **Ramayana** and even the **Puranas** have dominated literature. Most of these women find a place in the list of revered women by adhering to “pativrata dharma”, a virtue much sought after in the earlier times as it is even today and to that extent it defines womanliness even today.

Here to it is alleged that there is a tendency to generalize and treat all Hindus as a category, but it must be remembered that it has been a dominant influence. We know vaguely of some Vedic goddess, who by their virtues of being Goddess, are far removed from being idols for women and therefore don't serve as role models, besides being far removed from patriarchy and domesticity both. Also some passing mention is found of Rishikas of the Vedas. But who were these Rishikas, what did they do, why are they known, how come women were writing in our distant past, how come they were allowed matters of philosophy and religion, etc. are unanswered questions to most of us.

They are at best good names for children, thanks to Gayatri pariwar, Swami Dayanand and other such protagonist whose work have at least kept alive some memories from our past. These Rishikas were very learned, as of the rest, we presume Sanskrit scholars would know. Why have not tried to know more about them? Recent research in this area tells us why, reason enough to revisit. See Kak, Telageri, etc. Looking at these reasons goes way beyond epistemological and scientific reasons. It shows how sciences and scientific perception can be socially colored. It also shows how social perceptions are culturally and socially structured **and how** women's roles and perception about women are created in social processes.

Rig-Veda is one of the most revered texts of the Hindus yet the majority **of Hindus have** not read it; when they do, it surprises its readers. Not only is this because the text hardly comes across as a religious text full of religious prescriptions for life and death, it actually goes much beyond. It is not the matter for religious orthodoxy and bigotry and the bastion of patriarchy and gender domination in a certain sense, while also depicting the vilest of practices. It is in fact an exceptional text to this extent.

For one, despite its antiquity it has at least **thirty** six women seers. Unusual for any text that old, least of all for one considered the fountainhead of all-Hindu philosophy. Rig-Veda addresses **the women's questions**. It reflects the aspirations, achievements and ascriptions of women. It reflects the vision of society of women, their roles, their life and the space it provides to them is important. Since most feminist theories tend to see patriarchy (**predominantly** supported and formed by religions tenants), as the root of women's subjugation and low bargaining space it will be interesting to note how these hymns relate to modern day **women's** concerns. Besides where did the RigVedic society go? Could it have perished overnight? A society can't just vanish they have continuities in succeeding generations. What and where are these continuities? Scholars believe these continuities can be traced right down to modern times, besides more clearly some of the practices and social patterns have found mention in texts as late as Kautalia's Arthshatra.

Therefore, our study will naturally have **reflections** of the social system and its institutions prelevant in the Rig Vedic society. An attempt is thus made to look in to the social provisions, which may be said to empower women in the Rig Vedic society. Most of all **can** the Rig-Vedic women seers be classified as being empowered? Also, why don't we hear of these women as role models, sparing the few references we get of their scholarship? Why do they not inform the social identity of Indian women and womanhood as such? Clearly communication is a selective and

distorted process. The Indian women ideal is informed by other parameters, ignorant of our past in a sense, or more precisely selective. Further why have we easily presumed that the Rig-Veda will be the bastion of parochialism and patriarchy and therefore anti women? How are these perceptions formed and such presumptions sustained? Clearly to understand the past we first need to be aware of our projections of the present. Can any projection/methodology/knowledge be free of its social context?

Going back to another much explored story, in the relationship between Kunti and Pandu, the freedom of choice available to the woman is quite clear. All of Pandu's hectoring and citing of precedents fails. It is only when he joins his palms in abject prayer and pleads with her that Kunti agrees to obtain children as he desires. Even then, she does not agree to go to a Brahmin as he wants, but announces her power to summon any God. Where Pandu prescribes, every time, which god Kunti must have intercourse with; it is an interestingly different story with his favorite Madri. Pandu does not approach her to beget children by other men because he is not sure that it would be to her liking (this is what he tells her when she approaches him to obtain for her the mantra from Kunti). He not only persuades Kunti to share her mantra with Madri, but leaves the choice of the god wholly to her! Understandably, Kunti feels outsmarted and has no hesitation in refusing to oblige Pandu when he asks her to give Madri another chance, for she fears that her co-wife will get more sons than she has [Adi Parva, 124.26].

These stories although centuries apart are uncomfortably familiar because of the continuities that may be drawn from them. Pandus and Kauravs belong to the puru dynasty, a tribe in the Rigved, and cultural continuity is claimed by a lot of scholars. For example present day marriage rites are styled on the **Surya** Savitri hymn in the Rigveda.

#### **Rishikas in the Rig-Veda:**

RigVeda is considered to be *aupurash* i.e. not conceived of by mortals. They were received by some rishis and preserved for future generations. The Vedas are part of the Hindu Shruti — these religious scriptures form part of the core of **the Brahmanical** and Vedic traditions within Hinduism. There is considerable controversy with regards to the dating of the Rigveda and the origin of the Aryans. Newer research in this area has conclusively provided some answers though. It is now believed to be among the oldest text in the world and its **authenticity** is now widely acknowledged. There are over 403 Rishis in the Rig Veda who are credited with 1027 mantras. The RV is divided **into** 10 Books or Mandals and each Mandal is credited or attributed to a particular Rishi as below: -

Mandal mixed	(6)	Mandal Bharadwaja
Mandal Gritsamada	(7)	Mandal Vashishta
Mandal Vishwamitra	(8)	Mandal Kanwa
Mandal Vamdeva	(9)	Mandal Angiras
Mandal Atri	(10)	Mandal mixed

Out of these over 403 Rishis there are also some women Rishikas who have emoted various Mantras. Most of these Mantras are from the 10th Mandal. There is little agreement amongst scholars as to the number of these Rishikas the number of 36 is generally agreed to form the least. Some of these names are abstract qualities or inanimate objects or even their authorship

is contested. But it cannot be contested that women seers emoted in the RV and that these portions are not mere reflection of their male counterparts. Although research in women studies generally agrees that the further back we go in time the more primitive is the society that we see. Not only is this held true at the materialistic & technological level but also at the philosophical & ideational level. This view is seriously challenged by the stories of these Rishikas

The general belief/misconception is that only men have contributed to the Vedas. This myth needs to be broken and the view to be projected is that enlightened Rishikas also have written various suktas in the Rig Veda. The Vedic Rishikas were also called Bharmavadnis and these women were named in the Brhaddevata of Saunaka and Arsanukramaani in which 27 women poetesses are mentioned who have composed these hymns. They are Ghosa, Godha, Visvavara, Apala, Upanisa, Nisad, Juhu or Brahmajaya, sister of Agastya, Aditi, Indrani, mother of Indra, Sarama, Romasa, Urvasi, Lopamudra, Rivers (Viipasa and Sutudri), Yami, Sasvati, Sri, laksa, Sarparajni, Vak, Sraddha, Medha, Daksina, Ratri and Surya Savitri

But from our reading we find some more women going by the gender of the noun, who have composed these hymns. Other Rishikas not mentioned in the Brihad Devta by Saunaka are Indrashnusha vasukra patni, Jarita Sharngah, Mamta Sachi Paulomi, Sikhandini Kashyapi, Sikta Nivavari, Suditi rangirasah, Tvashta Garbhakarta. There is also some concern as to the authorship of some of the rishikas for they seem to be abstract qualities or inanimate object like Ratri night or Bipasha, which is a river, but at the other end looking in the contents of the verses makes things further complicated by this logic Some of them spoke to deities, others discussed philosophical matters, and some dealt with domestic issues some parts also deal with personal desires and wishes. Their suktas give us an insight into the Rigvedic society, its cultural and social processes and practices.

In the Rig Veda every Sukta of the Vedic Mantra has a Devata or some God in whose praise the mantra has been emoted and there is also a rishi /rishika whose name is mentioned as the authoress of that particular mantra. It is also interesting to note that most of these Rishikas were related to some of the rishis of the Rig-Veda as wife, mother, daughter, sister, etc, some were related to Gods or were Gods themselves .To this extent one can presume the historicity of the character. Also it may be alleged that it was these relationships which found them space, but it must be remembered that there is a relationship between social abilities and social status. Therefore any such conclusions will be hasty. Also the writings of most of these Rishikas are not in the same mould as that of rishis, thus they do exhibit independent identities and also women concerns to an extent and that these have found place in a philosophical/religious collections is amazing and unparalleled.

These Rishikas have been divided into 7 groups following categorization done by Tiwari (2002), followed by a table showing the relationship of the Rishikas.

**Classification of Rishikas**

Related to the gods or gods themselves—Indramatarah, Indrasnusa, Indrani, Aditi, Surya, Savitri, Yami, Vaivasavati, Sachi Paulomi.

Pertaining to Rishis and Kings—Agastyavasa, Apala, Atreyi, Sashvati Angirasi, Ghosa, Kaksivati, Juhu Brahmajaya, Romasha, Lopamudra, Visvavara Atreyi.

Apsaras—Urvashi, Sikhandinyau Kashyapi.

Creatures other than human beings—Devasune or Sarama, Godha, Sarparajni.

Inanimate objects—Nadyah, Ratri, Daksina.

Abstract things –Vak, Sraddha.

Rishikas of Khila Sukta –Sri, Laksa, Medha, Upanishad and Nisad.

Most historians of ancient India, both Indian and western, conclude that the position of women in Vedic India was “fairly satisfactory” (Altekar 1978: 338), but they tend to treat the condition of women in a topical manner that does not pay much attention to continuity and change through chronological periods. The major sources for their information are textual, for example the four collections of Vedas. Because of their oral transmission, these religious texts lack chronological precision.

Two more recent historians of religion have opposing conclusions. Wendy O’Flaherty has characterized the Rig Veda, the earliest collection of Aryan religious hymns dating from about 1000 to 800 B.C., as “a book by men about male concerns in a world dominated by men [and] one of these concerns is women...” O’Flaherty divides the hymns about women into conversation hymns and marriage hymns. Both types are concerned with sexual rejection of the female by the male, but the marriage hymns end happily whereas the conversation ones frequently do not (O’Flaherty 1980).

Julia Leslie thinks that some Vedas were composed by women who performed sacrifices to the Aryan Gods (Vishvavara) and probably wore the sacred thread that signified their knowledge of the Vedas and participation in sacrifice, the key religious act of the Aryans. She argues that three of the most notable hymns composed by women are Ghosa (Rg Veda [RV] X, 39 & 40), Apala (RV VIII, 80), and Visvavara (RV V, 28). It is however her deductions which draw our attention: .Cultural limitations have been pointed out by many scholars.

Apala sacrificed to Indra, the god of storms and monsoons, telling him “Drink thou this Soma [a still undefined ritual liquid which may be translated literally as moon juice] pressed with teeth, accompanied with grain and curds, with cake of meal and song of praise and asked for personal favor in exchange.” This story is interesting in the continuity one can see in the Mahabharata. The depiction of Satyavati who doesn’t falter while exchanging sexual favor for personal advancement. Sexual submission actually led to enhancing her prospects and not the reverse. Also see Ghosha.

Visvavara offered sacrifice to Agni, the fire god and a major rival of Indra, pouring oil on the fire and chanting, “Thy glory, Agni, I Adore, Kindled, exalted in thy strength” (Leslie 1983: 91-92). Thus the evidence is mixed on whether or not the Vedic age was a golden age for women. In other parts of the world the shift to a sedentary, agricultural economy appears to have reduced the physical mobility, the public economic activity, and the personal rights of women, and there is

evidence that by the end of the Vedic period such changes were occurring in the lives of Aryan women.

### **Status of Women in the Rig-Veda**

Within the Rig-Veda we see both glorifications of women as well as a counter strand. It is generally recognized that some parts of RV portray women as enjoying a high status and many privileges. Many women are referred to with respect and admiration. They enjoyed opportunities of education, religious participation, discussion and public debates etc. Women received education as well as imparted it. Women could devote their whole life to education and remain unmarried 'Brahamavadinis'. (V.7.1) (III: 55:16)(III:33:1-3) and Sadyodvahas latter got married and lived conjugal lives. A learned lady Pathyaswasti traveled great distances for scholarship and was called 'Vadi'.

Girls had upanayana performed for them and carried out the sandhya rites. Seclusion of women was unknown, as was the concept of purdha and there are references of young girls leading free lives and having a decisive voice in the selection of their husbands.

The idea of conjugal equality is expressed in (V, 61; VII) the most controversial Hindu practice of sati, clearly has no sanction in the Rigved. The Rigveda (x 18:8) clearly commands the widow to return to the living. Women participated in public debates as shown by sulabha of sanah in **SABHA AND VIDHATA** Marriage was not compulsory for women. Wife's presence was essential in all rituals, but it is also seen that the role of wife of a sacrifice performer was defined in terms of instrumentality (III, 8.2.5) and their ritual rites were limited.

Bride's position in her father – in – laws house was exalted. A mother was seen as the best preceptor for her children and women had inheritance rights. Women warriors like Vishpala, Mudgalani, Danu, Sharhiyasi, Vadhrimati have been mentioned. Age of marriage seems to be much after puberty. Status as a mother is greater than heaven itself.

Passages show that the birth of a daughter was an unwelcome event, whilst another passage shows the father reciting a prayer for the welfare of his daughter after returning from journey (AP. G.S., XV, 12-3). There are goddesses of power and resources mentioned in the Rig-Veda.

Both men and women offered daily prayers. Some of the Rishikas are related to the Gods or are Gods themselves. The Vedic pantheon includes a substantial number of female gods. Women were allowed to remarry and have children when widowed (X, 18.8) (Niyog). Women (wife's) position in her husband's family was of authority (RV X-85; 86) word 'Kulap - means protector of family. The system of polygamy and polyandry were present. Even descent is seen to have both the matrilineal as well as patrilineal pattern. Women were seen to be the property of men and could be gifted (8:85:40), thus making their subordination inherent. Marriage was seen as their natural social role and desire for son's endemic (X, 85 - 44:45).

Ownership of wealth was primarily male. Women were allowed to choose their own spouses. Women had rights in marriage as well as duties. Some aspects of marriage find mention in mahabharat as when a valuable insight into the ancient customs is provided by Pandu when, for persuading Kunti to have sons by other men, he relates to her that in the past women were not restricted indoors, nor were they dependant on male family members, but moved around freely,

enjoying themselves as they wished, having intercourse with any man they liked from the age of puberty.

Pandu specifically says, “They were unfaithful to their husbands and yet were not held sinful”, for that was the accepted custom of those days (Adi parva, 122.4-5). Pandu adds the information that the greatest sages praise this tradition, that “the new custom is very recent” [122.8] and, most significantly, that “the northern Kurus still practise it” [122.7]. That is the precedent Yudhishtira refers to when he counters Drupada’s objections to all five brothers marrying his daughter with the declaration that in this they follow the practice of their ancestors [Adi parva, 197.28].

Certain kinds of knowledge were defined as generative. We see examples of women engaged in warfare. There is mention of a woman queen Vishpala. Child marriage was prohibited RV 3.55.1 women participated in public life viz yagnas and sabhas RV (1:22:2}, RV {1:167:3} samana {4:58:8}. Women were also kept as servants almost like slaves and were given in tributes in times of war. RV (6:27:8).

Narratives show how an ugly / diseased women pining for marriage asks the Gods to help her. Women are allegedly intellectually inferior (VIII: 33: 17) RV includes a prayer to ensure that the bride will not be of fearsome eye, or a destroyer of her husband (X: 85 : 44). What can be asserted is the clear absence of sati, johar, child marriage, dowry and female infanticide. A widow had no stigma attached and could chose to live a full life.

Of the direct ancestors of the lunar dynasty, the Brahmin girl Devayani remains unforgettable for the imperious confidence with which she grasps the hand of king Yayati, will not take no for an answer, and successfully forges an inter-caste marriage, possibly the first such in the epic. She even succeeds in turning the Asura-princess into her maidservant, but loses Yayati to Sharmishtha’s blandishments and the kingdom slips out of her progeny’s hands to Puru, her rival’s son. Clearly no single statement can be made about the status of women in the Rig-Veda. That it was exceptionally good is just as true as its reverse.

### **Emerging issues**

For one, no other religious texts give women as much space as has been given in the Rig-Veda. Women seers emoting in the most sacred of all texts is unthinkable in most world religions. Secondly in the narratives we see women actively interact with their male counterparts and using the system in their favor. Thirdly, although no single institution stands out as one favoring women, yet in its overall functional aspect we see social institutions lend themselves to women friendly interaction see Apala ,Ghosha, Romsha, Lopamudra etc. These women not only assert their rights but effectively find solutions to their problems by negotiating with men and Gods. To that extent one may conclude that Rig-Veda women were empowered in the modern parlance.

This is further born out by the fact that chastity was not a predominant obsession with the Rig-Veda society. Dirghatamas and daughter of Kakshivat, both composers of hymns in praise of Ashwins, Ghosha has two entire hymns of the tenth book, each containing 14 verses, assigned to her name. The first eulogizes the Ashwins, the heavenly twins who are also physicians; the second is a personal wish expressing her intimate feelings and desires for married life. Ghosha suffered from an incurable disfiguring disease, probably leprosy, and remained a spinster at her father’s house. Her implorations with the Ashwins, and the devotion of her forefathers towards them,

made them cure her disease and allow her to experience wedded bliss. Here is a woman who bargains to solve her problem and is not limited by definitions of morality and chastity. In some of these stories we find women also asking favor for their families, showing their relationship with wider issues.

Another story of assertion is that of Lopamudra. The Rig Veda has long conversations between the sage Agasthya and his wife Lopamudra that testify to the great intelligence and goodness of the latter. As the legend goes, Lopamudra was created by sage Agasthya and was given as a daughter to the King of Vidarbha. The royal couple gave her the best possible education and brought her up amidst luxury. When she attained a marriageable age, Agasthya, the sage who was under vows of celibacy and poverty, wanted to own her. Lopa agreed to marry him, and left her palace for Agasthya's hermitage. After serving her husband faithfully for a long period, Lopa grew tired of his austere practices. She wrote a hymn of two stanzas making an impassioned plea for his attention and love. Soon afterwards, the sage realized his duties towards his wife and performed both his domestic and ascetic life with equal zeal, reaching a wholeness of spiritual and physical powers.

Women could choose not to marry. The role models available to them are varied. There were women actively engaged in warfare as already mentioned earlier. Urvashi was a proponent of the fine arts. Women are depicted as preparing to go to **SAMANS** social gatherings where all members of society could mix irrespective of gender. Motherhood was not only welcomed it was almost elevated to divinity. Society seems to be patriarchal but one doesn't see it result in women's seclusion, nor refusal of their right to property. Women too are seen to be praying for wealth example of Apala. RV 8:91 . Katyayani in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Madhu Kand clearly shows her preference for wealth.

Women's health issues are not glossed over, Maudgalya gets a leg and Juhi golden hands. A child born out of marriage is not stigmatized.... and has equal access to education as any other child. A bride is expected to rule over her husband's family like a queen and dowry as a burden to womanhood doesn't seem to exist. We do find Apala and Ghosha pining for marriage because they are not physically beautiful due to health reasons. This can hardly be interpreted as women's identity being molded by social standards of beauty. Quite unlike today's feminine concept where women go overboard trying to fit into male fantasies fanned by media and market forces.

In these mantras we also find women actively participating in decision making. Kaytyayani & Maitreyi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Madhu Kand are given a choice about their future. There are a number of instances about women choosing their spouses. Urvashi refuses to co-habitat with Pururava despite his pursuit. King Pururavas was infatuated with the heavenly Apsara.

She lays **down** a few conditions to live with him and thus the emperor spends four years happily with the woman he desires. But when the emperor forgets the conditions she had laid. Urvashi leaves him for failing to keep his word.(Much like Ganga in another story). Driven to grief at her separation, the emperor wanders and finally finds her playing with her friends. He requests her to come back with him but she refuses. The conversation that is held between them can be found in Rig Veda,( 10:95).

Lopamudra asserts her conjugal rights. Indrani doesn't pine away like a woman burdened with co-wives to share her husband with. She herself destroys them. The devisukta can hardly be called modest it is a clear assertion of women's identity and ability. In the Rig-Veda we see both

the sexes freely mixing and participating in social life and styling it. No where do we see in these Rishikas the image of the poor, meek and victimized women mutely accepting her social reality and trying to fulfill patriarchal dictates at the cost of their self and individual identity.

The first one to appear in the Rig Veda is Romasa. Intolerant of her husband's criticism that she was a small girl; she paid self-encomiums about her beauty and composed a hymn. The hymn by Aditi is not only a beautiful composition and given to philosophical interpretations it depicts the image of women in all her finery.

Also these works are examples of fine poetry and social knowledge, showing the capabilities of the women seers, who couldnot have lived dull and limiting lives.

*"Starting at dawn and leaving for those houses where the yagas are Being performed, where are your chariots finally reaching as destination? At The end of the day? Who adorns your chariots for you? (Rig Veda X 40.1)*

### **Conclusions**

The popular conception is that the further back we go in time worse is the situation of women. This is a conception not borne by the facts as presented in the R.V. It is also popularly believed that religious ideology is responsible for legitimizing women's subjugation, which again cannot be supported in the light of RV.

The development of ideology and its interpretation are to an extent procedural and must be viewed in the light of social functioning and processes. Patriarchy as viewed today is time and culture specific. The fact is that historical explanations as well as feminist interpretations have glossed over these differences, resulting in moribund theories, which cannot reflect social reality. Social construction of women's image as 'chaste' 'sati savitri' is the end result of centuries, exactly because it fits into our mould of social organization and not the reverse.

By controlling women's sexuality society subjugates women, but it doesn't solve the problem of male aggression besides ignoring the superimposition of different social institutions. Women's status is fallout of systemic needs to an extent. How these needs impinge upon social systems and influence social ideals and perception need to be elaborated. Clearly they prevent women from perceiving and pursuing their own needs.

The treatment meted out to Dirghatama by his wife shows the freedom women enjoyed. Disgusted with his public indulgence in "the practices of the cow-race" (Adi Parva, 104, 241), she refuses to take after the blind sage, scorns his advice to take him to the Kshatriyas who will pay well for his progenitive powers to provide their dynasties with virile sons, and has her sons throw him into the river. That is when Dirghatama lays down the first commandment restricting the freedom of women, prescribing that every woman must be faithful to one man throughout her life and even after his death must not seek union with another man. Any transgressor, he pronounces, shall be counted corrupted [Adi parva, 104.31-32].

In Rig-Veda society there were no artificial restrictions beyond what we call Rta then it is easy to understand that the concept of sin is a very big misnomer. There is need to understand the construction of social perception and demistyfy Indian Womens Ideal. The increased vulnerability of women today due to market and social changes calls for better understanding of women's roles and construction of social perception and how it moulds social reality.

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## Towards Understanding “Social Mobility’ : Critique of Approaches

*Deepthi S.*

Social Mobility is a dynamic process through which the changes in the society can be examined. The term ‘social mobility’ springs out of the phenomenon of social stratification<sup>1</sup>. It is a sensitive subject referring to the division and social ranking of the people in a society and revolves around complex institutions like class and caste. Implicit in this system of stratification is inequality. Social mobility and social inequality are not only closely related to each other but also reinforce one another. Sociology of social stratification seeks to analyze the structure, process and ideology of social inequality in society. Social mobility in most of the studies is understood as movements of people from one social position to another. Sorokin<sup>2</sup> defines social mobility as ‘any transition of an individual or social object or value from one social position to another’. (Sorokin 1964: 133). It refers to a broader concept of social change rooted in the pattern of stratification in the society.

This paper is an attempt to understand social mobility from two divergent views known as Distributive approach and Social relations approach<sup>3</sup>. Distributive approach is an individualistic approach to understand the phenomenon of social mobility. It emphasises on the possession and distribution of individual attributes, which can be measured and graded. The individual obtains or loses certain attributes while undergoing the social mobility process. The focus is on the individual and the social mobility process is understood from the individual point of view. In other words, if social mobility is studied within the scope of a defined occupational hierarchy, then it is to adopt distributive approach to the phenomenon. Here, the society is looked at as an aggregate of individuals, whose characteristics stem from their social positions. On the other hand, social relation approach focuses on the social relations between groups and individual and is expressed in terms of mutual relations or interactions between groups. In this theory, the unequal distribution of goods among individuals or groups is viewed as resulting from certain features of social relations. Knowledge of social relations, which are both spontaneously formed and institutionalized, becomes a pre-requisite for an understanding of the nature of social processes. Unlike the distributive approach, which places a premium on individual units or attributes, this approach has institutional orientation in explaining the social mobility process in the society. Social relations emerging from various social institutions, which contribute to the individual’s social mobility is taken into account while

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understanding the process. It focuses not merely on the social relations between individuals and groups, but also on the institutions, ideologies (norms and rules) that determine the social structure. Emphasis is laid on how the social mobility of a group or community is the result of the interaction with society and its institutions. While distributive approach is built upon individual's behavior to determine the social structure, social relation approach tries to see it other way round. (Mach et al 1986)

The distributive approach is often regarded as a partial attempt to inquire into social structure. It severely restricts sociological thinking about social structure. As is often claimed, a major shortcoming of such an approach is that it avoids the whole issue of social relations between individuals and groups. Not that studying the attributes of individuals is insignificant, but focusing entirely on them would tend to ignore important aspects of social relations. Distributive approach gives a definite and quantifiable result and may be helpful for short-term understanding of the phenomenon of 'social mobility'. It may be useful for immediate policy needs but may fail to analyze social mobility as an institutional phenomenon. The two approaches seek to explain social inequality by stressing different aspects of the structure. The distributive approach focuses on stratification scales, which are imagined and visualized as the distribution and on the inequality of opportunity. In the relational approach, the focus is on the structured conditions visualized as social relations and distribution of goods are considered as the consequence of such relations. Sociologists, most of the time, stress on either one of the structural aspects. Those interested in the inequality of conditions have a tendency to criticize the unnecessary stress on mobility studies being done adopting distributive approach. They argue that by underestimating inequality of conditions, sociology fails to explain the actual process of mobility and ends up only in describing them. It is necessary to examine both, the inequality of opportunity and inequality of situation while understanding the social mobility process. Tumin (1994) for instance also states that 'Equality of Opportunity' is different from the concept of 'Equality of Situation'. Most of the time there shall be equality of opportunities and inequalities of situation in the same society.

Researchers (Bond and Saunders 1999) have made an attempt to study the nature of occupational selection<sup>4</sup> in Britain using the comparison of both Status attainment tradition and Class structurationist tradition. These traditions spring from distributive and social relations approaches. Both the approaches open stimulating debates on mobility studies. The class structurationist approach, which is popular in British mobility studies, believe that, people's occupational attainment and achievement depends upon the factors associated with their class origin. The status attainment research quite popular in U.S.A, on the other hand, believes that the individual characteristics such as ability, motivation, ambition etc are the key factors, which are likely to influence occupational achievement in individuals.

The two approaches in social mobility studies have exhibited enough differences justifying their mutually opposite interests. They differ in the questions they seek to address and in the way they measure key concepts and also in the methods they employ to analyse the evidence. The status attainment approach takes measures of occupational status as its dependent variable and tries to predict individual position on this occupational hierarchy with reference to various other attributes like socio-economic background, education etc., which act as independent variables. The class structurationist approach, in contradiction to the status attainment tradition, rejects the use of occupation scales and prefers to use the system of social class as dependent variable. In

this approach, the system of social relations are expressed in a cluster of occupations which constitute common social class positions. Thus, the key concept here is social class instead of occupational status. Social class draws clear distinctive boundary lines between different classes and thus, understanding of the social mobility itself undergoes a change since social mobility here is defined not as a movement along a continuous scale, but as movements between discrete class categories, either to be in the service class or out of it. This approach fails to explain the issue of why and how certain individuals end up in particular position in the class system. The possibilities that social mobility might be the result of the individual characteristics and abilities are totally ignored in this approach. On the other hand Status attainment approach highlights the importance of ability and effort in influencing class destinations.

The class structurationist approach pioneered by Goldthorpe (1987) and Marshal *et al* (1988) which has dominated mobility studies in Britain however, have not been able to explain the effect of different variables like intellectual ability or level of motivation of individual in the social mobility process and they continue to undermine the validity and importance of meritocracy in understanding social mobility research. Payne (1987) is highly critical about the class structurationist theorists in understanding social mobility. He condemns them for being uncritical and simply recycling endless theories on class and inequalities. There have also been efforts made to explore the reasons for structurationist theorists to remain unconvinced about the status attainment approach. There are three reasons put forth by the researchers to explain the conviction of the British sociologists in the class structurationist approach. One of the reasons is that the use of I.Q. tests as a means to measure ability is under severe criticism and there is a possibility that some of the key influences in individual's life like emotional quality of family life is neglected as it cannot be captured through IQ test. This might affect the overall measurement in explaining the effect of different variables affecting the occupational status of an individual. The second reason is the criticism against the status attainment approach for being functionalist. They are branded as ideologically conservative because their major argument focuses on ability being more important than class background in influencing people's occupation. Third criticism leveled against them is for being individualistic and consequently, ignoring 'social structure'. Coser (1975) states that status attainment approach fails to address the question of power and privilege, which constitute class positions in the society. It fails to take into account of whether and how the class relations are reproduced over time.

The dominant class structurationist tradition, springing from the mainstream classical Britain Sociology, has traveled a long way in mobility research without trying to address the important question as to why certain individuals, groups and communities experience social mobility when others do not. Though they have successfully measured and documented the extent of social mobility in Britain, they have not reflected as to why some people take advantage of the structural opportunities available to them while others do not. Bond and Saunders (1999) have explored this question and they conclude that individual success and failure largely depends upon attributes and characteristics of the individuals, which include motivation, ability, hard work etc. Class background and good parentage has only minor role in influencing the individual's occupational status. It only strengthens motivation and ability but cannot be altogether considered as the direct effects of class backgrounds on the individual's occupational achievement. Thus, the authors confirming

with the meritocratic principles conclude that occupational destinies are influenced and decided by individual talent, hard work, ambition, determination and other individual attributes.

The classical social scientists by and large adopt Sorokin's views while understanding the social mobility process in the society. Whether it is Marxian analysis of social change or Pareto's circulation of elites, social mobility in those days was understood to have occurred because of a simple transition of an individual from one social position to another. Modern theorists gradually began exploring the wider meaning of social mobility process and were not just confined to Sorokin's framework. For instance Status attainment tradition in social mobility research in western countries emerged as a response to Structurationist tradition which adopts a traditional method to understand social mobility process. The former by highlighting the importance of individual attributes like ambition, aspiration, ability, motivation, hard work and merit while analyzing the social mobility process of an individual has cut across the conventional argument of explaining social mobility process through factors associated with class origin. Thus western scholars in early nineties being influenced by Structurationist tradition began recognizing the meritocratic principles and individual attributes along with the variables associated with the 'class' to understand social mobility process.

Most of the mobility studies especially in the west emphasize more upon the methodology adopted in the study than the issue around which the study revolves. These studies deal with the measurement of social mobility, where survey is done, data collected and collected data is explained and analyzed using different statistical tools. Research on mobility usually involves a large national sample, a formal questionnaire based survey, statistical analysis, few operational definitions like intergenerational and intragenerational mobility, mobility tables etc which would be usually supported with occupation and education as indicators. In British Sociology, the main motivation behind social mobility research has been to use it as an explanatory of class and for measurement of status. There are not many studies, which try to see social mobility beyond the measurement of social status and change in the social status. There are studies, which tell us to what extent people are mobile from one position to another, but less emphasis is given on why and how few are more mobile than others. It is usually felt that mobility studies are currently concerned with inequality of opportunity rather than with the problems raised by the inequality of conditions. Such studies concentrate on the distribution of rewards, income and prestige, in isolation from the social relations, which conditions this distribution. In other words most of the studies in social mobility research have been carried out with the help of distributive approach and researchers have claimed that social relation approach has hardly been applied in the study of mobility. (Mach *et al* 1986).

There is indeed a general apprehension among the researchers that the mobility studies are not being holistic in their effort to understand this important process of change. For instance, the role of social structure in the mobility process and the mobility of the group or community have not been fully accounted in the earlier literature on mobility studies. The need for a better understanding of social mobility thus becomes very important. It has been realized that both Distributive and Social relation approaches are essential for complete understanding of the phenomenon. Either of them in isolation remains incomplete and cannot explain the social mobility processes. Study on social mobility needs a framework, which has a coherence of both namely socio-psychological aspect and the structural aspect. If distributive approach is built upon the individual's behavior to determine the social structure, social relation approach tries to see the

way social structure determines individual behavior. The two approaches though are deviant in origin and nature and inquire the social phenomenon of mobility with different tools, but are not isolated from each other. A judicious mix of both can enrich the understanding of social mobility. The distributive approach has a functional base. Generally mobility studies exhibiting a strong functional base are heavily criticized by the Marxists. Though some of the Marxist interpretation is evident in few of the debates in social mobility research, there has been not much effort to conduct research using it as a framework and hence has remained unexplored. Social relations approach has a Marxian base and shall be a appropriate alternative. But it should have within its fold the already critiqued distributive approach to strengthen the understanding. In other words, contemporary mobility studies should have a coherence of both attributes and relations, which overcomes the shortcomings of any one of the social theories. The call is not to abandon the distribution approach altogether, but to make sure that it is not conducted exclusively and in isolation. However, such a fusion of both the approaches has not been evident in the past and the existing literature on social mobility studies and an effort to undertake such a study might throw more light on the complete understanding of the social mobility process.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Tumin (1994) refers to Social Stratification as “an arrangement of any social group or society in to a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification”.

<sup>2</sup> One of the most pioneering and original writings on social mobility can be traced in the scholarship of Pitirim Sorokin. His ‘Social Mobility’ (1927), later reprinted as ‘Social and Cultural Mobility’ (1959 and 1964) has been a classic work in the field of mobility studies.

<sup>3</sup> These approaches can be termed as Weberian and Marxian approaches in the study of social mobility.

<sup>4</sup> The study of occupational selection is important and is critiqued because ‘Occupation is generally used as one of the important indicator of socio-economic mobility of an individual

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## Development : Concept, Issues and Some Clarification

Prahlad Mishra

The aim of the present paper is to understand the meaning of development in different contexts. Development is known as multi-facet and value laden concept. Rogers (1976) pointed out that the concept of development grew out of the historical events like industrial revolution in Europe and America, colonial experience of Asia, Africa and Latin America; and the capitalist economic political philosophy of North America. Traditionally the concept of development stresses the need for rapid economic growth that is achieved through the industrialization. It also maintains that the developing countries can also achieve the status of advanced countries by taking the same historical path through which the developed countries had traveled. Rostow's five stages of development (1960: 4) indicate that traditional societies for its development have to pass through the stages of the preconditions for take-off; the take-off; the drive to maturity; and the age of high mass-consumption. It advocated about the capital accumulation through the mechanism of saving and investment and observed it as engine of development. Thus, the traditional concept of development laid emphasis on heavy industries, capital intensive technology and urbanization which had profound impact on the mind of scholars concerned with development communication.

Schramm (1964) has pointed out that the key for development is productivity and that can be increased through the rapid industrialization. Lerner (1958) maintains that the modernized elites have to play a crucial role in the process of societal development. Pye (1963) comments upon and observes that there are fewer modernized elites in developing countries who can build a modern nation state. For this purpose state has to make communication policies to empower the modernizing elites and they have freedom to strengthen their influence in society. These scholars of development communication are of the view that communication can create right path for development through the dissemination of new knowledge, new skills, new values, and aspirations to create a sense of national feelings among the people in society.

The first serious conceptual attempt for understanding the development communication that has well defined philosophy practices and testable propositions was made by Dissanayake (1981). He reviewed the literature on development and communication and pointed out that development laid emphasis on growth of income, capital intensive technology, centralized planning

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and endogenous factors of development. He further comments on that this approach is now leveled as ethnocentric, unilinear view of history, one way of communicator and of ignoring the uniqueness of social structure of developing countries. The ground of criticism is the empirical realities which have emerged after the end of colonial era in the third world countries. It is perceived that although in developing countries GNP has been increased but at the same time unemployment, urban congestion are also increased and the gap between rich and poor is also widened.

Rogers (1976) discussed the deficiencies of the first approach of development that is now called "Old Paradigm" He has presented a second approach to development that is known as "New Paradigm". The stress of new paradigm is on the need of income distribution, labour intensive technology, decentralized planning and endogenous and exogenous factors of development. Its emphasis is on the quality of life, use of the combined modern and traditional media, selection of the appropriate technology and the people's participation in decision making process. The new paradigm is recognized as a two-way communication model where communicator and receiver shares an equal responsibility and make use of the cosmopolitan and indigenous media for the effective communication between the policy makers and the public.

Rogers (1976) pointed out that the new paradigm is prepared on having the account of world's major events like oil crises, environmental pollution, green revolution and failure of income distribution in societies. Apart from all its merits advocated by Rogers and his followers, the new paradigm has also posed some challenging questions which are related with the distributive justice, self reliance management and development purposive integration of the old and new media.

The facts of different studies reveals that history conscious and society specific model of development communication and structural factors cause constrain for development. The questions posed by the new paradigm have been attempted by a number of social scientists. Nordenstrong and Shciller (1979) agree with the argument of Galtung (1971) that the colonial structure still persist in the relationship between centre and periphery nations. They further observe that international socio-political economic system decisively determines the cause of development within the sphere of each nation. Thus, it is perceived that there is an asymmetrical relationship between developed and developing countries. It has provided the chance to developed countries to succeed at the expense of the developing countries. The forth approach is of the self reliance which advocates that the fundamental pre- condition for development is to eliminate this asymmetrical relationship through the mechanism and resources available in the country.

The review of literature on development indicates the following facts i.e. rational utility of economy (maximum satisfaction) fulfillment of individual and collective demands (production and consumption), meeting out the market demands (goods and services) and alleviation of stress (policies and programmes) in society. These identified features of development are universally recognized and are termed as desired gross national values for prosperity and progress of a society. Urs, K. (2005 :607) argues that universally well known indicator of economic growth that is Gross National Product (GDP) has to be contrasted with the concept of Gross National

Happiness (GNH). The contextual reality of non-Western societies specially the Bhootan can not be explained through the indicators of development mentioned above. Such empirical realities invite thought on the term development that has its Western mooring i.e. 'Maximization of Happiness', has to be re-examined by the social scientists of the non-Western countries.

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