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IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON TRIBAL ARTS AND CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF RANCHI

Doctoral Dissertation Abstract (2020)

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Urbanization is the driver of social and cultural change, and it shapes the social relations of the society. The impact of urbanization on the tribal community is also visible. The tribal society, in more than one way, is self-contained; it is 'a cultural isolate' as its social organization and way of life is different from other communities. It has restricted relations with mainstream society. Until recently, the essential criteria for defining this segment of humans had been their relative isolation, homogeneity, and settlement in a distinct habitat. Primitiveness, economic backwardness, lower levels of development, pre-agricultural technology, low literacy rates, and a small population are other characteristics of the tribal population.

The tribal society has been transforming since independence, due to several government initiatives, particularly associated with the marketing system. As a result, within their community, changes are evident. For example, they have separated their arts and crafts from everyday life. They are trying hard to associate with mainstream society through formal education and work participa-

tion. A large number of scholars have studied the impact of these developments on tribal life. Two distinct connotations can be derived. One group thinks that these changes, to a large extent, have empowered the tribal population in their assimilation with mainstream society. In comparison, the other group believes that this philosophy of inclusion and adaptation has been practically forced on these people to accept a uniform set of cultural norms and practices.

Whatever the case may be, these societies in India, particularly, have been experiencing the political and economic processes of transformation for some time now. The tribal community of Ranchi district, as well as the Ranchi Municipal Corporation per se, is not an exception. Urbanization, modernization in education, Sanskritization, and trans-acculturation of cultural methods have been on their way to set a new path for this section of the population.

Objectives of the Study

Major objectives of the present study are:

- To theoretically analyze the process of urbanization and its impact on tribal society;
- to examine the demographic structure, arts, and culture of the major tribes of Jharkhand;
- to understand the relationship between urbanization and various socio-economic indicators among the tribal population of Ranchi District and
- to investigate how the process of urbanization has influenced the tribal arts and culture in the city of Ranchi.

Database and Methodology

In this study, both secondary and primary data have been used. Secondary data related to various socio-economic indicators have been extracted from the Census of India for the years 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011. For primary data, a field survey has been conducted for 500 respondents, making about 0.25 per cent of the entire tribal people, which, in turn, is almost 20 per cent of the city's total tribal population. The respondents have been selected from different age groups and occupations among the tribal population in the Ranchi Municipal Corporation (RMC). Three generations of the population, i.e., children, young and older people, have been kept in mind while conducting the survey. The random cum purposive sampling method has been adopted to conduct the survey. Seven wards of the city, i.e., ward No. 2, 4, 7, 36, 38, 54 and 55, in which tribal population is either dominant or substantially high in numbers, have been identified for the survey. They have been interviewed through structured and unstructured questionnaires.

Major Findings

The pattern of growth of the tribal

population in Jharkhand has been sluggish, particularly between 1971 and 2001. The population of Santhal tribe has been found to be highest among all the tribes in Jharkhand, both in 2001 and 2011. The demographic regime of the tribes of Jharkhand has witnessed two significant changes. Firstly, it is decrease in the young population indicating birth control and secondly, an increase in the active working population (lower dependency ratio).

Ranchi district has witnessed two distinct phases of growth of urban population between 1951 and 2011. Phase I, is from 1961 to 1971, when it experienced an almost 10 per cent increase in urban population, from 21.8 per cent in 1961 to 31.62 per cent in 1971. It has been due to the establishment of several industries and research institutes that attracted a large number of labor force from the surrounding regions. Phase II is from 2001 to 2011, during which the district has recorded nearly 8 per cent rise in urban population, from 35.1 per cent in 2001 to 43.04 per cent in 2011. The upgradation of Ranchi city, as the Capital of Jharkhand in 2000, has been the major reason for such a high growth of urban population during this period.

Within the district, there are regional variations in the levels of development. The tehsil of Ormanjhi has emerged as most developed in comparison to other tehsils, due to locational advantage, as it is only 10 km away from the capital city of Ranchi. The city suburbs are also expanding in this direction.

The relationship of urbanization with all the socio-economic indicators associated with tribal population has been found to be positive. Highest positive relationship ($r = 0.922$) has been recorded between urbanization and literacy rate of the tribal population of the Ranchi district. The missionaries have

played a significant role in this regard as they have enabled these people to assimilate with the other sections of the society through formal education. Secondly, after the formation of Jharkhand as a separate state, there has been an enormous influx of investment in the education sector, especially for the tribal population.

Cultural practices like music, dance, painting, language, festivals, marriage rituals etc. are an integral part of the tribal population residing in the city of Ranchi. These people embody singing and dancing with their everyday life, which is quite evident from the answers given by most of the respondents during the survey. Eighty three per cent of the respondents still practice these forms of arts. However, about 50 per cent preferred modern

versions than the traditional ones. Similarly, 76 per cent of the respondents knew their tribal language.

The most significant inference, drawn from this study, is that urbanization has had a positive impact on the arts and culture of the tribes of Jharkhand and, more specifically, Ranchi Municipal Corporation. The tribal people are still practicing their performing and creative arts, along with various cultural rituals within the city. The tribal population has accepted the constructive changes in their day to day life but, at the same time, adhere to their traditional arts and culture as the latter is closely associated with their identity and recognition. The tribes of Ranchi city, thus, cite an example where there is a balanced amalgamation of tradition with modernity.

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