



Marginalization of Youths and Women in 'Phase Paradhi' Scheduled Tribe in Kolhapur District, Maharashtra (India).

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ABSTRACT

Aim:

The present study was aimed to describe marginalization of youths and women in phase-paradhi scheduled tribe due to socio-economic and educational problems in (Uchgaon) Kolhapur district of Maharashtra.

Methods:

Total 35 youths and 40 women were selected as a sample for the present study (by using accidental sampling method) to understand their problems. Interview schedule was framed to collect information about the problems of youths and women of this community. Observation and discussion methods were also adopted to collect detail information.

Results:

In this study, among the youths, it was found that, 31.4% were from Below Poverty Line while remaining 68.6% were from Above Poverty Line. All the respondents' occupation is daily wages. Their educational status is very low. Majority respondents are not aware about various government vocational training programs. Their chief occupation is daily wages. Majority (91.4%) respondents are addicted and they spend huge amount of money for that. As far as problems of women are concerned; 72.5% women were illiterate and the major causes of illiteracy were early marriages (27.5%) and lack of family support (27.5%). Majority women have freedom in their family but they have restrictions of community too. Most of the women are getting lower level of nutrition due to their low social status. Most of women (67.5%) occupation is going for daily wages in construction sector and the average monthly income is four thousand to five thousand and it's affecting to their health also. Women have their self-help groups but they are not aware about various schemes for SHGs and some SHGs are not actively working. Therefore there is a need of positive government intervention to improve the socio-economic and educational status of this community. It can be done through proper enforcement of tribal related policies and programs and active participation of these women.

Keywords : Phase-Paradhi Community, Scheduled Tribe and Government Intervention

Introduction:

Phase Paradhi or Phasse Paradhi is a tribe in India. The tribe often faces harassment by Indian law enforcement agencies. The tribe is found mostly in Maharashtra and parts of Madhya Pradesh. The Phasse are a sub tribe of the Paradhi caste which includes sub-castes like Gav-Paradhi Berad-Paradhi, Gay-Paradhi, Chita Paradhi. Paradhi is the term for "hunter". There are only three surnames among them, Chauhan, Pawar and Solunkhe.

Koppers traced the name Paradhi to Marathi paradha ("hunt") and accordingly described the Paradhi of Jhabua and Kutch (Rajasthan) as a "caste" of hunters who used nets to catch their prey. The Gujarati Paradhis were known to him as a "wandering tribe of fowlers". Nowadays the Paradhi are classified as "migratory Bhil" who speak one of the many Bhil "languages" (Pardhi) and live throughout Maharashtra and Kutch (or Kutch) in Gujarat, earning their keep as hunters of birds and small game, snake charmers, basket weavers and producers of black-stone bowls and pitchers (www.ksafe.com).

A Brief Anthropological Profile of Pardhis:

The word "Pardhi" which is derived from the Marathi term "paradh" indicates a livelihood activity –hunting. Colonial accounts of Pardhis describe them as wanderers and hunters (Russell and Hiralal 1997: 358) indicating the nomadic lifestyle of the group. It is not a homogeneous category and encompasses many groups named differently on the basis of their

occupation or their lifestyle. Some of the more well-known ones include ChittarPardhis (antelope-hunters), Gay-Pardhis (who ride cows), Gaon-Pardhis (who live at the periphery of the village), Bhil Pardhis or Shikaris (who use firearms), Langoti Pardhis (who are dressed only in a loin cloth to cover their nakedness), Phase Pardhis (noose hunters) and Pal-Pardhis (who live in tents), Haran-shikari (hunters of antelopes) and Adavichanchar (literally, 'wanderers in the forest'). The two distinct endogamous groups within the Pardhi fold are the Raj-Pardhis and Mahadeo Pardhis. The Raj Pardhis, also called as Mevadis, trace their original homeland to the Mewar region which is surrounded by the Vindhya and Satpura ranges (Sangave 1967: 67). The Mahadeo Pardhis out-migrated from Mewar region in Rajasthan much before the Raj Pardhis and settled down in different regions across present day central India, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Although Pardhis have come to be categorized as a "tribe" through the processes of enumeration, colonial accounts list them as a "low caste" (Russell and Hiralal 1997: 358). It is highly probable that they were treated as a caste in traditional rural Hindu society, and assigned the lower-most position in the social hierarchy. Besides engaging with the caste system (if not co-opted by it), Pardhis also bore economic links with the village society. While hunting and food gathering were their principal means of survival, Pardhis provided specialized services and goods to society, thereby engaging in reciprocity (before introduction of monetized economy) and later, in exchange with the wider society. But in all probabil-

ity, Pardhis were not full-fledged members of the village milieu. They either engaged in nomadism or were settled at the periphery of rural areas in clusters of households bound by kinship relations. While supplementing the village economy, they remained outside the balutedari and jajmani systems that sustained self-sufficiency of the village and reflected its social order (Bokil 2002:148). Markers of cultural and social distinctiveness of Pardhis from the local Hindu caste societies include their unique language which is a unique mix of Gujarati and Hindi, a unique pantheon of totemic deities, with each totemic clan representing an exogamous group and sharing a unique cognomen, and prevalence of nyaya panchayat (council of justice) whose membership is accorded by birth in the community.

Phase-Paradhi community is known as a Scheduled Tribe in Maharashtra state. However, they have good skill of hunting with hunting instrument of 'Phasa' (trap) through which they catch the animals and birds therefore they are known as Phase-Paradhi. The original habitat of this community is Rajasthan. Then they migrated towards Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Hunting was their primary occupation for that they were living in forest areas. They preferred to hunt in group; hence their bonds were very strong. As the number of animals decreased in the forest and government began banning unlicensed hunting, pardhis could not find substitute means of survival and turned to thieving and dacoit which alike hunting they committed in group. The British government therefore declared the entire paradhi population as a criminal tribe. The paradhis paid a heavy price for their chosen social isolation and remained ignorant, illiterate, superstitious and extremely indigent.

Without doubt, there are Pardhis who commit crimes. But there are reasons for such crimes. They deserve consideration. Take what Stephen Fuchs wrote in *The Aboriginal Tribes of India* (1973): "A number of such tribes are passionately nomadic, and since food gathering and hunting in the jungle, in the traditional manner, is often impossible, they have switched over to the rather dangerous ... life of 'foraging' in the fields, villages and towns. ... This has gained them a bad reputation and in the British times some of them were branded criminal and held under close police supervision. Since Independence this stigma has been taken from them, but the watch over them by the police has not much relaxed. ... They are forced by the prevailing adverse circumstances to practise subsistence thieving."

Although; large paradhi settlements are found in the Khandesh of Maharashtra. The district of Nasik, Solapur, Kolhapur and Beed of Maharashtra and Bijapur district of Karnataka have significance presence of paradhis. In Maharashtra they are commonly known as 'Phase-Paradhi' and in Karnataka as Anakh-Sincha.

Volume XII of the 1880 Bombay Presidency Gazette has these remarks about pardhis, group of whom this author has been spending time with in rural Maharashtra state: "They are still fond of hunting and poaching and have not got rid of their turn for thieving...The phase-pardhi (a sub-tribe) is nearly always ragged and dirty, walking with a sneaking gait."

Ch. Shahu Maharaj and the Phase-Paradhis in Kolhapur:

Phase-Pardhi as their name signifies, are bird and animal trappers. They are nomads and for generation have profitably used their tracking and stalking skill to commute theft and dacoits also for which they are shunned by they settled people are of Dravidian nary origin. Alike Korvis and Ghisadis; Pardhis also call themselves of Rajput descent and claim that they left reputed on Maharana Pratap's demise.

During millennium wandering may pardhis had arrived into the jungles in the western part of Kolhapur region. In their hunting camp at Katkal, Chh. Shahu Maharaj learned about pardhis nuisance in the nearby villages and also that had planned to ambush chatrapati's camp Chh. Shahu sent his

militants, arrested the pardhis and brought them to the camp. He however, did not harass or torcher them but fed them well and provide them creaturely comfort. He already knew of the parches reputation but he wished to explore the route cause of their criminal aberration. Chh. Shahu felt sympathy for them. From the jungles of Katkal he shifted the pardhis, he shifted the pardhis along with their families to his favorite retreat at Sontali camp, near Kolhapur. He accommodated him in temporary shelters and arranged for the daily supply of food grains.

Chh. Shahu knew that, pardhis were brave and courageous. But they were victim of their circumstances finally he decided to raise in a unit of pardhi guards for his Sontali camp. Many were amazed at Maharaj's audacity of trying to convert predators into protectors. On many later occasions Maharaj tested pardhi guards alacrity watchfulness and in fallibility and they passed the muster every time.

Maharaj wanted the pardhis to interact other people and learn the way of the civilized society. In Kolhapur city proper, pardhis were settled on 15 acres plot of land near Ujlaiwadi. The land was acquired as the campus of Shivaji University in 1962 and pardhis were shifted nearby. They have now formed their cooperative housing society and named it as 'Shantinagar' most of the old men held job in Shahu textile mill, while younger boys ventured into stone crusher business, an activity ancillary to the construction business.

Review of Relevant Literature:

Paradhi is a Dalit tribe, still officially branded as a thief caste, in Marathwada (Maharashtra state). Their literacy rate is eight percent. They often bear the brunt of brutality from suspicious police. Interest in education amidst such daily life battles would be expected to be low.

According to TISS, the acute fragmentation of nomadic and denotified groups, their vast spread across the state, inability to access health, education, water, sanitation and public distribution system make them "highly vulnerable" to poverty and exclusion. The report — Status of Pardhis in Mumbai city — says though it focuses on urban poverty among Pardhis, the findings will be indicative of the nature of problems faced by members of other nomadic, denotified groups in urban areas. Maintaining that Pardhis in Mumbai are at the bottom of economic and social hierarchies, the report says 70 per cent of the families stay in non-notified settlements without basic amenities. The picture is bleak in other areas too. "...36 per cent of families don't have ration cards and only 20 per cent have access to Antyodaya (scheme for poor) support. These directly point to the drawbacks of the targeted public distribution system."

According Mayank Sinha of the Centre for Criminology and Justice, School of Social Work, TISS, Mumbai one of the biggest hurdles this population faces is the issue of caste certificates. "Traditionally, Pardhis are nomadic. So they do not have a culture of keeping certificates from the 1960s which the state has asked to categorise them. The government has split the sub-groups into schedule castes (SC) and other backward class (OBC) for inexplicable reasons. Plus, the DNT label is not recognised by the central government."

Despite a government resolution passed in 2008 to give every member of the tribe a BPL card, several families haven't been given one, as a 2010 RTI petition by the National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (NAPM) revealed. In response, they organized a big public meeting in the city. The meeting was successful since some families coming under the Chembur zone in Mumbai got their cards. However, for the rest of them, life hasn't changed much. documents like birth certificate, ration card etc. Only 60% of the respondents surveyed had birth certificates of their children, only 10% had caste certificates.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore the process of marginalization of youths and

women in Phase-Pardhi schedule tribe in Kolhapur district (Maharashtra).

2. To understand socio-economic problems of youths and women of phase-paradhi community and their causes and consequences.
3. To study educational problems of youths and women of phase-paradhi community.
4. To discuss the need to deal with these problems effectively for the inclusion of this community through proper enforcement/implementation of tribal policies and welfare programs.

Methodology:

Total 35 youths and 40 women were selected by using accidental sampling design because of their busy schedule. The present study is depending on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through interview schedule and apart from that observation and discussion methods were also adopted. The collected data was codified and code sheet was prepared. The collected/codified data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of SPSS and findings were drawn. Books, journals and internet as secondary sources were also used.

**Table No.1 Problems of Youths
N=35**

Sr. No.	Variables	Total Frequency	Total Frequency in %
1.	Age (in years)		
	15-20	19	54.3
	21-25	12	34.3
	26-30	02	5.7
	31-35	02	5.7
2.	Marital Status		
	Married	13	37.1
	Unmarried	22	62.9
3.	Below Poverty Line		
	Yes	11	31.4
	No	24	68.6
4.	Educational Status		
	Literate	33	94.3
	Illiterate	02	5.7
5.	Level of Education (in standard)		
	5 th to 7 th	11	31.4
	8 th to 10 th	18	51.4
	11 th to Graduation	04	11.4
	Not Applicable	02	5.7
6.	Awareness about Educational Programs		
	Yes	03	8.6
	No	32	91.4
7.	Occupation		
	Daily Wages	35	100
	Other	00	00
8.	Awareness about Government Vocational Training Programs		
	Yes	13	37.1
	No	22	62.9
9.	Addiction		
	Yes	32	91.4
	No	03	8.6
10.	Type of Addiction		
	Alcohol	07	20
	Tobaco/Gutkha	18	51.4
	Cigarrete	04	11.4
	Paan-Supari	03	8.6
11.	Causes of Addiction		
	Peer Group	18	51.4
	Family Problems	12	34.3
	Personal Problems	02	5.7
	Not Applicable	03	8.6

**Table No.2 Problems of Women
N=40**

Sr. No.	Variables	Total Frequency	Total Frequency in %
1.	Age (in years)		
	20-30	15	37.5
	31-40	18	45.0
	41-50	04	10.0
	51 and above	03	7.5
2.	Educational Status		
	Literate	11	27.5
	Illiterate	29	72.5
3.	Family Head		
	Father in law	03	7.5
	Husband	36	90.0
	Mother in law	01	2.5
4.	Family Below Poverty Line		
	Yes	34	85.0
	No	06	15.0
5.	Have Personal Freedom in Family		
	Yes	29	72.5
	No	11	27.5
6.	Community has Restrictions on You		
	Yes	36	90.0
	No	04	10.0
7.	Age at Marriage		
	13 – 15 years	12	30.0
	16 – 18 years	28	70.0
8.	Health Problems		
	Anemia	06	15.0
	Problems during delivery	07	17.5
	Skin disease	03	7.5
	Backache	12	30.0
9.	Lower level of Nutrition	12	30.0
	Treatment for illness		
	Visit to doctor	10	25.0
	Take rest	10	25.0
	Ignore	03	7.5
10.	Domestic medicine	05	12.5
	Worship	12	30.0
11.	Occupation		
	Agriculture	02	5.0
	Road construction	11	27.5
12.	Building construction	27	67.5
	Monthly Income		
	3000-4000	01	2.5
	4001-5000	25	62.5
13.	5001 and above	13	32.5
	Participation in SHGs		
	Yes	28	70.0
14.	No	12	30.0

Results and Discussion:

In this study, it was found that, out of 35 youths (from the selected sample); 62.9% were unmarried and 37.1% were married. Among them, 31.4% were from Below Poverty Line while remaining 68.6% were from Above Poverty Line. All the respondents' occupation is daily wages. 94.3% literate and only 5.7% were illiterate but 91.4% are not aware about government educational programs. Majority (62.9%) respondents said that; they are not aware about various government vocational training programs. All the respondents' occupation is daily wages. Due to lack of higher education, absence of caste certificate and lack of awareness paradhi youths are not getting employment. Addiction is one of the most severe problems among paradhi youths. In the study, majority (91.4%) respondents are found to be addicted. There are various programs launched by government for the welfare and development of these people but they are not aware about such programs therefore; there is need of awareness among this community people. Universities and academicians from the field of anthropology, sociology and social work should take initiative to start action projects/

research to work for this community. District social justice department is also concerned to spread awareness in this community about different welfare measures taken by government.

As far as problems of women are concerned; 72.5% women were illiterate and the major causes of illiteracy were early marriages (27.5%) and lack of family support (27.5%). The literacy rate of paradhi women is lower than paradhi youths and general women too. The main cause of illiteracy is their dialect. Paradhi people are not well familiar with the local language Marathi (which is used by teachers too during teaching). Due to language barrier the school drop-out rate is also high. Majority (82.5%) paradhi women are living in nuclear families and husband (90%) is the head of family. Majority (72.5%) women have freedom in their family but 90% women said they have restrictions of community. Most of the women are getting lower level of nutrition due to their low socio-economic status. Their nutrition should be good enough because majority of women go for daily wages which requires physical labour. 67.5% women go for daily wages in construction sector and the average monthly income is four thousand to five thousand. Women have their self-help groups but they are not aware about various schemes for SHGs and some SHGs are not actively working.

Conclusion:

Phase-Paradhi is a minority scheduled tribe community in Maharashtra. Due to the label of criminal (since the British era) they started living a nomadic life; which led them to deprivation and marginalization from the main stream society. Constitution of India has given them reservation and other welfare facilities. Different ministries along with the ministry of tribal affairs are imparting special attention to the upliftment of scheduled tribes like phase-paradhi. But still we are not completely successful to impart justice to this community. Therefore there is a need of positive government intervention to improve the socio-economic and educational status of these women. It can be done through proper enforcement of women related policies and programs and active participation of these women.

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