



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF VADAR A DE-NOTIFIED COMMUNITY OF SOLAPUR CITY, MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract: Solapur City is known for its diverse population. Many NT-DNT communities are seen to be living in the city. Vadar community is also one of the De-notified tribal communities which reside in Solapur city since from ancient period. Vadar community is unique and has different features which make them different from other NT-DNT communities. Vadar are the most skillful and hard working community among tribes. Present paper is an attempt made to understand the present conditions of Vadar community and the challenges they are facing in day to day life in the Solapur city. The paper examines the status of Vadar community and effects of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Present paper is purely based upon primary qualitative data. The researcher has discussed interviewed and has done participatory observations to understand and analyses the situations and challenges of Vadar community. The researcher has visited more than 40 houses in the area called "70 feet road" where the population density of Vadar community is more. Paper has narrated different dimensions of Vadar community and specific observations. These observations and findings can help to take further analytical and in-depth research on Vadar community.

Key words: Vadar, De-notified Community.

Understanding the history of the Vadar Community

According to Ghatage (2011), the term Nomadic Tribes in sociologically refers to the people who were forced to live a wandering life by the Indian social system divided into deferent castes and their origins. The term De-notified nomadic tribes consist of about 60 million in India out of which about five million lives in Maharashtra state there are 43 major nomadic tribes scattered into various sub tribal groups around 313 Nomadic Tribes and 198 De-notified Tribes.

Vadar community is among one of the many De-notified Tribe in Maharashtra. Vadar is known for skillful and hard work especially stone work. The vadars are found in urban and rural setup but according to their occupation availability of work they are mostly found in urban areas. In the Maharashtra state, the Vadar communities are found in Pune, Solapur, Kolhapur, Yavatmal districts. They are living in Solapur city from many years ago. The Vadar communities are located in different areas of

solapur district; some of them live in the area called as 70 feet road in solapur city. At 70 feet road in Solapur city there are near about 100 houses of the vadar community. Basically Vadar community people's main occupation is stone cutting and carving; making the statues and working on building construction sites. According to Bokil (2002), the DNT's present real challenge is when it comes to documenting their history or historical dislocation. Though the nomadic people give an impression that they were nomadic from time immemorial, many of them have become nomadic due to specific historical events or processes. As mentioned in EPW (2007), special article it states that, as most DNT's do not possess traditional land rights or house titles, they remain denied of most citizenry, including voting, rights. Several groups of DNT's have congregated around urban areas, occupying degraded land at the periphery, seeking informal means of livelihood Vadar community were found to be having no agricultural land nor were they having permanent houses, this they are seen to be migrated from one

place to another place in search of livelihood. From this situation one can also understand that due to non stability of occupation and housing the Vadar community is facing the problem of permanent land and thus they do not possess any agriculture land of their own.

These people were migrated from the different region of the country to fulfill their livelihood needs. The De-notified Tribes also known as *Vimukta Jati*, these tribes were originally listed under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 enacted by the British Government so as per this act the vadar community was also known as the Criminal Tribe¹. According to these community people, because of this act they faced so many problems in their life. They were not getting the admissions in schools or colleges before 1950s. In the society the other community people neglected them and consider them as an untouchable; So that they do not get any work for their income or fulfill their livelihood. Then after the independence this act replaced in Habitual Offenders Act². The study made by Devy (2000) highlighted that, soon after independence, the communities notified as criminal tribes were de-notified by the Government of India. This notification was followed by the substitution of a series of Acts, generally entitled the 'Habitual Offenders Act' henceforth called as the HOA. The HOA preserved most of the provisions of the former Criminal Tribes Act (CT), except the premise implicit in it that an entire community can be 'born' as criminals. Apparently, the de-notification and the passing of the HOAs should have ended the misery of the communities penalized under the CT Act. But this has not happened. The police forces as well as people in general were taught to look upon the 'criminal tribes' as born criminals during colonial times. India got independence and criminal tribe act was repealed by Government of India in 1952. In Maharashtra, they have been not been included in the list of Scheduled Tribes because of some historical circumstances, but are listed as Scheduled Castes or "Nomadic Tribes". The tribes designated

as "De-notified", "Nomadic" or "Semi-Nomadic" are eligible for reservation in India, Ghatage (2011).

That attitude continues to persist even today. After discussing with the Vadar people the research found out the same findings that these people are still stigmatized and are marginalized community. Apparently, the Vadar community is living outside of the city in poor houses made up of stone or mud. Most of them live in huts. They get employment in construction of houses and buildings as labours for their livelihood. Their living standards and quality of life are observed to be very low.

Now-a-days these communities main occupation is working at building construction similarly many people of this community also found as a labor in urban area and started a small business like Vegetable shop, Grocery shop and very few of them are seen to be in a government servant or in private organization. At present their housing structure are seen to be constructed as urban type.

Composition of the Community

In the 70 feet area of the Solapur city there are more than 100 houses of vaders community. The Vadar communities were migrating from one to other places in search of livelihood and now they had been settled out side of the city. Some years ago these community have settled at the outside of the solapur city at 70 feet road area in the Solapur city. The place of vadar communities is known as the VADARWADI. Their huts were generally made by the stone and mud but now their houses are made of Patra shades (a thin metal sheet) house or cement constructed houses.

From long back Vadar community use to have a Caste Panchayats. This people give most important of Caste Panchayat. If any incident or problem happens in the community the Caste Panchayat takes the decision and solves problems. Marriage, their norms, rules are decided by the Caste Panchayat. In the Caste Panchayat there are five members of the community these five members are the prestigious people of the community and Caste Panchayat also work for the social justice and giving judgments. But in recent days the Caste Panchayat

has fewer roles to play. The vadar communities are now under the municipality or Municipal Corporation and rule of law. According to study made by Ghatage (2011), 'Jamati Panchayat' (caste council) mediates in the infra-family disputes in 84% families, 9% settle them mutually and only 7% take resources to courts of law. 12% families live in makeshift tents, 33% in earthen walled houses, 23% in mud-walled houses and 7% in RCC houses. Majority families are settled in slums around the city areas and suffering from dirty atmosphere.

Cultural Activities of Vadar Community

The vadar community mostly wears traditional dressing style like dhoti and kurta. Their kurta is known as BANDI. Some men wear white shirts. The adults wear a white cap called a GANDHI TOPI. But now the men's wear a pant and shirt. The vadar women's wear sari and blouse but elder women follow the tradition of community and they are not wearing blouse but they cover her breast by saris. Women not wearing blouse is one of the traditional peculiarity attached to Vadar communities.

The vadar mainly live in joint family but in recent by changing the occupation and lifestyle they prefer to live in nuclear family on job areas. The vadar community people's main food is the rice and jowar. The person of this community is non vegetarians so they also eat the meat. On the special occasions they sacrificed pigs and goats and they celebrate feasts with community members. These communities' people believe in Lord Hanuman. They called themselves as a Pujari of Lord Hanuman.

In this community it is found that marriages are permitted only within the vadar community. They never marry outside of the community and their marriages decision is taken by elder people. Inter-caste marriages are not accepted of the vadar people.

The vadars speak a vadari dialect; this dialect appears to be a mixture of Telugu, Kannada and Marathi language. In Solapur their mother tongue is Telugu language but due to migration in search of livelihood they speak a local or regional language where they are living now.

Economic Activity of Vadar Community

According to Rao and Casimir (2003), the economic activity NTDNT can be classified on the basis of three economic activities, they are, 1) *Pastoral or animal husbanders*- Basically the NTDNT community depends upon the reproduction and multiplication of the livestock for their economy. The frequency and intensity of dependency of the community is generally varied as season changes or as the pattern changes. Thus these communities are dependent on nature and season for their economic activity. Thus in result these communities are dependent on the vegetation available, as they take their livestock to the vegetation they do not collect vegetations to feed the livestock. These communities are basically called as pastoral nomads. 2) *Foragers/Hunter-gatherers/Gatherer-hunters*-these are the communities basically believe in gathering, collecting or hunting for the purpose of economic activities. These communities have very little or no agriculture land for cultivation. 3) *Peripatetics*- These communities are generally dependent on the skill primarily for economic activities. These communities earn their bread by selling something and or providing some kind of services. These skills are hereditarily learn and are been passed to next generation for the survival. Recently they are addressed as the service Nomads.

According to this classification the Vadar community falls into the third category as they are depended on their skills and they provide service to other community for economic activities and their earnings.

In the Past era the vadar people migrated in search of livelihood, so they have not a continuous occupation for the income at one and same place as they have to migrate in search of work for earnings. In Solapur city most of the Vadar community earn their livelihood by working as construction worker. Their hereditary skill of carving stones, cutting stones and building is now been diverted them to work in construction work. High use of cement concrete and plasters the skills of Vadar are not enhanced and they have to work in as labour, thus lost their identity as

artist of carving stones for building house or even temples and monuments.

May be this has resulted in shift in the occupation in Vadar community, as now a days, the vadar community are seen in occupation like driving auto riksha, cars , in small scale business like the vegetable shop, glossary shop. Most of them are industry labours. Very few have Government jobs.

Educational Status of the Vadar Community

The vadar people were migrated from one to another place so there was a problem of education but many of them are settled in Solapur thus their children are getting education facilities.

“The vadar people explained that when they migrated and settled at area of solapur 70 feet road that time this area was outside the city, the vadar people stayed there and because of their living style and their occupation is like labour. The vadar people were consider as a untouchable in the society”

This was the one of the reason why many Vadar people do not went to school. But things are changing now in Solapur, Vadar community are sending their children to school and struggling for justice and equality. The vadar communities are basically poor community due to migration they do not earn any land of agricultural land. They need livelihood to survive. Because of these limitations many adults and women did not go to schools or collages and they join the work at where they are staying.

But the present days the vadar people are always in search of better livelihood source to survive and also they are stable at one place like city or village. Their stability helps to take education. Due to lack of documents they were away from schools or collages but now they have all required document which is necessary to take education and they get admission. The government also have taken initiatives for the tribes they has started the Adivasi Ashram Schools. But there is need to aware the Vadar about their rights and programmes.

The youth in vadar community are aspirant now days they know that only education can bring up from their miserable conditions, thus they have dreams to become government employers and work

for the nation. They learn that the education helps them to maintain the standard of living in the society and it's very crucial.

Health

The vadar mostly lives in slum of urban area and slums have an unhygienic condition so due to unhygienic condition they face many health problems. Vadar communities live in urban area they have less accessible health facilities as they live in slum areas. According to the city development report there are around 220 slums in Solapur. The Vadar community majority lives in the slum. The municipal corporation of Solapur city is unable to develop slum areas. After having in-depth interviews in Vadar community explained the researchers that, there are problems of titling of the houses and the land they are staying. There are rarely any primary health centers of Municipal Corporation. Due to hardship and lack of proper nutrition the vadar community seems to spend more on hospitalization and on many miner and major diseases. They faced diseases like malaria, typhoid, jaundice, and diarrhea. Due to surrounding they faced many health issues. They live in urban area where all health facilities are available for them but not accessible easily.

Policies and Programmes for Community

Starting from the First Five Year Plan Period1 (1951 - 1956) the government is steadily allocating financial resources for the purpose of tribal development. Towards, the ends of the plan (1954), 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (MTDPs) were created. During the Third Five Year Plan Period (1961 -1966), the government of India adopted the strategy of converting areas with more than 66 per cent tribal concentration into Tribal Development Blocks (TBDs). By the end of Fourth Five Year Plan (1969 - 1974), the number of TBDs in the country rose to 504. Additionally, in 1972 the Tribal Sub - Plan Strategy (TSP) was implemented by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. TSP was based on twin objectives of socio-economic development and protection against exploitation. It was generally implemented in the areas where the Scheduled Tribe population was

more than 50 per cent of the total population. The PESA (The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 in fact, has made it mandatory for the States having scheduled areas to make specific provisions for giving wide-ranging powers to the tribes on the matters relating to decision-making and development of their community. A centrally-sponsored government scheme of ashram schools exclusively for ST children from elementary to higher secondary levels was initiated in the 1970s. But the poor quality of education in ashram schools, however, has undermined confidence in education as a vehicle for social mobility. The Janshala Programme is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five UN Agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA – a community based primary education programme, aims to make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalized groups, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes/minorities, children with specific needs, Dr. Kabita Kumari Sahu (2014)¹.

Vadar Community Needs and Problems

The vadar peoples live in the urban slum areas. Slums have unhygienic condition so that the people are facing so many health problems. The vadar was migrated and they stay in Solapur city but because of the migration they have no documents of their land or house. Because of lack of documents they can't take benefit of the Government schemes. They need the documents of their lands clear titling of the houses.

The vadar community facing the problem in present days due to unhygienic condition, problems like sanitation, health issues, problem of drinking water, basic amenities. They need proper sanitation.

Sanitation has been helpful to prevent their health issues and also drinking water problem. They need pure drinking water facility. This area has lack of basic amenities like the public toilet, roads and infrastructure facility. They are in need of basic amenities.

Future Scope and Challenges for community

The vadar are facing so many challenges in society. Due to migration they faced a language challenges as they speak dialect mixture of regional or local language. The vadar community mostly lives in slums of urban area so they have health challenges and children faced problem of malnutrition. Because of the poverty they do not take the proper diet for the prevention of malnutrition and also they have challenge in the livelihood development.

They are in the search of scope in the building construction so they were doing work of construction. They live now in the urban area so that they have many scopes to reduce their poverty and develop the livelihood but it is very competitive for them. The education has also given scope to them as employability but there is difficulty in accessibility. The vadar people can develop the various entrepreneurship in urban area they have been take benefit of urban area, But these are many administrative challenges.

The vadar people have challenges to fulfill their needs like sanitation, pure drinking water facility, prevention on health issues and basic amenities. Tackling these challenges they need the documents, awareness about water and sanitation, waste management and health. There is a need of proper, effective and sound implementation of policy and programme.

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Foot note:

1. Ethnic or social communities in India which were defined as "addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences it's a criminal Tribes.
2. According to the Habitual Offenders Act, a habitual offender is one who has been a victim of subjective and objective influences and has manifested a set practice in crime, and also presents a danger to the society in which they lives. The Habitual Offenders are usually hardened criminals whose major part of life has been spent in jails. It is because they commit offences at frequent intervals and are sent back to jail.