ABSTRACT

Factors affecting the socio-economic development of Dhangar community in Ahmednagar district – A Geographical study

Ahmadnagar District is the largest districts in Maharashtra and Dhangar community is the major “Nomadic Tribe Community” found in this district. Dhangar Community people find in large scale in the District but majority people are socially and economically backward, which are divided into two major sub caste, first one is Hatkar Dhangar and the second is Khutekar Dhangar. The Hatkar Dhangar engages in Shepherding occupation for the purpose of wool and meats as well as they do farming, services and other occupation. While the Khutekar Dhangar depend on the blanket weaving occupation and they also do the various types other occupation, such as agriculture, wages, service and other occupation. But in district, major Sub Dhangar cast is Hatkar Dhangar. For the searching of the fodder the community moves throughout the year one region to another region.

Basically Dhangar’s occupation depends on natural phenomena such as rain fall, relief and other natural factors. So whenever natural condition is favorable, their Sheep Harding occupation is better, otherwise lack of rainfall and other factors influencing badly. Due to their major occupation is shepherding, they move one region to another region in order to grass and fodder for sheep and goats, so they do not get a proper education, hence this community is educationally very week there for their socio-economic condition is very bad. Although Dhangar community is a semi nomadic community, Dhangar community is a vital and inside part of Indian society. This research work was conducted for the study of this neglected community and introduce to the problems and find the remedies about the community.

Madane (2010) slowly particular animal herding developed in some parts of the world. In the big tracks of land which could not maintain agriculture or in areas where the dry season was rigorous and fodder was not obtainable for a large number of animals, people gave up interest in farming and became full time herders. They use to take their animals to fodder in different areas. Until the present day many communities in the world
and India move around with their cattle (sheep, goats and buffalos). They shift to different areas in different seasons in search of pasture and stay in the areas where the fodder is available in plenty. These people are called nomadic people. Some of the cases, these nomads have a stable house and they move from there in a particular season and come back when they have suitable. This practice is called seasonal movement. In some situation the people will be on a regular migration whole time the year and will stay in different areas in different seasons, this is called regular migration.

In India as well as world, many nomadic tribe communities are shown. They have a great history in the world. The following important communities are founded. The Toda is the important nomadic community in the world, it is found in the southern India in Nilgiri Mountain. They are buffalo kipper. The Masai is the second important nomadic community in the world; they are established in the highland of Victoria in Africa. The community is cattle herding community. The Bahima is the other important nomadic community in the world. Their major occupation is cattle herding. The Kazak nomadic community is placed in Siberia. Their major occupations are Cows, horses, camels and sheep herding. Dhangar is the nomadic tribe community in Maharashtra (India) it is depending on the rearing of the shepherding occupation, their subsistence is depending on wool and meat determination. Gujjars are another nomadic tribal community in Himachalpradesh. It relates to the Islam religion. The main source of substances is Buffalo rearing. Gaddi, Gujjar also pursues the related example of migration and they remain in the grasses of the Himalaya for half year and in plain areas for half year months of the twelve. The Ramoshi Community is famous for the protection of the village. The majority of the Ramoshi people are residing in western Maharashtra. Remorse considers himself as the origin of Lord Rama. In Marathi language they say “we are Ramwanshi” (Madane, 2010)

This study region has been selected for present study due to various reasons such as Dhangar community is an important and integrated part of Indian society. As the majority of Dhangar’s live in remote forest and hilly areas, remain isolated and untouched by civilization. The study area has diversified relief, rainfall and land types. They are largely unaffected by development processes. Therefore, their geographical and
socio-economic study has considerable significance. Researcher belongs to this study region, hence familiar with study area.

Ahmednagar district has included various mountains and valleys ranges. It has also various river basins such as Godavari and its various tributaries. However, mostly area is hilly and rain fed hence it is favorable for the occupation of agriculture as well as shepherding, so large number of shepherders are lying in this district. It is the biggest district of Maharashtra State with a geographical area of 17418 Sq.k.m. that is 5.66% of area of Maharashtra State. Out of entire areas 391.5 sq. k. m. is urban area and remaining 16,656.5 sq. k. m. is rural area. Ahmednagar is centrally situated in western Maharashtra. In the Ahmednagar district, there were 14 talks and 1,581 villages and 1,308 Grampanchayat. The Ahmednagar district is placed between 18°2’ to 19°9’ North latitude and 73°9’ to 57°5’ East longitude, and is bordered on the north by Nasik district, on the north east by Aurangabad district, in the east by Beed and Osmanabad, on the south by Solapur while in the south west by Thane and Pune district. The region with irregular shape and has 200 kilometers a length and width of 210 kilometers. In the study region density was 266 persons per sq. kilometer. The sex ratio was 939 females per thousand males, literacy was 79.05 percent. The growth of population from 2001 to 2011 was 12.43 percent. Phyiographically, study region is divided into three regions, namely, Sahyadri hill ranges, namely, Kalsubai, Adula, Baleshwar and Harishchandragad, Plateau and plains drained by Godavari and Bhima rivers. Average rainfall receives 575.8 mm. The mean daily maximum temperature is 37° centigrade and means daily minimum temperature is 12.5° centigrade. The deep black soil, medium black soil, gray soil and red soil appear in the study region. 71.10 percent area is found under cultivation and irrigation accounts 32.40 percent. The major crops, namely, jawar, wheat, bajra, maize, sugarcane, cotton, pulses and oilseeds are cultivated in the study region.

The undertaken study has attempted to measure and assess the factors affecting socio-economic development of Dhangar community in Ahmednagar district by following objectives

i) To study the socio-economic condition of Dhangar community.

ii) To investigate the changing occupational pattern of Dhangar community.

iii) To survey the relationship between education and socio-economic condition.
vi) To analyze the impact of Geographical factors on the occupation of shepherding.

The present study is based on primary and secondary data obtained from government and non-government sources.

1) Primary Data was composed from field survey by an interview with an appropriate questionnaire for the Village of Ahmednagar District; Total 42 villages from thirteen blocks were selected purposefully for study on the basis of existence of maximum Dhangar Pastoralists. A total 420 respondents were nominated randomly from 42 selected villages and data were made through the personal interview schedule along with participating observation. The generated data were analyzed by various types of statistical methods.

2) Secondary source (data) was gained from the Department of census, Publication of Ahmednagar District, Toposheets of survey of India, Maps and Development Report from Ahmednagar District.

The present study has been arranged into seven chapters.

The first chapter is an introduction of study which includes a general introduction, choice of region, importance of the subject, study area, need of the research, aims and objectives, hypothesis, review of literature, data base and methodology.

The second chapter focuses on location, site and situation, relief, drainage, soil, climate, rainfall, temperature, forest and natural resources.

The third Chapter has studied historical background, land use pattern, transport, network, density and distribution of population, the growth of population, literacy, sex ratio, occupation structure, irrigation and weekly market.

The fourth Chapter is included the meaning and definition of Dhangar community, its, Kuldaivat, Dhangari Gaja, Sub caste as well as Socio-economic analysis of Dhangar Community such as Age of marriage, Owner ship of land, Types of agriculture, Crops types, Age composition, Size of family, Types of family, Annual income, Occupational structure, Land holding capacity, Dependency ratio, Sex composition, Number of sheep, Migration pattern, Time of migration, Other community people think about respondents present occupation, Changing occupation and development of social status etc.
The fifth Chapter has assured that the Literacy of Dhangar community (respondents) in Ahmednagar district. This chapter is focused on literacy of Respondents because education factor is almost as significant to the process of development of Dhangar community in Study region. Although, in this community the ratio of migration for the sheep herding is not very high, the respondent’s literacy rate is very low in the study area. That is the most significant fact in this study.

The sixth Chapter is for the village Shindodi in Sangamner tehsil selected as a case study in terms of distribution, density, growth, literacy, sex ratio and occupational structure of Dhangar community at village level study.

The seventh chapter covers Summary, Conclusion, Findings and Suggestions and these are as below:

In study region respondents literacy rate is very less as compare the average district literacy; therefore it is an urgent need to create intensity and awareness among Dhangar community about the education. For that it requires providing more education facilities like scholarships, hosteling facilities etc.

Shepherding is their traditional occupation. The study indicate only 30 percent respondents have sheep, they are economically very backward. They can’t purchase the sheep their own credit so that they do other types occupation, such as farming, wages, helper, etc. To remain this occupation they should be provided the Loan facilities to purchase the sheep.

Although the population census data of Dhangar community is not available but according to community leaders and knowledgeable persons in this subject, the actual population of the Dhangar community in Maharashtra and the actual reservation percent to Dhangar community is very dissimilar which further resulted that the community does not get the proper representation in political and service sector. That’s why Dhangar community is remained very backward in the socio-economic circumstances. Hence the government should give an appropriate reservation to Dhangar community in education, services as well as politics.

In the present phase, most of Dhangar community people are changing their traditional occupation because of decreasing pasture land. Therefore, it is an urgent need to provide the grassland region for the fodder of sheep.
Know the community should adopt new technology in their occupation, such as goat farming.

The pasture land also declined gradually with the growing population. Therefore, the community should find the other sources of livelihood. Government should take advantage of strong, firm and fearless characteristics of the Dhangar community in the various fields such as the Police Department, Defense and other security forces.

Dhangar community members have a very less participation in various organizations, that means almost community members are not in a mainstream of society so that they should be included in the mainstream and they should be got a sufficient participation in that type of organization for their upliftment.

The Dhangar community is semi-nomadic tribe. It has been doing sheep herding occupation from its origin, but now maximum people are shifting from their traditional occupation to new occupations. Educational condition of Dhangar community is not so good. People are facing many problems for taking the education. The main reason of the changes in occupation is that, many people want to get a better employment, so they have turned towards the agricultural activity. Other community people react respectfully towards the present occupations which are accepted by Dhangar community. So that the hypotheses of this study could accept, they are follows:

1. Seasonal migration for sheep herding adversely affected the educational development of Dhangar Community.

2. Dhangar Community is improving their Socio-economic status in recent year.