

Chapter - V

Conclusions

This study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- ❖ To examine the extent to which modernisation and westernisation is affecting the Lambada culture and Language in Telangana.
- ❖ To identify the key differences between the religious customs and traditions of the indigenous Lambadas of Telangana.
- ❖ To study the differences in religious practices between the Christian and Hindu Lambada community of Telangana.
- ❖ In addition, the following research questions were sought to be explored:
 - ❖ What is the impact of various religions on the customs and traditions of tribal community of Lambada?
 - ❖ What is the impact of the upper castes on the Lambada community in Telangana?
 - ❖ What are the key differences between the religious customs and traditions of the indigenous community of Lambada (Banjara tribes) in Telangana region?
 - ❖ What are the differences in religious practices between the Hindu, Christian and Sikh tribal groups of the Lambada community?
 - ❖ The impact (both positive and negative) of modernisation on the Lambada The study was covered in the following chapters:
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction, Explanation of tribal culture. Tribal population, history of the Lambada tribe, derivation of the word lambada or Banjara and their clan system. This chapter also included review of literature.

It emerged that the Lambadas are a very vibrant race, with a rich cultural background. They are a very important part of the cultural milieu of the state of Telangana.

Chapter: 2. Cultural Identity of Lambada.

This chapter dealt with the tradition, custom, behaviour living style of the Lambada tribes and their celebrations. This included their birth ritual to death rituals, etc., and their celebration of festivals, importance and its derivation, folksongs, folk dance gods and goddess and their way of worship through ceremonies and sacrifices and other professions of Lambada by such as occupation, language. And slow change towards new trend.

One could discern that the Lambadas have very elaborate rituals for each of their life-cycle rituals (birth, engagement, wedding and death). Their festivals bring out the rich heritage, spontaneity and gaiety expressed through their songs and dances. It was found that many of them have a lot of faith in their clan gods and goddess. However, due to the onslaught of various religions and exposure to ‘modern’ lifestyles, the younger generation is tending to veer away from what their elders faithfully believed in.

Chapter: 3. Religious Identity of the Lambadas

This chapter discussed the transformation of traditional culture of the Lambada community from ‘Animistic belief’ to different religious cultures and tradition due to the impact of modernisation and urbanisation on the community. Other issues covered included: changes in culture and religious beliefs. A few case studies were also included.

It could be seen that the Lambada community has been under continuous onslaught from all possible sides. Other religions, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, etc., have managed to make significant inroads in the community which was largely animistic in nature till very recently. Many Lambadas have become very enthusiastic followers of their newly adopted religions, which include observing their festivals, life cycle rituals and adopting their ‘dress codes. Remarkably, despite all pressures, many Lambadas have shown the resilience to still retain some features of the original culture.

Chapter: 4.

Modernity vs. Tradition in Lambada Tribe

The focus here was on how the process of modernisation, including migration, is impacting the traditional folk culture of the Lambadas, including their linguistic identity.

One conclusion that could be arrived at here is that the forces of modernity have sought to deluge Lambada community and totally overwhelm them. The areas where the impact has been largely felt include: entry of other religions, language,

and dress, pernicious impact of the dowry system, food habits and the system of local governance (traditional vs. statutory Panchayats). While modernisation has shaken up the traditional Lambada milieu to a considerable extent, modernisation has increased the means of access of the Lambadas (by providing road-rail connectivity with other areas), improved their awareness levels (due to the spread of literacy) and enhanced their health status (due to the expansion of healthcare services even to remote areas).

One conclusion that could be drawn from the discussion so far is that the Lambadas have continued to remain a very vibrant and dynamic community. They have been very proud of their cultural ethos, traditions and customs. Unlike the dinosaurs, which became extinct because of their poor adaptability to the rapid environmental changes, the Lambadas have very valiantly withstood the forces that operated against them. When the introduction of the road and railways system threatened their occupation of transporters of goods, they adopted more settled occupations like agriculture. This enabled them to evolve a culture of their own which grew from strength to strength. One common element in all the festivals and rituals was the high position accorded to the family elders and the Naiks and other officials of the Thandas. Another remarkable facet about the Lambadas was the almost total involvement of the entire community in the festivals and rituals.

Today, the Lambada culture is under severe stress. The youth of this community are being increasingly drawn towards other religions, 'modern' dresses and food items. Even the Traditional Lambadas dances and songs are facing the threat of becoming extinct.

These and the costumes seem to be acquiring the status of show pieces – to be displayed only on festive occasions.

It needs to be understood that our culture should be a source of strength for us – not a cause of embarrassment. We have to retain its positive elements, while moderating its weak ones (like belief in superstition). The knowledge possessed by the tribals may not have been acquired from universities or colleges. Instead, their native wisdom has been fine-tuned and sharpened by experience, which most agree is the best teacher. The tribal youth, including those from the Lambada community, must be motivated to feel proud of their roots. They should be encouraged to become change agents so as to bring in positive changes in their community. They should interact with their community members and spread awareness on issues like cleanliness, sanitation, proper ventilation, proper healthcare (like timely inoculation for infants and ante and post-natal care of pregnant women), environmental protection, availing of all the facilities like education, health centres, employment schemes, the PDS, etc.

The development agencies should take steps to check the exploitation of the tribals by forest contractors, moneylenders, etc. This could be ensured by facilitating loans on easy terms (in times of pressing family and social needs). The developmental projects in tribal, including Lambada, areas should be as per the felt needs of the local community. For instance, it would be only a waste of money to lay a bridge over a perennially dry river just because the funds have to be expended before the ending of the Financial Year.

It is a historical reality that for many centuries, persons belonging to certain communities were ‘debarred’ from accessing education. There has also been a classic instance from

the **Mahabharata**, where the immensely talented tribal boy, Ekalavya, was asked to give his right thumb as 'guru dakshina' to Dronacharya, the preceptor of the Kauravas and the Pandavas,. The only reason for such a cruel demand was that the upper castes at that time just could not tolerate the idea of a tribal boy excelling the Pandava prince, Arjuna, in archery.

In this context, it may not be wrong to say that one may be born in a poor family (a condition over which he or she has no control), but if one makes absolutely no effort to overcome the handicaps, it may only point to a poor attitude. Many great persons came from very humble backgrounds, but later attained very high positions due to their commitment, determination, will power, self-confidence and tenacity.

Suggestions for Future Research

The lifestyles of the earlier nomadic communities need a more detailed study. Due to limitations of time, and other issues, the instant study could cover only a few issues – that too regarding a particular tribal community only. It is suggested that future researchers explore the following areas:

- (a) The challenges being faced by gypsies in other countries, and continents, while interacting with the mainstream communities there.
- (b) The similarities and dissimilarities in the rituals, customs, and traditions of the various tribals groups in India.

(c) Success stories of tribals who have overcome handicaps to reach positions of some importance and how they are contributing to replicating their success stories.