

Social life of the Chamars of Patna District

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Scheduled caste is at the lowest state in the caste hierarchy of Hindu Society Chamars is the weakest scheduled caste. Hindu law maker, Manu has given many theories regarding the origin of the scheduled caste and made of their life Manu says. That the origin of the Shudras is from the feet of the Brahman from such type of thinking one cause to the conclusion that Shudras have no status in Hindu Society. Although they are human beings the faulty caste system has degraded them to the level below human beings. They are not allowed to exercise such rights as the caste Hindu. As a result of the Hindu laws one section of the society is regarded as god and goddess while the others are treated as worse than animals. These feelings of caste system are seen ever to day everywhere in our Indian Society and are deep-rooted, Due to these inhuman feeling the social life of scheduled caste is still pitiable and they are still the most vulnerable section of our society.

The Hindu Society is totally guided by the rules granted by the religious texts. The virtual and duties performed by the four varnas are given below :-

The Brahmins are responsible to control the mind and sense cleanliness anoterity for bearanees uprightness and conduction etc. The Kshatriyas are high spirited firm having the responsibility to protect the society the vaisvas have the pursuit of agriculture, trade and commerce and the Shudras were only manual labourers and servants of above mentioned three Varnas. Thus Shudras could never have economic freedom. This rule was strictly enforced.

The people of Chamars community in the study area subsist mainly on labour and some agricultural activities. Some non agricultural activities are also seen. There is a great and valuable contribution by them in the national development since they toil hard and increase national production. It is the weaker sections of the society who grow food for the nation but themselves they are not allowed to earn food for both meal a day this group of the Indian

society has no share not only in landed property but also in trade and commerce. In modern time when the government is clamoring for the welfare of the scheduled caste in effect the result is nil so far Chamars community is concerned. Although through long periods of evolution, the higher castes have appropriated to themselves a major part of power, wealth and prestige it is the lower castes who played a negative role of friction and drag in the overall development of society in particular regions not with standing their supplementary contribution to the social economy, our religions is such that it has effected the economic development of the scheduled caste population to a great extent.

The Jajmani system is being practical in the India society for the last three millennium for major classes in the socio-economic set up of rural India are existing since the ancient period. The word Jajmani is derived from the sanskrit word yajamani which means sacrifier. In Indian rural society, generally a Brahmin used to warship daily in the home of higher caste people the Brahmin used the term Jajmani for their client the Rajputs, and Bhumihars. This Jajmani word is also used by other traditional occupational for the rich because they devote their time for the service of the rich so the occupational class is a known by the name of kamin. Thus it is clear that Jajmani is used by traditional occupational or Kameen or sacrifier for the higher caste. But there are also some difference regarding the occupations of Kameens. The Brahmin having the highest and top position on society is also a traditional occupational. But as per the tradition and culture, his duty is regarded only with the religious activities, sacrificers and rituals so the word kameen is never used for a Brahmin. Kameen is regarded as something degraded or inferior and is only used for the poor and the scheduled castes for the Brahmins word like Baba, Pandit Jee, Maharaj Jee or Purohit Jee are used but in Jajmani system for Kameen 'Re' a most degraded inferior and dishonorable word is used by the higher upsor the rich. The Jajmani system is very closely related to the caste stratification. As discussed earlier the higher castes are Jajman who avail of the services of the lower castes or Kameen. The Kameen are paid remuneration in both cash or kind.

There are certain patterns of Jajmani system in the study area, It has been found that:-

- (a) The lower caste serve the higher caste for which they are paid remuneration in both cash and kind.
- (b) Secondly the traditional occupational provides his services to other occupationals with mutual understanding.
- (c) Thirdly some occupationals such as Nai and Chamar serve the lowest sub caste of the scheduled caste and they have their remuneration paid in terms of either cash or kind such patterns of Jajmani system are in vogue since long and it will continue in future also.

But some changes in this system and obligations are taking place in the study area. However the rate of change is not satisfactory rather it is negligible this system is strong in the rural areas. But in the urban area there is no rigidity regarding the caste occupation like that in the rural areas. Main cause are as follows:-

- (a) Poor-socio-economic condition of the scheduled has compelled them to perform their traditional occupations.
- (b) Most of the educated scheduled caste people who perform their caste occupations can easily earn by other means. But due to the social suppression and influence of the higher castes people they cannot change their old occupation.
- (c) The traditional and illiterate scheduled caste people never pay attention the modernisation. If their educated member or son and grandson advice them to give up the traditional occupation they become angry and are never ready to go by their advice but in many cases it has been seen that the enlightened scheduled caste have refused to perform traditional occupation and their refused has resulted in atrocities on them by the higher castes.

Social Interaction:-

The term social interaction means to meet with the people of not only the same caste but also with the other lower or higher. The caste system in India society is of unique type which can be hardly seen in the world's community. Here the made of life are fully dependent on caste system and social customs and traditions are entirely guided by the caste. It is so deep rooted

in the society that it is impossible to ameliorate in the near future although the practice of caste system has always proved to be dangerous the higher caste people regard this practice as a tonic for them. They feel very happy as well as grave in main training distances from the lower caste people they do not want to mix with the poor or with the scheduled castes. Even the educated higher caste living in modern society do not respond properly to the greetings of the well educated scheduled caste elites and even if they reply their response is in a low key, But they neither look to wards the scheduled caste nor greet them if it can be avoided they also deal politics in society among their colleagues, they know all the rules and regulations & the government and the rights of the scheduled caste because some & them are lawyers also they will partake tea sometimes dinner and breakfast also with their backward or scheduled caste colleagues in offices and in urban areas. But these very higher caste people change their mentality fully after visiting the rural society. They totally forget the feelings of interaction and mixing with the scheduled caste people at least with those who are educated and sometimes more educated in comparison to them. The Chamars endogamy was prevalent in the past but now a day's exogamy is in vogue. The Chamar are also divided into several sub-castes such as Dhusia Koril Kari, Rai Das and Rangiya etc. The feeling of superiority and inferiority exists among earn the different branches of Chamars also.

The social customs of Chamar are more or less the same as the other Hindu. After twenty days of birth of a new baby the chamar organises a ceremony, women who give birth to new body are thought to be untouchable during the "Soiri", The period of Soiri varies from one week to three one week to three weeks.

The Chamars worships a dozen of gods and goddesses like other Hindu castes. Their main gods and goddesses are Dihal, Bharosi, Bighin, Sair, Samme, Goraiya Baba, anniversary of Sabari.

The people of Chamars community observe savan festival. Savan or Shravan festival is locally known as Sawami Puja and Bahari Puja. This puja is in practice among the Chamars and other SC. In this puja they sacrifice pigs and some times goats to their deity for their betterment. The Chamars have also their caste panchayat is very strict and strong and have full water on the Chamar Society if the panchayat finds any fault it has the right to take action and penalise the culprit sometimes the panchayat socially boycott the culprit and stop him Hukka-Pani if good

sense prevails on the culprit and he comes on good path maintains the social norms and caste rules regulation. The panchayat may again accept their person as a member of their society, such type of practice is seen only in the case of their events otherwise in the case of minor changes the panchayat imposes some monetary fine the amount of fine varies from Rs. 50 to five hundred there is another local practice of punishment known as Lachhminia is a word given to the branch of the palm tree. It is used as Lathi or Stick a person who has got the punishment of Lachhminia would be hit with the palm tree branch for the number of times what the panchayat has decided. The Chamar community either bury or burn the dead bodies. In the matter of funeral ceremonies the custom of the other Hindu caste are in vague, the Shradh is performed after ten days. The Bhagina of the deceased officiates as priest at the Shradh.

Social changes involves a number of processes the area of settlement and habitation, diversification in political field, changes in economic condition alternation activities and background, changes in religion and believes, rituals shift in cultural trails change in the mode of life and life style clothing and food, social structure, prestige, privilege etc are all parts of social change the social change is a process which takes a considerable length of time.

The Indian society passing through the phase of social change the impact of new ideas believes and modes of behavior are seen in urban areas. The lowest caste previously was forbidden to choose any other clear occupation or occupation according to their choice they were attend to their traditional occupations which yielded very low income. The higher castes had made them immobile by their Vedic-rules. Now the main problem however is to change their socio-economic conditions with which all other changes are related. After the independence the new constitution incorporated several progressive measures for radical social and economic change, some special provisions were formulated and stern measures were taken by the government for those who were neglected for thousand of years to whom status of untouchable was given with this view the reservation policy was adopted for the down trodden.

But inspite of several constitutional safeguards and measures the social status of the chamar in the study areas has not changed event to the extent that can be visible same of the people of chamar community living in the urban areas has changed their dress particularly the younger generation there is impact of urban culture upon them, but their social status is just as it was in the previous days. The change is negligible the people rural areas are totally devoid of any change.

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