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CHAPTER - V

Traditional Occupations and Change.

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CHAPTER V

Traditional Occupations and Change

An attempt is made in this chapter to study the nature and extent of occupational mobility. The economy of a traditional Indian village is based primarily on agriculture and certain crafts and services relate to agriculture. With the forces of modernization set in motion change in this situation is bound to occur. One very important evidence of this change is that many castes have given up their traditional occupations and this process is going on.

In the beginning it will be useful to present an overall picture of the assets, in the form of land of the families we have selected for study. Table No.1 given this picture.

TABLE NO.1 - Castewise distribution of Landholdings.

Sr. No.	Caste and Religious groups	Size of Landholding (in acres)									More than 36 acres	TO-TAL	
		Land less one acre	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35				
1.	Brahmin	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
2.	Maratha	2	2	13	15	3	4	1	-	1	-	41	
3.	Vani	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
4.	Kumbhar	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
5.	Lohar	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
6.	Mali	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
7.	Teli	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
8.	Gurav	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
9.	Nhavi	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
10.	Parit	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
11.	Jangam	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
12.	Sangar	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	
13.	Dhangar	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
14.	Kaikadi	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
15.	Khatik	-	-	1	±	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
16.	Chambhar	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
17.	Dhor	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
18.	Mang	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
19.	Buddhist	-	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	
20.	Muslims	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
T O T A L:		9	10	34	15	3	4	1	-	1	-	77	
		(11.69)	(12.99)	(44.15)	(19.48)	(3.90)	(5.19)	(1.30)	(-)	(1.30)	(-)	(100.00)	

/Note : Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentages to the total./

The table reveals the inequality in the distribution of the most important natural resource in a village community. Except the Marathas not a single family is found to possess more than 5 acres of land. It should be borne in mind here that economic inequality is one of the important bases of social stratification.

Now we shall begin the study of occupational change by first pointing out the traditional occupations of the various castes represented in our sample. Table No.2 gives this position

TABLE NO.2 - Castes and their Traditional occupations

Sr. No.	Caste	Traditional occupation.	Sr. No.	Caste	Traditional occupation
1.	Brahmin	Prist-hood	11.	Jangam	Religious Mendicant
2.	Maratha	Agriculture	12.	Sangar	Ghongadi weaving
3.	Vani	Trade and Commerce	13.	Dhangar	Sheep rearing
4.	Kumbhar	Pottery	14.	Kaikadi	Basketry
5.	Lohar	Black Smithy	15.	Khatik	Meat-cutter
6.	Mali	Gardening	16.	Chambhar	Making foot ware
7.	Teli	Oil seeds crushing	17.	Dhor	Tanning leather
8.	Gurav	Religious Mendicant	18.	Mang	Rope making
9.	Nhavi	Shaving and hair cutting.	19.	Buddhist (Former Mahars)	Village service
10.	Parit	Washing Clothes.	20.	Muslim	(No specific traditonal occupation)



As the Table shows, as Many as 19 different traditional occupational classifications are represented in our sample. The Muslim forms a religious minority which is not having any specific traditional occupation. But it is a separate endogamous group and hence mentioned as a separate " caste ".

In our survey we collected the detailed information about the main occupations of the heads of the family. The main occupation is that from which the family obtains the largest portion of its net income. It is true that a small village community will not present a picture of occupational changes occurring in the vast Indian sub-continent. But this micro-level study will at least give some idea of the nature and direction of social change. With this limited purpose we intend to present below the present castewise and occupationwise distribution of the sampled families in the village.

TABLE NO.3 - Castewise and occupationwise distribution of the Heads of the families.

Sr. No.	Caste & Religious Groups.	Agri- cul- ture.	Agri. Labo- ur.	House- hold indu- stry.	Trade and Comm- erce.	Other servi- ces.	Total
1.	Brahmin	1	-	-	-	-	1
2.	Maratha	27	3	1	-	10	41
3.	Vani	-	-	-	1	1	2
4.	Kumbhar	-	-	-	-	1	1
5.	Lohar	-	-	1	-	1	1
6.	Mali	-	-	-	-	1	1
7.	Teli	1	-	-	-	-	1
8.	Gurav	-	-	-	-	1	1
9.	Nhavi	-	-	-	-	1	1
10.	Parit	-	-	-	-	1	1
11.	Jangam	-	-	-	-	1	1
12.	Sangar	-	-	4	-	1	5
13.	Dhangar	1	-	-	-	2	3
14.	Kaikadi	-	-	1	-	-	1
15.	Khatik	-	-	-	-	1	1
16.	Chambhar	-	-	-	-	1	1
17.	Dhor	-	-	2	-	-	2
18.	Mang	-	-	-	-	1	1
19.	Buddhist (Farmer Mahars)	-	6	1	-	3	9
20.	Muslim	1	-	-	-	1	2
T O T A L :		31	8	10	1	27	77

The main points revealed in Table No.3 are -

- 1) The Marathas are in majority in the village caste groups.
- 2) Among the agriculturists having their own land the Marathas form the largest group (87 % of the total)
- 3) Among the landless labourers, the neo-Buddhists i.e. former Mahars form a majority (more than 60 %)
- 4) Except a few castes all are turning towards other services of employment for earning their livelihood in an even manner.
- 5) The occupational mobility is there but its nature is not exactly contributory towards the eradication of the caste system as such. This point will be clear in later discussion.

There is no exact empirical evidence regarding the occupations of the heads of all the families in our sample about a hundred years ago. But on the basis of the commonly described system of Balutedari, we can point out the traditional occupations of these families with a fair amount of reliability; and on this background we can take into consideration the occupational changes taken place in recent time. Table No.4 gives a summary of the number of families belonging to each caste following traditional as well as new occupations.

TABLE NO.4 - Distribution of Families as per Traditional and Non-traditional Occupations.

Sr. No.	Caste	Traditional Occupation.	No. of Families following as their principal source		Total
			Traditional occupations	Non-traditional occupations.	
1.	Brahmin	Priesthood	-	1	1
2.	Maratha	Agriculture	30	11	41
3.	Vani	Trade & Commerce	1	1	2
4.	Kumbhar	Pottery	-	1	1
5.	Lohar	Black Smithy	1	-	1
6.	Mali	Gardening	-	1	1
7.	Teli	Oil Seeds crushing	-	1	1
8.	Gurav	Religious Mendicant	1	-	1
9.	Nhavi	Shaving & hair cutting	1	-	1
10.	Parit	Washing clothes	1	-	1
11.	Jangam	Religious Mendicant	1	-	1
12.	Sangar	Ghongadi weaving	4	1	5
13.	Dhangar	Sheep rearing	1	2	3
14.	Kaikadi	Basketry	1	-	1
15.	Khatik	Meat cutter	1	-	1
16.	Chambhar	Making footwear	1	-	1
17.	Dhor	Tanning leather	-	2	2
18.	Mang	Rope making	-	1	1
19.	Buddhist	Village Service	-	9	9
20.	(Former Mahars)				
T O T A L :			44	31	75
			(58.67)	(41.33)	(97.40)

/Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentages to the total./

The Table is self-explanatory. Following facts, however, deserve specific attention. As many as 41.33 % of the families have abandoned their traditional occupations. But this statistical fact may mislead us if we do not study the changes carefully. Out of 19 castes, 8 have not changed their traditional occupations.

Another noteworthy fact is that all the families belonging to Mang, Dhor and former Mahar caste have abandoned their traditional works. This is quite a significant change. Similarly, the Brahmin, Mali and Teli families have turned to new jobs.

All the above changes are, however, not of the same kind. They indicate different types of under currents. Thus, the change in the traditional occupation of a Brahmin may mean that the priesthood has not remained a worthy job. Black Smith, barber etc. do not change their jobs, because they still get adequate income without 'losing' social 'status' as such. Mali and Teli have left their traditional jobs because those have become almost outdated. Lastly, the Mang, Dhor and Mahars, the lowest in the hierarchy have thrown away the traditional burdens, those being felt as symbolic of slavery. These castes feel liberated. Thus, here we observe various facets of modernization process and also the constraints therein.

Another angle to study castewise occupational changes is to take into consideration the nature of newly adopted non-traditional occupations. Table No.5 gives this picture.

TABLE NO.5 - Castewise distribution of Heads of families changing their traditional occupations and adhering to new ones.

Sr. No.	Caste Group	No. of heads who changed the traditional occupations	No. of heads who have taken to new occupations.					
			Agri- cultural.	Agri- cultural Labour	Agri- cultural Labour	House- hold indus- try.	Trade and comm- erce.	Govt. Servi- ces (Employ ees.)
1.	Brahmin	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Maratha	11	-	-	-	1	-	10
3.	Vani	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
4.	Kumbhar	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
5.	Mali	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
6.	Teli	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Sangar	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
8.	Dhangar	2	1	-	-	-	-	1
9.	Dhor	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
10.	Mang	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
11.	Buddhist (Former Mahars)	9	-	5	3	1	-	3
T O T A L :		31	3	5	3	4	-	19
		(100.00)	(9.68)	(16.13)	(9.68)	(12.90)	(-)	(61.29)

/Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentages to the total./

This angle of looking to the facts throws interesting light on the direction of occupational changes; out of 31 heads

of the families who have changed their traditional occupations as many as 19 (61.29 %) have turned to employment in Government and other institutions. On the other hand, not a single person has endeavoured to earn his livelihood by trade. We have earlier seen that the former Mahars have been a highly mobile group, but their mobility is only partly upward, as 5 out of 9 (55.56 %) have actually to resort to agricultural labour for their daily bread.

At this stage we can return to the point raised while explaining table 3. The picture of the occupational mobility in the village is by now clear. It can be observed that there is a change in the traditional occupation. However, this change is towards such occupations which are more or less new to the village life. There are traditional services and occupations which are not followed by other castes. For example, we do not see a 'barber' becoming a 'washer man' (or vice a versa), or a 'black-smith' becoming a 'shoe-maker'. Hence, the occupational changes are only of a limited nature and their direction is specific. Interchange in the occupations has not taken place.

Secondary occupations :

In order to make the occupational scene of the village more clear we have taken into view the secondary occupations of the sampled families. This information is summarised in the Table No.6.

TABLE NO.6 - Castwise and Secondary occupationwise
distribution of families-

Sr. No.	Caste Group	No. of families not following secondary occupations.	Agri- cultu- re.	Argi- cultu- re labour	House hold indu- stry.	Trade and comm- erce.	Other servi- ces.	Total
1.	Brahmin	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
2.	Maratha	26	12	-	-	1	2	41
3.	Vani	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
4.	Kumbhar	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
5.	Lohar	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
6.	Mali	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
7.	Teli	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
8.	Gurav	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
9.	Nhavi	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
10.	Parit	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
11.	Jangam	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
12.	Sangar	4	1	-	-	-	-	5
13.	Dhanagar	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
14.	Kaikadi	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
15.	Khatik	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
16.	Chambhar	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
17.	Dhor	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
18.	Mang	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
19.	Buddhist (Former Mahars)	7	2	-	-	-	-	9
20.	Muslim	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
TOTAL		48	24	-	1	1	3	77
		(62.33)	(31.17)	(-)	(1.30)	(1.30)	(3.90)	(100.)

/ Note : Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentages to the total./

This Table is not intended to throw any light on occupational changes. The main purpose is to point out that quite a large number of families (37.67 %) and especially from almost the upper castes (51.72 % of the total doing secondary jobs) have turned to additional means of income. The upward mobility, as far as the economic status is concerned, is thus, found among the upper castes in a relatively large scale.

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