

CHAPTER-I

NOMADIC CASTES AND TRIBES

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1.A VILLAGE COMMUNITY

'Unity in Diversity' is the peculiar characteristic of Indian Society. The concept of ' Village Community ' has been present for a long time in our Indian Society. Village community was formed to fulfil the various needs of the human beings. Some groups of people are still living as nomads. They wander to find food and other essential things. Due to their instability they lag behind in terms of development. To understand the dynamics of rural India, it becomes necessary to understand the lives of these nomadic tribes.

B) DERIVATION / ETYMOLOGY OF ' NOMADS ' -

A man or a group of people, who wanders for livelihood or for their occupation, or for finding out the means for their livelihood is called a nomad.

The word ' Nomad ' is borrowed from Greek Word ' Nomi ' or ' Nemo ' (meaning to feed cattle)¹

According to Oxford Dictionary, Nomad is one who leads a wandering or pastoral life one of a tribe that wanders about in quest of games or of pasture and has no fixed habitation.²

According to Concise Oxford Dictionary Nomad is a member of tribe roaming from place to place for pasture.³ According to 'Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Nomad is a member of a tribe that wanders from place to place, with no fixed home .⁴

The word ' Nomad ' or this concept has not been used in a restrictive sense. It has not been restricted for the people wandering in forests. It is used for the people or groups of people who wander in desire of their livelihood, without a fixed house. They wander to fulfil their needs alongwith their primary and small scale things. Some times they wander on their accord. Sometimes they change places on account of their necessity and natural calamities. To earn money, they adopt many professions. Some of the professions are acrobatics, magic show, foretelling, selling of herbal medicines, juggling,disguising and so on. Whatever they earn adopting such professions is very scanty.

Some groups are semi wanderers. They own some fixed property. But they can't get crop-production from their fields, for fulfilling their yearly need. To make up that want they migrate after finishing the harvest. When rainy season comes they return to their fields.

C) DEVELOPED CONDITIONS OF NOMADS -

Man in a primary stage used to wander to earn his livelihood. He earned his livelihood from the natural resources available e.g. Herb, leaves of a tree, esculent roots,fruits etc. In course of time he prepared worden tools or tools created of stones. He developed the skill to use these tools for

various purpose. Afterwards he used metal and created various weapons, like bow and arrow, spear etc. He started hunting. He included the meat of this animal as food. He also developed some of the tools significant for agriculture. Hunting nomads is the next stage of the nomads who search food.

While collecting the food the man realized that he can produce the food. The developed stage of a human being came when he started keeping cattle and agriculture. They started using cattle for various purpose : Milk, meat, for carrying loads, for agriculture and so on. They started trade of animals.

In the life of human being the primary revolution took place due to agriculture. Human development took place from the primary state of agriculture. The next stage was keeping cattle. Through these professions they provided services useful for humanbeings.⁵

D) CLASSIFICATION OF NOMADS -

Classification of Nomads on the basis of profession.⁶

- a) Who produce something / productive work,
- b) Who offer services,
- c) Who entertain .

a) NOMDAS WHO DO PRODUCTIVE WORK -

The nomdas belonging to this class earn their livelihood from keeping cattle and from the resources from cattle (for instance, bones, skin, wool etc.) They also sell the cattle to earn money. To keep these cattle healthy, they need good feed. In search of the pastures they wander

from place to place. They wander in area of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Sahyadri . While wandering in these hilly regions, they opted hunting, herbal medicine, esculent roots, fruits as their complementary businesses.

b) NOMADS OFFERING SERVICES -

The people belonging to this class wander for fulfilling the basis needs and needs in our daily life. They take some things like foodgrains, salt etc. Wherever available. Where there is scarcity of such essential commodities, they sell it out taking a small profit. They also sell out herbal medicines, honey, wood etc. They also offer services like Blacksmithy and others. These services are helpful in life of a human being.

c) NOMADS WHO ENTERTAIN -

In this class, we have people who go in village and entertain people, in exchange of food grains, money or other things. For instance the people from ' Joshi ' community go from village to village and foretell, 'Nandiwale ' play game of bulls, some play tricks, Acrobats show their skill in balancing on a string. Thus they earn money for their livelihood.

Raghavayya classifies Nomads as follows :-⁷

- a) Tribes living Traditionally as nomads.
- b) Tribes keeping cattle (Nomadic)
- c) Seasonal nomads
- d) Criminal Nomadic Tribes
- e) Professional Nomads

- f) Beggar Nomads
- g) Nomads
- h) Semi-Nomads

The Nomadic Tribes can be classified on the basis of following points :

- 1) Type of wandering
- 2) Economic life
- 3) Sociological Principles

With the help of above points we can have this classification.

- 1) Semi-wanders (Nomads)
- 2) Nomadic tribes keeping cattle
- 3) Professional Nomads
- 4) Nomadic Tribes offering useful services for human society
- 5) Other Nomadic Tribes

E) INFLUENCE OF HINDU RELIGION ON NOMADIC TRIBES :

The nomadic tribes in India are influenced by Hindu religion. While wandering in many regions of India, they absorbed various traditions in Hindu religion . All the concepts like sin and making good towards people, resurrection and redemption are there in Nomadic tribes. These concepts are inseparable elements of Hindu Philosophy and religion. We also can find the influence of the religion adopted by rulers for instance - Some of the nomadic tribes like 'Gujjars' in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh accepted ' Islam '.⁸

F) FAMILY AND MARRIAGE SYSTEM IN NOMADIC TRIBES -

Though these tribes wander here and there, they don't have fixed inhabitat, yet their family system is permanent. For nomads blood-relation, family and joint family are very important. In nomadic tribes, there is tradition of asking a girl for marriage. In nomadic tribes we find a tradition to offer dowry to the parents of a girl. The marriage ceremony goes on for long time, many days.⁹

G) THE PLACE OF NOMADS IN TRADITIONAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM.

The place of Nomads in traditional, social life was negligible. In traditional society, there were Twelve Balutedar (Public servants) and Eighteen Alutedar. In village community, these was also a place for a wanderer and a beggas-brahmin. The dealing goes on in exchange of the things and services. The money was not the main factor in dealing. Thus the villages were independent and autonomous. The nomads in this system wander from village to village and earn their livelihood¹⁰.

H) EFFECT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND MODERNIZATION ON NOMADIC TRIBES -

Industrialization and Modernization have greatly affected Indian tradition. It is the same case with Nomadic tribes. The traditional professions and means of it declined. The machines replaced the traditional tools. Thus the nomads became aimless and found themselves in dark. Thus to earn their

livelihood they started wages and hardworking professions.
Some of the nomadic tribes started begging.¹¹

1.1 A) NOMADIC TRIBES IN MAHARASHTRA -

There are 43 nomadic tribes in Maharashtra. Of these 29 are nomadic tribes and 14 are Vimukta Jamatis . There are 221 subtypes of these 42 nomadic tribes. They differ on the basis of culture, language, tradition, profession, state of living etc.¹²

B) CLASSIFICATION OF NOMADS IN MAHARASHTRA -

a) Roughly the nomads in Maharashtra can be classified as follows :-¹³

- 1) Hunting Tribes:- Phaseparadhi, Shikalgar, Vaidu .
- 2) Tribes keeping cattle - Gopal, Golla, Mairal, Dangat etc.
- 3) Tribes that entertain - Chitrarathi, Kolati, Sagarudi, Madari, Sayyad Halদিwale, Manggarudi etc.
- 4) Tribes that foretell and beg - Tirmali, Medhangi, Kudmude , Joshi, Thoke Joshi, Damruwale, Sarode, Kashikapdi, Vasudev etc.
- 5) Tribes doing other professions - Kaikadi, Waddar, Banjara , Beldar etc.
- 6) Tribes developed from the tradition of dedicating - people to God - Gondhali, Vaghe, Aradhi, Jogti etc.
- 7) Begging as discipline - (Panthiya Magate) - Dashami, Namjogi, NathGosavi, Lavangi Gosavi etc.

C) A list of Vimukta Jati has been published by the Government of Maharashtra. It includes the following castes.¹⁴

Vimukta Jati

Caste	Similar
1) Berad	1) (A) dropped (B) Naikwadi (C) Lalwar (D) Walmiki
2) Bestar	2) Sanchalu Waddar
3) Bhamta	3) (A) Bhamti (B) Girni Waddar (C) Kamati (D) Pathrut (E) Takari (including Muslim) (F) Uchale
4) Kaikadi (In Mumbai, Thane, Kwaba, Ratnagiri, Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Pune, Ahmednagar, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Solapur, Aurangabad, Beed, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Nanded, Rajura Taluka from Chandrapur district and district itself)	4) (A) Dhontale (B) Korava (C) Makadwale Or Kochikoravi (D) Pamlor (E) Koravi.
5) Kanjarbhat	5) (A) Chara (B) Kanjar (C) Nat.
6) Katabu	6) --

- 7) Banjara (According to 7) A) Gor Bajjara
 G.R.7 No.CBC/1464/14, B) Lambada/Lambara
 14669-M,dt.18th Feb., C) Lambhani
 1965) D) Charan Banjara
 E) Laman
 F) Mathura Laman
 G) Kachikuwale Banjara
 H) Laman Banjara
 I) Laman/Lamani
 J) Laban
 K) Dropped
 L) Dhali/Dhalia
 M) Dhadi/Dhari
 N) Sigari
 O) Navi Banjara
 P) Jogi Banjara
 Q) Dropped
 R) Dropped
 S) Banjara (G.R.No.CBC/14771
 35512-K-5 dt.18.08.1977.)
- 8) Dropped 8) Pal paradhi
- 9) Raj Paradhi 9) A) Dropped
 B) Gao Paradhi
 C) Haran Paradhi
 D) Dropped
- 10) Rajput Bhamta 10) A) Pardeshi Bhamta
 B) Pardeshi Bhamti
- 11) Ramoshi 11) ---

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|---|--|
| 8) Ghisadi | 8) Ghisadi, Lohar Or Gadi, Lohar Or
Chitodi Lohar, Rajput Lohar (G.R.
No.CBC/1470/10269/J dt.14.8.70) |
| 9) Golla (These
words are dropped
in Solapur and
Sangli districts
according to G.R.
No.CBC/1478/41079/
K-5 dt.29 Nov.,1978) | 9) Gollewar, Goler (G.R.No.CBC/1479/66/
K-5 dt.12.7.79)
Golkar (G.R.No.CBC-1479-66/K-5
dt.4th Sept.,1979) |
| 10) Gondhli | 10) -- |
| 11) Gopal | 11) A) Gopal Bhorpi (G.R.No.CBC-1464/
93343-M dt.13.8.65)
B) Khelkari |
| 12) Helavi | 12) 1) Hilav |
| 13) Joshi | 13) A) Budbudaki
B) Damruwale
C) Kudmude
D) Medhangi
E) Sarode
F) Joshi
G) Sarvende
H) Saroda |
| 14) Kashi Kapadi | 14) -- |
| 15) Kolhati | 15) -- Dombari |
| 16) Mairal | 16) A) Dayant
B) Wapir |
| 17) Masan jogi | 17) 1) Sudgad Sidha
2) Mapn Jogi |

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|---|--|
| 18) Nandiwale | 18) Tirmal |
| 19) Pangul | 19) - |
| 20) Rawal | 20) Rawool Or Rawal yogi (G.R.No.1465/
151005-M Dt.21.5.1960) |
| 21) Sikkasagar | 21) Katari |
| 22) Thakar Conly
from Ratnagiri
district) | 22) -- |
| 23) Vaidu | 23) dropped |
| 24) Vasudev | 24) -- |
| 25) Bhoi (G.R.No. CBC-1073/10615/
J-10,dt.20th May
1974. G.R.
modified same no.
dt.7th June,1974) | 25) 1) Zinga Bhoi 2) Pardeshi Bhoi,
3) RajBhoi 4) Bhok 5) Kahar
6) Godiya Kahar 7) Dhuliya Kahar
8) Kirat 9) Machua 10) Manzi
11) Jatiya 12) Kewat 13)Dheewar
14) Dhiwar 15) Dheemar
16) Palewar 17) Machendra
18) Nawadi, 19) Malhar 20) Molhar
21) Boi 22) Gadhav Bhoi,
23) Khadi Bhoi 24) Khare Bhoi
25) Dhewra (G.R.No.CBC/1073/10615/
J-1 dt.25th Oct.,1974) |
| 26) Bahurupi | 26) --- |
| 27) Thelari(From
districts Dhule,
Jalgaon, Nashi &
Aurangabad) | 27) --- |

Castes	Similar
28) Otari	28) A) Otankar B) Otakar C) Watari D) Ozari (G.R.No.CBC-1477/40950/ K-5 dated 13th Dec., 1977)
29) Dhangar	29) 1) Ahir 2) Dange 3) Gatari 4) Hande 5) Telwar 6) Hatkar 7) Haatkar 8) Shegar 9) Khutekar 10) Telangi 11) Tellari 12) Konkni-Dhangar, 13) Kanade 14) Varhade-Dhanagar 15) Zade 16) Zende 17) Kurmar 18) Mahure 19) Ladase 20) Sangar 21) Dhanwar.

In the above list published by Govt. of Maharashtra of Backward classes. We don't have some tribes included. Some tribes are trying for their inclusion. The Govt. has provided various facilities for the people living under this condition.

D) OCCUPATIONS OF NOMADS IN MAHARASHTRA -

Many a tribes in Maharashtra at present have adopted many professions for earning their livelihood.

While wandering they hunt, keep cattle, entertain with the help of their traditional art, foretell, beg and so on. They also do some rituals as well as some hard working professions.

They adopt professions complementary to their original profession.¹⁵

F) DEITIES IN NOMADS : INCLUDING GOSAVI COMMUNITY -

- 1) Gosavi - Dhardevi, Rajmongal, Devi, Satdevi, Ambika, Laxmi, Sitla Devi.
- 2) Lavangi Gosavi- Mariai, Khandoba, Laxmi, Aai Ambabai, Pir.
- 3) Nath Panthi - Kala Bhairavnath (Black)
Davari
- 4) Ghisadi - Jotiba, Ambabai, Bhairoba, Khandoba.
- 5) Gopal - Khandoba, Pir, Jotiba.
- 6) Kudmude Joshi - Pir, Mariai.
- 7) Vaidu - Shankar, Hanuman, Firastimata .
- 8) Kolhati - Khandoba, Bhairoba, Kanhoba
- 9) Bahurupi - Shankar, Khandoba.
- 10) Nandiwala - Mahakali, Mhasoba, Nath, Shankar, AmbaBhavani.

F) FESTIVALS OF NOMADS IN MAHARASHTRA -

The nomads in Maharashtra celebrate the following festivals mostly.¹⁷

- 1) Dasara
- 2) Nagpanchmi
- 3) Navaratri
- 4) Deepawali
- 5) Mahalaxmi Pilrimage
- 6) Khandoba Pilgrimage
- 7) Akshaya Tritiya
- 8) Nagdevi and 9) Other local pilgrimages.

G) CHARACTERISTICS OF NOMADIC TRIBES -

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Following are the main characteristics of nomadic tribes :--

- 1) There exists the traditional community court (Jat Panchayat)
- 2) Simple society, Pre-industrial society or folk-society.
- 3) Tribal societies are small in scale and are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations.
- 4) They possess morality, religion and world view of corresponding dimensions.
- 5) Tribal languages are unwritten and hence the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow.
- 6) Exhibition of remarkable economy of design.
- 7) Comparatively more compact and self-sufficient than that of modern society.
- 8) There is a corresponding unity and coherence in tribal values.
- 9) Tribal societies are supremely ethnocentric .
- 10) Economic relations are extended outside the community.
- 11) No development of economic differentiation and specialization.
- 12) A sort of socio-economic equilibrium is attained in relation to environmental conditions.
- 13) Belief in God and tradition.
- 14) Observe untouchability
- 15) Every tribe thinks itself separate from other tribes.
- 16) Their own language (dialect) and great love for the dialect.
- 17) conflict for leadership and profit.

- 18) Most superstitious, participate on greater extent in festivals, fairs etc.
- 19) We can observe illiteracy on large scale.
- 20) No dealing of any kind (like marriage) between the caste and subcastes.

H) IMPEDIMENTS PREVALENT IN NOMADS -¹⁹

- 1) Other layers of society donot accept the nomadic tribes easily.
- 2) Some Nomadic tribes were registered as criminals in pre-independence period by English people. After Independence also they are treated as criminals.
- 3) They can't get caste certificates due to their consistent wandering and instable life .
- 4) They lack the powerful leadership.
- 5) No use at present of their traditional professions.
- 6) They can't get various facilities.
- 7) They can't get financial assistance for starting any business.
- 8) They donot own a piece of land. They do not have even a house to live in.
- 9) Some of the nomadic tribes are treated as untouchables.

I) ATTEMPTS MADE FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE NOMADS -

For hundreds of years, these tribes had been living in the valleys and hilly regions. Many of them were house-less and deprived of other fundamental needs. For the welfare of these nomads the Govt. has made many plans.²⁰

- a)
 - 1) To offer them land to make them stable.
 - 2) To make available any non-agricultural business.
 - 3) Reservation in services for nomads in Govt.undertaking industries,Banks and Institutions.
 - 4) Reservation in Semi-Government Companies .
 - 5) Reservation in Colleges and also in universities .
- b) Educational Facilities ;
 - 1) Reservation in all Govt.technical and vocational education.
 - 2) The Govt.has begun Adult education for the illiterate generation.
 - 3) Beginning of 'Ashram Shala ' for the poor students.
 - 4) Separate arrangement of vocational courses for the backward classes.
 - 5) Relaxation of the tution fee and hostel fee.
- c) Govt.has provided subsidy and loan for the levelling of land,digging wells,pumps,tools for agriculture fertilizers etc.
- d) The Govt.has provided loans and subsidies for building house. Also provided facilities of drinking water,Roads,electric supply etc.

J) THE MEETINGS HEID IN MAHARASHTRA OF NOMADS

To provide stability to their wandering life and for their upliftment Govt.has made many attempts.To make them united and to make them alert of their duties and rights,the first conference was held on 9th January 1972 in Bombay. In many districts such organizations were held.Some districts are - Dhule,Nashik,Sinnar,Pandharpur , Mangalwedha,Solapur,Latur,Nilanga,Ichalkaranji,

Mumbai, Ratnagiri, Beed and others.²¹

K) THE CHANGES OBSERVED IN NOMADS LIFE -

Some years ago, we could see the sorrows and sufferings in the lives of the nomadic tribes, wandering to earn their livelihood. But now-a-days we can see many changes in their lives.²²

- 1) The extent of wandering for earning is lessened.
- 2) They are living a stable life and inhabitats.
- 3) They are having the advantage of education.
- 4) They are getting the opportunity to represent their community in politics.
- 5) For the social development, they are being organized and united.
- 6) They are getting place in government services.
- 7) They are involving themselves in businesses
- 8) They are raising their voice against the injustice.
- 9) Their likes and dislikes and state of living are changing.
- 10) The old traditions, vicious traditions are being stopped.

When the Indian social structure is largely represented by the Hindu social system, there are other systems as well. One such is the tribal social structure of which there are a variety of systems. When these are many studies conducted on the Hindu social system and other systems, there are few on the tribal social structure. Especially studies on nomadic tribes are very less. To have an understanding of the Indian social

structure, it is necessary to study these neglected sections. The present study is an attempt towards this end. It aims to understand the social mechanisms of the Gosavis, a nomadic tribal community in Southern Maharashtra.

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