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CHAPTER - V

A PICTURE OF CHANGE OR OTHERWISE DURING

THE LAST TWO DECADES ( 1971 - 91 )

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### A PICTURE OF CHANGE OR OTHERWISE DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES ( 1971 - 91 )

In earlier parts of this study we have presented a factual picture of the Socio-economic conditions of the sampled respondents who are themselves landless agricultural labourers. We have also seen that in spite of the introduction of various programmes for development, these respondents have continued to be poorly paid labourers without any change in their living conditions for more than two decades. However no society is static and especially when the government and other agencies are implimenting various rural development schemes atleast some persons of the coming generation are certainly likely to take advantage of these schemes. To study Socio-economic changes over any period of time we must have factual information of both the beginning and the end of this period. We have tried to collect during the interviews this type of information. Moreover, a comparision of different generations can also reveal the areas and nature of change.

#### (1) EDUCATION:

We shall begin this brief account with education. During the interviews we collected detailed information about education. This information is presented in Table No.2 of Chapter-IV. The total population covered by our studies is 275. Out of these 275 persons, 29 are the children below the age of 6 and the question of their education does not arise at present. In the age group 6-10 there are in all 41 children out of which only

9 are illiterate, that is, they are either not enrolled in the schools or have left the schools at very early stage. In case of our respondents the percentage of illiteracy was 51. But this percentage, in case of the youngest generation of children of school-going age has come down to 28. This change is noteworthy. Similarly in the age-group 11-20 there are in all 40 persons, out of which 10 are illiterate. This also shows that the rate of illiteracy has come down in recent years, even though illiteracy has not been totally eradicated. Again, in the age group 21 and above the percentage of persons educated upto higher Secondary level is very low (19.6%). But this has increased considerably (75%) in case of the persons belonging to age group 11-20. Thus, there is change in the educational levels of second generation population. It can be hoped that the educational development would bring about the desired Socio-economic change and especially the motivation for self-development.

(2) ECONOMIC CONDITIONS:

The extent and direction of change, as far as income and occupational pattern are concerned, can be studied on the basis of individual family histories. We have already seen in the earlier chapters that out of a total population of 275 covered by our survey, there are 29 children below the age of 6. Besides there are 41 children belonging to age group 6-10. Thus in very general terms, we can say that there are in all 205 persons - both male and female - who can opt for some kind of labourer's job. Out of these 205 as many as 134 are the regular earning

members, that is they are engaged in some form of economic activities. About 25 percent of the persons belonging to school going age group are actually illiterate. But at the same time slight change in the occupational pattern can be seen among the second generation persons.

TABLE NO.1

TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND EARNING MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY

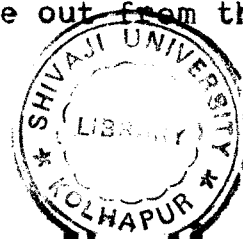
Sr. No.	Type of activity	Male	Female	Total
1)	Agricultural labourers (including respondents)	65	56	121 (90.3)
2)	Self-employed	8	2	10 (7.5)
3)	Service	3	-	3 (2.2)
TOTAL		76 (56.7)	58 (43.3)	134 (100)

N.B.: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages to total.

Table gives an overall picture of sex-wise and occupation-wise break-up of 134 earning members. Eventhough our respondents are agricultural labourers the members of the second generation of their families have taken advantage of some government schemes. Thus 8 males and 2 females have taken loans for self employment schemes. The two female members, with the facility of loan schemes, are doing the business of vegetable selling. Out of the 8 males who are self-employed, two have started small bicycle shops; one has started tailoring work; one a Kirana shop; one has opened a 'pan-patti' shop; one is selling

electrical material and the remaining two are doing small scale tobacco business. Here also, it may be noted, that two of these ten persons have not been very successful in their new activities. Thus the Kirana shop and one cycle shop are on the verge of closure and these two persons are again likely to be agricultural labourers. This means out of our 45 labour families only in ten families the members have been able or motivated to strive for economic progress and only 8 have been successful in their endeavours. The table also shows that three persons are gainfully employed elsewhere. All the three are serving at lower level jobs. We can thereby conclude that the change in economic conditions of the landless labourer families is quite discouraging. In view of slow progress in the field of education and also very low level of motivation for progress through government schemes, we can say that the landless labourer families have more or less remained away from the economic development.

The reasons for perpetual poverty and lack of motivation for development can be traced in the various problems these labourers face. The interviews revealed that there is a sort of vicious circle. They cannot have daily bread unless they work. The wages are very low and hence to feed the family all the physically able members including women and children are forced to work on farm. Thirdly there is no guarantee of job. In this condition it is hardly possible for the parents to encourage the children to go to schools or colleges. At the same time it is also true that lack of education becomes barrier for further advancement or change in occupation. How to come out from this





14-16 is the proper age of marriage for girls. They are not aware of the legal restrictions. We also notices that twenty three girls were married at the age of 13-14 during the last twenty years. The marriage of the boys also takes place at a relatively lower age of 18-20.

Divorce, remarriage and widow remarriage are not the problem areas for our respondents, But cast is still an important factor in social life and no respondent accepted inter-caste marriage as normal or desirable.

About family planning, our respondents are generally aware of the benefits. But all the respondents still stressed the need for male child. This is quite substantiated by the fact that the number of male children is larger than that of the female children. The only welcome signe is that the respondents have accepted family planning operations as necessary from economic and health points.

As far as cultural and recreational activities are concerned, our respondents have high expectations. They enjoy yearly fairs, periodical festivals and moviews and 'Tamashas' at local theatres. The children and young boys play traditional local games.

The respondents are partly aware of the Government Schemes, But most of them are not prepared to accept any risk or to go for any new 'Venture'. This may be because of lack of motivation, frustrated and fatalistic outlook towards life developed long impact of cultural tradition and unenviable economic situation.

