

CHAPTER-VII

HEALTH AND SANITATION LEISURE  
AND RECREATION

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## CHAPTER-VII

### HEALTH AND SANITATION

### LEISURE AND RECREATION

#### 1) Introduction :

It is essential to study the health and sanitation of a particular village or caste. These villages are not different from the common Indian villages. The villages mostly inhabited by the Mendhe Dhangars consist of an average two roomed dwellings; with walls made of mud, a door and a roof of tiles. There is no arrangement for proper ventilation in the house. Their houses are generally small with no windows and, therefore, hardly any proper ventilation.

Among the Mendhe Dhangars, Bronchial and Respiratory premitient fever, Malaria, small-pox are diseases which are very common in this area. Other diseases have negligible percentage. Respiratory, complaints are most prevalent among the Mendhe Dhangars. Because, of that, they are suffering from cold and fever, 90% of the total number of the Mendhe Dhangars families replied to my queries that they are suffering from cold and fever.

Among the Mendhe Dhangars 11% families are suffering from Maleria fever, 4% from constant and neuralgic pains, headaches and 7% suffered from stomach disorders. Neither

the people nor the Governments seem to take the lack of sanitation seriously. The Gram Panchayats of these villages seem to be useless as they do not help. They do not seem to do any development work for the Mendhe Dhangar people.

There are many causes of the diseases. They drinking wells are also places for germs, if they are not cleaned, timely. Most of the private wells are 'Kachha' and open and they are never cleaned. Nobody, seems to bear any responsibility, for their maintenance and upkeep.

The next cause of the diseases is wrong food habits. It is obvious that 90% Mendhe Dhangars take poor food. But 30% of the people manage to take milk regularly. The common man can afford neither wholesome vegetarian nor non-vegetarian food regularly.

The poor people have been found suffering from diseases like T.B., Leprosy etc. If any diseases affect them, they first go to their temple, specially in the case of women and children.

If any diseases affect them they first go to temple for earnest appeal to God, the almighty. The hospital is left to the final stage, when there is hardly any chance of the disease being cured. They reach the hospital only at the very serious or last stage.

But the Mendhe Dhangar reach the 'Vaidis' who are also available in the villages. They use native herbs both for applying and for taking orally. They also recite some sort of 'Mantras' at the time applying medicine.

These are their traditional beliefs derived mainly from superstition. Generally the Mendhe Dhangars do not like to go to hospital because they cannot afford to do so. They cannot even buy medicines. They are not medical minded. The Government has indeed opened many health centres in the country. In Pattankodoli village, there is a health centre. They reach the health centre only at the very serious or even last stage.

## 2) Food :

All the Mendhe Dhangars are non-vegetarians. But they cannot afford meat daily. Many members of the Mendhe Dhangars rear cows and buffalows. They do not use milk in their diet regularly. They do not take rice regularly. Now a days among the drinks, wine is found in every village. Tobacco and Pan and smoking Vidi, Chilim also has become very common. During the time of my investigation I found that all the Mendhe Dhangars were either Chewing Tobacco or smoking Bhang and Ganja are rarely used.

### 3) Family Planning :

Government has launched family planning programme on a large scale in the country. In each Block Development Office, there is a family planning officer, Operations and applying or fixing of the loop are also made in these centres.

The members of the Mendhe Dhangar caste dislike all these methods. Generally they say that children are gifts from God and, therefore, family planning should be shunned. That is why so many children are found in the same nuclear family.

Despite their traditional beliefs against family planning some of them do know the traditional methods for family planning. Though the Mendhe Dhangars are not generally in favour of family planning, there are those who know the problem of the family planning and there are other who are generally unaware of it. The average percentage of the Mendhe Dhangars, who are aware of family planning is 95%.

The information given below, shows the people's attitudes towards the methods of family planning. The people who feel that modern methods are good are 85% among the Mendhe Dhangars. The families with the belief that the modern methods of family planning are not good, are 10%. Among the families, who think that the traditional methods are good, are 5%.

Though the Mendhe Dhangars are not generally in favour of family planning yet how many of them feel its need, because the size of family is growing with its concomitant hardship.

#### 4) Child Birth :

The Mendhe Dhangars do not take recourse to hospitals during child-birth, as they are poor and cannot bear the heavy charges. If we look into the details of birth during last ten years we will find that all babies were born at home.

#### 5) Leisure and Recreation :

Recreation is a part of life for the Mendhe Dhangars. Recreation provides with a change and opportunity to recoup lost energy. It is essential for physical and mental health of an individual. Recreation may be healthy as well as unhealthy. Unhealthy recreation would provide a change but it would also have an adverse effect on life. In fact man has been having recreation since the beginning of his social life. Without recreation the life would become monotonous and lose all its variety and charm.

In Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka, there are limited avenues and sources of recreation. The means of recreation that are found in the villages can be termed as folkways of recreation. They are very much indigenous in their form.

According to the Mendhe Dhangars, leisure is an essential part of daily life and they welcome it. The boys and girls like playing at home. Different types of dances are held on marriages and festive occasions among the Mendhe Dhangars. Boys and girls take an active part in the dancing and singing.

Various persons of the different ages and sex groups have different types recreation. The following details may be useful :

(1) Children :

A male child upto 10 years age is found playing rural games i.e. Kabaddi, Goti, Lapa-Chupi and Langadi.

A male child in the age of 11 to 15 years is generally found assisting his parents. But he also enjoys the games of young boys after his work is over.

A female child, if not married, upto 10 years, is also seen playing rural games like Fugadi, playing at house etc. A female child in the age group of 10 to 15 years, if not married generally assists her mother, but if she gets some leisure she plays games and sings.

(2) Adult Male :

The young men between 16 to 25 years age are playing Kabaddi, Kho-kho, Cards, hunting etc. The young men also

dance and sing at the time of festivals. The young man also drinks liquor, which at best is only a dubious form of recreation. They dance 'Gajnritya'. They sing the seasonal songs or 'Dhangari Ovyas' in their leisure hours.<sup>1</sup>

The adult man also participates in singing different types of songs. The adult male in the age group of 25 to 40 years is found playing cards, singing 'Dhangari Ovyas' etc. At the time of marriage festivals they are found relaxing themselves after taking liquor.

### (3) Older People :

The people between 40 and 55 years have been recorded entertaining themselves like the people of 25 to 40 years of age.

The people of 60 years of age and above participate in the above noted recreations as onlookers only. They guide the younger people. They spend their leisure in drinking liquor and paying visits to their friends and neighbours and guests.

### (4) Elderly Women :

Elderly women among the Mendhe Dhangars pass their time in gossiping, visiting other's houses or playing with

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1. Some of the 'Dhangari Ovyas' are appended towards the end of this dissertation. See page No.



their grand children. They spend their time in worshipping or in singing religious songs etc.

There are no provisions in Pattankodoli and Ghunaki villages which I have studied for modern means of recreation and amusement like the Cinema, theatre etc. If any one is keen to see a film or drama he has to go to Taluka place.

Normally following are the main avenues of recreation in the Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka :

- 1) Village Games
- 2) Story telling
- 3) Singing of Dhangari Geet/Ovya.
- 4) Gajnritya
- 5) Drumming
- 6) Wrestling bouts, Kabaddi etc.

1) Village Games :

The games in the villages are also an important means of recreation. 'Gulli-danda', 'lachi-danda' or 'atti-danda' etc. are the normal games that children play. Elders play cards and some other games that provide recreation to the Mendhe Dhangars.

2) Story Telling :

The Mendhe Dhangars gather in groups and somebody narrates a story. Some Mendhe Dhangar people also offer

riddles and others are expected to solve them. In Hatkanangale Taluka, there are certain Mendhe Dhangar persons who are very expert at telling stories and they keep a large number of people engrossed in the stories that they tell.

(3) Singing of Dhangari Geet or Ovyā :

This is a very important means of recreation for the Mendhe Dhangars. Normally, through 'Dhangari Ovyā' devotional songs are sung in order to remember God. These activities, create religious attitudes among the Mendhe Dhangars while providing them an opportunity for recreation. Sometimes competition in 'Dhangari Ovyā' are also held. These competitions while providing a means of recreation also create a healthy spirit of competition among the Mendhe Dhangars.

(4) Gajanritya :

This is a very important means of recreation. This is one type of dance, with drum. The younger and elder peoples of the Mendhe Dhangars dance. It is called a Gajanritya. In Ghunaki and Pattankodoli villages, this Gajanritya is famous.

(5) Wrestling bouts Kabaddi etc. :

In village, there are places where young boys are trained in the art of wrestling. In these 'Akharas' certain experts tell these young boys and train them in it. Some Mendhe Dhangars young boys go in 'Akharas'.

Apart from wrestling bouts, Kabaddi is an important game of the Mendhe Dhangars. Some education young boys form teams and play 'Kabaddi'.

Apart from these important means of crecreation, certain other means of recreation are prevelent in the Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka.

The means of recreation of the Mendhe Dhangar people are not carried on as a thing which can bring them livelihood. There is no specialisation and no element of commercialism. Every body who is interested in singing, acting or dancing, takes part in it and people give him encouragement and enjoy the recreation provided by him. All the means and ways of the recreation of the Mendhe Dhangars have an element of religion in them. On religious days, they take to acting and singing the events. In fact Mendhe Dhangars' religion has become part of the social and cultural life and so the means of recreation are also influenced by it.

The Mendhe Dhangars also arrange dances during different festivals by collecting funds from the villagers. The Mendhe Dhangars are interested but their poor economic condition does not permit them to do so as often as they would like.

Thus, it is clear that they do not have any well organised and formal institution for leisure and recreation.

They have suggested three reasons for leisure and recreation. They are - (1) for health, (2) to increase efficiency for labour, (3) without taking rest it is difficult for them to work continuously. Gossiping and exchange of mutual social visits and celebration of the festivals are the main sources of recreation for the Mendhe Dhangars living in the same villages of Hatkanangale Taluka.