

CHAPTER-IX

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

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### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 1) Introduction :

Most of the Dhangars are living in a scattered situation. They are living in the remote areas of the country side. The Mendhe Dhangars of Kolhapur district are found in all the Talukas. Most of the Mendhe Dhangars of Kolhapur district, are keeping sheep and cattle. For that purpose they have to wander from place to place in search of pastures/meadows. Thus, majority of the Dhangars, are nomadic in nature. These conservative people think that migration is their 'Dharma'.

It will be seen that the tending of sheep now a days is not at all a beneficial occupation, as the grazing lands are taken away by the forest Department. This is really an alarming situation. As sheep rearing business is traditional, the Dhangars have to gain knowledge of other business but they lack education in modern techniques. Now, therefore, they have to earn their livelihood by doing hard labour, coolie work and even by bonded labour. Eventhough, they are doing shift cultivation, it is also not beneficial. Moreover, the land is owned by landlords. They have very little land of their own. The landlords, Forest Officers, money lenders, leaders etc. are exploiting Mendhe Dhangars

inhumanly. Moreover, these conservatives spend the amount of money whatever they have, extravagantly for social and religious ceremonies. Therefore, there is no surprise, that, 'Indian Dhangars are born in debt, live in debt and die in debt,'

In this critical situation there is no assurance of continuity of labour work. This community is starving a lot. In this circumstances how will it be possible for them to educate the children ? Here, we can remember Swami Vivekananda's saying that, "Education is not for hungry stomach."

Even in the days of independence and that too, even after 34 years independence, the claim for equality and justice to all the oppressed the poor and weaker sections of the Indian Society is little. These Mendhe Dhangars are still neglected, foregotten sons of the soil. This community moves from place to place, lives under sky and sleep on earth in most unhygienic conditions. In general, this community is not getting adequate basic needs of life.

Thus, Mendhe Dhangars live in a politically neglected, economically exploited and culturally starved situation.

Recently, the Maharashtra Rajya Dhangar Samajonnati Mandal has been established. And even some of its branches

were opened at Taluka places. Many Dhangar leaders, social workers and researchers are trying their best to uplift the community by hook or crook.

In this community is to be developed, it should be, included in the 'Scheduled Tribes' list. For this purpose many leaders, Yuvak Mandals, have requested and are requesting the Government for the inclusion of said community in 'Scheduled Tribes' list.

Following correspondence will highlight the efforts that are being made in this direction, particularly in Kolhapur district :

Sr. No.	Appeals from	To	Date
1.	The Government of India, New Delhi	The Maharashtra Govt. Social Welfare Deptt. order DBC 1059/580011.	28-11-69
2.	The Secretary, Dhangar Samajonnati Mandal, Branch, Kolhapur.	The Prime-Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi	17-8-74
3.	The Secretary, Kolhapur Zilla Sahyadri Mata, Dange Dhangar Samaj, Kolhapur.	The Secretary, Lok Sabha Parliament House, Annex Building, New Delhi.	17-11-78
4.	The Secretary, Dhangar Samajonnati Mandal, Kavalgaon.	The Chief Minister, Vasantdada Patil, Govt. of Maharashtra, Bombay.	24-7-78

Sr. No.	Appeals from	To	Date
5.	The Secretary, Maharashtra State Dhangar Samajonnati Mandal, Deotali (Nasik).	The Chief Legislative Officer, New Delhi.	28-11-78
6.	The General Secretary, Maharashtra State Dhangar Samajonnati Mandal, Kolhapur.	The Joint Committee for S/c and S/t, New Delhi.	21-11-79
7.	The Secretary, Dhangar Samajonnati Mandal, Kurundwad, Tal. Shirol, Dist. Kolhapur.	The Secretary, Lokshbna, Parliament House, Annex Building, New Delhi.	17-11-78

Even the Backward Class Commissions like Kalekar and Chanda of 1952/53 have requested to the Government for the inclusion of Dhangar community in the 'Scheduled Tribes' list. Moreover, there was a session of Dhangar community on 28, 29 and 30th December, 1974 at Bombay. In this session the then Janata Party President, Hon. Jagjivan Ram had promised that the Dhangar community will be included in the 'Scheduled Tribes' list. Thus, many recommendations were made to the both Central and State Governments but still both are mum.

The Dhangar community is fighting for its allround uplift. But still they are underdeveloped and neglected.

The Governments are not doing justice to the said community as people expect. Thus, this unfortunate community is becoming weaker and between the State and Central Governments decisions.

As we know, many Unions, Institutions, etc. are fulfilling their wants/demands by strikes. Likewise, if this community wants to develop then it should work for quick results. So that, Governments would be prevailed upon to take a quick decisions in this connection. This community is illiterate. Therefore, social workers and educated people should come forward and encourage their brothers in this holy work.

Most of the Mendhe Dhangars are facing a number of difficulties. These difficulties are not overcome completely. Some leaders have arranged many 'Morchas' to get the help from Government and have already put many demands before the Governments.

#### Conclusions :

1) The present work aimed at presentation a rounded, integrated and comparative account of the life and culture and the problems of the Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka in Kolhapur District. It should be clear from the perusal of various Chapters and Sections, that they are by and large landless labourers, tending the sheep and goats. The problem

of indebtedness is equally important for the Mendhe Dhangars. These people have no savings worth the name. The condition of the Mendhe Dhangars of the Hatkanangale Taluka is all the more deplorable because they are badly indebted to the village money leaders. Most of the loans are taken to fight droughts, to meet marriage expenses, for treatment of diseases and many other unproductive purposes.

It has been mentioned at various places that the Mendhe Dhangars are engaged as agricultural labour. The agricultural labour market in India is not at all organized. Unlike factory or mining labour, an agricultural labourer is appointed every day, that too, only for that day, and generally for a piece of work to be finished within a limited time. They are paid in kind. There is no fixed rate for agricultural wages. It is reported that even today there is a tug of war between the upper caste landed people and the Mendhe Dhangars labouring on daily wages, on this issue. It may take long time to settle these differences in the form of compromise.

2) Pasture is the main source for sheep rearing. The pasture area is limited and day by day it is decreasing. Reserved forests are not open for the Mendhe Dhangars.

3) In the market the Mendhe Dhangars are not getting good prices for wool, meat, sheep's leather, milk etc. The poor conditions of the Mendhe Dhangars compel them to sell their goods with low price.

4) The sheep and goats are not protected from wolves and robbers. The Mendhe Dhangars are unable to protect the sheep, because they have no guts to protect the sheep.

5) The Mendhe Dhangars, in general, take marriage as a sacrament but there is some regional variations in the matter of ideal age for marriage. The Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka, by and large have shown a preference for comparatively early marriage.

6) The Mendhe Dhangars have their Caste-Panchayats. The Panchas who form a Council of elderly and respectable persons of that particular community are nominated to settle the differences and disputes within the members of the same caste. Thus the social, religious and political life of the Mendhe Dhangars falls within the jurisdiction of the Panchayat. The Caste Panchayats of Hatkanangale Taluka are comparatively more active and have maintained some of the powers vested in them to look into matters important for the members of the Mendhe Dhangars.

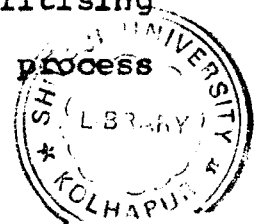


7) The political life of the Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka is not well organized. Their thin population scattered over a vast area and lack of guidance may be regarded as partly responsible for the same.

8) The religious life of the Mendhe Dhangars in general, is very simple. The Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka worship mostly natural objects. Illiterate the ignorant as they are, they are steeped in superstition. These superstitious beliefs and practices are also partially responsible for their backwardness. The Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka, believe in various gods and goddesses and in different sets of deities. The life of the Mendhe Dhangars is bound up with various kinds of religious activities right from birth to death.

The Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka, have a strong belief in the concept of soul, salvation and rebirth. They feel that the 'Sanskar' of this life can continue in the next life also. Hence good conduct and character have to be maintained.

9) The Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka, are trying hard to raise their social status by Sanskritising themselves. In the villages under study the same process



may be observed, but its tempo is slow and gradual. The Mendhe Dhangars come in contact with the people of other castes and places and it thus helps them to up lift their socio-economic status.

10) The problems of socialization and education to the Mendhe Dhangar children seems to be insoluble.

Although the birth of a child should be taken a joyful occasion, the reality is that the new arrival becomes a load on the poverty stricken family in no time. In the absence of a nutritive diet given to the mother who has to feed the baby for about three years, both mother and child suffer in health and are debilitated. The environment in which they grow is full of dirt and filth.

The Mendhe Dhangars forced not to educate their children. Because of wretched economic conditions they cannot send their children to schools. If their children were put to school, they would not be able to help their parents in their traditional occupation.

11) Coming to the problems of health and sanitation among the Mendhe Dhangars of Hatkanangale Taluka, a perusal of the relevant sections dealing with the same reveals that by and large they do not have any proper sense of sanitation,

nor do they understand the value of cleanliness in life. They are habituated to live in a dirty environment. They do not know the meaning of personal hygiene. Dirty water for bathing and drinking as well as for cooking is very common.

The rooms in which they live, there is no proper ventilation. Fresh air and sunlight are denied to their hovels. The rooms are dark and floor is always damp. Their poor economy does not permit them to purchase a cot to sleep on.

As 90% of the Mendhe Dhangars are illiterate and superstitious, they believe that most of the diseases are caused by witches or evil spirits. Hence they approach the village Bhagats or Mantriaks for effecting cures by magical rituals, incantations etc. A few who can afford may go to doctors also for curing them of diseases.

Regarding the attitude of the Mendhe Dhangars towards family planning, most of them disliked the programme as they expressed the opinion that children were the gifts of God.

12) As has been discussed in the various foregoing chapters, the Mendhe Dhangars being by and large poor illiterate and a rural people, there is absence of formal institutions exclusively meant for recreation, like cinema, houses, theatre halls, clubs and the like.

It appears as if they are worried more when they are at leisure. The children and young men like to play kabaddi, Dand-patta, Lezim, Play-cards etc. They dance 'Gajnritya' and sing 'Dhanagari Ovyu'.

13) Coming to inter-group relations among the members of Mendha Dhangars of the Hatkanangale Taluka one finds that they depend largely on each other in every sphere of life. Each one tries to help others, i.e. for construction of dwellings. Other types of mutual co-operation is also seen. Similarly, on the eve of festivals like Diwali, Yatra etc. the entire village is united and they take active part in celebrating these festivals. Thus, we see that all the people are directly or indirectly inter-dependent.

## 2) Suggestions :

1. Dhangar community should be included in Scheduled Tribes list.

2. Migratory life should be stopped by providing employment opportunities.

3. Their complaints against Forest Department should be settled smoothly.

4. Co-operative Societies should be organised.

5. Cultivable Government land should be given to land-less Mendhe Dhangars.

6. Medical facilities should be provided.

7. The sheep and goats should be protected from the thieves.

8. The sheep and goats should be protected from the dangerous and injurious savage animals.

9. 'Gaon-than' and 'Gay-ran' should be made available to Dhangar community.

10. The students from Dhangar community should be provided free hostel facilities.

11. Nationalised Banks should provide the loans for the purchase of sheep and goats.

12. Low-price housing facilities should be made available to the Dhangar community.