

A Sociological Evaluation of the Major Government Schemes Meant for Promoting Education and Health among The Members of the Meena Tribe in Rajasthan

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Abstract

Rajasthan, the Indian state known for its distinct culture, is also known for its tribal demographic features. The Bhils, the Garasia, The Meenas etc. form a major part of its tribal population. Obviously, the tribes have suffered horribly, and are now ready to change their destiny as a result of the efforts made by the government. The Meena is a popular tribe of Rajasthan. At present, though found all over Rajasthan and India, they are particularly found in the districts like Dholpur, Karauli, Bharatpur, Dausa, Jaipur, Ajmer, Sawai Madhopur etc. The government is trying its best to provide them the maximum of health and education facilities in order to bring them closer to the main stream of the development of the nation.

The role of the various governmental education and medical schemes in the welfare and upliftment of the Meenas in Rajasthan and in the specified study areas in particular is significant, but it still is far from making the Meenas empowered.

Keywords: Meena, Matsyapurana, Timaniya, Ghaghra, Choli, Main Stream.

Introduction

Meena, also spelled as Mina, is a community principally found in the state of Rajasthan. The name of this community has been derived from the word Meen, which means fish in Sanskrit language. At the time of the British ruling, the Meena tribal community had been acclaimed as the 'Criminal Tribe'. This very act was taken to hold up their coalition with Rajput kingdom in Rajasthan, also revealing the fact these Mina tribes were still in war with Rajputs, indulging in guerrilla attacks to hold on to their lost kingdoms. The Minas mainly reside in northern part of Rajasthan including some areas like Sawai Madhopur District, Dausa District, Jaipur, Dholpur and Karauli districts in Jaipur and Bharatpur region. They also reside in Bharatpur district and Bayana district and from Jaipur-Sikar in Shekhawati region and Alwar in the northeast region of the state. The people of this community are also found in huge number in Kota, Jhalawar and Bundi including north-western parts of Madhya Pradesh.

The Meo population is said to have originated from Meenas and due to this reason there is a similarity in the ethics and culture of the Minas. The Rajputs are said to be the admixture of Meenas, Gujjar community, Jat and other warrior tribes. Festivals, music, songs and dance bear a proof of the fact that the culture and tradition of these Meena tribes are quite bright. Although the Mina tribes fete these festivals, they have incorporated their rituals and rites of the local origin. For example, the seventh day of Navratri is the time of the celebration for the Mina tribes who get together to rejoice with acrobatics, swordplay dancing and singing. Minas firmly believe in the institution of marriage. It is the Bhopa priests who are involved in matchmaking based on horoscopes. In this Rajasthani tribal community occasion such as these call for great festivities. A plethora of festivals are celebrated by the Mina tribes as well. This fact is confirmed by the hundreds of ancient culture of feting Meenesh Jayanti in the name of Lord Vishnu. They employ a Brahmin priest to perform all rituals related with birth, marriage and death

in their community. Majority of the Minas follow Hinduism.

The dresses of the people of Meena community are quite similar the other tribal people mainly the dresses of women are much similar in style with subtle differences in designs. The dress of a Mina woman comprises an odhna, ghagra, kanchli and kurti. Unmarried Mina girls wear a sari called lugda. The dabki-wali ludi is a special odhna worn by Mina women and is always coloured red and green. The ankle-length ghagra, which is usually made of deep red cloth with blue designs, is the distinguishing mark to identify a Mina woman. The ghagra, which is heavily gathered at the waist, is also known as a 'palla ghagra'. The sleeves of the 'kanchli' or the kurti are usually of elbow-length. Jewelleries form an integral part of the costumes of Mina tribal women. The Mina women prefer to adorn themselves with jewelleries. The most prominent ornament of the Mina women is the 'borla', a symbol of her marital status. Women also wear a 'hansli' round the neck, a 'nath' in the nose, 'timaniya' in the ears, 'pnonchi', 'bangri', 'gajra' and bangles on the forearms and 'bajuband' on the upper arms. All married women invariably wear 'chuda' made of lac. They also wear 'kadi' and 'pajeb' on their feet. Silver is used for head and neck ornaments, while ornaments for the feet are crafted from brass. Mina women generally do not wear gold. Irrespective of marital status, a Mina woman does not wear her hair loose. Hair doing is a part of their regular lifestyle. It is usually parted in the middle of the forehead, which, is set off with a 'borla', which in the case of married women, is studded with imitation stones. Unmarried girls wear their hair in a single braid, which ends in a knot.

The dress of the Meena man consists of a dhoti, kurta or a bandi and a turban, although the younger generation has adopted the shirt, with pyjamas or trousers. During winter, the Mina men wear a shawl that covers the upper part of their body. Their usual headdress is the potia, which is wrapped around with decorative tape. Red-printed headgear with gota work is also worn. A shawl, which is worn around the neck, is also in colours of red and green. Interestingly, marriage brings a change in the costumes of Meena man. A long red upper garment is worn at the time of marriage. It is calf-length and straight, with long slits on the side and full sleeves. It has green piping on the ends of the sleeves, hem, slits, neck and front. It is also appliqué and has a front-opening. They normally wear the dhoti as the lower garment, which falls just below the ankles. It is worn tight and is draped like the 'dolangi' or 'tilangi' dhoti. Mina men do not wear much jewellery. The most common ornaments are ear-rings called 'murki'. Other accessories at the time of marriage include a large sword and a 'kada' on the wrist. The men wear their hair short and usually, sport beards and small moustaches.

Tattoos are also popular with the Meena community. Mina women display tattoos on their hands and faces. The most common designs are dots, flowers or their own names. They wear kohl in their eyes and black dots on the face as a form of body ornamentation. Tattooing is popular with the men as well and they usually have their forearms

tattooed with their names, floral motifs, figures and deities. Main languages spoken by Meena tribes include Hindi language, Mewari, Marwari language, Dhundari, Harauti, Malvi language, Garhwali language, Bhili language, etc.

Government Schemes for the Upliftment of Scheduled Tribes

1	Scheme of Construction of Hostels for ST Girls and Boys
2	Scheme of Establishment of Ashram School in Tribal Sub-Plan Areas
3	Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students
4	Upgradation of Merit
5	Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST students studying in classes IX & X.
6	Vocational Training in Tribal Areas(State's component)
7	Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for STs
8	Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for STs
9	Top Class Education for ST students
10	Grants in aid to Voluntary Organisations working for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes
11	Coaching for Scheduled Tribes
12	Strengthening Education among Scheduled Tribe Girls in Low Literacy Districts
13	Vocational Training in Tribal Areas
14	Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
15	Grants-in-Aid to STDCCs for MFP Operations
16	Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP' as a measure of social safety for MFP gatherers.
17	Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India
18	Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Plan (SCA to TSP)
19	Development of Tribal Products/Produce (Grants in aid to Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)

Overview of Literature

Mother Teresa Rural Tribal Development Society, Madhyam Samajik Sansthan, Marigold International Educational Society, Manav Pragati Sansthan, Manav Kalyan Sansthan, Meri Saheli, Mangalam, Matritva Seva Sansthan, Mother India Foundation, Mahila evam Bal Vikas Kalyan Kendra, Mercy Rehabilitation Society, Maa Sewa Sansthan, Mahila Utthan, Mahila Margdarshi etc. are the names of some of the NGOs in addition to many other government agencies that are rendering their valuable services to the the education and health of the marginalized in India.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

1. To be familiar with the history of the Meena tribe
2. To study the ways of living and culture of the Meena tribe in Rajasthan.
3. To learn about the various government schemes meant for the promotion of their health and education.

4. To explore their availing the facilities provided to them by the government through various agencies.
5. To make them aware of the various health and educational schemes run for their upliftment.
6. To observe and study the causes that prevent them from availing such facilities.
7. To explore the changes brought about by such governmental health and education schemes.
8. To compare those who have availed or are availing themselves of such schemes with those who failed to avail them for various reasons.
9. To explore the possibilities of more health and education policies.
10. To study the health and education status of the members of Meena tribe in the specified study area.
11. To assess and evaluate the role of the governmental health and education schemes in the welfare and upliftment of the Meenas in the specified study areas.

Conceptual Framework

Nearly all the districts in Rajasthan have some tribal population, and the southern Rajasthan districts of Banswara, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, and Dungarpur are predominantly or significantly tribal. The TDF includes provisions for prioritized targeting of designated tribal areas; engagement of dedicated staff for TDF implementation; community disclosure of TDF; pre-mobilization consultations with tribal communities and leaders; tribal focused information campaign; tribal representation and participation in all community institutions and their executive positions and committees; intensive technical assistance and handholding in preparation and financing of microcredit and livelihood plans; accessible information dissemination and grievance mechanisms; engagement with PRIs and tribal development department; periodic community feedback and consultations, reservation for tribals in project structures; and sensitization of project staff and partners on engaging with the society and culture of tribals in Rajasthan.

Dholpur, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur, Jaipur and Ajmer districts of Rajasthan abound in the Meena tribal population. The Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan are trying their best to change the destiny of the Meena tribal people in order to bring them closer to the main stream of the development of the nation. Several health and education schemes are being run for their welfare and upliftment.

Hypotheses

1. The Meena tribe is one of the oldest tribes in the world.
2. The Meena tribe relates to the Hindu mythology.
3. The Meenas are found all over India, but especially in Rajasthan.
4. The Meenas are hard working enough to do any work.
5. Theirs is a particular culture.
6. They have long been backward and cut off from the main stream of the nation.
7. The illiteracy rate is too high among the Meenas
8. They suffer from poor health.

9. The Government of India is committed to the tribal welfare.
10. There are several health and education schemes for the upliftment of the Meenas.
11. The various governmental health and education schemes have changed the destiny of the Meena men and the women.
12. A large number of the Meena men and the women are getting benefit of such schemes.

Research Methodology

The proposed study is an empirical study conducted on 100 units of information randomly selected from all the five specified study areas. For the sake of the scientific spirit of the work, all the steps of scientific method and social research recommended by the various social scientists were observed. For the purpose, both the primary and the secondary data were used. The primary data were collected through the schedule technique while the secondary data were collected from the various prescribed sources, such as, journals, books, magazines, theses and the internet sites. The Principal Investigator personally observed the problem in the specified study area and made a participant observation. Objectivity was strictly observed.

Relevance of the Study

Since the chief concern of the Government of India is the welfare of the marginalized and dalits, the proposed study shall be incredibly relevant. It shall not only produce the actual scenario of the Meenas' availing the various health and education schemes but also open vistas of research to the next generations of the researchers. At the same time the proposed work shall be capable of pursuing the government to launch more and more health and education schemes for the welfare and upliftment of the Meenas in Rajasthan so that they are no longer cut off from the main stream of the development of the nation.

Conclusion

1. The Meena tribe which finds room in the Matsyapuran in the Hindu mythology, is one of the oldest tribes in the world.
2. Rajasthan is especially known for the Meena Tribe
3. The Meenas are hard working enough to do any work and their distinct culture wins a particular identity not only to them but to India also.
4. They have long been backward and cut off from the main stream of the nation due to illiteracy, ignorance and dwelling in the remote areas.
5. The Meenas suffer from poor health because of working under unbearable and unhealthy working conditions
6. At present the Government of India and the state government are committed to the tribal welfare, and have implemented several welfare schemes for the upliftment of the Meenas.
7. At present there are several health and education schemes for the upliftment of the Meenas, but the practice says that only the few of them who are aware of such schemes get benefit of the schemes, and still most of them are deprived of such schemes.

8. The governmental health and education schemes have changed the destiny of several Meena men and the women and have ensured them education, accommodation, health, but the day when all the members of the Meena tribe are ensured and guaranteed these welfare schemes is only a mirage.
9. There is a need to start campaign in the tribal areas in order to create awareness among them.
10. Education, health and job opportunities are not within the access of all the members of the Meena tribe.

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