

Scavengers in Saharanpur: A Study of Occupational Mobility



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Abstract

Occupational mobility is an important constituent part of the social mobility. Occupational mobility and social mobility are very much interrelated with each other, social mobility pertains with the overall mobility of person or a group or a family while occupational mobility is one of the most important aspects. Some of the studies analyzed occupational mobility as the synonyms of the social mobility. Occupational mobility is defined as a movement of an individual from one occupation to another, having same or different prestige aspects. The Scavengers that are called Bhangi is the most downtrodden community among Scheduled Castes. Bhangis are firmly associated with Scavengers work. The word Bhangi has become the synonym of scavenger. Job, what lead to their most downtrodden status in Hindu social system. They have failed to change their socio-occupational portrait. In this new age most of them do scavenging, their children do not take education properly and their condition still remain vulnerable. The Bhangis occupy the lowest status among the untouchable. The bhangis are a caste of scavengers and have a low ritual status. A number of terms are generally used for them. They are variously known as Halal Khor, Chuhra, Hadi, Mehter, Lalbegi, Hella, Hari and Valmiki . The households which migrated from various adjoining villages of city Saharanpur between year 1980 to 2000 are 1180. All the such households were put in a list whose last generation was associated with scavenging job. Hence, the list of such 1180 households was made and starting from 1 every 20th household was sampled for the study. So 59 households were sampled for this study. Primary data on major socio-occupational variables were collected using a schedule called 'household schedule'. Required data on quality of life, socio-economic milieu and cultural structure was collected qualitatively. Focused interview and observation (non-participant) were used for collecting primary data. Findings of the empirical study show that 64.40 percent of Bhangis are illiterate, 23.72 per cent are educated up to primary. Women education among the Bhangis after primary education is nil. Only 1.69 per cent males are graduate 86.43 per cent Bhangis are in scavenging job in which big number (59.32 per cent) are in non-government organization. Because of the policy of privatization of government of India 23.72 per cent females are doing scavenging job in non-government organisation. Due to their indulgenc in non-government organization they earn a low income (40.66 per cent) They earn up to Rs. 3000 p.m. Only 5.08 per cent of the respondents who work in Govt. sector earn up to Rs. 25000. None of the respondents earn more then Rs. 25000 p.m. Hence Privatization is fatal for weaker section people.

Keywords: Occupational mobility, Differentiating, Privatization.

Introduction

Occupational mobility is an important constituent part of the social mobility. Occupational mobility and social mobility are very much interrelated with each other, social mobility pertains with the overall mobility of person or a group or a family while occupational mobility is one of the most important aspects. Some of the studies analyzed occupational mobility as the synonyms of the social mobility (Gangrade, 1975; Jain, 1969; Loperato, 1965; Milner, 1975)

Differentiating, between social and occupational mobility (Dube, 1975) has observed that social mobility is a wider term and it including with in it, the upward and downward changes in the economic, political or occupational status either of the individual or of a whole group. Driver, E.D.

(1962) defines occupational mobility as a change from one occupation to another, as a result of which the number and variety of social interactions are changed. The change in the social status that interest the theory of social mobility are primarily variation in occupation, prestige, income, wealth, power, and social class. A high or low rank is one of these values is often associated with a roughly corresponding rank is most of the values (Gould 1960).

Occupational mobility is defined as a movement of an individual from one occupation to another, having same or different prestige aspects. But this itself does not explain the whole phenomenon. It has its varied dimensions, one such important dimension is that of time phase dimensions. Occupational mobility is a process which involves a considerable period of time. One can not be mobile overnight. To be mobile one has to get changed some definite quality /characteristic such as education, wealth, political power etc. With all this another important relation to whom and to which point?

Hence, the occupational shift of the individual involved is from one prestige category to a higher prestige category, it can be called upward occupational mobility, whereas if the occupational shift involves a highest prestige category to a lower prestige category it can be called downward mobility. The second axis is known as another occupation of the same prestige category.

The Scavengers that are called Bhangis the most downtrodden community among Scheduled Castes. Bhangis are firmly associated with Scavenging work. The word Bhangi has become the synonym of scavenger. Job, what lead to their most downtrodden status in Hindu social system. They have failed to change their socio-occupational portrait. In this new age most of them do scavenging, their children do not take education properly and their condition still remain vulnerable. (Maxmullar, 1964, Shyam Lal, 1998 and Sushma Rani, 2005).

The Bhangis occupy the lowest status among the untouchable. The bhangis are a caste of scavengers and have a low ritual status. A number of terms are generally used for them. They are variously known as Halal Khor, Chuhra, Hadi, Mehter, Lalbegi, Hella, Hari and Valmiki (Shyam Lal, 1997).

Thus, the need for understanding the problem associated with the welfare of the Bhangi can not be over looked. These problems are well placed before us in all their magnitude and manifestation and have to be dealt with.

The present research paper, to aims to highlighting the process of the occupational mobility among Bhangis have been undertaken.

The present study focuses on the following issues:

1. Change in the occupation of Bhangis through last and present generation.
2. Position of Bhangis in term of economic and educational point of view.

The Area of Study

The study is carried out in the city of district Saharanpur (29° 34' 45" to 30° 21' 30" N and 77° 9' 0"

to 78° 14' 48" E) of Uttar Pradesh. The district Saharanpur is curved to the west by river Yamuna. Till recently the river Ganga formed the eastern boundry of the district. Now newly formed state of Uttarakhand constitutes its boundary. Saharanpur district is borderd by Dehradun, the capital of Uttarakhand, on the north and Muzaffarnagar on the south. Its head quarter is only 186 kms from the national capital and 460 kms from the state capital. The capital of neighbouring state Utrtrakhand, Dehradun is nearly 70 kms.

Saharanpur is extended over an area of 3689 sq. kms. It is among the relatively small district of the state. It is predominantly a rural distrrict. The rural area of the district is 3598.92 sq. kms and urban area is only 90.08 sq. kms i.e. 97.53 per cent and 2.46 per cent of the total area.

The total population of the district as per census 2001 is 28,96,863 persons; the male component is 15,53,322 and female 13,43,541. Rural component is 21,41,291 and urban component is 7,47,572. The urban population is 25.81 per cent and rural is 74.29 per cent. The male female ratio in the district is 1000:868. Male consist 54.02 per cent and female 46.98 per cent of the population. The literacy is neither widely nor equitably spread. Out of total population only 61.22 per cent persons are literate; male lissteracy is 70.91 per cent and female literacy is 50.00 per cent.

The religious composition of the population reveals that Hindus, Muslim and followers of other religions reside here. Socially the general castes constitute 31.78 per cent, OBC 46.5 per cent and SC/ST 21.72 per cent (as calculated by politicians at the time of election).

The Bhangis reside in the city in various colonies (Basties) such as Moongagarh, Mata Garh, Chhimpian, Bandron Wala Bagh, Janta Colony, Beri Bagh, Numaish Camp, Sharda Nagar, Sugar Mill Colony, Nandpuri Colony, Indir Colony, Naveen Nagar, Brahampuri Colony etc.

Methodology

The study was carried out between September 2016 to February 2017. Finding are based on data collected through primary survey as well as various secondary sources e.g. District Census Hand Book, Office of Arth Avam Sankhya Vibhag etc.

In this study the primary survey is used which was done by Valmiki Sabha which shows that the total Bhangi population is 37,827 in city Saharanpur. The total number of households which reside in the city are 1958.

The households which migrated from various adjoining villages of city Saharanpur between year 1980 to 2000 are 1180. All the such households were put in a list whose last generation was associated with scavenging job. Hence, the list of such 1180 households was made and starting from 1 every 20th household was sampled for the study. So 59 households were sampled for this study.

Primary data on major socio-occupational variables were collected using a schedule called 'household schedule'. Required data on quality of life, socio-economic milieu and cultural structure was

collected qualitatively. Focused interview and primary data. observation (non-participant) were used for collecting

Table-1
Age of the Respondents, Age group of the Respondents

Particulars	20-40	41-60	61-80	Total
Male	08 (13.55)	20 (33.89)	09 (15.26)	37 (62.72)
Female	10 (16.94)	07 (11.86)	05 (8.47)	22 (37.28)
Total	18 30.50	27 (47.76)	14 (23.73)	59 (100)

The above table shows that in the age group 20-40 there are 30.50 per cent of the respondents out of which 13.55 per cent are males and 16.94 per cent are females; in age group 41-60 there are maximum (47.76 per cent) respondents out of which 33.89 per cent are males and 11.86 per cent are females, in age group 61-80 there are 23.73 per cent respondents out of which 15.26 per cent are males and 8.47 per cent are females. Age group 20-40 contains maximum number (16.94 per cent) of female respondents, while

age group 41-60 contains maximum number (33.89 per cent) of male respondents.

Table-2 on the next page shows that maximum number (64.40 per cent) of respondents are illiterate out of which 38.89 per cent are males and 25.42 percentage are females. 23.72 percent respondents have education upto primary level, 6.77 per cent meals up to middle, 3.38 percent males are literate up to higher secondary, only 1.69 per cent mles are graduate. None of the female respondents are literate up to middle and above.

Table-2
Education of the Respondents

Particulars	Illiterate	Upto Primary	Upto Middle	Upto Sec./ Hr. Sec. Metric	Graduate or above	Total
Male	23 (38.98)	07 (11.86)	04 (6.77)	02 3.38	01 (1.69)	37 (62.72)
Female	15 (25.42)	07 (11.86)	-	-	-	22 (37.28)
Total	38 (64.40)	14 (23.72)	04 (6.77)	02 (3.38)	01 (1.69)	59 (100)

Table-3
Occupation of the Respondents

Org.	Scavenging		Non-Scavenging		Total
	Govt. or Public Organisation	Non Govt. or Private organisation	Govt. or Public Organisation	Non Govt. or Private organisation	
Male	11 (18.64)	21 (35.59)	02 (3.38)	03 (5.08)	37 (62.72)
Female	05 (8.47)	14 (23.72)	-	03 (5.08)	22 (37.28)
Total	16 (27.11)	35 (59.32)	02 (3.38)	06 (10.16)	59 (100)

Table-3 shows that maximum (86.43 per cent) respondents are doing scavenging out of which 27.11 per cent in government or public organization and 59.32 percent are in private or non-government organization, 13.54 per cent are doing non-scavenging out of which 3.38 per cent in government sector and 10.16 per cent in private or non-

government sector. Maximum number (23.72 per cent) of female respondents doing scavenging job are in non-government or private organization . Maximum number of males (35.59 per cent) are doing scavenging job in private or non-government organisation.

Table-4
Income of the Respondents per months

Particulars	Up to Rs. 3000	Up to Rs. 5000	Up to Rs. 15000	Up to Rs.25000	Up to Rs. 50000 and above	Total
Male	10 (16.94)	15 (25.42)	09 (15.25)	03 (5.08)	-	37 (62.72)
Female	14 (23.72)	03 (5.08)	05 (8.47)	-	-	22 (37.28)
Total	24 (40.66)	18 (30.50)	14 (23.72)	03 (5.08)	-	59 (100)

The above tables shows maximum respondents (40.66 per cent) are having income up to Rs 3000 out of which 16.94 per cent are males and 23.72 per cent are females; 30.50 per cent are having income upto Rs 5000 out of which 25.42 per cent are

males and 5.08 per cent are females; 23.72 per cent earn upto Rs. 15000 out of which 15.25 per cent are males and 8.47 per cent are females; 5.08 per cent ear upto Rs 25000 who are all males.

Table-5
Reasons of Migration of the Respondents from Village of City

Particulars	Marriage	Harassment by upper caste	Enmity with upper caste	In search of jobs	To educate their children	Total
Male	05 (8.47)	19 (32.20)	06 (10.19)	05 (8.47)	-	37 (62.72)
Female	06 (10.16)	14 (23.72)	02 (3.38)	-	-	22 (37.28)
Total	11 (18.64)	33 (55.93)	08 (13.55)	05 (8.47)	-	59 (100)

Data presented in table-5 on the preceding page show that the 18.64 per cent respondents migrated due to their marriage out of which 8.47 per cent are males and 10.16 per cent are females; 55.93 per cent left their village due to harassment by upper caste out of which 32.20 per cent are males and 23.72 per cent are females 13.55 per cent migrated due to enmity with upper caste out of which 10.19 per cent are males and 3.38 per cent are females 8.47 per cent males migrated in search of jobs.

Discussion

After framing the issues and reaching the above finding we may look into the direction of occupational mobility of Bhangis setting in Indian context.

Sabarwal satish (1972) indicated the ways in which individuals use their caste network as well as the new network of occupational and political interest groups to seek betterment for themselves. The three castes he studied were the Bhangis, the Ad-Dharmis and the Ramgarhias and their traditional occupation respectively were scavenging shoe-making and carpentry. Sabarwal's study shows that the Bhangis made the least progress of the three groups. They were lowest of the three group in status hierarchy. They were also weak in their motivation since the demand for the traditional occupation had not been affected by the changes in the growing township. Also carrying the taint of pollution, they faced much more social resistance in their efforts at upward mobility.

Before inferring the data for conclusions, it would be pertinent to review some of the studies and provisions relating to the traditional position for scavengers and conditions laid down for their work.

Jan Kalyan Sansthan, 2005

On the conditions of scavengers a survey was conducted by Jan Kalan Sansthan, Chauri-Chaura, Partner organization of Social Development Foundation, Delhi under the guidance of Shri Ram Bhuvan, Mrs. M. Sultana of Sainik Mahila Prashikshan Sansthan, Gorakshpur. Housing survey says that the scavenging community remains ostracize. The survey consists of the 369 people out of which there are 117 scavenger families of Basantpur, Burkmanpur, Laldiggi, Muftipur, Bhediagarh areas of Gorakhpur town. Survey indicates that 5 per cent of those people lived in the government houses, 12 per cent of them are

informally living in occupied land but 83 per cent of them were living in depressingly miserable conditions and half completed huts on the government land.

Social Development Foundation Delhi: 2005

Data reveals the conditions of scavengers of Bhangis related to various aspects-42 per cent of the families are still in the sanitation work, 44 per cent are still unemployed, 9 per cent of the families are still scavenging while 4 per cent have retired. The study further indicates that there is virtually no entry of this community in the government sector as well as other labour work. It clearly means that while in the sanitation work of the municipalities there is one hundred per cent reservation for them. There is virtually no effort to delink scavengers from this tradition and rehabilitate them elsewhere. About the financial condition of the scavengers study reveals that 26 per cent of the families were able to save money but a majority (76 per cent) were sinking in heavy debt due to their poor earning.

Manusmriti

Bhangi is supposed to do sweeping work only and he should not be paid for this work because he is the asset of his owner. Hence, being a slave he has to do 'Baigar'. He has not got right to make his personal assets.

U.P. Municipality Act

If any Bhangi denies to sweep the magistrate has got power to punish him/her upto Rs. 10.

Municipality of Punjab Act

Punishment up to Rs. 10 and order of lapse to be passed against any Bhangi who forbade scavenging.

Conclusion

Findings of the empirical study show that 64.40 percent of Bhangis are illiterate, 23.72 per cent are educated up to primary. Women education among the Bhangis after primary education is nil. Only 1.69 per cent males are graduate 86.43 per cent Bhangis are in scavenging job in which big number (59.32 per cent) are in non-government organization. Because of the policy of privatization of government of India 23.72 per cent females are doing scavenging job in non-government organisation. Due to their indulgenc in non-government organization they earn a low income (40.66 per cent) they earn up to Rs. 3000 p.m. Only 5.08 per cent of the respondents who work in Govt. sector earn up to Rs. 25000. None of the respondents

earn more than Rs. 25000 p.m. Hence Privatization is fatal for weaker section people.

The emphasis of Indian four fold caste system can be seen on the migrated respondents from villages to cities as 55.93 per cent of the respondents migrated due to harassment by upper castes and 13.55 per cent of the respondents left village due to rivalry with the upper castes. None of the respondent left village for the sake of their children's education while 8.47 per cent left their villages in search of new jobs in the cities.

During interviews these Bhangis disclosed that in villages they were not able to get education due to the repugnancy of the upper castes as they say that who will do scavenging in case they become educated and leave their traditional occupation of scavenging. In cities also, no body gave them any job beside scavenging after knowing that he/she belongs to Bhangi Caste. Hence, the mindset of Hindu mythology or caste-based notion sacred and profane is the most important factor which restricts Bhangis only for scavenging profession. However, it must be mentioned that the trend for non-traditional occupation or modernization of traditional occupation has started which may have far reaching impact in future.

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