

Patterns of Livelihood of Bangala Tribe in the Malwa Region of Punjab: An Ethnographic Study



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Abstract

Occupational change has been largely understood as a change in the activities of the members of a society to earn their livelihood. The change is observed by the increase and decrease in the distribution of these activities in the socio-economic structure of a society.

The present study was undertaken to find occupational changes among Bangala (Jogi) community of Punjab. A sample of 250 respondents from malwa region (Fazilka, Shri muktsar sahib, Bathinda, Sangrur, Barnala, Ludhiana, Moga, Ropar, and Mohali) were selected. Out of this sample 200 were males and 50 were females. Respondents were asked about their occupations with the help of interview schedule. It was found that 65.20% respondents had changed their traditional occupation of Bangala community losing its entity in modern era of industrialization and urbanization.

Keywords: Livelihood, Occupation, Bangala, Tribe, Lifestyle, Modernization.

Introduction

Occupational changes or patterns acts as the prime factors for studying any society's nature and its extent of sociological transformation. As human is a social being who has some of the basic needs such as food, cloth and shelter. In order to accomplish these needs he has to work hard and to earn his livelihood. Livelihood is always considered in terms of finance so to earn money some occupation is must, for this reason human civilizations are adopting and searching for various means of occupations from ancient times till today. In stone-age human beings used to earn their livelihood mainly through hunting or through by-products from the forest. Change in time has brought change in occupation of societies too. Now human being is earning his livelihood from many different ways. According to Guriye (1961), in 19th century Indians were not having freedom of selecting occupation of their own choice, moreover people used to do the same occupation as of their ancestors.

Indians are largely depended upon agriculture and forests. With growing modernization both the fields are losing its aspect. Tribal communities which were than dependent on natural resources are now moving towards or adopting others means of livelihood, which indicates a rapid occupational change of society.

Similarly in Punjab there are about 12 tribal communities namely Boria, Bazigar, Vanzara, Bangala, Barad, Gandhila, Nut, Sansi, Gujjar, Marasi, and Naik found settled in different regions all over the state. Out of these 12 tribes first seven are registered as Criminal Tribes by the Britishers. According to a survey by B.P. Singh (2008) Deptt. of Sociology, Punjabi University, Patiala suggests that Bangala tribe is mainly dependent on forests for its livelihood.

Review of Literature

Barinderpal Singh (2010) in book 'Globalization and change: Perspective from Punjab' edited by Ghuman R.S. (2010) has mentioned about the 'Denotified Tribes of Punjab' in this he discusses about different Tribes of Punjab in which livelihood of Bangala Tribe is also mentioned and had divided their Occupation in two sections viz., Traditional (Bean playing, herbal medicines, Snake catchers) and Modern occupations (rag man, chap man).

Badan B.S. (2014) studied different researchers and mentions the Culture, History, Language and current situation of different Tribes of Punjab, in his book 'Nomades of Punjab'. he divides the Tribes of whole

world in Two Sections viz., non-nomadic tribes which remains in the forests living away from the civilized people and spending their life as jungles, other being the nomadics which shifts from one place to the other in search of food and shelter along with their pet animals.

Tyagi Mohan (2014) studies the complete lifestyle of Bangala Tribe in Punjab. He mentions about the livelihood pattern of Bangalas in Punjab and finds that their main or traditional occupation is snake catchers, begging, bean playing and selling of herbs and sherbs. According to him wildlife preservation Act and deforestation along with the inflation is the main reason behind the change in livelihood pattern of Bangala Tribe.

There has been no recent review or study on Bangala Tribe since after 2014.

Significance of the Study

Growing industrialization has led the whole world towards the drastic occupational transformation. Bangala tribe is also affected by the change in time and generation due to modernization. In ancient times this tribe was known for its major profession of snake charmering, bean playing, begging, and to search for herbal plants in forest areas and these professions constituted for the major source of their income. But modernization, mechanization, urbanization and industrialization has affected and changed this civilization in many forms and folds. This transformation has affected social, political, religious, financial and cultural set up of all the communities. Same has been with the Bangala Tribe which is transformed from its ancient profession towards new ways of earning livelihood. Ancestral business of Bangalas is obstructed due to ongoing deforestation, inflation and wildlife protection Acts made by the government. Researcher here studied three generations of the tribe to co-relate the patterns of changes in the livelihood of the ancestors and the modern generation of Bangala tribe.

Table 1.1 Distribution of respondents on the basis of districts and sex

S. No.	District	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Fazilka	20	8
2	Shri muktsar sahib	25	10
3	Bathinda	30	12
4	Sangrur	30	12
5	Barnala	30	12
6	Mohali	25	10
7	Ludhiana	35	14
8	Moga	25	10
9	Ropar	30	12
	Total	250	100

Result and Discussion

Tab 1.1 portrays a clear image that in Punjab Ludhiana district or central Punjab is having highest population density as compared to the lowest being in Fazilka or south western Punjab. As these respondents were selected on the basis of population density in there concerned areas. In this study sex ratio was taken to be 4:1 i.e. 4 men and 1 woman as a respondent. Number of respondents was highest in Ludhiana (35) and least in Fazilka (20) as the population density was found to be lowest in Fazilka district of Punjab.

Objectives of the study

1. To know about the livelihood earning tools of Bangala tribe.
2. To study the variations in livelihood of the Bangala tribe.

Hypothesis

1. Most of the persons has changed their ancestral occupation.
2. There are some reasons behind the occupational change of respondents.
3. Respondents has moved towards new occupations with the change in traditional occupations.

Survey Sample

The present paper is based on a survey of 250 persons selected as respondents in 4:1 male and female ratio respectively (tab 1.1) of Bangala Tribe. This selection is done from different districts of Punjab namely Fazilka, Shri muktsar sahib, Bathinda, Sangrur, Barnala, Ludhiana, Moga, Ropar and Mohali. These people were interviewed face to face with the help of interview schedule.

Methodology

In this study researcher has taken these respondents as per the simple random sampling from the districts of Malwa region of Punjab on the basis of population density of the particular districts, i.e. number of respondents is more from the districts with more population density. In order to fulfill the objectives of research it was compulsory to know about their social and economic life so, such a questionnaire was prepared with formal and some informal type of questions for better understanding about the lifestyle of Bangala Tribe face to face interaction was done as per the interview schedule, they were asked about their profession, lifestyle and livelihood. This research is done through non-participation inspection.

Table 1.2 based on the change in occupational pattern from 1st generation to the 3rd generation or from grandfathers to the grandchildren. Clarify that today in present times there has been a rapid change in the profession of the Bangala tribe.

This table shows that 1st generation was having more number of respondents/ people (88.40%) engaged in traditional ancestral profession such as snake charmering, herbal medicines preparation, begging etc.

As we move towards the 2nd generation's occupational behavior a clear significant difference

can be seen in shift from traditional to modern occupations. In this generation i.e. of fathers, the percentage of traditional occupation falls from 88.40% to 61.60% with a rapid decrease of 26.80% is noticed. Similar trend can be seen in case of 3rd generation i.e. sons or grandchildren. As they decreased from

61.60% in 2nd generation to 34.80% in 3rd generation, if compared with grandfathers, grandchildren have decreased from 88.40% to 34.80% which is about 53.60% decrease in traditional occupation of Bangala tribe.

Table 1.2 Occupation change pattern from 1st generation to 3rd generation (grandfathers to grandchildren)

Sr. no.	Generation of respondents	Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	1 st generation	Traditional	221	88.40
		Modern	29	11.60
Total respondents			250	100.00
2	2 nd generation	Traditional	154	61.60
		Modern	96	38.40
Total respondents			250	100.00
3	3 rd generation	Traditional	87	34.80
		Modern	163	65.20
Total respondents			250	100.00

But simultaneously it can be noticed that they are shifting towards modern occupation such as rag man, chapman, cleaners or house maids, etc. these occupations were limited to about 11.60% respondents in 1st generation and the number increased to 65.20% in 3rd generation. These results clearly shows that tribal people of Bangala Tribe are now changing their lifestyle, livelihood etc. this change may be due to growing modernization, industries, education, or the concern of deforestation can also be one of the factor working behind this change. Similar traditional occupations and modern occupations of bangalas are mentioned by Harinder kaur (2010) and K.S. Singh (2003)

These drastic results of change in occupation patterns of tribe obtained from the respondents, compelled us to know about their satisfaction from this change, which is mentioned in **Tab 1.3** which shows that 60.00% of respondents are satisfied from the change and 40.00% respondents are not satisfied from the change. This shows that the respondents those who are satisfied from their occupation are doing the profession of their own choice and are earning sufficient amount of money to have a better living whereas those who are unsatisfied have changed their occupation unwillingly under some social pressure or due to decreasing forest land etc.

Table 1.3 Satisfaction towards Current Occupations

Sr. no.	Satisfaction towards occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	150	60.00
2	No	100	40.00
Total		250	100.00

In Bangala community as we move towards the occupations or livelihood pattern of new

generations from ancestors, they are found to be more diversified in occupational choices.

Table 1.4 Respondents children's current occupations

S.No.	Children current occupations	Number of respondent's children	Percentage
1	Traditional	58	04.54
2	Private sector	185	14.47
3	Labour	255	19.95
4	Business	164	12.84
5	Education	512	40.06
6	House hold	104	08.14
Total		1278	100.00

In the above Table 1.4 variance in the choices of younger or modern generation can be differentiated in many forms according to the interests of tribal people. They are now moving towards education as 40.06% respondents in this survey depicted this but at the same time traditional occupation is reduced to just 04.54% which is shows that younger generation is now changing its lifestyle and livelihood.

Conclusion

This study reveals a rapid change in the lifestyle of Bangala tribe as they are now finding and moving towards new sources of livelihood, traditional occupation is losing its aspect as it got reduced to 34.80% from 88.40% and more drastically reduced to 04.54% in younger generation. Also Bangala tribal people are now concern about the educational needs for their children as about 40.06% children are now school going children which is highest among the other occupations of younger generation. These livelihood patterns or changes can be attributed to the modernization, industrialization, and concerned about educational benefits and need of current scenario. Also deforestation and shifting culture is somehow

playing a background role in change of livelihood patterns of the tribe. These changes can be seen as beneficial from the modernization point of view whereas if we concern the cultural view than it can be said that Banagalas are now losing their aspect and entity on the ground of modernization and need of current scenario.

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