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LAMBADA COMMUNITY SOCIAL CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN SOCIETY IN INDIA

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Absract

Lambada tribes (also known by other names as Banjara, Lambani, Lambada, Sugali, Vanajara and Lamani) were nomads of North India, settled in south India and were originated from Marwar region of Rajasthan state. Banjara derived from a Sanskrit word “Vanachara” meaning wonders of the Jungle and are known for migrating from one place to another and showing the paths to various kings like Shah Jahan, Allauddin Khilji. Lambada tribe did not intervene in tribal customary laws, life styles and economic fabric and their life was not influenced by political change. Till the entry of British, these tribes were the master of their traditional ways of ancestral works. As a result of British entry, they lost their livelihood sources and compelled to take- up such activities, which was considered by the colonial state as criminal occupation. In post- independence India, along with other communities, they were de-notified, since then, some changes have taken in their occupational structure for their lively hood. After independence these tribes also faced the same issues they faced at the time of British. The situation did not change for them. The government tried through various polices for their upliftment but the approach did not work. However, in Modern society & digitization of India, these tribes have been changed through various welfare polices like Educational and Health Polices, & Social development structures like norms of values, cultural tastes, humanization and modernization. But still a lot is to be done, since their health and educational standards are far less than their counter parts in the modern society. This paper will discuss development of lambada tribes through various welfare polices implemented by government on par with other developed communities in the sectors of socio-economic, political, religious sphere, trade tradition and their customs and adopting Telugu people life styles, marriage systems, dress pattern, birthday and death ceremonies, festivals in some extent in context of Modern society.

Introduction

Lambada tribes are an ethnic trading group which may have origins in the Mewar region in the state of Rajasthan, India. The Gor usually refer to themselves as Banjaras and outsiders as Kor but this usage does not extend outside their own community. A related usage is Gormati meaning own people. This community became known as Banjara from around the 14th century AD and but previously had some association with the ‘Laman’ who claim a 3000-history.

The origin of Banjara lies in the Sanskrit word variously rendered as Vanij, Vanik and Banik as does not the names of Bania caste, which historically was India’s “Pre-eminent” trading community. However, according to B.G.Halbar, the word Banjara is derived from the Sanskrit word Vana Chara. Despite the community adopting a multitude of languages, Banjara is used throughout India. Indian tribes are the people living in various zones in forests, hills, plain areas and isolated from civilization society, living in separate helmets called thandas with different living style with their community life & living definite geographical area. Lambada community has their own culture, customs, religious belief etc which make different from other tribal community. Psychologically, the Banjara tribes often experience passive indifference that may take the form of exclusion from educational opportunities, social participation and access to their own land. They belong to different racial stocks and religious background and speak different dialects. However, after independence, Sanskritization, education, industrialization, globalization had profound impact on their life and also, under British rule, the functions and powers of the tribal chiefs changed considerably but they have continued their culture, traditions along with them. Tribal modernization is a process denoting a change in traditional or quasi-traditional role-structure of the tribal communities and consequently promoting a dual system of values for self and societal transformation, towards a certain desired form of social structure, values and norms.



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Changes in tribal Society: The cultural assimilation, integration and transformation, are the different sequences of changes and also the dynamics that each of them experienced through interactions. The social mobility and Sanskritisation, Hinduisation, transformation is some of the processes responsible for the tribe- caste continuum in India.

Lambada tribal community can be found all over the states of India like Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat. Banjara language that they speak volumes about the resilience of this community, which has fully grown out of the totally unjust tag of a ‘criminal tag’ to emerge as a very vibrant and colorful fabric of India. The adverse effect of Urbanization & Modernization in areas like cultural change, dress pattern, life cycle rituals, and celebration of festivals were changed in some extent, in context of Modern society. This Modern change of Urbanization has brought out both positive and negative changes in the Lambada community.

Statement of the Problem: The tribal development, there has been an unbroken history with a bundle of broken promises (Sharma, 2010). The history of tribal marginalization witnesses the internal inequalities. With regard to ownership and access to resources, the tribal and non tribal differentiation has not only a matter of great concern; the internal differentiation pushed a few groups of tribes such as Lambada tribe to extreme margin leading to a threat of survival. After completion of 4th five year plan it was realized that the trickle down development. The Lambada tribal have been subjected to almost all forms of resource alienation in Modern Society. However, Lambada tribe were developed in some extent through welfare policies implemented by government and slowly they have been familiar with civilized society culture, customs, adopting their marriage system, customs, birth day & death ceremonies, life styles in the context of modern society era.

Review of Literature: Development refers to a qualitative change for betterment. It is usually conceived as a facet of transformation that is desirable, roughly predicted, properly planned and effectively administered or at least influenced by governmental action. Thus, the concept of development consists of 1. An aspect of change 2. A plan or prediction and 3. Involvement of the government for the achievement of that planned or predicted goal. The term ‘Development’ is also used for the process of allowing and encouraging people to meet their own aspirations. It, therefore, must relate to together its economic, Social, Political and administration aspects on all-round balanced upward.

Changes of Lambada community tribe into Modern Society : The identity of Lambadas has now matured into different patterns of travelling for their livelihood of lives. Many Lambada tribes are still nomadic in nature. Further, they travel on seasonal basis. Nevertheless, a majority of them have settled down in a place formed as group wise families called Thandas and away from developed civilized society and have maintained their identity. In modern era, the nomadic culture is substituted with a search for constant opportunities for income, abiding by law, settling down with their families and trying to become a part of civilized society. Both the original tribes of India and western gypsies have undergone constant transformation with respect to culture and individual identities that are contingent with political, economic and social influence. Thus, it has resulted in variations in language and modern culture. However, Lambada tribe are following and still continuing their own culture & trade tradition etc of their community.

Now a days Lambada community people has experienced drastic transmutation from an underdeveloped and self – sustaining to a literature and dependent on society. These migrants have stopped from restricting themselves and have started to engage living with the other communities, no matter the caste or religion, and have become the normal law abiding citizens in the society especially after the sovereignty of India. They have advantages, like educational privileges, modern medical facilities, business employment, career, personal development, and disadvantages like extinction of primitive culture and traditions. Impact of Digitization, globalization and urbanization on Lambada tribes, the following factors were changed in modern societal organization

Social celebrations & family systems in Modern Society of Lambada tribe:

- a. **Lambadi Dance:** Lambada dance is a tribal dance of their tradition and culture. They are popularly known as Banjaras/Lambadas or Sugalis. Lambadi dance is also a graceful dance performed by Banjari women while

carrying metal pots on their heads. The women wore colourful dresses and beaded jewellery. In modern society, they have been following culture of civilized society norms, movies of regional language of state and Hindi movie, other community cultural activities. However, majority of lambada tribes have been following their community dances & songs during festivals and Marriage occasions.

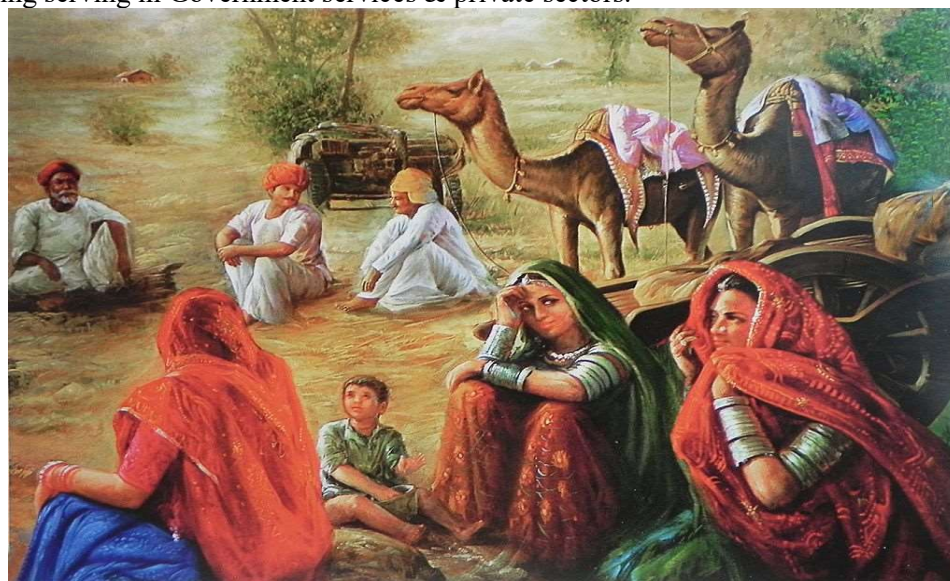


- b. Banjara culture:** Banjara culture is a unique in style. The birth, death, food style, dressing pattern, festivals, and marriage system ceremony has not been taken away by other community in today. The Banjaras to begin their life were pure vegetarians. They use to worship Sun God: the Bhog and now called: Homa; the Hindu tradition was the original culture. The division of Banjaras as chawan,Rathod,Pawar, Jadhav, Bhanoth, etc are derived from the legends of lord Krishna. Banjaras worship Goddess of prosperity Lakshmi.Hundreds of cowries that the Banjara tribal women wear much very auspicious as they represent Goddess Lakshmi. Andhra Pradesh Banjara tribe celebrates Teej, Holi, Seethla, Dusshera, Duga Maata Bhavani puja, Diwaali, Meraam yaadi puja and some folk festivals like holi, Deewali,Dusshera which they celebrate with enthusiasm. A variety of dance forms are performed together during their festivals and marriage occasions. In modern society they are also performing Pongal,Ugadi telugu festival, Telugu girl maturity function in telugu states.
- c. Dressing Pattern of lambada tribe:** Existing dress pattern of Lambada tribe are colorful their traditional Kanchali, Phetiya for Married women, Oni, Ghaguri for unmarried women, Pagadi &Dhoti for Men. The traditional dress for the Lambadi women comprises of a long-ankle- length skirt, a blouse and a Ghoonghat or Dupatta(an additional piece of cloth). Their clothes are colourful, vibrant, and heavy. Lambadi woman's traditional dress is always adorned with typical embroidery. The arms are profusely covered with trinkets and rings made of bones,brass and other rude materials.Balia (bangles), karautiya (anklet), Hassli (necklace made of coins), Bhuria (nose ring), Kolda (leg ankle rings0), Ghagri. A Lehenga is a type of skirt that has rounded flare at the bottom and made with different patches of different coloured cotton cloth, the skirt is tied around the waist

with a cotton cord. In modern society, Sari, blouse for married women, Chudidhar for unmarried women, jeans & T-shirts for Men are using in the context of modern society.



- d. **Lambada tribe life style:** Banjaras were nomadic people who used to move from one region to another in search of good pasture land for their cattle. They moved long distances, selling plough cattle and other goods to villagers. They were reputed as excellent traders. The word “Banjara” is derived from “ Vanaj,” trade, and “ jara,” travel. They speak Gorboli language, an Indo-Aryan language made up of words from many different Indian dialects. Gorboli language also varies from region to region. The life style of Banjaras was traditionally a migratory people, they did historically mostly settle each year in fixed helmets called thandas away from villages. In Modern society lambadas are performing various trading from one place and slowly few of them were educated are being serving in Government services & private sectors.



- e. **Marriage system:** A lambada person cannot marry outside the sub caste or inside the section to which he/she belongs. Earlier polygamy system was prevalent, now since lambadas are covered under Hindu marriage law.



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Among the lambadas child marriages are not allowed/preferred. Girls are not usually married under 12 years of age. The traditional lambada marriages are considered egalitarian in the sense there was no financial considerations in determining marriages. The practice of bribe price has been a well appreciated cultural practice among the lambadas. Even the marriage ceremonies pattern also differs from main stream Hindu marriages. In historical accounts, the marriage ceremonies of the Sugalis of North Arcot.

Traditionally, clan and Gotra exogamy was followed, but today they follow only clan exogamy and Gotra endogamy. Polygamy was prevalent but now majority practice monogamy. Child marriages were not preferred but they are quite prevalent. Today majority of them simply conduct marriages according to Hindu rites. Traditionally bride price/bride wealth was given but now all of them take dowry and majority of them prefer cross-cousin marriages. However, in the last couple of decades, there has been a sudden change in the spiritual realm, and all traditional Goddess are being replaced with patriarchal Hindu gods. The impact is felt more in the marriage practices. In lambada traditional marriage, bride price was/is in practice, the bride's parents do not pay dowry. Rather, it is the bridegroom's parents who pay bride price, it is called Karar. The wedding expenses are also shared more or less equally. In olden days, the male lambada bride price, of Rs.20/ and four bullocks. The bribe system varies according to the means of bridegroom. However, it is no case, less than Rs.50/ -. Half of the amount is paid at the betrothal and the remaining half amount is paid when bridegroom comes to the bride's house for marriage. This well appreciated practice has undergone a tremendous change in modern society. Over a period, it became impossible to protect their ethnic identity amidst the in-egalitarian society that had been surrounding it, because of their living proximity with the caste ridden Hindu main stream society. Even the changing pro-market ideology, of Indian state from 'economic nationalism' to 'economic globalism' through liberalization, privatization and globalization is affecting them in adverse terms. Since 1990s, these socio-economic reforms have had great impact on their mode of thinking. Present day lambada community seems to be under deep cultural crisis, emanating from leaving away their old egalitarian practices and adopting the in egalitarian practices and adopting the in egalitarian Hindu culture.

f. Education among Lambada tribes in Modern Society:

Education is the process of instruction aimed at an all-round development of individuals, it providing the necessary tools and knowledge to understand and practice in day to day life. For many, education is understand to be a means of overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and status for all by developing every individual to their fullest potential. The formal education is very low. The dropout rates are very high in the primary and secondary school level, especially girls are high compared to boys, through various policies and programmes have been implementing by the governmental and also continuous effort done by various non-organizations (NGOs) and others. Traditionally education was unknown to theses tribes. But today many of them are sending their children to schools and colleges. Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing schemes exclusively for educational upliftment of scheduled Tribes(ST) in India.

- 1.Eklavya Model Residential Schools
2. Pre-Matric scholarship to S.T students
3. Pot-Matric Scholarship to S.T students

The main problems faced by Lambada community are :

1. Poverty and exploitation
2. Economic and technological backwardness
3. Socio-Cultural handicaps
4. Problems of assimilation with the non- tribal population
5. Illiteracy among tribal is a major hindrance to their development

g. Lambada families economic activity in Modern society: Traditionally they were cattle breeders and in trade of run pack bullocks and salt today they were mainly engaged in various other activities like labour, vegetable fruit sellers, agricultural labours, construction labour, agency teachers, some of them are working in government sectors.



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h. Lambada language in Modern society: Language is social-cultural- geographical phenomenon. There is a strong relation between, culture & society. It is in society that man acquires and uses language. When we study a language, we have to study its dialects, socialects, idiolects and other varieties. Then we have to focus on geographical and cultural area, in which it is used. Lambada language in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation in different regions. Educated, un educated old and new generations of lambadas, their taking methods and delivered words differs according to context. Since the percentage of education in modern society is in progress among lambada community when comparing to other generation of lambadas, there are some changes in terms of language & education and livelihood of lambadas.

Lambada is a tribal community and migrated people from place to place living in the forest area/plain area and away from society formed a thandas and settled in that place. The dressing pattern, separate their own language they speak, culture, speech pattern, food habits, celebration their gods, and life style are unique and competently separate from other community people. The language spoken by lambada is also called Gorboli. But today majority of them speak Telugu. In fact, all of the respondents spoke mixed language of lambada and Telugu together.

i. Cradle ceremony: This event was celebrated by Telugu state people on the occasion of 21st day of child’s birth. Earlier, there were no such celebrations in lambada community, but, today, after adaptation of the mainstream the customs and culture of this community also started to celebrate this type of ceremony in same manner as the Telugu community.

j. Leadership among the lambada tribe: Traditionally Thanda Naik rule the entire Thanda people and having power to control their rights. He was chief and decision maker for welfare of the thanda people. Today, in modern society none of thanda people go to any such Naik, since they do not have any such Naiks in the thandas and they prefer courts to resolve conflicts and disputes.

Conclusion:

Modernization society changed some extent of traditional life of lambada community in sectors of socio-cultural and political, religious sphere for upliftment through various welfare schemes of Health, education, nutrition implemented by government. Lambada community has continued to remain a very vibrant and dynamic community. They have been very proud of their cultural ethos, traditions and customs. When introduction of roads and railway system, threatened to their occupation of transporter of their home made goods, they adopted more settled occupations like agricultures and cattle farming. This enabled them to evolve a culture of their own which grew from strength to strength. However, in their world have a freedom, and a self expression. Modernization is bringing changes, which effect men and women differently. With the introduction and exposure to modern economy, the concept of lambada tribes are rapidly changing among other developed communities. With the exposure to a market –oriented economy and industrialized society played a significantly role for changing their livelihood in some extent. Lambada tribe unlike other people have a unique tradition of socio-cultural life, thanda settlement, dress pattern, language, festivals, gods, customs and manners as independent of public life. Lambada tribe does not follow caste system rather than have a clan system. However they follow Hinduism in their practice of religious and social life. In modern society they been following Telugu state people life style like dress pattern, festivals, living styles, marriage systems, birth day death ceremonies in some extent.

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