

NOMADIC TRIBES WOMEN'S STATUS OF PAST, PRESENT IN MAHARASHTRA

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Introduction

Indian nomadic tribe people lay a key part in constructing the cultural heritage of India. They occupy major part in the history of India. Nomads are known as a group of communities who travel from place to place for their livelihood. Some are salt traders, fortune tellers, conjurers, ayurvedic healers, jugglers, acrobats. Story teller, snake charmers animal doctor, grind stone makers, basket maker ect. Anthropologists have identified about 500 nomadic groups in India.

Nomadic tribes' member of a community of people who live in different location. Moving from a place to another. Among the various ways nomads relate to their environment. Nomadic tribe's people are scattered all over India. Nomadic tribes different from other people in India. Nomadic tribe's community people's languages, dressing style, habits, living in different area in different state. State wise Nomadic tribe's people are different culture and lifestyle.

A **nomad** is a member of a community of people who live in different locations, moving from one place to another. Among the various ways nomads relate to their environment, one can distinguish the hunter-gatherer, the pastoral nomad owning livestock, or the "modern" peripatetic nomad. As of 1995, there were an estimated 30–40 million nomads in the world.

Nomadic hunting and gathering, following seasonally available wild plants and game, is by far the oldest human subsistence method. Pastoralists raise herds, driving them, and/or moving with

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them, in patterns that normally avoid depleting pastures beyond their ability to recover. A Nomadic is also a lifestyle adapted to infertile regions such as steppe, tundra, or ice and sand, where mobility is the most efficient strategy for exploiting scarce resources. For example, many groups in the tundra are reindeer herders and are semi-nomadic, following forage for their animals. These nomads sometimes adapt the use of high technology such as solar photovoltaic's to reduce their dependence on diesel fuel.

Definition of the Nomadic tribe's

- A number of a group of people who have no fixed home and move according to the seasons from place to place in search of food, water and grazing land.
- A nomad is some who lies by travelling from place to place. Nomadic thus means anything that involves moving around a lot. Nomadic hunter gather tribes follow the animals they hunt, carrying tents with them.

History of the Nomadic Tribes

The word nomad comes from a Greek word that means one who wanders for post ore. Most nomadic group fellow a fixed annual or seasonal pattered of movement and settlements. Most of the nomadic live in tents or other portable shelters. Nomadic tribes always have been a source of suspicion to sedentary people. In the colonial period. The British normalized a set of nation about such groups that posed a “threat “to settled society and introduced a legislative measure the criminal tribes act in 1871 and as a result of which nearly 200 such communities stood “Denotified as criminals”

Culture

Culture is totally unique. The faiths, dress, festivals and even the languages are different and not to be found anywhere in India. People usually prefer visiting these tribes because of their lifestyleandconduct.

Lifestyle

The lifestyle is simple to say the least. Most of these Indian tribes are engaged in occupation like agriculture and the food they eat is depended mostly on their work input. The earlier posts have

also put a lot of stress on the different life styles of various tribes of India. So, the Maharashtra tribes are no different. In the nut shell these tribes of Maharashtra are a must visit and an integral part of your Indian tribal tour.

Women Status in the Ancient India

Traditionally, India had seen a woman as a member of the family or a group and not as an individual with an identity or right of her own. The principle of equality of women and men has been basic to traditional Indian thinking and the Hindu religious philosophy.

Nomadic tribe's women's was very hardworking women. Nomadic tribe's women's was different in other caste and religion women's. Nomadic tribe's women's was very strong and powerful for ancient time. Nomadic tribe's women's go to work have to bear the double burden of work both at home and at work place. Nomadic tribes women's from face triple discrimination due to their specifically of caste, class and gender. Till today the old traditional such as Jat Panchayat are prevalent among the Nomadic tribes women's from these communities are victim of the Jat Panchayat.

The reason for disadvantageous position of women is extreme social restriction of freedom of movement and activities. Women are socially and physically suppressed. They are confined to the domain of the household and suffer from various restrictions even within that domain. Low female participation in education is one aspect of this general pattern of women limited interaction with the outside world. Women's limited opportunity to acquire education and information is bound to affect their ability to play an informed role in the family and in the society.

Because of the socio-cultural factors, women have no say in decision-making, which result in lack of control over their own bodies, sexuality and reproductively. Early marriage and lesser decision- making capacity in marriage matter, early motherhood, repeated pregnancies, lack of accessibility to family planning services, affect a woman's health and even life expectancy.

Women Status in Medieval India

The status of women in India deteriorated during the medieval period with the entrance of the Muslims. Several evil practices such as female infanticide, sati and child marriage were practiced during this period. 'Purdah' was introduced to the society. Women were also forced to practice 'zenana.' Polygamy was also common during this period. Women also excelled in literature, music and arts. They were also rulers during this period.

The status of tribal women can be judged mainly by the roles they play in society. Their roles are determined to a large extent through the system of descent. The families try to pass their property by the line of descent. The family surnames too are traded on the basis of the system of descent. In an unilateral system the descent is traced either through the male or female line. When the descent is traced through the mother's line, it is called a matrilineal system and when it is traced through the father's line, it is called a patrilineal system. Most of the tribes in India follow a matrilineal system. There are exceptional cases like the Khasi, Jaintia, Garo and Lalung of Meghalaya in the North-East who follow the matrilineal system. The Mappilas of Kerala too are a matrilineal community. There are very rare cases of bilinear descent.

The status of a person quite often depends on the system of authority he/she enjoys in the community. When the authority is held through the male line, it is called 'patriarchy' and when it is held through the female line; it is called 'matriarchy'. Quite frequently one mixes up 'descent' with 'authority'. Not surprisingly, the Khasis are often believed to follow matriarchy. But in reality though the property is inherited through the mother's line, the final authority of the household vests with the mother's brother.

The type of family differs to a large extent with the type of marriage prevalent in the community. The nuclear family formed through monogamy is the most common type of family prevalent in the tribal communities in India. The extended type of family is also quite a common norm wherein the daughters leave the natal home after marriage to distant places. The older sons too leave the parents after marriage to set up new homes in the near vicinity. It is common to find the youngest son residing with the parents even after marriage.

Women Status in Modern India

The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribal's are more sincere and honest than non tribal's. However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders.

The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of tribal's, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life.

The impact of development planning needs to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of not only the socio-economic system but the entire eco-system. Against this backdrop, the present paper reviews the emerging perspective in the context of the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women and changing paradigms of development.

General Status women's

The status of any social group is determined by its levels of health-nutrition, literacy education and standard of living. The tribal women, as women in all social groups, are more illiterate than men. The low educational status is reflected in their lower literacy rate, lower enrolment rate and their presence in the school.

In India women are discriminated due to several historical, religious and other reasons. A girl child is suppressed from the moment she is born in terms of personal development. She is made to undergo the feelings of being inferior and feeble. She is denied the prospects for personal expression.

There are various hypotheses about why women have relatively high or low status. The common premise is that women status is high when they contribute substantially to primary subsistence activities. Women position is low in the societies where food getting is entirely men's job like hunting, herding or intensive agriculture.

Male and female and other genders are culturally constructed categories, associated with culturally defined expected patterns of thought and behavior that are subjected to hierarchical distinctions, advantages and disabilities. In India the low status of women derives from a lack of control over material or social resources and from a lack of choice in the unfolding of one's destiny.

This started with men maintaining their monopoly over the use of ox-drawn plough used for breaking the dry, hard packed soils. Men achieved this monopoly for essentially the same reasons that they achieved over the weapons of hunting and warfare. Their greater bodily strengths enabled them to be more efficient than women. However a single measure cannot be used to assess the status of women; rather a multi-dimensional cluster of variables is required to indicate the status. Status is not a fixed rigid concept, it changes over time. Women occupy different positions in the social structure as they pass through the life cycle, and the very basis upon which the community ascribes power, privilege and prestige also changes. Tribal societies have been by and large characterized as egalitarian societies especially in relation to the

hierarchical character of caste society. However, it cannot be said of women status. Status of women varies in different societies.

All societies offer its children the presence of two genders and related roles, according to kinship, sexuality, work, marriage and age. It also supplies the broad guidelines for undertaking these roles through a body of attitudes, specifications, metaphors and myths. In the present study an effort has been to describe regions, with different socio-economic conditions and cultural backgrounds. Majority of the tribal women in the study area have never attended school; therefore for those who have completed their primary education, it will make a positive difference in their status. Work status of women in these areas is broad and it includes all forms of women's labour force participation: formal as well as informal work, work inside and outside the home, and work for payment in cash or kind or no earnings. In these traditional tribal communities, the women have an important role to play. Gender principles are central to the organization of traditional communities.

Gender and the division of labour that depends on its recognition, are decisive elements giving these societies stability and cohesiveness (Illich, 1982). Emphasis on gender, a relational concept provides opportunities for looking at full range of social and cultural institutions, which reproduce gender hierarchies and gender-based inequalities. The cultural interpretation of gender is central to the identity and status of women that entails web of relationships. The conceptual framework to analyze women's status comprise the seven roles women play in life and work: - parental, conjugal, domestic, kin, occupational, community and as an individual. In order to appraise the social status of women in these diverse ecological areas, the findings have been divided in to subsequent categories: - (a) a girl /daughter/ a unmarried woman; (b) a married woman; (c) a widow; (d) divorcee; and (e) a barren woman. Apart from the social status, women role in the social sphere; her political domain; religious sphere; economic activities; and decision making have been discussed.

Characteristics

- No settled

- Keep moving for different reasons
- Life style
- Language
- Different custom and traditional
- Habits

Constitutional Status of Women

The Constitution of India, which came into force on 26th January 1950, operates as the fundamental law in India. Giving recognition of women's participation in freedom struggle of the country, Indian Woman was integrated as a special concern in the Indian constitution.

Therefore, improvement in the status of women was a pledge made by the constitution makers and admitted by the government from the very beginning as one of the major tasks facing the country.

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution briefly crystallizes and solemnly declares among other things; "Justice, social, economic and political" and "equality of status and of opportunity" which by implication sought to equalize women.

Article 14 ensures 'equality before law' and Article 15 'prohibits any discrimination'. There is only one specific provision in Article 15(3), which empowers the state to make 'any special provision for women and children', even in violation of the fundamental obligation of nondiscrimination among citizens, inter alia of sex. Article 16(1)-guarantees 'equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state'. In addition, Article 16(2) forbids discrimination 'in respect of any employment of office under the state' on the grounds only of 'religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any one of them'.

Directive Principles, which concern women directly, have a special bearing on their status. These include:

Article 39(a) 'right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women equally'

Article 39(d) 'equal pay for equal work for both men and women

Article 39(e) 'protection of the health and strength of workers – men, women and children from abuse and entry into vocations unsuited to their age and strength

Article 42 'just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief'

The Constitution of India lays that an Indian Woman will function as a citizen and as an individual partner in the task of nation building whatever her social position role or activities may be. While motherhood is an important function, the constitution implies that this is not the 'only role' for women of India. There are so many other roles for the Indian Women as a partner in the nation building.

Conclusion

Tribal women play a major role in the co- management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock production, horticulture and post harvest operations but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstitions, and dominant roles in decision making, social evils and many other cultural factors.

The participatory role of tribal's in improving their living conditions by fully exploring natural endowments and alternative uses must find an appropriate place in the strategic approach. The social dynamics of tribal welfare and development is such that effective strategies to protect tribal's and their livelihood imply negotiating some kind of social consensus about criteria concerning tribal development and values of the society that evolves from such programmes. This also implies a broad social consensus about the basic rights and opportunities that tribal's should enjoy and the responsibilities that should be taken by different individual and social groups.

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