

Caste and Financial Status: A Study of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in Telangana State

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3379693

Abstract

This paper deals with the caste and financial status of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of Telangana state. The present study is based on primary data collected from Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Warangal and Nalgonda districts of Telangana state. Using random sampling techniques data collected from fifteen caste groups belongs to Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, the selected caste groups are: Siddula, Dommara, Gangireddula, Vaddera, Dasari, Budigajangam, Kunche Yerukala, Veeramushti, Mandula, Katikapla, Peddammalollu, Kakibhadige, Vamsharaj, and Pochammalollu. The study results show that denotified and nomadic and semi-nomadic are tribes facing problems to get their caste certificates to form concern government authorities, most tribes are shown interest in practicing caste occupations and their unique art. Majority of the sample denotified and nomadic tribes are unable to earn adequate income through their caste occupations and performing by their art.

Keywords: Denotified Tribes, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes, Caste and Financial Status.

Introduction

The denotified and nomadic tribes are originally listed under the “Criminal Tribes Act” of 1871. The Britishers labeled these tribes as criminals. The “Criminal Tribes Act” 1924 was repealed by the “Criminal Tribes Laws Act” 1952. As a result of the notified tribes as criminal tribes, stood denotified and the name “Denotified Tribes” has been in use for them, since then. Nomads move constantly from one place to another place and generally have no permanent home. Most nomadic tribes till today could not settle down and become stable, most of them are categorized as SC, ST and OBC and some communities are not covered in any of these categories. The transformation of nomadic and denotified tribes is difficult one; even today most of these communities live in poverty, unable to access available welfare schemes and benefits from government and lacking basic amenities to lead their normal life, they have been suffering from atrocities committed on them. Empowerment of denotified tribes and bringing them into the mainstream of the society is not fully addressed by the government and other existing institutions in the society.

As part of evaluating the progress of the development and welfare policies, government of India has constituted a “National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic tribes and Semi-Nomadic Tribes” (NCDNT) with a mandate to identify and finalize a statewide list of Nomadic and denotified tribes in SC, ST and OBC, and to suggest suitable measures for recommending welfare policies. The commission came into existence from 9th January 2015, visited 20 states, conducted meetings with 15 state governments, met 123 communities in their locations and observed denotified and nomadic tribes’ living conditions. During these visits, almost 834 grievances and representations received from various associations, nongovernmental organizations and local communities. The commission observed that many communities are facing deeper crisis because of losing traditional occupation and declining population. Almost 142 representations received from various organizations working for the welfare of nomadic and denotified tribes. They were asking for inclusion in other categories from present. During commission’s visits denotified tribes opined that earlier time there was no way to in which they can express their grievances. This move will be useful for assessing the status and development of nomadic and denotified tribes living in different parts of the country and will be helpful to state-level scheduled caste, scheduled tribes commissions and other backward communities’ corporations for designing development and welfare schemes.

DNTs in Telangana State

The denotified tribes of Telangana state is well known for their skills, value system, distinct lifestyle, arts, and crafts. Despite eligible to get reservations and other benefits the majority population in these communities are still not able to get their privileges

due to low literacy rate. By nature these groups have no permanent residence, living in small groups and migrating people denotified communities cannot become the agenda for any political party. In recent time government of Telangana is focusing on educational support for denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes and encouraging children belongs to denotified and nomadic tribes to join government residential schools. The state BC Corporation is supporting most backward communities in the state by providing loans for their small businesses and livelihood promotion activities. A few NGOs like Seva Bharathi and Grama Bharathi are identifying denotified tribes across the state and providing free residential education to their children. The government and few nongovernment organizations efforts are not able to address the issues of these communities, NT and DNTs in Telangana state require special support services from government and social organizations.

Significance of the study

Denotified and nomadic communities in Telangana still engaged in their old traditional occupations but they are not getting a sufficient income for their subsistence. Those who are engaged in traditional occupations are facing financial problems and unable to meet their families' basic needs. There is a need to understand specific vulnerabilities of denotified and nomadic tribes in the state, especially the caste and financial status of these tribes are rarely studied by researchers. The present study is important for two main reasons firstly identifying caste and occupations of DNTs in Telangana state. Secondly assessing the income earned from their present occupations. Such efforts will help in identifying caste wise interested and engaged occupations of denotified tribes and their financial earnings from practicing occupations.

Literature Review

According to the 1931 census "denotified and nomadic tribes" were the most oppressed and were dishonored by history, branded by law and rejected by societies as expert write volumes on their woes. Many nomadic tribes who earn their income from street plays, rope walking, playing music, through use of animals like monkeys, snakes, and cows, etc. some communities live by virtue of their traditional occupation such as making toys from waste materials, making bamboo baskets and making agricultural tools. Catching birds and rats are the main livelihood for some nomadic groups. (Voices of the DNT/NT communities in India, 2017)

It is estimated that in India, almost 10 percent of the population belongs to Denotified and Nomadic. The number of Denotified Tribes is about 150; the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities. Denotified Tribes have almost settled in various states of the country. In Indian society, there were groups that entertain the public through performing arts and they were accepted by the settled society for their services. There were musicians, dancers, storytellers, acrobats, and tightrope walkers. (NCDNT report, 2008)

There are denotified and nomadic communities which used to be acrobats, singers, dancers, fortune tellers, jugglers, and street performers. They have been banned from doing so under anti-beggary laws. Many of them are homeless and cannot arrange for regular livelihood and food for their families. (Meena Radhakrishna, 2008)

After the Ayyangar committee report in 1950, various other committees and commissions were constituted for the purpose of review SC, ST and Backward classes. Justice Venkatachaliah commission was appointed for review the working of the constitution of India recommended in 2002, for strengthening the programs for the economic and educational development of DNTs and constituting the special commission to look into their needs and grievances. National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) was constituted earlier in 2005 which had made certain recommendations. In 2015 the government of India constituted a new national commission to focus the identification, present status, area of habitation, inclusion, and review of progress of nomadic and denotified tribes.

Objectives of the Study

To know the various castes and sub-castes of denotified and nomadic tribes in Telangana state

To analyze the present occupations of denotified tribes and income earned by them from their occupations

Methodology

Descriptive and analytical research design is used for this study. The present study is based on primary data collected from Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Warangal, and Nalgonda districts of Telangana state, these five distinct districts of Telangana state have been identified by using standard stratification process. From these selected districts around 360, denotified and nomadic tribes were identified by using random sampling techniques for the purpose of the study. Thus the total number districts selected for the study is 5 and respondents from denotified and nomadic tribes are 360.

Major Findings of the Study: Caste and Financial Status of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in Telangana State

Table 1: Status of Caste Certificates

S.No	Caste / Sub Caste	Do You have caste Certificate		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Siddula	35	5	40
2	Dommara	15	15	30
3	Gangireddula	5	25	30
4	Vaddera	4	1	5
5	Dasari	5	10	15
6	Budigajangam	20	25	45
7	Kunche Yerukala	0	5	5
8	Veeramushti	0	5	5
9	Mandula	20	25	45
10	Pusala	5	10	15
11	Kasikapadi	0	30	30
12	Peddamalollu	0	10	10
13	Katikapala	10	10	20
14	Vamshraj	6	23	29
15	Pochammalollu	16	20	36
Total		121	219	360

From the table1 it is observed that out of fifteen caste groups of sample respondents from denotified and nomadic tribes of Telangana state, four caste groups namely, Kunche Yrukala (5), Kasikapadi (30), Veera musti(5) and Peddammalollu(10) were responded that they do not have their caste certificates. Nearly fifty percent of the sample respondents from Dommara (15), Budige Jangam (20), Mandala (20) Kakibhadige (10) caste groups having their certificates and remaining fifty percent still do not have caste certificates. It is observed that majority of the sample respondents (219) from all the fifteen caste groups of denotified and nomadic tribes are not having their caste certificates and only 33 percent of the sample respondents having caste certificates.

Table 2: Dependency on Caste's Occupation

Are you still depending on Your Caste Occupation			Total
Age	Yes	No	
15 to 21 Years	5	5	10
22 to 30 Years	5	67	72
30 to 40 Years	30	54	84
40 to 50 Years	20	63	83
50 and above Years	61	50	111
Total	110	250	360

The table 2 shows that 55 percent respondents from the age group of 50 and above years are opined that they are interested to engage in their caste traditional occupations, followed by 36 percent of the sample respondents from the age group between 30

years to 40 years, shown interest in practicing their caste occupation, interestingly 89 percent of the sample respondents from the age group between 15 years to 30 years not interested to continue their caste occupations.

Table 3: Castes and Monthly Income (Individual)

S.No	Caste	Monthly Income (Individual)						Total
		Below Rs.5000	Rs.5000 to 8000	Rs.8000 to 10000	Rs.10000 to 12000	Rs.12000 to 15000	Above Rs.15000	
1	Siddula	0	15	0	10	5	10	40
2	Domмара	5	10	5	0	10	0	30
3	Gangireddula	15	10	5	0	0	0	30
4	Vaddera	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
5	Dasari	0	10	0	0	5	0	15
6	Budigajangam	10	20	10	5	0	0	45
7	Kunche Yrukala	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
8	Veeramushti	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
9	Mandula	10	10	25	0	0	0	45
10	Pusala	5	5	5	0	0	0	15
11	Kasikapadi	25	0	5	0	0	0	30
12	Peddamalollu	0	5	5	0	0	0	10
13	Katikapala	20	0	0	0	0	0	20
14	Vamshraj	11	18	0	0	0	0	29
15	Pochammalollu	30	6	0	0	0	0	36
Total		106	138	66	20	20	10	360

It is found from the table 3 that only Siddula (10) caste group respondents are earning above Rs.15000/- per month whereas the remaining all fourteen caste groups are earning below Rs.15000/- followed by the three caste groups namely Siddula(5), Domмара (10), Gangireddula(5) are earning Rs.12000/- to Rs.15000/- per month. The majority of the sample respondents 38 percent are earning Rs.5000/- to Rs.8000/- per month, among these caste groups 45 percent belong to Budigajangam community only. Lastly, it is observed that 29 percent of the sample respondents are earning below 5000/- they are kunche Yerukala and katikapala caste groups.

Discussion and Conclusion

Many Denotified and nomadic tribal communities still today not able to get caste certificates. Caste certificate is mandatory to avail the benefits of government welfare schemes, without having caste certificate students cannot join educational institutions, if they denied admissions into educational institutions, they cannot move forward in their life. In this view state government can take special initiation to issue caste certificates to the eligible members of denotified and nomadic tribes. Presently, many of the denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes are spread among SC/ST/OBC, some of them are still not classified anywhere and have no access to welfare schemes benefits. To address these complex challenges state government may establish separate welfare corporation for denotified and nomadic tribes. Special awareness programs can be organized for DNTs to avail the benefit of various welfare schemes.

The 50 and above age group population of Denotified and Nomadic tribes are interested to engage in their caste traditional occupations, the main reason for this could be the after completing 50 years of age, they cannot perform in any other new file and they can only do things where they can feel comfortable in their work. Almost all the respondents from the age group between 15 years to 30 years are not interested to continue in their caste occupations the main reason for this type of response is, the present generation is not willing to lead their lives without fulfilling basic needs. They know that in the present situation it is not possible to earn sufficient income from their existing caste occupations. The younger generations of denotified and nomadic communities are looking for alternative live hood opportunities to lead better lives. Ninety percent of the denotified and nomadic tribes' caste-based

occupations are not able to generate minimum income to survive their lives.

Recommendations

Government has to ensure special provisions for denotified and nomadic tribes to enhance their financial status. As denitrified tribes showing interest in practicing their castes' unique art, it is the responsibility of the state and non-governmental organizations to provide suitable and viable platforms to artists form denotified communities to perform their art. Mere providing platforms to perform castes' art cannot enable nomadic and denotified tribes to earn livable income for their families, in this view, they need training and capacity building inputs and skill development programs which can improve their existing skills to practice their occupation and related to art. Providing alternative livelihoods can also be taken into consideration for those denotified tribes who are not willing to practice their caste-related occupations while taking steps to provide alternative livelihoods to denotified and nomadic tribes, it is important to consider their interests and need to respect their castes' value systems and unique culture. The problems related to caste certificates can be solved only through government initiation and concern departments' proactive role. Professional social workers and community-based organizations need to work together to find the possible changes in the situation and to build pressure on policymakers to take necessary steps by the government departments.

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