
“A study on the Economic changes in the Kol of Shankargarh”

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is the result of an extensive and intensive study of the Shankargarh region of district Allahabad. The data collected processed and tabulated reveal that the economy of the kol has been undergoing a sea change. The kol have started moving away from their traditional occupations such as hunting, forest-based and agricultural activities as their main source of economy to carpet –weaving, rickshaw-pulling, three wheeler and trolley-pulling, stone-breaking and running general merchant shops for their survival and betterment.

INTRODUCTION

Much study of several different tribes and tribals has been carried out by many anthropologists and researchers all the world over. But unfortunately so far very little amount of substantial serious study of the kol has been done.

Pertaining to the primitive groups of India, the kol constitute a considerable section of the scheduled caste population of Uttar Pradesh in India. In Uttar Pradesh, the kol are scattered in the south and south-eastern part of the state in such districts as Allahabad, Banda, Mirzapur and Varanasi .Allahabad has got a considerable kol population. The kol inhabit in karachhana and Meja Tehsils of Allahabad and the blocks of Shankargarh.

OBJECTIVES

- To find out the socio –economic profile of the kol.
- To find out the changing factor of economy.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This paper explores the entire area of Uttar Pradesh to find out the places where the Kols reside and operate. It has been discovered that the Kol are spread in Allahabad, Mirzapur, Banda and Varanasi districts of Uttar Pradesh. It makes a micro – study of the Kol residing in rural areas of Allahabad. About 93% of the Kol in U.P. are rural.

The Allahabad district has been chosen for purposive sampling where the Kol are in great number. Shankargarh is one of the 20 blocks of the district Allahabad. It is the bordering area between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Shankargarh, as a block, contains 60 small villages in which there is a mixed population of different kinds of castes and tribes.

It has been noticed that the Kol live along the bank of the river Jamuna in trans-Jamuna area specially in Chak Babura Alimabad and Lawayan Kalan Uparhar. According to official data, there are 88 Kols living in Chak Babura Alimabad and 50 adult Kols living in Lawayan Kalan Uparhar.

There are 20 blocks in Allahabad Districts, viz. Handia, Dhanupur, Pratappur, Saidabad, Bahadurpur, Bahariya, Phoolpur, Holagharh, Korihaar, Jasra, Shankarghar, Korawa., Manda, Meja etc Shankarghar is one of the blocks.

A Shankarghar block has been selected by purposive sampling for the study of Kol. For this study ten villages have been selected following purposive sampling. Due to the concentration of Kol in these villages. These villages were Nimi, Jhajhara Chaube, Newaria, Chintapur, Gidhar, Jar Khori, Salaiya Khurd, Bichhia, Jorwat, and Basidewa.

200 households have been selected randomly from the ten villages of Shankarghar. From each household one person (male or female) are chosen.

Data were collected by various tools and techniques like participant, observation, structured interview schedule, focus group interview and case study. Secondary data were also used.

The economy of the Kol in Allahabad Districts remote past in general and the recent past in particular has been a matter of great concern. Frankly speaking it is at present miserable despite tall claims made by Non-Governmental Organizations. The Kols of Allahabad are miserably poor and in deep debt to money-lenders. They are mostly landless and their income from agricultural work is so meager that they find it difficult to survive also they find it impossible to repay the loans taken from money-lenders. Also because of their landless condition, they are unable to take loans from the banks. Owing to their incapacity to repay the loans taken they work as bonded labourers for the money lenders and other rich people.

The fact of the matter is that in Allahabad District quite a few NGO's emerged ostensibly to help the Kols to improve their employment-related condition. These NGO's as the survey conducted in several villages such as Nimi, Jhajhara chaube, Newaria, Chintapur, Gidhar, Jar Khori, Salaiya Khurd, Bichhia, Jorwat, Basidewa, by the present researcher reveals, have received handsome non-recurring as well as recurring grants to establish schools and provide employment to the Kol men and women and other poor villagers. But nothing has since happened. Instead of improving the fate of the Kols, the kingpins of those NGO's have bettered their own fate in several ways. Government projects fail to reach these villages and their benefits are enjoyed by the Pradhans and Pundits of the villages concerned.

Bonded labour is endemic in Shankarghar and the surrounding Patha region where landless Kol tribals from Madhya Pradesh have settled. The clout of contractors enables them to get work out of the Kols at below minimum wages.

The agreements of various authorities notwithstanding, the tribals continue to be at the receiving end as neither the authorities nor the NGO'S have been able to get the order revoked in the larger interest of rehabilitation of Kol bonded labourers.

Table 1 Sources of Income

N=200

| S.NO. | Sources | Income of Range | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|---|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Marginal Workers (stone breaking) | 900 -1200 | 160 | 80 |
| 2. | Trolley Pullers | 900 -1200 | 05 | 2.5 |
| 3. | Cultivators on Borrowed land (patta) | 1200 -1600 | 20 | 10 |
| 4. | Shop – owners | 1600 -2000 | 05 | 2.5 |
| 5. | Driving | 2000 - 3000 | 10 | 05 |
| Total | | | 200 | 100 |

The above table reveals that 80 per cent marginal workers (stone breaking) income range is 900 -1200. 2.5 per cent trolley pullers income range is 900 -1200. 10 per cent cultivators on borrowed land (patta) income range is 1200 -1600. 2.5 per cent shop-owners income range is 1600-2000. And 05 per cent driving income range is 2000 – 3000.

Table 2 Economic Contributions of Male, Female, & Children

N=200

| | Nature of Work Of Male | Frequency | Percentage | Nature of Work Of Female | Frequency | Percentage | Nature of work Of Children | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Marginal Workers | 40 | 40 | Marginal Workers | 20 | 40 | Marginal Workers | 20 | 40 |
| 2 | Cultivators | 30 | 30 | Cultivators | 20 | 40 | Cultivators | 15 | 30 |
| 3 | Agricultural | 20 | 20 | Agricultural | 10 | 20 | Agricultural | 15 | 30 |
| 4 | Others | 10 | 10 | Others | – | - | Others | – | – |
| | Total | 100 | | | 50 | | | 50 | |

The above table shows that 40 males participate in marginal work; 20 percent females participate in marginal work and 20 per cent children participate in marginal work. 30 percent males participate in cultivation. 20 percent females participate in cultivation. 15 per cent children also participate in cultivation. 20 per cent males, 10 per cent female respondents and 15 per cent children participation in agricultural work; while 10 per cent male respondents participate in other work.

Table 3 Changing Pattern of the Economy of Traditional & Modern Occupation - N-200

| S.no | Traditional Occupation | Modern Occupations Adopted | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Cultivation | Stone-breaking | 60 | 30 |
| 2 | Agricultural daily wages labour | Cultivators on borrowed land | 40 | 20 |
| 3 | Vegetable selling | Agricultural daily wages labour | 40 | 20 |
| 4 | Rickshaw pulling | Workers in Factory (Migrated to M.P) | 25 | 12.5 |
| 5 | Collecting forest products | Driver (Three- wheeler) | 15 | 7.5 |
| 6 | | Shop | 05 | 2.5 |
| 7 | | Trolley puller | 15 | 7.5 |
| | Total | | 200 | 100 |

Sources – Traditional occupation Block & old people of the village.

Traditional occupation

The above table reveals the changing pattern of the economy of the kols. Kols are engaged in cultivation of fields. Kols work as agricultural daily-wages laborers. Kols work as vegetables sellers, 05 per cent kols work as Rickshaw pullers. They collect forest products and kols are engaged in marginal work.

Present occupation Adopted

Kols have now also adopted present occupations, 30 percent kols are engaged in stone-breaking, 20 per cent kols work as cultivators, 20 per cent kols work as agricultural daily-wages labourers, 7.5 per cent kols work in factories in Madhya Pradesh. 2.5 per cent kols run

general-merchant shops. 7.5 per cent kols work as driver of three-wheeler auto rickshaws and 7.5 per cent kols work as trolley pullers for carrying loads.

Table 4 Factors Responsible for Change in the Economic Pattern

N = 200

| S.NO. | Factors | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Education | 200 | 100 |
| 2. | Socio- Economic | 200 | 100 |
| 3. | Cultural Regidity | 200 | 100 |
| 4. | Political | 200 | 100 |
| 5. | Health | 160 | 80 |
| | Total | 200 | 100 |

The above table shows that 200 respondents lacked education; 200 respondents faced various socio-economic problems; 200 respondents were victims of cultural rigidity; 200 respondents were victims of political exploitation at the hands of the Pradhans of villages and 160 respondents suffered serious health hazards caused by the traditional occupation of stone – breaking leading to T.B. etc. these factors were basically responsible for the change in the economic pattern of the kols.

We now come to our field of study and deal with the economic status of the kols of this area. The kols work as daily earners in the stone industry or as agricultural labourers in the village field. Migration of labour is a perpetual problem in the agricultural villages where employment opportunities are seasonal in nature. Usually the males of such villages move out to markets and towns in search of some employment. Landless and debt-bondedness are two most important factors ascribable to the migration Kols to other places and setting up residence over there. Examples of many Kol villages have been found which have simply been abandoned by the kols for these reasons.

The incidence of migration and/ or abandonment is higher in areas in and around Shankargarh block.

Some kols have tried to set up their own business after taking loans under the I.R.D.P. These loans are advanced for the following purposes through the block office by the lead Bank of the area. The programmes are: goat unit, carpet industry, band, cycle parts/repair shop, general/provision store, buying bullocks or buffaloes, rickshaw –trolley, utensils hawker, readymade garments, wood industry/ carpentry shop, cloth shop, loud speaker set , poultry unit, diesel pump set ,pig unit and chara machine. Though there are many beneficiaries of such schemes, rarely do we find anyone working under the said category or utilizing the loan

amount. Some of them have tried but they have been forced out by the other established businessman of the area through different coercive tactics.

The number of kols engaged in livestock/cattle breeding and rearing and in manufacturing household and other articles has certainly increased during the period 1971-81-91. The increase in their number is reflected by the number of kols that have been provided loans under the I.R.D.P. to start their own business.

Earlier the mounds of stone in Shankargarh broken slowly and gradually by hands of the labourers using hammers and other old-fashioned tools. But now things have changed. The labourers use Jhoomers, Sabbals, Drillers and Tractors to break the mounds of stone

At present, new technology has been introduced for breaking stone in Nimi village in Shankargarh. In that village there are mounds of stone. First of all a mound of stone is blasted by explosives. Then big pieces of stone are drilled by a drilling machine. Then big pieces of stone are collected by the kols who break these pieces into small chips to be supplied to different districts for sale and they are used in the constructions of road and buildings.

CONCLUSION

It has been studied that most of the kols continued to be engaged in traditional occupations of stone-breaking and cultivation. 160% kols worked as stone breakers and 20% kols worked as cultivators. But with the passage of time and increasing economic pressure some tangible change in the economic pattern of kols was noticed. 20% kols adopted modern occupations such as trolley-pulling, running general-merchant shops and driving vehicles. 05% kols were engaged in trolley-pulling. 05% kols came to run shops selling ordinary things of day-to day use. And 10% kols started working as drivers. Thus the changing pattern of the economy of the kols in Allahabad was emerging.

Men, women and children all participated rigorously in economic activities for their survival. 40% men 20% women and 20% children took part in marginal work. 30% males, 20% females and 15% children participated in cultivation. 20% males, 10% females and 15% children participated in agricultural work; while only 10% male respondents engaged themselves in other kinds of work.

Miserable socio-economic condition, acute lack of education, persistent cultural rigidity, political partiality and poor health were basically the major factors responsible for the change in the pattern of the economy of the kols.

The kol community in Uttar Pradesh in general and in Allahabad in particular were facing several severe problems in their life. The kols were confronting serious health hazards caused by their traditional occupation of stone-breaking. They received meager remuneration from the contractors who badly exploited them financially and physically. Due to poverty, the kols fell into the clutches of money-lenders who lent them money at an exorbitant rate of interest which they failed to pay off and thus become bonded labourers of the money –lenders for the rest of their life.

Owing to acute economic constraints, the kids of the kols, who were larger in number, were unable to avail themselves of education.

Also, owing to political partiality and other political problems, the Pradhans of the villages did not extend any kind of help to the kols and hence did not want to make them aware of their rights and kept them in the dark.

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