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A study of the leatherworker community in Latur district

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Abstract

Indian society has historically been structured around a rigid caste system that predetermined social and economic roles. Among the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra, the leatherworker (Charmakar/Chamar) community occupies a significant position due to its traditional association with leather-based occupations. This research paper presents a socio-economic and educational study of the leatherworker community in Latur district, Maharashtra. The study adopts a descriptive and inferential research design and is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, direct interviews, and observations from 460 leatherworker families across various villages in all talukas of Latur district, covering a total population of 2,346 individuals. Secondary data were obtained from census reports, government publications, research articles, and social organization records. The findings reveal that although literacy levels within the community are gradually improving, higher education attainment remains comparatively low. Economic transformation, industrialization, and the decline of traditional village systems such as the Bara Balutedari have significantly affected the traditional leather-based occupations. As a result, many families have shifted towards wage labor, agriculture, or alternative employment. The study also highlights key challenges faced by the community, including lack of capital, weak political leadership, and fragmented caste organizations. The paper concludes that strengthening education, diversification of occupations, and collective efforts through community organizations are essential for the sustainable socio-economic development of the leatherworker community in Latur district.

Keywords: Leatherworker Community, Chamar Caste, Education, Occupation, Socio-economic Change, Latur District

Introduction

Since historical times, a social and economic framework of the caste system has been created in the lives of the Indian people. In this framework, the caste of a person is used as a system to control social and economic transactions, so the structure of the caste system has been built on various unique waves and customs. In this system, people are divided into different social classes. Each caste is given independent social and economic rights. Therefore, the social and economic rights of a person born in each caste are predetermined with their birth. Are among the Dalit castes in Maharashtra, the three castes that are most numerous are Mahar, Chambhar, and Matang. This is followed by Dhor, Holar, Khatik, Medgi, Holiya, Dob, Kaikadi, Bandar, and Shenvi. As of 2011 According to the census, the total population of Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra is 1,32,75,898, which is 11.81% of the total population. Among the Dalit castes in Maharashtra, the second most important caste is the Charmakar caste. The Charmakar caste is found in almost all places in Maharashtra.

The leatherworker community is one of the Bara balutedaras in the rural areas. Like other Balutedaras in the village, this community has an independent traditional profession. At that time, the leatherworker was engaged in the work of making leather tools useful for the agricultural business of the farmers, as well as slippers, shoes, boots, oxen's neck straps, mots, etc. In return, he was given grain by the shekriya during the harvest season for a year. Along with this, if some minor repair work was done, the remaining food was given as compensation. Also, during every festival, people from other castes in the village used to get festival gifts. This community was found earning its living on such income. Since today's modern social system has rejected the system of bara valuvedari, this community is seen doing whatever work they can get along with their traditional occupations in rural and urban areas.

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Research Methodology: -

The subject taken for the research is the leatherworking community of Latur district, a study and since it is about a brief review of the leatherworking community of Latur district, a descriptive, inferential design has been adopted. For this, the research has been completed on the basis of primary and secondary information.

Primary Data :-

Since the subject of the research is for a specific community, maximum use has been made of primary information. In it, leatherworking families from various villages of the district have been randomly selected on the basis of questionnaires, observations, direct interviews, etc., and questionnaires have been filled based on interviews with 460 families in the district.

Secondary Data: -

The research work has been based on primary information as well as secondary information. The research has been completed based on various census reports, government, semi-government offices, social organizations, research articles of various groups, etc.

Scope of Research: -

Since the research is related to the leather workers community in Latur district, it was conducted on the basis of selected villages in all the talukas of the district, and a brief review of the educational, professional, and various problems of the leather workers community in the district has been conducted.

Objectives of the research paper: -

- 1) To know the educational status of the leather workers community in the district.
- 2) To review various problems of the leatherworking community.
- 3) Briefly about the profession of the leatherworking community review.

Educational Status: -

Education is a very important tool for the social and economic development of a person. A society in which the level of education is high is scientific and developed, and the all-round development of the personality of a person in such a society occurs due to education. The society improves due to an educated person in the society. But in Hinduism, since the caste system was very strict, each caste had a prescribed profession, along with which the breadwinner business etc. were imposed on each caste. In Hinduism, a handful of people from the community had reserved the right to get education, due to which the doors of education were closed to Shudras, untouchables, and women. It is seen that the Pandits of Hinduism mainly tried to deprive the untouchable community of knowledge. Therefore, they had to live an unjust and servile life. But under the British Due to the Argaman, the caste system began to crack. At the same time, the British gave priority to education, and the doors of education were opened to the Dalit community, who had been living in the darkness of ignorance for generations. At the same time, the social reformers here provided

educational opportunities to such poor Dalits, and it is seen that the Chamar community, among the poor Dalits of Latur district, has been provided with this opportunity for education.

Educational status of men, women, and boys and girls in the chamar community

The direct sample survey of the Chamar community in Latur district, out of 2,346 people from 460 families, 1,079 (45.99 percent) people were found to be illiterate. While 1,267 (54.01 percent) people were found to be literate. Out of them, 242 (10.32 percent) people had studied up to the fourth standard, 15.47 percent had studied up to the seventh standard, 8.99 percent had studied up to the tenth standard (SSC), 10.95 percent had studied up to the twelfth standard, 5.63 percent had studied up to the post-graduate level, and 62 (2.65 percent) of the Chamar community had studied up to the postgraduate level. From this, it is clear that the level of education of the Chamar community in Latur district seems to be lower than the average level. The direct sample survey showed that due to the inability to spend on education, education could not be taken or imparted. Because the business has faced many difficulties in the past few years, many people have said that they have not been able to provide further education to their children due to low income.

Educational status of men, women, and boys and girls in the Chakma community

Description

From the above table it is seen that the literacy rate has increased compared to that of men and women. The literacy rate of men and women is 46.05 percent and that of boys and girls is 60.04 percent. From this one thing is clear. is clear that in recent times, due to the spread of education and the changing attitude of the leather society towards education, along with some degree of economic development, there has been a social and educational transformation in the society.

Business status of the leather working community

In recent times, a great revolution has taken place in business, because of which there have been great changes in the structure of caste business. Many caste businesses have been replaced by mechanical industries, which has had a negative impact on the business of the leatherworking community. Because due to the mechanical age, leather the place has been taken by fibber, resin, artificial sole, plastic, etc. Due to this, it seems that the main business of the leatherworking community has been ruined. Because the leatherworking community is already poor and cannot invest the necessary capital in the business due to poverty, etc., their difficulties have increased. Due to the industrial revolution, many big companies dealing in footwear have come into the market. For example, the entry of companies like Bata, Woodland, Lakhani, etc. has led to a radical change in the business of the leatherworking community. The explanation of this is given because of the following table Business status of the leatherworking community.

Out of 460 families, 177 (32.48) families are seen doing traditional business today, while 53 (11.52 percent) families are seen selling ready-made slippers, boots, etc., bypassing the traditional business. The number of families repairing old slippers and boots on the roadside in villages and cities was 42 (9.13 percent), while the number of working families was 45 (9.78 percent). Today, due to the difficulties faced by the leather industry, it seems that there has been an increase in education. Its The results show that the number of families doing jobs instead of traditional occupations has increased and it has been indicated that families doing traditional occupations in the leatherworking community are leaving their traditional occupations and doing farm labour due to many difficulties in the business. It is understood that some of the leatherworking community members have been farming since long while some have taken up farming in recent times. Today, the number of families doing farming and farm labour is 143 out of 460. That is, the leatherworking community seems that they are doing whatever they can, leaving behind traditional businesses.

Problems of the leatherworking community: -

The leatherworking community has been facing various problems in recent times and it is seen that they are facing many difficulties in meeting the needs of their own families. Because of the encroachment of many capitalists on their traditional business and due to lack of capital, they cannot and cannot leave their own business. Such a situation has arisen in leatherworking today.

- 1) Lack of capital: - Due to the entry of many big capitalists into the business of the leatherworking community, there has been a lot of competition in the business. There is a huge need for capital to face this competition. But 2) he has become unable to compete due to lack of capital. Therefore, today he is seen only doing old footwear repair work.
- 2) Lack of political leadership: -There have been many leaders in the leatherworking community 4) and there are still many. But it is seen that there is a lack of leadership that strives for the socio- development of the entire community
- 3) Lack of caste organization: - There is a lack of caste organization in the Chamar community. Even though there is caste organization, it is scattered among various organizations. As a result, this community seems to be moving away from the developmental trend.

Conclusion: -

Although the level of education in the leather workers community is increasing, there has been no progress in higher education like other communities. Due to this, the development of leather workers has slowed down. Along with this, if the leather workers community chooses a profession according to their qualifications along with the traditional profession, it will definitely help in the development of the leather workers community and if the leather workers community works together

through caste organizations, the neglected sections of the society can also develop.

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