Social Changes among the Scheduled Caste Population of the Vaishali District: A Geographical Study.

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Abstract: Change in social conditions concerns; transformation of culture, behaviour, social institutions and social structure of a society over time . It has taken place in most areas but as far as the less developed areas are concerned these have recorded phenomenal changes during the recent years due to improved educational facilities, economic conditions, mass- media communication, efforts of the social reformers, government policies, etc. So also the less developed areas of the State of Bihar have experienced significant social changes. The district of Vaishali, one of the country's 250 most backward districts, as by the ministry of Panchayati Raj identified in 2006, has also recorded considerable changes in the attitudinal, behavioural and structural features of the Scheduled Castes. The present paper aims to highlight the changes which have taken place among different Scheduled Castes of the selected villages of the Vaishali district. The paper highlights the changes in the social conditions of the migrant and non-migrant Scheduled Caste people with special reference to some of the social features like family structure, housing conditions, educational development, religious activities, dress pattern, changes in food habit & socialization pattern, etc.

I. MIGRATION

Migration is movement of people from one place to another permanently or semi permanently leading to cultural diffusion and social integration.

II. OBJECTIVES

The following are the main objectives of the present study-
(i)   The study aims to analyse the geographical conditions influencing social change.
(ii) It also aims to analyse differential development of different scheduled caste communities who have contributed migrants to other areas.
(iii) It further presents comparative account of migrant and non-migrant scheduled caste people of the study area.
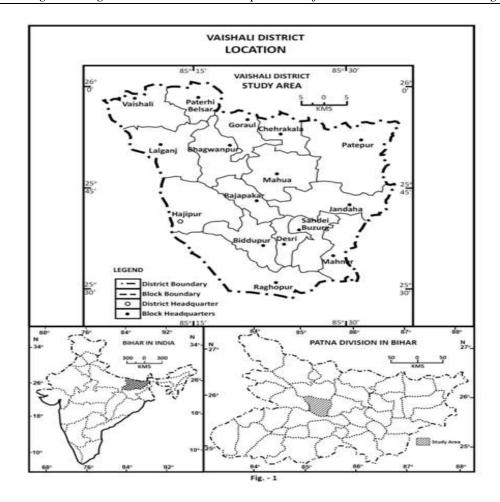
III. METHODOLOGY

The study is based mainly on primary data generated through questionnaires and schedules. Some data concerning population size and characteristics, economic conditions have been taken from census records and other government publications.

IV. STUDY AREA

The Vaishali district is located in the central part of the North Bihar Plain. It is surrounded by Muzaffarpur on the north, Ganga river & Patna on the south, Samastipur on the east and river Gandak and the Saran district on the west. It extends from 25° 29' N to 26° N latitudes and from 85° 05' E to 85° 40' E longitudes and has an area of 2036 sq.km. It has 16 development blocks, 1638 revenue villages and 3 main urban centres - Hajipur, Lalgang and Mahnar. This district has a total population of 34,95,021 (yr.2011 census).

Fig. - 1

This district is noted for contributing a large number of landless labourers and poor farmers to different urban centres and better developed rural areas of the country. This district has also considerable percentage of Scheduled Caste population. The district has played an important role in contributing out-migrants due to adverse man-land ratio, bad economic condition of the socially deprived and suppressed communities. It is a fact that the area under study is quite fertile and is also important for growing food grains, vegetables, seasonal fruits, etc. but, lack of opportunities for economic development and unemployment have forced people especially the scheduled caste people to move out to other places. The area under study forms a part of the North-Bihar Plain especially the Tirhut division. The selected villages are Kamalpur, Nasir Chak, Phulwariya, Chandaleh, Mohanpur and Dubha of the development blocks Lalgang, Patepur, Mahua, Hajipur, Raghopur and Sahdae Buzurg respectively of the Vaishali district.

Table: 1

Location of the Selected Villages						
Name of Villages	**Name of the Panchayat**	**Police Station No.**	**Name of the Block**	**Lattitude & Longitude**	**Distance From Metalled Road**	**Distance From District Head Quarter**
Kamalpur	Khanjahan Chak	94	Lalganj	25°22.5'-25°53' 85°8.5'-58°9.5'	1km	19km
Nasir Chack	Teknari	447	Patepur	25°52'-25°53' 85°31'-85°31.5'	1km	23km
Phulwariya	Mahuaa	161	Mahua	25°47'-25°48' 85°23'-85°23.5'	1km	10km
Chandaleh	Balwakuari	122	Hajipur	25°43'-25°43.5' 85°12.5'-85°13'	0.5km	2km
Mohanpur	Saidabad	391	Raghopur	25°32.5'-25°34.5' 85°19'-85°20'	4km	22km
Dubha	Pohiar	564	Sahadae Buzurg	25°42'-25°42.5' 85°29'-85°30'	0.5km	21km

Source :District Census Hand Book of Vaishali and Field Work

Fig. - 2

It may be mentioned here that the sample villages have been selected on account of their distinctive locational conditions and presence of different scheduled caste families. Table -3 depicts the distributional pattern of the scheduled caste population in the study area.
Scheduled Caste population of Vaishali district

Table: 2.

						Scheduld Caste Pop.			Percentage of SC pop.		
Sl No.	Blocks	Sex Ratio 2011	Density (per sq km), 2001	Density (per sq km), 2011	Share of Scheduled Caste Pop.						
					In %	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	Vaishali	913	207.05	267.56	4.6	33929	17736	16193	18.1	18.02	18.19
2	Paterhi Belsar	928.3	235.49	313.31	3.15	23235	12049	11186	24.29	24.12	24.47
3	Lalganj	896.1	290.62	376.88	7.73	57071	30099	26972	21.51	21.34	21.69
4	Bhagwanpur	905.13	273.47	366.55	5.87	43355	22757	20598	20.87	20.71	21.04
5	Goraul	914.42	281.82	375.53	5.03	37132	19396	17736	20.91	20.83	21
6	Chehrakla	915.52	297.95	388.71	3.6	26553	13862	12691	20.27	20.23	20.31
7	Patepur	927.46	240.33	328	11.4	84155	43661	40494	22.73	22.66	22.81
8	Mahua	890.38	344.43	458.53	8.32	61407	32484	28923	21.58	21.64	21.52
9	Jandaha	892.84	297.82	400.57	8.16	60213	31811	28402	21.8	21.74	21.87
10	Rajapakar	901.4	364.48	464.95	4.7	35136	18479	16657	22.22	21.11	22.34
11	Hajipur	896.26	468.14	597.47	12.7	93719	49423	44296	21.11	20.99	21.24
12	Raghopur	881.6	135.67	182.14	5.57	41128	21858	19270	17.66	17.48	17.86
13	Biddupur	884.58	341.91	454.18	7.05	52022	27604	24418	19.35	19.29	19.42
14	Deshri	887.6	337.83	400.78	2.71	20035	10614	9421	22.87	23.05	22.67
15	Sahdae Buzurg	921.14	228.97	324.04	3.85	28431	14799	13632	22.32	22.09	22.57
16	Mahnar	911.3	314.51	405.55	5.49	40510	21195	19315	22.46	22.48	22.45
Total			902.99	276.09	362.49	100	738031	387827	350204	21.12	21.03	21.22

Source: Census Office.

Table -2 reveals that the proportion of the scheduled caste population in the Vaishali district (21.12%) is more than that of the state (15.70%). The distribution of the Scheduled Caste population is uneven. The highest percentage of the Scheduled Caste population is found in the Paterhi Belsar development block (24.29%). The

other development blocks having Scheduled Caste populations execeding the regional average (21.12%) are Deshri (22.87%), Patepur (22.73%), Mahnar (22.46%), Sahdae Buzurg (22.32%), Rajapakar (22.22%), Jandaha (21.80%), Mahua (21.58%), Lalganj (21.51%). The other development blocks having Scheduled Caste populations less than the regional average are Vaishali, Bhgwanpur, Goraul, Chehrakala, Biddupur, Raghopur and Hajipur. The share of the male and female population does not vary much.

Scheduled caste population in the selected villages

The selected villages of the study area have considerable percentage of scheduled caste population. The highest percentage of scheduled caste population is found in Village Phulwaria (37.15%) followed by Dubha (35.04%), Kamalpur (34.79%), Chandaleh (21.15%), Nasirchak (8.0%) and Mohanpur (5.87%). At the time of the survey the highest number of scheduled caste families was recorded (260) in Village Phulwariya followed by Kamalpur (217), Dubha (127), Chandaleh (91), Mohanpur (88) and Nasirchak (52). It may be noted here that not all scheduled caste communities are there in all the selected villages. Some scheduled caste communities like Chamar, Dusad, Pasi and Dhobi,etc are there in all the selected villages. The four communities like Dom, Mushar, Tatwa are in negligible numbers.

Table: 3.

	Caste Population in Selected Villages, 2011					
Name of Village	**Kamalpur**	**NasirChack**	**Phulwariya**	**Chanda Leh**	**Mohanpur**	**Dubha**
Total Population	3605	4175	4083	2123	9386	2126
Population in 2001	789	251	1051	382	561	476
Pop. in 2011	1254	334	1517	449	551	745
Share of SC Pop.(%)	34.79	8	37.15	21.15	5.87	35.04
Pop. in 2014 (By Field Work)	1404	359	1657	489	528	806
% Growth (2014 - 2001)	77.95	43.02	57.66	28.01	(-)5.88	69.33
Number of Family	217	52	260	91	88	127
	DETAILS OF SCHEDULED CASTE COMMUNITY					
Chamar (%)	53 (24.42)	30 (57.69)	62 (23.85)	46 (50.55)	23 (26.14)	54 (42.52)
Dusad (%)	81 (37.33)	10 (19.23)	98 (37.69)	15 (16.48)	30 (34.09)	47 (37)
Pasi (%)	34 (15.67)	3 (5.77)	53 (20.38)	10 (10.99)	16 (18.18)	
Dhobi (%)	27 (12.44)	3 (5.77)	25 (9.62)	4 (4.4)	8 (9.9)	14 (11.02)
Dom (%)	4 (1.84)	..	7 (2.69)	3 (3.3)	..	..
Mushar (%)	13 (5.99)	..	..	9 (9.89)	..	8 (6.3)
Tatwa (%)	..	5 (9.62)	..	..	8 (9.09)	..
Others (%)	5 (2.3)	1 (1.92)	15 (5.77)	4 (4.4)	3 (3.41)	4 (3.15)

Source: Field Work
Social Conditions of Migrant and Non-Migrant Scheduled Caste Families

Table -3 depicts the changes in the social conditions of the migrant and non-migrant families of the selected villages. An attempt has been made here to analyse the changes in the social conditions with special reference to education, food habit, dress pattern, religious practices, formulation of social network, etc. More emphasis has been laid on the geographical conditions which influence the changes in the social conditions. It may be noted that social change is not a product of very short time. It takes a longer time. Several environmental and socio-political conditions play their role in transforming the social conditions of the area as well as social life of the people living in the region. As a matter of fact the functionaries of society are inter-related to each other and the impact of social environment on the social system is observed in the base of society. It is very difficult to isolate one organ of the human body from the other as in its absence it is difficult to asure proper functioning of the human body. So also a society has a social system and different social structure which are inter-related.

Family Structure

Table - 4 depicts the families of different scheduled caste groups in the selected village wherefrom people have moved out for either permanent job or daily labour or some other economic activities. Families contributing migrants and those not contributing migrants have been considered with the objective of evaluating social change.

Table: 4

Name of Village	Migrant/Non-Migrant	Kamalpur	NasirChack	Phulwariya	Chanda Leh	Mohanpur	Dubha
Family Structure (Migrant / Non-Migrant)							
Chamar	Migrant (%)	31 (58.49)	19 (63.33)	39 (62.90)	27 (58.70)	16 (69.57)	33 (61.11)
	Non-Migrant (%)	22 (41.51)	11 (36.67)	23 (37.10)	19 (41.30)	7 (30.43)	21 (38.89)
Dusad	Migrant (%)	49 (60.49)	5 (50)	55 (56.12)	9 (60)	21 (70)	32 (68.09)
	Non-Migrant (%)	32 (39.51)	5 (50)	43 (43.88)	6 (40)	9 (30)	15 (31.91)
Pasi	Migrant (%)	19 (55.88)	1 (33.33)	28 (52.83)	6 (60)	9 (56.25)	..
	Non-Migrant (%)	15 (44.12)	2 (66.67)	25 (47.16)	4 (40)	7 (43.75)	..
Dhobi	Migrant (%)	13 (48.15)	1 (33.33)	13 (52)	1 (25)	5 (62.50)	8 (57.14)
	Non-Migrant (%)	14 (51.85)	2 (66.67)	12 (48)	3 (75)	3 (37.50)	6 (42.86)
Dom	Migrant (%)	3 (75)	..	4 (57.14)	2 (66.67)	..	..
	Non-Migrant (%)	1 (25)	..	3 (42.86)	1 (33.33)	..	..
Mushar	Migrant (%)	9 (69.23)	..	..	5 (55.56)	..	4 (50)
	Non-Migrant (%)	4 (30.77)	..	..	4 (44.44)	..	4 (50)
Tatwa	Migrant (%)	..	3 (60)	..	..	5 (66.50)	..
	Non-Migrant (%)	..	2 (40)	..	..	3 (33.50)	..
Others	Migrant (%)	3 (60)	..	8 (53.33)	3 (75)	1 (33.33)	2 (50)
	Non-Migrant (%)	2 (40)	1 (100)	7 (46.67)	1 (25)	2 (66.67)	2 (50)

Source: Field Work

Housing Condition

It is important to note that the change in the social conditions is also revealed by the housing condition because house is considered to be a true socio – economic index. Previously most people used to construct their houses by use of locally available cheaper raw materials. Most of the houses of the poor used to be mud walled and thatched roofed but now the conditions have changed. Even less rich people prefer to have houses made of burnt brick with tiles or asbestos or Pacca roof, because economic conditions have improved. Migrant families have comparatively better houses than the non-migrant families. Amenities in houses have also improved.

Table - 5 depicts housing conditions in the selected villages. The table shows that the migrant and non-migrant families have pacca and semi-pacca house.

Table 5.

Name of Village	Migrant/Non-Migrant	House Type		Room		Toilet		Drinking Water	
		Pacca	Semi-Pacca	Small	Large	With	Without	Own	Dependent
Kamalpur	Mig-127	36	91	88	39	64	63	69	58
	(%)	28.55	71.65	69.29	30.71	50.39	49.61	54.33	45.67
	Non-Mig-90	21	69	88	32	39	51	47	43
	(%)	23.33	76.67	64.44	35.56	43.33	56.67	52.22	47.78
Nasirchak	Mig-29	5	24	17	12	18	11	18	11
	(%)	17.24	82.76	58.62	41.38	62.07	37.93	62.07	37.93
	Non-Mig-23	2	21	18	5	16	7	14	9
	(%)	8.7	91.3	78.26	21.74	69.57	30.43	60.87	39.13
Phulwariya	Mig-147	46	101	67	80	69	78	65	82
	(%)	31.29	68.71	45.58	54.42	46.94	53.06	44.22	55.78
	Non-Mig-113	33	80	79	34	42	71	49	64
	(%)	29.2	70.8	69.91	30.09	37.17	62.82	43.36	56.64
Chandaleh	Mig-53	39	14	41	12	37	16	39	14
	(%)	73.58	26.42	77.36	0.2264	69.8	30.18	73.58	26.42
	Non-Mig-38	13	25	29	9	26	12	29	9
	(%)	34.21	65.79	76.32	23.68	68.42	31.58	76.32	23.68
Mohanpur	Mig-57	17	40	33	24	22	35	29	28
	(%)	29.82	70.18	57.89	42.11	38.6	61.4	50.88	49.12
	Non-Mig-31	8	23	19	12	13	18	16	15
	(%)	25.81	74.19	61.29	38.71	41.94	58.06	51.61	48.39
Dubha	Mig-79	14	56	52	27	31	48	38	41
	(%)	17.72	82.28	65.82	34.18	39.24	60.76	48.1	51.9
	Non-Mig-48	11	37	39	9	21	27	30	18
	(%)	22.92	77.08	81.21	81.75	43.75	56.25	62.5	37.5

Source: Field Work

Educational Development

It has been noted earlier that educational development has considerably influenced migration of people and social transformation. Out-migrating people from the rural areas comprise educated, less educated and non-educated people. However, the less educated and educated have higher share. Educated persons moved mostly to the urban centres. But the less educated have moved out to work in the better developed agricultural regions as well as to urban areas. Attempt has been made to analyze the literacy and educational levels of the migrant and non-migrant families of the selected villages. Since, the different scheduled caste people have distinctive inclination towards education, literacy and level of education of main scheduled caste have been considered.

Religious activities

It is important to mention here that the religious beliefs and practices do bring some social changes. It is a fact that drastic change is not possible because of the deep rooted beliefs of a very long time. It is true that some religious beliefs and practices determine human society and culture. In rural areas people are very conscious of their religious ceremonies and practices. Certainly, during the different historical periods the religious beliefs and practices changed considerably. India, especially the study area has been influenced by the Dravids, Aryans, Budhists / Jains, Mughals and the British, etc.

In the present work only the recent changes in the religious beliefs and practices have been studied. Religious celebrations like performance of Puja and Prayer have also changed due to people's being engaged in various economic and social activities. As such a considerable number of people deviated from their traditional beliefs. Earlier more people used to visit temples or perform Puja regularly at their residence or to give more respect to the persons engaged in religious practices. Now the number of such persons has decreased in almost all the selected villages. However, the females have not deviated much from their traditional beliefs and practices.

Dress Pattern

Migrant and non-migrant respondents of the selected villages have expressed their view on dress. It is a fact that change has taken place in the dress used by the people. Even today some people have not discarded their traditional dress. Teenagers and adults have adopted modern and ultra modern dresses more than the elderly people. The migrant and non-migrant families show some difference in the use of dress. The male workers of the rural areas have started wearing Lungi, Pant, shirt while the females wear Frock, Salwar, Night gown, etc. Certainly the elderly people and those with less resource have not deviated much from their traditional dress, but their percentage is decreasing slowly.

Changes in food habit

The people of the study area have also undergone some changes in their food habit. Migrant respondents have changed more in their food habit because of outside exposure and mass media influence. People have also become aware of the nutritional value and consume items which ensure better health and cause less harm to the body. Earlier most people used to grow food crops of their choice and consumed only these as their food. But now the cultivators have started growing crops which enable them to earn more money which enables them to purchase such food items which are not grown in the selected villages. Moreover, the consumption of milk and milk products, fruits and non-vegetarian items has increased considerably. The consumption of chapati has increased remarkably and that of rice has decreased. Similarly consumption of vegetables, fruits and non-vegeterian items has increased considerably. Although the migrant respondents show greater change than the non-migrant respondents because of better purchasing power.

Socialization Pattern

It has been mentioned earlier that educational development, increased mobility of people and contact with those of different areas, mass media communication and globalization have influenced formulation of social network. Earlier formation of social network was not broad-based because most people used to be confined to their caste or religion or economic level but these days social network has widened due to the changed attitude of people, more particularly those of the villages which are closer to the urban areas have more liberal attitude towards formulation of social network and socialisation pattern.

V. CONCLUSION:

Better contact with people of other areas and experience of migrants have enabled people to show changes in their social conditions especially formulation of social network. An attempt has been made in the present work to deduce the social change of the scheduled caste population of the Vaishali district from the conditions obtained in the six sample villages taken together. This is because the individual villages show differing amount of change as regards the seven selected parameters of change. The seven selected parameters are modification of social structure, housing betterment, higher educational level, changed religious activities, adoption of modern dress, changed food habits and updated level of socialization. The picture that emerges in the six sample villages taken together is that of greater social change of the scheduled caste families which send out migrants because the resources at their hands are augmented by the earnings of the migrants and their wider contacts. On the other hand the families which do not send out migrants show lesser change because these lag behind in resources.

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