

Vol III Issue VIII Feb 2014

Impact Factor : 2.2052(UIF)

ISSN No :2231-5063

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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IMPACT FACTOR : 2.2052(UIF)

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2231-5063

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GRT EXTINCTION OF AN OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF TONGAWALAS OF BIJAPUR CITY

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Abstract:-Occupation is the basic biological mechanism for healthy survival. There are numerous occupations in which man engage himself in work for his existence. Even though Bijapur district is a poverty stricken and drought prone land, people here struggle to get work and engage in different works according to their abilities and skills. So, here an attempt was made to study the community called Tongawalas. What are the problems faced by tongawalas in their mundane life? Why their number is declining or decreasing day by day? The reasons for extinction of such occupation are addressed here.

Keywords: Extinction, Occupational community, tongas,

INTRODUCTION:

PREAMBLE:

Tongas were popular mode of transportation right from olden days. The common people and the tourists, who visited the historical city Bijapur preferred tongas. Tourists exclusively prefer the tongas specially the foreign tourists and enjoy their fun-rides. Tongas are famous in many parts of India, but the structure of the tongas, and the horses they use differ. In Bijapur tongas are made up of wooden and the horses are mainly brought from Sholapur, Pandarpur, Malegaon, Rehmatpur, Sarankhed and Kolhapur which have the best breeds of horses in this region. There are special tongas called Buggies (Buggy) which have originated from Mumbai and is used only during marriages specially in muslim and Maratha, Rajput marriages and in other occasions, ceremonies having great significance. But nowadays we rarely see such best horses in Bijapur because of costly maintenance. Even though the number of tongas are declining day by day it has not lost its importance or pride, where younger generation don't have much fascination towards tonga but the older, retired people, children have more fascination and interest to have tonga ride pleasure. The tongawalas have almost losing their significance due to autorickshaws and taxies (tum-tum). The authorities are not giving them scope people also have not good attitude towards this vehicle.

The tongawalas have great demand on Sunday and Wednesday because these days are the market days in Bijapur. So, they have to transport agricultural goods and services, where they get more profit on these days when compared to other days. Some of these tongawalas have contact with the owners of famous hotels in the city such as Maduvan, Kamat and Navaratna etc. Where the owners invite these tongawalas to take the tourists in their tongas and show them various tourist sites, it is a kind of package ride and is called as 'Maharaja Savari' out of which they can earn good but due to communication gap or lack of awareness they are not taking up this opportunity.

Tongas are often used to transport agriculture goods and services. Earlier they had their own association and a president and active members who had worked for the development for this community. Later due to non-cooperation and lack of leadership the association was disintegrated and earlier the tonga fairs were held at Navaraspur, but from last four-five years this fair has not been held.

Tongawalas are unskilled manual workers who are considered as the lowest grade workers in point of skill and responsibility. These tongawalas maintain a tonga for their existence and tonga is used as a means of local transportation in the city. This occupation is an unskilled and traditional occupation in a unorganised sector. In this traditional occupation family members continued it from one generation to other. It did not require any training. The training is given from the parents from their childhood years. The anticipatory socialization is done by the parents or family

Historically if we look at tongawalas majority of them belonged to Muslim community. Some of Maratha also found

in tongawalas occupation. Some of the tongawalas are local residents and few of them are migrated from the villages of Southern parts of Maharashtra. Tongas are the main bases for these people and their primary occupation is to serve as a local transportation by transporting agricultural goods and services. They are also used to fulfil the tourist needs by showing the famous historic monuments. Tongas in Bijapur district prevailed from ancient period and are more popular in the northern part of Karnataka and this area possess more number of tongas but at present their number is declining.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine the socio-economic status of tongawalas.
To explore the reasons for the extinction of Tongawalas occupation.
To know the problems and hardships of the tongawalas.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.

Universe of the study

The exact population of tongas is not available in any documents. Therefore the researcher approached District Administrator of Bijapur. However they also did not maintain the data pertaining to tongas and suggested researcher to go to a person who was active member and former president of Tonga Association, which is not existing today. On the basis of his information the total universe of the study was 2500-3000 and number of tongas are 150-200.

The sample: Sample selection is an important aspect of any Sociological research. The sample selection should be unbiased and representative and adequate. Therefore a sample was drawn for the study on the basis of scope and limitation of the study it was decided to select a sample of 50 tongawalas, who own tongas by using simple random sampling method.

Sources of the data: It is collected through primary data with the help of interview method by interviewing 50 respondents about their household, family, occupation and conditions. The secondary data required for the study was collected with the help of many sources like the District Development Officer, authorities, former tongawala association president, libraries, journals, articles, state and district gazetteers, and internet sources.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Throughout the years studying about a society, community, tribe or a minority has become common. It may be the study of socio-economic problems, health, occupation, mobility or many other issues. This paper has emphasised more on the state of extinction of an occupational community, and the reasons for the extinction, its consequences on the family members and their livelihood have been explored.

In Bijapur district many studies were made on various issues, communities and tribes. There are many historic approaches and studies have been conducted in the various perspectives. However a Sociological study of tongawalas has not been done so far. This is a maiden attempt to study socio-economic conditions of tongawalas of Bijapur city. Therefore present study gained prominence.

CONDITIONS OF TONGAWALAS.

Table 1: Earnings per day of the respondents

Sl.no	Earnings per day	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Less than 50	2	4.00
2	51-100 Rs	22	44.00
3	101-150 Rs	13	26.00
4	151-200 Rs	10	20.00
5	201 above	-	-
6	Can't say	3	6.00
		50	100

Studying the economic conditions of respondents is very important so, in the Table 1 it shows the earning

per day of the respondents. 44% of the respondents have their earnings ranging from 51-100 rupees and 26% of the respondents earn Rs 101-150. Only 20% of the respondents get Rs 151-200 and 6% of the respondents are not sure about their earnings because it fluctuates.

Table 2 : Nature of the respondent's house

Sl.no	Nature of the house	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Thatched	47	94.00
2	Tiled	3	6.00
3	RCC	-	-
		50	100.00

Housing conditions and nature of house are important aspects for studying where Table 2 indicates the nature of the respondents. More than quarter portion (94%) of the total respondents reside in the thatched houses and this is due to the poverty and poor conditions of economy. And a significant point can be noted that only 6% of the respondents reside in tiled house and nobody lives in the RCC houses.

Table 3: Location of the respondent's house

Sl.no	Location of the house	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Slum	32	64.00
2	Town	4	8.00
3	Extension area	14	28.00
		50	100.00

Dwelling area is an important aspect for studying where Table 3 indicates the location of the respondent's house and it is important to note that more than half (64%) of the respondent's houses are located in the slum like areas and only 28% of the respondents reside in extension areas which is convenient for the horses also and only 8% of the respondents live in some parts of town.

Table 4 : Expenditure towards the maintenance of horse

Sl.no	Expenditure of horse (Rs)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	50-100	21	42.00
2	101-150	-	6.00
3	No expenditure	3	--
4	Can't say	26	52.00
		50	100.00

It is an important aspect to study the expenditure towards the maintenance of the horse in order to understand the economic status or conditions of the respondents because the income which they get have to be balanced with both the family and horse. More than half (52%) of the respondents said that they are not sure about the expenditure of the horse because it depends on the income they get which is not constant and always not same each day. Nearly 40% of the respondents said that they expend 50-100 rupees for horses for the hay, fodder, grains and their health. And only 6% of the respondents expend 101-150 rupees on horses.

Table 5: Expenditure towards maintenance of tonga

Sl.no	Expenditure of tonga (Rs)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	30-50	20	40.00
2	50-100	-	-
3	101-150	-	-
4	Can't say	22	44.00
5	Only during repairs	8	16.00
		50	100.00

The respondents not only have to balance their income between the family, horse and also on the tonga. So, the Table 5 indicates the expenditure towards the maintenance of tonga. Where 40% of the respondents said the maintenance of the tonga ranges hardly between 30-50. And 44% of the respondents are not sure about the expenses. Whereas 16% of the respondents said that the expenses are only during the repairs and jatras, urs and occasions like marriage and other they need to be painted and refurbished.

Table 6: Questions to the respondents regarding their economy.

Sl. no	Questions related to their economy	F Yes	Percentage	F No	Percentage
1	Do you have tonga of your own	47	94.00	3	6.00
2	Have you have availed loans from bank or organisation	28	56.00	22	44.00
3	Have you got benefit from government	8	16.00	42	84.00
4	Do you have ration card	48	96	2	4.00
5	Do you have voting card	50	100.00	-	-
6	Do you get adequate rations	43	86.00	7	14.00
		50	100.00	50	100.00

The Table 6 indicates various information pertaining to their economy and 94% of the respondents said that they have their own tonga and only 6% don't have own and they hire them. And more than half (56%) of the respondents have availed loans from banks and organisations due to many reasons. And only 16% of the respondents said that they got help from the government and 84% said they didn't get any benefit from the government. But 96% of the respondents have ration cards and 86% get adequate rations. And significant point is that almost all the respondents have the voting card. So, the socio-economic conditions of the respondents is important to study.

PROBLEMS OF TONGAWALAS

Tongas in the northern part of Karnataka are in extinct stage and are facing lot of problems. The major problem is health and other problems are also enlisted here.

The respondents interviewed shared their feelings and told that life here has become a problem due to many reasons and hike in prices has a very bad impact on their life. They have large families and the rate of poverty is more.

Tongawalas reside in slums or the areas where there is no sufficient light, fresh air and good environment, no proper drainage and sanitation facilities, they live in a very thickly populated and very small houses along with their horses.

The tongawalas are not getting the proper basic facilities and are struggling hard to sustain. They live in thatched houses, which are temporary and are very dangerous, they don't get pure drinking water and in some houses they don't have electricity supply.

The tongas in the Bijapur are in extinct state, they are not getting scope and the maintenance of horse is too costly. And they can't afford hey, fodder and grains as they are very costly in a dry land like Bijapur. So these Tongawalas have to spend half of their income on these.

The other reason for the dearth of scope for tongas is tough competition of auto-rickshaws and private vehicles.

There was a token system earlier, where the numbers or grades and prizes were given to the tongas which were

maintained well. So, there was a tough competition between the tongawalas to keep their horses and tongas in a good condition. But today that system exists no more.

As they are getting very less amount i.e per day 100-150Rs, they can't afford good food and other facilities, their family members are suffering from various problems connected to health. And life has almost become a balance : Balance between the horse and family for them. So, they are in search of better occupations and some people even get migrate to other places.

Table 7 : Alternative jobs of Tongawalas

Sl.no	Do you have alternative jobs	Frequency	Percentage
1	Garrage	10	20.00
2	Welding	11	22.00
3	SellingVegetables	14	28.00
4	Working in hotels	8	16.00
5	Working in kirana shops	4	8.00
6	Remain in the same occupation	3	6.00
		50	100.00

If we observe the table 7, it shows the alternative jobs of tongawalas, here 20% of the respondents prefer to do or engage in garage work and 28% does selling vegetables. And 22% does welding work and 16% prefer working in the hotels as waiters because they can't earn sufficiently in the tonga occupation so, 8% of the respondents working in the kirana shops and significant note is that only 6% of the respondents want to remain in the same occupation. This number is very less because they are not satisfied with the income they earn.

Tongawala women and aged people have severe health problems and they won't get proper health facilities and not having the awareness about the health.

Tongawalas, too face many health problems. Occupation and health go hand in hand. So, Tongawalas who are in such an occupation face many health problems as they have to wait in scorching sunlight in search of passengers and the amount they get is very meagre .So, their occupation has an adverse affect on their health.

Tongawalas children do not go to schools as they have more number of children, only two-three children get minimum education.

Tongawalas are not treated well by the traffic police and authorities due to heavy traffic and they sometimes do not allow them into the main roads.

They don't have any policies and programmes regarding their development and there were some policies but they didn't get implement. And they don't have any old age pensions.

TABLE 8 : The problems of respondents.

Sl.no	Problems of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	No availability of basic needs	8	16
2	Don't have tonga stands	11	22
3	No pensions for older people	11	22
4	All the above	20	40
		50	100.00

If we observe the table 7, it states the problems of the tongawalas and 22% of the respondents said that they won't get basic needs. And 22% of the older tongawalas do not get no pensions. Nearly 40% of the respondents said they have all the problems.

If we observe the table 8, it states the problems of the tongawalas and 16% of the respondents said that they won't get basic needs. 22% of the older tongawalas do not get pensions. 22% of respondents do not have proper tonga stands. Nearly 40% of the respondents said they have all the problems.

REASONS FOR THE STATE OF EXTINCTION:

There are many such occupations which are in extinct state, Occupations such as pottery, carpentry, honey collection and fisheries, weaving and cottage industries have losing their traditional significance due to various 'isation's that occurs in the society. These occupations can be hardly seen the rural areas. If the occupation starts losing its scope then the people or community associated with that occupation will suffer from lot of problems and face many challenges. Tongawalas community also fall in the same category.

In recent times the number of Tongas is declining and tongawalas are losing their significance due to popularity overtaken by auto rickshaws. Huge, dense traffic and also people's attitude towards the tonga led to decline of tongas. They are in extinct state.

Tongawalas are not getting enough income and scope and their living conditions are becoming very poor. They already started facing lot of problems mainly from social, economic, health and environmental aspects. Therefore they are shifting from traditional occupation to other basic and untrained occupations. They are not trained and qualified to pursue other occupations.

Even though a tonga is a eco-friendly vehicle there is a lack of encouragement by the people and authorities. Due to the globalisation and rapid increase in the transportation system more and more number of private vehicles ruining the very existence of tongawalas in a historical place like Bijapur.

Rearing of horses is another challenge to tongawalas. It is not an easy affair in the present day. It has to be fed properly and sufficiently. It is very difficult in the drought stricken place like Bijapur, where people and animals suffer a lot for water. The cost of fodder and grass is too high that they cannot afford it. As they don't possess their own land they have to purchase the fodder out of what they earn. The earnings are not that satisfactory. Since tongawalas themselves are poor, most of them are giving up the occupation of tongas.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

After studying their conditions researcher have made some findings and conclusions were also made with some suggestions.

The District Authorities should take some measures to eradicate their poverty and to increase their standard of living and provide them various health aids.

Recarnation of tongas can give a new image or dimension to the historical place like Bijapur. Popularising tongas should be thought of seriously. Bijapur being a tourist spot it attracts many people across the world, so, simultaneously the tonga occupation can also be made popular.

They should be provided with good and spacious, hygienic tonga stands and more number of tonga stands are required. The hotel managers of the city should also utilise these tongas, which can be helpful to raise their livelihood.

As the autorickshaws have a fixed fare depending on the distance but whereas these tongas don't have any fixed fares. So, authorities should fix the fares.

It's a question of human rights, where animal life has become more critical and sensitive than man. If these tongawalas aren't earning enough the life of their horses too will be in a critical state. So, some measures should be taken for the tongas welfare too.

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