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Socio-Cultural Aspect of Transition in an Urban Fringe of Lucknow

Dr. Jaya Pandey, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Mahila Vidyalaya Degree College, Lucknow

Abstract:

The physical growth of cities has brought significant changes in the rural-urban interconnections. It has given rise to the formation of urban fringes which is a highly dynamic zone between the rural and urban land uses and activities. Due to the ongoing process of urbanization the rural character of fringe is gradually or sometime abruptly replaced by the urban profile in the terms of land use, employment and culture. Economic changes in fringe have certain repercussions on traditional service relations, joint household and kinship obligations as well. Some aspect of traditional caste system is also changing. Urban employment and occupational mobility have created a new criteria of differentiation based on income, occupation and education. The present paper attempts to explore the factors and forces governing to the growing settlements and leading them towards the transforming their socio-cultural aspect of society.

Key Words: Urban Fringe, Urbanization, Rural-Urban Interconnections, Traditional service relations.

Main Text: The physical expansion of the metropolitan cities has given rise to the formation of fringes around its periphery which is a highly transitional zone between the rural and urban land uses. Process urbanization is leading to the transformation of agricultural land into urban land uses on the one hand; on the other attracting the villagers towards new urban occupations and urban lifestyles. This two-way process is encouraging the villagers towards land selling and adopting the urban ways of living which is ultimately resulting into the transformation of an agricultural village into a landless Urban Village. Urban influences on peripheral villages have inevitably enhanced the economic activities and also accelerated social mobility in rural society.

Due to being situated next to the city, the fringe villages have experienced an increase in interactions with the city. Because of this, the urban life is highly influencing the rural life. The urban economy has availed numerous economic opportunities for the rural population. In addition to this, urban market, educational and medical facilities have attracted the rural population. The livelihoods of the villagers, as well as their various requirements and necessities have led to an increase in their commutation towards the city. Vice versa, there is variety of forces governing the urban people to interact with the rural people. In this way, the urban lifestyle and thought-processes have deeply affected the rural life. Rural-urban interconnections are the cause of the rapid change in the traditional-social structure of rural society. Its impact can be seen on the caste system, traditional service relations, joint households, and on the kinship obligations as well.

Area of the Study:

In order to assess the transition of fringe villages, Lucknow has been selected for the research. Thus, all the fringes surrounding this city are identified as the universe of the study. As the capital of a larger state Lucknow is the center of all political, administrative and economic activities and has always been the nerve of development activities. The fringe areas around the city are undergoing the process of transformation in their social, occupational demographic and infrastructural characteristics. Present study is done in the village Chhota Bharwara of Chinhat block of Lucknow City. The studied village Chhota Bharwara is a small village of Bharwara gram panchayat, situated at the distance of 11 kilometers from the Lucknow city headquarters.

Methodology:

Village is the focus of present study in the context of transition, and households are the units in which changes need to be explained. The present study is descriptive in nature; therefore, a descriptive research design is adopted for the study. The sample design of present study was done at three stages. At the first stage the selection of an urban fringe through purposive sampling was made. Selected fringe area is Chinhat block, located at the distance of 11 kilometers from the Lucknow city headquarters. At the second stage, a village Chhota Bharwara from Chinhat block is taken for the study which comes under Revenue village Bharwara. Bharwara is an agglomeration of four small villages named; Jagpalkheda, Mankheda, Gaderianpurva and Chhota Bharwara. All these small villages have gone through the same processes of change. Out of these four Chhota Bharwara is selected purposely as it is the largest amongst all and is a good representation of the revenue village. The village has good connectivity with the main city which ensures closer contact of villagers and urban dwellers. This has made the greater influence of urban culture and lifestyle on this fringe village. At the final stage, 55 households that is 50 % of the total households, of Chhota Bharwara selected through stratified random sampling. The criterion of selecting the village is that it is passing through the process of urbanization. The quantitative and qualitative socio-structural data have been collected from a comprehensive and purposeful field work which is based on the interaction with the people. For the effective and flawless data collection, interview and focused group discussion methods were extensively used during the field work. Interviews done are mainly semi- structured and questions are open ended so that responses are not restricted.

Social Profile of village 'Chhota Bharwara' of 'Chinhat' Block:

Village Chhota Bharwara comes under the block chinhat of Lucknow city. The block has 57 revenue villages under 33 different Gram Panchayats. Since this block is just adjacent to the metropolitan city, it has a widespread urban impact. A number of small scale industries are running here which is providing an economic resource to the village residents as well as attracting the immigrant labourers from far off villages. Many private factories like Linex factory, Ply board factories, Poultry farming, Ramswaroop chemicals, Meghalaya Ply board, Commercial auto, Floor mill, Dalmoth factory etc. are running as a major economic resource of this region. More than 50 % of agricultural land has been transformed into non-agricultural uses. Villagers of this block are majorly involved in dairy farming. The block is also famous for its pottery industry. Ceramic pots and earthen utensils made here are very famous in nearby places and in the main city.

The studied village Chhota Bharwara is a small village of Bharwara gram panchayat, situated at the distance of 11 kilometers from the Lucknow city headquarters. It is situated on the other side of railway track that goes through the boundaries of Gomti Nagar which is a posh locality of Lucknow city. As this village is situated just adjacent to the main city, it is well connected by the roads and many available means of transport. In this village the population of Yadavas, a caste of Hindu religion is in majority. The village has all 110 households with 1100 total population in which male constitute 572 and female constitute 528 number of total population. Out of 110 households, 109 households are constituted alone by Yadavas. Apart from Yadavas one household of Muslim barber caste residing here from ages. Other castes of Hindu religion that is Brahmins, Kayastha, and Kurmi are also part of this village and all of them are migrants staying in the village as tenants.

Chhota Bharwara is one of the agglomeration of four small villages; Chhota Bharwara, Gaderian Purva, Mankheda and Jagpalkheda. These villages are dominated by Yadavas, though other castes are also seen residing in these villages.

Distribution of Households in Villages by the Caste

Villages	Castes/Religion	Households
Chhota Bharwara	Yadav	109
	Muslim	01
	Total	110
Gaderian Purva	Gaderia	50
	Lodh	40
	Yadav	04
	Total	94
Mankheda	Chamars/Raidas	40
	Chamar/Rawat	01
	Total	41
Jagpalkheda	Yadav	100
	Pasi	05
	Total	105

From 1991 Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) started land acquisition in this region. The present day village Chhota Bharwara was not acquired by LDA. Instead, LDA acquired the land which falls on the either side of the railway track which runs through the area. The acquisition of land has given rise to the concept of earning money through land transactions. On the one hand, villagers were keen to earn money through land selling, on the other hand many private builders and investors were also taking interest in purchasing land for future prospects. Consequently, all the agricultural land been sold to the private builders and to the people who wanted to invest their money for future appreciation. Nowadays many private colonies can be seen here with lack of basic facilities. These new built colonies are occupied by urban middle class who are unable to buy their own houses in the main city due to high land value. The agricultural land of Chhota Bharwara now turned into private colonies named Durgapuri, Vigyan Khand, Kaushal Puri, Gangotri Vihar and Laxmi Vihar.

Out of 110 households, 55 households have been selected for the intense study of the village. Studied sample constitute 54 households of Yadavas, which is a Hindu intermediate caste that comes in OBC category and one household of Muslim barber caste that also comes in OBC category.

All the respondents are highly influenced by urban area, as most of them are working in an organized or in unorganized sectors in the city. Their requirements for jobs in urban area enabled them to get educated to the extent they can be eligible to seek for the occupation. It is found that none of the respondents were uneducated and even keen to get their children more educated than them.

As there is no agricultural land left in the village, all most every household in the village is involved in non-agricultural work as their main occupation. Villagers have further invested money in many ways as their requirement and priorities. Many of them further invested a big sum of money in purchasing land at the villages near to Brabanki, Sitapur and Gosaiganj. The village and the lifestyles residents are much influenced by the urban life. Its contact with the city on daily basis leads it to the category of an urban village. All most in every family two or three persons commute to the city on every day. As located just adjacent to the main City, this village has gone through the many stages of urban impact. It is well reflected on the house structures situated in particular village and also in its vicinity. The neighboring area of the village is also converted to modern set ups.

Findings:

Village Chhota Bharwara reflects the ultimate stage of transformation of the fringe village. This is an urban village where there is no agricultural land is left around for farming. The site of the village is surrounded by the residential colonies. It is seen that the original village site has acquired the new characteristics which is a mixture of original residents and also the newcomers. This village has all the appearance of the city with lack of basic amenities. Such transformation of the village has brought concomitant changes in social and cultural aspects of the villagers' life. Villagers have become totally urbanized in their way of living, though the village is still not considered as urban because it is out of the city administration.

Village is reflecting the most of the characteristics of an urban society, though the mindset of the villagers is not very broad in the perspectives of caste. The village is dominated by the Yadavas, beside them only a Muslim barber family is residing here. Villagers were seen maintaining distance with this family in the village. It is observed that Yadavas of Chhota Bharwara maintain distance with other castes of the neighbouring villages Gaderian Purva, Mankheda, and Jagpalkheda villages. In usual visits to the households of other castes, they avoid sharing 'Kachcha' food with each other. At the time of marriage and other ceremonies they used to take 'Pakka' food but they strictly avoid any kind of food sharing with Chamars.

It is observed that the agglomeration of these four villages is dominated by Yadavas and they influence the local politics in these villages. At the time of panchayat elections, they make frequent visits to other castes and do not hesitate to make ties with other castes. It is also observed that the caste ties are not much rigid at the place of occupation outside the village and its vicinity. Four members of Yadav households who work as vegetable vendors at vegetable market in the city they used sit in the market along with two persons of Chamar community of Mankheda village. They usually share common cigarette with each other. It is found that a restriction in sharing food does not matter outside the boundaries of the village.

As an urban village, Chhota Bharwara is being exposed to the maximum urban influences. Families in the village are found nuclear in nature. Joint families in the village after separation residing at same place with separate kitchens as the family have no landholdings other than the house in the village. Villagers have shown their opinion against inter-caste marriages but it was seen to be accepted by one of the households where son had married with another caste girl.

Urban influence on village is also seen in the status mobility of the women in the family and also in terms of economic independence. Women in all most every house is taking part in inside and also outside matters of the family. Women in the village used to go out alone for shopping and other house requirements. Young girls of 6 households of Yadavs were seen doing private jobs in the city.

Village Chhota Bharawara for all practical purposes is seen reflecting the characteristics of the city. Most of the households were seen equipped with modern household appliances. All most every family there is two or more persons who used to go to the city on the daily basis. Female members of the households frequently visit to the city for purchasing household goods and for the other requirements like dropping and picking up the children from the schools. The village for all practical purposes is behaving like an urban area which in near future will be absorbed in the city.

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