



OCCUPATION CHANGES AMONG HAVYAK BRAHMINS A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN UTTARAKANNADA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Community is a social group of anywise those whose members resides in a specific locality, share a common culture and historical heritage. Community is a Homogeneous group, thus Havyak community is one of important community in Uttarkannada district and the purpose of the present enquiry is to study the Havyak community social and occupational aspects which would help the research to understand their background. In this research, researcher tried to bring sociological view on the occupational changes of Havyak Brahmins.



KEY WORDS: *Havyaka, Haviga, Brahmin.*

INTRODUCTION:

The stratification of Indian society is based on Varna System. According to it, Hindu society is divided into four groups – Brahmin (intellectuals), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (businessmen) and Shudras (labour class). It was associated, more or less, with social position of each group. The restrictions and privileges in matter of social intercourse and rights and duties of each group were clearly defined. All members of a group had similar rights and duties, similar thinking process, similar customs, language, food habits and style of dress. Though it believed in segmental ranking of different groups according to their relevance and contribution of their work to the, it placed all the individuals within each group -rich or poor- on the same footing. A person's relations with fellow members were closer and equal than with those belonging to other castes. His relations with other Varnas were formal. Elders of a group took care of maintaining discipline within the Varna and helped its weak and helpless members. All the members shared moments of joy and sorrows together.

Brahmins had been given the highest place of honor in Hindu society, not because of material successes, but for their learning, character, intellectual and spiritual pursuits and ability to guide the masses. (Quoted from Palkiwala) Brahmins, being natural learners and pursuers of knowledge, were quick to move ahead of other communities. Their long tradition and undisputed role in the field of knowledge and learning, their intelligence, sincerity and hard work helped them to take a lead in all newer areas of advancement and secure an important place in the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. Find out the present occupation among Havyak Brahmins.
2. To trace the occupational changes among the respondents.
3. To know the reasons behind the occupational changes.

MEANING OF BRAHMINS:

Baidynath Saraswati in his Brahmin Ritual Traditions, in the crucible of time stated “Brahmin is the potency or principle from which all things are derived; It is the ultimate basis of the world”.

K. S. Singh (2003) in his people of India Karnataka, about the etymology of the word ‘Havyak’, some people, in ordinary parlance, says that as they were named Havyak.

“The Brahmana was his mouth,
The Rajanya was made of his two arms,
His thighs became the Vaisya,
From the feet was produced the Shudra”.

The Brahmana has been called the mouth of the Purusa and is placed highest in society. His special function pertains to speech. Being a priest, invoking gods is his privilege. The second rank, Rajanya, is born of the arms of Purusa and has the privilege of wielding arms. The thighs of the Purusa became Vaisya. The occupation of Vaisya is agriculture and trade. From feet was produced the Sudra. Just as the feet are the lowest in the body, Sudras are the lowest in the society.

Dr. Rajendra Nath Sharma (1977) in his “*Brahmins Through the Ages*”, The word ‘Brahman’ is both masculine and neuter. Its neuter form denotes prayers addressed to different gods whereas its masculine form merely denotes the sage, the poet, the officiating priest or a special priest, designated as Brahman. It would mean that a person, possessed of Brahma (Prayer), was called Brahman

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Selection of The Field Area:

The study is based on a sample conducted in Uttar Kannada district of Karnataka state. They are scattered in Uttar Kannada District, but numerical strength of Havyak Brahmins is more in Yellapur, Sirsi, Siddapur, Kumta and Honnavar. Therefore researcher has selected these districts as her study area. The study is proposed to conduct in these taluks. Researcher has selected rural and urban areas both because, Havyak Brahmins are different in their life style, rituals, education, from rural to urban. This is because of the impact of urbanization, education, modernization.

Universe of The Study:

The Research conducted in Uttar Kannada district. In the field area most of them are engaged in agriculture, priest hood, business etc. We cannot see or find out any precise census of Havyak Brahmins population in India, because in India we cannot see any sub-caste or particular caste wise census. The study age group includes both men and women of 20 to 66 years and above 66 years are also included in some circumstances. Approximate Universe of the study is not confirmed due to above mentioned reason, so the researcher has selected a sample of 500 respondents in Uttar Kannada district. Research will conduct both in village and town area. Population of Havyaks all around the world is estimated to be about Eleven Lakhs (11,00,000) in India and around Three Lakhs (3,00,000) in Karnataka. The details of the census made on the Brahmins have been mentioned below, but as I already said there is no bifurcated census on them or on any one type of particular Brahmins. (Source: Internet sources and Wikipedia but not any government census).

Brahmin Population:

Castes / Religion % Total Population India (2011)	Census & Other Sources	Recalibrated*
Other Backward Castes (OBC)	32.0%	29.5%
Non-Brahmin Upper Caste Hindus	18.4%	17.0%
Scheduled Caste	16.2%	15.0%
Muslims	14.2%	20.8%
Scheduled Tribe	8.2%	7.6%
Brahmins	5.0%	4.6%
Christianity	2.3%	2.1%
Sikhism	1.7%	1.6%
Other Religions	0.9%	0.8%
Buddhsim	0.7%	0.6%
Jainism	0.4%	0.4%

* See Analysis Below

Brahminpedia (c) 2015

According to the Magazine, National International Business Sport art and Entertainment Books and Culture Society, 16 June 2003 National.

1. SC - 1.08 crore (18%)
 1. Muslim - 75 lakh (12.5%)
 2. Lingayats - 59 Lakh (9.8%)
 3. Vokkaligas - 49lakh (8.16%)
 4. Kurubas - 43lakh (7.1%)
 5. ST - 42lakh (7%)
 6. Brahmins - 13lakh (2.1%)
 7. Edigas - 14lakh (2.2%)

Sample of The Study:

A random sampling technique is adopted for selecting the sample. This study is conducted respectively in Yellapur, Sirsi, Sidapur, Kumta, Honnavar and other taluks where Havyak Brahmins are located thickly. The study is confined the taluks of Karwar district. The data is collected from 500 respondents, i.e...head of the household and family members.

Tools and Techniques of The Study:

The study comprises of both primary and secondary data. The study was conducted in two stages: First stage involved the collection of secondary material, based on review of literature to understand the past; researcher had gone through all the relevant literatures like community magazine, books, articles and journals etc on Havyak Brahmin community. District Gazetteer and Manuals helped the researcher in tracing the Havyak Brahmins settlements and obtaining information about Havyak Brahmins. However, the basic material for this thesis comes from the data collected through participant observation and from formal and informal interviews.

The primary data is collected with the help of interview schedule. The researcher directly participates and interviews the head of the household. The interview schedule containing close-ended and open-ended questions. Besides researcher attended the few meetings of community leaders. Researcher

also participated in life cycle ceremonies and other customary rituals based on observation of their day-to-day activities and inter-personal behavior.

The relevant data were collected from the head of the family, head/leaders of the community, the local leaders, elders and knowledgeable members of the community.

The data from the heads of the families contain the attitude, feeling and awareness of Havyak Brahmins towards recent changes that are taking place in various fields and areas such as marriage, family, economic organization, rituals, beliefs, dress pattern, occupational and education. Data enabled the researcher to examine their educational awareness and aspirations, culture, occupation aspirations, rites and rituals, kinship organization, political awareness, health practices, status of women etc.

Occupation:

Occupation is a person's usual or principal work or business, especially as a means of earning for his and his family's livelihood.

The traditional and main occupation of Brahmins was that of priesthood at the Hindu temples or at socio-religious ceremonies and rite of passage rituals such as solemnizing a wedding with hymns and prayers.

Traditionally the Brahmins are supposed to become priests, but in actuality they hold a wide variety of occupations. Many members practice agriculture, while others hold white collar jobs. The Brahmins are allowed to follow any profession, but no one except a Brahmin can become a priest. Only some members are priests, other members have held professions as educators, law makers, scholars, doctors, writers, poets, land owners, and politicians.

According to Ramesh Balry T.S, 2010, in his book 'Being Brahmin Being Modern', Rural Brahmins who owned agriculture land received impressive incomes which enabled them to send their children to urban areas for English education. This helped their absorption in government services. Thus the transition of rural Brahmins was financed by rural surpluses generated from their lands.

The Havyakas (a Brahmin jati predominant in the coastal district of Uttar Kannada and in Shomoga) were perhaps the only Brahmin landowning and cultivating group. They continue to be involved in great numbers (compared to other Brahmins) in the agricultural economy, particularly in the cultivation of cash crops like areca nut. In many parts of Karnataka, Brahmin families that owned agricultural property were not directly involved in agricultural operations and lent it out to predominantly non-Brahmin tenants: The Brahmins held mostly the /nam lands - the lands granted by the erstwhile rulers in appreciation of their services. As both by tradition and also on account of the fact that they had taken up service in government and by reason of which moved out of rural areas into towns and cities, Brahmins were the absentee landlords (Thimmaiah and Aziz 1985: 46-7). The Havyakas (a Brahmin caste predominant in the coastal district of North Canara and in Shimoga) were perhaps the only Brahmin owner-cultivating caste. They continue to be so involved in great numbers (compared to the other Brahmin castes) in the agricultural economy, particularly in the cultivation of cash crops like areca nut.

Table No.1.1

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Priest	70	14%
Agriculture	275	68.75%
Agriculture and Priest	95	19%
Business	35	7%
Government Job	20	4%
Any other	5	1%
Total	500	100%
Respondents	continuing	Frequency
		Percentage

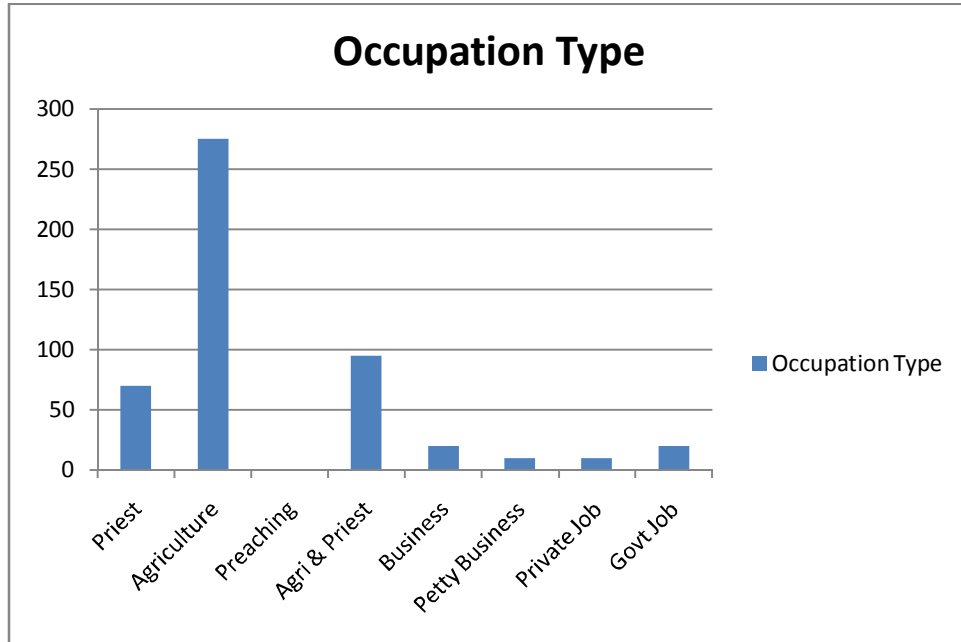
traditional occupation		
Yes	440	88%
No	60	12%
Total	500	100%

Agriculture is the heart of rural economy for India. This sector provides gainful employment as well as raw materials for a large number of industries in the country.

Table No. 1.1 explains that researcher put forward the questions about whether respondents continuing the traditional occupation or not? And 440 (88) percent respondents are replied that they are continuing traditional occupation. 60 (12) percent respondents are not continuing traditional occupation. Because people are engaged in different type of work and educated scattered various urban places.

Table No. 1.2

Type of traditional occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Priest	70	14%
Agriculture	275	55%
Preaching	-	-
Agriculture and Priest	95	19%
If No, Present occupation		
Business	20	4%
Petty Business	10	2%
Private Job	10	2%
Government	20	4%
Total	500	100%



Above the table no 1.2 explain about the traditional occupation of the respondents in Uttar Kannada district. 55 percent of respondents occupied in agriculture. Havyak Brahmins have their own agriculture land. Among respondents large numbers of respondents are involving in agriculture. Willingly or not willingly they

are involving their self in agriculture. It is observed that, Agriculture is a major source of income for their livelihood.

19 percent respondents were involving in both Priest hood and Agriculture. Havyak Brahmins are known for their unique rites, and ritual. Younger Brahmins boy child should study the Poojarike, Mantra, etc. Once boy gone through the Upanayana samskara every boy gets the knowledge of Brahmin rules, norms, and mantra. So the priest hood is gift to every young boy who belonged Havyak Brahmin community. In that some are following it and make it as professional. Along with agriculture they following priest hood.

14 percent respondents were engaging in Priest hood. Before Havyak Brahmins start Agriculture they were Priests in Kadambas, Maratha's period. In Uttar Kannada district respondents are influenced by Urbanization, Modernization etc. They are adopting new occupations but they are not leaving up traditional occupation.

4 percent respondents are not following traditional occupation. Their present occupation is business like (pity business) Adike Vakari, Restaurant, Shops, Travel agencies, Small Scale Industries etc. 4 percent respondents are doing government job and 2 percent respondents are involving in private job.

Table No. 1.3

Reasons for continuing traditional occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional occupation should not end	-	-
Essential	-	-
Both	440	88%

88 percent respondents told that both reasons, that traditional occupation should not end and traditional occupation is only source for livelihood, so it is essential. All respondents have their own Agriculture land. Rural women's main source of their livelihood opportunities is confined within agriculture and its allied activities. Improvements in agriculture, is therefore, can contribute in a fundamental way to women empowerment by making them economically independent-which will ultimately provide the platform for gender equality. In Havyak Brahmin community female family members are involving directly or in-directly in traditional occupation like Agriculture. Along with household work involving agriculture also became part of their life.

Table No. 1.4

Utilizing modern technology	Percentage	Which type of technology	Percentage
Yes	(440) 88%	Tractors	-
No		Machines	-
		Irrigation facility	-
		Agricultural tools	-
		All the above	(440) 88%

In field region 88 percent respondents utilizing modern technology for agriculture. Respondents make use of tractors for paddy field and all the respondents know how to make use of Tractors, machines, irrigation facility, and agriculture tools, therefore Singh Yogendra (1980) Modernization concept is influenced in field study.

Table No. 1.5

Crops	Percentage
Paddy	-
Beatle Nut	-
Coconut	-
Pepper	-
All the above	(440) 88%

Above table explained that respondents was growing the various crops. People of this part grow Paddy and Beatle nuts. 88 percent respondents are growing Paddy, Beatle nut, Coconut, Pepper. These crops are commercial crops. Along with commercial purpose respondents use Paddy and Coconut for their domestic purpose also. But respondents spend the more money look after for fertilizers and feticides etc

Table No. 1.6

Respondent's family member/relative decreasing in Agriculture?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	410	82%
No	90	18%
Total	500	100%

Table No. 1.7

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Low income	55	11%
High investment	-	-
Climate problem	-	-
Shortage of Agriculture labour	70	14%
All	285	57%
No	90	18%
Total	500	100%

In field study, by asking above question researcher came to know that respondents family members or relative decreasing in agriculture about 82 percent. They stated reasons like low income, high investment, climate problem, and shortage of agriculture labour.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

1. In field area 68.75% of respondents are involved in agriculture.
2. They use modern technologies like tractors, rollers, organic seeds and fertilizers, machines in agriculture.
3. Along with agriculture priest hood also followed by the respondents.
4. Havyak Brahmins in study area involved not only traditional occupation they involved in business, petty business, shops, private jobs, government jobs, teaching profession etc.
5. In field area respondents continuing traditional occupation along with other occupation because they don't want to leave tradition and traditional occupation.
6. 82% respondent's opined that family member/relative decreasing in agriculture. Because of High investment, low income, Shortage of Agriculture labor, climate problems.
7. In field area respondents are influenced by modernization, globalization, and westernization so they migrating rural to urban places for urnings and education.

CONCLUSION:

Havyak Brahmins is one of the high castes, which is recognized by their traditional occupation, traditions, culture, food habit and knowledge of Shastra. They modified their fundamental elements but not totally changed. Because of social change in orthodox Brahmins community also changes in socio economic, way of life, food habits, occupation etc. This research paper mainly focused on Havyak Brahmins of Uttar Kannada. The main purpose of the study is to find out the changes that have taken place among them mainly in occupation. Most of the Havyakas of today follow either Ramachandrapur Mutt or Swarnavalli Mutt and are guided by the Aadvaita philosophy of Shankaracharya. Till recently Havyakas were primarily engaged in agriculture, especially growing betel nut, paddy, banana, coconut etc., while some practiced Vedic professions like priests. A few decades back they also started entering into other vocations like business, education and, employment etc.

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