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Life style of Bodh and Balti tribal women of Leh block of Ladakh region

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Abstract

The investigation was aimed at studying the status of tribal Bodh and Balti women. The study was conducted in Leh block of Leh district of J&K state with 150 women, (100 from Bodh tribe and 50 from Balti tribe) in the age group of 20-60 years. The respondents were selected purposively randomly from 15 villages. Interview schedule was used to illicit information from the respondents. The result revealed that in both tribes majority of respondents were found illiterate and the cause found behind were:-Poor socio- economic status, long distance from home to school and transportation problem. It was found that most of the Buddhist women were working as laborer in construction of building and road etc, where as only few percent of Muslim women were working as labour because Balti women were restricted to do such kind of works and they were not allowed to go outside frequently. Majority of respondents from Bodh and Balti tribes had kaccha house (mud house) and well wood constructed house which protected them from extreme cold from winter.

Keywords: Bodh, Balti, women, tribe, Leh

1. Introduction

1.1 Studies related tribal women in Indian

Tribal or adivasis, as they are popularly known as a symbol of self-assertion, comprise of around 8.2 per cent of the national population. The status of tribal women can be judged mainly by the roles they play in society. Their roles are determined to a large extent through the system of descent. The families try to pass their property by the line of descent. The family surnames too are traced on the basis of the system of descent. The status of a person quite often depends on the system of authority he/she enjoys in the community. When the authority is held through the male line, it is called 'patriarchy' and when it is held through the female line; it is called 'matriarchy'. The status of the tribal women usually depends on the economic roles they play. The tribal in the past were usually forest dwellers and their livelihood to a great extent depended on the food-gathering economy. More than the men, the women walked long distances to fetch wood and fodder. Besides, they also collect fruits, roots and tubers, lac, gums and leaves for self-consumption and sale. The men also complemented them by collecting timber and logs. They climbed the trees to shake down the fruits that were gathered on the ground by women. As there has been large scale deforestation, women have to slog harder to retain the gathering economy. The tribal women in India have virtually no role to play in the social and political spheres. Even in the past though for many tribes in central India and in the North-East there were bachelor's dormitories, there was hardly anything for the girls. The girls used to fag around for the boys residing in the dormitories. The tribal women had no place in the village councils. The women were never represented in the traditional Panchayatas.

Maiti (2005) [3] investigated on health care and health condition among the tribal women in comparison to the non-tribal women in the newly formed state of Jharkhand by drawing upon data from the National Family Health Survey. The sample was a multi-stage cluster sample with an overall response rate of 98 percent; it consisted of 1614 ever married women in the age group of 15-49 years residing in 1642 households. The analysis focused on 1614 ever-married women was illiterate compared to 71% of the non-tribal women. Only 3% of tribal women completed education above high school compared to 8% in the case of non-tribal women 88% tribal women have not been exposed to any mass media compared to 61% among non-tribal women. Tribal women were slightly more in the younger cohorts than non-tribal women.

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About 52% of tribal women were below age 30 compared to 50% of the non-tribal women. Less than 3% of tribal women reside in urban areas compared to 23% of nontribal women. More than 80% of tribal as well as non-tribal women belong to the Hindu religion.

Das. (2005) ^[1]. conducted a study on "Autonomy and Decision Making Role of Tribal Women". A case study of Santoshpur state of odisha. The objectives of the study were to assess the level of autonomy and decision making power of tribal women. This study analyzed the decision making role of tribal women and to find out the impact of their socio-economic status on their decision making roles. The study was carried out in three tribal hamlets of Santoshpur village in Sundergarh district. All the three hamlets i.e. Jaratoli, Pahartoli and Militoli have similar socio-economic backgrounds. Here tribal communities, mostly belong to the Oraon and Munda tribes. The three hamlets have 225 households all together and the entire sample was taken into account. Therefore no specific sampling technique was employed. The major findings state that the tribal women enjoy autonomy at their household level, especially in social aspects and enjoy equal rights along with their husbands in economic matters but their community participation is passive and autonomy level is very low. The major reason behind this is low literacy rate and unemployment.

Mohindra, K.S, Haddad (2006) ^[4] conducted a study on Women's health in a rural community in Kerala, India. The objective of this study was to examine the social patterning of women's self-reported health status in India. Cross-sectional household survey, age-adjusted percentages and odds ratios, and multilevel, multinomial logistic regression models were used for analysis. Participants of the study were 4196 non-elderly women. This study reveals that Women from lower castes (scheduled castes/scheduled tribes (SC/ST) and other backward castes (OBC) reported a higher prevalence of poor health than women from forward castes. Socioeconomic inequalities were observed in health regardless of the indicators, education, women's employment status or household landholdings. The multilevel, multinomial models indicate that the associations between socioeconomic indicators and health vary across caste. Among SC/ST and OBC women, the influence of socioeconomic variables led to a "magnifying" effect, whereas among forward caste women, a "buffering" effect was found. Among lower caste women, the associations between socioeconomic factors and self-assessed health were graded; the associations were strongest when comparing the lowest and highest ratings of health. Even in a relatively egalitarian state in India, there were caste and socioeconomic inequalities in women's health. Implementing interventions that concomitantly deal with caste and socioeconomic disparities will likely produce more equitable results than targeting either type of inequality in isolation.

Rahman, Banerjee & Akther. (2006) ^[5]. Conducted a study to find out the "vaccination status of the tribal mothers and their under 5 children" in some selected villages of Durgapur upazila under Netrakona district. It was a cross sectional study in which 92 tribal mothers and 91 under 5 children were included. The study was carried out in 4 different tribal villages under Netrakona district. According to National EPI schedule, it was revealed that 58.2% of the children were fully vaccinated, 26.4% incompletely and 15.4% were not vaccinated. The individual vaccine coverage was 84.6% for BCG, 68.1% for OPV and DPT, 58.2% for Measles. Considering the literacy, most of the respondents (78.3%) were illiterate and 21.7% had some basic education. None of the mother completed 5 doses of TT coverage. The individual

TT coverage was found 78.3% for TT(1), 67.4% for TT(2), 17.4% for TT(3) and 1.1% for TT(4). This study observed that the vaccination status in the tribal children was satisfactory in relation to National coverage, but the vaccination status of the tribal mothers was not satisfactory in our national context.

Dhingra (2011) ^[2]. Conducted study on "The Health Status of Tribal (Gujjar) Adolescent Girls". The sample for the study comprised of 200 girls in the age group of 13-15 years. Both nomadic and semi-nomadic Gujjars were included. A combination of snowball and random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample group from various areas of Jammu district of Jammu and Kashmir state. Clinical assessment was conducted to look for the symptoms of various ailments (anaemia, malnutrition, hypertension, respiratory rate and other pathological signs). The results of the study revealed that adolescent Gujjar tribal girls enjoy a balanced emotional status along with capacity for strenuous physical activity. The data of the study showed that the body mass index (BMI) of the majority (88.1%) of the subjects was low indicating the highest prevalence of malnourishment among girls of 13 yrs of age. 96(48%) subjects had systolic blood pressure below 100. The observations for the signs and symptoms of anaemia and malnutrition indicated that 90 percent of the subjects had pale cold skin, 89.5 percent had general weakness and 86.5 percent had yellow conjunctiva. Majority (90.5%) of the respondents showed clear cut presence of anaemia having haemoglobin less than 10gm/dl. The results hold implications for professionals to introduce health programmes in order to improve the health of adolescent girls in particular.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Locale of the Study: Ladakh is divided into two districts. These are Leh and Kargil. The city of Leh is the capital of Ladakh. Leh district consists of nine blocks i.e. Nubra, Panamik, Khalsi (Khaltse), Saspol, Leh, Chuchot, Kharu, Durbuk, and Nyoma. Each block consists of a number of panchayats. It is one of the most sparsely populated regions in Jammu and Kashmir. The temperatures of the region vary between 30 degrees Celsius in the summer months and -20 degrees Celsius in the winters. As per the 2011 census Leh district has a population of 147,104. The sex ratio of Leh is 583 females for every 1000 males. The people of Ladakh are a mixture of Mongolian and the Aryan races. Ladakh Division is inhabited by followers of two major religions Buddhism and Islam, 76.7 percent of the total population is Buddhist while 13.4 percent are Muslims. Balti are Shia. They are originally from the Skardu area of Baltistan and now inhabit the Kargil district including Kargil town. Balti population is also found in the Leh district in certain pockets and settled in certain villages like chushot, shey and phayang. In Leh area women of both the communities, Buddhist and Muslim, enjoy a greater freedom than other parts of the region. The staple crop of Ladakh is barley and in some areas wheat, peas, vegetables and mustard for oil are also cultivated.

3.2 Sample

The respondents were selected randomly from Leh block of Leh district. From each village women were selected purposively in the age group of 20-60 years from each village of Leh block.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Purposive random sampling technique was used for the present study. Women from the mentioned age group were selected randomly.

3.4 Sample Criteria

- women should be married
- Women should be in the age group of 20 to 60 years
- Women should belong to Bodh and Balti tribe of Leh block

3.5 Tools for Data Collection

Interview schedule and observation method were used for data collection.

4. Result and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondent N=150

Respondents Age	Bodh n = 100		Balti n = 50	
	n	%	n	%
29 – 39	53	53	26	52
40 – 50	47	47	24	48
Total	100	100	50	100
Religion				
Buddhist	100	100	-	-
Muslim	-	-	50	100
Total	100	100	50	100
Education Qualification				
Illiterate	53	53	33	66
Primary	28	28	8	16
Middle	11	11	5	10
Metric	8	8	4	8
Total	100	100	50	100
Occupation of				
Govt. Job	25	25	8	16
Shop/ Business	8	8	11	22
Factory Workers	6	6	--	--
Domestic /	61	61	31	62
Total	100	100	50	100
Income Per Month				
Less than Rs. 5000	41	41	29	58
Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10, 000	40	40	12	24
Rs. 10, 000 – Rs. 20, 000	19	19	9	18
More than Rs. 20, 000	--	--	--	--
Total	100	100	50	100

From the Bodh tribe the table no. 1 clearly shows that majority (53%) of the Bodh respondents fall in the age group of 29 – 30 Years, 47% of respondents fall in the age group of 40 – 50 years, and from Muslim (Balti) tribe (52%) of the respondents fall in the age of 29 – 39 Years, 48% of the respondents fall in the age group of 40 – 50 years. If we look towards the religion (100%) of respondents from Bodh follow Buddhist religion and same percentage from Muslim (Balti) tribe follow Muslim religion. Regarding the tribe concerned (100%) of the Buddhist respondents belonged to Bodh tribe, where as 100% of Muslim respondents belonged to Balti tribe. As far as Martial Status was concerned (100%) of women were married from both the tribes. Regarding education qualification majority (53%) of respondents were illiterate, (28%) of respondents were primary class pass, 11% of respondents were middle class pass, and only 8% of respondents had qualified their metric from Bodh tribe. While from Muslim (Balti) tribe majority of (66%) of respondents were illiterate, 16% of respondents were primary class pass, 10% of respondents were middle class pass, and 8% of respondents had qualified their metric. Regarding the occupation of Bodh respondents majority, (61%) of the respondents were engaged in domestic chores/ farming, 25% of respondents were govt. employee like peon in office, bank clerk, teacher, 8% of the respondents were in business like they had their own shops, traveling agencies,

taxi-drivers etc. 6% of respondents were working in factory like grinding of Barley, Sheep Wool Industry, Handicraft etc, From Muslim (Balti) tribe majority (62%) of respondents were engaged in domestic chores/ farming, 22% of respondents were in business like they had their own shops like dry fruits, meat ships, taxi-drivers. As par as income per month was concerned (41%) of Bodh respondents were earning less than Rs. 5000,(40%) of respondents were earning Rs. 5000 - Rs. 10, 000 whereas 19% of respondents were earning Rs. 10, 000 – Rs. 20, 000 per month. Whereas from Muslim respondents majority (58%) of respondents were earning less than Rs. 5000, 24% of respondents earning Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10, 000 and only 18% of respondents earning Rs. 10, 000 – Rs. 20, 000 per month.

Table 2: Profile of the Family N = 150

Respondents family's profile	Bodh n = 100		Balti n = 50	
Type of Family	n	%	N	%
Joint Family	22	22	32	64
Nuclear Family	78	78	18	36
Total	100	100	50	100
Number of Family Member				
2 – 4	46	46	9	18
5 – 6	26	26	14	28
7 – 8	13	13	21	42
More than 8	15	15	6	12
Total	100	100	50	100
Occupation of family				
Only farmer	33	33	13	26
Farming with other job	19	19	9	18
Business	8	8	16	32
Govt. Job	14	14	7	14
Labour	26	26	5	10
Total	100	100	50	100
Income per month				
Less than Rs. 5000	39	39	23	46
Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10, 000	41	41	15	30
Rs. 10, 000 – Rs. 20, 000	20	20	12	24
More than Rs. 20, 000	--	--	12	24
Total	100	100	50	100

Data from the table No. 2 show that the majority (78%) of Bodh respondents were from Nuclear family which constituted of respondents and their husband, with children while 22% of respondents were living in joint family and from Muslim (Balti) tribe majority (64%) of respondents living in joint family which constituted of husband, wife, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grand parents, uncle, aunt etc. and 36% of respondents were from Nuclear family. Regarding number of the family member from Bodh tribe majority (46%) of the respondents were having 2 – 4 members in the family, 26% of respondents had 5 – 6 members in the family, 15% of respondents were having more than 8 member in the family and 13% of respondents had 7 – 8 members in the family, and from Muslim 28% of respondents had 5 – 6 members in the family, 18% of respondents had 2 – 4 members in the family, and only 12% of respondents having more than 8 member in the family. Regarding occupation of the family from Buddhist tribe 33% of the respondents were farmers, 26% of the respondents were working as labours in construction of building work, road construction etc., 19% of respondents were farmers with other part time job like selling milk in the morning and evening time selling curd, sweeper along with farming, 14% of respondents were doing govt. job like teacher, peon, clerk in agencies etc. and if we look towards the Muslim(Balti) tribe 26% of respondents were farmers, 32% of

respondents were engaged in business like travel agencies, they were having garments shops, dry fruits because they had less land for farmer and most of the Belt were dependent on their business, 14% of the respondents were doing govt. job like Peon, Clerk in Bank etc., 18% of respondents were doing farming with other part time job like selling vegetable, making bread and only 10% of respondents were working as labours because Balti women were not allowed to go outside frequently, their husband did not allow them to work as labour.

Table 3: Basic Living Condition of Respondents. N=150

Bodh n = 100			Balti n = 50	
Essential Facilities	n	%	N	%
House				
Kaccha (Mud House)	39	39	23	46
Semi Pucca	38	38	15	30
Pucca (Cemented)	23	23	12	24
Total	100	100	50	100
Toilet				
Flush	21	21	18	36
Ladakhi (Local Toilet)	79	79	32	64
Total	100	100	50	100
Sewerage				
Well constructed	44	44	19	38
Drains inside the house only	56	56	31	62
Total	100	100	50	100
Drinking Water				
Pipe	31	31	17	34
Hand Pump/ Spring	69	69	33	66
Well	--	--	--	--
Total	100	100	50	100
Electricity				
Yes	100	100	50	100
No	--	--	--	--
Total	100	100	50	100
Kitchen				
Kacchi	43	43	28	56
Pacci	57	57	22	44
Total	100	100	50	100
Essential Facilities				
Fuel				
Gas	61	61	30	60
Electricity	4	4	4	8
Kerosene	11	11	4	8
Wood/ Cow dung Cakes	24	24	12	24
Total	100	100	50	100

From Buddhist tribe the above table show that (39%) of the respondents had Kaccha House (Mud House) and (38%) of respondents had semi pucca house and only 23% of respondents had pucca house (cemented house). Because of poverty and lack of heating facilities majority of people had well wood constructed within the house which protected them from unbearable cold in winter and from Muslim tribe majority (46%) of respondents had Kaccha house (Mud House) because of poverty they cannot afford pucca house, and 30% of respondents had semi pucca, and 24% of respondents had pucca (cemented) house, and Muslim people also had well wood constructed within the house. most of the people used heater or used local heating system (Bukhari) during winter. As per as toilet facility was concerned majority (79%) of Buddhist respondents had the facility of ladakh (local toilet), 21% of respondents had the facility of flush latrine, and from Muslim tribe majority (64%) of respondents had the facility of ladakhi (local toilet), and 36% of respondents had facility of flush latrine, because most of the people cannot afford well constructed flush latrine because of poverty.

Regarding sewerage (56%) of Buddhist respondent's house had drain within the house only, 44% of respondents houses had well constructed sewerage and from Muslim respondents (62%) of respondents house had drain within the house only, 36% of respondents houses had well constructed sewerage. As far as water facility was concerned majority 69% Of Buddhist respondents had hand pump/ spring water facility followed 31% of respondents who had facility of pipe and from Muslim (66%) of the respondents had hand pump/ and spring water facility and only 34% of respondents who had facility of pipe. Regarding the facility of kitchen, 57% of Buddhist respondents had the facility of pacca kitchen and 47% of respondents had kacchi kitchen, where as from Muslim majority (56%) of Muslim (Balti) respondents had kacchi kitchen because of kaccha house and 44% of respondents had pacca kitchen because of pacca house. Regarding the facility of electricity (100%) from both tribes had the facility of electricity. Regarding the fuel for cooking was concerned majority of (61%) of Buddhist respondents used LPG gas for cooking, 24% of the respondents used wood and cow dung cakes as a fuel, 11% of respondents used kerosene stove and used as heating in room during winter, and only 4% of respondents used electric heater and cooker, if we look towards Muslim respondents majority 60% of respondents used LPG gas for cooking, 24% of respondents used wood and cow dung cake as fuel in their traditional chullas because it was cheap and easily available in their home 8% of respondents used kerosene and electric heater as fuel. Majority (93%) of Buddhist respondents had their own mobile phone and 7% of respondents had no mobile phones with them, and from Muslim tribe (92%) of respondents had their own mobile phone and only 8% of respondents had no mobile phones with them because in some area or location there was no net work facilities. Majority (92%) of Buddhist respondent had no computer in their homes and only 8% of respondents had computer facility, and from Muslim tribe (96%) of respondents had no computer even they didn't have any knowledge of computer and only 4% of respondents had computer facility. (100%) of Both tribe respondents had no A.C. as there has no requirement of A.C. in Leh. Regarding vehicles facility (71%) of Buddhist respondents had vehicles of their own like car, bus etc., 29% of respondents had no such facility,if we look towards Muslim(Balti) tribe (54%) of respondents had vehicles of their own and 46% of respondents had no facility.

5. Conclusion

The study was conducted in Leh block of Leh district. The study revealed that majority 53% from Bodh and 66% from Balti respondents were housewives, and illiterate. All the respondents were married. Majority 46% Muslim (Balti) and (39%) of Buddhist respondents had kaccha house because of poverty and lack of heating facilities. Majority of respondents from Bodh and Balti had well wood constructed within the house which protected from extreme cold in winter. Regarding the occupation of the family member (14%) from Bodh and Balti respondent's family member were in govt job like teacher, clerk in bank, army. Majority (33%) from Buddhist and (26%) of Buddhist(Bodh) respondents working as labour in construction building work, road construction etc, and only (10%) of Muslim(Balti) respondents were working as labour, because Balti women were not allowed go outside frequently and Balti women were restricted to do work as labour, and 19% from Buddhist(Bodh) and 18% from Muslim(Balti) respondents were farmers with other part time job like selling milk in the morning and evening time, selling vegetable etc.

Further it shows that majority 78% of the Bodh respondents and 36% of Balti respondents were from Nuclear family and 22% from Bodh and 64% of Balti respondents were from joint family which constituted of husband, wife, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grand parents, etc. 79% from Bodh and 64% from Balti respondents had the facility of (local toilet). All the respondents had electricity connection. Majority 69% of Bodh and 66% of Balti respondents had hand pump/spring water facility.

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