Chapter - IV

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In this chapter, an attempt has been made to know the change that has taken place among the Koracha of Chitradurga district over a period of time. To do this an intensive fieldwork was conducted among the Koracha who have separate habitats of their own in different localities of Chitradurga Town giving sufficient attention for several parameters like age, sex and experience.

Change is a ubiquitous phenomenon. It is found everywhere. All human societies of the world are constantly changing in time and space. Change is of two types - Necessitated change and Imposed change. Necessitated change is that change which is necessitated by the people. This change comes from within. This is a positive development for any society to develop. Imposed change is that change which is imposed by some external factors. Social change is the change in the social structure. Social structure is a web of social relationships. Hence social change involved in social relationships. In the words of Davis (1981), “Social change is meant for such alternatives as secure and
social organization that is the structure and functions of society". According to Merill and Eldredge (1941) social change means that large numbers of persons are engaging in activities that differ from those which they or their immediate (forefathers) engaged in some time before. All changes take place in society because of some innovations or discoveries. All these changes later diffuses till it reaches the nooks and corners of the society.

A society which is dynamic is subjected to such changes, though the nature in which these changes occur and the manner in which a society accepts them may vary from place to place and under altered situations. The traditional Indian society has from the very beginning been a dynamic society and has seldom refused spontaneous changes from within. All societies are interlinked and interdependent societies. As a result of this every society is bound to change ion its outlook and perceptions. Hence the change is the essence of life, especially in the context of Indian society. Before the dawn of independence, and that too before the constitution came into force the suppressed, oppressed and depressed sections of the society, the so called
SC/ST and OBCs had no chance to change themselves. Only after having the constitution and also after having sufficient provisions in the constitution, to uplift the downtrodden lot these suppressed communities exposed themselves to the winds of social change. This change was noticed in their very way of life. Education (free and compulsory), reservation in jobs and such other facilities brought tremendous change in their life and living conditions. The Koracha of Chitradurga District is no exception to this type of change. These people have utilized the facilities given by the government rightly and showed sufficient progress. Now if anybody visits the habitats of Koracha will be amazed to know the changes that have taken place in them.

Koracha are termed differently in different parts of the state depending upon the occupation they follow as Koracha, Korma, Korava, Koravanji and Koracha shetty. Koracha has a sizable population of about 2 lakhs in the district.

The social organization of Korachas is very strong. Their marriage practices, kinship bond and also the
family types and sentiments attached to these are equally on par with any other population. Korachas prefers marriage within the relation. As far as possible, they prefer to marry the maternal uncle. Under exceptional circumstances, they marry outside the relation. Bride price is commonly found among them. But over the years the educated people of this community in their panchayat pleaded to remove bride price, which is an insult to women folk. According to our informants the educated youths have started taking dowry. Koracha observes a series of rites in different contexts. They observe rites at the time of birth, naming ceremony, tonsure, marriage and death ceremonies. They express greatest solidarity in their different celebrations.

All known human societies of the world undergo a series of change over a period of time due to several contributing factors like modernization, globalization, westernization, and sankstritisation. As a result individuals and their communities also undergo many novel socio-cultural experiences which make their lives totally different from the past ones. In this respect, we need to study the concept of social change that has
taken place in the lives of Korachas. During the colonial rule, this Koracha was known as a 'Criminal Tribe' indulging in stealing, robbery, dacoity and burglary (Sethana:1989). Added to this, the entire non-Koracha population was scared of this people in protecting their valuable property being stolen by this people. In the post-independence India, this Koracha community was included under the 'Scheduled Caste' (SC) Category in Karnataka, and got all constitutional privileges to join the main stream of society. The Koracha community was labeled as a criminal tribe but now they have changed completely due to the constant motivation by the community elders and leading a very normal and problem free life which is totally free from criminal activities. If we look at the police-records, in Superintendent of Police office at Chitradurga one can wonder to know that not even a single criminal case is booked in the name of this community in the last five years. This itself is an indication that the Korachas has firmly decided not to commit any criminal offence and get the abuse from the society.

India is a multi-cultural, multi-religious pluralistic society where we see different ethnic groups, cultural
agencies, racial orientations which are in operations to establish their existential identities (Majumdar:1944). Because of the onslaught of cultural forces, every cultural sphere is coming under the influence of hybridized cultural contact. Given these factors, it is interesting to note that the historical experiences of the Koracha community which was branded as criminal and barbaric by the hegemonic upper caste people and also by the colonial masters. They were looked down upon as unworthy, nasty, wild human beings (Simhadri:1973). Their living condition was not better than the untouchables in India. The stratified casteist India's upper caste population exploited this community giving them all kinds of harassment and humiliations (Hutton:1945). For several centuries they were suppressed and oppressed by the upper caste giving no room for tolerance and humanism. They had been ostracized denying them their 'place' in our society. Though the Korachas were in way burden to the society, their valuable services in the form of productive labour to human society were not recognized. The onus was on the privileged section of our society to recognize them as valuable human resources and as society builders. It
is a fact that the privileged section of the society did not give them their due 'place' in our society, because of the hegemony of the upper caste people. Empirically speaking, these Korachas have supported the society to be on the track of self-reliance and sustenance by offering their labour say for example pig and cattle rearing, basket making, thread and rope making, manure collection, for the promotion of agriculture and horticulture which have been the lifelines of our nation. Therefore, it is indispensable to study the contribution of this community in nation building. In this context we would like to record here the achievement of social change of Korachas from the Anthro-criminological point of view.

**Cultural dynamics seen in the Koracha Community:**

The Korachas were branded as a criminal tribe once upon a time, but now, carved their niche in the society showing their tendency to have social upward mobility. This is evident in their move from primitive societal network to modernistic way of life. It is a striking fact that this nomadic community who did not possess any substantial movable property till recently now owned their own jewelry shops which have been the
exclusive monopoly of the Maravadies and Vysyas. Thus, we observe how this koracha community has developed to a great extent economically to have its own identity in the society which is constantly changing (Sashi:1991). Due to the influence of modernism and liberalism, which have been the slogans of modern world, the Korachas have realized, as M.N. Srinivas (1942) a prominent sociologist and an anthropologist, pointed out the factor of sanskritisation alone enables them to join the main stream of society.

With regard to worshipping is concerned the Korachas were worshipping primitive gods and goddesses, like Maramma, Dyamamma, Huligemma, Satyavati and Lord Anjaneya (Thurston & Edger 1909). But now the Korachas have begun to worship the Gods and Goddesses of higher stature like Sathyanarayana Swamy, Tirupati Venkateshwara, Dharmastala Manjunatha, Aiyappa Swamy, Nanjanagudu Nanjundeshwara, Mantralaya Ragavendra Swamy and so on to prove that they are moving upward in religious hierarchy. Majority of Korachas, every now and them have Satyanarayana pooja which was exclusively meant for upper castes in the beginning, at their homes and
offer food to all those who attend the pooja ceremony. Korachas have a strong faith in their family deities and worship their dead ancestor's souls performing the elder's Remembrance Day during night time as a part of kinship bond. In this community family trees are well maintained and the figures of the ancestors are drawn with a charcoal on a white cloth or on the wall as a mark of respect on the occasion of the festival meant for worshipping the ancestors.

**Community consciousness:**

No community leader is as an Icon or role model for this community. Awareness is being created with regard to their community identity and importance. The people of this community felt that Education alone can get them a superior status to feel proud of themselves in the society. Many organizational networks have been setup to bring in awareness for the welfare of their community. It is to be recorded here that an I.A.S. Officer by name Naryanaswamy, the then deputy commissioner of Bangalore with much difficulty established a free hostel for the community students for their overall development and welfare by donating his own house for the accommodation of the students. Of
late, community organization is being taken up on a war footing by the Koracha elite and educated people. In order to promote community development and community consciousness, a religious institution (Mata) in the name of Shatana Naliya Chandayya, a contemporary of Basavanna of the 12th century of Karnataka, is being established in Chitradurga district of Karnataka. Undoubtedly this will pave for the betterment of the community. Every now and then the elites of this community organize various community awareness campaigns for its overall development in various places throughout the state. This itself gave an impetus among the youngsters to come closer and closer and to contribute their might for the overall development of Koracha community.

Political awareness:

The Koracha community in the path of its development and to have its identity mobilized its population to have their 'place' in political life. Consequently, young people who have access to education and modernity, have occupied some important political positions and have joined in some decision-making process at the Village panchayat level,
Zilla panchayat level, state and national level. Two individuals from this community became MLA and MLC in the past.

Social, economic and educational empowerment among the Korachas:

The wave of change is being seen in the society. As far as occupational changes are concerned, there is a scope for the economic status improvement in this community in recent times. Pig rearing, tilling the land, thread/coir string and rope making, mat making out of palm leaves and jute fibers, basket making, brush making, hunting, manure collection have been their traditional occupations. Owing to several social changes occurred in their community circles, the Korachas have now realized the value of movable property and ownership factors. Empirically speaking many Koracha families in Chitradurga district have landed property. Modern modified occupational developments are also seen in this community. Currently, there are nine (09) jewelry shops in Chitradurga town owned by this Korachas indicating the vertical economic mobility and development. This community has clearly understood the importance of tapping the commercial potential.
There are some band troops among them to find their new social pasture and to have their own socio-economic standards. Now a few members of this community have become mobile vendors riding on a bicycle to sell clothes, plastic gadgets, metal utensils, sugarcane milk and so on. Some of them have also been offering their labour as masons in building works, and others have been working in other miscellaneous works like working as assistants in market yards, grocery shops, and textile shops, private and public undertaking companies as well. Many educated Korachas have become doctors, principals, lawyers, teachers, and also police officers forming their own elite group in their society. By looking at this elite group, the younger people of this community also aspiring to become Class I and II officers and thereby to have little bit of academic supremacy as well.

**Behavioural change:**

The Koracha community wants to maintain its own identity in society. They have overcome their inferiority complex and have achieved their human dignity and social status. Psychologically speaking, they have realized their potential and they aspire to have their
'place' in society. Now this awakened Koracha community has been fighting for inner reservation facilities under the scheduled caste category to have many more facilities. They strongly believe that 'empowerment' can only safeguard them from exploitation, social injustice, discrimination, poverty, conflict and other socio-political and economic problems.

**Language Factor:**

Korachas are multi-lingual. Earlier they use to speak the Kulava language which is a mixture of several dialects. This helped them to communicate their feelings wherever they go. But now due to the awareness and due to education they got, speak Kannada, English, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu and even Malayalam. But now at home they rarely use Kulava language, but use Kannada language to show that they have improved considerably.

**Diet System:**

Basically the Korachas are non-vegetarians. They were fond of eating meat specially the meat of pig and wild cats. But now they are slowly leaving the eating of meat. This is because of two reasons. If they eat the
flesh of pig, wild rats and cat people belonging to upper strata will not come to their house. Basically upper caste people feel that Korachas are shabby, dirty and they try to keep themselves bit away from these people. Secondly by eating the defiling foods they feel that they don't move upward in social hierarchy (effect of sanskritisation). This change has come from within as a token of development.

Demographical aspects:

The male and female ratio among the Koracha community is almost equal. This fact could become an area of interest for feminists to know that termination of female child (abortion) prematurely or female feticide is virtually absent. Thereby, we can understand the importance of a female child in the society. Bride price is still in existence. Dowry cases are too less among them. Out of total Koracha population 35% of the population lives in rural area and 65% lives in the urban centres. This is because of the fact that for jobs and to earn their livelihood, they migrate to urban centres. Koracha community is male-dominated one, but it gives prominence to the women whose status is well maintained, within the jurisdiction of their family.
Micro Credit facilities extended for the up-liftment of the community:

For the promotion of their professional progress, the government of Karnataka and Government of India have come forward to lend the community loan at an affordable interest rate to enable them to have their self-reliance and economic empowerment. The Koracha community has been utilizing this facility to join the mainstream of society with their own power of education and economics.

Overall, the Koracha community society is in constant flux to have its own vertical social mobility. The younger generation of the Koracha has a plus point today due to the constitutional provision made for them for their empowerment in the stratified society through qualitative higher education and robust economic power. Illiteracy is being replaced by literacy because of the spread of educational technology and mass media; undoubtedly, it is the great 'Korachayana epic' which depicts the Koracha community with all its socio-cultural dimensions. It is up to the people to consider this community on par with other upper caste community to accord them equity, social justice, fruits
of fraternity and rights to empowerment. So that this community can have its competency to prove its worth in the society as the best human resource.