MODERNITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN TRIBAL SOCIETY:
A CASE STUDY OF LAMBADA TRIBE OF TELANGANA
1900-2000 A.D.

(Abstract)

Introduction

Modernity is a resultant of the development and advance of practical sciences which further leads to the development of industrialism, individualism, democracy, freedom and the ideologies of social philosophies opposed to metaphysics and theology. The concept of modernity is based upon the social structure prevailing in highly advanced countries mainly characterized by rapid urbanization, growing literacy, meaningful concourse of idea among people by means of new media, radio, television and books, etc; increase in proficiency and skill which builds up man power the support the economic progress of the country and growth of political consciousness. This results in increasing geographical mobility and mechanization invades most of the walks of life. Modernity is a different indicator of culture whose characteristics are discernment, broadmindedness, diversity, and the respect for individual which implies the freedom to follow one’s own ideas. In India, social change in evident in various walks of life which is taking place through the instrumentality of factors like urbanization, industrialization, westernization, secularization, democratization and Sanskritisation. In the perspective of contradictory goals being pursued through social change in India, the social scientists have pointed towards the interaction of tradition and modernity. The role of modernity and tradition in social change in the developing countries was very relevant to the Indian scenario. The role of modernity has been very profound in creating a social change in religion and caste allowing the people of backward classes to get acquainted to the outside world through education and cultural transformation. This study aims to identify the role of modernity in bringing about social change in the lives of people especially people from Lambada tribe who have being exploited for centuries from the hands of upper class on various pretexts.
India, a country with diversified cultural heritage, spread widely with various cultures, traditions, castes based on their respective professions. Banjaras a tribe in India, meant for their efficient logistics is a shining beacon to the nation’s culture and are the best known for their migrating from one place to other in search of merchandise, with their Pack- Bullocks. They have shown path to various empires from north to south and are meant to be the outstanding service providers to the kings in showing path to them, as they themselves are the explorers of the places. Indian society is very carefully and dexterously stratified on the basis of castes and sects. This carefulness and dexterity are used not only to divide the society into thousands of sections but also to protect and preserve this system for ages, banning and barring mobility and interaction between castes. Each caste has a caste lower than itself in hierarchy. Even the most downtrodden and discriminated against section like “untouchables” are divided sharply among themselves according to their castes and practice untouchability against one another. Subservience to one caste and subjugating another caste will put each caste’s agenda, position and attitude in tact by making it rigid in its hierarchical behaviour.

Lambada tribe is the most exploited tribe among other tribes despite their socio-economic developments. They still kill their children due to their poverty, especially girl children because of dowry system. They still drink Dharu (Alcohol) as sacred drink during their festivals. Still believe in their mythological stories as they are origin of their existing. Myths, folklores, practices, etc. are formatting them in their social and public life which are exploiting their own kith and kin every day, but lot of changes has taken place in their lives. Now many of them are educated and once they did not give importance to even primal educational qualifications.

**Study Area**

It is against the background of above facts; it is felt that a thorough study is necessary. Talangana region has been identified for the study because it is a backward
region in Andhra Pradesh, the first hand information on Lambadas in this Region. Hence, a research study on “Modernity and Social Change in Tribal Society: A Case Study of Lambada Tribe of Telangana 1900-2000 A.D” is initiated with the following objectives.

**Aims and objectives**

There has been major transformation in the behaviour and lives of Lambada tribe with many of them have access to proper education, connectivity with mainstream society, health, etc. Many other studies carried out pertaining to Lambada tribe conclude that the people have transformed themselves in order to be part of the mainstream society rather than being a distinct community. This study aims to evaluate the statement apart from the following:

1. Examine the impact of modernization on Lambada community that helped in its cultural transformation during 20th century i.e. 1900 – 2000;
2. Examine the significance of government policies, laws and legislations; addressing the problems and suggesting welfare measures for the Lambada community in bringing about social change; and
3. Examine the politics of social change, especially in adopting the culture of Hindus, and what was the impact of such change on the Lambada community.

**Hypotheses**

This study provisionally argues that the change taking place in the tribal society is a synthesis of old and new, with some older cultural makers finding a place alongside the articulation of new community values and ambitions. It is important to note most of the cultural assimilations were from Hindu community, especially Brahminical. It is evident from the background study of the Lambada tribe, its history
and post modernized community, there has been a radical change in the behaviour and lifestyle of the community. The cultural transformation has been possible only due to the welfare programmes implemented by the government during the 20th century that has allowed equal participation of the people from Lambada community through reservations.

**Scope of the study**

The study is regional pertaining to Lambadas of the twentieth century in the Telangana, The region and period of the study have chosen strategically. The lambadas are largely concentrated in the Telangana region of erstwhile Hyderabad State and present Andhra Pradesh. The region has a specific historical experience as it was under the rule of Nizams, and maintains its uniqueness in many aspects till today. A significant change can be noticed among the Lambadas from the early 20th century when they began settling down as agriculturalists during which they came into contact with the caste-Hindu society. The present study focuses on the significance of socio-economic and political conditions of the Telangana region in the social transformation of Lambada.

**Research Methodology**

Research is a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic and as such it is an art of scientific investigation. Research comprises of defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions which is tested to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. Selection of the overall research philosophy depends upon the choice that is to be made between the two primary alternatives. The two primary alternatives are the positivist philosophy and the phenomenological philosophy. In case of positivist philosophy, it is basically believed that the world is external and objective. Moreover
the observer is independent. On other hand in case of phenomenological philosophy, it is believed that the world is socially constructed and is subjective. Moreover the observer is the part of what is being observed. It is very important for the researcher in positivist philosophy to focus more on the facts, look for fundamental laws and causality. It is also important to take into account that the phenomenon is reduced to the simplest element. The researcher also has to formulate the hypothesis and then he needs to test it. But in case of phenomenological philosophy the researcher has to focus on meaning and then try to understand the things that are happening around him. He also needs to look at the totality of the situation. Given the research problem the best fit was to follow the positivist philosophy or paradigm. These were done after recognizing the following parameters. It tends to produce quantitative and objective data by collecting the primary data.

**Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches**

The choice that has to be made is the adoption of qualitative or quantitative approach or the mixture of the two. The quantitative approaches are based on numerical measurements. They use the methodology of empirical, hypothetico-deductive as well as experimental psychology. The main aim here is to test the hypothesis and identify the numerical differences between the groups. On the other hand, qualitative approach deals with qualities i.e. how people take their experiences. It tries to explore the meaning and might be chosen to investigate the issues for three reasons like practical, ethical and epistemological reasons.

The quantitative methods are developed in natural sciences in an attempt to study the events of the natural phenomenon. Examples of quantitative methods are survey method, formal method and numerical method. Qualitative methods are developed in social sciences in order to enable the researcher to study the activities of cultural and social phenomenon. Examples of this method are case study, research and ethnography. Further the study adopts ethnographical approach in order to obtain
authentic information pertaining to the research questions. Ethnography approach will help in assessing the socio-cultural profile of Lambada Tribe through observation, recording the information in native language. The ethnographic study on modernity and social change raises questions on the cultural and social profile of Lambada tribe and how this tribe has strictly followed its age old rituals despite nearby towns were getting developed. The ethnographical approach will help in assessing the results especially with a view to make recommendations for the overall development of Lambada tribe and their regions. The methods are essentially descriptive and inferential in character and focus primarily on the kind of evidence that will enable to understand the meaning of what is going on. Swanborn elaborates extensive approach wherein information is collected about the relevant properties of a large number of instances of phenomenon and conclusions are drawn by putting together all the information and calculating and interpreting correlations between the properties of these examples i.e. case studies. Case study research is a rather versatile qualitative research technique because it may be aligned with any philosophical stance.

**Research Design**

The present study is multidisciplinary as it requires constructing data from the historical perspective, explaining the concepts in sociological terms. History should be written objectively which means that the whole narrative of facts, the interpretation of facts and the conclusion deduced there from, must be always based on solid foundation of historical facts carefully selected from vast mass of source materials having varying degrees of credibility. The present study is based on the cultural transformation of Lambada tribe during the 20th century which has its roots based in colonial period; the methodology of history is viable in view of collecting information in chronological order and constructing them accordingly to the objectives of the study. According to Marvasti, sociology is a social science that aims to empirically appreciate the complexity of human life which reveals the ‘the strange in the familiar’ and ‘places individuality in social context’. It is further mentioned that understanding
and reporting the behaviour of people through analyses and presenting reality is the role of sociologists, the present study requires involvement of people from the Lamdaba community to find measure the hypothesis mentioned above pertaining to the government welfare programmes and the visible transformation that has happened to the people of Lambada tribe. Sociological methodological approach will help in offering competing reports with the data received during the field study. Anthropological observations will be made during the review of secondary data and various other information present in form of books, journals which will help in understanding the basic concepts like modernity and social change.

**Sampling Methods**

Sampling is used to save time and money, may enable more accurate measurements, remains the only way when population contains infinitely many members, and usually enables to estimate the sampling errors, thereby assisting in obtaining information concerning some characteristics of the population. Though sampling may not be part of case study research, strategic sampling method has been used to choose only those companies which are market leaders and have proven record of formulating marketing strategies in ever changing market and industry. Intensive open ended repeated interviews will be conducted among the selected people of thanda so as to gather relative information on social, cultural and religious status of Lambada tribe in their clan, any impact of development policies on their lives and society in general. For the purpose of collecting primary data, a detailed questionnaire will be prepared that would most probably evaluate the hypothetical assumption which will be administered in person to the Chief of the thanda or old people, strategically selected, who can answer the question from historical perspective and who have seen such change happen in their families or society. Five to Seven people will be interviewed in each thanda from districts of Telangana and this has been limited due to the non availability of people in thanda because of constant
migration taking place in their community to towns and cities in search of livelihood or education.

**Primary Data**

Primary data are those which are collected fresh and for the first time which happens to be the original work of the researcher. The present research will largely be carried out in Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad and will be based on archival and oral sources and published reports of colonial and post colonial governments. A Lambada thanda from each district of the Telangana region will be selected for undertaking field study and interviews with detailed set of questionnaire which will include selective as well open ended questions pertaining to the causes of socio cultural transformation and impact of modernity on their traditional activities.

**Secondary Data**

The secondary data was collected from books, official records, reports and journals, published and unpublished matter. Apart from above, formal and informal interviews were also conducted through primary and secondary sources has been analyzed, interpreted, tabulated and presented in the thesis.

**Chapterization**

The present study entitled on “Modernity and Social Change in Tribal Society : A Case Study of Lambada Tribe of Telangana 1900-2000 A.D.” divided into seven chapters they are as follow:

**Chapter-I: Introduction:** Introduce the concepts and theories pertaining to society, social change and modernity and its relevance to the tribal society. The chapter introduces various theories of continuity and change explaining the need for different
societies to adopt change in order to develop their societies and themselves through better education and awareness to modernity. This chapter discusses in brief the methods used for collecting primary and secondary data pertaining to the policies and reforms formulated by pre-Independence and post – Independence governments and to understand the views of Lambada people on modernity.

**Chapter-II: Origin of the Lambada Tribes:** Brief history of lambada tribes is discussed by providing its existence since Mughal period followed by their alliance with the British rulers in trading their goods and materials. This chapter mainly focuses on their population status in India and Andhra Pradesh, their struggle to be categorized as Schedule Tribe in the Indian Constitution, social status of Indian tribes, etc. The chapter further discusses the entry of Lambada tribes into Andhra Pradesh, their cultural profile, and their present situation in the state of Andhra Pradesh in terms of lifestyle, education, employment and social status as compared to other people.

**Chapter-III: Social Celebrations among Lambada Tribes:** deals with the traditions, customs, way of living and behavior of Lambada people. Though most of the societies have modernized and are accepting modernity as a tool to develop them, Lambada people have not yet warm up to the idea of modernization and still following their age old rituals like wearing traditional clothes, birth and death rituals, etc. The chapter discusses in detail how lambada’s follow their rituals strictly closing the doors of modernity upon themselves and strictly adhering to the society principles. This chapter also gives accounts of Lambada tribes festivals, folk songs, gods and goddesses and their different ways of worshipping through ceremonies and sacrifices. Various other attributes of Lambada tribe such as profession, occupation, language, migration, social profile, and their awareness about the modernity is presented in this chapter with a view that this will enable the research to take further road to enhance its study on the concept of modernity, why lambada people do not
support modernity, and why there is such a miniscule level of development among this tribe even after 67 years of independence.

Chapter-IV: Role of Modern Institutions in Social Change: discussses the role of modern institutions in social change. The concepts of social change in relation to modernity and its effects on the society have been discussed in this chapter so as to understand the emotional attachment between various relationships among different members of the family and society. Other concepts like westernization, modernization, social mobilization, social differentiation are discussed in this chapter with a view to understand the correlation between these factors and its impact on the society in relation to education, social status, religion, caste, employment, etc. This chapter further focuses in depth on the role of social institutions and its system pertaining to behavioural and relationship pattern that are densely interwoven and enduring and how these institutions order and structure the behavior of individuals. Various approaches like Durkheim and Parson’s view on the role of social institutions and social identity are discussed with a view to understand the importance of social relationships, positions of power and the importance of symbols, policies and ideologies in the social system. Different theories like functionalist, conflict, modernity and modernization explain different aspects and values of family system. The role of modern institutions like government, social workers, NGOs, and other agencies involved in uplifting and development of Lambada tribe are analysed.

Chapter-V: Developmental Policies for Lambada Tribes: Presents a historical profile of development polices formulated by the government and other agencies during 1900 to 2000 era. Most of the developmental reforms recognizing the development needs of the Lambada tribe were formulated and established as bills after India got Independence especially through Constitutional Amendment. However there were certain polices and development projects undertaken by the government i.e. under British Rule, granting certain rights and privileges, abolition of superstition, introduction of education, etc. as part of the inclusive development. Various other
initiatives under different five year plans are being explained, the budget sanctioned, acts and policies have been discussed.

**Chapter-VI: Perception of the Lambadas in Social Change and Modernity:**
Analyses the primary data collected for the purpose of the identifying change in the village hamlets of Scheduled Tribe in four villages from four districts which have been selected strategically depending on their vicinity to the city or town. The data has been collected to analyze their social, cultural and economic background apart from their understanding and knowledge about the government projects, schemes and programmes which are brought out and implemented by the state government and Government of India from time to time to uplift the downtrodden caste. A structured questionnaire consisting closed and open ended questions were administered to people living in hamlets, hitherto referred to as thanda. The respondents were chosen randomly among the people living in thanda and data was collected in a manner that would address the issue of modernity in the present context.

The primary data presented and discussed in Chapter VI have been analysed and necessary findings have been presented in Chapter VII. Recommendations and suggestions based on the findings made in Chapter VI are mentioned in this chapter.

**Chapter-VII: Conclusions:** The last chapter provided summary of conclusions, findings of the study and suggestions.

**Findings of the study**

1. While scheduled tribes are living in different parts of Andhra Pradesh, Lambadas are the tribes associated with the Telangana region from Nizam’s period.
2. The literature review clarifies that lambadas were actively involved with the Nizams and later the Britisher’s in transporting activities like moving of goods and supporting them during war.

3. The census of 2011 states that Rangareddy district has recorded the highest decadal growth of population of 48.16 percent.

4. Many families engage their children into labour activities at construction sites or as agricultural labour.

5. Similarly the practice of child marriage has been stopped however, there are some poor people who marry of their girl child so as to get rid of the responsibilities as they themselves could not offer to provide her better livelihood.

6. It is important to note that the societies that have encouraged child education and more specifically girl education.

7. The families are getting their children’s educated, both boys and girls, while giving equal prominence to both girl and boy child.

8. Several NGOs and other governmental agencies have established their offices with an aim to educate tribal people about the government policies and their constitutional rights.

9. Children from tribal communities receiving education is decreasing from the time they enter the school in Class I. The scenario is similar across sections of poor people but trend is higher among tribal people and the gap widens more between girls and boys.

10. The 12th Five Year Plan focused on providing compulsory education to all. Various programmes during the 11th and 12th five year plan like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan aimed at providing free and subsidized education to the poor.

11. State and Central government projects like Arogyasri, SGSY, NREGA and other policies framed by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India have seemed to benefit the Lambadas.
12. Hyderabad city has helped the Lambadas to access the benefits of government programmes. Peddakongara and Mulkapally thanda are greatly influenced by the modernity of Hyderabad which has helped the people from these places to gain knowledge about their rights, various government projects and have access to such benefits.

Suggestions

1. In respect to modernity and changing behaviour of the society, role of media is important because media has the ability to change the mindset of the people through positive campaigns on government schemes and projects, their constitutional rights, benefits that can be achieved through various schemes, role of education in their livelihood development, etc.
2. There is no doubt the parents send their children to schools, but dropout rate is the main issue which needs to be addressed. NGOs and government agencies need to create awareness campaigns and encourage girl education.
3. Government of Andhra Pradesh has initiated various schemes encouraging education among STs like post metric scholarship and developed 291 schools under APSWREIS to address the educational needs of deprived communities.
4. There are other government schemes which are aimed at economic empowerment and development of poor.
5. Lambadas can be benefited from the self help group (SHG) which aims at empowering women and allowing them interact with wider social groups resulting in modernization.
6. Women empowerment and girl child education need to promoted in thandas because it will lead to dramatic change in the society resulting in modernity which will pave way for various other opportunities
pertaining to livelihood and growth apart from equal treatment in the society.

7. The SHG movement in Andhra Pradesh is one such opportunity for Lambada women’s to come in groups and create a change in the society by addressing social and economic problems.

8. Many lambadas are not aware of the government programmes in their respective thandas. It is therefore essential that thandas should be connected through proper road and provides frequent public transportation facilities.

9. Change could not be possible unless people from different societies interact with each other and unless this happens, lambadas will be seen as different due to their cultural attire and the concept of modernity will be viewed as taboo in the lambada community. Hence communication is essential in terms of trade, education and employment, etc.

10. NGOs and other social development agencies have an important role to play in bringing the communities together so that equal participation is undertaken. This helps further interaction among people from different sects of the society, exchange of ideas, etc. This results in change of mindset on various issues like girl education, women empowerment, livelihood, rights of the poor, etc.

11. Modernization is achieved through change in the mindset of the people living in particular community. While the government has a larger role to play in development of the people and community the various agencies and departments share their role and responsibilities in bringing such people living in depravity out of apathy and help them receive the benefits which they are entitled to through awareness programmes, education and health campaigns, providing employment opportunities through employment missions like Rajiv Yuva Kiranulu in Andhra Pradesh, empower women and girls through education, etc.
12. While different programmes aimed at tribal development are important, it is necessary that Lambadas are aware of their rights and more importantly women are empowered which can be possible through formation of SHGs which is a huge success in Andhra Pradesh.

13. There are various government and non governments agencies who are working towards the socioeconomic development of lambadas, modernization could only be achieved if education and other basic services at par with urban centres are provided to the people living in thandas apart from providing equal opportunity.

14. The government programmes are implemented properly and that the benefits of tribal development programmes are provided to lambadas instilling confidence in the government programmes.

***