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Demographic Structure and Economic Status of Saharia Landscape in Rajasthan

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Abstract

The Saharia is the most primitive and backward tribe in the state of rajasthan.The tribals like to live in their natural abodes, comprising of the hills, forests,river banks and practice their traditional culture,rituals and customs within a self sustained ecosystem. Saharia is one of the primitive tribes in the anthropological history of human habitation in India. There is a close relation between the landscape pattern and distribution of tribal population. The forested hills, vallies provided a natural habitat for the majority of tribals. They have their distinct problem and thus require plans and policies that are different form general schemes. It is therefore, essential that demographic characteristics of the tribal people living in a region is analysed in order to given a proper shape and dimension to the welfare projects devised for the socioeconomic uplift of these people and their habitat. The whole tribal landscape is a geographical entity. The areas socially, economically and culturally linked to its central places are as follows –Shabadad and Kishanganj.

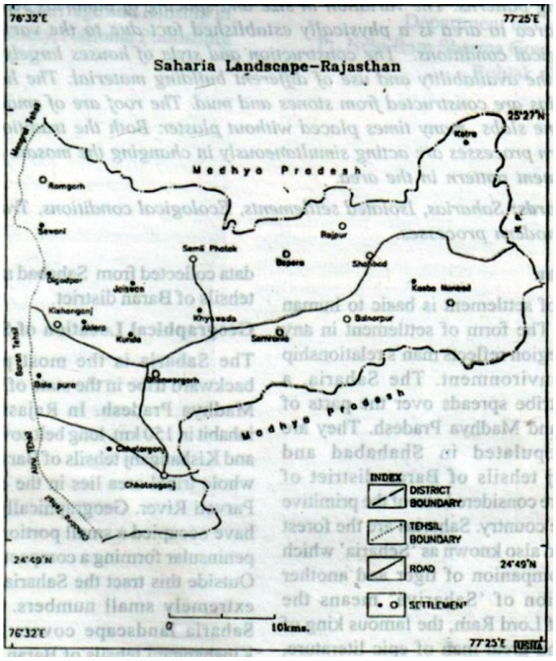
Keywords: *Saharia, Rajasthan, Population, Demographic Community*

Introduction

An historical account of Shahabad would not be out of place here as history plays an important role in shaping the life of the people live in that area. The whole Saharia Tract was a part of Malwa in earlier times. Malwa had always faced the problem of political uncertainties due to which its political boundaries were changed from time to time and culturally compact societies were divided by artificial political boundaries. Shahbad is 95 Km away from Baran on the Baran-Shivpuri national highway. It is said that once upon a time. The remains of old buildings, Jama Maszid, Fort, City wall, City gate and Step wells indicate its Lost prosperity. The high gigantic core of Shahbad on the top of hillock and the Jama Masjid on the plains have a Character of Their own. In 1838 the territory of Shahabad was incorporated in to Jhalrapatan a new state which was created for the heirs and successors of Jhala Zalim Singh. In 1899 when the British Government was dissatisfied with the administration of its last ruler Rajrana Zalim Singh II of Jhalawar is again transrerred Shahabad to the state of Kota. Since then Shahabad became an integral part of Kota State and today the whole Saharia landscape comes under Baran District.

Geographically, The Saharias have occupied a small portion of the Indian peninsular Farming a compact Saharias Tract. Outside this tract the saharia are found in extremely small numbers. In Rajasthan Saharia Landscape covers Shahbad and Kishanganj Tehsil of Baran District which Lie beyond the Parvati river in the eastern part. On the three side saharias landscape of Rajasthan is surrounded by Saharias occupied districts of

Madhya Pradesh i.e to the north by Morena and Gwalior, to the east by Shivpuri and the south by Guna tehsil its wasten side is connected with chhabra, Atru, Baran and Mongrol Tehsils.



Demographic Structure

The analysis of demographic attributes of tribal population like growth distribution composition, age sex structure, Literacy and occupational structure are based on data available from sensus handbook. And also on data and information's collected by various other agencies. Intensive fieldwork of the area has enabled the author to check their findings.

Ethnic Characteristics of Saharias

It is fashionable today to talk about ethnicity, ethnic processes and identity. More especially the processes are related to minorities and tribal groups. The Problem with the tribals of our study is that they have a particular ethnicity which is manifest in their dress, diet health, hygienic occupations and beliefs and rituals. The ethnic specificity is in danger today. There is massive social change among them. The change has eroded their traditional value system. The Saharias Religion, customs, traditions, social structure and the value system attached to it are fast displaced by new secular values. The new Saharias society which is emerging as a result of transformation is relatively more stratified and differentiate. In this context it is feared that the Saharias might get many of the traits of their ethnicity shed off. The ethnic Processes which provide identity to the Saharias might also go in to oblivion. Their Saharias identity might also be lost in craze for development. It is argued that with the increase in social differentiation, the ethnicity is a also getting loose. If the ethnic character is lost, it is possible the Saharias might lose its identity.

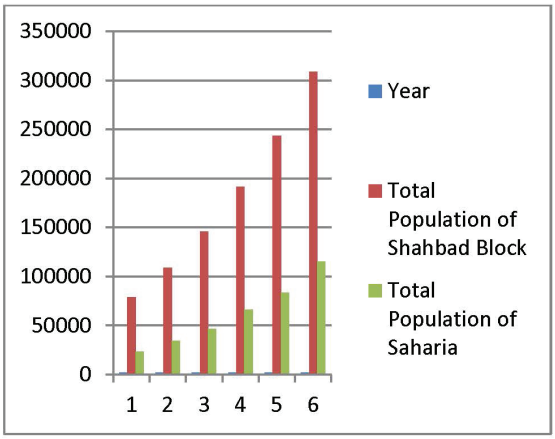
Distribution of population The Saharia landscape study area of the Saharias population includes Shahbad tehsil and kishanganj tehsil. Here total Saharia population comes to about 1,15,129 by the end of 2011. The number of villages, have less than one hundred population are 75 (31 villages in Shahbad and 44 villages in Kishanganj tehsil) second order the villages which have more than hundred population are 190 (90 villages of Shahbad and 100 villages of Kishanganj.

Table 1: Population of Saharia Landscape (Shahbad Block) 1961-2001

Year	Total Population of Shahbad Block	Total Population of Saharia	Decade variation per cent Saharia	Annual growth rate per cent Saharai
1961	78,965	23,299	-	-
1971	1,09,067	34,619	+48.58	+4.85
1981	1,45,733	46,607	+34.60	+3.46
1991	1,91,373	65,861	+41.31	+4.13
2001	2,43,264	83,228	+26.37	+2.64
2011	3,08,925	1,15,129	+38.33	+3.83

Source: District gazetteers & census.gov.in

Thus, the total number of the villages in entire Sahariya landscape in 335. But 70 villages are classified in the category of uninhabited section and without Saharia population. 335 vilage 2001 has been increase to 435 in 2011.



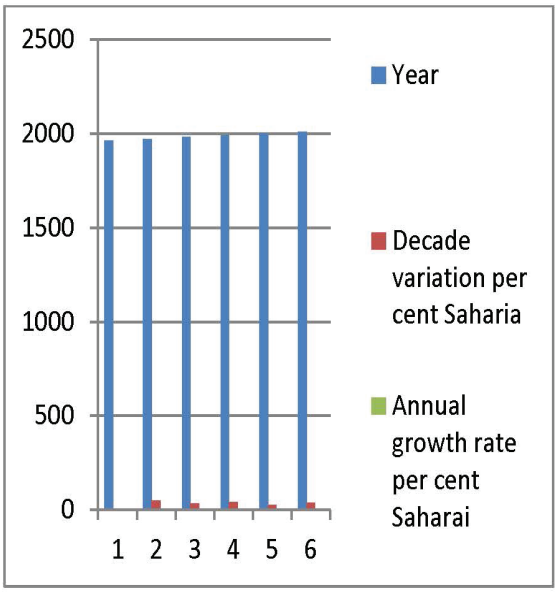


Fig. 1: Decade Variation and growth rate percent in Shahbad Block

Sex composition not only acts as a determinant of population growth, but it also reflects the effects of birth death and migration of population in any region. Any economic, social or cultural planning for regional development cannot be carried out without the consideration of sex composition. The demographic analysis of sex ratio shows the number of males per thousand female in any geographical unit. The following table shows that the sex ratio in the area is 926 but it may be noted 972 in Shahbad and 980 in Kishanganj. Low sex ratio of Shahbad shows that a large number of Saaharias of the tehsil are working in urban center of Baran and other urban ccenters of M.P.

Table 2: Sex composition in Saharia Landscape- Rajasthan

(1981-11) Year	Shahbad		Kishanganj		Total Area	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1981	9795	9522	14058	13232	972	941
1991	14992	13837	19034	17998	923	946
2001	18866	17946	23890	22526	951	942
2011	27800	27013	30937	29379	972	980

Source: Census Atlas Kishanganj, Shahbad, 1981-2011

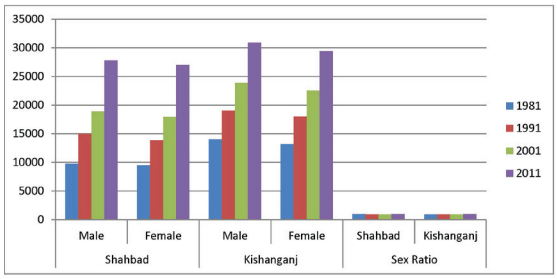


Fig. 2: Sex compostion Shahbad and kishanganj in Rajasthan (1981-2011)

Literacy

Literacy is one of the important aspect of economic development. It is a cultural attribute of population pertaining to the capability of the society to read and write. Population geographer treats judge the socio-economic development an area.

The concept of literacy varies from country to country. It often refers to minimum level of literacy skills. This minimum level of skills varies from ability to communicate orally, to make a check of a variety of difficult arithmetical computations. The present study is an attempt does analyse the historical approach of tribal literacy in Saharia landscape.

Before 1959 the literacy rate in the Saharia community was nil. For the first time in 1959, one Saharia boys hostel, with the capacity of 100 students started in Shahbad. After that two hostels each with the capacity of 40 students also started in Nahargarh and Kasbathana. In 1960-61 one primary school started in Penawada village but it could not developed because the student's upto 5^{th} class were not given the admission in the hostel as the Government passed the law. Though the government was giving Rs 15 as scholarship to each Saharia Student but They could not turn up to the schools due to thir poverty and other limitations.

At that time there were 110 primary school in the development block of Shahbad and Kishanganj but Saharias were least interested for education because of appositions of non-tribals. In these circumstances one tribal residential school, Shahbad started at the Gujarat Pattern in 1960. It was very helpful at that time for the spread of education amount the Saharia children. Thus three hostels, one residential school and one Bal Sewa Kendra, are working in Shahbad, Kasbathana and Nahargrh area where more than 600 hundred Saharia students are getting educationand more than 6000 have completed.

Thus the literacy rate of Saharia community was nil in 1960 that has increased to about 11 per cent by 1991.

Economic and Social Status of Shahrias

At present the economic activities of Saharias in the forest land are extraction of honey, Catchu making, Coal making, Gums collection from "Khair", "Dhouda", "Jumrasi", Achar, Karai, Chedi trees. Collection of Awala and other seasonal frutits roots, tubers and leaves also support the economy of Saharias. The Govt. of of Rajasthan gave the direction to "Rajas Sungh" in 1977-78 that all the forest items should be collected by tribals at the Govt. prescribed rates. Saharias come to Baran town to sell their forest products.

Most of the cottage industries proposed required plantation and alied works for which a large numver of man days employment would be created. The Saharia landscape is mainly associated with forest based village industrial writs, only

(i) 'Dona-Pattal' – The cottage industry in running in Shahbad, Kishanganj, Kasbathana.

(ii) Wooden Toys – Mainly confined in Kasba Thana in Shahabad tehsil.

(iii) Hone – Honey is prepared in Shahabad, Kasba Thana, Shergarh

(iv) Bidi industry – Bidi work is done in Kishanganj area.

Saharias are working in all these industrial. At present 4 per cent of the total workers are engaged in industries sector.

They traditionally practiced shifting cultivation hunting, gathering pastoralism, fishing, extraction of honey, catchu-making, coal making, food gathering, livestock etc. and sometimes also adopted nomadic quit. They have quit their traditional activities due to deforestation. The proactive of agriculture on a large scale started in this tract in the twentieth century when under the new land started in this tract in the twentieth century when under the new land system, skilled agriculturalists were invited to cultivate land. They were sowing Johwar and Bajra by hand with the help of digging are in small patches of land. This position remained intake up to 1952-53. As soon as the Government stopped the cutting of the forest and adopted other protective measures, the Saharias become helpless because they got very

little and unfertile and according to the new settlement. There are two main crop season in the district, Kharif and Rabi. According to 2011 46% Labour was engaged in agriculture filed. In the present time, most of the Saharia have become daily wage earner instead of their traditional way of occupation. It is a transition phase for them, wherein a handful of powerful.

The Saharias pursue their indigenous socio-cultural rules, customs and norms which affects their maternal health care system. Shaharias suffered due to land alienation and rehabilitation.

Proposed future development plans for the Saharia landscape

Various meansures are considered nececessary to augment the tribal economy viz cottage village industries, mining, Khadi Gramodhyog, horticulture, tribal art and craft, etc. The Government or Tribal Development Co-operative Federations will have to provide necessary financial support for infrastructure viz. Training in managerial and technical skills, credit facilities marketing and others. It is suggested that the proper integrated approach should be evolved expeditiously involving various activities or recommendations the future development plan for the Saharia landscape and inhabitants as given below:

1. Protection against alienation of land should be extended to tribals by making suitable provisions in the existing laws.
2. The tribals who are displaced due to implementation of various projects such as irrigation projects, industrial projects, mining, for setting up of wild life sanctuaries etc. should comprehensively be rehabilitated before the starting the projects.
3. A massive programme of creative awareness among tribals about their rights in land, provisions of the acts as mobilizing traditional tribal community organizations for protecting their interest in land should be undertaken.
4. With the reckless deforestation from the tribal land, the tribal families are now facing the problems. There is a urgent need for involving a multiprolonged approach to deal with the problems related to forest land development and tribal welfare in the country by involving the tribal energy for the successful implementation of afforestation schemes in the area.
5. Establishment of demonstration-cum-training courses in the tribal land of Shahbad and Kishanganj area for adoption modern and sophisticated techniques in horticulture and forestry.
6. Establishment of forest based cottage industries for additional income viz. rope making, mat making, basket making, toys, handmade paper, matchboxes, pencils, slates and other domestic items.
7. Proper training for bee keeping.
8. Setting up of gum processing units.
9. Collection and prosessing of medical herbs like ‘Safed musli’ ‘Sarpa gandha’.
10. Increasing number of poultry farms in the area.
11. The Saharias who are living in low-lying area would be given training to develop the fisheries.
12. The tribals who live amids nature have a gift of energy store house. The Rajasthan State Sports Council should provide the proper coaching sports like race swimming, long jump, high jump, also kho-kho and kabaddi which do not require any equipment. The camps should be held to know the tribal potential in sports and games.
13. Centers to promote the tribal painting dance and music also be started in the Saharia landscape.

Conclusion

Literacy and proper protection of saharias by government agencies is the most important attributes of all integrated approaches we have diccused above and are essential for their economic status upliftment and other aspects of development. The sharias are distinct from the general pubic so they will be requiring different

and special policies and progrrames according to their needs , which will ensure conservation of their culture and focus on making them skillful and littrate to ensure to make them self sustainable and self aware. Emphasis over education and to make them aware about existing schemes will also help them to avoid their exploitation. Foregoing research and analysis has also shown environmental disturbance in the region, which is also affecting the living of communities and the people which has to be also checked through multiprolonged approch by proper immplementation of aforrestration schemes in interest of tibal and land forest welfare.

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