



An Ecological Study of the Bhil Tribe in Rajasthan

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Abstract- This study was done with forty days experience of staying and learning with the community. Bhils are listed as indigenous people of the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan—all in the western Deccan regions and central India—as well as in Tripura in far-eastern India, on the border with Bangladesh. Bhils are divided into a number of endogamous territorial divisions, which in turn have a number of clans and lineages. Most Bhils now speak the language of the region they reside in, such as Marathi, Gujarati or a Hindustani dialect. This study includes different dimensions of this tribe. It clearly describes the social, cultural, economic, and the ecological dimension of the tribe. The information are mainly collect through participatory approach, where an active participation of both community and researcher make this study very rich.

Keywords- Bhil, Ecosystem Study, Tribal study, Rajasthan, India

INTRODUCTION: Ecosystem study of the village gives the deep understanding about the village and their surroundings; it includes different dimensional studies which is done through close observation and community participation. According to a study of Tripathy (2020) a village is a geographically distinguishable place which is habitat of some human beings who lives in groups called family are socially, culturally and economically interrelated with each other. According to the data of census 2011 of India, 68.84 per cent Indians are stayed in village which is around 833.1 million people live in 640,867 different villages. Among them nearly 104 million people which is 8.6 per cent of the total Indian population is belonging from the tribal community.

According to Wikipedia Bhils or Bheels are an Indo- Aryan speaking ethnic group in West India. They speak the Bhil languages, a subgroup of the Western Zone of the Indo-Aryan languages. As of 2013, Bhils were the largest tribal group in India Bhils are listed as indigenous people of the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan—all in the western Deccan regions and central India—as well as in Tripura in far-eastern India, on the border with Bangladesh. Bhils are divided into a number of endogamous territorial divisions, which in turn have a number of clans and lineages. Most Bhils now speak the language of the region they reside in, such as Marathi, Gujarati or a Hindustani dialect.

Each village and tribe have their unique culture and their individual problems related to that area and their surroundings. To stay there and put themselves in that situation get good exposure to understand them and their surrounding deeply. Ecosystem study of any village give good exposure to understand the day to day life of that area people, their life style, their major problems and issues, adept with them and adapt their good habits which they already practicing in their life. Ecosystem study is able to give great encouragement to growth of Indian society. Village studies are helping in planning reconstructions of not only rural infrastructure but also rural society. Village visit is essential to understand them deeply and make themselves to understand them at their situation in that position where they currently stay. It gives the actual ground reality how much actual resources reach at the ground or zero level who is genuine entitled person of any government policy. It also good to get what is the opportunity at the local level which they are lacking at that place due to the lack of awareness.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS: Chhapra village comes under charakni panchayat in GangarTalai block, previously comes under Bagidora block of Banswara District under the Udaipur sub division of Rajasthan. This village share their border with Gujarat. This village is situated 60km faraway from their District Banswara and 550km from the state capital Jaipur. There is no post office in Gangartalai for the postal work they have to visit Bagidora which is 30km far away from GangarTalai. Total population in this village is 1117 out of which 555 is male and 559 is female. Total household in this village is 187. This finding is matching with another research of Tripathy and Khan (2018) that the female population in a tribal area is more than the male population.

SOCIAL DIMENSION: Social dimension focusses on the social structure of the village and the people interconnection or relations with one another. Every human is different from each other it is the society and their norms and their culture and their tradition interlinked with each other. The smallest unit of any society starts with the family, slowly generation to generation it spreader and converted in hamlet. Hamlet to village, village to panchayat. Group of panchayat form a block and so on. Society also have different dimensions like caste, class, gender, Demography, Health, Education, Languages, Family Structure and so on.

Clan: Bhil community have their own clans in which they all are divided among them i.e. Garasiya, Diama, Katara, Rathor, Masar, Bariya, Tamboliya, Bhuriya. In this village majority of the clans are Daima, Rathor and Garasiya. Katara, Masar, Tamboliya and Bhuriya are in minority but there is no any discrimination in between them that they are in majority and other are in minority they all live together and invite all in the any family function.

Education: It is one of the biggest tool to fight against poverty. It is the key to success to any human being. Government also give priority to education made free and compulsory education to each and every child of our country till std. VIII. Most of the backward class people till now not understand the importance of education and they have to suffer at each and every moment of their life and have to pay for it by struggling whole life in deprivation of their basic needs. Chhapra is tribal village in GangarTalai, Banswara district of Rajasthan. They don't give importance to education. It is not in the priority list of the villagers. Children went school as per their own wish only primary level school is available in the village after that children went 3 km in neighboring village till std. VIII then they used to go 6-7km for their further studies. After that if they want to continue their study, they have to go to their district Banswara which is 60 km away from village. This is the real situation of rural India, in the study of Tripathy and Khan (2018) about a village named *Keelamattiyam* similar type of problems were described there.

Language: Language is important to acknowledge people of any geographical area. People can easily classify on the basis of their language. Bhil people use Bhili language but here in this region *Vagari* is the main language spoken by the village people. It is also one of the Bhili dialects. There are total 36 identified dialects for *Bhil* community differs by region. Bhili language is based on Gujarati, but it gradually on the basis of time slowly merge into wider spoken language like Marathi in the south eastern part and Rajasthan in the northwest.

Official language here is Hindi. They read and write in Hindi all the official work is done in Hindi. Those who is literate can easily speak in Hindi. Illiterates can understand Hindi but they give response in *Vagri*. Since village share their Border Gujarat they also understand Gujarati. Slang they use in *Vagri* are mixed with Gujarati. They are well aware of Gujarati language as compare to Hindi Even illiterate also know Gujarati. They work in Gujarat they spoke in Gujarati and listen Gujarati song as compare to Hindi.



Transportation: Village is connected to the link road which connects the market with the help of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sharak. Distance between link road and village is 2.5km. Transport facility is not good van come from another place with full of person there is no sit available in the van. Person sit on the roof of the van and hang out side of the van. Road is not good so many breakers and small pits are on the main road. It causes frequently small accident happens by the bike. In current there is no major severe accident happens like death and permanent disability. Inside the village there is no permanent *pucca* road only main entrance in the village is *pucca* which is made under Gram Sarak Yajana. Connectivity between block and district is also not good only 3-4 private small city buses run in the whole day and it took 2-3 hours to reach their Destination point. They are totally isolated from main Stream. Transportation also play a major role in the isolation from the main stream. Now people become aware and purchase Bike for their convenience for the market.

HEALTH DIMENSION: Health is one of the essential part of now a day of any human being condition of health is not so good in the village not only in village health status of the district is not so good. To understand the health condition, did sample survey in the village and visited *Aanganwari* in the village and at the block level only one community health center (CHC). Collected so many details regarding the health status and awareness of the local area people. Most of the people are unaware about their health condition they believe on Bengali doctor also who is available in the village itself. According to the study of Khan and Tripathy (2020) of a village of Odisha same type of situation and the issues were observed. In the sample survey it is observed that most of the house hold spent on an average approx. Rs500 to Rs1000 monthly on their health. They didn't believe on Government hospital doctor treatment. They took treatment from the outside doctor in the city. In Gangar Talai as per observation there is no any single MBBS Doctor. All medical shop person open small clinic inside the shop itself. They give medicine as per their own choice whatever they wish without any medical perception.

Hospital: Block level hospital is one of the major and primary source to the local public of any locality. It should be affordable and easily assessable to all community people. Herein Gangar Talai Community Health Centre (CHC) is available for public their infrastructure is good but there is lack of staff. There is only one doctor and 2 nurse and some more staff who maintain hospital. On an average 100 patient visited daily in the hospital in the off season and in the season more than 300 patient visited in one day. Majority of them are female and children.

Family planning camp conducted in the CHC Gangar Talai regularly in a different time interval of 2-3 month, this month camp is conducted in the hospital itself in that camp 34 patient shows their interest out of which gynaecologists rejected 17 patients because 7 patients is again pregnant and 10 have a baby of less than 3 months. Each woman has 3-4 children who come for surgery and the age gap between their children is between 13-17 month and maximum 21 month. ANM and aasha worker bring them from the villages of local area, they are unaware about the cause and effect of surgery when asked to them they came here by their own interest they reply aashadidi told if not interested to give birth more baby then have to go with small surgery and for that you also got money of amount Rs 3000. They were more willing for money not for their surgery and their cause and effect. They blindly believe on Asha worker what she told them they listen her. Most of the Delivery is done mostly in the hospital for that they got encouragement amount of Rs 2500 for the girl and Rs 1400 for the boy. They got benefits under the state government scheme Bhamashahh Yojana.

Sanitation: Sanitation is the major issue in this village Even though most of the household got toilet subsidy benefits under *swachh* Bharat Mission. Most of house built their toilet and bathroom. Some of



24 them only made bathroom and show toilet in government list and get benefitted but only few house or house member use these bathroom and toilet. Even tough woman and old age person also not use their own toilet. They give excuse because of water scarcity and not in habit. Some senior citizen told it's not in their culture whole life they use to go outside their children make toilet to claim government money.

Safe drinking water: Water is one of the most essential part of any human being. It is necessary for everyone in their whole life without water no one can aspect life in that particular area. In this village water is one of the major problem Each and every house hold women and children fetching water in the morning as well as in the evening for the cooking, drinking and other necessary use. They carry water from some government hand pump and wells nearby their house. No one house has their personal hand pump some households have their own open well. Most of the wells and hand pump dry after March and then they have to face more problem related to water they have to travel long distance for fetching water from the wells where there is water. Taste and quality of water hard contains harmful elements also with it. During the problem analysis villagers tell water and their quality is the major issue in this village. Fortunately no one face any type of disease due to water. During the discussion they told about water, they are in fear regarding to water, there is no water also during the summer season even for drinking there is little water available in some well or government hand pump which is at the lower level.

ECONOMICAL DIMENSION: The study of Economical dimension of a rural area is to understand the information about the different topics like livelihood activity, poverty status, vulnerability level, access to financial and non-financial services, infrastructure and its access (housing types, water facilities, roads, dairy, Ration shop) to know about how are they working and living there and on which basis. All these clarifications are discussed below from the understanding and on the basis of primary data collected.

Livestock availability:

In this village major assitional occupation is livestock rearing. Like goat, hen, cow, buffalo and ox. They rear animals but they don't take seriously in each and every house there is limited amount of livestock but not sell their goat and hen in organised way. There is no nearby animal market and also there is no any nearby big market where they go to sell their animals. Cow is also small and not producing milk in more quantity. Mostly they utilize livestock and their produce in their personal use and use for exchange purpose not focus on their sell for the earning purpose.

Isolation: Not only is this village this whole area isolated from the main stream. No one takes care to them and also no such facility is there to connect them in the main stream. There is no opportunity nearby to get benefitted and come out from the poverty. They are totally cut-off from the main stream they can't able to fulfil their daily basic needs.

Income: Economic condition of people in this village is not so good, yearly on an average income of 70% household is in between Rs.50000 to Rs100000. Rest 25% household condition is worst their average yearly income is below Rs50000. These both group are under the burden of liabilities. They took 2-3 loan at a same time from the formal and informal sector. In this area there is so many finance company is available to provide loan and recover in weekly, 15 and monthly. In the informal sector they charged 10% interest monthly. Here poorer become poor and rich become richer. Only 5% population here is good in survival condition many of them in these 5% also took loan but they invest their money in a judicious place in a meaningful way to expend their business. They took loan from the formal sector or nearby banks.

Inequality: There is no such inequality in terms of cast clans and gender. Some work is segregated in terms of gender like fetching water and kitchen work is mostly done by the women. Men take care of work outside



the home like agriculture and labour work but woman also participate in agriculture and labour work.

CULTURAL DIMENSION:

Bhil People are well aware regarding their culture. They are Indo Aryans. They have their unique culture. These are known for Pithora painting. Ghoomar is the traditional folk dance of Bhil. Ghoomar is the symbol of womanhood. Man perform Gair which is religious in the month of July and August. Like the other tribes such as Asur and Bedia Bhil tribe also worship their Ancestor who died. According to the study of Mondal and Tripathy (2019) and Khan and Tripathy (2018) tribes are the worshipers of their ancestor or nature.

Marriage: Marriage is the important part of the Bhil tribes lives. It is one of the auspicious moment for them. They think god made pair during the birth itself to both of them boy as well as girl to whom they are married to each other. Before the marriage they have to pass by tough part they have to find bride and groom whose family gotra shouldn't match not only their bride and groom family their maternal family *Gotra* also shouldn't match. Here dowry system is opposite groom side have to give dowry to the bride side. Groom side person also give jewelry to the Bride side family for their future wife or *Bahu*. Amount how much they have to pay is decided by brideside village member and their relative. On an average it is about to 1 lakh cash with 1-2 kg jewelry (mostly silver).

Food Pattern: The main food here is Maize. They eat chapatti of Maize with green vegetable which grow in their kitchen garden. They took food twice in a day. Both time same food maize chapatti and vegetable and Pulse which grow in their land. They call maize chapatti "Rota". Most of the person grow vegetable in their kitchen garden during the season but during the off season those who have water facility grow vegetable in their kitchen garden rest have to purchase from the market or cook Pulses in place of vegetable. In the morning between 08AM to 9AM usually they took tea without milk or goat milk tea. Most of the household have no milking animal. They have goat, hen and ox. They took food during the lunch time between 11AM to 12AM in the noon. Once a day time and in the evening time took dinner directly between 7PM to 8PM. On any special occasion like any festival and any function in the house, they prepare Dall Bati or Rice with Dall. Some sweet item and pakoris. During any special occasion they spent more money on the food and clothes.

Way to collect money from the groom side is little more interesting before marriage they have to conduct program in their home and invite all relative and village persons. Each invited members have to give money to the groom for their marriage called *Nautra*. These collected moneys have to give to the bride side what they have demanded if these money is less what the bride side is demanded it is not accepted. Groom side have to arrange all amount of money whatever demanded by bride side even by selling their piece of land. Whole marriage ceremony is conducted in the home of both side it is expensive mostly for the groom side they go to give dowry as well as have to conduct program in the house. Choice of food is decided by the family member of the groom side it is not by the villagers mostly they serve rice and Pulse or wish or efficiency of the person.

Festivals: They celebrate all festival which is celebrated by the Hindus like Holi, Diwali, Druga puja and so on apart from these they also have their regional festival like *Akkhateej* and *Purnima*.

Makar Sankranti: This festival celebrated in January month. On this day they use to eat a product made up of *teel* and sugarcane *jagery* like *teelpapri*.

MahaShivratri: on this day they offer Pooja to god Shiva in their home as well as in the temple on this day even men including women took fasting. They also conduct 2 day Meel near the village temple and celebrate Shivratri

Holi: Holi usually celebrated in the month of March. From this day Hindu calendar is consider as a



new year. Holi is the festival of colour. They use to play with colour and enjoy festival and welcome Hindu New Year by celebrating Holi.

Akhateej: It is their regional festival on this day women took fasting and offering Pooja to their god for the more life span of their husband.

Rakshabandhan: This festival is celebrated in the month of August on the Sawan Purnima. On this day sister tie ribbon (Rakhi) on the ankle of her brother for their safety.

Druga Pooja: Druga Pooja is celebrated in the month of October. They use to worship Ambeemaa even in their house daily. It is celebrated on the victory of Demon. This festival is celebrated 10days in this area.

Diwali: Diwali is celebrated in the last of October or starting of November. On this day cook different varieties of foods and sweets in the home and offer Pooja to Goddess Laxmi and God Ganesa together. It is belief that on this day goddess give blessing to their devotees to live long and happy life. On this day all person decorates their house with lightening and Colourful Rangoli. Fire crackers in front of their house and enjoy.

ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION:-

Climate: Normally here 3 seasons are there summer, winter, Rainy season but due to the uncertain weather and climate change they have to face problem sometimes in the summer and winter season rain happens and destroy their crops. Normally here summer season is dominating. Here summer season starts from mid of February to march continues till august and September in between rainy season come from July to September but due to the climate change Rain doesn't happens in these duration which is disastrous to them. Since this area is approx. 250meter high from the sea level here cold is also severe in last December and the starting of January month. Average temperature in the summer is 38-degree Celsius -42 Degree Celsius. Hottest month is June during this month average temperature in this area is 40-45-degree Celsius. Coldest month is last Dec to mid Jan during these duration average temp. is 8-12-degree Celsius.

Natural Resources: In the village Chhappara on the name of natural resources one Canal is there in that sometimes they got water in it from Aug to till Jan if good rain happens. Some bushy plants are there and some herbs and serves are there. They are cutting the plants for making land and use wood for their kitchen fire. Due to the scarcity of water plants are died in the summer season and in the rainy season if rain happens it grows in the barren unused land. Villagers also use some plans as a medicine couldn't understand but it is observation based. They also didn't able to explain it in more clear way.

Weather: As per the timeline there is change in pattern of weather before that there is depend on natural rainfall now also they are depend on rainfall. During that time there is certain rainfall but now a days it is totally uncertain. Rain will happens in anytime and destroy their valuable crops. Due to the change in weather they have to make a change in their livelihood and apart from agriculture they have to do lot of work for their livelihood. Due to the frequently uncertain whether change and major loss in their crop pattern they lose the trust, from the agriculture activity they can develop themselves and made self-Sustainable.

There is on an average 40-43 degree Celsius temperature is in the summer Season and uncertain rain happens in the cropping season. It is less rain but enough to destroy the crops because with rain it carry high speed wind and storm together destroy the whole crop.

Conclusion: From the above findings we get lot of insights about the Bhil tribe. They have a unique culture and free way of living. But there is lot of scope in the field agriculture, skilled and unskilled labour. They have to do technically animal rearing. It is observed that they do animal rearing is only done for the survival activity they have to do it for business mind- set to the upliftment of their



livelihood. While staying in the village the food habit was also closely observed, the findings is like people are taking limited vegetables as the market availability of vegetables is very low. In such case small kitchen garden in a home scale is recommended. There is need of awareness because major problem in this village is addiction problem and open defecation. They are involve in vulnerable occupation where they went to do labour work in search of job in the industry and factory. They don't have knowledge on personal healthcare and hygiene practices. They have a belief on Superstition. If something happens internally inside the body of the person they 1st went to Bengali doctor then after they meet with Doctor. To come out from that they need to be training and awareness program in the village.

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