

PREFACE

A student who is pursuing his study for the degree of Ph.D. is required to submit a thesis based on research through fieldwork as part of doctoral study at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. As a student of Sociology Major, I believed that study of a rural community or caste would be more relevant contribution to social sciences. I am fortunate to get Prof. P. S. Choondawat as my supervisor. I met him several times in order to finalize the topic for my research. After several discussions, the topic was finalized and we decided to undertake the study under the title 'A Sociological Study of the Changing Status of the *Kshatriyas* in Gujarat' (With Special Reference to the *Bhal-Nalkantha* Region). We thought that it would be possible to get accurate information which would also be closer to truth because my birth place was located in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* region and I belonged to the Hindu *Karadiya* Rajput.

I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Choondawat for his guidance in making me pass the preliminary tests necessary for registration as a research student. I also feel a bit proud for this but I think I became worthy of being his student only due to this pride.....

I believe he inspired me removing my laziness and enabled me to make my research come to his expectations. He corrected my linguistic errors, gave me benefit of his vast experience and shaped my thoughts. I am thankful to my teacher because I have grown mature enough to take up my study by his blessings.

I will be indebted to Prof. Choondawat forever for accepting me as his student as a result of which I could fulfil my dream. I have developed mentally because Prof. Choondawat made me struggle at the initial stage and I feel proud for getting him as a teacher and I am quite happy that I got this opportunity to express my indebtedness. Research requires a scientific attitude and impartiality. Structuring of the process of research is as important as the background for research, problem fixing, selecting the topic, special inquiry as well as the familiarity with the area of research. In the present time, the level of tendency towards research and fieldwork has been increasing. The possibilities of clearer and more accurate results are more in natural sciences but there is man at the base of social sciences and man is the primary unit of human society.

Moreover, thoughts, speech and behaviour keep constantly changing, and therefore, it is said 'human life is like the flow of a river.'

Research begins right at the moment a researcher begins thinking about taking up research and it takes up an actual form when the thoughts of research are given physical form.

India is a vast agricultural country and majority of population is spread over in villages. *Varna* system has existed in the Indian society and caste system came into existence as a result of this *Varna* system. Various groups and organization of these castes have started to make an impact on the political system.

As said earlier, importance of castes has remained special and it play an incredible role in the political field. Kakasaheb Kalelkar has said in his book of his travels that India is a parental home of castes. Castes prove to be effective in strengthening social system, in fighting against a problem and in social as well as economic development. Indian society has been distributed into castes and sub-castes while Ancient society was divided on the basis of *Varna* system in which there were four *Varna* such as the Brahmin, the *Kshatriya*, the *Vaishya* and the *Shudra*. Initially, this *Varna* system was based on occupations.

The Brahmin were supposed to perform rituals, give knowledge to the society, the *Kshatriya* were supposed to provide security to society and the country and protect them, the *Vaishya* had to perform the duty to stabilize the economic system which was the base of *Varna* system and see that it worked properly and take society to economic prosperity. The *Shudra* were supposed to serve people of the three *Varna* mentioned earlier. With the passage of time, castes came to be decided on the basis of birth instead of duties. Indian philosophers, Sociologists have been trying to form a casteless society and remove the caste barriers but in vain. There is an element in caste that gives inspiration and backing to society for leading better life.

Family is the primary unit of caste and it begets a permanent membership of the caste.

Caste maintains its unique form even in the changing social conditions. Caste system is a structural network of a number of social relations and therefore, it becomes extremely important to take up its research study in social field. Caste is thus an

important factor to decide the mutual interrelations between an individual and another individual as well as among different castes.

In India, crores of people following different religions and cultures live. Large groups of people following different religions and cultures have been coming to India for the spreading one's own religion and culture. For example, the *Aryans* came and settled in the Indus valley which is now in Pakistan. Later, the Dutch, the French and the British entered India and began spreading their ideas/culture. The British administrative system, their life style, architectural structures and so on are the bright examples of the British people even in the present. The *Parsi* (the Persians), too, had entered Gujarat for spreading their religion who mixed with the people of the state like sugar in milk.

In the present time, one of the reasons to study caste system is the changing form of the caste system in the Indian society. In the present, the flow and form of caste has changed and it has become more organized and stronger than what it was in the past. The vertical organization has decreased while the horizontal unity has increased. Hostels, periodicals, marriage bureaus of the caste, events like community marriages organized by the castes, community conventions besides educational facilities on the basis of caste, youth associations-all of these suggest that the organization of caste as a social unit has been growing. Thus, the horizontal organization of caste has increased/consolidated.

In the traditional caste system caste had formulated certain strict codes for people of community such as restrictions on food and drinks, those on occupations and so on in order to maintain its position in society. It was the duty of all members of the community/caste to obey these rules. Today, these rules have disappeared. There have been many changes in the functions because of time and circumstances.

I furnish here the details which I have presented in different chapters here in this Preface.

- Introduction

The present study is a sociological study of the *Karadiya* Rajput community. The data collected during the research has been presented in the following chapters.

1. Chapter-1: Research Methodology and Planning of the Research:
In this chapter, introductory beginning, form, background of the research methodology, selection of the research topic, research problem, deciding the research area, concepts of research, fieldwork for the area of research, selection of the research units, methods of fieldwork (study techniques), data collection, review of reference literature, hypothesis of research, significance of research, objectives of research, interpretation of data, data analysis and classification, tabulation, main aspects of research, limitations of study, experiences of fieldwork and conclusion have been discussed in detail.
2. Chapter-2: Historical and Geographical Background of the Research Field (Area) (Introduction of the Research Field (Area)):
In this chapter, historical and geographical introduction of Gujarat, of Ahmedabad, of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area and the conclusion have been discussed.
3. Chapter-3: Origin, History and introduction of the Rajputs (*Kshatriyas*):
In the present chapter, introduction, origin of the Rajput (the *Kshatriya*) and their history, the origin and history of the *Karadiya* Rajput community, the peculiarities of the *Karadiya* Rajput people, life of the *Karadiya* Rajput people and conclusion to the discussion are included.
4. Chapter-4: Physical Culture (Physical Resources or Property) and Economical Life (Economical Structure or Economical System):
This chapter contains discussion of the Physical Culture (Physical Property) and Economic Life (Economic Structure or System) of the *Karadiya* Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* region.
5. Chapter-5: Social Life (Social Structure or Social Organization (System)):
In this chapter, introduction to the social life-family system, social status of the community, marriage system, social customs and norms and so on have been discussed. It ends with a conclusion to the discussion of the social life of the *Karadiya* Rajput.
6. Chapter-6: Religious and Cultural Life:

In this chapter begins with an introduction to the religious and cultural life of the *Karadiya* Rajput community. It discusses the meaning and significance of religion, worship, various gods and goddesses, worship of Nature, worship of ancestors, religious beliefs about birds and beasts, worship of agricultural tools, worship and religion in different aspects of life, the Hindu traditions of *samskara*, superstitions, beliefs about the soul and ghosts, black magic and the role of the *Bhuva* (the exorcist), beliefs regarding dreams, beliefs regarding the good and the evil, beliefs about the good and bad omen, tendency to visit temples, tendency to have a Guru (a religious mentor), tendency towards fasts and religious *vrata* (vows), tendency towards non-vegetarian food, beliefs regarding tattoos, rites on the occasion of death, ritual of *chaulkriya* or *babari* (shaving of the first male child's head), the sati tradition, beliefs about the good and bad deeds and heaven and hell, tendency towards untouchability, religious festival and celebrations, folk-*vrata* (vows), temples, *madh* (monastery), group prayers and story-telling from the scriptures, pilgrimages, different sects, folk literature of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, programs for entertainment, folk dances and fairs, changes in the religious and cultural life. The chapter ends with a conclusion to the discussion.

7. Chapter-7: Community Board (*Gyatipanch*), Leadership and Political Life
(Organization):

In this chapter, introduction, form and functions of the Community Board, traditional leadership and political awareness, socio-political position of the *Kshatriya* in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, change in the caste system during the British rule, change in the caste system after the Independence, new/emerging forms of the caste in the modern India, change in the *Kshatriya* community as a traditionally dominating community, change in the position of the *Kshatriya* as a dominating community and so on. The chapter ends with a conclusion to the discussion.

8. Chapter-8: Education, Health, Changes (Trends or Streams) and New
Tendencies (Attitudes):

In this chapter, introduction, education, health, changes, new tendencies and a conclusion to the discussion of these matters are included.

9. Chapter-9: Findings of the Study:

In this chapter, Introduction, Research Problem, Objectives of the Study, Hypothesis of the Study, Concepts (Definitions) of the Terms, Area (Field) of the Research, Methods (Tools) of the Study, Sample Method, Observation Method, Interview Method, Significance of the Study, Limitations of the Study, Classification and analysis of the Study, Planning of the Research and Conclusion are presented.

- Conclusion
- References

In the present research study, the elder of my community and other citizens have given me cooperation, affection and love. So, they have given their contribution to try to make my research better by giving frank opinions about the changes that have taken place in the Rajput community and to what extent they have stuck to the old traditions and customs. How can I forget to express my gratitude to them?

I am sure scholars, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and social workers will like the present study and find it useful. Personally, I have found the study beneficial in adding to my knowledge. I rightly expect that it will undoubtedly be useful to all readers.

Date: 21-12-2017

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