



A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF TRIBAL RELIGIOSITY LEVEL IN NANDURBAR DISTRICT (M.S.)

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Abstract

For all the tribes, the religious concepts, terminologies, and practices are different and various, but all the members of these groups contribute to somewhat which is common in them, they are below regular stress from the main prepared religions, like Hinduism and Christianity. Some of this force is intentional, as the missionaries work among tribal group to gain converts. Most of the pressure, however, comes from the process of integration within a national, political and economic system that brings tribes into increasing contact with other groups and different, prestigious belief systems. In general only those tribes that remain geographically isolated in hill and forest regions are able to retain their traditional cultures and religions for longer periods. Those tribes that make the transition away from hunting and gathering and toward agriculture, usually as low-status laborers, find their ancient religious forms in decay and their place filled by practices of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, or Buddhism. This paper is an attempt to understand the spatial variation in tribal religiosity and its co-relation to education and other factors.

Keywords: Tribal area, religion, religiosity, spirituality, faith, superstitions, education.



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INTRODUCTION:-

Religion has deep rooted in Indian social system and has a strong bearing on various social parameters. In the past all the events in the society were attributed to religion. Various kinds of superstitions and myths were there. Religion has a very strong bearing on the economic activities of the people too. Gradually with the increasing level of education the attitude towards religion is transforming. People are becoming more liberal, less superstitious and less orthodox. They are now more receptive to new ideas and practices (Noor, 2000, p. 79). Religion is an important parameter to find out the socio-economic composition of the population living in the region. The tribal people believe that their religions have narratives, symbols, traditions and sacred histories that are intended to give meaning to life.

Religiosity is very complex and delicate social element, its quantitative measurement is slightly difficult. However, a number of values loaded, simple questions were put to the

respondents of different socio-economic strata. The basic aim was to assess the changes in their traditional orthodox and believes in religion, superstitions and other such myths. As the questions were of different nature and character, accordingly the total religiosity of each respondents were worked out and they have been divided into three categories.

In fact, the issue of tribal identity is not something new or a very recent phenomenon. In one stage, tribal people preferred to follow the upper caste. In the process of Sanskritization, giving up many of their own traditional beliefs, values and customs just to include themselves in the Hindu fold. Since time immemorial, they live in isolation, observing a totally different value system, culture and life style, which have virtually remained unchanged since ancient times. Then with the rapids industrialization tribal people faced a different type of identity crisis. Change in their traditional economic spheres because of adopting many industrial jobs, resulted into the reorientation in tribal way of life with some structural and organizational changes too.

M.C. Beheras (ed.) *Tribal Religion: Change and Continuity* (2000) emphases on the syncretic religions of various tribal communities that have emerged over time, in spite of influences of propaganda and other dominant religions on tribal religious traditions, either in the process of symbiosis and acculturation, as Hinduism on tribal religions, or in superposition as Christianity on tribal religions. Such syncretism is seen in Milton S. Sangma (1987), H. Kamkenthang (1986, 1988), O.L. Snaitang (1993), Fr. J. Puthempurakal (1996) and various other local scholars works on the evangelization impact from 1840 till today, and how the Christian missionaries have positively contributed in the process of social change and modernization in general among the tribal people.

Glock and Stark (1965) have been influential in defining religious orientations, origins, and dimensions. Fukuyama (1960) examined four dimensions of religiosity that he identified as cognitive, cultic, creedal, and devotional, which are summarized in Cardwell (1980) Allport and Ross (1967) identified two basic dimensions of religiosity extrinsic and intrinsic. Lenski (1963) identified four different ways in which religiosity might be expressed associational, communal, doctrinal, and devotional. Religiosity affects not only specific demographic groups, but individuals as well. Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) wrote extensively about the individual effects of religiosity.

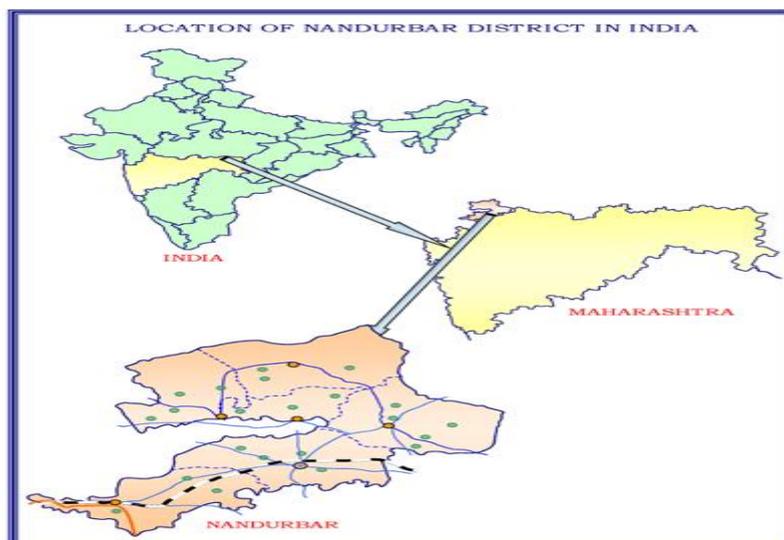
Attempting to describe the broadest range of religiosity, Bergan and Mc Conatha (2000) defined religiosity as a number of dimensions associated with religious beliefs and involvement. For this population, the aspects or dimensions of religiosity, such as private devotions and religious belief systems, may serve as more accurate measures of religiosity

(Ellison, 1991 Ellison, Gay, & Glass, 1989, Kristensen, Pedersen, & Williams, 2001). Other recent studies of religiosity stressed a multidimensional focus of religiosity that encompassed such concepts as the subjective, cognitive, behavioral, social, and cultural dimensions (Chumbler, 1996, Ellison, 1991, Ellison et al., 1989). Many researchers placed an emphasis on the dimension of religiosity that deals with religious knowledge (Chumbler, 1996; Fukuyama, 1960; Glock & Stark, 1965; Lenski, 1963), while only a few focused on the application of that knowledge (Allport & Ross, 1967; Ellison, 1991).

STUDY AREA:

Astronomically Nandurbar district extends between 21⁰ 0' to 22⁰ 03' north latitude and 73⁰47' to 74⁰47' east longitude. Nandurbar district lies in the north western part of Maharashtra. Nandurbar district was created with bifurcation of Dhule district on 1st July, 1998. The region is bounded by Dhule district on east and south. While on the west by Surat district of Gujrat state and to the north by Badwani and Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh . The Nandurbar district with a geographical area of 5034.23 sq.km. has an amorphous shape.

According to 2011 census Nandurbar district accommodates 16, 48,295 people with 69.28 percent of scheduled tribe population, which ranks first in the state with 39 tribal groups being accommodated in various tahasils of the region. Wide variations are found at the tahsil level in the Nandurbar region. Dhadgaon tahsil ranks first with 94.95 per cent tribal population, followed by Navapur, Akkalkuwa, Taloda Shahada and Nandurbar tahsils with 84.87, 84.76, 72.29, 48.61 and 40.82 per cent of total tribal population, respectively. Urban population is very low with 16.71 percent. One finds a close association between the high concentration of tribal population, religiosity and the geographical environment in certain tribal dominant areas.



OBJECTIVES

- To study the proportion of tribal Religiosity.
- To find out the distributional pattern of tribal Religiosity.
- To identify the factors affecting on changing tribal Religiosity.
- To examine and understand the various aspects of the religious life in the study region.

DATA BASE AND METHODOOGY:

For this study both qualitative and demographic data were collected using the methods of observation, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, group interview, case study, survey, census records, etc. Religious leaders of the village including the village head men and priests (*Bhagat, Ojha, Mantrika etc*) were interviewed to gather ample data on the religious affiliations of the people as a whole. As there are very few published documents on religion the interview guide technique was used to collect information as people's sense of history and perception are great value for such a study.

The study is based upon the secondary data as well as the primary data through village and household questionnaire designed for the purpose. Specific 22 villages were selected as Sample villages by stratified area sampling method and for household 650 persons selected as respondent's by random sampling methods. The collected data has been processed and analyzed by using different quantitative, statistical technique.

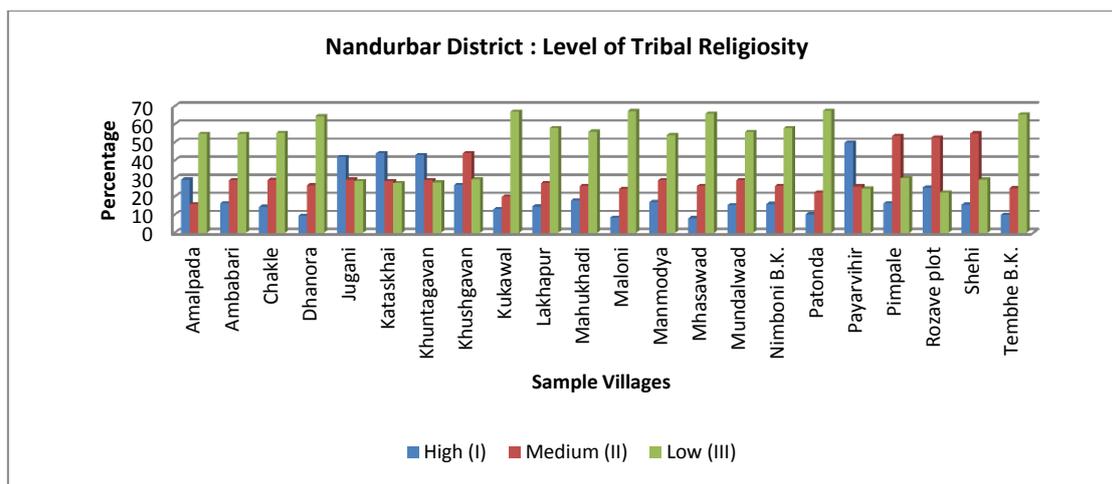
Table 1.1 Nandurbar District : Level of Tribal Religiosity

S. No.	Sample Villages	% of tribal Population (2011)	Literacy (2011)	Category		
				High (I)	Medium (II)	Low (III)
1.	Amalpada	99.36	49.80	29.40	15.80	54.80
2.	Ambabari	97.50	55.70	16.20	29.00	54.80
3.	Chakle	65.53	52.20	14.40	29.30	55.30
4.	Dhanora	69.25	56.85	09.30	26.20	64.50
5.	Jugani	99.77	20.70	42.00	29.40	28.60
6.	Kataskhai	100	10.75	44.00	28.60	27.40
7.	Khuntagavan	100	42.49	43.00	29.20	27.80
8.	Khushgavan	100	44.39	26.50	44.00	29.50
9.	Kukawal	36.55	55.43	13.00	20.00	67.00
10.	Lakhapur	96.48	61.72	14.50	27.50	58.00
11.	Mahukhadi	99.59	53.39	18.00	26.00	56.00
12.	Maloni	33.41	55.53	08.40	24.30	67.30
13.	Manmodya	96.95	46.32	17.00	29.00	54.00
14.	Mhasawad	34.58	62.54	08.10	25.90	66.00
15.	Mundalwad	99.44	53.77	15.30	29.00	55.70
16.	Nimboni B.K.	93.90	44.71	16.00	26.00	58.00
17.	Patonda	68.46	51.84	10.20	22.30	67.50
18.	Payarvihir	99.74	26.54	49.80	25.70	24.50
19.	Pimpale	95.50	44.74	16.30	53.60	30.10
20.	Rozave plot	96.46	57.24	25.00	52.70	22.30
21.	Shehi	98.00	55.95	15.60	55.00	29.40
22.	Tembhe B.K.	37.29	55.77	09.90	24.60	65.50
Total Region		96.43	54.07	14.74	29.26	55.00

Source: Based on Household Questionnaire.

Table no 1.1 clearly shows that according to 2011 the proportion of tribal population in the selected sample villages up to 69.43 per cent. In three sample villages per cent population is tribal, while in 11 sample villages tribal population is above 95 per cent. The lowest proportion tribal is existed in maloni with 33.41 per cent followed by Mhasawad, Kukawal, Tembhe B.K. and Patonda with 34.52, 36.55, 37.29 and 68.46 per cent respectively.

The highest literacy ratio recorded in Mhasawad with 62.54 percent followed by Lakhapur, dhanora, Shehi, Tembhe B.K., Maloni and Mahukhadi with 61.72, 56.85, 55.95, 55.77, 55.53 and 53.39 percent respectively. The lowest literacy found in kataskhai with only 10.75 percent followed by Jugani, Khuntagavhan and Khushgavhan with 20.70, 42.49 and 44.39 percent respectively. In selected household 91.00 percent sample household belongs to Hindu followed by Muslim, Christian, other with 04.00, 03.00 and 02.00 percent respectively. With the help of collected and analyzed data and field investigation researcher conducted that there is found a close relationship between the higher religiosity and literacy. As well as proportion tribal and religiosity also closely tribal and religiosity also closely associated.



In category Ist 15.74 percent respondent found very high influence of religiosity. In high tribal religiosity category there is found variation from village to village and tahsils to tahsil. Highest tribal religiosity found in Payar vihir with 49.80 followed by Kataskhai, Khuntagavan, Jugani, and Amalpada with 44.00, 43.00, 42.00 and 29.40 percent respectively. Due to high proportion of tribal low literacy and remoteness resulted as high religiosity. Tribal people believe in “dakin pratha” Maximum people are more superstitions. Even today in these villages the Dakin costae of also observed.

Lowest proportion of category first found in Mhasawad with 08.10 percent followed by Maloni, Dhanora, Temthe b.K, Patonda, Kukawal and chakle with 08.40, 09.30, 09.90 , 10.20, 13.00 and 14.40 percent. Due to high literacy, urban influence and awareness found a low religiosity. Dhanora and Mhasawad are the ‘Rurban’ centres Patonda and Maloni villages are very close to the urban areas or urban hinterland.

About 29.26 percent respondent of the study region included in IInd category (Medium tribal religiosity). Highest respondent found in Shehi with 55.00 percent followed by Pimple, Rozave plot, Khushgavan and Jugani with 53.60, 52.70, 44.00 and 29.40 percent respectively. Lowest proportion of category Ii (Medium tribal religiosity) observed in Amalpada with 15.80 per cent. Followed by Kukawal, Patonda, Tembhe B.K. and Payarvihir with 20.00, 22.30, 24.60and 25.70 per cent respectively. In these sample villages maximum respondent are coming from middle class csatogary. They adopt the modern technique. Due to the modernization some respondent inclined towards the western civilization. They are not more believe in blind faith.

Table no. 1.1 clearly shows that about 55.00 per cent respondents in the study region included in third category (Low tribal religiosity) Researcher observed that globalization, modernization and influence of information technology in tribal areas the level of religiosity has been declined slightly. The highest proportion of respondent of category third has been

found in Patonda with 67.50 percent followed by Maloni, Kukawal, Mhasawad, Tembhe B.K. and Dhanora with 67.30, 67.00, 66.00, 65.50, 64.50 percent respectively.

In Patonda about 68.46 percent respondent belonging from tribal communities beside that the level of religiosity is very low. Because Patonda sample village is located 2 km away from district head quarter Nandurbar and the urban influence is very high. Maloni also situated 0.5 km away from Shahada urban fringe. In Kukawal only 36.55 percent respondent are tribal hence recorded low religiosity Mhasawad and Dhanora are the leading Rurban centre's in district. About 16 villages in the study region level of religiosity recorded between 54.80 to 22.30 percent. There is found large variation in this group.

CONCLUSION

The present study done in the tribal context of the Nandurbar district is important especially in context of tribal communities who are in a process of constant change due to contact with other communities, progress of media and communication net works and other factors. To ensure a balanced research perspective, both *emic* and *etic* views are considered. As this is a micro study, in-depth observations are given more importance than mere presentation of meticulous numerical data. Researcher observed that in the satpura mountain ranges some village are sent percent tribal in this region people are highly influenced by various religions activities. Hence found high religiosity But in southern part of the satpura compare to north part peoples are less influence of superstitions. With the help of field investigation researcher concluded that, remoteness socio- economic condition, literacy social media and information technology are affect on the levels of religiosity. According to time and space religiosity has been changed.

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