

# Occupational Mobility and Changing Caste Relations in an Urban Fringe of Lucknow

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## Abstract:

The occupational structure of Indian Village has been rigidly fixed with caste system. The occupation of an individual was determined by the caste system in which membership was restricted by birth. Each specific occupation was ascribed to each caste or sub-caste. Since caste was hierarchical, the occupation dependent upon the caste was also hierarchical in its status. When the traditional Indian society came into contact with modern society, the close relation between caste and class got diluted. In the modern Indian society, the occupation is neither caste based nor hereditary as it was in past. New Industrial-Urban society has created several non-conventional jobs and has broken the barriers of caste. Present paper intends to look upon the occupational mobility and changing inter-caste relations in a fringe village of Lucknow.

**Key Words:** Urban Fringe, Caste Stratification, Inter-caste Relationships, Jajmani System, Occupational Mobility

Economic development and physical expansion of the cities has given rise to the formation of urban fringes which is a highly transitional zone with the mix characteristics of rural and urban activities. As the fringe villages are situated just near by the metropolitan city, it is very obvious that they are more likely to have urban impact. The nearer the village, its chances of showing urban impact increases more and more. Villages that are situated in an urban fringe are changing in respect of economic institutions and inter-caste relationships. Economy of traditional village society was basically dependent on the agriculture. In spite of the fact that agriculture has been the main resource of livelihood for all most every caste in village society, the relationship of agricultural land with every caste was not the same. It is found more often that in a village higher castes are holding major portion of agricultural land. This resulted into a caste stratification based on economic dominance. It is also a matter of fact that inter-caste relations in the villages are not only governed by the relationship of economic dominance but also by the reciprocity. This reciprocal system of caste relationships is well defined as *Jajmani*. With increasing urban interaction, the close relations between castes and occupations are fading away. These changes are more prominent in the villages which are closer to the metropolitan city as compared to villages which are far off from the city. The present studied village is reflecting changes in the same manner.

## Area of the Study:

In order to assess the transition of fringe villages, Lucknow has been selected for the research. Thus, all the fringes surrounding this city are identified as the universe of the study. The fringe areas around the city are undergoing the process of transformation in their social, occupational demographic and infrastructural characteristics. Eventually, in the peripheral areas of Lucknow city, numerous 'rurban' centers have emerged reflecting the mixed character of rural and urban activities as well as rural-urban interconnections. Present study is done in the village Sonva of Bakshi ka Talab block of Lucknow City. Studied village *Sonva* is situated towards north at a distance of 27 km. from the Lucknow city headquarters. It is connected with the city by all weather roads and covers 2.33 km. square area of this region.

## Methodology:

Village is the focus of present study in the context of transition, and households are the units in which changes need to be explained. The present study is descriptive in nature; therefore, a descriptive research design is adopted for the study. The sample design of present study was done at three stages. At the first stage the selection of an urban fringe through purposive sampling was made. Selected fringe area is *Bakshi ka Talab* block, located at the distance of 27 kilometers from the Lucknow city. At the second stage, the selection of village, namely *Sonva*, made through purposive and at the final stage, 161 households that is 50 % of the total households, of *Sonva* selected through stratified random sampling. The criterion of selecting the village is that it is passing through the process of urbanization. The quantitative and qualitative socio-structural data have been collected from a comprehensive and purposeful field work which is based on the interaction with the people. For the effective and flawless data collection, interview and focused group discussion methods were extensively used during the field work. Interviews done are mainly semi- structured and questions are open ended so that responses are not restricted.

## Findings:

Out of 322 households 161, that is 50% of total population, have been taken for the intense study of the village which includes all the caste, religion and category on the basis of rational sampling which has already been discussed in the chapter of methodology. The sample constitutes 56 households of Upper castes, 43 households of intermediate castes and 62 households of lower castes. Head of the selected households were asked the questions related to the total way of life of their family. They were all between the ages of 25 to 70 years. Heads of 5 households out of 161 households were females as they all were widowed in their marital status.

**Table: 1 Structure of Sample by the Caste /Religion Composition**

Caste /Religion	Number of Households	
	Total Number	Sampled
<b>Hindu</b>		
Brahmin	90	45
Kashtriya	20	10
Yadav	25	12
Lodh	22	11
Goswami	12	06
Nai	04	02
Kumhar	04	02
Chaurasia	02	01
Mallah	01	01
Gautam	40	20
Pasi	60	29
Dhobi	25	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Muslim</b>		
Darzi	15	08
<b>Sikh</b>	02	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>161</b>

The sample design consists of 45 households of Brahmins, 10 Kashatriyas and 1 of Sikh that is total 56 household of upper caste category. The other components of sample are 12 households of Yadavs, 11 of Lodhs, 6 of Goswamis, 2 of Nais, 2 of Kumhars, 1 of Chaurasias, 01 Mallah and 8 of Muslim Darzis, that is total 43 households of intermediate caste which comes under OBC category. Lower castes are the components of sample that constitute 29 households Pasis, 20 households of Gautam and 13 households of Dhobis, that is total 62 households of sample design. Since agriculture is the main economic resource in the village, most of the people are involved in agricultural activities though their contact with urban area get them involved in many other non-agricultural economic activities as well. Apart from traditional occupational categories, based on agricultural economy, many other occupational categories are emerging in the village as an outcome of increasing interaction of city and village. Households in the village are seen combining both rural and urban occupations as their livelihood resource. It is also observed that in few households single member involved in rural and urban occupations simultaneously.

There are four categories of villagers who are involved in agricultural activities. These are landowners, tenants and landless labourers.

**Table: 2 Distribution of Households Involved in Agricultural Occupations**

Castes/Religion	Total Households	Landowners	Tenants	Landless labourers
Brahmin	45	32	04	03
Kashtriya	10	07	-	02
Sikh	01	-	-	-
Yadav	12	09	-	03
Lodh	11	06	01	04
Goswami	06	03	-	03
Nai	02	-	-	-
Kumhar	02	01	-	01
Chaurasia	01	01	-	-
Mallah	01	-	-	01
Muslim Darzi	08	02	-	-
Gautam	20	07	06	07
Pasi	29	11	07	10
Dhobi	13	06	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>

Percentage to Total	52.8	11.2	21.1
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It can be well observed from Table 2 that 52.8 % of total households are landowners, 11.2 % households are tenants and 21.1 % of total households are agricultural labourers. It is clear that 137 of total households, that is, 85.1 %, are dependent on agricultural occupations in any of its kind. This is an overwhelming dependence on agriculture though many amongst them have started combining both, agricultural and non- agricultural occupations simultaneously. Only 24 households, that is, 14.9 % of total, are involved in the occupations other than agriculture. The occupational structure of the village is still depending more upon agriculture, but it can be observed that many new forces have entered into villagers' life, leading them into the direction of adopting new occupations. Rural-Urban interconnections are encouraging villagers towards the combination of rural and urban occupations simultaneously.

**Table: 3 Occupational Structure of the Village by the Caste**

Caste/ Religion	Total Households	Total Dependence on Agriculture	Agriculture & Non-Agri. Occupations In Village	Agriculture & Urban Occupations In city	Agricultural, Non-Agri. & Urban Occupations	No Dependence on Agriculture		
						Non-Agri. Occupations In Village	Urban Occupations In City	Combining Both
Brahmin	45	24	07	08	-	01	04	01
Kashtriya	10	05	03	01	-	-	01	-
Sikh	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
Yadav	12	06	05	01	-	-	-	-
Lodh	11	06	02	03	-	-	-	-
Goswami	06	04	01	01	-	-	-	-
Nai	02	-	-	-	-	02	-	-
Kumhar	02	-	01	-	01	-	-	-
Chaurasia	01	-	01	-	-	-	-	-
Mallah	01	01	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muslim	08	-	02	-	-	01	05	-
Darzi	20	16	03	01	-	-	-	-
Gautam	29	26	-	02	-	01	-	-
Pasi	13	03	03	-	-	07	-	-
Dhobi								
Total	161	91	28	17	01	12	10	02
Percent to Total		56.5	17.4	10.6	0.6	7.5	6.2	1.2

Table 3 shows that 56.5 % of the total households are totally dependent on agricultural occupations and 14.9 % of the households are totally independent of agricultural occupations. 28.6 % of the total households are seen combining agriculture with other occupations simultaneously.

**Table: 4 Distributions of serving Castes by the Continuity and Discontinuity of its Traditional Services**

Caste	Services	Number of Households		
		Total	Continuing	Discontinuing
Nai	Barber	02	02	-
Kumhar	Potter	02	02	-
Mallah	Traditional boatman	01	-	01
Dhobi	Washer man	13	10	03
Darzi	Tailor	08	08	-
Gautam/Chamar	Leather worker	20		20

Table 4 shows that Nais are continuing with their traditional occupation and they are totally dependent on it as they do not own any agricultural land. It is found that they are not confined to their village only rather giving their services to neighboring villages also.

Kumhars are also pursuing their occupation of making pots, though they are more dependent on agricultural and other occupations also as a member of one of the households is involved in urban occupation also. The only household of Mallah in the village is seen working as agricultural labourer since he has no agricultural land and also his traditional occupation is no more relevant in present scenario.

There are 8 households of Darzis in the village and all seen continuing their occupations of tailoring. As this occupation has larger scope in the city, members of 5 households are seen carrying their occupations in the Lucknow city. These are even taking bulk orders of *Chikankari* work and bring it for villagers; in this way they are enabling the villagers, especially women, to earn money. Out of 13 households of Dhobis, 10 are continuing with their traditional callings. It is found that members of 7 households have gone to Delhi and earning good sum of money with carrying their occupation of washing clothes. Three of them have purchased few *Biswas* of land in the village, their families are seen to have left their occupation in village and totally dependent on farming on the land they own.

There are 20 households of Chamars residing in the village and they all are involved in agricultural occupations. It is found that most of them left their traditional occupation long ago though 5 households were doing the pursuit two generations ago. The reasons to deviate the traditional callings were the ill feeling of their own pursuits and also their desire to achieve higher status in society. Households were asked about their interaction and the kind of behaviour pattern with other castes. Upper castes were enquired about their interaction patterns with the castes lower to them in social stratification.

**Table 5 Type of Interactions of Upper Castes with lower castes**

Type of Interaction	Number of Households		
	Brahmins	Kshatriyas	Sikh
They often go to lower caste houses-holds and share food	-	-	
Go to their houses very occasionally but avoid food	06	02	01
Fraternize at public meetings at the time of festivals and other Occasions	37	07	-
Only unplanned meetings at market places	02	01	-
Total Numbers of Households	45	10	01

As reflected in Table 5, it is found that upper castes in the village do not much interactive with the lower castes. Their interactions with the lower castes are confined to certain occasions. As this village is Brahmin dominated, it is seen that they make ties with lower caste due to their political interests. It is seen that they fraternize with lower castes during the time of Panchyat elections to get votes for the person they are supporting for. It is observed when the post of Gram Pradhan seen reserved for SC or OBC candidates; they encourage the person of their choice to contest in election.

It is observed that in the village the relationships of the different castes with other castes are not the same. As the castes are arranged in hierarchically in the society, they follow the concept of 'purity' and 'pollution'. Although the traditional notions which are related to castes have got much diluted, few attributes are still seen in practice in the village. In village Sonava, the avoidance of *Kachcha* food with other caste is much in practice. *Kachcha* food is cooked by adding water while *Pakka* food is cooked by adding ghee in it. Upper castes usually avoid sharing food with lower castes; though in special occasion they make take *Pakka* food with lower castes. Yadavs restrict themselves for having food with other castes in the village. Likewise Pasis and Dhobis restrict themselves having with Gautams. On ceremonial occasions, they can take *Pakka* food. As an urban impact, a drastic change has been noticed in the traditional class system of the village which was earlier embodied into the caste system of the village. Age old rural stratification dominated by the caste is changing fast and a new class system parallel to that of the urban class structure has been seen emerging based on income, occupation and education.

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