



Impact of Urbanization upon Traditional Occupational Groups of District Ganderbal in Kashmir

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the place and significance of traditional occupational groups in the economy of Kashmir in the light of the urbanization. The core findings of this paper include deprivations of the people associated with traditional occupations by different sources among which urbanization is a driving force. This paper employs both Primary and Secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data have been collected through an *ethnographic Study* carried out in a village *Korag Domarg* in which majority of the population is engaged with traditional occupations. For secondary sources, relevant literature was scanned so far to achieve authentic and credible outputs.

Keywords: *Traditional Occupations; Ganderbal; Health Facilities, Decline, Wages*

Introduction

Breeze (1969) described urbanization as a process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities and corresponding changing of behavior pattern. This process of changing is visible in the district as well. Ganderbal has secured 259 square kilometers of which 233.60 square kilometers in rural and 25.40 under urban areas. People are majorly residing in rural areas. Till 2011, urbanization has blurring figures in Jammu and Kashmir as only 27.38% is urbanized. In case of district Ganderbal, the 2011 census showed that only 15.81 percent was found in urban areas. As per 2011 census, 84.19% population of Ganderbal district lives in rural areas. Its urban part has 47 thousand people with 9th rank as least urban populous district. The total geographic urban part is 25 km² and is the 9th smallest by area in the state.

In order to promote urbanization in the district different efforts are being made by the authorities. Efforts like good transportation and communication facilities, provision for recreational activities, community facilities, and sewage and sanitation facilities. In order to provide effective facilities to her citizens, The Master Plan (2012-32) has proposed to build city level commercial centers, technical colleges, IT Park, City level Ecological Park, and River Front Development. For this purpose, twelve villages have been proposed to be urbanized and added to Ganderbal Planning Area.

Industrially district has disguised figure as its industrial units are spread only over 106 kannals of land with an industrial estate of 91 plots of which 46 units are producing commodities like PVC cables, Aluminum utensils, electrical accessories, sheet metal, clothes, food products, and other necessary items. Consequently, the industrial estate is providing jobs to 350 persons of the city town. The industrial estate is located in Duderhama Ganderbal. An unfortunate part of the unit is that it is established within

the residential area of the district narrated *Irfan Qadir Tantary*¹. It is clearly depicted from the figure 1.



Figure 1: Industrial Estate Ganderbal within locality

Source: Field Survey, 2018

In terms of sewerage and sanitation, the district is lagging behind bars. There is poor drainage system and no community latrines. The below-presented picture clearly depicts the nature of sewerage system in district Ganderbal.



Figure 2: Sewerage System

Source: internet, accessed on 12-10-2018

Explaining Traditional Occupations

It is believed that traditional occupations were borrowed from Central Asia and were adopted by the majority of the Kashmiri population. The adoption of such occupations gave emergence to traditional occupational communities. The exogenous occupations maintained an indigenous character in Kashmir. Since then these occupations are being transferred from generation to generation. In this connection Ratnam defined the Traditional occupations as “ *ancestral occupations and are practiced by*

¹ Research Participant, an adult, resident of Duderhama Ganderbal, city town narrated how difficult it is to study when industrial estates are in operational mode. Migration seems the only option.

successive generations, rooted in customs and practices and focused on subsistence economies, pre-dating colonization and the industrial revolution. Often these refer to occupations within agriculture and crafts” (Ratnam, 2011). In the context of Kashmir, traditional occupations are practiced over the longer course of civilization and passed by generation upon generation. Both men and women are involved in the production process.

Exploring the Roots of Traditional Occupations

(Ahmad Parvez, 2007) reported that the main credit of introducing the art of making carpets in the valley go as far back as 1425 A.D. goes to Sultan Zainu’l- Abidin, who brought experts and specialists from Persia, Central, and Arabia to train local inhabitants. (Khan, 1978, p.11) informed that Zain-ul-Abidin is reported to have introduced new industries like that of Shawl, Carpet, Silk, paper-mâché, paper, wood-carving, Namdah, and Gabha. The study insisted that the fame of Srinagar rests on these industries and Srinagar thus became an emporium of trade. Decade by decade, industrial sectors began to develop throughout the valley. The central Asian Muslims encouraged Kashmiri people to participate in the economic activities of the state that helped the sultans in establishing karkhanas. To promote trade and commerce the Mughal emperor paid great attention to the maintenance of trade routes. Abul Fazl states that there were 26 routes linking Kashmir with the outside world and among them, only 6 were frequently used (Mattoo Majid Abdul, 1988). Therefore, it was during Mughal era that urbanization started gaining ground in Kashmir. They tried to open new dimensions of trade and commerce in Kashmir.

Major Traditional Occupational Groups in Ganderbal

The major traditional occupational Groups that have been identified and are able to maintain their position in the era of urbanization and globalization in Ganderbal district include:

- Traditional occupational group of fisher worker (facing threat from market liberalization).
- Traditional occupational group of carpet and shawl weaving (facing threat from globalization and urbanization).
- Traditional occupational group of mat weaving (faced complete extinction in district Ganderbal).
- Traditional occupational group of wicker workers (threat from globalization and urbanization).

Literature Review

The scanning of primary and secondary literature is the essentiality or primary step of every research work. The present study though microanalysis has undergone through a number of past studies done on the traditional occupational communities in order to investigate the impact (positive/negative) of urbanization upon such communities in district Ganderbal. Despite, the author has also tried to evaluate relevant literature related to environmental risks or in sociological term Risk Societies created by the process of urbanization. Therefore, a brief summary of the literature review is presented in a dialogue form raised and worked out by the scholars from time to time. Studies based on fieldwork are investigated in the context impact of Urbanization.

The pace of urbanization accelerated by other processes like Globalisation drastically impacted the indigenous ways of producing goods and services among the occupational communities. It deprived and disrupted the status of indigenous knowledge, lifestyle, and social life among Indians in general and Kashmiri's in particular. It has resulted in displacement of many tribal and non-tribal inhabitants in different states of the county. In the occupational sphere, there is continual disruption of traditional occupations which is key source of alienation of workers. In an urbanized world which is highly techno-centric requires skilled workers of which traditional occupational communities are unaware or unable to learn. I recall here Emile Durkheim who stated that specialization leads to exclusion because the transformed society requires special skills; such specialized skills, in turn, needed erosion of traditional skills. Therefore urbanization deskills rather en-skills the traditional occupational communities. Priyanka Nial has correctly pointed out that such communities “do not have enough education, health, and nutrition to compete in the competitive scenario are bound to fall outside the cut-throat competition in the market” (Nial, 2017). This forces them to migrate towards cities thereby resulting loss of traditional skills and landing holding with strong backwash effects². The issue was raised by Purobi Sharma who stated that the rapid growth of cities in the North East India attracts majority of population towards urban way of life through migration from the less developed areas. “In this process, though there is steady growth of economy and high literacy rate in the city, the original inhabitants lag behind the process of urban development (Sharma, 2013,p.1). They have achieved the status of landlords to marginalized communities in the race of urban development. Due to governmental control over forest resources, they lost indigenous rights of forest benefit which was one of the important sources of cashless economy among tribal and non-tribal occupational communities of Kashmir³. Regarding environmental risks imposed by rapid urbanisation Iram Imtiyaz interrogated that “whooping majority, 389 respondents (97.25 percent) accepted that urbanization has led to environmental pollution in the city and the main reasons as per research participants were chose vehicular emission, increasing vehicular traffic, more buses, cars and solid waste generated by urban households which often remains uncollected (Imtiyaz, 2017). In connection with rapid industrialization and urbanization Karl and Engels in the preface of their work quoted that “in India, millions of hand-weavers were finally crushed out by the introduction of Lancashire power-loom” in manufacturing process (Engels, 1845). Ample literature is available over the destructions brought out by urbanization so there is no need to spend more pages on it.

² It is evident from the developed areas of Srinagar city in which majority of the population is migrant population. Even in the adjoining areas of university of Kashmir most of the residents are migrants. The original inhabitants who had poor monetary sources sold their lands to the rich people which deprived them from cultivation activities.

³ The above statement is based upon the personal observations of the author as most of the women who used to collect wood from the forests for the cooking and charcoal purpose now-days stay idle at home. This was done through the strict control of government on the entry of forest zone areas and social stigma; as no men want his wife should collect wood or other cow dung from the forest areas.

Research Gap

Urbanization has both positive and negative impacts upon society. All these studies have either focused on urban development or urban problems but no emphasis has been given over the impact of urbanization upon traditional occupational communities like carpet and shawl making communities who are at the verge of extinction. This current study was designed to study overcome such issues.

Objectives in Totality

This current study was designed to achieve following objectives

- a) To assess the impact of urbanization on traditional occupations
- b) To assess the impact of urbanization on education, and health of traditional occupational groups

Research Methodology

This present work aimed to study the impact of urbanization upon traditional occupational communities of Kashmir: A study of district Ganderbal was carried through auto-ethnography research techniques. Pertaining to auto-ethnography research techniques, participant observation and interviews were held to cover the objectives of the study.

Universe of the Study: This study was entirely ethnographic in nature, was carried out in Korag Domarg, a village in which majority of the population is engaged with traditional occupations. It is 10 kilometers far from the district but nearness to district has not proved beneficial. For comparative analysis, some observations were drawn from Ganderbal city town and from tribal village Chattergul, Kangan.

Sampling Plan: Inferences were drawn from 150 families out of 307 families through simple random sampling. However, stratified random sampling was used in identifying traditional occupational communities. Problems of the all communities were studied jointly because they were witnessing same impact in terms of deprivation and decline. The sample size was limited because of the uniformity of the problems experienced by the occupational communities.

Limitations of the Study: This study is limited in scope as the author used limited number of families for the investigation purpose. The author has also shown subjectivity in terms of selection of the area. However, there is a great scope for future research within the same village because these occupational communities have adopted alternative occupations. One can study the position and progress of these communities in other fields and can easily compare their socio-economic conditions in the former and the alternative occupations. **Demographic Profile of the of village:**

The demographic profile of the village Korag Domarg, district Ganderbal is depicted from the following table. The table clearly bifurcates the Total number of families and total population.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the village

PARTICULARS	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Total no. of Families	307		
Population	2005	960	1039
Child (0-6)	380	181	199
Schedule caste	0	0	0
Schedule tribe	104	45	59
Literacy	44.49	52.23%	37.26
Total workers	911	446	465
Main workers	239	0	0
Marginal workers	672	210	462

Source: Census, 2011

The main reason behind the low female literacy is their active participation in traditional occupations as they constitute 462 marginal labors which higher than men whose participation is 210 only.

Research Findings and Discussion

A systematic way was followed in order to seek out the objectives of the current study. The major findings of the study are justified through life experiences of the research participants and interviews conducting by the author during the time period spent in the village. These findings are viz:

Occupational Impact of Urbanization

Much attention has been laid on the impact of urbanization, the percentage of population living in urbanized areas with high volume of density (Stolley, 2005, p.160). Urban areas are characterized with modern lifestyle. The rural areas generally taken for granted as practitioners of traditional and slow lifestyle. As more and more areas are becoming urbanized traditional occupational communities are facing severe repercussions. The cities being hub of market promote market liberalization. Deepa Narayan et al. reported that “market liberalization hits poor in countries with diverse condition and economies”(Narayan, Chambers, Shah, & Petesch, 2000). The traditional occupational communities especially carpet, shawl, mat and willow workers are in wretched conditions. The free flow of machine-made goods and lack of protection from import of cheaper products from USA, USSR, China, Pakistan, and India undermines our protection⁴. It is difficult to sell our basketry items, carpets, shawls, and earthen utensils because people now would prefer to purchase cheaper foreign land items and if we lower the prices of our product then we would not be able to incur our cost of investment⁵. Having conversation with an educated research

⁴ Research participant, Discussion group of shawl weavers headed by Bashir Ahmad Bhat who has hired and provides work to thirty craftsmen and craftswomen (shawl work only), Korag Domarg Village, district Ganderbal.

⁵ Research participant, Discussion group of three willow workers (Mukdum Mohalla, village Korag), three potter women(village wakoora), three shawl weavers (Rather Mohalla, Korag Domarg

participant with same background narrated that worst tale of our story is the attitudinal change of west towards local products of Kashmir⁶.

Trouble with getting raw material for carpet weaving is not a new thing⁷. There is not a single shop which deals with local products. However, for the commercialization of machine-made products, there are 500 retail shops within different parts of Ganderbal town. Local Bazar is completely absent in the district. Consumers love foreign choice when local products are not introduced. There is a need to promote marketing place for the local products within nation and abroad. Working conditions since the origin of such communities has not changed yet. A number of weavers sitting jointly in an area of three feet have harsh impact on their health as is depicted in figure 3.



Figure 3 showing conditions of workshops. Source, Field Survey

The structure of wages among the occupational communities has not improved till date. Rather it would be right to mention that the grant of wages under MGNREGA are significantly better what they earn from their traditional occupations⁸. The products of traditional occupational communities are based on simple handmade tools but require specialized skills. Therefore, the pre-occupation period i.e. the period of learning which takes more than four months goes without wages⁹. The traditional occupational communities are highly deprived by urbanization on one hand and on the hand their wages are sucked by the master and middlemen. The most unfortunate part on their side is the lack of awareness about governmental schemes. Nonetheless, they are aware about credit schemes but again they are unable to get loan from the banks if they get then subsidiaries are denied by the banks, as a result, they are trapped in debt. They are fed up of applying loan. A family headed by a young girl declared that she will never let her Abu (father) to apply for loan as she mentioned the case of her cousin brother who had applied for loan for investing more in the business of shawl.

⁶ Research participant, Rameez Ahmad, a lecturer and former Academic Associate/IIM Ahmedabad India -2017) was interviewed by the researcher. As per him the Europeans succeeded in created the notion of prejudice among her citizens towards our products as they propagated can the developed county use product that requires child labor.

⁷ Research participant, discussion group of four carpet weavers headed by Abdul Hamid Rather, stated that I need to visit to city in order to get raw material for my loom. To get raw material, it takes needs long time to spent, to travel, get raw material at cheaper rate and returns to scale are lower than what I spent Mohalla Darkhpora, Korag Domarg. These are the widespread complaints among the community of carpet weavers. Our city complexes are full of Chinese carpet that too has devalued out local product.

⁸ Research participant, discussion in group of men, aged 20-30 years, village Khan Mohalla Korag. They were all shawl makers who had just applied for MGNEGRA jobs cards and find the work enjoyable. They narrated that the number of working days should increase. When asked about their own occupation they narrated "the workshop is like a prison, in which we are offered one tea and Namkeen chaaye.

⁹ Research participant, discussion group Girls (Khan Mohalla, Korag Domarg)

Subsidiary failure and deceives by the middlemen forced him to sold his farmland to pay advances and bank loan. The members of traditional communities who wish to apply for loan are bound by the power of document. For getting loan so many documents are required and more essentially the difficult part is to get a guarantor for the grant of money. This difficulty in finding a guarantor has badly affected the livelihood of these communities and eroded many occupations¹⁰. In the same village, the unique observation was that now the governmental employers have started the role of masters who now hire these skilled men of traditional occupational communities for weaving purpose at meager wages. From all sides, they are at disadvantaged position. The special feature of traditional occupation is that it is carried out within the premises of the house. Within the village, carpet weaving is diminishing. The total number of households in that village as per 2011 census is 302. During the field survey, it was observed that only ten households have maintained their traditional occupation of carpet weaving and less 20 households are engaged with wickerwork. The maximum number of household continued with shawl weaving. Work is done within the boundaries of house as the following picture clarifies artistic beauty of willow workers.



Figure 4 Wickerwork (Rather Mohalla, Village Korag Domarg)

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Their wage rates as per day were Rs.100-120 (shawl weavers), Rs.150 (carpet weavers), and Rs. 200(willow workers)¹¹. The situation was worst in the Government run workshops as they are being paid 500 per month. That means they are earning Rs.16 per day. In this regard, the following pie chart will be helpful to know the

¹⁰ Research participant, Governmental employer Abdul Hamid deployed at elementary training center, village Korag Domarg.

¹¹ Research participants, an adult girl (Tasleema) aged 28 years feeding her four dependent sisters narrated the range of wages in shawl making is very low and the situation became more glimmering after free flow of machine-made goods that have flooded the markets. Regarding willow work, three families were surveyed and in terms of carpet, four families were interviewed from the same village. It is worth mentioning that in the village and in the district female labor participation is more than men in village and in the district.

income levels of occupational communities excluding those working in government-run centers:

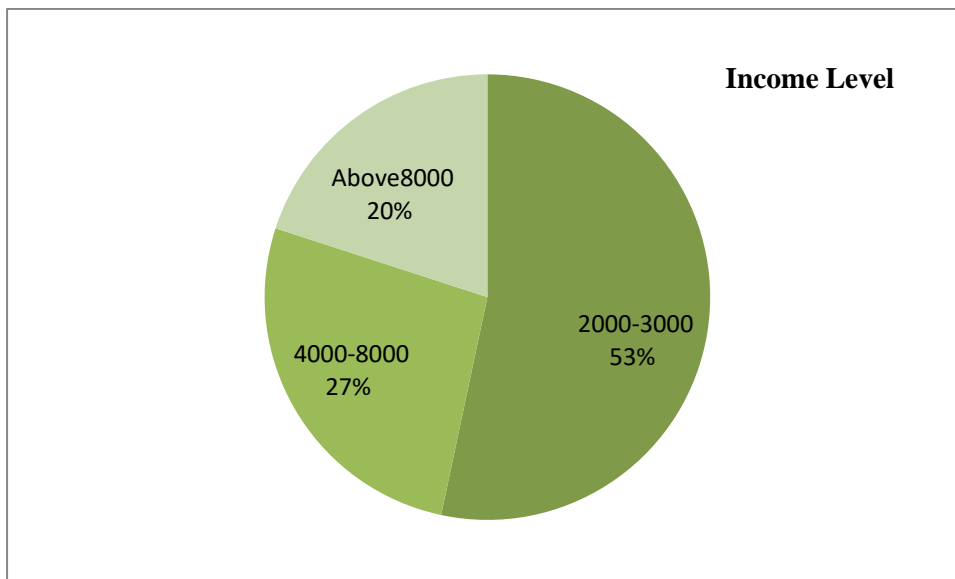


Figure 5: Income level of the Surveyed Families (Interval Scale)

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Most of the training centers in rural and urban areas were running out of toilet and sanitation facilities, cleanliness, floor coverings, first aid facilities, and entertainment items.

In a nutshell, globalization along with urbanization has destroyed the occupation of these communities and rendered them as marginal workers or street vendors. It has made them outside workers whose chances of getting work becomes a major challenge during winter as valley is known for low temperature.

Major Occupations of the Surveyed Families

The main occupation that is still practiced by men and women of these traditional occupational communities are presented below:

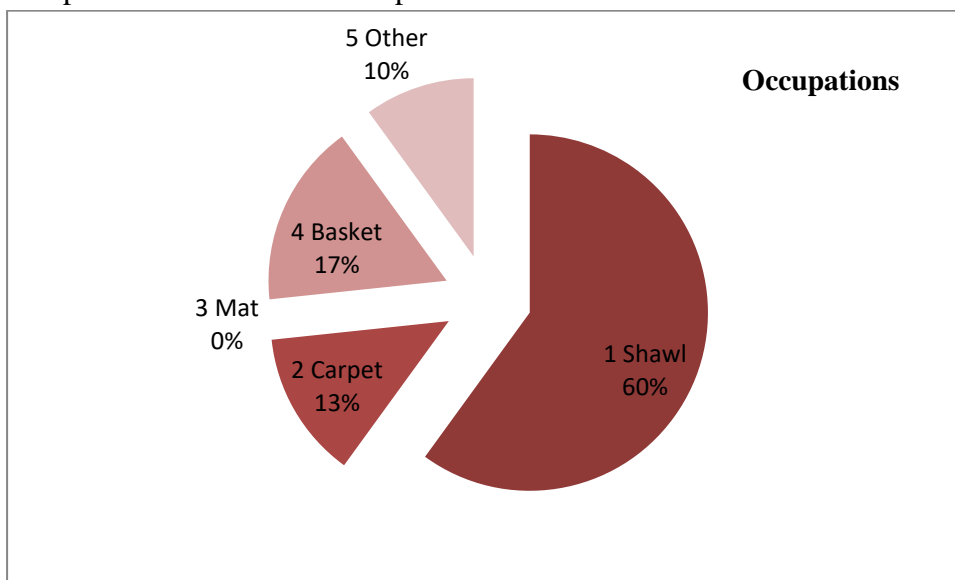


Figure: 6 Source Field Survey, 2018

Educational Development

Urbanization has improved the pace and development of educational facilities in the district but in the village, with 307 families only a middle school is running and has never been upgraded. The current enrollment in the school is more than 200 students as per one of the teacher who was communicated through phone. In the village, the total literacy was 44.49% out of which 52.23% constitute male and 37.21% constitute female as per 2011 census. The gender disparity in the educational set-up in the village is visible. But after a critical look over the issue, it was found that for higher they need to send their wards to other villages or main city secondary and higher education. As a result, most of the girls refuse to study as they have needed to cross a bridge before entering into the premises of another village. The picture of the bridge and the working school of the selected village along with educational achievement of the sampled population are pictured down:



Bridge between Darhpora Korag Domarg and Wakoora Block

Figure 7 Source: Field Survey, 2018



Figure 8 Govt. Middle School Korag Domarg

Source: Field Survey, 2018

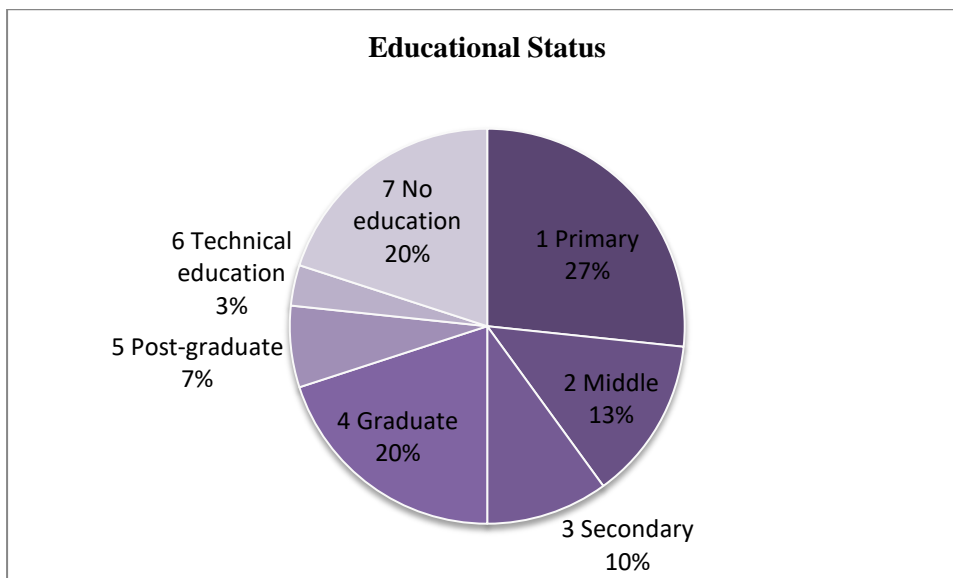


Figure 9; *Educational Status of the Surveyed Families village Korag Domarg, Ganderbal*

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Urbanization and Its Risks

The process of urbanization was devised to accelerate development in the modern society. However, it promoted major environmental risks like global warming. Beck has rightly called urbanized society a risk society. Such risks know no boundaries flow all over the world. It is uncertain society wherein no one is aware what will happen and is indeed a minefield (Bauman, 2005). The process of over-urbanization has imposed a major threat to the environment, human and wildlife. It would be not wrong to say urbanization has stolen our future, a future of sustainable development.

Urbanization and the Issue of Missing Basics

In the village, despite occupational disruption by the modern processes, most of families agreed that during last few years especially after 2010 we are getting basic amenities like adequate water, ration cards, and food and supply facilities on regular basis¹². The distant and too close villages of the district avail benefits of urbanization. However, people from hilly-remote (Chattergul) and nearest village (Korag Domarg) showed anguish attitude towards urban facilities when they were asked about roads, public transport and communication facilities. In Korag village we have three public buses which never follow proper timing. Whole day we have to wait on the road for lift so that we will reach college on time¹³. Look at the road it is covered by drainage water turned into stream enjoyed by ducks¹⁴. Please look at the village bridge, a tearful voice came from the corner of the ground; it was a voice from an old man who was trying to cross the river. The following pictures give us makeup of realities

¹² Research participant, discussion group of men and women were interviewed at governmental food store, village Korag Domarg, Makhdum Mohalla.

¹³ Research participant, secondary and college level student's village, Korag Domarg.

¹⁴ Research participant, aged women Rather Mohalla Korag.



Figure 10: Darkhpora Village Korag Domarg

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Urbanization and Health Facilities

It was found that majority of the sample families were poor as they have faced economic crisis due the erosion of traditional occupations which is the only source of their earning. For the three hundred households there was a one sub-center, without aids and medical staff. Before October 2018 the sub-center was running in a rented building. In Dec, 05-12-2108 it was shifted to a recently constructed building. The residents of the village were dissatisfied with the health care facilities as for fever we need to visit either wakoora or district hospital Ganderbal¹⁵. In the district 9 allopathic hospitals, 10 Unani hospitals, 17 primary health centers 6 dispensaries, 3 sub-health centers, and 29 private hospitals are workable. The picture of the newly constructed sub-center in village Korag Domarg is displayed below:



Figure 11: Newly constructed sub-center in village Korag Domarg

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

¹⁵ Research participant, discussion group of elderly men and women who have never availed or received any treatment within the village as no healthcare facility was available there.

Urbanization Stolen Our Future: A reflection from street vendor's

No doubt urbanization increased occupational and employment opportunities in the informal sector but simultaneously it widened the gap between the rich and the poor. It has increased the risks of oppression against the poor. Interacting with a number of street vendors' who were selling clothes, vegetables, onion and aloo pakkada narrated one of the aged person "my son our business was going good before 2000 but now city roads are occupied by frequent jams so we are scapegoats frequently displaced and replaced by traffic police and other security agencies resulting in our loss of customers and livelihoods.

Conclusion

The dawn of urbanization has helped in narrowing down many social evils that have maintained status quo in the district and village; it has been able to improve lifestyle, economy, education, health care infrastructure and development of means of communication. Moreover, it has improved the status and promoted the development of women through the spread of education. The need to focus on urban village so that rural communities can fully avail the benefits of urbanization while taking into account the sustainability of traditional occupational communities. However, with reference to the impact of urbanization upon these occupational communities it has tearful results rendered them jobless and imposed occupational crisis and loss of traditional occupations. Furthermore, these groups have low income and education levels in terms of development. In terms of income, out of 150 families 80 (53.33%) of the families have per month income between Rs 2000-3000, 40 (26.67%) families have income in the range of Rs.4000-8000 and only small fraction 30 (20%) have income above Rs.8000. As far as education is concerned 40 families (26.66) have education up-to primary level, 20 families (13.34%) have middle-level education, 15 families (10%) have up middle-level education, 30 families (20%) are graduates, 10 families (6.67%) are postgraduate, 5 families (3.33%) are with technical education, and 30 families (20%) have no education. Therefore, there is a great need to improve their education and sustain these occupational communities as they are based on labor-intensive techniques and are eco-friendly. Occupational communities are vital to our cultural heritage and need to be preserved. The indifferent attitude of the government towards them has virtually resulted in loss artistic work that is under severe threat of extinction. The inability of the central and state government to reach them had led to downfall of these communities. A majority of the surveyed population stated how urbanization increased prioritized problems like lack of potable water, lack of electricity, lack of health center, lack of high schools, lack of protectionist policies for their occupational development, isolation with bad roads in both tribal and rural areas¹⁶. Therefore, steering sustainability in highly urbanized world is a major challenge for developed and the developing nations of the world. With regard to

¹⁶ Research Participant, Discussion Group of Tribal men and women Chattergul village, block Kangan, district Ganderbal. Look at the city, they have everything at the door steps and look at us electricity generated and produced in our areas and enjoyed by the city people. This is injustice nature will take revenge narrated an old lady staying with her blind daughter. Her house was Kuccha without light, using traditional Kerosene oil lamp was only source of light as she was not in a position to pay electricity bill.

district, Ganderbal sustainable cities are only possible when these indigenous communities are enhanced rather than disrupted.

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