**TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**HYDERABAD**

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Experiential Learning- 1

**Group Report on Maripadiga Village**

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**INTRODUCTION**

For the longest time villages have been perceived as the basis of the Indian society. With the ever-evolving times, villages are seen to have undergone certain dynamic changes understood from the changes observed in the inhabitants of the villages. Hence, the theme of understanding the villagers was aimed at surfacing the significance of the people who are at the very end of the pyramid of social structures and are at times perceived to be backward. Formulating 68.84% (2011 census) of the Indian population, villagers have come to support the Indian society as 50% of India’s GDP is contributed by the rural and semi- urban spaces (2011 census). The selection of one village helped us in breaking the anonymity of the rural Indian social and economic history and transcend the limitations of conventional published and archival sources by aiming at specific arenas of progress or regress.

The village of Maripadiga, situated in Yadadiri Bhubhannagiri district of Telangana is placed hundred kilometres from Hyderabad. As the Experiential Learning of 4 nights and 5 days began from 25th November 2019, the group seemed to be a bit stressed out given the unfamiliarity of the place and the unavailability about the information of the village on any Social Media accounts. However, on reaching the village in about 4 hours, it came to the surface that this village is one of the many reasons why Telangana has become popular in the handloom industry. The Pochampalli Saree of this village has made Telangana reach greater heights with its constant contribution towards the GDP of the State. Along with handloom being of significance, agriculture followed by other sources of livelihoods seemed important too. Going around the village on the very first day, caste seemed to be an inevitable feature of this village. Trying to understand the village society from a new lens, in every account caste was encountered by the group. Thus, one of the objectives to be furthered worked upon was to assess the influence of caste on the occupation of the villagers. As quoted by many scholars, “*the ethnic linguistic composition of a village along with its caste constitution also determines the character of villages”* (Dube, 2011). The second objective undertaken was to assess the issues related to arenas like education, health, water and gender. This objective would help in analysing the status of all these measures and the major drawbacks faced by the villagers in such regard. These objectives provided the group with a systematic method of going forward with their understanding of the villagers as these modes of livelihood and social indicators assist the group in learning from the village.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The following study was carried out after the village was assigned to the group. For the purpose of carrying out this research, purposive and snowballing techniques were employed. After the mere observation of the village and drawing an understanding of the influence of caste on the occupation, the former technique was employed as the respondents were chosen efficiently and after certain level of analysis for attaining answers to the pressing objectives. Here the samples were chosen purposively, while the latter is a result of the respondents leading to other respondents and thus, creating an effect of a snowball. Both of these sampling techniques fall under the category of non- probability sampling.

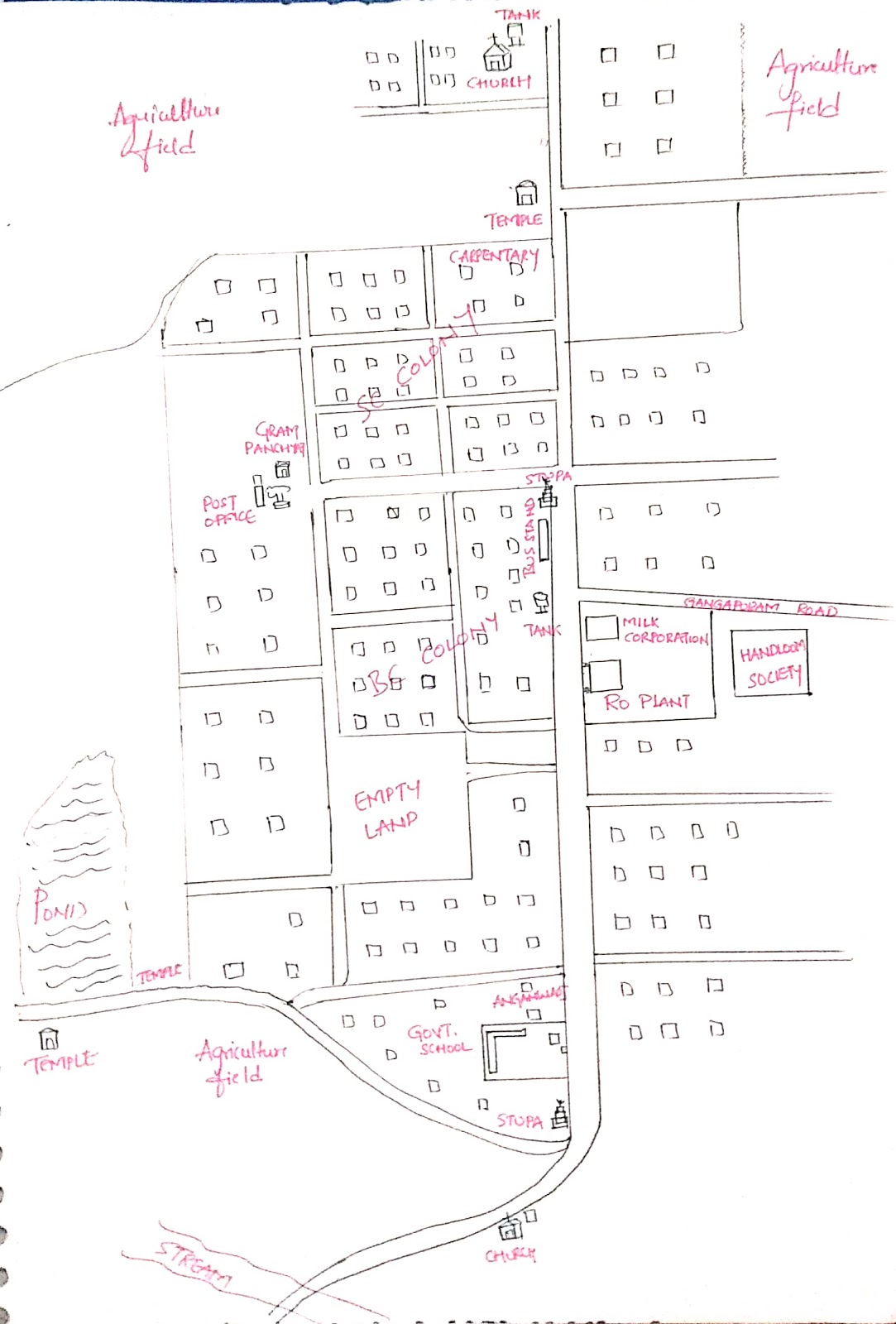
The research methodology used for the purpose of this study is personal interviews with semi- structured questionnaire, focused group discussions, observations and case study. Case study was used as a result of in- depth and detailed examination of a subject of study (in this case the comparative study between the handloom weavers employed in the handloom co-operative society and those employed by private contractors). These modes help in carrying out the study and provide a method of reaching towards the stated objectives.

Additionally, various sources of data have been used for attaining information from various respondents. Primary source of data was employed as a result of the personal interviews from the respondents, thus gathering first-hand information from people. Secondary source of data which entails official records from the Gram Panchayat, Anganwadi and ASHA workers have been used for carrying out this study.

**Participatory Resource Mapping**

This process enables the researchers to comprehend knowledge about various resources, communities dependent on the same, people managing and using the resources. It helps in bridging the gap between the communities and their physical location in the region (*The International Institute for Environment and Development,* 2017).

The Village area of Maripadiga is around 1001 hectares according to the 2011 census. The village is divided into two colonies one is SC and BC colony. The village has resources such as government school, one anganwadi center, one RO plant, one handloom cooperative society, mission bhagiratha tank. Most of these are noted to be present in BC colony. The Gram Panchayat office and the post office are located in between SC and BC colony. The village has two temples and two churches. The village has a pond at the extreme end which is used for agricultural purposes. Apart from all these resources the remaining part of the land is used for agriculture and their major production is cotton and paddy. The general ratio of land distribution between two or more castes, between certain families or between one big landowner and the rest of the community may have a vital influence on the nature of village organization and problems.

  
Image 1: Resource Map

**VILLAGE PROFILE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Demographics of the Village | | Source of the Data |
| State | Telangana | - |
| District | Yadadiri, Bhubhanagiri District | Sarpanch |
| Nearest village/ town | Janagam | Sarpanch |
| Area | 1001 hectares (2011 census) | Sarpanch |
| Average Revenue (for 2018) | 7-8 crore (approximately) | Village Revenue Assistant |
| Pincode | 508277 | Post Office |
| Total Population | 2026 | Asha Workers |
| Sex Ratio | 0.97: 1  (1002 females & 1024 males) | Calculated |
| Number of Households | 574 | Sarpanch |
| Average family member in one house | 3-4 members (approximately) | Calculated |
| Natural Deaths | 6 / 0.30% in the previous years | Asha Workers |
| Accidental deaths | 0 | Asha Workers |
| Average Age of death | Above 65 years | Asha Workers |
| Castes | SC (Madiga and Masati) and BC | Mandala Parishad President |
| Number of people out of India | 8 (USA, UK, Gulf) | Mandala Parishad President |

*Table 1: Village Profile*

The aforementioned table provides information about the village in great detail along with the various sources of data from which it has been collected. This 1001 hectare of land has a revenue of seven- eight crore with a population of 2026. While looking at the sex ratio, it can be understood that the gap is not quite wide as number of females are 1002 and the number of males is 1024. Additionally, it can be calculated that the total population when divided with the number of households, provides us with the average number of people in the family ranging from 3-4. Another astonishing fact is the death rates of the village. According to the data provided by the Asha Workers, the number of people who have died since last year are merely 6 and that too due to the reason of natural deaths, above the age of 65 years. This can then come to be associated with the good health observed in the village along with less factors leading to suicide or murder. Hence, providing an overarching image that most people are trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle with a decent life span.

The village of Maripadiga was mostly dominated by Hindu population. The settlements were divided into two broad parts, the schedule caste colonies and backward caste colonies. Besides the settlements, there were four temples in the village. However, unlike the people of SC community, the BC community celebrated Bathukamma. According to the accounts of the villagers, the Reddys who played a role of being an invisible hand over the village had once forbidden them from celebrating this festival. Since then this legacy amidst the SC community has been followed.  Additionally, there were very few inter-caste marriages as stated by the villagers. According to the Sarpanch and other Panchayat clerks, it had been observed that in such marriages, the couple have no other option other than to elope and hide from the villagers. The Panchayat played a crucial role in counselling of the eloped couples.

The 3 Muslim families who belonged to the OC community were noted to be living in the corner of the village. There was no mosque in Maripadiga. Among the three Muslim families, the male head of the one family was a teacher, the other family was farmer and shepherd by occupation, and the male abled body of the third family was a peon in Government office. Also, they were granted land from the Panchayat for the construction of graveyard. There were 2 Christian families who resided at the two ends of the village and carried out the occupation of farming. The 2 churches were constructed at two ends of the village. They celebrated Bathukamma as their own festival.

**FIELD VISIT SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DAYS** | **SITES VISITED** | **METHODS EMPLOYED** |
| Day – 1 | Village | Observation |
| Mandal Parishad President | Personal Interviews |
| Gram Panchayat Office | Interviewing the officials with semi- structured questionnaire |
| Day - 2 | School | - Creative measures employed like drawing of their dream school ; write- ups about their aspirations  - Interviewing the teachers  - Observing the official data |
| Anganwadi | Personal Interviews with the employees |
| Handloom Co-operative Society | - Focused Group Discussion with the members  - Case Study |
| RO Plant | Interviewing and observing its functioning |
| Day - 3 | Self Help Groups | Interviewing the members |
| Asha Workers | - Interviewing the members  - Observing their official data |
| Households | - Interviews  - Observation |
| Youth | Focused Group Discussion |
| Day - 4 | People employed in various occupations | - Interviews  - Observation |

**MAJOR INDICATORS**

This segment deals with certain major indicators which aid in understanding the development indices of any region. Four major parameters have been studied in order to gain a greater understanding of the latter objective which focuses on assessing the status of education, health, water and gender in the village.

**Education**

Education being an essential component for the holistic development of an individual, it occupies an important position in the socio- economic fabric of any village. The two major institutions catering to the education of children in the village included an anganwadi centre and a school having classes from 1st to 8th standard.

1. **Anganwadi**

The Anganwadi centre for the village Maripadiga was located within the premises of the village school. The centre had two Anganwadi workers named Kalamma(46 years) and Swarupa(30 years) and two helpers named Poshamma and Somana. Ideally, according to government rules, for every 1000 people, there should an Anganwadi centre. In the village of Maripadiga, however, there was only one Anganwadi for  2024 people. According to information given by Anganwadi workers, initially there were two anganwadi centres, one for the SC colony and the other for the BC colony, but later on both were clubbed into one Anganwadi centre. The anganwadi took care of children aged between 3-6 years. For children aged between 0-3 years, food was supplied to their homes and the very first week of every month, the child’s weight and blood pressure was checked by workers at their homes. Further, child MUAC( Mid-upper arm circumference) tapes were used to measure their health condition. Almost all the children in the village aged between 3-6 years were present in the anganwadi centre from 10 am to 4 pm with a lunch break at 12 pm and snack break at 3 pm.

The anganwadi also catered to pregnant women. During pregnancy, women came to the anganwadi centre to have their lunch. Even after delivery of child, they came to the centre for the first 6 months to have food. From 7th month to 3 years, a food supplement named Balaamrutham and 16 eggs per month was supplied for the child. All this supply came from ICDS office at Janagam. Slates and notebooks for children were usually given by donors; if not, they had to buy it themselves.  The anganwadi workers also performed works related to adhaar card, voter card, health survey, pulse polio, supplying deworming tablets and counselling against child marriage. Further, the anganwadi arranged for celebrating baby showers and birthdays.

Observation(s)

It was observed that children were being taught basic english and telugu alphabets and rhymes. Along with these, names of different position holders in village panchayat and Mandal Parishad were also being taught.. This highlighted the fact that the gram panchayat and the mandal parishad had a significant influence on the working of the anganwadi despite not much funds being provided by these institutions. It was also observed that children were made well versed in basic manners, since whenever any child was entering the class, he/she asked for permission. Children were very enthusiastic in learning the lessons taught to them and were seen actively engaging in chorus recitations.

Though the anganwadi centre performed its duties quite efficiently, as highlighted by the villagers themselves, yet there were certain infrastructural issues that needed to be addressed. Firstly, there were no toilets for children. Secondly, the space was very congested and only a single room catered to both pregnant women and children. According to anganwadi workers, they requested for proper toilets and a bigger building several times, but there had been no response from state authorities.

1. **School**

 Prathamika Konantha Pathshala, Maripadiga, established in 1934, was a government school for  students from class 1 to 8 of the village. It had a total of 76 students from the village, 7 teachers(5 permanent and 2 contractual) who were not residents of the village, a chairman, vice chairman, head master named Srinivas and one bell ringer( the oldest  staff of the school, aged above 70). It consisted of the primary section (class 1 to class 5 with 56 students) and secondary section (class 6 to class 8 with 20 students). After class 8, students had to go to Gundala High School which is 5 km away from the village.There was no private school or college in this village. The nearest college was in Jangaon, 24 kms away from the village. The school had a good attendance percentage of around 80% (attendance registers). Mid-day meals played an important role in it. Students were observed waiting eagerly in a queue with their plates, after washing their hands, to have lunch.

Observation(s)

The school campus was observed to be quite clean and students expressed their satisfaction with the washroom facilities.According to the principal, the reason behind less number of students in higher secondary classes was that most of the well-off  students of the village preferred to go to private schools like PVR school and Balayantri school. On the other hand, 90% of students from Maripadiga Government school were from below poverty line backgrounds. Due to this reason even most of the well off villagers were reluctant to take up the issue of school expansion to higher authorities.

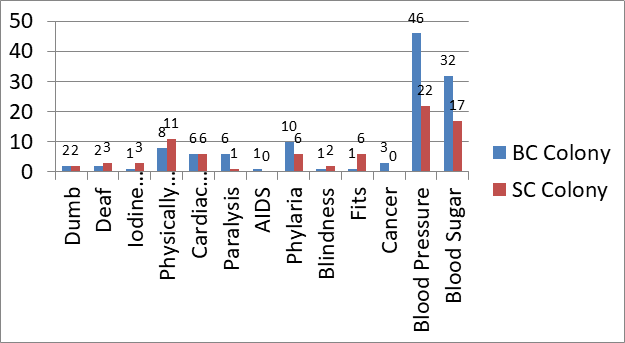
The school faced several hardships. Firstly, it was observed that there was an acute shortage of sports facilities. An activity was conducted with the school children, asking them to draw the kind of school they aspired and almost every child drew a huge green playground and proper classrooms. This highlighted how they aspired for a proper place to play. Secondly, there was an acute shortage of benches and children in the primary classes were seen sitting on the floor during lessons. Thirdly there was insufficient number of classrooms. Few classes were taking place in the verandahs and under tree shades to accommodate all the students. The principal complained that the school had been receiving an annual funding of ₹15000 for infrastructural development which was grossly insufficient to meet all the infrastructural needs and yet expressed his willingness to work towards the benefits of the students

**Health and Hygiene**

As defined by WHO, *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*” For the health facilities of the villagers, they were dependent on two ASHA workers, one RMP, and a nurse. The village did not have a Primary Health Centre of its own and the nearest PHC was at Gundala.

The village of Maripadiga consisted of two ASHA workers, V. Bhagyamma who looked after BC colony and G Kalamma, who looked after the SC colony. The ASHA workers had all the basic medicines needed for primary diseases. They also catered regularly to pregnant women, supplying necessary medicines and iron supplements and accompanying them to the PHC during child birth. Both of these workers had a good reputation in the village asattested by the villagers as they were seen performing their duties diligently. It was observed that they maintained detailed records of various patients suffering from different diseases and ailments across the village as well records of pregnant women. Bhagyamma had never been to school and was a farmer before becoming an ASHA worker. Nevertheless, she was awarded as the best ASHA worker of the region the previous year.

A nurse from the PHC was supposed to visit the village every alternate day to check on people’s health, but according to villagers she came only once every Sunday. Also, a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) was present in the village. However, nobody seemed to trust him alleging that in reality he was just a former compounder of some doctor and did not have much knowledge. Rather in case of any disease, they preferred to visit the PHC. When the RMP was approached by the group, he seemed to be in a bit of haste and seemed to avoid any questions. This gave an impression that he perhaps was eloping to hide something.



*Chart 1: It showcases the incidence of different diseases in the BC and SC colony of Maripadiga.*

From the disease statistics obtained from the two ASHA workers, the above bar graph was constructed. Each of the colonies had a population of roughly 1000 persons and the graph depicts the number of persons suffering from different ailments in each of these colonies. The number of patients in case of major issues like cardiac problems was roughly same in both the colonies. Interestingly, the number of patients suffering from blood sugar and blood pressure related ailments was almost double in the BC colony. This could perhaps be due to the reason that people in the SC colony were more engaged in physical labour, as was also evident from our study on occupational structure.

**Drinking Water**

The village had a RO plant which was given to private contractors by the Gram Panchayat on an annual tender basis. The plant had two filters, one donated by the local MLA and the other donated by the Birla Foundation. It was opened twice a day, once for two hours in the morning and once for an hour in the evening. The system was that people received a card from the Gram Panchayat in which they could recharge an amount of ₹30 and withdraw water at the rate of ₹2 per 20 litres. People from different parts of the village were seen taking water from the RO plant, highlighting that no untouchability prevailed in the village in this regard. Also, men were seen lining up along with women to take water, breaking the gender stereotype of this particular work being solely that of household women.

Observation(s)

According to the account of the villagers, most of the times, one of the filters used to be defunct and hence people had to wait longer in queues. Secondly the time was restricted to just three hours per day which led to certain hardships for people during emergency water needs.

**Women**

As largely the passive participation of women has been embedded in the psyche of people, this section discusses the status quo of women in the village.

Almost all the working women in Maripadiga were part of some Self -Help Groups (SHGs). Many others were there who were once part of SHGs but then dropped out due to payment and coordination issues.  Even, most of the petty shops in the village were run by women with the help of loans taken from SHGs. There was a total of 42 Self Help Groups in the village. Each group had 10 to 20 members and 2 leaders each.  There were basically two types of Self-Help Groups, the caste based (the Self-Help Group of Padmashali weaving community) and inter caste (the Self Help of petty shop owners). The leader of the Self-Help Group borrowed on behalf of the group. A petty shop owner Soumya Lakshmi was interviewed for providing insights towards the functioning of SHGs. She told that their leader Indirimma borrowed loans from the bank on behalf the SHG and repaid to the bank after collecting the money from the group.

Simultaneously, there were reservations for women in 2 wards and for the post of MPP (Mandal Parishad President). However generally women were used as dummy candidates, as was observed in the case of the MPP who had no idea regarding any government initiative, and everything was being answered by her husband. She was seen to be more occupied with the household chores than to make decisions for the Mandal. Additionally, patriarchy was observed to be quite prevalent in most of the households. Often it was observed that women were mere passive participants to any discussion taking place and also were seen occupying a seat on the floor in the presence of their male counterparts and in-laws.

The sex ratio in the village was almost 1:1, highlighting the fact that girl children were embraced happily by people.  Moreover, girls in the village were encouraged to pursue higher education. It was largely observed that most of the households sent their girl child to study in the city after 14-15 years of age.

**INFLUENCE OF CASTE ON OCCUPATIONS**

The caste system, which is the system of elaborately stratified social hierarchy distinguishes India from most other societies (Bayly, 1999). Among the various factors determining caste, a close link between caste and occupation is witnessed, especially in rural India. According to Anderson (2011), the traditional village economy revolved around a hereditary caste hierarchy that prescribed individuals’ occupations. The upper castes were usually the landowners whereas the artisans and menial job workers belong to the lower caste.

As caste came to be narrowly expressed in the light of religion, it soon was seen perpetrating in the economic and political domains (Raheja, 1988). The economic aspect of this is visible from the caste-based occupations carried out in several parts of India. This instilled a thought of understanding the caste- based occupations as one of the objectives.

1. **Toddy Extraction**

This occupation was carried out by the Gouds, belonging to the BC community. Nearly all the people belonging to this sub-caste carried out toddy extraction as their major occupation. The peak season is usually from March to June where they earn ₹ 5,000 to ₹10,000. This toddy is usually sold in the village itself. However, such prices are not enough for them to sustain in a market with exorbitant rates. They further resort to programs like MGNREGA wherein they dig canals, plant trees and clean the lakes. Moreover, they also work as agricultural labourers during the off-season and earn ₹250- ₹300 per day.

Chandragiri Raju, a 68 year old man has been in this occupation since last 30 years. Toddy extraction has been carried out in his family since generations. He owns three acres of land where he grows cotton and paddy which is rainfed. Alongside, he owns a borewell in the house provided by the gram panchayat. The crops growing on his land are self-consumed and the leftover is sold in the closest town Janagam. He clearly indicated that toddy extraction did not provide enough income as he had to sell his entire cattle and take a loan of ₹8,00,000 with 2% interest for his daughter’s marriage. He also discouraged his son to follow this tradition and sent him to Hyderabad for further education.

1. **Barbers**

In the village of Maripadiga, there were only two barbers who belonged to the sub-caste called mangali. One barber carried out barter system and the other took cash payment. Every sub-caste in the village was divided among the two barbers. However, people who worked as daily wage labourers and who were landless usually preferred cash payment in the absence of paddy. For further understanding the barber who was engaged in the barter exchange was interviewed.

Rasamulla who was 40 years old had been in this profession since last 20 years. Similar to toddy extractors, this profession had been carried out since generations. His son was seen to be employed in this similar occupation in Hyderabad. Rasamulla received 5 baskets of rice every year from each household with 10 kgs of rice in each basket. He sold this rice in the local market of Jangam for instant cash. Additionally, he seemed quite unaware about the various schemes for the benefit of the villagers like kishore balikalu and runa mafi.

1. **Bamboo Mats and Basket Making**

This another significant occupation was carried out by the Yarkala and komati sub-caste, belonging to the scheduled tribe. The village of Maripadiga had only two ST families. They usually acquired all the raw materials from the nearby forest located 3 kms away. To make a single mat or basket it took around 3-4 days after a rigorous process of slicing the bamboo, drying them and moulding them into mats or baskets. However, this business did not seem to be very prosperous owing to the declining demand of such goods

The individual interviewed for this occupation was Vanamnarsa. He was seen shifting to agriculture as an  agricultural labourer, earning around ₹300- ₹350 per day (while his female counterpart was seen earning ₹200- ₹250). This clearly indicated towards the differential treatment and pay parity between men and women in the village. Furthermore, all the members in his family were enrolled in MGNREGA as it provided additional employment and income to the family.

1. **Drummers**

Madigas who had the hereditary work of stitching the slippers, beating the drums, belonged to SC community. They occupied less land as compared to other castes. They generally used to stitch slippers for big landlords by extracting leather from mutton and beef shops. The mode of payment was either via barter system using jowar and rice. Due to the absence of mala community, who perform the task of grave digging and wood collection, madiga community in the village carried on this work. They also beat drums during deaths in the village, receiving an amount of ₹5000- ₹6000 while during marriages they received ₹500 with rice bags .

Panagatti Narassai, a 70 year old was interviewed. He had 6 acres of land, which he had given for tenancy. The land was bought 20 years back for an amount of  ₹15000, from the money saved by working under landlords.

For around 30 houses, he was the sole person responsible for carrying out marriage and death rituals. He owned around 30-40 drums, which were distributed to different political parties during elections.Both his son and daughter were government teachers.

1. **Dhobi**

In Maripadiga, the main job of dhobi was of ironing clothes since people ususally washed their clothes themselves. A minimum amount of ₹10 was charged for a cloth and  during funerals they charged ₹7000 for washing clothes of all the members in a house. They belonged to BC community and had enough land for agriculture.

Komalatha,a married 20 year old B.Com graduate with a child, was interviewed. She had been practising the work since 2 years with the support of her in-laws. Their second business was agriculture. She earned a daily  income of around ₹150. She was not satisfied with her work and aspired to complete B. ED to become a teacher. It would be possible only once her child grew up and started attending anganwadi.

1. **The Potters**

The village of Maripadiga had 4 potters. The whole village was divided into four parts by segmenting each caste into four sections based on the number of families and each potter catered  to one segment from each caste. Therefore, apparently there was no competition for profits . Out of the 4 potters , presently only one potter named Malamma made her own pottery.

Malamma (aged 68) earlier used to cultivate flowers, paddy and cotton in 9.5 acres of land, and later shifted to pottery. She got married in the year 1962 and started pottery making from the year 1966. Her husband, who used to be a potter too, left pottery making due to old age and weakness. However, he receives Rs 3000/- monthly as old aged pension. The major sources of mud for pottery making were found to be Sitarampuram and Gadawadi. She paid   ₹1000 for getting the tractor to collect mud from Sitarampuram. She used hay (leftover hay of livestock) and firewood from the nearest forest for making pottery. She also ran a petty shop which was observed to double up as an illegal bar.

1. **Carpenter**

The village of Maripadiga had 3 carpenters. Unlike the potters, there were competitions for earning profits between the carpenters. The major sources of wood found were Sitarampuram, Gangapuram, Guduru and Vishuru. Most demanded wood works were doors, dining tables, beds, and windows.

Vipendra aged 32 had been a carpenter of Maripadiga since 2009. Before carpentry he used to make agricultural tools. However, the fall of prices of hand- made agrarian tools due to the coming of new technologies and machines in agricultural fields led him shift to carpentry. He used to collect wood from Vishuru forest with his own bike or private auto.  His income varied from Rs 5000 to Rs 10,000 monthly. As most of the orders were made during the summer season, there was a slight increase of income during the summer. His wife wanted him to migrate to Hyderabad for less work pressure and more earnings. However, Vipendra never wanted to leave his native place. Though he incurred huge medical expenses every month owing to the ill health of his and his children, he had no plans of switching to other professions.

1. **Cattle Herders**

Yadavas were involved in the generational work of cow, buffalo and sheep rearing. They belonged to the BC community and had sufficient land for agriculture.

Boini Swami, a 41 year Bcom, MBA (discontd) was interviewed. He worked for HDFC as a computer operator and returned back to the village due to the high cost of living in the city. He was the sole computer operator working for SHGs and banks and earned an amount of ₹7000. He also owned  8 acres of combined land where he grew paddy in 2 acres. . Under the KCR scheme he purchased 4 cows under 50% investment from government and 50% from individual and owned a total of 7 cows. The cows bought under KCR scheme were not of good breed and could not adapt to the natural habitat. Hence, he had to sell 2 cows for an amount of ₹12000. His daily sale was 25L milk at ₹30 per litre. After deducting cost for fodder and medicines, he earned around ₹20000 per month. He had access to Rythu bandhu and had an outstanding loan of ₹9 lakh. He wanted the government to firstly increase the market price of farmers’ produce and secondly, to ban alcohol since in the village almost 30% of household income was spent on it. Further he emphasized the need for improving irrigation facilities instead of simply waiving off loans.

1. **Fisheries**

35% of one acre land belonging to Bharath Kumar in the village of Maripadiga was used for fisheries. He had invested ₹10000 for fishing cultivation in which ₹9000 was invested on fishes and ₹1000 for transportation. Fishes belonging to Buccham category were cultivated. After seven months the fishes were fit to be sold. They were sold at  ₹65 per kg inside the village and at ₹120 per kg outside. He earned an income of ₹3,60,000 at the end of the year .

1. **Agriculture**

Maripadiga carried out agriculture as the chief occupation as it employed more than half of the village. People with other occupations as mentioned above were also seen to be related with agriculture in one or the other way. For ease of this research they were bifurcated into small scale, large scale and landless farmers. The main crop cultivated in the village was cotton and paddy, followed by vegetables and groundnuts. The small scale labourers owned 2-3 acres of land which was usually rainfed. On the contrary, the large scale landowners owned around 15-20 acres of land and had proper irrigation systems (like wells, borewells and motors) for their crops. The small scale farmers usually borrowed tractors from the large scale landowners once or twice a year for tilling the land which amounts to ₹2000 for1.5 hours. Similarly, vice versa stood true when these small-scale landowners were employed as tenant farmers on the lands of the large-scale landowners. This usually happened when the small- scale farmers faced crop failure. However, the method of payment usually depended on the large-scale landowners. For instance, the landowner could pay ₹200- ₹250 for working the whole or he could pay them per kilogram of cotton picked (₹10 for 1kg). Although the latter seemed more lucrative, it had the issues of extreme working hours with no breaks and degrading of the health.

Hence, it can be observed from the aforementioned instances that not all the occupations are caste based. Occupations such as fisheries, agriculture, running petty shops and many others were driven less by caste and more by the availability of resources. Hence, our former objective of the influence of caste on the occupation seems to be loosening as the future generation (when interviewed) stated that they are more willing to take up other occupations and not continue with traditional measures of livelihood.

**GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & INSTITUTIONS**

This section entails the various schemes and government institutions which were seen to have an impact on the inhabitants of Maripadiga village. However, this section provides a critical assessment towards the various schemes which influence the life of the villagers in varied ways. The schemes are as follows, Rythu bandhu, Kalyana lakshmi, Kishora balikalu, Kanti velugu, Mission Bhagiratha, KCR Kit, THRIFT Fund, Swachh Bharat.

The initial scheme of **Rythu bandhu** is an agriculture support scheme. The government provides ₹5000 per acre per farmer in each season i.e. kharif season and rabi season. This scheme portrays a rosy picture of availability of support from the government however it largely provides the money to the landowner rather than tenancy farmer. This largely kept the status of the tenancy farmers at a constant by not encouraging them to invest in the farmland. Hence, this scheme is unable to aim at those directly involved in agriculture. Another scheme, the **Telangana Kanti Velugu** is a scheme which primarily aims at correcting the vision and maintain the eyesight of the people. They conduct eye screening & vision test for people of the village and provide spectacles free of cost according to the requirement. Also, they provide medication support for common eye alignments and refer to nearby hospitals for any major surgery. However, it was observed that no fund was provided for the people for their surgeries and even at times there was no free spectacles distributed.

The subsequent scheme, **Kalyana Lakshmi**, provides financial assistance to the bride who belong to SC/ST community with a condition that the girl be unmarried and has attained 18 years of age. Earlier the government used to provide around ₹50,000, however now they are providing around ₹1,00,116. Although the purpose of the scheme is to provide financial support to the bride, the families at Maripadiga stated openly that they are using this money for the purpose of dowry. Hence, one can also witness that dowry stands as a strong social evil present in the village along with getting indirect assistance from the government. **Kishora Balikalu** scheme targets the girls between 11 to 18 years of age for providing iron tablets to them. Additionally, they conduct awareness programs on nutrition, health hygiene and even counselling for girls and their parents on child marriages. However, it was observed that child marriages in the village have largely never been encountered and encouraged for. Also, most of the school- going girls were seen stating that they receive iron tablets regularly from the Asha workers hence suggesting that this government scheme works closely with its government employees.

The **KCR Kit** was launched by the state government with an intention of reducing the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate. Under this scheme a kit with 16 baby care items is provided to the mother to keep new born baby warm and hygienic along with ₹12,000 to compensate for the loss of work by woman during her pregnancy. The amount is released in 2 installments in the adhar linked bank account of the woman. It was observed that all the pregnant ladies of the village registered for this scheme with the help of Asha worker and attained 0% infant mortality rate in the previous year. Hence, it suggested that the health condition of pregnant women and new born babies in this village was taken with utmost seriousness.

The consequent scheme aims to induce the habit of saving and provide financial security to the handloom weavers. This falls under the **THRIFT Fund**. In this scheme a weaver is suppose to contribute 8 paise of every 1 rupee earned in the a bank account. Additionally, 4 paise will be contributed by state government and 4 paise will be contributed by central government. The tenure for this scheme is 3 years and after completion of the tenure the weaver can withdraw the money. It was observed that weavers were able to accumulate good amount of money which was mostly used for daughter’s marriage (as dowry, mentioned above) or to expand the capacity of production or repaying of loans.

**Swachha Bharat** was also seen to be contributing towards the development of the village. Under this scheme, every household of the village received fund of ₹12,000 for the construction of the toilet. However, the actual cost incurred was ranging between ₹20000 to ₹40000. Despite of such varying costs, it was observed that every household in the village had constructed toilets and even separate soakpits. Thus, despite the insufficient funds from the government, people were seen to have an understanding and awareness towards hygiene.

**Mission Bhagiratha** being a flagship program of the Telanaga State Government, is responsible for the water supply for the villagers. As mentioned earlier, the water tank was located near to the BC colony and hence the water was not supplied rationally in the whole village. Subsequently, since the water tank is situated at certain height, it is not feasible to fill the tank with low pressure water motor. However, only such motors are available in the village which then leads to insufficient water in the tank due to which the villagers have to rely on other water resources like borewell, tubewell etc.

**INSTITUTIONS**

This section deals with the various insitutions present in the Maripadiga village. It specifically discusses the various political and administrative bodies functioning at the village level.

The village of Maripadiga had one Gram panchayat consisting of Sarpanch, Vice-sarpanch, ward members and village members as evident from the image below. The gram panchayat provided certificates of birth, death and marriage. It was observed that this office collected house tax of ₹200- ₹800 from each house depending upon the area of the land they owned. It collected water tax of around Rs 150 from every household. For any problem to resolve the decision should be approved by sarpanch and at least 6 ward members.

The Sarpanch of this village was elected unanimously. After he came to power he installed around 107 led bulbs and constructed around 100 soak pits in the households, as testified by the villagers. He was seen stating that he had put forth some problems at the mandal level for the funds towards the extension of anganwadi building and construction of bathroom in anganwadi. The villagers specified that he seemed more approachable than the MPP and thus, was aware of more intimate problems faced by them.

Under Village Revenue Officer (VRO) there were cluster of two villages which he controlled, Maripadiga and Mandapalli. He had records and details of lands owned by all the households and was accountable for the issuance of income certificate, caste certificate and ration card. However, due to his absence in the village the group was unable to interview him personally, although a telephonic conversation took place.

Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGV bank) had accounts of all the villagers. It provided insurance for crop failure and purchase of livestock. It was brought into the light that due to the failure of the cotton crop APGV bank provided ₹24,000 as insurance to the affected farmers. The farmers attested to the same.

This mandal consist 20 villages, which fall under the ambit of Mandala Parishad President (MPP). The MPP was seen residing in Maripadiga itself. Every month a meeting was held at village level and once every three months at mandal level to discuss the usage of the fund which was being transferred by the State Government. Currently both MPTC and gram panchayat were planning to construct a grave yard, new panchayat office and a dumping yard in the village. Interestingly, the MPP who was a female had very little say in the decisions of this office, as already mentioned above.

Maripadiga have sub branch post office which provides various services like:

1. Recurring and fixed deposits with 8% interst rate.
2. Saving account with the withdrawl limit of Rs.10000
3. Posts and mails for all over India
4. Transfer of various pensions by the Government except government employees.
5. MGNREGA fund transfer.

The post office in the village was operating twice a week which seemed to be problematic for the villagers as withdrawing money for instant use barely seemed an option for the villagers. Thus, many of the households were seen to be proposing the idea of home delivery of the fund via post.

**CASE STUDY: THE WEAVER COMMUNITY OF MARIPADIGA**

After agriculture, handloom weaving was the most prevalent work done by villagers, in Maripadiga village. Handloom weaving was mostly done by Padmashali community, which was considered to be their caste-based occupation. From many generations Padmashalis were the only people working in the handloom weaving industry in the village. Almost all the Padmashalis in the village had a handloom in their respective households. Each machine was legalized by GEO tag given to them by the government. Different products such as towels, handkerchiefs, blankets, shirt clothes, bag clothes and sarees were made by the villagers using handlooms. Handloom involved various steps to create the final product. Initially they purchased the raw material either from government or from the markets in Hyderabad or Bangalore. After that they put the thread on Asu machine, machine which creates loops of the thread which helps in the process of saree making. Later they painted it and looped the thread again onto a small reel and finally used it to make the cloth. Asu machine was mainly used in the process of making sarees.

There were two entities which were involved with the handloom weavers, which are:-

i.                    Government based handloom cooperative society

ii.                  Private handloom weavers

Government based handloom society bought raw materials from the government and sold the final product to the government. Private handloom weavers worked as contractors under a master weaver, who got the raw material from either Hyderabad or Bangalore, and then sold it in the market. Mostly master weavers preferred silk sarees whereas cooperative society preferred cotton sarees. In the paragraphs below, two case studies of each cooperative society and private handloom weaver is given and comparison between both is explained.

1. Government based handloom cooperative society:

Vellala Saraswati (Padmashali), 47 years old, was a worker in the handloom cooperative society. Before entering into the handloom work, she was involved in lot of other works such as maintaining the telephone booth, coin box, tailoring, and working as agricultural labor and even did agriculture in her own land for two years. As she couldn’t find sustenance in any of the jobs, she learnt weaving work on handlooms. Initially she learned work from her husband. Later she learned work at the cooperative society. When learning work at the cooperative society, it used to pay her ₹250/- per saree. It took her 2-3 months to learn how to make a saree. It took her 15-20 days for her to learn how loop the thread to the reel and how to paint on the thread for making saree. Now she could make different products such as towel, cloth bag, shirt cloth, dupatta, handkerchief and saree. She had been working in cooperative society since 2011. She was even awarded by the district collector for being the fastest worker in the society.

1. Private handloom weaver:

Satyanarayana (Padmashali), 58 years old, was a private weaver who worked under a master weaver. He was a 6th drop out as his family was not able to afford for his education at that time. His father also used to work under a master weaver back then. So, satyanarayana decided to learn work from his father. Later when he was 18 years old, he decided to go to Mumbai to work there. He used to make readymade clothes in Mumbai like shirts and jeans and used to earn  ₹3000-₹5000/- per month being in Mumbai. After working for 20 years in Mumbai, he came back to his own village to work independently. So, he set up a handloom in his house and started to take orders from master weavers. Presently he was working under a master weaver named Birru Ramakrishnayya, a padmashali. He was doing silk sarees, as private weavers mainly worked on silk sarees and not cotton. He earned up to ₹1000/- per saree. Each saree took 2-3 days to complete. Satyanarayana blamed the younger generation for not learning handloom work as he feared its extinction. He complained that it takes patience and a lot of effort to learn and work and this was the reason for younger generation to not learn.

**Comparison between cooperative society and the private sector:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Corporation** | **Private** |
| Work recognition | Yes | No |
| Right to question | Yes | No |
| Ease of work | No | Yes |
| Loans | Yes | No |
| Job security | Yes | No |
| Income | INR 750 /- per saree | INR 1,000/- per saree |
| Work timings | 7am-6pm | According to comfort |
| Skill training | Yes | No |
| Loan waiver | Yes | No |

*Table 2: Representing the comparative study between the handloom weavers of the government Co-operative and the Private Sector*

As per the table above there are a lot of differences between cooperative society and private sector. Cooperative society has the work recognition compared to the private sector. Each individual working there gets recognition as an independent compared to private sector, where only male member of each household get recognition, even though the entire household is involved in the work. Private Weaver does not have a say on the product and the wage that he/she is paid. In cooperative society one has every right to ask for their basic rights such as decent pay and right to decide the price of the product. In the private sector person has no certain time limit on when to complete his/her work. but in cooperative society, there is a time limit for each product and individual has to complete the task in given time. As private weaver does not have any time constraint, he/she completes the product as fast as they can and earns more than weavers working in cooperative society. as they can work whenever they want, private weavers have hand full of time to work on each product and complete it even before cooperative society completes one saree. But the advantage of being in a cooperative is that they have job security and authorities cannot remove a worker in an instant. But in the private sector, master handloom weaver can stop giving orders to master weaver if he/she thinks he is not capable. Weavers in cooperative society also get loans from the cooperative society with zero interest and it also helps individual to get personal loans from banks, as they do not have any asset to put as farmer has his/her land as a collateral. Finally, cooperative society has skill development programs from government and which lacks in private sector. Only person who knows work does work in private sector whereas in cooperative society, it trains people and recruit them for work.

**CONCLUSION**

Villagers are the reflection of tranquility, naivety and simplicity. The people in this village were humble, kind and approachable. Such love and affection portrayed by the villagers had an awe-inspiring effect on the group. The group observed various routines followed by people from different walks of life along with their livelihoods and livelihood challenges. In a nutshell our visit to Maripadiga made us experience the essence of village life. It was an eye opener in the regard of caste influencing the occupations of the villagers. The various instances quoted in this research are, Padmashalis as weavers, kamaris as carpenters, kumbari as potters, mangalis as barbers, gouds doing toddy extraction, yarkalas as being associated with bamboo products, komatis as basket makers, madigas as drum beaters and slipper makers. The occupations such as fisheries, petty shops, dairy and agriculture are occupied by people who have appropriate resources and thus, are not caste based. Therefore, the objective of understanding influence of caste on occupations was seen to hold true to some extent. However, with the low-income levels in some of these tasks and the coming of new generation, this structure has become more fluid. The village had composition of different religious groups who lived in harmony. Most of the villagers were observed to have equal access to the resources like drinking water from the RO plant, education and health. The ASHA workers in the village were noted doing tremendous work in maintaining the official records of the villagers. However, it was also observed that there was lack of infrastructure facilities in the school (like lack of library and playground) and healthcare.

On conversing with the few youths, it was observed that they were strictly against privatisation of education and desired for the government schools to excel. Further it was noted that the youth was quite unaware about various education and job opportunities available to them outside the ambit of traditional occupations. Interaction with them also revealed the persistence of corruption in the local administrative units of the village. In conclusion we learnt beyond classroom learning and saw the reality of rural communities. The group believes that the various courses dealt with in the previous semester have helped them gain an insight into the socio- political and economic structure of the village, as can also be noted from the aforementioned arguments throughout the report. The lessons which we learnt will be helpful in further studies both in Rural Development and Governance & Developmental studies. Tata institute of social sciences has given a great opportunity to explore and experience the rural life.

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