

Abstract (Submitted after Ph.D. Viva)

Topic : Culture and Society in Varanasi : Continuity and Change

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This research work is about the culture and society of Dom community in Varanasi. Varanasi is also known as *mahashmashaan* or the city of death. For, centuries, Doms are engaged in funeral work that is again related to the death and they are also considered as custodian of 'sacred' fire. In Hindu tradition, it is believed that *moksha* or liberation from this life is not possible until they provide sacred fire for burning dead bodies. To understand continuity and change in their social life the objectives of the study were :

- a. To study the status of Doms in traditional social structure of Varanasi
- b. To study socio-economic profile of Doms of Varanasi and social mobility among them
- c. To study family, marriage and nature of residence among Doms
- d. To study belief, faith and religion among Doms of Varanasi

This study adopted descriptive research design in understanding social change and social mobility in their socio-economic life. This research work followed mixed methodology i.e. qualitative and quantitative. In qualitative method, in-depth interviews were conducted to understand their day-to-day life while structured interview schedule was prepared in quantitative method to collect the data from 6 wards of the city. Dom community was divided in three subgroups- Rahdaria, Banrasia and Ghatia on the basis of their traditional occupation. A comparative data analysis was done based on these three sub-castes.

This research work was compiled in seven chapters based on different topics. In first chapter, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, review of literature based on social change and social mobility and also some other sociological studies relating to Varanasi. In chapter two, research methodology is discussed in which rationale of the study, theoretical perspective, research techniques and tools, period of the study, limitations of the study, universe and sample were included. Chapter three deals with continuity and change in other societies of Varanasi in the context of tradition and modernity. This chapter tried to present the social structure of Varanasi as a field of research. Chapter four discussed about educational and occupational intergenerational social mobility of Doms of Varanasi. In chapter five, family and marriage institutions were analysed in the context of social change and social mobility. This chapter also elaborated the types

of residence of three communities of Doms and their relation and interaction with other caste groups of the city. Chapter six analysed the data based on religion, faith and belief system of Doms of Varanasi. Seventh chapter i.e. last chapter dealt with conclusion of the research work and the reasons of backwardness of Doms of Varanasi and suggested remedies for their empowerment.
