

Changing Village Economy; A Case Study Of A Fringe Village Of Himachal Pradesh

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Introduction

Economic anthropology has come out to deal with the subsistence mode of economic system visible in rural societies. In general, people living in the rural and peasant societies manage their lively hood from their surrounding atmosphere and nature. Economy is one primary social institution as any changes in it have a causal affect on the other rest of the three basic institutions (Mallinowski, 1922). Being part of non-capitalistic economic discourses, Economic Anthropology generally deals with the distribution of goods and services in existing peasant and rural society. According to Raymond Firth (1951) economic anthropology deals primarily with economic aspects of the social relations of the persons. Economy is an important constituent of community life and plays a deciding role in the formation of cultural and social structure of a society. Marxist philosophy also talked about same as Karl Marx put economy as the core of his super-structure; changes that occur in core lead to change in other social institutions located in periphery.

Economic institution involves the exchange of various types of human services and commodities. It comprises of the ordering human relation and human effort to procure as many as necessities of day to day life with spending minimum effort. It is the attempt to secure the maximization of profit with the utilization of minimum resource. It is desirable to have the possible maximum satisfaction through adapting limited means to limited ends in an organized manner. In this continuity, it has been observed that primitive economic institution is of subsistence type and has been failed to analyse through the existing broad category of production-consumption economy.

The present study dealt about the transition of a subsistence economic system to a capitalistic one by illustration a case study of fringe village located in Himachal Pradesh. With the exposure of semi-urbanization, infrastructure development and industrialization pushed the existing village economy to adopt for a semi capitalistic form of economy at the back drop of its subsistence one.

Methodology

Methodology refers to the rationale and the philosophical consumption that underline particular study relative to a scientific method. This often refers to anything and everything that can be encapsulated for a discipline or a series of processes, activities and tasks. I have employed a set of tools and methods of social research while conducting my fieldwork in the village Gaggal. For bringing out the emic point of view of the villagers I used some very useful techniques such as unstructured interview, Participant and Non-Participant Observation, Genealogy, Interview Guide, Life-Histories and Case studies. These tool and methods of social research served an indispensable part of my study. Later on, data have been interpreted using narrative analysis to fulfill the study.

Brief Ethnographic Profile of the Village

The literal meaning of Himachal Pradesh is "Region of snowy mountains" and it is also known as "Dev Bhoom" (land of gods). After India became free in 1947, a number of princely hilly states were integrated into a single unit to be administered by the Government of India. Himachal Pradesh came into being as a state of the India. Himachal Pradesh came into being as a state of the India Union on April 15, 1948, by integrating 31 big and small hill states of the region.

The fieldwork was conducted in a small village Gaggal, situated on National Highway 70 which cuts across the village and this highway connects District Hamirpur and Nadaun. Gaggal is just 1.5 kilometer away from Nadaun of Hamirpur District, Himachal Pradesh. Gaggal is a somewhat plane or foot hill village. It has been surrounded by four villages on the north side by village tillu on the east side by village jiladi on south the south side by village kothar and from west side by naudam town. It is a multi-caste village dominated by rajputs. Communities residing are Rajputs (parmar), Chaudhary (girth), Nai (barber), Jhimar (water carrier), Harijan (cobbler) and Kabir panthi.

Village is occupied by the residents' lands and agricultural fields around it. Entire village is distributed along the National Highway and some portion on the other side of

National highway. Further, there is also tendency to build one's house on the road side. So maximum people have their houses on road side, and there are many agricultural fields in the back side of the village. This village is divided into three cluster called lower Gaggal, Middle Gaggal and upper Gaggal, today there is nobody landless in the village, no matter even if some families just have 2-3 Kana of land and even which are least fertile, difficult to irrigate and soil hardly contain any water. Additional to this there is a list of problems, they are closed to two main forests namely Protected Forest 39 Tillu total area is 88.22 hectare and Protected Forest 37 Kothar total area is 15.38 hectare. Thus given enough temptation of wild boar, Nilgai etc, to come and eat away the agricultural produce.

In Gaggal there is no school; one reason could be there is three school nearby gaggal. One English medium public school in Kothar (In Front Of Gaggal). One Govt. primary school and one senior secondary in Jiladi. It is one and half Km away from the village. It was established in the year 1905 as primary school. Thereafter it was upgrade to Middle school in 1951 and to high school in the year 1968. Finally it was upgrade to 10+2 in the year 2006. One central school was located in Nadaun. One Govt. degree college located in Kothar. Earlier this college was situated in Nadaun and in 2002 it shifted to Kothar. Primary health center is situated in Nadaun, and several nursing home and private clinic. There was one vocational institute which offers medicals course like ayurvedic and homeopathic. There was one veterinary hospital in Kothar.

Gaggal is watered by river Beas and two seasonal river namely Mann Khad and Kunna Khad. The soil condition and agro-climatic conditions offer great possibilities of growth of various types of vegetables and other cash crops. Major crops are wheat, maize and vegetable includes cabbage garlic, potatoes, peas, etc. Staple food is wheat and maize. Wheat is the main crop of the village. Wheat chapatti and sabzi are very common but people also eat maize chapatti (makki ki roti). Although the traditional 'Chulha' is some time used for cooking but it has been majorly replaced proper gas tables and LPG cylinders.

More than the normal clothing is required during the winter seasons. Ordinary clothing for man consists of shirt, pant, dhoti or pajama. However, Jeans and trousers have replace it to some extent. Women generally wear skirt, blouse and some wear sari or Salwar Kameez. The spoken language is Hindi with Punjabi accent, consisting of various dialects of a which the main dialect is "Pahari". With the spread of

communication and increasing literacy rate among people some also speak English.

Here in rural area the houses are both Kuccha and Pucca in nature make of stone, brick, concrete and iron sheets and the first floor consist of the kitchen with self made floor and ceiling make with bamboos. But some houses of village is really beautiful like bungalow. This is because of influence of Nadaun town.

A cattle shed is separated from the main living area. Wash rooms are not attached but outside the main area. Village is electrified and there is regular supply of electricity and Telecommunication is well developed. They have proper fitted tap system and source is the water pipe line laid under ground.

Caste Hierarchy (In Descending Order)

- ♣ Brahmin (e.g. Maoku & Purodh Brahmin)
- ♣ Rajputs
- ♣ Rajput Sub-Caste:
 - ❖ Parmar
 - ❖ Parihar
 - ❖ Mandiyal
- ♣ Chaudhary
- ♣ Chadhary Sub-Caste:
 - ❖ Rana
 - ❖ Kandal
 - ❖ Girth
 - ❖ Niatu
- ♣ Harijan:
 - ♣ Harijan Sub-Caste:
 - ❖ Nai
 - ❖ Julaha
 - ❖ Chamar

Gaggal is very near to the place called Jwalaji, where a temple of Jwalaji is situated. Most of the people of Gaggal worship the goddess Jwalaji. Myths are found regarding the goddess Jwalaji. As the history of Gaggal shows that it came under the Kingdom of Katoch dynasty, it witnesses the conflict between the Hindu and Muslim community. Myth also shows it very clearly.

Forms of Family in Gaggal Village

Based on Condition	Residence	Patrilocal
	Authority	Patriarchal
	Succession	Patrilineal
Based on Marital Status	Descent	Descent is Traced from the paternal line
	Single	Monogamous
Based on Composition	Composed of Father, Mother and Dependent Children	Nuclear
	Composed of Few Nuclear Family of Closed Blood Ties	Joint Family
	Composition of Either Mother or Father and their Children	Sub-Nuclear Family

The people of Gaggal have comparatively, small families. Similarly, the number of children each family had was comparatively, low perhaps the high literacy rate has a direct impact on the number of children. The village is Patrilineal and Patrilocal. By Patrilineal we mean that the descent is traced from the paternal line and thus male child is given more preference. The property rights are with the male head of the family who is usually the father and the property is equally distributed amongst all his sons and daughters. The inheritance of property is in the male line.

The kinship system in Gaggal village among people seems simple but the fact that all the kins of a person are around makes it difficult to study their interpersonal relations. A Patrilineal descent is observed. Inheritance of property is of equigeniture in nature. All the males of the family have equal rights in the property by virtue of being born into it, even in the case of second marriage. Females too have an equal right over the property but they usually do not claim it and if they do so they then lose ties with the family and the village.

Change in Village Economic Setup

The village economy is a mixed economy. People don't depend upon single mode of economy or occupation. They indulge in different-different types of economic activities. But, agriculture is primary occupation for all of them differ in their amount of production. Some produce at large scale for selling it. But, some others produce at small scale just for their own consumption. Their life is very well rooted in agriculture. As people also indulge in different economic activities in village, Gaggal village is situated on NH 70, that's why there are 22 shops of different kinds of goods like as confectionary shop, stationary shop. There is one bike showroom and its workshop, there were two automobile mechanic shop, and lots of tea-stalls. This village also has one milk plant named as HP State Milk Producer Federation Ltd.

Agriculture is the primary occupation of the villagers irrespective of their caste. The centre agricultural activities depend on rain. Maize (Makki) and wheat (kanak) is the main crops. Maize is cultivated at the arrival of monsoon. Wheat is cultivated during winters. The products are sufficient for self-consumption.

They grow vegetables in the kitchen garden which is also not for sale but for self-consumption. One of the villagers, the women folk does more work, be in house hold chores or in the fields same as weeding, harvesting, cutting grass for the cattle etc. this explanation was has he could do all as they are "women's work" and he was saying this from his deepest conclusion. these kinds of feeling are mostly dictated by society following the body so this was very little he could do. Similarly women would never be allowed to touch by men. Women even travel in tractors to nearby villages. This is probably because "tractor" is not depending traditionally or its function as a vehicle in more apparent than the function it performs in the field. Again in the forest the women folk goes to get grass, leaves for cattle, where as cutting of branches or tress are done by men folks.

Co-operative work is undertaken outside of the household too. During the time of harvest or sowing when the work load increases such co-operative work becomes a prime feature. However this does not mean that the people don't take the help of wage labour force. Because of the co-operation work, people in villages always care to maintain good relation with other.

On further exploration, I found that domestic co-operation was the only reason why people do not go for jobs far away. They insist on spending their night in their home. Thus, at the most they find a job not more than 20-30 kms away from the village so that in evening they may be with their family.

During the harvest and sowing, people prefer more of shift-duties that too using the night hours so that the entire day they are free and can devote their time helping their family members. Further, when there is too much of work in the field, the school going children might also be at their home to give a helping hand in the field. However this is not very common. It is because they want to show their indebtedness to all their kinsmen for their help in the field, that they invite them during the harvest to celebrate the new crop. Such celebrations help to strengthen the binding.

Family is a unit of production each family member has its own role, nobody sit alone in agriculture both male and female work equally. All hard work equally done by male and rest work done by female but it doesn't mean easy work is quite easy as it is also very difficult. They remove grass, weeds from crops, they distribute seeds, they also distribute cow doing in fields, they feed cattle and clean the cattle also. Male did or tractor work distribute fertilizer maximum work done by machine only like tractor, tube well. They are not merely depends upon rain they give water to crops whenever it needs.

Male also keep the accounts that how much he had spend and how much vegetable he had spend in market.

There are some ways of paying labour if field.

1. The first way when they need people to do work in agriculture they called labors and pays Rs.100 per day. These maximum daily laborers are outside the village and they called the "Bhaiya."
2. In second way they give entire field on lease ion which the modes of payment were taken in two ways.
 - Whatever is produced they divides half-2 i.e. half portion is given to land owner and half portion is taken by the worker and the seeds the fertilizer all wore belong to the person who hire the land.
 - This mode of payment, they give their entire field for the whole year. Ten care of field done by worker and the all seeds and fertilizer by given by the owner and the entire grass and 1/3 of total production to was given in the worker.
3. Third mode of payment give land to the worker on 2000 rupees per bigah per year and whatever is produce the worker will keep what them relives.

In Gaggal caste system is not really strange but there way of life so some has rooted in caste system. What the best thing. I observed that they usually give work to their own

caste people or their relatives. So how this economic ways revolved around the family and not only in family but any his relative also. And in Himachal Pradesh population is very control so their family is not large enough to take care of entire work an why not relative bear they are trust worthy and no need to test them. An the relative close to their family so rare chance of cheating.

The agricultural scenario of Gaggal is interesting, in the sense that neither people can produce in execs nor do crops really fail. Rarely the produce becomes less due to lack of rainfall or it gets spoil if it rains too much before harvesting when the crop is ripe. As far as the local people remember parts have never created havoc yes there are always isolated cases of pest attack but somehow they are brought under the control. Because of little senses of security there is no mechanism, which people have developed to help them in crisis. The commonest reply which I got, whenever I put the strange question of crop failure in front of them, was that in a village like Gaggal no one will die of hunger, because of camaraderie they share. They say every villager will help any other in crises. This may not hold good cent percent as there is a strong undercurrent of caste discrimination. However it is for sure intra caste support is very strong and apparent too. A *chaudhary* will always come to rescue a follow Chaudhary in help, but, this may not equally hold in a case it involves chaudhary and koli or likewise.

Change is a process, but all processes do not fix about change. The degree of change varies according to the kind of ideas that are being altered, Social change implies internal differentiation or multiplication of form or roles and relationship within a social structure and secondly, replacement of older structure by new structure. The system of production in Gaggal is being changed in some major ways. These shifts are still in the process of being worked out and their full importance can't yet be assessed. However, certain direction of social development are clearly apparent.

Agriculture being an occupation open to all, entailing no social restriction gave temptation which was a little too much for many of these families. Thus, came a new alternative. Now they had land and it become clear to them that a number of new schemes are in waiting for them. In many cases these interest for their traditional occupation took a back seat. Many of these families wanted to get rid of their age old occupation which entails social stigma. There was probably also an underlying dream of social mobility. However this could never become successful.

The land which the Government distributed was least fertile and there was always a scarcity of water. These fields were

on the high slopes of nearby hillocks. As a result of less productivity, the newly achieved interest in agriculture started taking a back seat. In Gaggal there are many villagers who depend on a number of occupations, categorizing them as primary, secondary and so on.

As we know in Gaggal the dominant cast group is chaudhary. They regard land in very high esteem. They equate that pride with their land. So there is hardly any land transaction between 2 chaudhary families. In most of the cases when a lower caste people sell their land, the chaudhary are on the receiving end.

On the other hand the scenario for chaudhary is also not as bright as it might seem. Since the chaudhary consider their pride to own land, no chaudhary is ready to give his share of land to other even to his brother. Many a time it results into a family feud.

This is a classic example known to all in the village. People say that like this is rare but sometime it happens. However in most of the cases the division of ancestral land is fairly done. But this led to a new problem the average land holding per individual has considerably gone down and this is because of breaking of joint family and this problems in the future is going to be even worse. But it seems people have realized this as a result the young generation do not believe much in agriculture. They probably do not see the future in it.

Further delays in rain, less productivity etc. is gradually taking away the interest of the young generation to the other field.

New Opportunities

With agriculture almost taking a back-seat, people have started trying for new opportunities. It is true that no Chaudhary family has completely left agriculture, and they still believe in producing what they need for their own consumption, yet they want to try for 'better' things.

a. Shops

Opening of shops seems to be one of the most upcoming opportunities in Gaggal. There are at least twenty two shops that have come up recently. With the increase of purchasing power of the people, and money entering every sphere of life, shops have become the ultimate centre for all transactions. There are tea stalls, grocery shops, vegetable shops, shoe shop, meat shop, electronic goods repairing shop, bike showroom, maruti service center, wine shop etc. A small room for shop comes on a rent of anything between Rs. 500-600.

It seems that this opening of shops is going to transform their economic way of life

b. Arms Forces

Army is another attractive opportunity for the young people. Gaggal has the tradition of sending young boys to join army. This gets a boost because of the recruitment centre nearby i.e. Hamirpur and one army training school in Amtr. As a result, any young man if he wishes can at least give a try without giving much effort. Moreover it is seen that those who have come back to Gaggal after retirement from the defense forces are better settled. With regular pension and other benefits given by the defense forces, these people are comfortably placed. This kind of stability encourages others to go for army.

c. Government and Private Jobs

Most of the educated people of Gaggal fall into this category. As told by the people of the village the trend jobs came with the coming up of the Bharkara Beas Management Board about half a century back. People went for any kind of jobs they got, be it peon, watchman, draftsman or whatever. People then didn't have much option because not many were educated. But gradually people started realizing the importance of education. Now with three schools in the nearby village and govt. degree colleges in kothar town, there is apparently greater emphasis of education. In the field of education there seems no apparent discrimination. People from both the sexes, from different castes all seem interested for education. There is an underlying belief that education, at least a degree would definitely fetch them a decent job.

Unlike in the past when the young folks were engaged in lot of household chores, a radical change seems to have undergone in the present. Parents try to keep their children free from household chores as much as possible. Many of the children also go for private tutorial to help them in school. People go as far as Hamirpur for private tutorials.

d. People going to abroad

Probably this is the latest trend that has been catching up the people of Gaggal. A lot of people of Gaggal talk of going to Middle East countries, America, Australia for job. These are very highly paid jobs, and getting to these countries as people say is also not very difficult if one has the money.

e. Buying Tractors

Tractors are considered to be the most and only versatile vehicle in the area. It is the only vehicle that can reach most

of the corners of the village. People use it for number of purposes and pay the rent readily. For ploughing it charges Rs.400 per hour. It also carried load to and from the such as food grains, materials for construction of building such as steel, cement etc. Tractors are more popular for supplying boulders and sand from a nearby stream called kunna khad or from river Beas. The only money that the tractor owner has to spend is for labor that will load and unload the tractor and of course the fuel. One each such trip they make a profit of Rs. 300 – Rs.400. Few villagers use tractor for water supply. They have tube-wells in their houses. So who so ever need water they supply. And charge Rs.250 – Rs.600 depending upon the distance where they have to deliver water.

Impact of highway

As Gaggal is on highway so lots of vehicle passes on this highway so people start shop on road side. Villagers don't cultivate land but lease the land and their land is on slope; tractor doesn't go there, so they have to work hard. And from Agriculture they did not get much amount of money. So, they started hotels, shops and restaurant besides highway. Maximum of their agriculture production is used in restaurant for consumption and they don't need to buy vegetable from market. Apart from these, some of the influential villagers owned petrol pump, Motor workshop and wine-beer shop which has creates job opportunities for villagers.

Conclusion

It seemed that the people of Gaggal village present an interesting amalgam of conservation and change in their entire way of life. Process of modernization has crept in, infrastructural facilities like electricity, water supply, telephone connections have become common things in the village. Metalled road is another boost to the village. There are frequent bus service from Nadaun to Hamipur. Many persons also own scooters, motorcycles and bicycles. All these and many other such factors have enabled the villagers to keep abreast with the happenings in the rest of the world.

The older generations of Gaggal are mostly illiterate, yet they place a great value upon education as is reflected in their desire to educate their children. The youths are coming forward to receive higher education and widen their horizons. The girls of the village also seek to be educated and self-reliant.

All these changes which the society has gone through have mostly been in the periphery while their core culture has

remained more or less intact over the passage of time. Though responsive to change, the people carefully preserve their own cultural heritage. It is indeed, a remarkable feat that in the process of culture contact, their value system, religious beliefs more or less still remains intact. Though fluent in Hindi, they always converse among themselves in their native tonogue (Pahari), this interesting.

However, despite the tendency to keep their core culture intact, major changes seems to be awaiting particularly in institutions of economy, political family.

The main economy of that has been adapted by the people of Gaggal is agriculture. However due to the rise of population changes in climate etc. now people have adapted to diverse economic systems. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the villagers irrespective of their caste. The entire agricultural activities depend on rain. Maize (Makki) and wheat (kanak) is the main crops. Maize is cultivated at the arrival of mansoon. Wheat is cultivated during winters. The products are sufficient for self-consumption. They grew vegetables in the kitchen garden which is also not for sale but for self-consumption.

Besides agriculture at least one member of a family is engaged in jobs. With this they support their children by providing education, subsists various needs of the family. People who do not have their sufficient agricultural land can subsist with the jobs. Most of the people have their enough agricultural land, again the same people are engaged in job also-this makes the standard of living of people relatively high.

Earlier people were entirely dependent upon the forest around, but now since there is prohibition regarding the use of forest resources, so people have diverted their mind from using natural objects to the objects that are product of modern scientific invention. The Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) and NREGA are also providing lots of jobs to the people.

Important issue of change in the village economy is the changing dimension in the system of production and the main factor is decline interest in agriculture influence of town Nadaun and National highway. Due to this highway people build up many variety of shops and even hotel too, due to highway the price of land is very high. The price of one kanal land on highway is 5-6 lakhs. So, people doing agriculture as a part time business as well as control over land, if they cultivate the land no one can take a single inch of lands. And due to close to Nadaun town, they have variety of Hybrid seeds, fertilizer which also reduce the effort & increase the crop production.

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Robert Frost on Agnosticism

Frost extended his argument on courage beyond literature to the whole of life. Men should be firm and courageous in their commitments in everything-in love and marriage, in religion, art, politics, and loyalty to their country and their friends. Agnosticism paralyzes the will and makes men cowards. Better a convinced theist or atheist than an agnostic. I remarked that John Henry Newman compared being an agnostic to standing on one leg forever. Frost responded that was what our political agnostics, the liberals, often did. They couldn't make up their minds and therefore were weak and indecisive as leaders. It was an excuse to say that we didn't know enough yet to take a firm position. It isn't a question of knowing, but of believing and acting. Even the best informed men act from insufficient knowledge, often we can believe our knowledge into existence sufficiently well to take action. Agnosticism is a miserable kind of neutrality about the most crucial questions of life and death.

Our talkathon lasted well beyond midnight, when Frost took his lantern and guided me down his dirt road to the highway. Although we talked about literature, and Frost had occasion further to expound his favorite themes about voice tones in poetry, it appeared to me that since two summers ago a new dimension of moral philosophy and religion had been added to his literary and political interest. This impression was confirmed during the course of the summer of 1941.

-Frost Centennial Essays III, Edited By Jac Tharpe, University Press of Mississippi Jackson, 1978,P.283.