

STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF WORLI KOLIWADA

** Riti Kushwaha & ** Prof. Dr. Moushumi Datta*

**M.A. Geography (Part II) Student, ** Professor, Department of Geography, Nagindas Khandwala College, Malad, Mumbai, Maharashtra.*

Abstract:

Worli Koliwad is one of the most important Koliwad in Mumbai. It mainly has Hindu and Christian Kolis as its residents. Various kinds of problems are faced by them on day-to-day basis in fishing and also because of migrants settling in the Koliwada. These problems affect their day to day lives and also their occupation. Apart from problems related to migrants, they also face problems due to poor government policies and negligence of local bodies towards the development of the Koliwada.

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Introduction:

The Koli community is the oldest and most primitive fishing community of Mumbai. The places where the Koli community lives is called a 'Koliwada'. The amount of pollution in the Arabian Sea is increasing day by day. Different types of sewage wastes, effluents etc. are dumped into the Arabian Sea. Lots of solid waste is also discarded in the Arabian Sea, leading to more polluted water. This causes immense trouble to fishermen while fishing. They are forced to go deeper into the sea to catch fishes. Many other problems are also faced by them.

Secondly, they also face hardships due to infiltration of migrants in Koliwad, this affects their physical and cultural space.

Literature Review:

(Senapati, 2016) In his study, a survey was conducted in five fishing villages in Mumbai. Around 200 fishermen were surveyed to collect data. The aim of the research was to find out the socio – economic implications of climate change and how the fishing community i.e., Koli is vulnerable to it. **(Ganesh, 2021)** conducted a study on Worli Koliwada, in her study, it was found that the Kolis maintain cultural balance of the place. They are highly engaged in fishing. They are showing changes in their lifestyle, now they have started to send their children to school. Thus, the literacy rate is increasing among them. **(Huney, 2018)** conducted a study on Worli Koliwada to study about the role of the architect in these fishing communities. This study was required as Worli Koliwada is densely packed fishing village. In the study, it was found that a floating device is not architectural design, but these designs were not needed to have good affect.

Objectives:

As every study has certain objectives, this study also has the following objectives.

1. To know about the lifestyle and fishing problems of the Koli community in Worli Koliwada.
2. To understand the socio-economic aspects of the Koli community in Worli Koliwada.
3. To suggest measures to improve the socio – economic life of fishing community in Worli Koliwada.

Research Methodology:

The study has been conducted in the following manner. The research methodology is divided into three phases. So, the three phases of the study are- Pre field, on field and post field.

A. Pre field

In order to know about the lifestyle and the fishing problems of the Koli community in Worli Koliwada, firstly the review of literature was done so that research gap could be identified and that would be studied in this study. A good number of newspaper articles, journals, e-books and other online and physical sources were referred. Secondly, as this study is based on primary data, so a well-structured questionnaire was prepared.

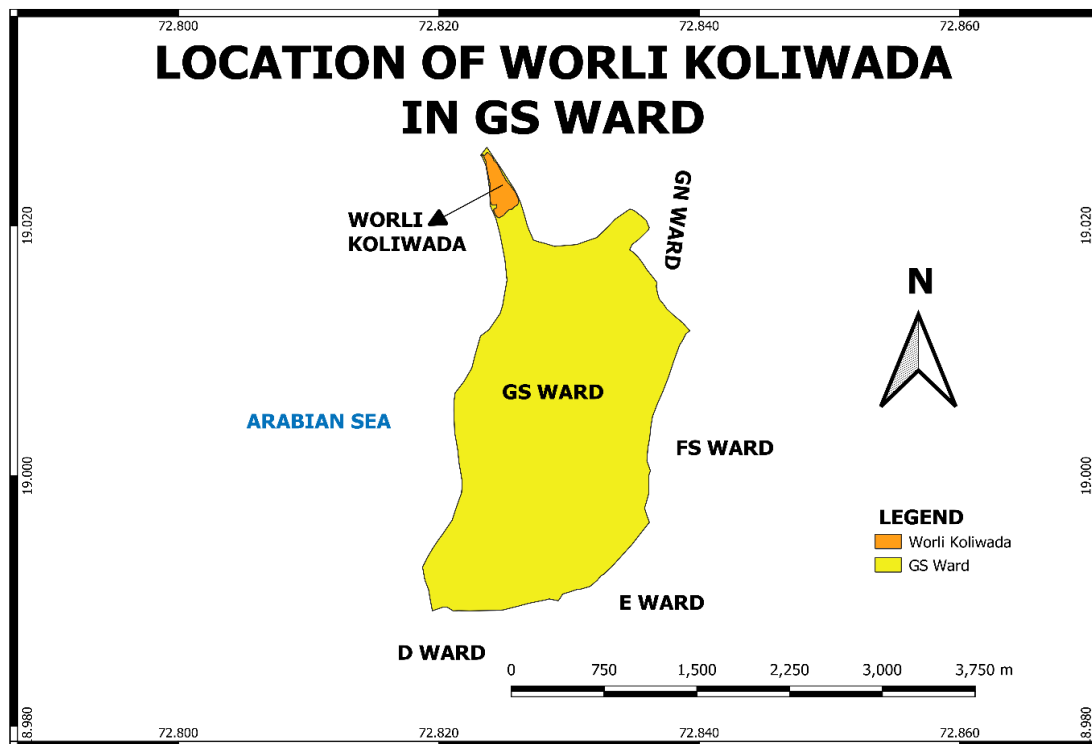
B. On field

Survey was done in the study area i.e., Worli Koliwada. Random sampling method was used. The residents of Worli Koliwada were asked surveyed according to the questionnaire. Naturalistic observation was also carried on for better understanding of the various socio – economic and the physiographic aspects.

C. Post field

The results obtained after conducting the survey was segregated, stored and analysed. Accordingly, the limitations and the major findings were identified. After understanding their lifestyle, fishing problems, socio-economic aspects and the cultural amalgamation, suitable suggestions and measures were discussed to improve their lives and have a better experience of fishing.

Study Area: Worli Koliwada



Worli is small fishing town located in the Worli region of Mumbai city in the state of Maharashtra. It is densely populated settlement and has around 40,000 residents. It is known for its fishing community i.e., the Koli Community. Worli Koliwada is an old settlement with Koli people staying here for hundreds of years. Worli Koliwada has many Hindu temple and churches as well as both Hindu Koli and Christian Koli are the two main religious groups of the Worli Koliwada. Fishing is their age-old profession.

Statement of the Research:

The study attempts to study about understand the problems of Worli Koliwada in dept. Koli people have continued

to maintain their authentic fishing techniques since ages. Due to intensely high housing prices in the city, migrants have to choose to reside in Koliwadadas. The continuous influx of the migrants in the Koliwada has not only caused lack of space in the Koliwada but also interfered with the traditions and culture of the native people.

Major Findings

- Fishing mainly is the work of men. Traditionally, men used to fish and women used to sell those fishes in the market. This pattern is still followed today.
- Worli Koliwada has majority of its residents between the age group of 40 to 60. It means that the population of middle-aged people is quite high in the Worli Koliwada.
- Literacy is also quite good in the Koliwada, almost all the residents are literate except a few people. A good number of residents even have higher education. This shows the importance of education in the lives of the Koli people.
- The major religious group of the Worli Koliwada is that of Hindu Koli, followed by Christian Koli. Small population of Muslim and Buddhist people also reside in the Worli Koliwada. The population of all the other religious groups is negligible as compared to the total population of these major religious groups.
- Worli Koliwada has large number of people living on rent. Only a few people have their own houses. Pagdi system still prevails in the Worli Koliwada, under this system the residents have been living in houses for hundreds of years by paying minimal rents, in some cases as low as rupees 100 in today's times that too in Mumbai city. However, in spite of living in these houses for ages, they don't own it. Moreover, they can't do any type of construction in the houses without the permission of the Landlords.
- Fishing is the traditional activity of more than half of the people living in the Worli Koliwada which has been practiced generation after generation since ages.
- However, with changing times, now many of the Koli people have shifted to other occupations as per their interests, education, needs and desires. Despite of being the main traditional economic activity of more than half of the population of the Worli Koliwada, it is practised by only a few people now.
- Majority of fishermen of the Koliwada do not travel much in order to fish, they mostly fish in the nearby areas. Only a few fishermen having their own mechanised boats travel to far off places to catch a greater number of fishes.
- From majority of families, only a few people and even a single person is engaged in fishing.
- Majority of fishermen have good experience in this field of more than 40 years.
- A good number of people have their own boats for fishing. However, the number of people mechanised boats is quite less as compared to the number of people owning traditional boats.
- Less than half of the population of the Worli Koliwada is engaged in any other occupation other than fishing.
- The non-fishermen of the Worli Koliwada are mostly the construction workers and mechanics.
- Global Positioning System (GPS) and life boats are available in good number of boats.
- More than half of the fishing community is ready to adopt new ideas and technological changes in fishing.
- Fishing does not cause any lifestyle disease. However, sometimes fishing operations may hurt fishermen, because minor cuts on hands while pulling nets, headache, body ache and other minor health issues may be caused sometimes but fishing does not lead to any lifestyle disease.
- Fishing is a dangerous and risky task; it involves a lot of risk and fishermen need to be alert all the time. Bad weather, storms, heavy rain showers, violent winds etc. cause immense trouble to fishermen and restrict them from fishing on days having such phenomenon.

- The economic position of fishermen is pretty good in the Worli Koliwada but their income isn't fixed. It mainly depends on fish catch and market prices. Changes in prices of fish lead to changes in income of the fishermen. Thus, their monthly income varies from month to month.
- The annual income of the fishing community over the period of five years has reduced. The prime reasons are the Lockdown imposed by the Government and the construction of coastal projects in Mumbai city.
- The rate of immigration to the Worli Koliwada has increased over a few years. Day by day, new people are coming and settling in the Koliwada. Due to this trend, the number of indigenous Koli people has become lesser than the total number of migrants in the Worli Koliwada.
- Primary reason for migrating to the Worli Koliwada by majority of the people is the cheap housing facility available in the Koliwada. They just have to live minimal rents under Pagdi system.
- This causes trouble to the original residents of the Worli Koliwada. Majority of the native people face issues with the settling of newer people in their locality.
- The main problem cause due to the settling of migrants is the problem of over congestion.
- Most of the residents of the Worli Koliwada believe that the original Koli culture isn't affected by migrants in any manner. Moreover, the Koli culture is adopted by the migrants. They learn Marathi language, prepare fish dishes according to the Koli recipe and celebrate the festivals together in same manners as Kolis do.
- There are many problems prevailing in the Worli Koliwada such as congestion due to overcrowding, lack of space, poor ventilation and drainage, small and highly dense houses etc.
These problems prevail due to residence of large number of people in a small area. Although the Worli Koliwada is spread over a large area but still now it is saturated to occupy more migrants. Due to continuous inward movement of people, these problems are also intensifying day by day and need to be considered seriously by the migrants as well as the native people of the Worli Koliwada.
- The major problem faced by the residents of the Worli Koliwada is the problem of narrow lanes. The lanes in the entire Worli Koliwada are extremely narrow. The Koliwada has only one main road that two without any division for the vehicles moving in opposite directions. All the vehicles and people have to use the same road for passing through the Koliwada. It creates traffic jams during the peak hours especially during morning and evening.
- During morning, children leave the houses for reaching schools on time and also the adults do the same to reach to their offices and other work place. Hence, there is a lot of rush on the only main road of the Koliwada, which causes immense inconvenience to all of them using that road.
- Apart from traffic jam on the main road of the Koliwada, there are numerous narrow lanes in the Koliwada, these lanes are built between the houses haphazardly, they are built without any proper planning, and hence they prove to be misleading for the outsiders and also to the new people happening to come to the Worli Koliwada. These lanes are so compact and dense that they don't even allow ambulances and even fire brigades to pass through them.
- Due to lack of space, ambulance and fire brigades are unable to reach to the victim and affected house respectively. This can prove to be highly fatal, leading to massive loss of life and property in case of major accidents,
- Second major problem of the Koliwada is lack of ventilation, drainage and sanitation. Due to limitedness of space and increasing number of people in the Worli Koliwada, these problems are also growing day by day. As discussed above, due to the continuous influx of migrants in the Koliwada, the place is getting congested. Illegal houses are also constructed to support the growing population of the Koliwada.

- Third major problem in the Koliwada is the poor waste disposal. Worli Koliwada lacks hygienic environment for the people to live soundly. The Koliwada is surrounded by water body on three sides. This water all around the Koliwada is highly polluted. There are many people in the Koliwada who do not have the toilets in the houses.
- Fourth major problem of the Koliwada is the problem faced by the fishermen. Due to construction of various coastal projects in the city of Mumbai, their fishing territory is reduced. They are prohibited by the government to fish beyond a fixed limit but fishermen complain that territory to be too small to fish. Fishermen continuously Demand to increase their fishing area. However, their demands are often neglected by the Government.
- Construction of Bandra Worli Sea Link has also reduced the fishing territory. Hence, the fishermen do not favour the construction of such projects in Mumbai.
- Apart from reduction in the fishing territory, the construction of these marine projects also creates hurdles in the smooth movement of boats. Due to construction of bridges on seas, the pillars are used to support the roads constructed over the water, these pillars sometimes limit the space for movement of huge ships.
- On normal days having good weather, the boats pass easily in between the pillars but on windy days or any other day with bad weather, boats may hit these pillars because of high velocity winds, this will cause huge damage to the ship or boat, may lead to overturning of boats/ships. Such accidents may cause huge loss of life and property within a few seconds.
- Hence, the fishermen demand to increase the gap between the two pillars of sea link but government cannot do so as this may not be beneficial for the stability of the bridge.
- Fifth major problem of the Worli Koliwada is government authorities do not pay much attention to the needs of the people in Worli Koliwada. Before elections, politicians visit the area, make false promises to people, then after the elections. They don't work for the development of the Koliwada. The work of roads, drainage and other things aren't done in an efficient way. The residents themselves have to find solution to their problems and they only have to look after their needs. The Corporate of the area seems to be least bothered about people's needs and wants.

Recommendations:

In order to reduce the problems of the residents of the Worli Koliwada the following recommendations are given-

1. There should be proper planning before constructing any house in the Koliwada. Planning should focus on well-lit houses with good ventilation and drainage.
2. Residents should understand the importance of proper waste management. Dry and wet wastes should be separated before being discarded. Recyclable wastes should definitely be recycled in proper manner and other wastes should also be disposed appropriately rather than being dumped into the surrounding Arabian Sea.
3. Two-way road should be built in the Koliwada in to reduce traffic jam and for smooth and easy movement of vehicles and people in the Koliwada.
4. Koli community should have other options apart from fishing to earn money so that their income isn't affected during rainy season or on days having bad weather.
5. Fishermen whose who are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies but are unable to do so due to lack of capital should be helped financially. They should be given loans on easy returns so that they can buy big mechanized boats equipped with high tech machines, so that their fish catch increases and their financial status will also be upgraded.
6. Local Government authorities should properly take care of the needs of the residents. The problem of roads, drains and illegal construction in the Koliwada can only be solved by the immediate attention of the local bodies into the matter. The politicians who are responsible for the development of the Worli Koliwada should fulfil their responsibilities in an honest way and should work for the betterment of the people.

7. Illegal construction of houses, shops etc. should be banned in the Worli Koliwada.
8. The fishing community should get larger area to fish as per their needs. Their genuine demands should be fulfilled by the government bodies.
9. The entire Koliwada should be redeveloped, then only all the above problems can be solved in the most efficient manner.
10. Government should make some welfare policies aiming at the safety, welfare, betterment and empowerment of the fishing community.

Conclusion:

From the study, it is clear that there are many problems in the lives of people in the study area, still the migrants and the indigenous people live together peacefully and more or less in a friendly way. Sometimes they may have a few issues with each other but this does not lead to permanent enmity. They adopt each other's culture especially the migrants learn about various aspects of the Koli culture. They also speak Marathi and dress like Kolis on festivals and other special occasions. Koli

Today, not every Koli is engaged in fishing. After getting education and some profession training, some Kolis have shifted to other professions as well. Cultural amalgamation is taking place in the Koliwada.

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