

# ABANDONING PROFESSIONS: A STUDY OF DECLINING HEREDITARY OCCUPATIONAL CASTES IN CHAK BHON

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**ABSTRACT:** *Caste is a form of ethnic communities; where people acquire specific occupational traditions of art, handicrafts from their ethnic community. This paper focused on exploring the causes of declining hereditary occupational castes in Chak Bhon. This Qualitative research is conducted by using non probability sampling technique (stratified random sampling) from each of the selected caste (Nai, Mouchi, Lohar). The data was gathered from 80 respondents by In-depth interviews and case study methods. Status achieved from education empowered them for having bright future. People also feel disrespect when other people called them from their professional names. While people of Mouchi caste were giving up their profession for joining armed forces or by hypergamous marriages. South Asian Society has placed the service class at the bottom of the social hierarchy.*

**Key words:** Abandoning, Occupations, Occupational caste, Hereditary, Declining

## INTRODUCTION

Occupational caste system is a system through which people are divided on the base of their hereditary occupation. Caste system is a system of economic protection and social security of the people. Social stratification of the society is based on caste system. The hereditary occupational castes mean professions which were adopted and preserved over the generations from the ancestors. There were different hereditary occupational castes. Many casts are traditionally associated with an occupation, such as high- ranking Brahmans, farmers, traders and artisan groups such as potters, barbers and carpenters leatherworkers and butchers [1]. Caste has been used as a source of social and economic power since its earlier stages. The *dvija* castes have used it as a property of the group of people who inherit a particular caste by birth. There is a strong relationship between caste and profession. This is not simply recognized. While within certain limits one may have recourse to a live hood other than what which is traditional for the caste of which ones member. It is clearer that caste system is not a professional system [2]. The caste and professions are linked through intermediary of religion which is probably in the caste of ritual specialists like barber and washer man.

A caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional, callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community [3].

Blacksmith or *Lohar* is a person whose job is making things by hand out of metal that has been heated to a high temperature [4]. The blacksmiths and machinists employed in the construction of locomotives paid but little attention to the laws of demand and supply, and, so long as they had steady employed made no inquiries concerning the trade in other localities [5]. Cobbler or *mouchi* was not a professional with a clientele, but rather a man who repaired a shoe of those who could not afford to buy new shoes [6].

Barber or *Nai* shops are also places of social interaction and public discourse [7]. They are the locations of open debates, voicing public concerns and engaging citizen's discussions about current issues [8]. Caste grouping has been given

various names, but is best known as the Maratha- cluster of castes. This kind of grouping seems always to have a distinctive internal structure. One major feature of the caste system, which in fact negates the basic thrust of colonial sociology [9]. Domitian argument, is that it has never been just a cultural category [10]. Using this measure of the number of caste identity manipulators; it can now turn to the evaluation of the quantity of land obtained by them [11].

The occupational caste in India is blacksmith. It is the *Lohar* and *Barhal*, who refer themselves back to Visvakarman, and who have a joint sub-caste called *Ojha* claiming to be as Brahmans, not apparently without a certain degree of recognition, though not to the full extent of their desire [12]. Most of castes in India are linked with occupations. There is thousands of Jatisin India. In comparison, standard list of occupational service castes are small others were occupational, such as Ayar (cowherds) [13]. There were goldsmiths, carpenters, salt makers and Brahmans. The evolution of some of these can be traced up to modern times, such as Paratavar, Velir who became a widespread agricultural caste in India. While the lower class people were treated badly. Those people perform different duties for the society. But over the time the occupational castes people became modern. They wanted to do struggle for their better survival [14]. The caste system is clearly not the classic *Varna* system, even though Hindus believe that castes have derived from those varnas. Yet others were occupational, such as Ayar (cowherds); there were goldsmiths, carpenters, salt makers and Brahmans [15]. That the origin of caste in Punjab and within Sikhism needs to be understood in the context of the large scale entry of Jats into Sikhism that not only rescued them from their low status but also turned them into a powerful community [16]. Tem barber, baker, cobbler, carpenter, potter, blacksmith, *musalli*, weaver, and tailor. Most villages have a *mirasi*; a village bard, and in some villages there are castes of Kashmiri and Arain, the vegetable growers [17]. The matter of recording caste names became an increasing problem for the colonial government because each time a census was about to be taken, a greater number of petitions would be submitted requesting acknowledgment of higher status [18].

## METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out on Village Chak Bhon in district Chakwal. Descriptive research methodology was used for the explanation behind caste based abandoning occupations. Data was conducted through in-depth interviews and case studies. Key informants helped building rapport into the field and introducing among the targetted population of *Nai* (barber), *Mouchi* (cobbler), *Lohar* (blacksmith) who were the main part of research. The sample size of 80 respondents was collected on the base of Union council of voter lists “Balokassar” of Chak Bhon. The sample of each caste was chosen on the basis of stratified random sampling. In which different case of each castes has been selected.

caste applied to a wide variety of social system where people deal it as an extreme manifestation of status differences [18]. People of *Lohar* and *Mouchi* caste said that when their income level was improved the people of their area started to give them respect and in that way they achieved better status since they now have money. They said that the main reason behind villagers giving them respect was their education and good jobs. People reckon each other on the basis of their kins from that caste. Some respondents told that their occupations have distributed them in castes. The caste system is a social division of people based on their occupation, tasks and power access [19]. Respondents from the locale were very particular of their caste. During research it was noticed that the people of lower class were feeling ashamed when they were questioned on their caste. The people of Chak Bhon said that it is necessary for human survival to have competition and a motivation to grow. Since most of the people wish to have their social status elevated. Some people hence preferred to marry in high caste people (hypergamy). So there was a trend of hypergamous marriages since many ethnically identified caste people are class and caste conscious they prefer exogamy.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1: Association of occupational caste with status and respect from society Good Status/Social Respect			
Response of people	Yes	No	Total
Yes	0	9	9
No	19	52	71
Total	19	61	80
Person Chi-Square = 3.159		Df=1	P-Value= 0.076

The overhead table explained that 11.25% respondents said that they had low self esteem since they had low social status. As the community considered them from lower class, people do not respect them by looking down upon them. While the 88.75% percent people who give up their ancestral profession said that now their income level has also improved. The people of their area started to give them respect and they achieved good status from the society. They said that people are now getting educated and aware due to which local people of the village Chak Bhon have established a good relation with them just on the behalf of education and good jobs. At 5% level of level of significance, we conclude that there is no relationship between response of people and good status or the chi-square value did not achieve the most significant which endorses the results. So the hypothesis is not true for the given detail order.

This study indicated that the people of the targeted occupational castes living in the Chak Bhone inherited it from their ancestors. It became a point of significance for their ancestral decent in their community since they were known for the professions they belonged to. The population of Chak Bhone was stratified in various castes which are united at *parya* level. While only some people said that they are not well respected and society does not have good opinion about them and their profession which discourages them. That’s why they abandoning their profession. The people of *Mouchi* caste said that they were not getting respect and social status. They had social acceptance only with their ancestral profession. The communities they were living in considered them lower class people even if their new generation gets educated, yet they are being called by their occupational caste. The only way out was to leave their profession or migration. In Indian caste system, the term

**Case Study**

This is a case study of “*Mouchi*” who was living in the village of Chak Bhon for thirty years. He was forty five years old and had a single daughter who was twenty years old. She had done Matriculation. When she got young, he got worried for her marriage. Since his income level was very low, he decided that he should search a better proposal for her daughter from a better class. For that matter, he gave up his ancestral profession since it was necessary for establishing marital relation and upward mobility. He had given up his hereditary occupation for Hyper gamy. He started working with property dealer and his income got raised. Caste mobility played a pivotal role in getting her daughter married to a Malik who was a very rich man.

People said that they were giving up their professions to become modern. 55 percent said that they wanted to become modernized whereas 45 percent said that they do not want to modernize. Modernization is expected to have an initial influence on gaining access to professional occupations, where ‘direct’ inheritance might play less of a role. So in this light she reached at this result that modernization influenced the occupational class [2].

**CONCLUSION**

The results of the research showed that the hereditary occupational castes were declining in the village as people want to become modernize and for them working for people as servicemen schedules them in lower class. They also want to achieve social status good enough to raise their self respect and esteem. In the village occupational castes based groups are now educating their young generation. They have joined armed forces and getting better jobs abroad. The main cause of giving up their occupation is the discriminatory treatment from the villagers.

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