Socio-Cultural and Religious Change in Peri-urban Areas: A Study of Lucknow City

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Abstract: *Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh and has the concentration of population. Lucknow has cross metropolitan culture however; it has been highly influenced by the cultural traditions of Muslim community as the district has been the capital of Awadh region ruled by Nawabs for a longer period. This paper has tried to unveil the socio-cultural and religious values of the people of the study area through the case study of peripheral locality of Lucknow city. Some selected peripheral villages of the Lucknow city has been taken under the study. The study is based on the primary data collected from the field survey. Paper mainly gives the changing situation of socio-cultural values of the people of the study area and the situation of life style of the community in the modern age. Therefore, this article attempts to investigate the socio-cultural changes in the surrounding region by deeply analyzing the issues such as the change in religious activities in the modern age in the light of history.*

Keywords: Social, culture, religion, urbanization, modern, Peri-urban

1. Introduction

History is a way of life of our thoughts, which is concern our past. The shape of History is being changed by time and situation. In Indian context, the typical Indian society has many qualities like as, cast, religious, customs, cultural, social, economic and political, and all the features which are included of that. The element of the society is being changed in modern age. Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Lucknow has cross metropolitan culture however; it has been highly influenced by the cultural traditions of Muslim community as the district has been the capital of Awadh region ruled by Nawabs for a longer period. Lucknow has distinct culture with strong elements of social harmony, communal integration and respect to each other. Hindu and Muslim communities, though other religious communities also live in Lucknow city however, the old city of Lucknow is dominated by Muslims. The cultural traditions, festivals and other religious activities are shared by both Hindu and Muslim community. The main religious and cultural affairs of Hindus such as Holi, Diwali and Dushehra are equally participated by Muslim communities with high degree of enthusiasm. Similarly, the religious and cultural traditions of Muslim community such as Moharram and Id are jointly shared by Hindus and Muslims. The dress sense of different religious communities is also highly influenced by Nawabi culture and Muslim rulers. The chikan embroidery, patronage by Nawabi rulers is widely practiced and chikan clothes are popular among all the religious communities (Govt. of UP 2011).

Urbanization has an impact on the occupational structure and, in turn, on the family structure, patterns of living and consumption, daily lives, desires and aspirations on the lives of the people living close to the city (Kumar, 2005). Peri-urban areas are the areas close to urban vicinity. Hence it is bound to get affected by lifestyles of the people residing in it. Urban Population is characterized by less time & lots of money. They spend lavishly on movies, shopping, food etc to entertain them in their leisure. The advent of shopping malls has augmented the leisure facilities for urbanites.

Shopping malls have become one stop destinations with retail, recreation, entertainment and eating opportunities that may include theatres, art galleries, cinemas, cyber terminals and pubs (Kasbekar, 2006).

The populace grown up in urban cultures is generally found to be rational in approach with a liberal thought process. Whereas, the rural social structure is prominently recognized by its accord of high priority to established conventions and shared assumptions of the people relating to issues of religious and mythological nature. Furthermore, the caste based social structure of rural society reinforces the continuation of such conventions, beliefs and value systems. This traditional mode of culture is entrenched into the organic base of the traditional social structures such as the caste, tribe and community (Singh, 2000). The predominantly ritual oriented rural society accords high priority to the established norms. Therefore it poses serious resilience to change in the established norms, values, rituals and conventions. A significant quality of social change which relates to structures and process in societies is that of continuity and resilience of the traditional institutions and values (Singh, 2000).

The city of Lucknow, today, presents the opportunities for a modern way of life. All necessary infrastructures for a convenient and cozy existence are available in the city. The city presents enormous opportunities for better education, employment, housing and overall quality of life. While describing the attractiveness of Lucknow city, Spate and Ahmad opine, "Both its historic past and its markedly central position favour it as a centre of law and government. With its riverside parks, a comparative absence of slums and some remains of the ease and affluence of the old court days, Lucknow exerts a strong centripetal pull. Its residential attractions are increased by the presence of several colleges, as well as of university and better medical services than are to be found in other cities" (Spate & Ahmad, 1950). These features make Lucknow a very attractive place to live.

The political decision to industrialize Uttar Pradesh led to the expansion of bureaucratic machinery in Lucknow which in turn resulted in boom in construction activity and population influx (Srinivas, 1996). As a result of these developments in recent decades, a people of different socio-economic background and status has been observed in the city. The rapid influx of populace has resulted in increased population and expansion of the horizons of the city to the nearby rural settlements. Lucknow has witnessed swift urbanization in recent years resulting in large, interconnected urban complex having diverse economic, physical and environmental features (Dutta, *et al*; 2010; Dutta, 2012).

2. Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to make a comparative study of socio-cultural and relogious backgrounds of the communities of city of the study area. The specific objectives of the study are as follows;
1) To examine the socio-cultural change of the universe.
2) To study the religious and urban life style in the modern age of the study area.

Scope and Limitation of the Study
This study has focused to unveil the social and cultural situation of study area. Study of the communities in the area of the city has been examined. Basically the importance of religious activities, cultural and traditional customs, religious and norms and attachment with urban life style hazards of the dwellers of the area of Lucknow city has been assessed .Therefore, the study does not claim that the findings, conclusions and recommendations are generalized in either case.

3. Methodology

1) Research Design
This study is descriptive in nature. The major goal of a descriptive research is to describe the events, phenomena and situations. Since description is made on the basis of scientific observation, it is expected to be more accurate and precise than casual (Ahuja, 2013:131). Descriptive research is a fact-finding operation searching for adequate information. It is a survey study, which is generally conducted to assess the opinion, behaviours or characteristics of a given population to describe the situation and events occurring at present. Descriptive research is a process of accumulating facts (Wolf and Pant, 2003:81).

2) Universe of the Study
The universe of the study is urban areas of Lucknow city. The immediate ring of urban areas surrounding Lucknow city are Chinhat, Bakshi Ka Talab, Mohana, Nigonha, Malihabad, Sarojni Nagar, Banthara, Ismailganj, Utratia, Mohanlal Ganj, and Gosainganj.

3) Respondents of the Study
Sampling Plan
Lucknow city has been selected, To derive homogenous information, four blocks are selected from all the four corners of Lucknow city, namely Mohanlalganj, Kakori, Bakshi-ka-Talab and Chinhat. Further, two villages each are

selected from all the four blocks i.e. eight villages in total are selected for sampling purpose. These villages are, Harkansgarhi and Pursaini in Mohanlalganj block, Kathwara and Hardhaurpur located in Kakori block, Bajnagar and Sikrauri situated in Bakshi-ka-Talab block and lastly, Uttardhauna and Tiwariganj falling in Chinhat block. These villages are comparatively large villages and have good connectivity with the Lucknow city which ensures closer interface of villagers and urban dwellers. This has led the greater influence of urban culture, life style and economic activities. The villages have mainly traditional social structure with social cohesion and harmony.

The quantitative and qualitative socio-structural data has been collected from the field work based on the interaction with the people of peri-urban areas. For 125 each respondent has been studied from the four blocks under study on the basis of Stratified Random Sampling. That means, total 500 respondents have been interviewed for collection of primary data with the use of Interview Schedule.

4. Findings

The respondents were asked that how much religious activities are important for them. Slightly less than half of the respondents reported that religious activities are very much important for them. Similarly, slightly less than $1/4^{th}$ respondents further revealed that religious activities are much important for them. Thus, only a negligible proportion of respondents said that religious activities are less important for them (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Importance's of Religious Activities

	No. of Persons	Percentage (%)
Very much	239	47.80
Much	118	23.60
General	102	20.40
Less	11	2.20
Very Less	17	3.40
No Importance	13	2.60
Total	**500**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey

The following table (1.2) is an attempt to comprehend the mind of the peri-urban residents with regard to the importance accorded to the importance of culture and traditional customs.

The respondents were further asked that how much traditional customs and cultural traditions such as celebration of birth day, karmkand, family rituals etc. About 31 per cent respondents reported that social and cultural rituals, customs and traditions are very much important for them. Similarly, about 22 % respondents further reported that these are much important for them (Table 1.2). This suggests that peri-urban people still prefer to be associated with old values and beliefs that their ancestors. However, some sections of the population have started deviating from these practices and significantly large sections have adopted a balanced approach in the performance of these rituals. This indicates that due to increasing urban influence the religious practices related to harvest have seen a change in recent times due to urban influence.

Table 1.2: Importance of Cultural and Traditional Customs

	No. of Persons	Percentage (%)
Very much	154	30.80
Much	108	21.60
General	138	27.60
Less	33	6.60
Very Less	22	4.40
No Importance	45	9.00
Total	500	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1.3 makes an attempt to know the impact of urbanization of the area on the religious values and practices. More than 1/3rd respondents admitted that there is change in religious values and norms. However, 2/5th respondents said that there is no change in religious values and norms. About 1/4th respondents further reported that there is less change in religious values and norms.

Table 1.3: Changes in Religious Norms, Customs and practices

	No. of Persons	Percentage (%)
Yes	171	34.20
No	196	39.20
Less Change	129	25.80
Can't Say	4	0.80
Total	500	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1.4: Attachments with Urban Life Style

	No. of Persons	Percentage (%)
Theater and Cinema	33	6.60
Shopping	125	25.00
Food in restaurant	5	1.00
Other	56	11.20
Other	281	56.20
Total	500	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The culture and lifestyle of areas is highly influenced by the urban life style due to exposure in electronic media and closure interface with urban centres. The respondents were asked that whether they are attached with urban life style. Most of the respondents reported that they are attached with urban life style in terms of shopping, theatre and cinema and other urban life styles (Table 1.4).

5. Discussion

The analysis of change in different cultural practices reveals that in the matters of religious faith, the importance of adherence to religious rituals is still widespread, however the intensity of performing these rituals seems to be low and people are increasingly adopting a balanced approach towards religion. While for some of the marginalized people, religion has little significance in their lives. This phenomenon suggests that urbanization leads to a deviation from the rigidity to the adherence to religious norms and propensity to perform religious rituals. Nevertheless urban people have strong religious sentiment and recognize the integrative and peaceful values of religion.

The urban lifestyle features such as going for shopping in malls and organized retail outlets, theatres and cinema for leisure pursuits and eating out in restaurants are attracting peri-urban residents. Still the majority of the peri-urban population is not enjoying these facilities due to a multitude of reasons such as insufficient financial resources, remoteness of these facilities etc. This feature also suggests that those people who are economically well of are accessing these facilities for recreation and amusements and a majority of the population which is living a marginalized life in the countryside is unable to even think of accessing these urban wonders.

Hence we can conclude very safely that in the modern age the changing factor is acting on in typical Indian society day by day and all the social cultural and religious values is going on changing in progressive.

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