

## THE ROLE OF CASTE DYNAMICS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY IN JODHPUR DISTRICT OF RAJASTHAN

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**Abstract:** Caste dynamics is an important aspect in respect of sustainable development, the caste dynamics work three ways i.e., cohesiveness between certain castes groups to build up solidarity to sustain, the second one is the occupational mobility in order to economic sustenance, thirdly, caste wise religious doctrine plays an important role to unify the rural society within the fabric of development perspectives. Thus, caste dynamics in rural society emerged from historic entities but reincarnated in terms of the present socio-political domain. The objective of the present article is to analyze and interpret the scenario of a *Marmar* village in Rajasthan state to discover how the caste dynamics still plays a significant role in the rural socio-economic sphere. The perspective of sustainable development is focused on the backdrop of the critical review of the government projects and schemes in the light of environmental and socio-religious impact. Therefore, this is a critical appraisal of the dynamics of various socio-religious facets within the rural society under the shadow of economic development and environmental sustainability.

### Introduction

The word 'Caste' is almost abandoned by social scientists especially in Anthropology and Sociology today. There are two dimensions i.e., caste identity as well as caste dynamics. In most parts of India, the caste system is not operating full-fledged. Despite that true fact the caste identity and dynamics are still important and play a serious role in respect of sustainable development. Accordingly, one case study of a *Marmar* village in the Jodhpur district of Rajasthan state reveals how caste identity and dynamics is still important in this context.

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The Khejadlikalla village in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan is famous on the world map for the brave sacrifice of the life of Amrita Devi along with 363 people belonging to the Bishnoi caste protested against the tree-felling because such action was prohibited by the Bishnoi religious doctrine to protect the *Khejri* (*Prosopis cineraria*) trees in 1731 AD. This incidence is known as “Khejarli Annihilation”. Her sacrifice for the protection of the environment not only inspired the Bishnoi people who devoted their lives to the protection of *Khejri* trees and wild animals but also imposed an unwritten prohibition of tree-felling and animal killing.

The present study area is significant because this glory of the Bishnoi people is commemorated by constructing a temple in this Khejadlikalla village on one hand and the other simultaneously this village was historically a *Jagir* state under Champawat Rajput established in 1726 AD. Therefore, there is an undercurrent efficacy of glorification between two dogmas between royal upsurges under the Rajput banner to universalize the ethos of Rajasthan and glorify the sacrifice of the Bishnoi people of the village for the maintenance of the environment which encompasses another dimension out of Rajput battle<sup>1</sup>.

Under this historical backdrop, the present study is important because this is an attempt to evaluate and analyze the facets of development perspective and issues of sustainability under the prevailing social context. Thus, the prime endeavour of the present discourse is to look at the whole situation from a new orientation where the environment is a key subject in the context of sustainable development of the Khejadlikalla village with engulfing current issues pertaining to caste dynamics. The entire article is divided into two aspects i.e., the village socio-political ethnography contextual to development perspective and environmental sustenance with emphasis to endogenous changes and the second aspect is the exogenous changes in the village by considering implications from the outside world. Therefore, the study is inclined into two directions, first one is to look at the Khejadlikalla village from the magnanimity of Bishnoi doctrine and the second one is the insight of the characteristics of *Marwar* of Rajasthan envisaged from the outcome of the study village.

Development is the multi-meaning concept with a positive inclination and one type of development closely impacts the other. The main focus of development is the multifarious features that lead to quantitative and qualitative changes in the life of the people due to development initiatives. Sustainability is to be looked at on the issues of perseverance of the communities under the background of conservation and utilization of natural resources. Thus, the inference is based on the assessment of dynamics of sustenance of the communities primarily on economic dimension or livelihood pattern along with evaluating the mechanism of social, religious and cultural facets.

Two published pieces of literature on Bishnoi under the context of Khejadlikalla village are important here. Srivastava (2001) emphasized a new kind of thought process

where the environment is looked at as respectful habitat and devotedly follow the prescription and prescription towards conserving resources. This is unlike the attitude of the industrial west where nature is viewed as a foe. He developed his concept of religion and environment from the perspective of twenty-nine principles of Bishnoi based on the idea of martyrdom (*Shahid bona*) for the well-being of others. Arakeri (2013) highlights the philosophy of the Bishnoi religion which reveals that all living beings (including trees and animals) have the right to survive and share all resources. He narrated Bishnoi identity under the backdrop of syncretism and adaptation.

The data are collected from different locations of the study village Khejadlikalla, different government offices, research institutes and non-governmental organizations, religious *Asbaram* or centre in 2017. The key informants were the knowledgeable person especially old age people of the village, key government and non-government officials, scientists of 'Central Arid Zone Research Institute', Jodhpur and religious leaders. The information is collected from different age groups. The women informants from all caste groups except Rajput are interviewed. The improvised field techniques are used for this study. The qualitative data are collected by using unstructured interviews. The selected case studies are cited within the frame of the write up without mentioning the names of the informants because of their personal reservations. The unorganized group discussions are taking place to get views and comments on specific relevant issues. The quantitative data are primarily collected from the Jodhpur Collector and Luni Tehsil office particularly on development projects, and land records as well as relevant online data (particularly the village census data of 2011) available.

### **The Khejadlikalla Village**

The studied Khejadlikalla is one village of Khejadlikalla Gram Panchayet under Luni Panchayet Samity of Jodhpur district of Rajasthan state. The Khejadlikalla Gram Panchayet constitutes four villages Khejadlikalla, Khejadlikhurd, Bhagatasini, and Sanghasini. The Khejadlikalla village is multi-ethnic and initially, three families (one Rajput, one Jat and one Raika) were the original settlers. Later other ethnic or caste groups settled in this village. The Khejadlikalla village is located just adjacent to the roadside. The Khejadlikalla Chauraya is the junction of two roads. One road is from Jodhpur to Sardarsamand and another one is Jodhpur to Guda Bishnoi via Kankela. Before August 1979, the Khejadlikalla was centred in one area as a nuclear village. The different caste groups were living in different hamlets in one prime location. The scenario changed in August 1979, when a devastating flood washed out many buildings and disrupted the entire village. After that time, the Khejadlikalla village was scattered in different locations. The main location of Khejadlikalla village occupies by caste groups Champawat Rajput, Khichi Rajput, Bishnoi, Jat, Kumbhar, Ravana

Rajput, Santh, Giri, Nai, Bhil, Raika, Suthar, Dadhich Brahman, Sonar, Baori, Muslim Teli. The other three locations are *Khejadlikalla Chauraya* (shops and commercial establishments), *Lions Nagar*<sup>2</sup> (inhabited by Meghwal, Sansi, Sargara, Lohar, Bhil, Yogi, Bhangi, Bishnoi, Dholi, Muslim Moila, Muslim Mirasi and Muslim Nilgar), *Samadhitbal*<sup>3</sup> (inhabited by Bishnoi and Meghwal). Two caste groups Oswal and Muslim Chipa migrated from this village to South India and Jodhpur respectively. Apart from that, there are few *Dhani*<sup>4</sup> in the Khejadlikalla village, which is occupied by Bishnoi and Rajput castes. At the onset of the village established, each caste group had a limited number of houses and used to live in caste wise *Tola* or hamlet. Later this situation changed to a great extent due to the migration of a few families and selling out of their houses to the different caste groups. As a result, the scenario of caste agglomeration within the village was mixed and the caste wise *Tola* disappeared. The settlement pattern of the village is the mixture of various caste groups set aside the hierarchical background. The settlement pattern is further decentralized and scattered after August 1979. The river Luni is situated almost 3 Km. away from the main location of the village.

Khejadlikalla is a large village with a total of 584 families residing. The Khejadlikalla village has a population of 3197 of which 1652 are males while 1545 are females as per population census 2011. In Khejadlikalla village population of children with an age group, 0-6 is 521 which make up 16.30 % of the total population of the village. The average sex ratio of Khejadlikalla village is 935, which is higher than the Rajasthan state average of 928. The child sex ratio for the Khejadlikalla is 874, lower than the Rajasthan average of 888. Khejadlikalla village has a lower literacy rate compared to Rajasthan. The literacy rate of Khejadlikalla village was 65.25 % compared to 66.11 % of Rajasthan. A total of twenty-six families of Khejadlikalla village are belonging to the below poverty line (BPL). Among twenty-six families five families belong to Scheduled Caste, fourteen families belong to Other Backward Classes and the rest seven families belong to general caste.

The history of the village started in 1726 A.D. when Suraj Singh Champawat acquired the *Jagir* of the Khejadlikalla village (formerly named as 'Jalnadi' village) at the cost of Rs. 3000/-. He was gifted this village for his bravery in the war which took place in Ahmedabad. In 1750 A.D. *Jagirdar* Suraj Singh was died in Segawas war. After Suraj Singh his son Sangram Singh was the *Jagirdar* of Khejadlikalla village. A different version was expressed by Khichi Rajput. It is said that initially this village was ruled by Hul Rajput. Anyhow, Hul Rajput left this village and *Darbar* gave the *Khalsa* status to Khichi Rajput. It is claimed at 1714 A.D. Thakur Prayag Singh was migrated to this village from Bhadonia of Nagaur district of Rajasthan. Later Champawat Rajput got the *Jagir* of this village.

**Table 1 : Ethnic Composition of Khejadlikalla Village**

| Sl. No. | Religion | Constitutional Category of Caste | Caste                      | Traditional Occupation | Present Occupation   | Remarks   |
|---------|----------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 1.      | Hindu    | General Castes                   | Champawat or Rathor Rajput | Agriculture            | Agriculture, lawyer and service  | Rajput is one major landholding community. They do not cultivate their land. They hire daily wage labours from other caste groups to cultivate their agricultural lands or give their agricultural lands on lease to other caste groups.  |
| 2.      |          |                                  | Khichi Rajput              | Agriculture            | Agriculture, business and service  | -Do-  |
| 3.      |          |                                  | Dadhich Brahman            | Priestly community     | Agriculture, service   | The Dadhich Brahman is also directly not engaged in agriculture. They also hire labours for cultivation or give their agricultural lands on lease to other caste groups. Presently, they perform the work of astrologers on the day of <i>Akha Tij</i> to predict crop success and failure. |
| 4.      |          |                                  | Santh                      | Priestly community     | Agriculture, business, 'Bhajan & Kirtan' at the time of death and 'Prabachan' of any religious leader, the temple priest | They migrated from 'Bhitinda' village of Jodhpur district fifty years back.   |
| 5.      |          |                                  | Suthar                     | Carpentry              | Carpentry work.  | Still, they stick to the work of making wooden furniture under the contractor.  |
| 6.      |          | Other Backward Classes           | Bishnoi                    | Agriculture            | Agriculture, business, transport business  | Bishnoi is one major landholding community. The primary occupation of the Bishnoi community is agriculture. Apart from that some of them are engaged with other occupations like business and transport.  |
| 7.      |          |                                  | Kumbhar                    | Pottery making         | Pottery making, agriculture, sweet making, daily wage labour   | Few people still engaged with the traditional occupation of pottery making. Most of this caste group switch over to the occupation of <i>Haluwai</i> or sweet making.   |
| 8.      |          |                                  | Darji                      | Tailoring              | Tailoring work, agriculture, daily wage labour and tea stall owner.  | They are not fully dependent on their traditional occupation of tailoring work by opening tailoring shops. Side by side they are also engaged with other occupations like agriculture, business and daily wage labours etc.   |

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|     |                          |               |                                     |   |   |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 9.  |                          | Giri          | Priestly community                  | Agriculture   | They hire labours for cultivation work.   |
| 10. |                          | Ravana Rajput | Agriculture                         | Agriculture, daily wage labour                                      | Most of them are presently engaged in daily wage labour work.   |
| 11. |                          | Sonar         | Making of gold and silver ornaments | Making of gold and silver ornaments                                 | They migrated from 'Danwara' village of Jodhpur district 20 years ago. They are engaged with their traditional occupation in the village.   |
| 12. |                          | Lohar         | Blacksmith                          | Daily wage labour   | The only Lohar family is landless and totally depend on daily wage labour work. The Lohar of this village claim that they were migrated from <i>Menar</i> region at the time of "Maharana Pratap".  |
| 13. |                          | Nai           | Haircutting and shaving             | Agriculture   | In the strict sense in a limited case the Nai or the barber caste is still practice hairdresser as a part of 'Jagmani' system by serving to the patron castes by getting ten-kilogram grain per person from each family in a year. Apart from that, they are also engaged in business by opening new hairdressing shops at the marketplace of the village as well as engaged in agricultural work as labourers.   |
| 14. |                          | Jat           | Agriculture                         | Agriculture, business   | The Jat community is still primarily stuck towards the practice of agriculture.   |
| 15. |                          | Ghanchi       | Oil pressing                        | -----   | The Ghanchi caste members possess land but there is no settlement of them in the village.   |
| 16. | Special Backward Classes | Raika         | To tend sheep, goat, camel herding  | Rearing of goat, sheep and camel, agriculture, business and service | The Raika caste is gradually settled in the village. The female folk of this community is permanently staying in the village. Most of the male folk is adhere to move in and around the vicinity of the village for the purpose of grazing. A very limited number of people who belongs to this community move along with goats, sheep and camels to distant places. The young generation switches over to other works such as business by opening a shop, selling cow dung to the different places or service sector as security guards at Jodhpur city. |

|     |                     |                  |  |  |  |
|-----|---------------------|------------------|--|--|--|
| 17. | Scheduled<br>Castes | Meghwal          | Making of footwear, camel seat ( <i>Pakan</i> ), water container made up of leather ( <i>Cher</i> ), rope ( <i>Bandna</i> )          | Agriculture, business and daily wage as constructional labours.                  | This community of this village is totally abandoning the traditional occupation as a present.  |
| 18. |                     | Sansi            | Shoe repairing, scavenging of dead bodies of cows. They unskinned the dead cow and sold the skin after cleaning it to the shoemakers | Shoe repairing work at urban and semi-urban centres, daily wage labour, business | Most of the members of this community are still stick to the traditional occupation.   |
| 19. |                     | Sargara          | Drum beaters and bonded labours of 'Jagirders'   | Agriculture, daily wage labour   | This community is totally abandoning the traditional occupation.   |
| 20. |                     | Baori            | The watchman of 'Jagirders'  | Daily wage labour  | This community is totally abandoning the traditional occupation. They are also engaged as workers under contractors to prepare coal as cooking fuel from <i>Babul</i> trees in some pockets of the area.   |
| 21. |                     | Bhangi           | Scavenging dead bodies of domesticated animals   | Scavenging, daily wage labour  | The main occupation of this community is daily wage labour work, however, the scavenging work in respect of dead dogs, cats etc. are still going on. The forefathers of the members of this community migrated from nearby 'Guda Bishnoi' village. |
| 22. |                     | Dholi            | Drum beaters of royal courts   | Service  | Only one family of this community is living in this village and the only male member of this family is a retired pensioner.  |
| 23. |                     | Yogi             | Begging by exhibiting snakes/ manufacturing of grinding stones ( <i>Gatti</i> )  | Daily wage labour, sell of poultry birds, begging                                | The people of this community occasionally capture snakes as and when other people seek help from them.   |
| 24. |                     | Scheduled Tribes | Bhil   | Soldiers of Rajput 'Jagirders'   | Agriculture, daily wage labour   |

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|     |        |                        |        |  |  |   |
|-----|--------|------------------------|--------|--|--|---|
| 25. | Jain   | General Castes         | Oswal  | Business   | -----  | Migrated to South India.  |
| 26. | Muslim | General Castes         | Moila  | Pottery making   | Pottery making, daily wage labour  | They still stick to their traditional occupation.   |
| 27. |        |                        | Teli   | Oil pressing   | Oil pressing, service, daily wage labour   | Though they also engaged in other occupations but primarily depend on traditional occupation.   |
| 28. |        | Other Backward Classes | Nilgar | Washing clothes  | Daily wage labour, business  | At present this community solely depend on the transport business.  |
| 29. |        |                        | Chipa  | Colouring work   | -----  | Migrated to Jodhpur city.   |
| 30. |        |                        | Mirasi | Playing the drums on birth and marriage ceremonies, rearing goats and sheep along with Raika caste | Manufacture of <i>Choti</i> , <i>Jhunki</i> and <i>Jhalar</i> items to decorate tractor, truck, rickshaw, bus and car at the time of <i>Dusseera</i> and <i>Devali</i> . | They acquired the art of manufacturing these items in Mumbai while they migrated from this village due to devastating drought. Later after coming back to the village switch over to this occupation. |

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Notional Map of Khejadlikalla Village

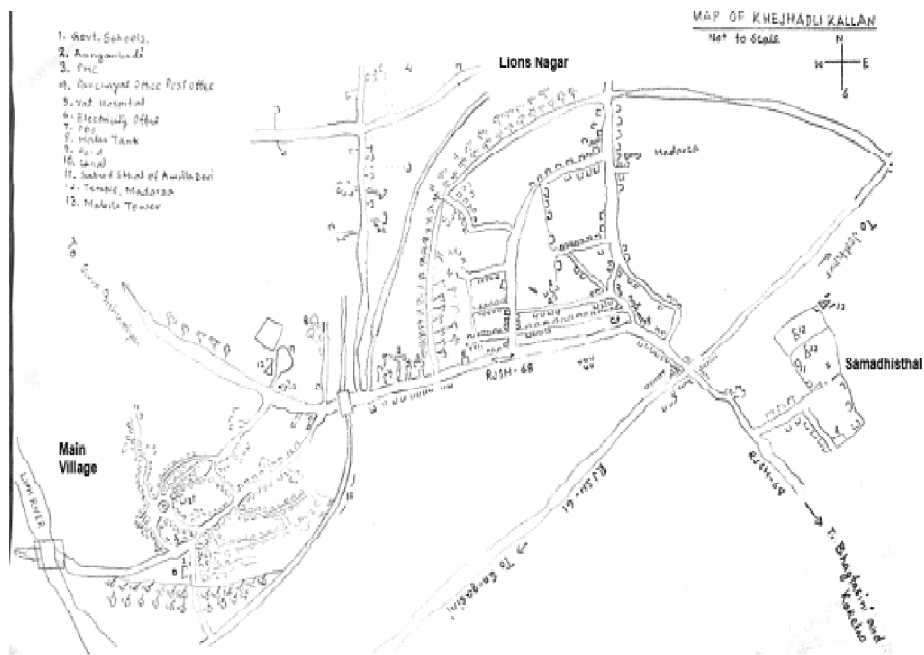




Table 1 will give an idea of the ethnic composition of the village along with a comparison between traditional occupation and present occupation contextual in respect of sustainability under the backdrop of development initiatives in detail. The Scheduled Castes groups were originally located at the southern part of the main location of the Khejadlikalla village and later concentrate at *Lions Nagar* and *Samadbitthal* locations of the Khejadlikalla village. Only the Baori caste group is still located at the southernmost part of the main location of the Khejadlikalla village.

The village is well connected by road from all directions. The different hamlets are well connected by *Pacca* roads. The private bus service connects Jodhpur city and Khejadlikalla village. Every household of the village gets the pipeline water supply provided by the Government of Rajasthan. The entire source of the water supply of this village is the lift canal of the main 'Indira Gandhi Canal'. There is a big pond in the Khejadlikalla village. Before the government water supply scheme, this pond was used as the main water source of the village. In 1975 the hamlet wise drinking water facility started. This facility is further extended in 1980 when the drinking water connection was reached to every household. Almost every household is getting electricity by paying the electricity bills. The electricity has reached the village in 1979. The LPG or cooking gas facility is available in almost all households in Khejadlikalla village. The area of community land is three kinds. The first one is *Gochar*, which is used as grazing land for domesticated animals. The second one is *Oron*, which is the catchment area of the pond of the village. The third one is *Parat*, which is the wasteland. There are two main temples in and around the Khejadlikalla village. The first one is the *Bajrangbali* temple near the pond of the village. The second one is the temple of *Guru Jhamboji* at *Samadbitthal*. There is one cremation ground near the river Luni for the village but each caste group maintain a separate place for the cremation of dead bodies. Three Hindu castes Bishnoi, Meghwal and Giri bury their dead bodies. They have separate graveyards. The Muslim people of the village have separate graveyards. There is one post office inside the village, which was established twenty-five to thirty years ago. One bank named 'Rajasthan Marudhara Gramin Bank' is located at 'Guda Bishnoi' village that was created almost twenty-five years back. Five villages of Khejadlikalla Gram Panchayat constitute a cooperative society named 'Khejadlikalla Sahakari Samity', which was established in 1951. Apart from that, the village comprises many shops for which villagers do not depend much on markets of the Jodhpur city. Twelve years back, the first educational institution was started in the village. There are five government schools and one private school in the Khejadlikalla village. All schools consist of both boys and girls. The three government primary schools (from class – I to class – V) are located at Lions Nagar, Beniwal Budiya Ki Dhani, Higoniyana. One government upper primary school named *Rajkiya Uchcha Prathamik Sanskrit Vidyalaya* (from class – I to class – VIII) at *ShahidSthal*.

One *Adarsh* government senior secondary school (from class – I to class – XII) named *Rajkiya Uchcha Madhyamik Vidyalaya* is at the main location of the village. One private school named *Shri Balaji Adarsh Public Secondary School* is situated in the village. It is observed that maximum students belong to ‘Other Backward Class’ followed by ‘General Caste’, ‘Scheduled Caste’, ‘Scheduled Tribe’ and ‘Religious Minority’. The *Prathamik Swastha Kendra* of Khejadlikalla village is the only health centre to facilitate medical service to the people. There are twelve staff members along with two physicians (one allopathic doctor with the qualification of MBBS and another *Ayush* doctor) in this primary health centre. There is one veterinary hospital in the village comprising of one doctor. The Khejadlikalla Gram Panchayat is eleven members elected body that controls administration, *Sarpanch* and *Up-Sarpanch* are two key posts of the body. The *Gramsevak* is another important post who acts as representative of state government to coordinate with Gram Panchayat. *Patwary* is an employee of the Tehsil office who maintains the land records of the Gram Panchayat.

### Development Process and Perspective

The Khejadlikalla village witnessed multifaceted approaches on target-oriented development initiatives and programmes of the government from long past. Out of the long list, few programmes and schemes are taken into consideration that addressed the basic components of sustainability directly or indirectly. At first, the list of major development and welfare schemes are furnished below (Table 2).

**Table 2: Types of Development/Welfare Schemes Implemented in Khejadlikalla Village**

| <i>Major Development Schemes</i> | <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Name of the Schemes</i>                                       | <i>Remarks</i>   |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--|--|
|                                  | 1.             | 14th Finance Commission  | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 2.             | State Finance Commission   | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |
|                                  | 3.             | Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 4.             | Swacch Bharat Mission  | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 5.             | Pranmantri Abash Yojana  | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 6.             | NHRM   | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 7.             | Fasal Bima Yojana  | Funded by both Government of India and Rajasthan State Government. |

*contd. table 2*

| <i>Major Development Schemes</i> | <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Name of the Schemes</i>                                      | <i>Remarks</i>   |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---|--|
|                                  | 8.             | Kissan Seva Kendra  | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |
|                                  | 9.             | Public Distribution System                                      | Funded by both Government of India and Rajasthan State Government. |
|                                  | 10.            | Anganwadi Kendra  | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 11.            | Bhamasa Card  | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |
| <b>Major Welfare Schemes</b>     | 1.             | Chief Minister Disability Pension Scheme                        | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |
|                                  | 2.             | Chief Minister Old Age Pension Scheme                           | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |
|                                  | 3.             | Chief Minister Widow Pension Scheme ( <i>Bidhaba Palanbar</i> ) | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |
|                                  | 4.             | Indira Gandhi National Disability Scheme                        | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 5.             | Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme                   | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 6.             | Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme                     | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 7.             | Pradhanmantri Ujjala Yogona                                     | Funded by the Government of India.                                 |
|                                  | 8.             | Dr. Sabita Ahmedkar Antarjatiya Bibaha Yogona                   | Funded by Rajasthan State Government.                              |

*Source:* Jodhpur District Collector Office, 2017

Many people are dependent on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (**MGNREGA**), which is designated a 'Kachha Kam' i.e., non-constructional work, which is cutting of pond or making of 'Morum Road' or 'Kachha Sarak', making of water reservoir or 'Tanka', plantation, water harvesting. The village people cut across caste and religious lines expressed views on development issues. The concept of the pond is not conducive in semi-desert. The pond may dry within two to three days and water will penetrate to deep soil. Rather the natural rainwater distribution within a large surface area is more beneficial for agriculture. The facet of corruption in connection with **MGNAREGA** revealed that few people along with 'Met' or supervisor are involved in manipulation. The *ex-Sarpanch* of the village belonging to the Bishnoi caste discussed the dimension of development by emphasizing that in past the focus was on employment generation by creating relief works in eighty decades, while at present the paradigm shift was initiated by

infrastructure development without disturbing employment generation. There are many areas of grievances expressed by the village people. The public transportation is weak and the road condition is bad. Agricultural infrastructure is not developed substantially. The people want river Luni may be linked with any big river so that irrigation facility is to be developed. The agricultural debt issue is important, the demand for exemption of agricultural debts is getting momentum.

Some administrative officers believe this kind of guaranteed employment generation work is approaching towards 'idleness of rural society'. The view of one non-government organization named **Gram Vikas Seva Sansthan** at Jodhpur is that the government officials are not serious and responsible enough to implement development projects. **Jodhpur Vikash Pradhikaran** acquires substantial lands in villages in and around Jodhpur city, which create a difficult situation for villagers to get sanction and permission from the appropriate authority for any kind of construction. Another important problem area was that many village people in this area have no title on house properties.

There are many other views in respect of health. Medicines are not always available in the primary health centre of the village. In case of emergency delivery cases, they are mostly dependent on hospitals at Jodhpur city. In summer the diarrhoea, the rainy season malaria, and winter cold and cough are common diseases. In general, the female members of the village are suffering from anaemia and male members suffer from high blood pressure. The habit of intoxication due to liquor and opium locally called *Doda* or *Amal* are important in this village. Under **Sachh Bharat Mission** the defecation habit in respect of toilet practice in this village is suffered due to the absence of a gutter line. There is no scope for discharge of water from the toilet to the outside due to the absence of a drainage system. At the time of the rainy season, the village *Kachha* roads suffer the problem of waterlogging.

Another government scheme linked with social welfare measures named **Dr. Sabita Ahmedkar Antarjatiya Bibaha Yogona** attracts attention for its aim and objectivity towards social justice. The specific objective of the scheme is to achieve social justice and combat the social stigma by encouraging inter-caste marriage, particularly weddings between Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes.

The Public Distribution System aims to ensure the supply of food materials and essential commodities to the people at a fair price by using complete 'Aadhaar' oriented digital technology. The present public distribution system is the complete targeted approach where 69% of people fulfilling certain criteria such as BPL cardholders, people under 'Aantayadaya Yogona', landless people, marginal farmers (less than 20 *Bigha* land) are eligible for 35 Kg. wheat per month at the rate of Rs.2/- per Kg.

Urbanization is another important dimension, the **Jodhpur Vikash Pradhikaran** has a plan to encroach 2000 to 2500 *Bigha* community land in the vicinity of the village for

the plan to build **Sports City** in future as revealed by some officials of **Jodhpur Vikash Pradhikaran** at Jodhpur. There is a proposal of a four-lane highway from Jodhpur to Udaipur that will cross through this village, from an infrastructural point of view; the Khejadlikalla village is gradually changing towards the satellite urban centre of Jodhpur city. According to village people, this urbanization process was not accelerated rapidly due to the presence of defence set up in and around Jodhpur city. The process of urbanization and commercialization started in the mid-eighties in Khejadlikalla village.

Marginalization is another important domain in respect of development and sustainability. An example is the Yogi community in the Khejadlikalla village. The people of this community reside on the roadside of the main village settlement by occupying government and private lands. They had migrated to this village 20 years back. The irony is that the Yogi people have no land to settle by virtue of their past migration history, poverty, illiteracy. At present, they completely depend on daily wage as labourers in agricultural fields, house construction works etc. secondly, they engaged in begging inside the village. Thirdly, they sell poultry birds to the Rajput, Meghwal and Muslim people of the village who eat non-vegetarian food. Fourthly, they are also engaged to catch snakes from houses of the village on call by respective houses instead of money for that. They asserted that their children were declined to get admission in schools because of no birth certificate and address proof. They are deprived to franchise their votes in elections because they have no voter identity cards due to the absence of address proof.

The important facet of development objectivity is digitization or E-governance. The insured subsidy amount for crop failure, the social pension amount is to reach the respective bank account of the respective beneficiaries through NEFT. The public distribution system is fully controlled using **BHAMASA** and **AADHAAR** linked digitized systems. The two main objectives of E-governance are to reduce corruption and people will be more dependent on the banking system. In support of the online payment system, some informants asserted that after imposition of online payment of widow and old age pension to respective bank accounts stop the corruption practice in respect of manually through Gram Panchayet earlier.

The last but not the least issue is the indiscriminate use of mining of sand from the river Luni bed. The sand or *Bajri* is mainly used in construction work. This mining is illegal as per the district administration of the Rajasthan government. The news of police intervention on this issue about the village for maintaining law and order is reported in local newspapers.

### **The Economic Dimension**

At the time of *Darbar* or the royal era of the *Marwar* region under the Jodhpur estate, there were two types of systems in respect of taxation procedure. The first category comprised

of those villages which were administratively ruled by the *Jagir* system. The people had to pay two shares of their agricultural products to the *Jagir* or landlord. One share was for *Darbar* and another share was for the *Jagir*. The villages which were not ruled by the *Jagir* system had to pay taxes by the *Khalsa* system. The *Khalsa* system was a particular taxation procedure where one person of this kind of village was identified as *Khalsa* as recognized by the royal court. The people had to pay two shares of their agricultural products directly to the royal court through *Khalsa*. The Khejadlikalla village was under the *Jagir* system.

The old caste-oriented economy was termed *Jajmani*. The characteristic feature of the *Jajmani* system was the payment to client castes by the patron castes through grains instead of service. In old caste-based economy defined a specific occupation for each caste mainly centred with the royal court. The *Jajmani* system is partially operating in the village and does not lose its significance completely. The barber caste or Nai still sticks to their traditional occupation by providing service to their Rajput patrons. Usually, one son from each Nai family is still sticking to their traditional calling. The Bhangi caste used to take dead animals like sheep and goats for skinning. In return, the Raika gives Bhangi 20 kg cereal annually. Raika caste members donate goats and sheep as a donation to Muslim Mirasi. They also reciprocate by providing cereals annually on any occasion. Similarly, the Sansi caste also takes dead animals like cows, buffalo and camels for skinning. In return, the Raika gives 20 kg cereal annually. Nai prepares food for the Raika on marriage occasions. Nai takes 10 kg cereal annually for both hair cutting and shavings for adults, the hair cutting of the children take 5 kg cereal annually from the Raika.

The landholding issue is relevant in the context of economic stratification. The landholding data is collected from the Khejadlikalla village *Patwari* at the Luni Tehsil office. The landholding records of 2017 are based on caste affiliation. As per the land record, it is observed that the name of a few caste groups appears who do not live in Khejadlikalla village. However, all landholding castes are taken into consideration. Firstly, the caste wise landholding data is presented to look at at a glance. Table 3 will give an idea of the landholding issue of the village by showing a descending order. The table reflects that Bishnoi and Rajput are two prominent caste groups in respect of landholding.

The next important issue is to measure intra-caste and inter-caste inequality in respect of landholding, which is determined by statistical tool 'Gini Coefficient'. The charts are self-explanatory and indicate both intra-caste and inter-caste wise stratification based on landholding inequality in Khejadlikalla village.

The intra-caste wise landholding inequality factor is equally important in respect of Khejadlikalla village is taken as a unit. It is observed that the highest inequality persists in the case of Bhil and the lowest is Musalman<sup>5</sup>. This statistical figure is a misnomer. By field investigation, it is revealed that in the case of the Bhil community all families are originated

**Table 3: Caste Wise Land Holding - Khejadlikalla Village**

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Caste</i>  | <i>Total Land Holding (In Bigha)</i> | <i>%</i> |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| 1.             | Bishnoi       | 7061.24                              | 60.68    |
| 2.             | Rajput        | 1550.31                              | 13.32    |
| 3.             | Meghwal       | 647.77                               | 5.57     |
| 4.             | Raika         | 535.06                               | 4.60     |
| 5.             | Jat           | 411.25                               | 3.53     |
| 6.             | Kumbhar       | 243.69                               | 2.09     |
| 7.             | Brahman       | 210.02                               | 1.80     |
| 8.             | Nai           | 188.11                               | 1.62     |
| 9.             | Musalman      | 159.82                               | 1.37     |
| 10.            | Baori         | 147.41                               | 1.27     |
| 11.            | Sargara       | 114.88                               | 0.99     |
| 12.            | Ganchi        | 60.36                                | 0.52     |
| 13.            | Bhil          | 58.53                                | 0.50     |
| 14.            | Sansi         | 50.64                                | 0.44     |
| 15.            | Darji         | 48.74                                | 0.42     |
| 16.            | Daroga        | 39.31                                | 0.34     |
| 17.            | Swami         | 37.11                                | 0.32     |
| 18.            | Dholi         | 23.08                                | 0.20     |
| 19.            | Bhangi        | 18.18                                | 0.16     |
| 20.            | Suthar        | 17.08                                | 0.15     |
| 21.            | Mali          | 11                                   | 0.09     |
| 22.            | Maheswari     | 3.03                                 | 0.03     |
| 23.            | Ravana Rajput | 1.11                                 | 0.01     |
|                | Total         | 11637.73                             | 100.00   |

*Source:* Luni Tehsil Office, 2017

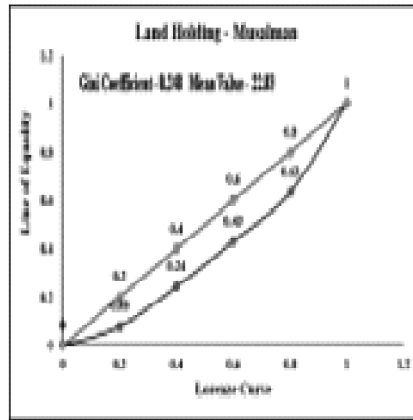
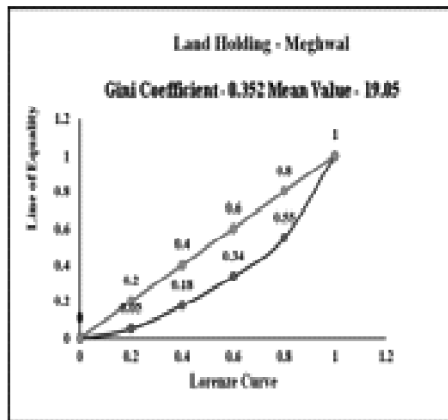
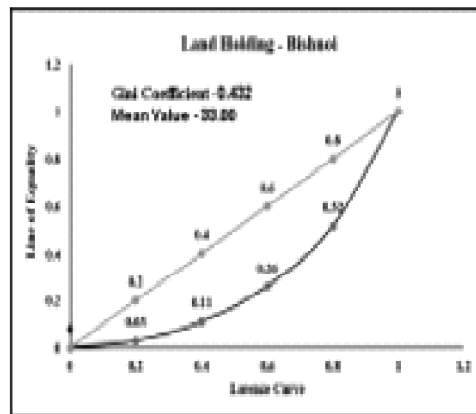
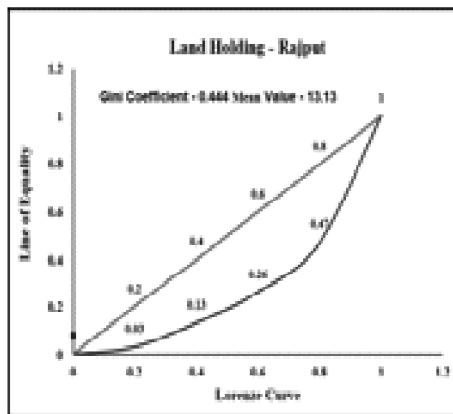
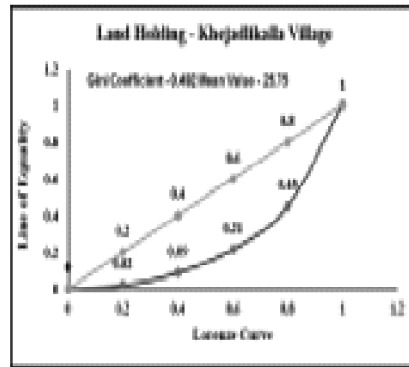
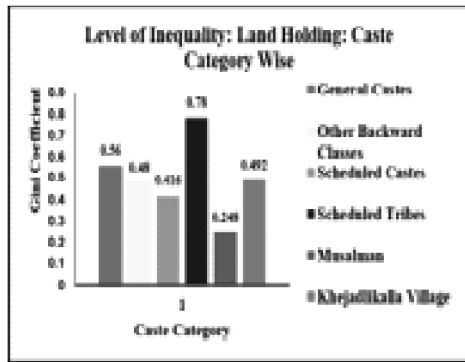
from one source and land are possessed by the ancestor and further official entry of divisions does not take place. At the same time, most of the Bhil families get the government land. These two factors combine and show this picture. But in other cases, the results are showing more or less the true picture. The constitutional caste category wise inequality in respect of landholding shows that the highest inequality is found in the case of 'General Caste' and followed by 'Other Backward Class', 'Scheduled Castes' and 'Musalman'.

The results of the Lorenze Curve will show the real picture, few cases are cited to understand the whole scenario. Each graphical representation is self-explanatory. The first one is the total picture of Khejadlikalla village as a whole by taking all ethnic groups together. The inequality level is significant. The pictures show that inequality is also high in the case of the Rajput caste. In the case of the Brahman caste, the inequality is higher than the Rajput caste. The highest inequality persists in the case of the Jat community. The inequality is significant and continues a uniformity in two Scheduled Caste groups Meghwal and Sagara. The inequality is less in the case of Muslim communities in terms of landholding issues.

The agriculture of the Khejadlikalla village is entirely dependent on rain harvesting and devoid of any sweet groundwater and full of salinity. There are two agricultural seasons in a year the *Kharif* or locally called *Unalo/Sewaj* and *Rabi* or *Saunu*. The main *Kharif* crops are *Bajri*, *Mung*, *Joar*, *Til* and *Moth*. The *Kharif* season starts in June by cleaning weeds or *Hur*. The harvesting month is September. The main *Rabi* crops are wheat, *Raira/Sarsa* and *Chana*. The *Rabi* season starts in January and the harvesting time is in March. The *Rabi* season in Khejadlikalla village is not pronounced due to scanty rainfall in winter. Mixed agriculture is common practice in this village. Usually, 50% *Bajra*, 35% *Moong* and 15% *Til* seeds are sowing simultaneously. In a mixed cropping pattern, the major thrust area is the production of *Bajra* as coarse grain and *Moong* as a pulse. The *Til* is cultivated only for domestic consumption. Secondly, the harvesting is done first to that crop which ripe. Rajput usually gives their land on lease on contract basis. The contract farming is locally called *Hassel*.

Usually, the big landlords give their lands on a contract basis to the other castes that are inclined towards agricultural practice. The contract in normal cases is based on 50:50 shares. In sometimes the entire cost of cultivation is expensed by the farmer who gets a contract on lease the share is 75:25 basis i.e., 75% by the farmer who cultivates and 25% for the landlord. In the majority of cases, the contracts are on the verbal agreement based on mutual trust. The Jat, Bishnoi and Meghwal castes of this village are still practising agriculture. Presently, the major changes in respect of agriculture are observed on two dimensions in this village. Firstly, delayed monsoon and irregular rainfall need two to three times sowing practice. Though the average rainfall is increased in recent years but this is because of heavy rainfall at one time and succeeds with a prolonged gap for the next shower. This type of rainfall is not conducive for agriculture but of course help in increasing the production of fodder which can be considered as a boon of nature for the protection of cattle and overcoming the hazards of drought. Secondly, agriculture in the arid zone in general and Khejadlikalla village, in particular, is to be considered as an integrated livelihood system that includes cultivation along with livestock and agro-forestry (*Khejri* tree). However,





Source: Luni Tehsil Office, 2017

agriculture cannot occupy the only prime area in this village because many people have switched over to other occupations also.

At present, the number of knowledgeable people is gradually decreasing who could access crop priority in a particular year by studying initial rainfall. Agriculture is no more is a profitable occupation now. This is one main reason that the young generation is least interested in agriculture and tries to switch over to other occupations. The major change in livestock is the decrease of cattle consisting of cows and ox. The ox has lost its importance in agriculture due to mechanization. Thus, the role of cattle is restricted only for the purpose of milk production. The goats are more prone or adaptive to climate change. The goats can sell out easily and procure cash money while needed. The weak position of agriculture invites the village people to adopt other occupations and businesses in which they think fit. The well-organized occasional migration in search of livelihood is well established. Most of the people particularly in combination with various caste groups of the village migrate to distant places in India for specific work on a contract basis. For instance, the Bishnoi and Meghwal caste members or Jat and Lohar caste members form a group used to move to Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal within India and Nepal along with tractors and other machinery to assist in agricultural or construction work under contract basis. The next shift is the take on transport business by the Bishnoi caste members. Raika caste of this village was wandering from one place to another throughout the year and was economically dependent on the herding of goat, sheep and camel in past. At present most of the Raika families settled in the village by depending on agriculture, opening shops in the village, purchasing a truck for selling dung to produce organic manure and engaging in daily wage labour work. Those families who still stick to the traditional occupation restricted their horizons and the numbers of sheep and goats decreased to a considerable number. The prime reason for giving up the traditional occupation is the drastic reduction of the price of natural wool due to the introduction of synthetic wool at a low price in the market. Another reason is that the grazing lands are decreasing day today simultaneously. The third reason is the theft of goats and sheep and the attack of dogs and leopards on the sheep and goats most frequently in the nearby forest.

The material change over time and space is a major aspect. Three major changes are contextual. The first one is the house building mechanism. The natural objects particularly specific soils and woods are no more in use. Only particular soil is still in use for pottery making by the Kumbhar caste or Muslim Moila caste group. Another major change is related to the *Safa* or turban of castes of this village. Each caste had a specific coloured turban traditionally were in use. The present change is that most of the castes use only multi-coloured turban easily available in the market. Only the Bishnoi caste wears a completely white dress including a white turban. The change of caste specific attire is

noticed, *Chura* or bangles of the upper portion of the married womenfolk is common in a few married women of two caste groups Raika, Jat.

### **The Socio-Religious Dimension**

In the long past, the castes in Khejadlikalla village were too rigid as while they had to travel carry food and water for the journey period. Even today, many castes do not eat *Chapati* and *Sabji* with gravy outside considering these food items are *Kachha* food. They consume *Puri* and fried *Sabji* outside considering these are *Pakka* food. Now the caste rigidity brings down to a considerable extent despite that the caste member does not accept the *Kachha* food from another caste member who is considered as belonging to lower strata socially.

The seeds of caste untouchability (locally called *Bherān*) in Khejadlikalla village are still present. One Meghwal informant of the *Lions Nagar* area of the village said that they (Scheduled Castes) are not allowed to drink water from the pitcher in the teashop of the village. Previously, they had to clean the glasses after drinking tea in the tea stalls in the village. Now the problem is solved due to introduce of plastic or paper cups. He cited a case that was happened a few years back in the village. The barber who belongs to the Nai caste of the hairdressing shop in the village denied cutting the hair of a person who belongs to a Meghwal caste. The Meghwal person was so angry that he lodged a police complaint at Jodhpur city. The majority of village members supported the barber for his act. While, one Meghwal caste member defends the argument that untouchability is an immoral practice, on contrary, he is in support of the similar practice with other Scheduled Caste groups of the Khejadlikalla village which they think lower than themselves. Another important facet of the inter-caste relationship is expressed through the entry of various caste groups inside the temples. The Bhangi caste members are not allowed to enter inside of *Bajrangbali* temple of this village. The Sargara caste members believe *Jogmaya* is the supreme deity and the main shrine is located at Bhakar near Rashida/Phittasani village of Jodhpur district. The members of Sargara caste are not allowed to enter inside the main temple of *Jogmaya*. It is reported that all Scheduled Caste groups are not allowed to enter inside the *Shiv* temple at Khejadlikalla village at the time *Shivratri* festival. The Sargara caste members expressed their desire to construct a temple of *Ramdeora* at this village so that they could be able to enter the temple for worship.

The Khejadlikalla village people depicted a few cases in and around the village in respect of inter-caste marriage. The first case is referred to as a marriage between a Raika male and a Bhangi female, after marriage, the Raika society decided to outcaste this man from his caste and he was assimilated within the Bhangi caste society. The second case is that one Bishnoi male married a Yogi female. This couple had faced a similar result. The third instance is a case of the wedding between a Bhangi male and a Santh female. The

Santh lady is outcasted from her caste. All results coming out from the cases cited indicate certain conclusions that males belong to a higher caste in social hierarchical order if married with a lower caste female, the couple after the marriage has to assimilate with the lower caste of the bride. On contrary, if a higher caste female marries with lower caste male has to disconnect all ties from her past relations.

The caste and religion are interwoven in Khejadlikalla village. Each caste has a specific religious inclination and doctrine with sanctity. Before entering into the discourse the caste wise affiliation to particular tutelary deities is given below in tabular form (Table 4).

**Table 4: Hindu Castes and Prime Deities in Khejadlikalla Village**

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Name of the Caste</i>   | <i>Name of Deity</i>                                     | <i>Remarks</i>  |
|----------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1.             | Champawat or Rathor Rajput | <i>Chamundamata or Jogmaya, Rani Bhatiyani, Satimata</i> | <i>Satimata</i> is the goddess who protects the caste from all evils. <i>Nangnobia Devi</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .                               |
| 2.             | Khichi Rajput              | <i>Chamundamata or Jogmaya</i>                           | The ideology and belief system is the same as Champawat or Rathor Rajput except they have no concept on <i>Satimata</i> .                         |
| 3.             | Dadhich Brahman            | <i>Dadbimati Mata</i>                                    | <i>Dadbimati Mata</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .   |
| 4.             | Santh                      | <i>Bajrangbali</i>                                       | <i>Kamladevi</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .  |
| 5.             | Suthar                     | <i>Biswakarmaji, Bajrangbali</i>                         | <i>Sachiya Mata</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .   |
| 6.             | Bishnoi                    | <i>Jambeswar</i>   | <i>Jambeswar</i> is considered by them as an incarnation of the 'Visnu' god. The main temple is situated at Mokam near Nauka of Bikaner district. |
| 7.             | Kumbhar                    | <i>Seriya De Mai</i>                                     | <i>Jogmaya</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .  |
| 8.             | Darji                      | <i>Pipa Sapri Dev</i> at Sondria of Pali district        | The temple of <i>Pipa Sapri Dev</i> is located at Sondria of Pali district. <i>Bhakalmata</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .                             |
| 9.             | Giri                       | <i>Dattatreya Bhagawan, Mahadev</i>                      | <i>Hinglajmata</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .  |
| 10.            | Ravana Rajput              | <i>Ramdevji, Bajrangbali, Jogmaya</i>                    | <i>Ashapuri</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .   |
| 11.            | Sonar                      | <i>Bhomeji Dev</i>                                       | <i>Ashapurimata</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> . The   |

*contd. table*

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Name of the Caste</i> | <i>Name of Deity</i>   | <i>Remarks</i>  |
|----------------|--------------------------|--|---|
|                |                          |  | temple of <i>Bhomeji Dev</i> is located at Danwara village of Jodhpur district and the temple of <i>Ashapurimata</i> is situated at Nadol village of Pali district.       |
| 12.            | Lohar                    | <i>Jogmaya, Ashapuri</i>   | <i>Ashapuri</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .   |
| 13.            | Nai                      | <i>Jogmaya, Ashapuri</i>   | <i>Ashapuri</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> .   |
| 14.            | Jat                      | <i>Sbyamji, Thakurji, Bajrangbali, Pabuji, Ramdevji, Jogmaya</i> | <i>Sargimata</i> is <i>Kuldevi</i> .  |
| 15.            | Raika                    | <i>Pabuji Rathor Dev</i>   | <i>Bainmata</i> is the main <i>Kuldevi</i> .<br><i>Nagnasi, Bagoriya</i> are also <i>Kuldevi</i> of them.   |
| 16.            | Meghwal                  | <i>Ramdevji, Rani Bhatiyani</i>                                  | The temple of <i>Ramdeoji</i> at Runicha of Jaisalmer district is famous. All caste groups have the access to enter inside this temple.                                   |
| 17.            | Sansi                    | <i>Bajrangbali, Ramdevji</i>                                     | The Sansi informants of this village claim that they have no <i>Kuldevi</i> .   |
| 18.            | Sargara                  | <i>Jogmaya</i>   | According to them, the temple of <i>Jogmaya</i> is located at Bhakar near Rashida/Phittasani village of Jodhpur district. <i>Bhamimata</i> is the <i>Kuldevi</i> of them. |
| 19.            | Baori                    | <i>Chamunda</i> or <i>Jogmaya</i>                                | <i>Chamunda</i> or <i>Jogmaya</i> is also <i>Kuldevi</i> of them.   |
| 20.            | Bhangi                   | <i>Chamundamata</i> or <i>Jogmaya</i>                            | They also worship <i>Bajrangbali</i> . According to them, the main temple of <i>Jogmaya</i> is located near Jodhpur fort.   |
| 21.            | Dholi                    | The gods and goddesses of Bhati Rajput.                          | <i>Babhuchra Devi</i> of Surendranagar district of Gujarat state is the <i>Kuldevi</i> of them.   |
| 22.            | Bhil                     | <i>Pabujidev, Deulmata</i>                                       | <i>Pabujidev</i> is considered as an incarnation of <i>Lakbman</i> and <i>Deulmata</i> is the Charan deity of Kathiwar of Gujarat.  |

*Source:* Fieldwork, 2017

Each caste group is abided by worshipping this particular god or goddess at the temple or shrine located in a particular place may be in Jodhpur district and outside of the Jodhpur district but mostly in the *Marwar* region of Rajasthan state and spread up to the maximum extent to *Mewar* region of Rajasthan state or *Saurashtra* region of Gujarat state. Thus, the ideology and theocratic doctrine of each caste group is unique and narrate a differential entity towards sustainability as well protection of nature. Another important observation is that worship of many Rajput gods and goddesses are followed by other caste groups, one example is *Rani Bhatiyani*<sup>6</sup>, who is one important deity of Rathor Rajput, simultaneously, the few Meghwal caste families of this village also constructed the temple of *Rani Bhatiyani* at their house premises. The environmental sustainability in respect of the religious doctrine of two caste groups Bishnoi and Raika are depicted below.

The Bishnoi people consider the *Khejri* tree is as auspicious as the *Tulsi* tree. The Bishnoi religious leader emphasized protecting the trees and animals at any cost as they are the gift of divinity. According to their philosophy linked with the environment as depicted *Yajna* or *Havan* is a sacred purifying fire ceremony, by developing positive energy and destroying negative energy. The five ingredients made up of by-products of cows (*Ghee* or clarified butter, *Dudh* or milk, *Dahi* or curd, *Gobor* or cow dung cake and *Gomutra* or urine of cow) along with auspicious coconut and dry branches of holy trees *Khejri* (*Prosopis cineraria*), *Aam* (mango or *Mangifera indica*), *Peepal* (*Ficus religiosa*) are to be put to the fire. Cleanliness is explained as heavenliness by observing three habits *Jal Snan* (bathing using freshwater), *Tap Snan* (meditation) and *Jap Snan* (incantation). The creation of life in the world is explained by four facets *Anda* (egg), *Jarasiyni* (plant), *Udvij* (microbes or who born and die instantly) and *Jeroj* (creation by intercourse). *Panchabbut* means *Akash* (sky), *Bayu* (wind), *Tej* (fire and light), *Prithivi* (earth) and *Jal* (water) is interlinked by *Pancha Tan Matraya* means *Sabda* (word), *Sparsb* (touch), *Rup* (size and shape), *Rash* (taste) and *Gandh* (smell) which synchronizing environment with the living entity. Bishnoi people think that intoxication not only harms health but also harm family and community as a whole. They explained the gravity and seriousness of the effect of intoxication by a story of 'Nimbi Rishi'. He was a saint and was performing meditation by downing his head and legs to the upper by hanging from a *Neem* tree. The king gave a condition that who could win over the saint was entitled to get the prize. One prostitute took the challenge. She decided to reach 'Nimbi Rishi' by the smoke of tobacco. With help of smoke of tobacco, she was not only able to reach the periphery of this saint but also stopped the meditation process. Therefore, the power of tobacco is so strong that may strike the meditation power of the saint.

Raika worships *Bayanmata* and is considered as a most powerful deity. The Muslim Mirasi caste maintains the history of the Raika caste. According to one story, the idol of *Bayanmata* migrated to Sandia Village of Pali district and Saluri village of Jodhpur district

of Marwar region from Chanchchar village of *Mewar* region by a Raika lady Bhamal Devi. *Bayanmata* was connected with two trees *Khejri* and *Neem*. It is said that *Bayanmata* advised the Raika to follow five rules viz. (1) no addiction to wine or liquor, (2) not to eat meat, (3) not to hurt *Neem* tree, (4) not to hurt *Akanra* or *Akunda* tree and (5) not to hurt *Roida* tree.

The relationship of the caste groups is mainly based on traditional relations and historical facts. At present, the inter-caste relationship in Khejadlikalla village is reshaped and reoriented despite the historical incidences and facts are still relevant in the present context while caste groups realign. The Muslim Mirasi has a good affinity towards Hindu castes Raika and Champawat Rajput. It is said that one Muslim Mirasi person died in 2010 at the age of 95 years. They have no separate graveyard. The other Muslim groups of this village refused to use their graveyard. The Raika people requested the then Champawat Rajput Thakur Late Bikram Singh to donate land for the graveyard. The Champawat Rajput donated land for the graveyard for the Muslim Mirasi. Traditionally the Muslim Mirasi was a close associate of the Raika caste. The Mirasi people used to accompany the Raika people while they moved from one place to other for grazing camel, goat and sheep. Sometimes Raika people donated sheep to the Muslim Mirasi people. Both Champawat Rajput and Muslim Moila admitted that they were related historically. They referred to an incidence at the time of independence and partition of the country. There is a village named Sanghasini under the *Khejadlikalla Gram Panchayet* inhabited by the Muslim Moila. Just after the partition of the country after independence few people belonging to Punjab came to the then *Jagir* of the Khejadlikalla village in search of Muslims to take revenge. The *Jagir* of this village misguided them with an idea that there is no Muslim under his jurisdiction. In that way, the *Jagir* saved the life of the Muslim Moila at that time. The Muslim Moila still remembered the incident and were grateful towards the Champawat Rajput.

### **Dynamics of Caste, Development and Sustainability**

The Khejadlikalla village witnessed multifaceted approaches to development initiatives. People of the village also have diversified views on these development programmes and schemes cut across the caste and religious line. The next important dimension is an agriculture-based economy which is the backbone of the Khejadlikalla village. Only rain harvesting is not sufficient enough on the promotion of agriculture in this village. At the same time due to insufficient irrigation, the people have to depend on entirely organic manure. Other amenities such as pesticides, micronutrients, a special variety of seeds as well highly technical mechanizations have no use in this village. On the other hand, due to tremendous salinity, the groundwater table is almost intact in Khejadlikalla village as a boon of nature. Apart from governmental development schemes, there are many other

social processes or contexts which are obviously inviting socio-economic changes. Urbanization is one such process that aims to engulf the rural economy within the ambit of the urban periphery. There are three facets of the urbanization process which are contextual in this regard. These are the build of the sports complex, four-lane highway and rapid growth of commercial centres within the village.

The next discourse is how these development aspects and phenomena are sustainable from economic, social, religious and environmental points of view. At first, economic sustainability is taken into consideration. The measuring of economic dimension from a qualitative point of view is attempted. Undoubtedly, the development measures are directly or indirectly conducive towards creating opportunities in respect of employment generation. The weak position of agriculture invites the village people to adopt other occupations and businesses in which they think fit. Most of the people particularly in combination with various caste groups of the village temporarily migrate to distant places in India to assist in agricultural or construction work on a contract basis to earn more and not for the sake of subsistence.

The social aspects of sustainability are important in the context of the development perspective. The inter-caste relation and caste discrimination are important issues still today. The stigma on lower caste groups by upper caste groups continues. Two aspects give a blow directly or indirectly on caste discrimination. The first one is the use of plastic or paper cups in tea stalls able to stop the discriminating treatment. The next impact is the outcome of natural disaster in 1979 relocates the Scheduled Castes from the southernmost direction towards the north-west. The economic development could not penetrate the inner wall of psycho set up of the people of the Khejadlikalla village on that aspect. Religion is the most important aspect which is the guiding doctrine of the people. An in-depth analysis of the facets of the religion pinpointing two dimensions. The first one is the sharp distinction of castes based on restricting the domain of the deities based on caste affiliation. Sometimes, the lower order caste groups show their inclination by following the worship of the deities of upper caste groups, especially the Rajput caste. The other facet of religion tries to build cohesiveness between various caste groups. This can be illustrated with examples of a few cases of deities like *Ramdeoji*, *Ratan Singhji* accommodating all caste groups and encouraging bondage within the society. Most gods and goddesses are linked with certain rules and obligations to be maintained by the followers irrespective of caste. The two important principles are common in almost all cases. The first one is the practice of vegetarian food habits and the second one is the prohibition of liquor or habit of alcohol intake. The religious doctrine of the Bishnoi caste with 29 principles is perpetuated for an ideal society, ideal environment and ideal life interwoven with religious practice. The conviction of Bishnoi towards the environment is being used as ethnic tourism



at 'Guda Bishnoi' village near Khejadlikalla village. This tourist area is represented as protected nature under the Bishnoi people with an exhibit of natural water bodies, migratory birds, deer, *Nilgai*, antelope (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*). Therefore, religion is the major facet of sustainability and any external force cannot able to penetrate the core of the society i.e., the religious dogma. The realignment of a few caste groups such as Bishnoi and Meghwal, Raika and Muslim Mirasi, Rajput and Muslim Moila and many others are the outcome of historical facts and present socio-political context.

The forces of development have a great impact on environmental sustainability. One caste group Sansi abandon the traditional practice which was a boon in respect of the cleansing environment. Thus, while the caste system is gradually disappearing from economic interdependency no other alternative avenues are still built up. The people across the caste line admitted that environmental hazard is often visible in the area. The *Gidb* or vulture birds are decreased to a considerable extent as revealed. According to their own experience, the vulture birds are playing an important role to clean the environment. Two reasons are responsible for the decrease in the number of vulture birds; the first reason is the toxic side effect of injection usually pushed to the cows for over milking after consuming poison flesh of these dead cows. The second opinion is that the aviation sector is responsible for the continuous gradual decrease of the number of vulture birds in this area. The next dimension is the conservation approach to traditional water bodies in Khejadlikalla village. There were numerous traditional ways of conservation of the water bodies. The three forms of water conservation ways are found in this village. The first one is the *Sarobar* means big water body. The second one is *Nadi* which is smaller than *Sarobar* and the third one is a small water reserve individually possessed locally called *Tanka*. The *Mansarovar* and *Jalnadi* are famous in Khejadlikalla village, both water bodies connected with stories linked with Rajput and Bishnoi castes of this village respectively. The area around the *Mansarovar* of the village is used as graveyards presently. The issue of climate change is relevant by the witness of the unpredictable behaviour of monsoon.

The wildness is one major reason that the agricultural products in fields are in danger. The domesticated cows and ox locally called *Awara Pasu* are creating a threat to agriculture. In past, they sell their cattle in the market, due to constant opposition from some Hindu organizations the cattle market is no more in existence. By compulsion, they leave these cattle. The number of cattle has increased so drastically inside the village that these cattle are a threat to their crops in the fields. Another change is reported that the number of pigs increased substantially inside the forest around the village are now destroying their harvest.

In nutshell, it may be concluded that the traditional caste system which was the outcome of *Darbar* or royal court is almost disappearing. The defined traditional caste occupation is

now almost lost its relevance in the majority of cases. The only exception is Muslim Teli and Muslim Moila who primarily stick to the traditional occupation of oil pressing business and pottery making respectively. There is a general trend of almost all castes to switch over to other occupations in accordance with choice and skill. The Khejadlikalla village historically embraces a dogma of development practised by a nourishing environment as proliferates the principles and doctrine of the Bishnoi caste. Therefore, the historical legacy of sacrificing own life for the environment created a kind of definition of sustainability that is unique. This philosophical endeavour encourages other communities of the village to sustain the environment by practising similar exercises. All development initiatives are pivotal towards the pronouncement of environmental sustainability. The economic changes encourage diluting the rigidity of inter-caste relations. Few inter-caste relations are historically determined as revealed in the deliberation of a set of revealed cases. The philosophical contour of inter-caste relationships and customary practices are still relevant today. The external forces or changes could not penetrate the psycho setup or mindset of the people of this village. Few external changes particularly on material aspects like house type, agricultural implements, modern gazettes (smartphone, television, newspaper) widen their worldview but the core philosophy of the people across the caste line inculcated over time is almost intact which is the soul of the Khejadlikalla village.

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### **Notes**

1. K. S. Singh (1998) in "People of India; Rajasthan Volume" mentioned that all the time, however, the Rajput also continued to fight amongst themselves and to deplete their resources. But in spite of internal weakness, they were a shield against foreign invasions for the rest of India.
2. After devastating flood in August, 1979, a new area was constructed under the patronage of Lions Club of Jodhpur in Khejadlikalla village, this area is named "Lions Nagar".
3. Samadhithal is the pilgrimage spot for Bishnoi community; the structure is built in memory of Amrita Devi who sacrificed her life to protect the 'Khejri' tree.

4. 'Dhani' is a settlement where the families used to build their houses near their agricultural fields. Another reason is shifting of their houses at "Dhani" because of scarcity in old houses due to increase of family members. It is common phenomena that in such cases the person after marriages constructs their houses adjacent to the agricultural fields. The advantage is that the family members work as watchdogs for their agricultural fields. The village is a compact unit, which accommodates houses, and agricultural fields are away from main settlement area. After construction of "Dhani" the concept is rapidly changing.
5. The word 'Musalman' is used in accordance with the land record data available in Luni Tehsil office of Jodhpur district.
6. Rani Bhatiyani shrine is in the village Jogidas ka Gaon, in the Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan. Jogidas ka Gaon is the birthplace of Rani Bhatiyani, whereas Jasol is where the Rani moved after her marriage to the ruler of the village, Kalyan Singh. Whereas the original Rani Bhatiyani shrine and the alleged house of her birthplace in Jogidas ke Gaon was practically unknown for many years, the temple ground in Jasol of Barmer district is also the funeral ground of Rani Bhatiyani.

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