



Ramifications of Church Missionaries on Gamit Tribal Community in Tapi District of Gujarat

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Abstract:

A Christian Mission is set systemic conceptualization and exertion to escalation of Christianity in India. Mission involved in sending individual and groups, called missionaries, across the boundaries, most normally geographical edge, for the purpose of proselytism or conversion. Evangelical missionaries who are financed by international fundamentalists preying of sentiments of weak and gullible tribals. Cultural paradigms have both dimensions behavioral and structural. Gamit community has own believes, culture and social structure. Christian missionary penetrating in this structure and low confident tribals are easily accepted this new culture and spiritual belief. Data has been collected from 10 villages of Tapi district where Gamit community having higher population. During analysis, minimum percentage of Christian conversion is 22.8 recorded in Balpur village. Whereas, highest conversion of Gamit community observed in Kapura is 60.15%. The Christian missionaries have made significant changes in whole Tapi district.

Key Words: Christian Missionary, Tapi District, Gamit community, Demographic change, cultural change, impact of church

I. Introduction:

Christianity has been a powerful agency of cultural change among the Tribes in modern India. These revision in tribal culture introduce by English East India Company's Charter in 1813 and 1833, though initially fairly small scale. But gradually it penetrated deep into the backward and inaccessible tribal areas. Tapi district was formed in 2007 out of some talukas that were separated from Surat District. The district has seven talukas viz., Vyara, Songadh, Nizar, Valod, Uchhal, Dolvan, Kukarmunda. Vyara town is the district headquarter. District has 448 villages, 2 municipality and 291 gram-panchayat. According to 1991 census data, the total population of schedule tribes is 6,77,58,000 during this census calculation Gujarat has 61,61,775 recorded. This

shows Gujarat 14.96 % of tribal population that indicates in Gujarat population of one tribal person per seven person. Later on, during 2001 and 2011 tribal population reaches to 74,81,160 and 89,17,000 respectively (Census 2001; 2011). The history of Gamit community started from Rajsthan and later they settled to Bharuch, Rajpipala, Surat, Navasari, Tapi, Dang districts. But most of the population of Gamit community settled in Surat and Tapi. Gamit community of Tapi which was formally included in Surat District, has own cultural, social and religious life-cycle (St. Mekvan, 1983). These community have heredity cultural values and religious believes which includes engagement, marriage, family life, social clusters (Rekha Mehta, 1989). Gamit community have their own language, arts and social-religious customs (Daxa; Navin, 1993). The Christian missionaries have made significant change in people's lives particularly in Gamit community through education, health, economic and mobility and agrarian relations. Because of lack of confidence tribals are never took part in arguing with cultural and demographic change. Some tribal communities have limited access to quality education also fear with languages barriers. Especially for tribal communities with district languages or dialects, can create difficulties in communication and interaction with mainstream society. That is one of opportunity for Christianity conversion, the sense of inadequacy and lower self-confidence among tribal individuals (R. Trivedi, 2024). Christian missionaries have been working in almost all fields of tribal life, especially in education and health. They also introduced modern life and culture side with preserving the existing cultural pattern of their work for tribal people.

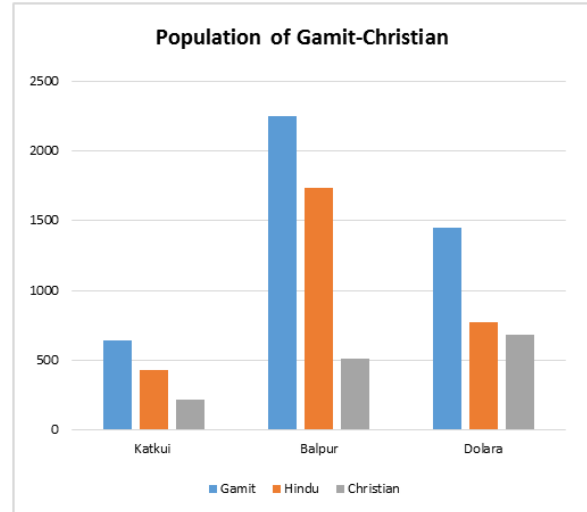
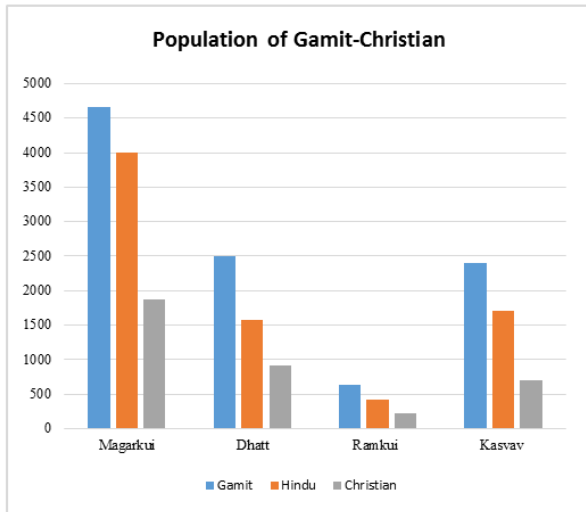
Material and method: method of data collection have two types of sources. (1) primary sources (2) Secondary Sources. Both types of sources have been used in the present study. Libraries and reference work have been used to get this kind of information. Whatever written information on caste was available was used. For this, we have tried to get information



through gazettes, census reports, history books related to rural castes, constitution pamphlets and investigative essays on rural castes at graduate, post-graduate and undergraduate levels, newspaper notes,

and community groups. In order to verify any written information found in the context of the study has been collected through direct self-examination field work by interviewing.

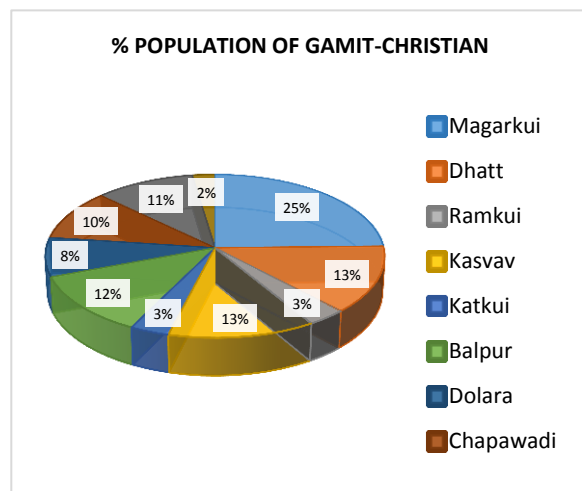
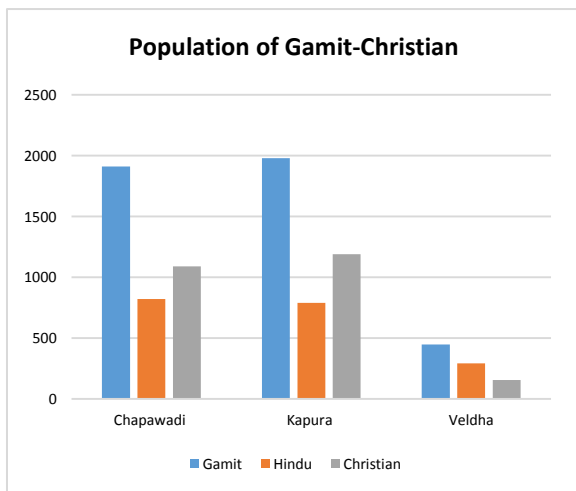
II. Result and Discussion:



Graph-1: Comparison of Gamit Community population between Hindu and Christian among seven villages.

Graph shows total population of Gamit community in 10 villages Magarkui, Dhatt, Ramkui, Kasvav, Katkui, Balpur, Dolara, Chapwadi, Kapura and Veldha. Highest population of Gamit community

recorded in Magarkui that highest under the influence of missionary propaganda. Vedka village which is having overall less population is also affected with conversion (Graph 2).



Graph-2: Comparison of Gamit Community population between Hindu and Christian among three villages. Percentage population of Gamit-Christian in 10 villages.

At times Gamit community have their old faith seemed inadequate to deal with the new stresses of colonial mindset, new faith, modernization, they lose control over their territory

and resources because of the crushing burden. They lose their identity, gradually disintegration of the village community, dispossession and migration. Of course, there are some people from Gamit



community refuge for Christianity, while some others held on to their traditions. Still others sought a new reevaluation of tradition and become Gamit-Christian. This turmoil in religious beliefs and practices is especially noticeable among all Adivasi community (R. Trivedi, 2024). Sometimes, religious subversion occurs through cultural means, such as challenging their cultural beliefs, attraction towards anesthetist. This can involve creating works of art, literature or continuous criticize religious beliefs or figures.

Sometimes, religious subversion occurs through cultural means, such as satire, parody, or artistic expression. This can involve creating works of art, literature, or comedy that mock or criticize religious beliefs or figures (R. Trivedi, 2024). Some of the villages like Magarkui, Dhatt that are quite nearer to main town place of district so missionary activities influence is very higher around the villages. In community and villages undergo influence of religion and create a secular value. This can lead to the erosion of religious authority and marginalization of religious institutions in public life as well community. Magarkui village have total population of Gamit community 4660 among them 1878 person following christian rituals instead of Tribal indigenous religious belief. Ramkui and Kasvav villages have total Gamit population respectively 640 and 2407 among them 224 and 701 people believe in Church rituals.

III. Conclusion:

The tribal society was not associated so closely with any religion; they generally believe in nature's powers and the local deities. This research has discussed the impact of Christian missionaries on Gamit Community at various forms of their contribution in deviating the tribal's of Tapi district either directly or indirectly but in most of the cases it has been found that they have been directly involved with their day-to-day activities and hence Gamit community converted to Gamit-Christian. The approach of missionary's work seems to be very pragmatic as they work as an insider by looking at people's problems and then acting accordingly. The researchers' own study has also found that the missionaries have played a key role in changing mindset of Tribes- Gamit, as was seen in the case of the villages of Tapi district. This study also confirmed that large demographic and religious change in various villages of Tapi District.

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