



Research Paper

Evangelization of Adivasi in Tapi District of Gujarat

R. Trivedi

Faculty of Science, Sarvajanik University, Surat, Gujarat.

Abstract:

Gujarat state has multiplicity of cultures and religions. Besides the vast majority of Hindu believes, the population of Adivasi or tribals in more than sixteen districts. Among the tribals in their different communities like Kathud; Kunwar; Kotwaliya; Gamit; Chaudhary; Dhigale; Naik; Vasava; Bhil out of all the people are apportioned to South Gujarat. Most of the community in dense population settled in Tapi District of Gujarat. The church in Tapi was in minority but within last two decades 25% of villages have “New Dharm-Sthal” which is “Signs of the Times”. Tapi is a fertile ground for the mission of evangelization, particularly with regards to the Adivasi, where Christ should not be brought from outside but be born and discovered within the culture of the people themselves. It needs to be realized by Adivasi people that building Christ community based on centurial penetration of evangelization lose their own Adivasi identity.

Key Words: Evangelization, Adivasi, Christ Community, New Dharm-sthal, Sign of the Times

Received 18 Apr., 2024; Revised 28 Apr., 2024; Accepted 30 Apr., 2024 © The author(s) 2024.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

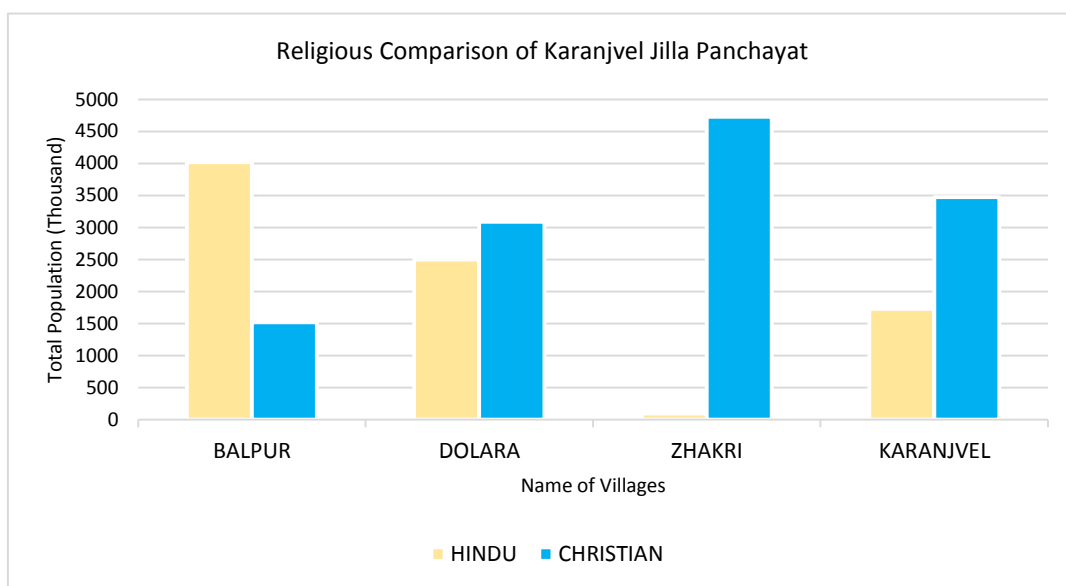
I. Introduction:

In the past, evangelization has always been understood as proclamation of the Good News. Evangelization was telling people that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and giving the testimony that the ministry of rehabilitation of fallen humanity initiated by Jesus is continued through the ministry of church (R. J. Schreiter, 2001). However, twenty centuries later, the definition of evangelization changed and turned into carrying conversion and forward it ahead (H T Lyche, 2020). Tapi is one of the poorest district in the Gujarat state. And the Adivasi community remain here as illiterate and unemployed. This situation poses a challenge to everyone reminding the fact that evangelization cannot be reduced from “save the souls” to “save the adivasi culture and religion”. It developed such answering the eliminating hunger and reduce poverty. In rapid changing situation the traditional belief system, which has orally been transmitted generation after generation; the common language, socio-religious-cultural ceremonies, feasts, and festivals are no longer able to play a role in preserving the tribal identity. Many now are becoming Christian and do not care the traditional pattern of community living. Christianity itself supports many supernatural activities, habits but while comparing with tribal culture this part of it never exposed and even questions never been raised by tribals (Blanco-Sarto, P; 2021). Under the influence of religion and religiosity, Adivasi people of Tapi district are progressively evangelized (R.Trivedi, 2024^a). The purpose of the study to bring notice of cultural and social salvation of Adivasi. Moreover, evangelization of Adivasi community that compromises to their own cultural values. The study followed by special coverage on the Adivasi community in Tapi district, with focused on mission of evangelization that deculturating religion, culture and social structure of them. Evangelization is considered as a key aspect of ecological, economical, educational, health, political development and social and cultural transformation among the community.

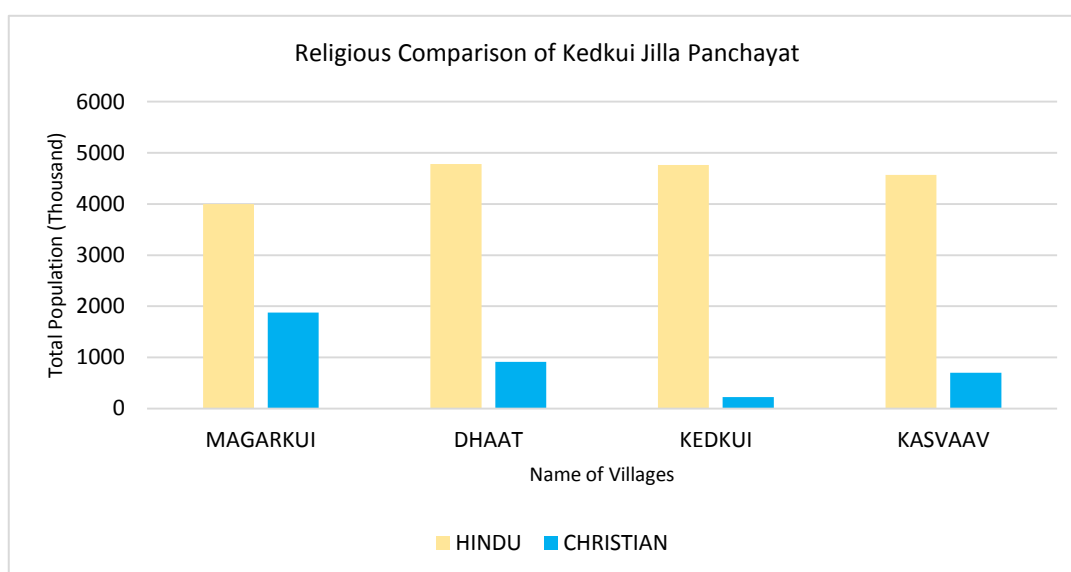
II. Methodology:

The research methodology used here is mainly historical, descriptive, analytical and synthesis. The study is made primarily on the basis of existing literature; books; periodical articles; research articles, search related to internet access and unpublished writings. It also comprises of field interview; primary data collection and secondary data collection especially for Adivasi community of Tapi district.

III. Result and Discussion:



Graph-1: Comparison of religion among Four villages of Karanjvel Jilla panchayat where maximum Evengelization of Adivasi occurred.



Graph-2: Comparison of religion among four villages of Kedkui Jilla Panchayat where 5-50% Adivasi Evengelized.

However, there is a chance of economic and educational development in the rural area through the “Gramin Bank” (Rural Bank) and Government Educational Schools, Institutions, Skill Development Centers, Vocational Training Centers that play a positive role as well the particularly during disasters. Besides the government initiative, Christ NGO, Schools and Vocational Training Centers along with the savings and Credit Union movement initiated by evangelical churches (Thomas C, 2003). They rather encouraging Adivasi Tribals to participate in such activities for enhancing economic and entrepreneurship development. Comparing the eight different villages of two gram-panchayat resulted in more than 50% of village population is evangelized by churches. Zhakri village having highest population of christian and they lose their identity as Adivasi (Graph-1). Similarly the villags like Kedkui and Kasvav having lowest population of christian (Graph-2). The reasons are Evangelical church activities, in some cases, religious subversion is intertwined with emotional movement. The chance of overthrow religiously based emotional and economical regimes systems. This can makes cultural and religious change in the whole Tapi district (R.Trivedi^b, 2024). The village Dhatt and Kedkui has more than 10 km distance from main district town, so may be this is the reason for low rate of Evangelization of the Adivasi community.

IV. Conclusion:

Individuals may subvert their religious upbringing or community by converting to another religion or leaving their original faith, altogether is injustice to own culture and religion. The valid reasons for evangelization in Tapi district incomplete unless people understood their origin and commitment to their own culture religion. The most of the cases of evangelization are isolated scenario in Tapi district, it happens among humankind with new creation of “New Dharmasathal”. Evangelization loses if the actual people understands the “ Signs of Time” properly and protest against the new age emotional propoganda. During the study it has been contextualization with Adivasi community that new generation looking toward guidance of Church present in this district, churches building up a new human community that distanced by their own Adivasi origin and never has been accepted by other religion with brotherhood. Their language, signs, symbols, cultural songs, marriage rituals having high impression of presence of Church.

Reference:

- [1]. Robert J. Schreiter, ed., *Mission in the Third Millennium* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001). Hereafter referred to as, *Mission in the Third Millennium*.
- [2]. R.Trivedi^a (2024). Reasons of Demographic change in tribal region of South Gujarat Tapi. *JETIR*, Volume 11, Issue 2: 561-565.
- [3]. Harald Tambs-Lyche (2020). Tribe as Nation, Nation as Folk: Missionary Discourses on Santal Identity. *Journal of Adivasi and Indigenous Studies*. Vol. X, No. 1, February 2020: 1–13.
- [4]. R. Trivedi^b (2024). Influence of Religion and Religiosity as Captive Mindset In South Gujarat, *IJSSSR* Vol.2 (1):2024: 35-42.
- [5]. Blanco-Sarto, P. (2021). Human and Religious Faith: Phenomenology and Experience. *Academia Letters*, Article 884. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL884>.
- [6]. Thomas C. Fox, *Pentecost in Asia: A New Way of Being Church* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2003), p. 212. Hereafter referred to as, *Pentecost in Asia*.