

**A Spatial Distribution of Female Beedi Workers in Solapur District –
A Geographical Study**

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Abstract:

In our country, the commercial beedi manufacturing is having more than hundred year history. Till today, the manufacturing of beedi carried out in three phase i.e. individual, self-employed beedi workers (who operate and even market beedis locally) and a branded beedi company. Different scholars have classified the beedi workers as per need of study as well as perspective of researcher. In this study all possible classification are incorporated.

1. Introduction

Beedi making is one of the major informal works carried out in our country. Generally the unorganized sector facing different problems some of them are low wages, unemployment, and irregular payment of wages, non-availability of social security and welfare facilities, and exploitative working conditions (Srinivasan and Ilango, 2012). Since last few decades the beedi workers of study area are well supported by labour unions. Almost all Beedi workers of study area are from poor and marginalized sections of the society.

In our country, the commercial beedi manufacturing is having more than hundred year history. Till today, the manufacturing of beedi carried out in three phase i.e. individual, self-employed beedi workers (who operate and even market beedis locally) and a branded beedi company. Different scholars have classified the beedi workers as per need of study as well as perspective of researcher. In this study all possible classification are incorporated.

2. Aim And Objectives

The main aim of this study is study the spatial distribution of female beedi worker in study area. The associated objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To study spatial distribution of the female beedi workers.
2. To study Religion, Caste wise distribution of Female beedi workers.
3. To study Age wise distribution of Female beedi workers.
4. To study Religion, Caste wise distribution of Female beedi workers.

3. Study Area

The Solapur district is located in southern part of Maharashtra state. It is having 14,845 sq. km. (5,732 sq mi) area and total population 4315527 as per 2011 census. The population density is 290/km² and the share of urban population is 31.83%. More than 70,000 workers are engaged in different activities of beedi industry of Solapur district. Beedi is a home-based industry and about 95 percent of its workers are female.

4. Database And Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected through field work. The interview of 850 female workers conducted and data is collected. In this process the observations, discussions, interviews and questionnaires techniques are applied. The secondary data is collected from available sources like Census of India, District Socio-Economic Abstract, District Gazetteer, records from beedi employee unions, other published reports. The collected data is tabulated thereafter graphical analysis is carried out and finally interpreted the same.

5. Spatial Distribution of Beedi Workers

The beedi making work of Solapur district is carried out only in the areas where factories are established. This work require raw material which is been supplied by the factory. As a result the spatial distribution of female beedi workers concentrated in particular areas. There are 23 factories functioning in Solapur city and 3 factories in Barshi. Hence beedi making work is carried out only at Solapur and Barshi.

Table No: 1 Number of Male and Female Workers

Sr.No.	Name of Brand	Male	Female	Total
1	Desai Bidi	45	2850	2895
2	Sambhaji Bidi	63	3420	3483
3	Shivaji Bidi	50	3450	3500
4	Thakur Savadekar Bidi	75	3458	3533
5	Battim Bidi	48	2650	2698
6	Kiran Thakur Bidi	68	4500	4568
7	Appa Thakur Bidi	54	3230	3284
8	Char Bahi Bidi	72	3538	3610
9	Mohini Bidi	40	1830	1870
10	Gujrat Bidi	48	3600	3648
11	Shankarlal Bidi	59	2150	2209
12	Kombada Bidi	65	2245	2310
13	Joshi Bidi	60	2250	2310
14	Sabale Waghire Bidi	65	4560	4625
15	Bhikusa Bidi	58	3530	3588
16	Ragutam Bidi	60	4520	4580
17	Chandratara Bidi	38	2050	2088
18	Bombay Bidi	65	3840	3905
19	Jayram Bidi	65	3850	3915
20	Latif Bidi	53	3080	3133
21	Sinnar Bidi	22	1850	1872
22	Munsy Bidi	62	3356	3418
23	Sohel Bidi	45	1500	1545
24	Unth Bidi	12	650	662
25	Revansiddheshwari Bidi	21	1135	1156
26	Momin Bidi	14	836	850
	Total	1327	73928	75255

Source: Annual report of Lal Bawata Bidi Kamgaar Union, Solapur City, 2010-11 (Courtesy: Chavan S. K. (Aug 2011) cited in research article "A Study of Female Bidi Workers in Solapur City" in Indian Streams Research Journal, Vol-I, Issue-5.)

The beedi making work was originally concentrated within Solapur city. Most of the beedi workers were from low income group and living at slums. The government has established special housing schemes for these beedi workers. The separate housing colony is situated at outer fringe of Solapur city which is known as ‘Beedi Gharkul’. The majority of beedi workers are living in the small slum pockets of Solapur city. There are few patches of beedi workers at Barshi. Out of total workers about 40% of the beedi workers are living in beedi gharkul, 55% workers are staying at patches of Solapur city and 5% workers are staying at Barshi. Hence in this study the spatial distribution of beedi worker is grouped into three units i.e. 1) Within Solapur city, 2) Beedi Gharkul (Outer fringe of Solapur city), 3) Barshi.

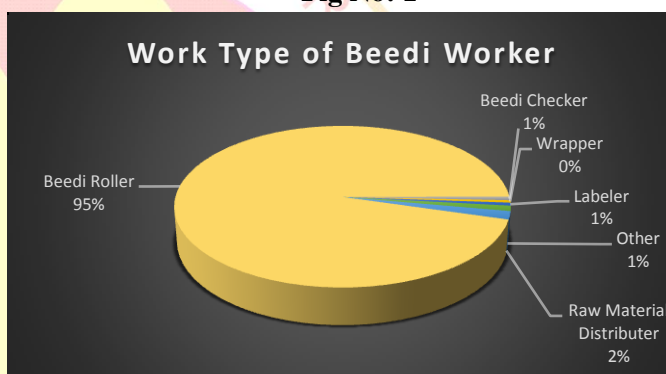
6. Classification Based On Work Type

The work of beedi making is been carried out by different workers at different stage. This work is carried out at house as well as at factory site. In beedi making process the rolling of beedi is major and time consuming task. Out of total workforce majority of the workforce is employed in the process of beedi rolling. Majority i.e. 95% workers are working at their own houses remaining at other places. The categories of worker are ranging as per their work i.e. Raw Material Distributors, Beedi roller, Beedi Checkers, Wrappers and Labelers, Clerical Staff, etc.

Table No: 2 Work Type of Beedi Worker

Worker Type	Workers	%
Raw Material Distributer	14	1.65
Beedi Roller	812	95.53
Beedi Checker	6	0.71
Wrapper	4	0.47
Labeler	5	0.588
Other	9	1.059
Total	850	100

Fig No: 1



Source: Based on Field Work Data

Table No.2 shows that more than 95% of female beedi workers are rolling beedies and rest all workers together contribute 5% share of total female beedi workers. The workers like beedi checker, wrapper, and labeler are having less than one per cent share. The share of raw material provider is 1.65% whereas other workers are 1%.

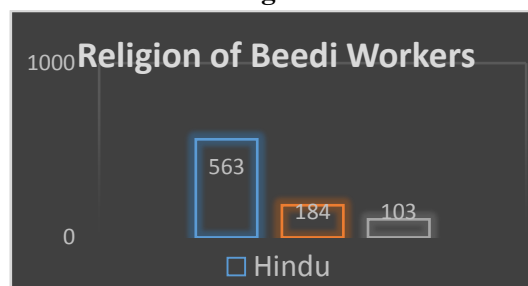
7. Religious Distribution Of Female Beedi Workers

India is country of region and caste, where numbers of religion, caste and sub castes are found the society. There is close relation between caste and occupation structure. In ancient India the work or duties was assigned as per their caste. Hence each community was doing particular work. The workers of beedi making industry are of different religion. The share of Hindu community is major i.e. 66.24%, Muslim community is 21.65% and Nav Boudh are 12.12%. The beedi workers are of all religions.

Table No.3 Religion wise classification

Religion	Respondents	%
Hindu	563	66.24
Muslim	184	21.65
Nav Boudh	103	12.12
Total	850	100

Fig. No.2



Source: Based on field work data

8. Caste Wise Classification of Female Beedi Workers

As discussed above the study area is having beedi workers from different castes. The female beedi workers are from nine castes. The Sali and Kam sheeti are the cast and Padama Sali is sub caste of Sali. The Muslim is religion and they are also having some categories but in this study Muslims is taken as religion as well as caste. The Boudh is religion but some workers are responded their caste as Mahar and some as Nav Boudh, but in this study both are considered as one i.e. Mahar.

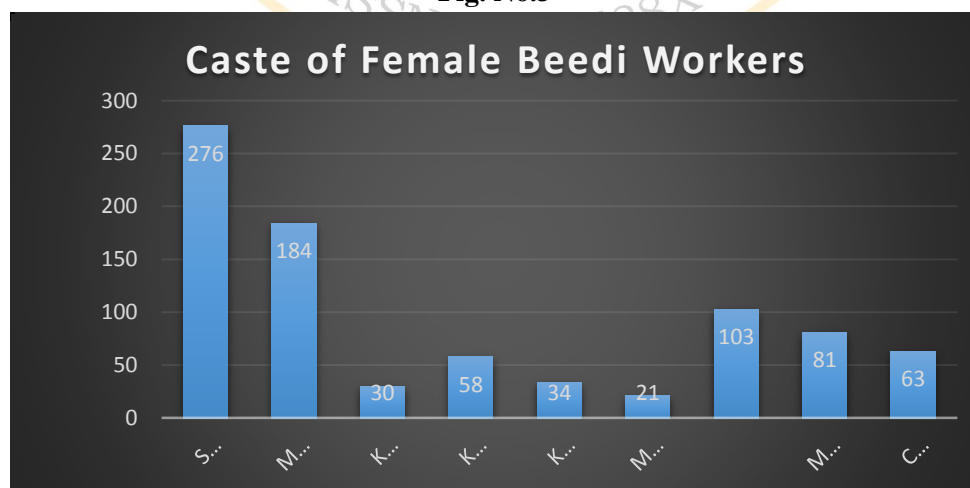
The highest proportion of Sali cast is highest among all i.e. 32.47% (276 respondents). The second highest category is Muslim (21.65%) followed by Mahar (12.12%), Matang (9.53) and Chambhar (7.41%). The Kurhin Shetti is one of caste which is engaged in beedi making since long time which is having its share 6.82%, Kam Shetti (6.82%), Khstriya (4%). Now days the slums are main centres for beedi making as a result all class people are engaged in it.

Table No. 4 Cast wise classification

Caste	Respondents	%	Caste	Respondents	%
Sali	276	32.47	Malkhande	21	2.47
Muslim	184	21.65	Mahar	103	12.12
Kam Shetti	30	3.53	Matang	81	9.53
Kurhin Shetti	58	6.82	Chambhar	63	7.41
Khstriya	34	4.00	Total	850	100

Source: Based on field work data

Fig. No.3



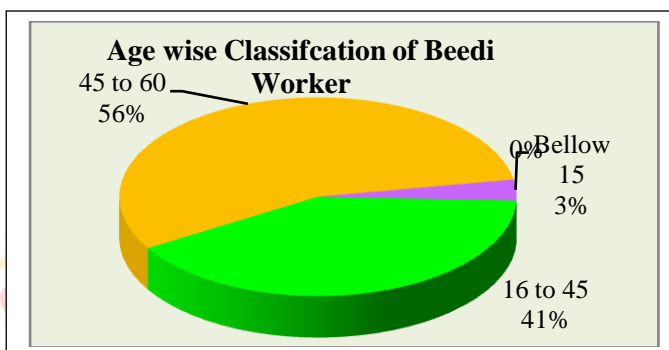
9. Age Wise Structure of Female Beedi Workers

The beedi workers are from different age groups. Each beedi worker is working for particular factory and having a employment card. Hence there is proper record beedi worker and officically the starting age of beedi worker is 18 years and end at year 60 that is the age of retirement. Hence on record there is no child labor in beedi workers. But it is observed that womens who are above 60 years and girls below 15 years are helping the actual beedi worker to fulfill her daily quota.

Table No.5 Age wise classification of Workers

Age Group	Respondents	%
Below 15	29	3.41
16 to 45	346	40.71
45 to 60	452	53.18
Total	850	100

Fig No.4



Source: Based on field work data

Table No. 5 represents the age group wise distribution of female beedi workers. Majority of the respondent were above 45 years. This is the period during which a person's earning capacity is decreasing. After 40 years, a woman has several health problems and therefore they are not able to work hard hence prefer to roll beedi.

10. Classification Based On Location Of Work

In Maharashtra this work is carried out at three levels i.e. household, site of contractor and factory site. In Solapur district the beedi work is carried out at factory site as well as at own houses. The conducted survey revels that all beedi workers are rolling the beedis at their houses. As per the official of Lal Bawata Unionon sent percnet beedi rolling workers are working at their own homes. In factory both male and female workers are working. Out of total female beedi workers 99% are working at home and rolling beedies and less than 1% are working at factory site. Out of total employes in beedi factory the share of female workers is 22% and rest are male.

Conclusion

- The beedi workers in Solapur are with multi-linguistic and multi-cultural features. The present part of the study is focusing on socio-cultural status of female beedi workers which show interesting results.
- There are 23 factories functioning in Solapur city and 3 factories in Barshi. Hence beedi making work is carried out only at Solapur and Barshi.
- Out of total workers about 40% of the beedi workers are living in beedi gharkul, 55% workers are staying at patches of Solapur city and 5% workers are staying at Barshi.
- The categories of worker are ranging as per their work i.e. raw material distributors, beedi roller, beedi checkers, wrappers and labellers, clerical staff, etc.
- More than 95% of female beedi workers are rolling beedies and rest all workers together contribute 5% share of total female beedi workers.

- The religion wise distribution of beedi workers shows that the Hindu community is major i.e. 66.24%, Muslim community is 21.65% and Nav Boudh are 12.12%. The caste wise distribution shows that the Sali cast is highest among all i.e. 32.47%, Mahar (12.12%), Matang (9.53), Chambhar (7.41%), Kurhin Shetti (6.82%), Kam Shetti (6.82%), Khstriya (4%), etc.

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