

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TOTO TRIBE IN
ALIPURDUAR DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED BY

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2019

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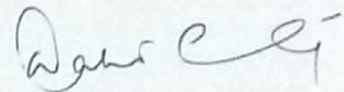
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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "A Sociological Study of the Educational Status of Toto Tribe in Alipurduar District of West Bengal" is record of bonafide research work done by Shradha Rai under my supervision and guidance. It contains the result of the candidate's personal investigation. The candidate has fulfilled all the necessary requirements according to the regulations of Jadavpur University, Jadavpur, Kolkata and is fit for submission to the University for the Partial Fulfillment of Masters of Philosophy in sociology. I further certify that no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgement

Contents

List of Tables

List of Maps

CHAPTER-I INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	2
1.3. Objective of the Study	3
1.4. Rational of the study	4
1.5. Methodology	4
1.5.1 Population	5
1.5.2 Research design	5
1.5.3 Methods of Data Collection	5
1.5.3.1 Primary Data	5
1.5.3.2 Secondary Data	7
1.5.4 Data Interpretation and Tabulation of Data	8
1.5.4.1 Coding of Data	8
1.5.4.2 Tabulation of Data	8
1.6. Chapterization	8

CHAPTER-II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction	10
2.2. Concept of Tribe and Primitive Tribal Group	10
2.3. Socio-economic life and History of Totos	11
2.4. Study of educational status of the Tribals	15
2.5. Development Programmes for Tribals	18

CHAPTER-III SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND ORIGIN OF TOTO TRIBE

3.1. Introduction	20
3.2. Origin of Toto tribe	20
3.3. Geographical location of the village Totopara	22
3.4. Socio-economic status of the Toto tribe	25
3.4.1. Socio-cultural Status of the Toto tribe	25
3.4.2. Economic Status of the Toto tribe	31

CHAPTER-IV EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TOTO TRIBE

4.1. Introduction	33
4.2. Educational Profile of Toto tribe	33
4.2.1. Primary Level of Education	35
4.2.2. Secondary Level of Education	39
4.2.3. Higher Educational Status	41
4.3. Reasons behind low literacy rate	41
4.4. Parental aspiration for their children's education	43
4.5. Constraints faced by the Toto students	44
4.6. Case Study	45
4.6.1. Gurshu Toto	46

CHAPTER-V COMPARISON OF TOTOS WITH THEIR NEPALI NEIGHBOURS

5.1. Introduction	48
5.2. History of the Nepalis in Totopara	48
5.3. Socio-economic status of the Nepalis residing in Totopara	51
5.4. Comparison of the Educational Status of Totos and Nepalis of Totopara	54

CHAPTER-VI CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction	56
6.2. Major Findings of the study	57
6.3. Limitations of the Study	59
6.4. Suggestions	60

REFERENCES	61
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ANNEXURE

Annexure-A

LIST OF TABLES

3.1 Population Composition of Totopara	26
3.2 Population statistics of Toto Tribe	27
4.1: The overall educational Status of Totos	34
4.2 The Current students' perusing education and Dropouts in Totopara	35
4.3 Enrollment of Students in Chittranjan School	36
4.4 Enrollment of students in Totopara Primary School	37
4.5 Enrollment of Toto students in Dhanapati High School for the year 201839	
4.6 Enrollment of Toto students in Dhanapati High School for the year 201740	

LIST OF MAPS

3.1 Map of Alipurduar District	23
3.2 Map of Madarihat Block	24
3.3 Map of Totopara	25

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

India is a vast country with a population which is the second highest in the world. India comprises of varied number of communities, religion, languages, cultures which have their own unique identity. Some of the communities are far more advanced while the others are backward and trying to achieve success. In India these backward communities are listed as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes which have been given some provisions by the Indian government to uplift their status. Even before the independence we see that our social reformers have highly emphasized the importance of education. After independence though the literacy rate has risen considerably we still see that some of the community's mostly rural and tribal communities are neglected.

Among these communities the scheduled tribes are the most few in number and are the most deprived group of people who still live in isolated places. The total number of Scheduled tribes is around 8.6% of the total population of the country. Their literacy rate is 59%. Tribal groups are to be mostly found in remote rural areas of our country which is devoid of modern advancement. Education is the only means through which we can uplift their socio-economic status. Education is the tool for the advancement of any community.

The Indian government in Article 21A of the constitution states that the state should provide free and compulsory education

to all children within the age of six to twelve. By doing so it makes education our fundamental right. Even after the government has made education compulsory, still we see some communities are not aware of the importance of education. Among the scheduled tribes of West Bengal the most vulnerable and endangered tribe is the Toto tribe of the Alipurduar district who live isolated in a small village called Totopara. They live in isolation maintaining their own traditional and culturally lifestyle but some of the traditionally ways are now giving way to new methods of livelihood due to the influence of the other growing communities in Totopara like Nepalese, Binaries and Bengalis at large.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The educational status of the tribals of India is very much in need of our concern. Even after independence we see that the educational status of the tribals is low as compared to the others. The educational status of one of the tribe of West Bengal called the Toto tribe is taken to study. The Toto tribe is one of the most endangered tribe in the world. Its population count is very low and its culture is also on the verge of extinction due to the cultural assimilation happening in the area where they live, called Totopara which is in the Madarihat block of Alipurduar district of West Bengal.

The Toto tribe is regarded as the primitive vulnerable tribal group of west Bengal due to its distinctiveness, cultural homogeneity, own language and the geographical distinctiveness. There is a huge disparity in terms of education among the tribes and the rest of the people. Though the literacy rate is low among the tribals we cannot deny the fact that there is disparity even

among the tribals themselves. The geographical location of Totopara is very secluded from the mainstream population. Therefore it is very important to find out the status of education among the Toto tribes.

Education is the most significant tool for the up liftmen of any society or a nation at large. For the advancement of any society education is the first requisite which must be met. In tribal areas too education is the prime important aspect which will enable them to raise their standard of living. The disparity in education is there between the Toto tribals and non tribals but there is also a disparity between others tribals and Toto. Thus, there is a need to investigate the reasons behind such great disparity in education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study entitle “A Sociological Study of the educational status of the Toto tribe in Alipurduar District of west Bengal” are as follows:

- 1) To study the formal level of education and achievement among the Toto tribe of all ages.
- 2) To find out the reasons behind low literacy rate.
- 3) To identify the parental aspiration for their children’s education.
- 4) To assess the constraints or impediments in the process of acquiring education.
- 5) To compare their educational status with the Nepalese residing in Totopara.

1.4 Rationale of The Study

The Toto is a rare community which is found only in Totopara. The literacy rate of Totos was 58.05% in 2011 census lower to that of West Bengal 76.26%. The rate of female literacy is even low to that of males. As education is the main tool for the upliftment of any community it is very important to focus on the educational aspect of any community to see its advancement and success. With this view a field survey is undertaken to know the educational status of the Toto tribe and to know about constrains faced by them if any.

A lot of work has been done to know about the Totos like their socio-economic status, education, their history, origin etc. The earlier works have mentioned the low socio-economic status and low educational level but they have not given us an in depth knowledge as to why is this happening. There is no much literature pertaining to the reasons for the low educational status of the Toto tribe. An in depth study as to know about the literacy rate among them, if any disparity present why is there, reasons for illiteracy are to be know in detail. Reasons are to be found of the problems of the people rather than just stating the position. A study to find out the reasons behind the low literacy rate and their educational status is being carried on in this study.

1.5 Methodology-

Research Methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify select, process and analyze information about the study. It is a systematic plan of conducting research. Methodology allows us to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

1.5.1 Population

For the purpose of my study, Totopara a village in the Madarihat block of Alipurduar District of west Bengal was chosen. The purposive sampling method was adopted. The sample of 60 households, 30 Toto tribe and 30 Nepalese people residing in Totopara was chosen. As the village is divided into six hamlets 5 Toto and 5 Nepali household were chosen accordingly, a total of 10 household from each hamlet was taken.

1.5.2 Research Design

A research design is a plan or a framework of methods and techniques chosen by the researcher for collection and analysis of data in such a way that it answers the research questions. It shows a way as to how to conduct a research following what methodology. A research question is assessed through the research methods planned in the research design.

1.5.3. Method of Data Collection

Methodology implies the method tools and technique used to collect data of field work. In this study both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used. Thus I have used the following methods of data collection:

1.5.3.1. Primary Data

Primary data is the data which is collected for the first time and is the first hand information. It is original in character. Under it I have used the following methods.

- Rapport Establishment- I went to Totopara village and talked with the people there residing in Totopara to develop a rapport with research participants. I met some people and the Panchayat head then introduced myself and told him about my field work. Then I started going door to door and introduced myself. I also notified the people that I was going to visit their place for about 10 days and prepare a dissertation from the collected general information of the area and the people.
- Household Census- A “Household” is usually a group of people who normally live in a house together and take their meal from a common kitchen unless the exigencies of work prevent any of them from doing so. There may be one member household, two member household or multi member household and a census is a procedure of systematically acquiring and recording information about the members of a given population. I spent 8 days to collect household census I took the help of villagers and I interviewed 60 household.
- Questionnaire-A questionnaire is a set of structured set of questions, the answers to which may be closed ended or open ended which is to be provided personally by the respondents. With the help of questionnaire 60 households were questioned for my topic analysis. The questionnaire was mostly open ended and some were close ended questions.
- Interview-In the interview method the researcher follows an oral verbal response. In this context, I went door to door and took interviews of the respondents who helped me in filling the interview schedule.
- Observation-The observation method is the most commonly used method especially in the studies relating to behavioral

science. It implies the use of eyes rather than of ears and voice. It is watching other people's behaviour as it actually happens without controlling it. I observed the Totos and the Nepali people residing in Totopara during my field work. I have observed the everyday life struggles of the Totos and their socio economic conditions.

- Stratified random sampling- Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller sub-groups known as strata. Random samples are then collected from each stratum. In my study I have divided the study area into six different hamlets present inside the village and then collected random households that come under those strata.
- Case study-Case study is a method of qualitative analysis which involve a careful and complete observation of a social unit, be that a person, a family, an institution etc. It emphasizes on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions. Therefore in this dissertation I have done three case studies to understand my people and their perspective more in detail.

1.5.3.2. Secondary Data

The secondary data is the data that is collect through secondary means such as through books and journals. I have collected secondary data through books, journals, newspapers, articles and internet .Secondary data are basically second handed data or information which is given by other people who has studied that area.

1.5.4. Data Interpretation and Tabulation Methods

This field study has been carried out on the educational status of the Toto tribes. The entire primary methods of study are based on the data which is collected through field survey. For this purpose I have collected 60 households of Toto and Nepali 30 each. The collected data is tabulated and analysed with graphical representation through maps, tables and diagrams which were incorporated to represent the findings by using computers as well as manually.

1.5.4.1 Coding of Data- Coding is a process where the data from both the qualitative and quantitative sources are categorized and analysed. The data derived from the interview schedule is decoded and made simple to understand and evaluate.

1.5.4.2. Tabulation of Data-The process of classifying data into tabular form i.e., in the form of tables is known as tabulation. In this study for the process of interpreting data in a simpler form I have used the tabulation process. I have used simple, double and complex tabulation method in the study.

1.6 Chapterization

In my dissertation there are six chapters which consist of the following, the first chapter deals with the introduction of my topic, research problem, objectives and the methodology used for my study of research. The second chapter consists of all the critically reviewed related literature and concepts of the study. The third chapter consists of a brief history, origin and the socio-economic status of the Toto tribe. Chapter four looks into the educational status of the Toto tribes in detail. Primary, Secondary

and higher educational level are categorized and their status is given. The perspective of students, parents and teachers in terms of the educational status is looked into. The reasons of enrollment, dropout rates and absenteeism are seen here. The fifth chapter deals with the comparison of the educational Status of the Toto Tribe with the Nepalese residing in Totopara are present. A brief history of the Nepalese people who reside in Totopara is given. The sixth chapter consists of the evaluation of the study and the limitations faced on conducting the study. It also looks into the possible measures which could be adopted in order to raise the educational status of the Toto tribe

CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

A review of literature consists of all the previous research works done under the research area which is being studied by the researcher. A review of literature surveys articles, books, journals, magazines and any other thing which is relevant for the study. It also acknowledges the work that they have done in that area. A literature review gives the researcher an idea as to what developments and things that have been done in that area and what more can be done in that particular field. The literature review is done keeping in mind the research objectives and issues undertaken for study.

2.2 Concept of Tribe and Primitive Tribal Groups

Ashim Kumar Adhikary (2009) in his book “The tribal situation in India Structure, Change and continuity” where he has stated about the concept of ‘primitive’ and ‘primitive tribal groups’. He says that Primitive tribal group was introduced looking into the backwardness of the tribe in India. Some of the tribes were given the status of ‘Primitive tribal groups’ looking into the backwardness, illiteracy, small in number and marginal position than the other tribes. They were more vulnerable and prone to extinction than the other tribes.

Tribal development department of West Bengal- ‘Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to Scheduled tribes as those communities, who are scheduled in accordance with Article 345 of the constitution. This Article says that only those

communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification will be considered to be scheduled Tribes. According as per the Constitution Order, 195040 Ethnic groups has so far been notified as Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal. Among these tribes, **Toto**, **Birhors** and **Lodha** have been notified as **PVTGs (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group)** in Terms if backwardness in different development indicators. Earlier they were termed as **PTGs (Primitive tribal Groups).**'

G.S Ghurye (1980) in his book the “The Scheduled tribes of India” has stated the problems of the aborigines of India. He has given a large number of facts which states the position of the aborigines and has said that how their position increased with the assimilation of other groups of people.

B.P Chourasia (1990) in his book “Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes in India” analyses the historical and geographical areas of tribal residence. He studies the various tribals of all the areas of the country in terms of geographical areas. He analyses the tribal cultural aspect in understanding the spread of tribals in various regions.

2.3 Socio-Ecomonic Life and History of Totos

Charu Chandra Sanyal (1973) in his famous book “The Meches and the Totos of North Bengal” is one of the most important and first brief book about the Toto tribes of North Bengal. Here he has clearly stated the socio-economic life of the tribe. He has given a brief account about the Meches and Toto tribes lives. In this book he gives us the idea about the different customs, religious activities, family, demographic profile,

language and demographic profile of the tribes. No such comprehensive work on the two tribes was done earlier by anthropologists. His work is very much useful for the later researchers who want to study the tribes.

Bimalendu Majumdar (2013) in his book “A sociological study of the Toto Folk Tales” gives us a brief background about the Toto tribe. He informs us about the lifecycle of the Toto tribe, their folk literature and folk tales. He has written about the diminishing Toto language which is now being preserved. This is the first book which states about the folk culture of the Toto tribe in detail. He has given 24 Toto folk tales and 5 other folk tales in Toto language. He has done an intensive study on the Toto folk tales.

Antara Dhargupta, A. Goswami, Minati Sen and D. Mazumder (2009) in their article “Study on the effect of Socio-economic Parameters on Health Status of the Toto, Santal, Sabar and Lodha Tribes of West Bengal, India” have given the reason that low income, large size of family, education and occupation were the significant factors that affected the health status of the tribes of West Bengal.

Jayanta Das (2011) in his article ‘Factors influencing the socio-economic status of Toto tribe in Madarihat block’ has given a brief idea and factors responsible directly or indirectly for the socio-economic backwardness of the Toto tribe.

Dripta Pipali (2017) in her article entitled “On the identity of Toto community: An Anthro-linguistic investigation” gives

us an account of the history and language by analyzing some of the oral narratives that are practiced in the tribal community.

Subhasis De and Kanchan Dutta (2014) their article named “Multidimensional poverty index of Totos-The smallest and primitive tribe” where they have measured the multidimensional poverty index of Toto community where poverty is measured in human poverty index (HPI). They found that the life expectancy of the Toto tribe is below the national average and the population is multi-dimensionally poor.

Arindom Biswas in his article “A socio-economic and demographic scenario of the endangered Toto tribe” where he has analysed the socio-economic lifestyle, religious customs and changing demographic patterns. He finds out that the population count of Totos is very low and they are now slowly engaging in new socio-economic environment. Initiatives are been taken by the government and non-governmental organization to uplift their socio-economic status.

Md. Intekhab hossain and Syed Moinuddin(2015) their article “Life-cycle of the Totos: A small tribe in the Sub-Himalayan West Bengal” gives a brief account of the life cycle rituals of the Totos. They have discussed three stages the birth, marriage and death rites of the Totos. The traditional ways of thinking and doing these rituals are diminishing due to the influence of the external forces like urbanisation and industrialization.

Anandita Dawn’s (2014) article “A peep into the lifestyle of the endangered Toto tribe” identifies Toto tribe as one of the

endangered tribe of West Bengal with low population growth and distinct socio-economic characters. She has given the socio-economic lifestyle of the Toto tribe.

Pallavi Sengupta's (2015) article "Capsulation of the global fitness status and body composition of the young Toto women: the smallest tribal community of India" here she has investigated the fitness and malnutrition among the Toto women where she found out that three quarters of Toto women are underweight this shows their status of fitness, work load and economic wellbeing.

Debarshi Ghosh and Dr. Snehasish Saha's (2017) article "Transformations of traditional livelihood and economic composition of population: A case study of Totopara village (west Bengal)" here they have analyzed the social transformation which is happening in Totopara. The Totos have their traditional ways of lifestyle which is now getting transformed and is compelling them to deviate from their traditional heritage. Most of the Toto tribes are now dependent on non-traditional works rather than their earlier traditional works of cultivation, orchard farming and livestock.

A.B. Ghosh, G. Banerjee and D. Biswas (2004) in their article "Psychiatric Morbidity in a Sub-Himalayan tribal community: An epidemiological study" states that they conducted a study on 1,021 Totos to find the level of psychiatric morbidity within the community. The result was 50 per thousand of the Toto people were psychiatrically morbid. Most of the population suffered from depression.

Md. Ziaul Hoque and Md Kowsar Ansar (2015) in their article “Socio-cultural and economic distinctiveness and transformation of Toto tribe” analyses the transformation which is slowly happening in the Toto community with the influence from Nepalese and Bengalis residing in Totopara. They have analysed the changes among the Totos in terms of the house structures, the dressing styles and their way of life. The main factor for change is also due to the influence of modern technology which is growing rampantly even in these remote areas.

B.K. Roy Barman (1962) in his book “A brief statement on the socio-economic situation in Totopara” has given the situation prevalent in that area. The socio-economic life of the Toto people is very much dependent on their agriculture and farming and how they are also going those transformations. He gives a background of the economic life of the Totos in detail.

2.4 Study of Educational Status of the Tribals

Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (1992) in his book “Tribal Transformation in India volume IV education and literacy programs” points out the literacy and education in tribal society taking into account various tribes of India, their development strategy, formal educational status and the problems faced by tribals in the path towards education. He has clearly given us the idea about the status of tribal education in India through various surveys done by different scholars in the different parts of the country.

Sumansh Dutta’s book (2008) “Household Fertility Behaviour and Children’s schooling amongst tribals” points out

that there is a high impact of household fertility behaviour on the children's schooling. He has done his research on the tribes of Tripura. It shows that the household which has higher income level is positively drawn towards sending their children to schools. Mothers who are employed or if any parent is working in the government sector it has a great impact on the demands of children's schooling.

Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (1990) in his book "tribal development in India: Problems and prospects" in chapter 32 he has clearly stated the various constraints faced by the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes in terms of education. He has given ecological, socio-economic and psychological constraints faced by the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.

Dr.V.Rajam and Malarvizhi (2011) in their article "A study on educational status of tribal children in the Nilgiris district" has written about the survey which they conducted among the tribals of Nilgiris in two blocks. They wanted to find out the formal level of educational achievement among the tribals, parental objectives and problems faced by them. They conducted a huge survey taking 600 respondents. We see that the educational level of the various tribes found in Niligiri is very low only few numbers of tribes have qualified graduation and fewer have done post graduation. Maximum numbers of respondents were studying for employment and the parent's motive to educate children was mostly for white collar jobs.

R. Balamurali Krishna and Dr.N. Prathiba (2016) in their article named "Assessment of socio-Educational Status of Irula tribe school in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu" has given the status of

Irula tribe middle adolescent school students of two hilly regions which are most backward. Their findings reveal that majority of the students find their schools as 'average' because of poor infrastructure facilities, no sports exposure, lack of cleanliness and no career guidance is there.

G. Anbuselvi, P. John Leeson (2015) their article "Education of Tribal Children in India a case study" states that the literacy rate of Scheduled tribes is generally below the literacy rate of the whole country. They have focused on the problems faced by the tribes in education and have conducted a survey on the 12 tribal groups in Ikuddi district of Kerala. They have given several factors which effect tribal education and the motivating factor for them is better jobs. The main reason for absenteeism is lack of transportation.

Sujit Sarkar (2015) in his article "The socio-economic and education of the Toto community with special reference to Madarihat Bock in the district of Alipurduar in West Bengal" here he has showed the socio-economic status of the Totos through variables like sex, family, occupation, income, language, religion etc. and education through rate of literacy and quality of education received by the tribals.

Vinoba Gautam (2003) in his report "education of tribal children in India and the issue of medium of instruction" through a programme called 'Janshala' focused on the education of the reserved category in India. The programme was implemented in the nine states where Janshala programme was adopted. The records collected from this programme showed a high dropout rate among the tribal children. The major reason for dropout rate

was the use of regional language in the schools which the tribals were unable to understand and also the medium of instruction was in regional language which made the tribals hard to understand. The other problem which came out was the appointment of non-tribal teachers in government schools with a majority of tribal students.

Singh and Ohiri (1993) in their research on the “the status of tribal women in India” says that as a result of modernization and other changes in the society the educational level of some of the tribes has been increased. But a lot of research and surveys need to be done on tribal education and especially on the women tribals for initiating new educational programmes for them.

2.5 Development Programmes for Tribals

N. Dutta Majumdar (1995) in his book “The tribal Problem” shows the various tribal problems present among the tribes. He examines the various programmes made by the government for the upliftment of the tribals. He analysed the policies and programmes made by the government for the tribals and their implementation. He point out that the policies framed by the government and the gap between its implementation among the tribes is also a great problem faced by the tribals.

Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (1990) in his book “Tribal Development in India: Problems and Prospects” gives up a compressive idea about the various tribal development approaches in India, there are various welfare schemes, Plans formed by the government but many a times its not been possible to implement in all the areas where tribals live. It is seen that the tribals who are large in number are in a better position to attain

the programmes of the government as they have a higher status than the tribals who are low in number.

Conclusion

The review of literature is done dividing the various aspects of the study being conducted, the concept and primitive vulnerable tribal groups, the socio-economic status and origin of Totos, the educational status of the tribals in India and the development programmes of the tribals. After going through all the literature done in the context of the study it is seen that there is a lot of literature stating the low socio-economic and the educational status of the various tribals in India but no concrete reason is given as to the low status of the tribals. There are various plans, policies and programmes framed by the government but its implication is rarely seen taking the entire tribal group.

CHAPTER-III

ORIGIN AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE TOTO TRIBE

3.1. Introduction

A small sub-Himalayan mongoloid tribal group who is present only in one particular area called Totopara is the Toto tribe. The village of Totopara comes under the jurisdiction of Madarihat police station in Alipurduar district of West Bengal. The village is situated on the Indo-Bhutan border. It is covered by rivers and forests on all sides but at the present almost half of the Totopara area is inhabited by the Nepali community who migrated there with their families. As a result there is often a dispute of land among the two communities. Today Totopara is influenced from external influence. The non-Totos have outnumbered the Totos but still they have been able to preserve their socio-economic features to some extent.

3.2 Origin of Toto Tribe

There are several mythologies as to the origin of Totos. The first such instance where the tribe Toto was mentioned was by a British Government employee, Rangpur collector ate Babu Krishna Bose in 1815. It was during his journey to Duars that he identified a small population called Toto at a village called Lukepur under Falakata Tahasil in western Duars.

There are various works done by Anthropologists and sociologists to know about the origin of the Totos. During 1880-94 Settlement officer D. Sunder surveyed western Duars. Here he has written that the Totos were unable to say when they came but

said that they were residing in Totopara since generations. After independence a census work of A. Mitra (1951) he wrote that “a very rare race lives in only one village in the wide world has a spoken language of its own”. During that time there was only 325 members. He also said that the Totos claimed Totopara as their ancestral home, at that time they had a tradition of migrating from place to place.

In search of the origin of Totopara it has been said that the place was under the domain of Bhutan kingdom, Krishna Kanta Bose has reported in 1815 that when he arrived at Poonakha in Bhutan he got to know that the place was once ruled by the Raja of Cooch Behar. Dhurun Raj of Bhutan had defeated the Cooch Behar king that created a mixture between Bhutanese and Cooch population. Their descendants were called ‘Thep’ the son of a Bhutia and Cooch.

The Totos do not know their origin of migration. Toto researcher Charu Chandra Sanyal was trying to discover the similarities of the Sub-Himalayan tribe Totos and the Bhutanese. He was of view that the Totos might be a mixture of them. Michael Aris in his book on Bhutan has written about a small group of similar people who live in west Bhutan. They are known as Tak-Top. He says the Totos might have ancestral link with the Bhutanese tribe Taktop (Majumdar, 1993)

After in depth study Roy Burman opined that the Toto settlement commenced approximately 18th century. According historical record Bhutia domination established adjacent to Totopara during that time. Before Bhutia domination the area was under the Cooch Behar raja. According to Bimalendu Majumdar,

famous Toto researcher Totos might have ancestral link with the Bhutanese tribe 'Doya' as both the tribes have similarities on the way of living, dress pattern, physical features. From the writings of Bimalendu Majumdar we come to know that the people of Cooch Behar also used to lead a nomadic life earlier. During that time Totos never used to cultivate land, they used to practice jhoom cultivation and hunting. Barter system was prevalent during that time.

It is said that one day the Totos set out to hunt and they killed a Sambar. They ate half and kept the head of the Sambar for the next day. But in the morning the head of Sambar was replaced by the head of cow. Since cow offering was restricted in Cooch Behar it is said that the Tots were fled from there. Then they took shelter in Bhutan but here again the Bhutias used to take them as slaves. Then one day 17 Totos managed to escape from Bhutan among them 13 survived alive after war. According to the name of the 13 Totos 13 clans were introduced in Toto society. They escaped and started to live in Totopara.

3.3 Geographical Location of the village Totopara

The geographical area of the village is 1991.59 acres. The village is located under Madarihat police station of Alipurduar district in West Bengal. The shape of the village is trapezoid with tapering ends. The village is bounded in the north by the Tading hills, on the south and west lays the river Hour-kungning-tee and Titi forest. On the east the village bounded by the river Torsha.

The total village is sub-divided into six goans:

1. Panchayat Goan
2. Mandal Goan
3. Subba Goan
4. Mitra Goan
5. Puja Goan
6. Dumchi Goan

Fig. 3.1 Map of Alipurduar district

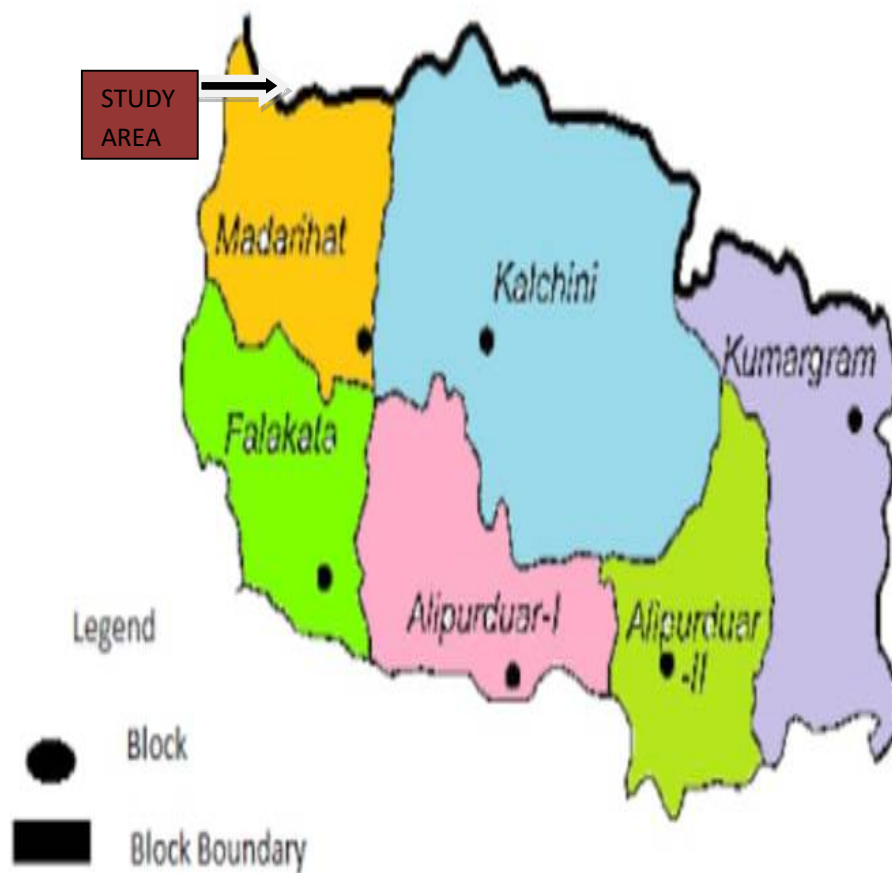


Fig. 3.2 Map of Madarihat Block

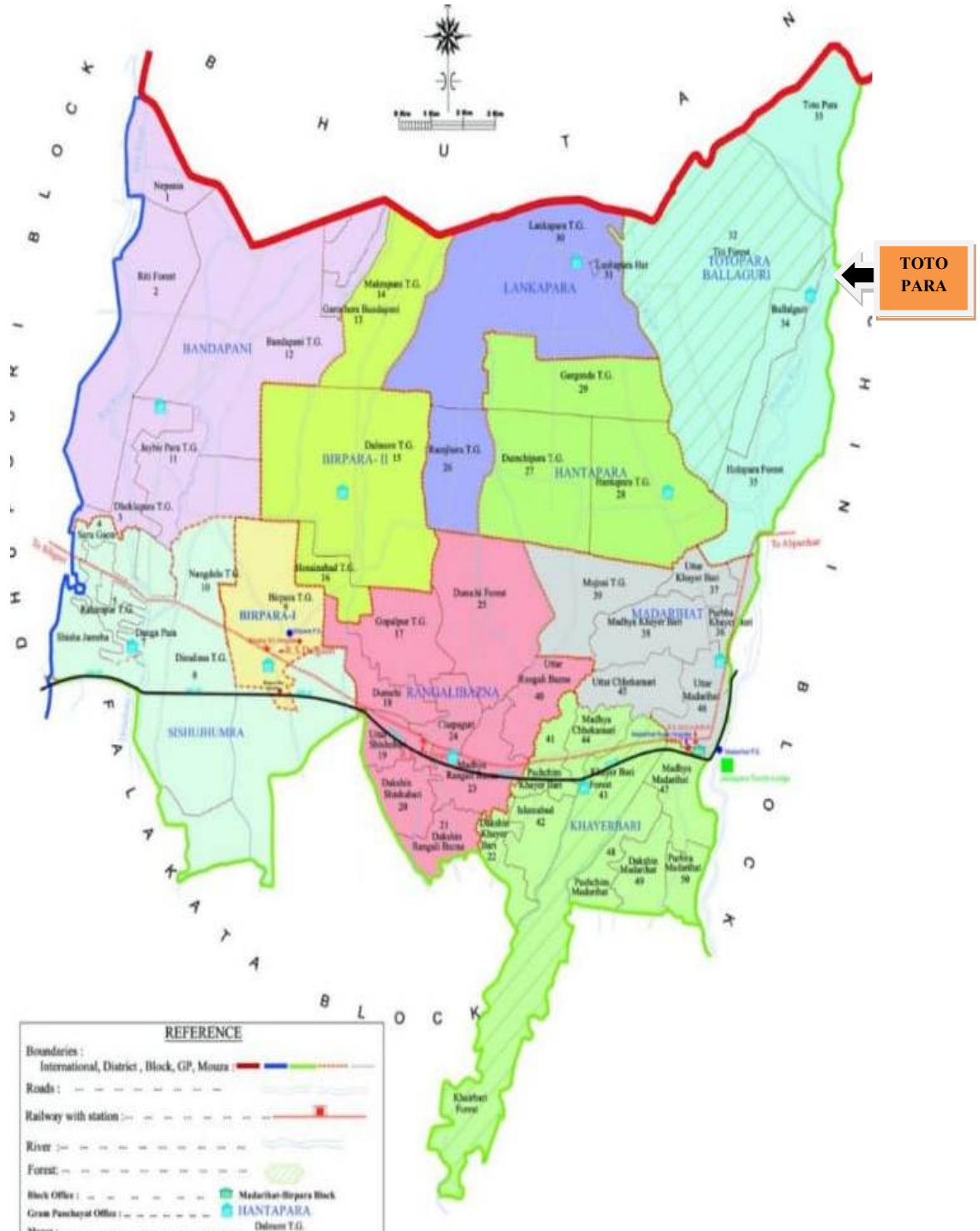
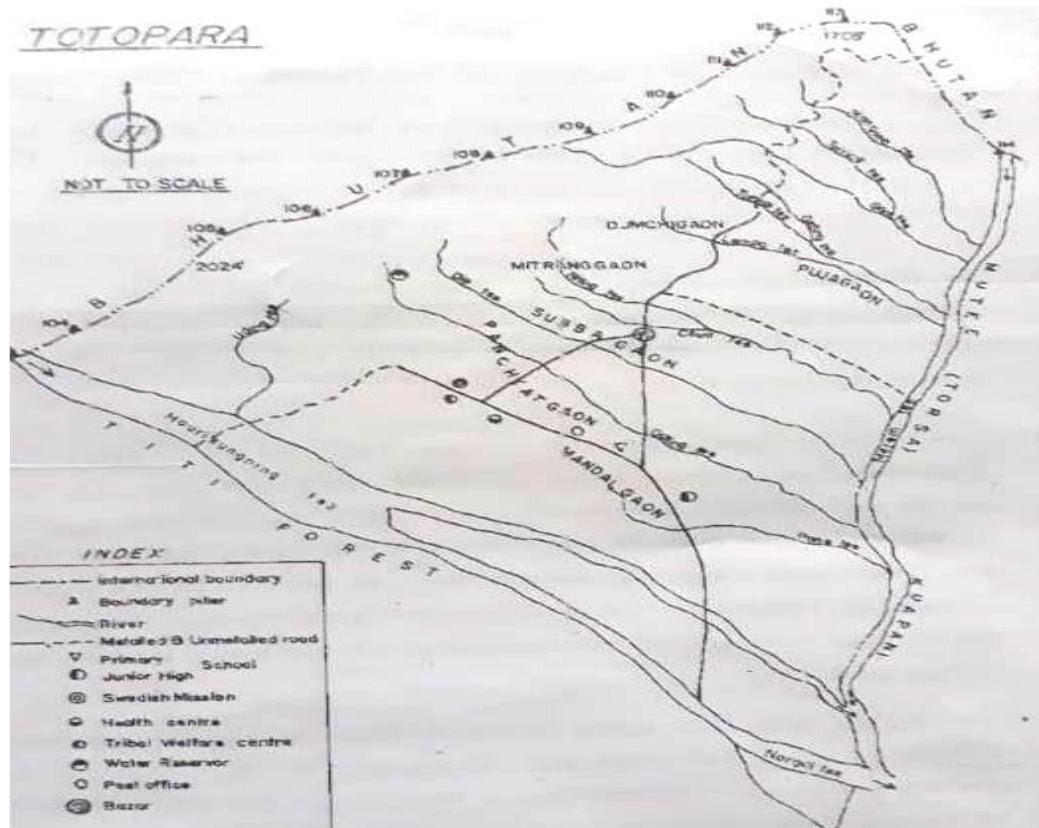


Fig. 3.3 Map of Totopara



3.4 Socio-Economic Status of the Toto Tribe

The socio-economic status of any community helps us to understand the society in a much better way. The socio-economic status shows what types of culture, religion, household, occupation, economic condition, marital status, age group and population composition the society constitutes of.

3.4.1. Socio-cultural Status of the Toto tribe

The socio-cultural status of the Toto tribe means the socio cultural factors present in the society which helps us to determine the status of that particular society. In this regard population,

sex, age, family type, marital status, religion, house type, language, health and education of the society helps us to determine the socio-cultural status of the Toto tribe.

Population composition in Table 1 shows a very distinct rise of population of Totos and the other communities which comprises of Bihari, Bengali and especially the Nepali community. The population of Totos is seen to be constant during 1952, 1953 and 1956. The population of Nepali community is seen to rise at rapid scale far more rapidly than the other communities. We can see that on 1952 and 1953 only Toto and Nepali community were present in Totopara.

Table 3.1: Population composition of Totopara

YEAR	TOTO	NEPALI	OTHERS	TOTAL
1952	383	191	-	574
1953	322	228	-	550
1956	322	310	6	638
1969	482	658	16	1156
1972	560	690	37	1287
1979	675	717	91	1483
1984	776	850	113	1739
1991	904	1153	117	2174

Source: Census Reports and A. Mitra Census Operation

The members of any species of living things are divided into two or more categories called sexes. The male female sex composition in Totopara as seen in Table 3.2 depicts how in 1901 the females were greater in number than the males. In 1911 and 1921 how the sex ratio was almost same.

Table 3. 2: Population Statistics of Toto tribes

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL POPULATION	SEX RATION(female /1000 male)	DECADAL GROWTH RATE(%)
1901	72	99	171	1375	Initial year
1911	125	110	235	880	37.42
1921	140	131	271	936	15.31
1931	130	204	334	1569	23.25
1941	159	162	321	1019	3.89(negative)
1961	206	189	395	917	91.90
1981	362	350	712	967	23.05
2001	620	575	1195	927	67.84
2011	737	650	1387	882	16.07

Source: District census Handbooks and das, 2011

Age refers to the number of years the person has lived since birth. Age is an important factor which helps to determine the status of society. In Totopara the majority of the people belong to the age group of 15 to 65 years. Their average life span is 65 years

The type of family present in Totopara is usually nuclear. The average number of family members in Toto community is 4-5 which consists of more than 50% of the population. Nuclear family is present in the community where the sons of the family have established their own house individually. It is seen that the poorer the family the more nuclear the family type as it is not possible for the family to live together when there source of income is very less.

The traditional houses of Toto tribe are made of bamboo which is about six feet above the ground. All the materials for house construction are found in the nearby forest. The roofs are

made with layers of thatched grass. The houses of the Totos also tell us about their economic status. The houses are now being influenced by the modern technology. They are getting amenities from the government to construct houses.

Fig. 3.4 A pakka house constructed by Government for the Toto tribe



Fig 3.5 A traditional Toto House made from Bamboo and Wood



Fig 3.6 The traditional Toto House are usually constructed 6 feet above the ground



There is both polygamy and monogamy prevalent among the Toto community. If a wife dies the husband marries the younger sister of the deceased wife, but a women cannot marry her husband's brother. On the death of the spouse the husband or wife must remain single for one year. The marital status of Totos shows the position of female members of the tribe. The marriage of any Toto person takes place only when the girl is to conceive a child.

Fig.3.7. Marriage reception of Toto, Where everyone id drinking “Iu”



The Toto tribes have their own language but they do not have a written script as such but they are in the process of making the script. The UNESCO stated the Toto language as highly endangered and that it should be protected. Hodgson and Grierson said, the 'Toto language belongs to Tibeto-Burman family of sub-Himalayan group'. At present most of the Toto people speak Bengali and Nepali as that is the medium of instruction at schools there. It is only among them that they speak Toto language with others they communicate with Bengali and Nepali.

The Toto tribe claim themselves as Hindu but they worship two Gods-*Ishap* and *Chemia*. *Ishap* is the male God and *Cheima* is the female God. Toto community worships these Gods and Goddess for health and prosperity. A few of the Totos have converted themselves to Christianity. (Sujit Sarkar, 2015)

There is a primary health center in Totopara and an ambulance is always kept there in case of any emergency. The main health issues faced by the Toto community are dysentery, head ach, ulcers, malaria, and diarrhea.etc. The medical officer in Totopara states that most of the cause of illness among Toto people is malnutrition and unhygienic conditions in the areas. Still there are other reasons like the practice of endogamy within the own clan lead the Toto people to suffer from thalassemia. But now there is less occurrences of such disease due to the practice of exogamy and also because of the modern medicines have been able to reach them.

Fig. 3.8 Health center of Totopara



The literacy level among Toto tribe is very low. The level of male literacy is slightly higher than the female. There is a high drop-out rate among the students. There are altogether five schools comprising both primary and higher secondary. I will be dealing with education in detail in the following next chapters.

3.4.2 Economic status of the Toto tribe

The economic status of the any community tells us about the progress and development. If a society is economically strong then education, health, lifestyle of that community will be better. The economic status of Toto tribes will determine the stability and progression of that society.

The predominant occupation of the Toto community is agriculture and rearing of livestock. Totos usually work as day

laborers and porters carrying oranges from Bhutan to the local market in North Bengal. Usually the teenaged children also go for such kind of works. The Totos have their own land away from their homes on which they cultivate. Only a few Totos are engaged in white collar jobs as bank clerks, managers, teachers, contractor, etc.

Since the economy of the Totos is heavily dependent upon agriculture their income is not stable and as they do not employ any new modern means of technology they do not have good agricultural produce which leads them to poor economic status.

Conclusion

The origin of the Toto tribe is still difficult to trace as to exactly from where did they originate. The village Totopara is where the Toto tribes reside now and the area is bounded by forests and rivers. The village is divided into six hamlets which are inhabited by the Totos and the people from other communities as well. The socio-economic status of the Toto tribe is backward. Their main source of occupation is agriculture but still there is no use of advanced methods to yield production in the fields. They have their own language which is now on the verge of extinction. Their population count is slightly increasing though still it is only 1387 in census of 2011. They follow Hinduism but they also worship their own Gods as well. The literacy level is very low. The socio-economic status of the Toto tribe needs to be uplifted by the government taking into consideration that they are the Particularly Vulnerable tribal groups of West Bengal.

CHAPTER-IV

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TOTO TRIBE

4.1. Introduction

In West Bengal the tribal population is 52, 96,963 as per the census 2011, which is about 5.8% of the total population of the state. The literacy rate of Scheduled Tribe in West Bengal is 57.90%. There is a huge disparity of the educational level between the tribals and non- tribals and also among tribes themselves. The level of education is often viewed as an indicator of the progress of any community. This is true for all societies. Among the 40 Scheduled tribes of West Bengal Toto, Birhor and Lodha are given the status of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups as it is seen that they are more backward then the other tribes. Among the PVTGs here the Toto tribe is studied in detail. Education is the backbone of any society, the literacy rate of any community is taken as an indicator for changing the backwardness of a community. The literacy rate of Totos is studied in detail in this chapter.

4.2 Educational Profile of Toto Tribe

The Toto tribe is found in Totopara in Alipurduar District. Its geographical location is very isolated and remote away from the main stream population. Totos are backward in education and employment. But the literacy rate of the tribe is very low. The illiteracy rate is 39.39% of the whole tribe. The male illiteracy rate is 15.05% and of female is 20.35%. In the higher education there are very few only 0.88% among males and 1.77% of females

who are pursuing or have qualified H.S. Only 4.42% of males are enrolled in or have qualified graduation.

Table 4.1: The overall educational Status of Totos

VI LL AG E	ILLITER ATE		K.G/ L.K. G		L.P (I-V)		U.P (VI- VIII)		SEC (IX-X)		H.S (XI- XII)		U.G B.A/ BSc		P.G M.A/ MSc		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
Mit ra Go an	2	5	1	-	1	3	3	1	5	2	-	-	4	-	-	-	16	11	27
Pan cha yat Go an	3	6	1	-	1		1	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	16
Puj a Go an	3	5	-	-	2	2	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	8	18
Mo nda l Go an	3	3	-	-	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	11	8	19
Du mc hi Go an	1	2	-	-	3	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	7	16
Su bba Go an	3	3	-	-		5	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	8	17
tota l	17(15. 05)	23(20. 35)	2(1. 77)	-	9(7. 96)	17(15. 04)	21(18. 58)	3(2. 65)	9(7. 96)	4(3. 53)	1(0. 88)	2(1. 77)	5(4. 42)	-	-	-	63(55. 75)	50(44. 24)	11 3 (1 00)

																				%
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Table 4.2 shows the current students who are pursuing education and the drop out. It is seen that 26.54% of Totos are currently pursuing education and 36.28% are dropouts. Only 0.88% is graduate and 32.74% are illiterate. These figures show that the educational status of the Totos is very low. There are a lot of reasons for dropout like low economic status, no interest on studying; they had to work on the fields.

Table 4.2 The current students pursuing education and the drop outs in Totopara

CLASS	K.G.	1-5	6-8	9-10	11-12	U.G
DROP OUTS	-	20	11	7	3	1
PERCENTAGE	-	17.69%	9.73%	6.19%	2.65%	0.88%
CURRENTLY PURSUING EDUCATION	2	6	12	6	-	3
PERCENTAGE	1.76%	5.3%	10.61%	5.3%	-	2.65%
TOTAL	2	26	24	13	3	4

4.2.1 Primary Level of Education

The primary level of education is much better than the higher educational levels. In any society the children will go to school only if there is an institution nearby in the areas. The primary level of education in Totopara is rising as among the five schools present in the area four are Primary Schools. These primary schools have classes from pre-primary to class four. The need to open more schools is now felt among the people though

most of the Toto people are first generation learners. Few of the Totos are now even enrolling their children in English medium schools.

A lot of NGOs come in Totopara and initiate to open schools. One such school is The Chittranjan School which was established in 2014 with the help of an Ngo. There are a total of 77 students among which there are 48 Toto students as shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Enrollment of Students in Chittranjan School

Class	Toto students	Other students	Total
Nursery	11	10	21
L.K.G	10	3	13
U.KG	11	8	19
Class I	5	3	8
Class II	3	1	4
Class III	5	2	7
Class IV	3	3	6
Total	48	30	78

Source: Principal Chittranjan School

Fig 4.1 Chittranjan School



One primary government school is Totopara Primary School which has classes from class pre-primary to class four. In this school the 84% of the students enrolled are Totos. There are 33.07% males and 31.53% females Toto students.

Table 4.4: Enrollment of Students in Totopara Primary School

Class	Toto students		Other students		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Pre-primary	9	11	3	7	30(23.07)
Class I	4	7	2	6	19(14.61)
Class II	11	8	6	6	31(23.84)
Class III	4	16	4	3	27(20.76)
Class IV	15	9	5	4	33(25.38)
Total	43(33.07)	41(31.53)	20(15.38)	26(20)	130(100)%

Source: Totopara Primary school

Fig 4.2 Totopara Primary School



The third school is the Brooklyn Mission School established by the Swedish Missionaries. This school is from primary to class five. The total number of students in this school is 42 comprising both Toto and non-Toto students. The fourth primary school present in Totopara is the Poargoan Primary school which has a total of 59 students. The Principal of this school is Suchana Toto who runs the school.

Fig 4.3 Brooklyn Mission School



Fig 4.4 Poargoan Primary School



4.2.2 Secondary Level of Education

The Secondary level of Education among the Totos can be clearly seen in Table 4.1 of the chapter. In the Upper Primary Level (class 6-8) we see that only 21.23% of Totos are enrolled or have studied and in the Secondary Level (class 9-10) only 10% of the Totos are enrolled or have studied. There is only one school in Totopara which is a high school Dhanapati Toto Memorial High School and has classes from five to ten. There is no other educational facility for the students even if they want to study higher education other than the Dhanapati High School, which is a Bengali medium school.

Table 4.5: Enrollment of Toto Students in Dhanapati High School for the year 2018

Class	Toto students		Total
	Male	Female	
V	22	17	39
VI	17	15	32
VII	19	16	35
VIII	22	15	37
IX	24	17	41
X	8	23	31
Total	112	103	215

Source: Dhanapati Toto Memorial High school

Table 4.6: Enrollment of Toto Students in Dhanapati High School for the year 2017

Class	Totos		Total
	Male	Female	
V	17	17	34
VI	18	18	36
VII	21	19	40
VIII	23	18	41
IX	9	17	26
X	11	9	20
Total	99	98	107

Source: Dhanapati Toto Memorial High School

Table 4.4 and 4.5 shows the enrollment of Toto students for the year 2018 and 2017 respectively in Dhanapati High School. There is a sharp rise in the enrollment of students between the year 2017 and 2018. In the year 2017 the numbers of enrolled students were 107 and in the year 2018 it was 215. There was almost double the increase of 108 students in 2018. This shows that there is an increase in the awareness among the Toto people the need for education and its importance in today's world.

Fig 4.5 Dhanapati High School



4.2.3 Higher Educational Level

The higher education level is very low among the Toto tribe. If we see table 4.1 it shows that 0.88% of males and 1.77% of females have completed or are studying in the higher secondary. The under graduation level is the lowest among all. Only 4.42% of males are undergoing graduation or are graduated. This clearly shows the level of higher education is very poor among the Toto tribes. This is also due to the lack of educational institutions in the area. There is no college or higher secondary school in Totopara all the students who want to pursue education have to go to Madarihat, Alipurduar or other places. Thus this is not possible for the Totos whose economic background is not strong. While collecting data I came across parents who were sending their children to study in Madarihat, Alipurduar and other places as those places have good facilities for students. As sending children to other places need a lot of money and the main source of income for Toto tribe is the agriculture which cannot guarantee stable income.

4.3 Reasons behind Low Literacy Rate

There are many reasons as to low literacy rate among the Totos. Some of the major reasons found during the survey are as follows:

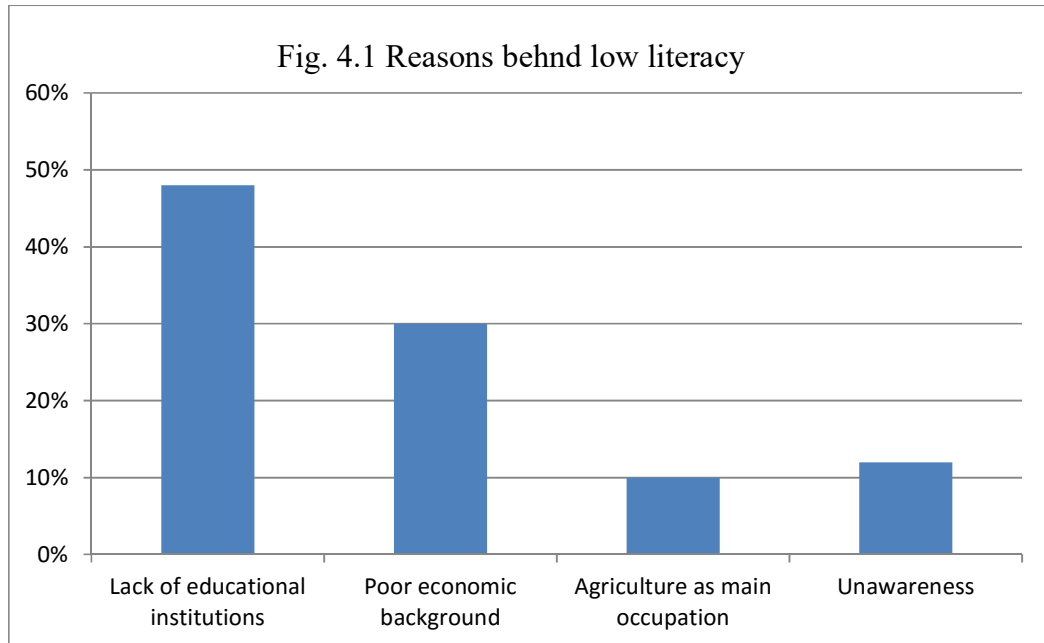
Lack of educational institutions- Lack of educational institutions is one of the main reasons for the low literacy rate among the Totos. 48% of the Totos feel that lack of educational institutions is the reason why they have so low literacy rate. There is no higher secondary school in the village. If they want to pursue they need to go to other places like Madarihat and Alipurduar which is not possible for everyone. There is only one secondary school which is not sufficient to cater needs of the students.

Poor economic conditions- The main occupation of Totos is agriculture and farming and they do not use any modern means of

farming, as such there is no good yield and income. There is no stable economic condition in the family. In such situation they will they send their children to study to other places for higher education The money they are earning is barely sufficient to feed themselves. Even if the children want to study further it is not possible for their parents to send them. 30% of the Toto people feel poor economic conditions has led them to illiteracy.

Main occupation is agriculture- The main occupation of the Toto tribe is agriculture so they try to imbibe their children also to do farming as they feel that it is the only means for them to survive. They feel if they work they can survive at least with what they grow on fields then .10% of the Toto people think that as their main occupation is agriculture they should do so instead of studying.

Lake of awareness- 12% of the Toto tribe people feels that they were unaware of the importance of education. Especially during the earlier times they did not know about the education system and its importance in the life of people. As they used to live in isolation during the earlier times they were not aware of education and the changes brought by it.



4.4 Parental Aspiration for Their Children's Education

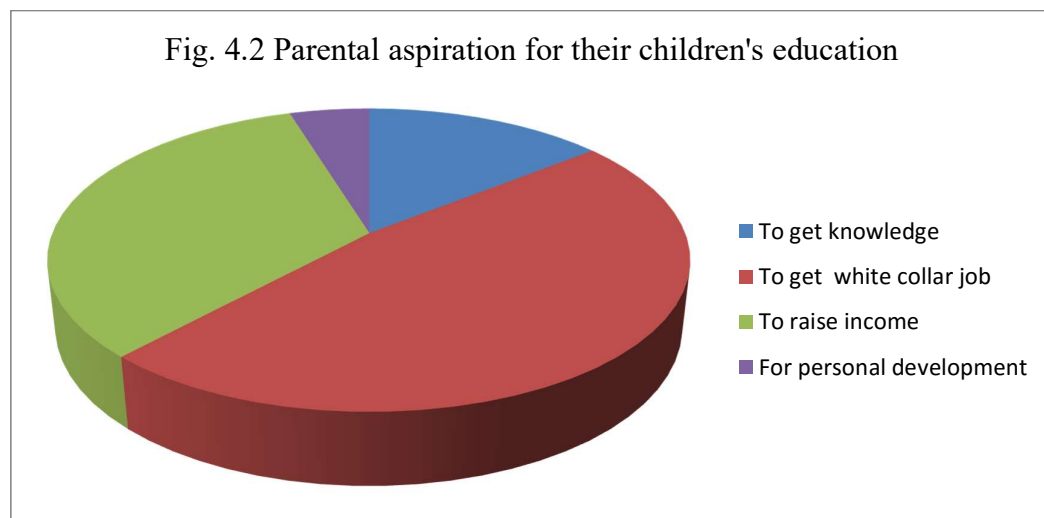
There are many objects of Parents in educating their children but the most common reasons found are:

To get a white collar job- the main objective for parents is to get a white collar job, a job where they need not work physically hard all day long. 50% of the parents want their children to study and get a white collar job in the future so that their children so not have to suffer and work all day long like them in the fields.

To have a better life with more income- the parents want their children to have a better life then their own lives. Through education they want their children to earn more and have a better lifestyle. They hardly have any money to send their children to other places to study but still they are trying to make their children's future better. 35 % of the parents aspire to see their children in a better place where their child's income is high and that they live comfortably.

To get knowledge- the other object of parents in educating their children is to make them more knowledgeable then them. They want their child to have knowledge about things which could help them in the future.15 % of the parents are educating their children so them become knowledgeable in the future.

Personal Development- 5% of the parent's objective in educating their children is also for personality development. They want their children to be forward and have a good personality.



4.5 Constraints Faced By the Toto Students

In the process of education the Toto students face a lot of constrains and this could also be the reason for their low literacy rate as when these constrains increases it leads to hindrance in the path of students. Some of the major constrains faced by students in the process of education are:

Lack of transportation- Due to the geographical location of Totopara there is difficulty in getting transportation for the students. Since there are many rivers flowing through the areas of Totopara it is difficult for the buses to ply on the roads. The vehicles are also very less in the area. There is only one daily bus which connects Totopara with Madarihat and has a fixed timing. Other small jeeps do run but not regularly. The students face a lot of problems due to transportation especially during rainy seasons. This is one of the major constrains faced by the students of Totopara.35% of the students feels this as one of their major constrains.

Medium of Instruction- The other major issue is the medium of instruction at schools. Since the Totos have their own language which they speak at home they also know some of Bengali and Nepali. But they prefer to have teachers who speak Toto language. All the teachers in schools are not Totos except some of them so the students find it hard to understand and connect with what the teacher is saying and low interest in studies. 21% of the students feel that the medium of instruction in schools is a problem for them.

No guidance from home- Since most of the Totos is first generation learners they do not have anyone to ask if they encounter anything which they have not been able to understand in school or what the teacher is saying. There is no one to ask to and the interest of the student is no more as the queries are not answered.18% of the students feel that this is causing hindrance in the path to the process of education for them.

Low economic status-Economic problem is also there as most of the students are under low income group it is difficult for the parents to educate children especially if there are many children. Economic stability is very important in the attainment of education.10% of the students face economic crisis in the process of education.

Need for working on the field-As the main occupation of Toto tribe is agriculture they are bound to work on the fields. Sometimes if there is less members in the family then the children also need to work as part of occupational activity on the fields sacrificing education. 16% of the students face such constrains in the process of education. Even the student's parents force them to work on the fields as that is the one which will give food and money.

4.6 Case Study

Case study is an in depth study of any individual, family or institutions. It helps to know anything in great detail where we can know the history and the present situation.

4.6.1 Gurshu Toto (grandson of Dhanapati Toto)

Gurshu Toto aged 55 is the Grandson of Late Dhanapati Toto. Dhanapati Toto was the eight *Gapu* or the headman of the Toto tribe. After the British annexed the village the center of power totally changed. The entire land of Totopara was recorded as the community property of the Totos, in the name of *Gapu*. He became the liaison between the tribe and the government. Since he was entrusted to collect tax he became powerful person in the Toto community. This system was prevalent upto Dinesh Toto the son of Dhanapati Toto and father of Gurshu Toto. Economic condition of Dhanapati was much better than the others he had large number of land and homestead. He was good with the village people. After him his son Dinesh Toto was the head. Dinesh was a powerful *Gapu* who was respected by everybody. He donated the entire land of the High School after purchasing it from a local Nepali. Dinesh was not formally educated but was conscious about the socio-economic traditions. He was in favor of changes of the modern times but also liked traditional culture, folk songs etc.

Gurshu Toto is not educated inspite of the fact that his grandparents and parents establish school in Totopara. He highly regrets the fact of not being interested to study. He has three sons and a daughter. His eldest son is a graduate now, the other two are in 1st and 2nd year of Birpara college. His daughter has just passed class 10 and would be studying further. His main occupation is agriculture and livestock rearing. He supports the education and wants children of the village to be educated. He regrets the fact of not studying earlier as he had all the money and facility to study even outside Totopara which very few got during that time.

Fig 4.6 Interviewing with Gurshu Toto



Conclusion

The educational survey conducted on the Totos show that most of the students in schools are first generation learners. The 39.39% is illiterate. The main reason for low literacy which the villagers say is because of lack of educational facilities. There are many other reasons like poor economic conditions, lack of awareness and as their main occupation is agriculture they have to go to the fields to work.

The parental aspiration in educating their children is to see their children more knowledgeable, to get a white collar job, to get better grooms in case of girls. The constraints faced by the Toto students in the path to education is lack of educational facilities, medium of instruction, no guidance from parents, have to work in the agricultural fields to help parents. All these problems are due to the low economic conditions. Only if they are economically stable will they be able to go to schools properly.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARISON OF THE TOTOS WITH THEIR NEPALI NEIGHBOURS

5.1. Introduction

Toto is a tribal group which is found in Totopara of Madarihat block of Alipurduar District of West Bengal. The population count of Totos is very low due to which they have been categorized as the 'Primitively Vulnerable Tribal Group' of West Bengal. They are one of the endangered tribe which needs to be protected. Earlier Totopara the homes of the Totos were inhabited by the Toto tribal group only but now it is seen that a lot of other non-Toto communities are also residing in the area. Other communities like Nepali, Bihari, Bengali and others are present in Totopara but the most flourishing and increasing group is the Nepali people. The Nepali populations are far higher in number than the Totos and are more economically and socially developed than the Totos inspite of residing in the same area Totopara which is geographically isolated. Here is a comparison between the Toto tribe and the neighbouring Nepali people of Totopara.

5.2. History of the Nepalis in Totopara

The origin of the Nepalese in the Totopara is not precise as from when did they start to live or from where did they come. There is no such written document which says exactly about the arrival of Nepalese in Totopara. The first ever information about the existence of non-Totos in Totopara was seen from the census report of 1911 comprising of 35 people which again declined to 6 in 1931 which shows that they were migratory in nature. For the first time a large number of non-Totos were seen in the census

report of 1951 of A. Mitra where he said that while visiting the village he came across some Bihari, Marwari and Nepali his census report of 1951 report⁶⁶ Nepali and 3 Bihari families comprising 253 persons.

In 1953 Charu Chandra Sanyal said that majority of the Nepali are not permanent residence of Totopara but are migratory traders who come to Totopara for business purpose mostly during orange seasons they build temporary houses and purchase oranges. In this way gradually the non-Totos population started to grow. There is also a verbal history of the existence of Nepali in Totopara. The Toto people says that they were told by their forefathers that the 5 to 6 Nepalese people were called by the Toto people much earlier because the Toto people were unaware about the use of farming techniques, ways of life sustenance other then hunting. Thus they called some of the Nepali people to learn various ways of living other than hunting.

Table 5.1 Shows the population of Toto, Nepali and other communities in Totopara. In the year 1952 we see that the population of Nepalese was 191 and that of Totos was 383 one third of the population consisted of Nepalese and there were no other communities except them but on 1956 we see that other communities started to come and the population of Nepali and Toto was almost same with only a difference of 12. Then consequently from 1969 to 1991 the population of Nepalese has grown along with the Totos but Nepali population exceeds Totos.

**TABLE 5.1-POPULATION OF TOTO, NEPALI AND OTHERS IN
TOTOPARA 1952 TO 1991**

YEAR	TOTO	NEPALI	OTHERS	TOTAL
1952	383	191	-	574
1953	322	228	-	550
1956	322	310	6	638
1969	482	658	16	1156
1972	560	690	37	1287
1979	675	717	91	1483
1984	776	850	113	1739
1991	904	1153	117	2174

Source: Census record, Tribal Welfare Centre, Welfare Officers of the village,
B.K Roy Burman

Table 5.2 Shows the communities wise break up of total population of Totopara. The table clearly shows each and every community that was present in Totopara in 1991 and their population also. We see that the Nepali population is almost double the population of Totos in the year 1991. Of all the other communities the Nepalese exceeds the most how from migratory resident Nepalese turned into permanent settlers in Totopara.

TABLE 5.2-COMMUNITY WISE BREAK UP OF TOTAL POPULATION OF TOTOPARA, 1991

COMMUNITY	NO.OF FAMILIES	POPULATION			PERCENTAGE
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
Behari	14	54	29	83	3.7
Bengali	9	16	8	24	1.06
Hindustani Muslims from Bihar & U.P	5	15	8	23	1.02
Garo	2	6	8	14	0.6
Lepcha	1	1	1	2	0.08
Mech	1	3	1	4	0.17
Marwari	1	2	0	2	0.08
Oraon	1	1	0	1	0.004
Nepali	209	630	536	1166	51.9
Toto	180	473	453	926	41.3
Total	423	1201	1044	2245	100.0

Source: Census record, Tribal Welfare Centre, Welfare Officers of the village, B.K Roy Burman

5.3. Socio-Economic status of the Nepalis residing in Totopara

The socio-economic status of any community tells us about the overall view of progress or degradation of the community. Through the socio-economic status we know about the education, occupation, income the key variables which tell us the status of the whole society. The socio-economic status of the Nepalese residing in Totopara is much higher than the Totos of that area.

The population of the Nepalese is much higher than that of the Totos this is clear from the table 5.1 and 5.2. In terms of non-Totos the population of the Nepalese is the highest among all. In the above table 5.2 we see that during the year 1991, 51.9% of the population comprised of Nepalese in the Totopara which

shows that Totopara the residence of the Toto tribe was dominated by the Nepalese population.

The family size of the Nepalese is mostly nuclear like the Totos. 55% of the Nepalese have family size 4-5. Joint family system is now going away and giving rise to nuclear family due to the high rise of modernization which increases small family type. After marriage the sons usually separate from the family and start to build its own nuclear family.

The house type of the Nepalese is predominately pakka house which is made of cement and bricks, very few have kachha house. The infrastructure of the houses of Nepalese residing in Totopara has been influenced by modern infrastructure. All the houses of Nepalese are pakka houses which are very opposite to the houses of Totos which is made of hay, asbestos, etc. This shows the economic status of the Nepalis and the Totos.

A pakka house of the Nepali residents of Totopara



A Shop outside a Nepalese house



The occupation of the Nepalis is seen to be varied. They majority of the Nepali people are agriculturists but there are also teachers, bankers, cooks, carpenter, factory workers, some go to other states of the country to work. They are not just into agriculture but sometimes work as labourers and also go to other place outside Totopara to work.

The marital status of the Nepalese is monogamy. There is also a system of remarriage in case of death of spouse. There is no polyandry and polygamy in the Nepalese society.

Language spoken by the Nepalese is Nepali. They communicate with the Totos in Nepali language which in turn the Totos also now speak and understand Nepali and Bengali. The Totos are familiar with the Nepali and Bengali language as the medium of instruction in government schools of the Totopara village is Bengali. The Totos have their own language which they communicate among themselves which are unknown to the others.

Religion followed by the Nepalis is mostly Hindus but there are some Nepalese who follow Buddhism and Christianity in the village Totopara.

Health issues faced by the Nepalese are mainly head ace, diarrhea, vomiting and other body pains.

Educational status of the Nepalese is higher than the Totos which will be done in detail in the next point.

5.4. Comparison of the Educational status of Totos and Nepalis of Totopara

The educational status of the society is the most important aspect of any community. The educational status of any society gives us an idea about the progress happening in that society. The development of any nation is through the educational. Education is the tool for any community to progress. The educational level of Nepalese residing in Totopara and Toto tribes are compared and analysed.

The illiteracy level of the Nepalese is 23.28% as compared to the Totos which is 32.74%. Most of the elderly people are illiterate in the village. All the younger generations are encouraged to learn and study. The primary level of education and secondary level are much higher among Nepalese than the Totos. It was seen that the Nepalese people had a lot of relatives outside Totopara but the Totos do not have, as they are confined only in Totopara. The Nepali people send their children to study outside Totopara in their relative's house where the Totos do not have that option. They do not have any relatives outside Totopara and if they are to send their children to study they have to rent houses. As the educational facility available in Totopara is not good the parents want the children to study outside Totopara.

Most of Nepalese send their children to Madarihat, Alipurduar, Sonada, Siliguri etc. which the Toto people cannot do so due to low economic status and also because they have no relatives.

The 2.73% of Nepalese are graduate and 4.10% are pursuing higher education like Masters and M.Phil degree where as among the Totos only 0.88% is graduate and no one is pursuing higher education after graduation.

Conclusion

When comparing the educational status of Toto tribe and the Nepalese people residing in Totopara it was seen that the Nepali population outnumbered the Toto population. The Nepali people were only migratory people coming to Totopara for business purpose in the earlier days but later they settled there. The socio-economic status of the Nepalis is far better than the Totos though they reside in the same isolated geographical area. The main reason for their better socio-economic status is the educational level of the Nepalis which is higher than the Totos. The Nepali people send their children to study outside Totopara as they have a lot of relatives outside Totopara. There is no facility for higher education in Totopara as such the children go to study outside but the Toto people are lower in socio-economic status and also they do not have any relatives outside Totopara which makes them impossible to gain higher education.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The Toto tribe of West Bengal is one of the Primitively Vulnerable Tribal Group who lives in a small village called Totopara which is an isolated place away from the main town of Madarihat. The socio-economic status of the Toto tribe is very low as compared to the other tribes of West Bengal. Due to its low population count it is a highly endangered tribe. The language of the tribe is said to be more endangered than the tribe itself. Even the educational status of the Totos is lower as compared to the other tribes of West Bengal. The educational status has been calculated doing surveys and has been divided into primary, secondary and higher secondary level. The Toto are getting enrolled in the schools but are frequently dropping out as well. When comparing the Totos with their Nepali neighbours who live with them in Totopara it is seen that the Nepalis have a higher educational status than the Totos. Nepalis and other non-Toto groups also live in Totopara along with the Totos the original inhabitants of the area. Now the non-Toto population is higher than the Totos in the area. There is a lot of assimilation happening in the area which is leading the culture of Totos to fade out, if the culture and tradition of Totos is not conserved it will to the extinction of the whole tribe. The influence of the non-Totos to the Totos is influencing them to gradual changes.

6.2 Key findings

The educational status of the tribals of India is very much in need of our concern. Even after independence we see that the educational status of the tribals is low as compared to the others. The educational status of one of the tribe of West Bengal called the Toto tribe is taken to study. The Toto tribe is one of the most endangered tribe in the world. Its population count is very low and its culture is also on the verge of extinction due to the cultural assimilation happening in the area where they live, called Totopara which is in the Madarihat block of Alipurduar district of West Bengal.

The review of literature is done dividing the various aspects of the study being conducted, the concept and primitive vulnerable tribal groups, the socio-economic status and origin of Totos, the educational status of the tribals in India and the development programmes of the tribals. After going through all the literature done in the context of the study it is seen that there is a lot of literature stating the low socio-economic and the educational status of the various tribals in India but no concrete reason is given as to the low status of the tribals. There are various plans, policies and programmes framed by the government but its implication is rarely seen taking the entire tribal group.

The origin of the Toto tribe is still difficult to trace as to exactly from where did they originate. The village Totopara is where the Toto tribes reside now and the area is bounded by forests and rivers. The village is divided into six hamlets which are inhabited by the Totos and the people from other communities as well. The socio-economic status of the Toto tribe is backward.

Their main source of occupation is agriculture but still there is no use of advanced methods to yield production in the fields. They have their own language which is now on the verge of extinction. Their population count is slightly increasing though still it is only 1387 in census of 2011. They follow Hinduism but they also worship their own Gods as well. The literacy level is very low. The socio-economic status of the Toto tribe needs to be uplifted by the government taking into consideration that they are the Particularly Vulnerable tribal groups of West Bengal.

The educational survey conducted on the Totos show that most of the students in schools are first generation learners. The 39.39% is illiterate. The main reason for low literacy which the villagers say is because of lack of educational facilities. There are many other reasons like poor economic conditions, lack of awareness and as their main occupation is agriculture they have to go to the fields to work.

The parental aspiration in educating their children is to see their children more knowledgeable, to get a white collar job, to get better grooms in case of girls. The constraints faced by the Toto students in the path to education is lack of educational facilities, medium of instruction, no guidance from parents, have to work in the agricultural fields to help parents. All these problems are due to the low economic conditions. Only if they are economically stable will they be able to go to schools properly.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

There are many limitations to the study conducted as many problems were faced during the study and they are:

- 1) Problem of Transportation- the main problem and limitation faced during the survey was the problem of transportation. There was only one bus which lead to Totopara and it had a fixed timing in the morning and evening. There were small vehicles but would run only in the afternoon so it was difficult to get transportation.
- 2) Geographical Location-the study area was very far away from the town. The roads were in a very bad condition. The villagers said that during monsoons when river level raises it is difficult for the people to go to towns. There are about eight river beds which is to be crossed in order to go to Totopara.
- 3) Small Sample- as the sample size is 30 Toto households and 30 Nepali households the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the whole village of Totopara.
- 4) Time constrain- due to time constrain the size of the sample could not be increased. If taken a large sample the study could have been able to generalize.
- 5) No transportation inside the village- there was no transportation inside the village because of which the researcher had to walk through all the six villages of Totopara.

6.4. Recommendations and Suggestions

- 1) Vocational training courses should be started in the area for the Totos.
- 2) More schools need to be opened especially higher secondary schools in Totopara.
- 3) There should be check on schools by the government from time to time to see the proper functioning of the schools.
- 4) Roads need to be constructed from Madarihat to Totopara. Lack of good transportation facility is the main reason behind low literacy rate in Totopara.

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ANNEXURE-A

- 1) Name of the respondent
- 2) Age
- 3) No. of family members
- 4) Their name and age respectively
- 5) All the family members educational qualification
- 6) Annual income of the family
- 7) If dropouts reason for it?
- 8) Occupation of family members
- 9) Are they aware of the scheduled tribe facilities YES/NO
- 10) Parental aspiration for educating the children?
- 11) Which religion do they follow?
- 12) If they possess land how much do they have and where?
- 13) Health issues if any?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- 1) Do you face any impediments while going to school?
- 2) Do you face any problems in the school?
- 3) What is your ambition?
- 4) Are you satisfied with the educational facilities provided by the school?
- 5) Do you face problems from home to come to school?

QUESTIONS TO SCHOOL

- 1) No. of enrollment of students and Totos
- 2) No. of dropouts if any?
- 3) If yes reasons for it?
- 4) Is there any regular absenteeism?
- 5) Does the government give any incentives to the students?