

## CHAPTER - V

### DEVELOPMENTAL EFFORTS AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION

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While the long 82 years of British rule in Totopara and the first 4 years of post-Independence period can be marked as tradition-bound and rather less dynamic as regards its socio-economic transformation, the next 40 years (1951-1991) of the post-Independence period, on the country, can be marked as the period of rapid transformation. At this period the Totos, 'the only isolated tribe in West Bengal' (as they were designated in the Sub-Plan for the tribal areas of West Bengal in 1975) were exposed to the outer world at a scale not anticipated ever before, and became an object for both development and exploitation.

Living isolated in their tradition bound life pattern for a long time the Totos suddenly found themselves entangled within a network of a new socio-economic environment causing a breach with their attachment to traditions. Though this period can be marked as the period of rapid progress, it can also be marked as the period of serious problems creating crises of social identity and disintegration. The problems like population growth, land alienation, unemployment, indebtedness, alcoholism etc. have gripped the Totos despite (or, because of) modernisation of the village. With the collapse of the traditional power structure it has devolved upon the educated tribal youths to find out a way for the survival of their community.

Since the beginning of this period, besides government projects, several voluntary organisations have executed different developmental schemes for the socio-economic upliftment of the Totos. But unfortunately the Totos are yet to make any head-way towards their cultural and economic integration with the current activities in the village which are mainly controlled by the Nepalis and other outside communities because of the numerical edge of the latter over the Totos within a broader democratic framework where the political parties and the political leaders have the upper hand. Keeping all these factors in view one has to assess the process of transformation of the Totos.

Immediately after Independence the Nepali squatters

attempted to establish their political supremacy by applying force to stop cow-slaughter by the Totos. The Nepalis raised the slogan of Hindu religiosity and condemned the age-old religious practices of the Totos including the sacrifice of cows. This incident did not escape the attention of Roy Burman (1957). However with the intervention of administration and other democratic elements the hue and cry raised by the Nepalis failed to attain its desired goal. In course of time the Totos also preferred to adopt a policy of forget and forgive and both the communities began to live peacefully. It is highly likely that the issue of cow-slaughter was raised as only an instrument to legitimise their migration and stay at Totopara by the Nepalis. So, looked at from another point of view, the objective of the outside people has been fulfilled even though not by the immediate stratagem they opted for.

#### 5.1 SPREAD OF EDUCATION

Since 1951 different voluntary organisations and the Government agencies started functioning in Totopara for the social and economic development of the Totos. In the initial stage, the 'Bharat Mahajati Mandali', a voluntary organisation, played a very crucial role. Together with the other developmental activities, primary education was also introduced for the first time by the Mandali after it had set up the Welfare Centre at Totopara in 1951 with financial aids provided by the Government.

One Jogendra Sarkar was appointed as the first Welfare Organiser for supervising and monitoring the developmental programmes including imparting of primary education to both the Toto and Nepali children. In his childhood Jogendra Sarkar was brought up at Biratnagar in Nepal. As such he was well conversant in Nepali language besides his mother tongue Bengali. He used to teach the Toto students in Bengali, and Nepali students in Nepali very efficiently.

Along with primary education, Jogendra Sarkar was also entrusted with the task of executing other programmes like (i) introduction of improved agricultural practices, (ii) to persuade the Totos to become more careful about personal hygiene including regular bathing and use of soaps, (iii) persuade them to take vaccination and inoculations against the preventive diseases, (iv) to acquaint the Totos with the mainstream of Indian culture and heritage, (v) to practise temperance, (vi) to protect them from being exploited by the traders engaged in bamboo and orange trade and also in the exchange of other commodities, (vii) protection of land of the Totos against encroachment by the Nepalis, and also to do such other ancillary activities as are conducive to the above programmes.

As a result, due to his pre-occupation with so many diverse types of work, it was not possible for him to make much headway in imparting primary education to the Totos. On the

other hand, before the completion of his tasks he was allegedly murdered but his deadbody could not be recovered by the police. However during his short stay at Totopara for about two and half years Jogendra Sarkar greatly succeeded in preventing the encroachment of land by the Nepalis and also in preventing the Totos from being exploited by the greedy contractors engaged in bamboo trade. It is widely believed that there was an unholy collusion of interests between a section of the Nepalis and the contractors that ultimately culminated in his assassination. Following this incident the Bharat Mahajati Mandali had to abandon their project at Totopara. Subsequently, the Welfare Centre established by the Mandali was handed over to the State Government in January 1955.

After the mysterious disappearance of Jogendra Sarkar a police camp was posted at Totopara apprehending breach of peace. It is at around this time that B.K. Roy Burman, the noted anthropologist, who was young and adventurous at that time was sent there by the Government to submit a detailed report on Totopara and the Totos, and also to help restore peace in this sensitive border area. Since no further unhappy occurrences took place, the police force had practically nothing to do but sitting idle in their camps. As a means of passing their time, some of the police constables decided to be friendly with the Totos by imparting primary education to their children. Eventually they took up this noble task (thanks to the absence of

Radio, T.V. or Video shows) and started performing it very sincerely. But, since none among them was conversant in Nepali language, they began to teach the Toto students in Bengali medium.

But the police picket was withdrawn after some time. There was no longer any teacher for the Totos and also there was a considerable delay in appointing the Welfare Organiser in place of late Jogendra Sarkar. At that time the Toto elders themselves took some initiative in the matter. They constructed a thatched hut near the present site of Totopara Bazar and appointed a Nepali teacher, Dilbahadur Rana, to teach their youngsters. Rana was ultimately absorbed in the Welfare Centre as Assistant Welfare Organiser-cum-Teacher. But before that, his expenses were borne by the Totos and Nepalis by voluntary contributions. When after sometime he became careless about his duties, the first flush of interest of the Totos also ebbed down. As a result, from a daily attendance of about 20 in the middle of 1955, the flow of students was on the decline. Finally, since the early part of 1957 the classes were practically suspended. D.B. Rana resigned from his post in the early part of 1957 causing much dislocation in education and other developmental works.

After the resignation of D.B. Rana at least five other persons (Dr. Ashis Dutta, LMS, Bhagabanbabu, Manotosh Sarkar,

Bangshibabu, and Ruben Basumatary) were appointed as either the Welfare Organiser or Assistant Welfare Organisers successively. A house for primary school was built at the present site of the godown of the Marketing Co-operative Society, by the Tribal Welfare Department for imparting primary education to the Totos. But all these efforts were largely useless because the Welfare Organisers would remain busy with their other assignments.

After a long gap of time Santosh Bhattacharjee joined the post of 'Teacher-cum-Welfare Organiser' on 2nd January 1964. Thereafter one Gharma Prasad Sarma also joined as 'Assistant Teacher-cum-Welfare Organiser' on 15th July 1965. Both of them carried on their duties along with other tasks entrusted to them from time to time. They started teaching both the Totos and the Nepalis in Bengali medium but no remarkable progress was made. In this regard Bhattacharjee stated, 'perhaps there is no other tribal community in India which is as backward as the Totos in matters of education. So far only 15 to 16 persons have learnt to put in their signature during the past 20 or 21 years since educational efforts were initiated way back in 1952' (Bhattacharjee:28-29). Table - 5.1 presents the educational level attained by the Totos upto 1973.

A new chapter was opened with the visit of Rev. Olav Hodne, Head of the Swedish Mission, Cooch Behar on 13 May 1967, along with Narendra Nath Das, the then Assistant Commissioner

of Tribal Welfare Department, and Manindra Nath Mitra, Special Officer of the same Department. Seven Toto boys were taken to the Rampur Mission Centre in Cooch Behar for vocational training after obtaining the consent of the then Tribal Welfare Minister of West Bengal, Deoprakash Rai. Among them two persons received training in weaving, two in woodcrafts, two in agriculture and one was trained as a compounder in the year 1967-68.

TABLE - 5.1

SPREAD OF EDUCATION AMONG THE TOTOS UPTO 1973

Read up to Class	Current Students	Total upto the reference year
Class - VI	1	1
Class - V	1	1
Class - IV	2	2
Class - III	3	3
Class - II	1	5
Class - I	40	48

Source : Santosh Kumar Bhattacharjee, Totoder Katha, p. 29.

Meanwhile, the school building constructed by the Tribal Welfare Department had become dilapidated. In its place the Swedish Mission constructed a pucca building, and renamed it as 'Toto Kalyan Bidyamandir' in 1969-70. The Mission also appointed one primary teacher named John Ekka who however left the school within a few days of his appointment. Then one

Anugraha Ekka was appointed in his place. But no record is available prior to 1972 as regards the growth of primary education. In 1972 the Primary School was accorded recognition by the District School Board. After some days Anugraha Ekka was transferred, and Haren Saiba (Mech) was appointed as the Headmaster of the primary school in 1973. One Samual Tikka was also appointed as the Assistant Teacher in the same year. But Samual Tikka was also transferred from Totopara in 1974. Since then a Garo lady named Parinita Mankhin has been serving the school as an Assistant Teacher. Upto 1985 she rendered her voluntary services free of cost till she was regularised in the same post. Later on she was married to Haren Saiba and since then the couple is serving the primary school.

At present a total of 162 students are studying in the Toto Kalyan Bidyamandir out of whom the number of Toto students is 67 and the number of non-Toto students is 95. It will be seen from Table - 5.2 that the Total number of students in 1972 was 55 of whom 36 were Totos. It will also be observed that between 1972 and 1991 the number of Toto students has increased by 86 per cent whereas the number of total students has increased by about 200 per cent. Taking the natural rate of increase of Toto population into account the growth in primary school enrolment is not satisfactory. On the other hand the increase in enrolment of others is a reflection of the influx of non-Totos into Totopara. It is also evident from Table - 5.2 that among the Totos the stagnation in female education is much more

TABLE - 5.2

## NUMBER OF TOTO STUDENTS READING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL UPTO CLASS IV

Year	Toto Students			Non-Toto Students			Total Students		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1972	35	1	36	12	7	19	47	8	55
1973	38	8	46	43	7	50	81	15	96
1974	34	6	40	9	7	16	43	13	56
1975	41	13	54	9	11	20	50	24	74
1976	39	12	51	7	11	18	46	23	69
1977	44	11	55	7	11	18	51	22	73
1978	41	10	51	11	9	20	52	19	71
1979	42	11	53	18	13	31	60	24	84
1980	58	14	72	34	19	53	92	33	125
1981	59	15	74	46	16	62	105	31	136
1982	51	15	66	52	24	76	103	39	142
1983	41	9	50	52	24	76	93	33	126
1984	39	5	44	64	24	88	103	29	132
1985	43	6	49	56	23	79	99	29	128
1986	43	14	57	53	24	77	96	38	134
1987	52	21	73	31	29	60	83	50	133
1988	56	19	75	28	26	54	84	45	129
1989	51	7	58	26	30	56	77	37	114
1990	50	15	65	38	35	73	88	50	138
1991	58	9	67	49	46	95	107	55	162

evident than among the non-Totos. In 1991 the proportion of female students among the Totos was only 13 per cent whereas among the non-Totos the females constituted 48 per cent of the total students. Thus, with the spread of education the Toto females are definitely going down in social estimation and a differentiation in status among the genders is surely going to emerge in course of time.

TABLE - 5.3

## ENROLMENT OF TOTO STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT CLASSES

Year	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Total		
					M	F	T
1972	26	5	3	2	35	1	36
1973	40	1	3	2	38	8	46
1974	33	2	2	3	34	6	40
1975	44	6	2	2	41	13	54
1976	35	9	5	2	39	12	51
1977	34	11	6	4	44	11	55
1978	31	9	5	6	41	10	51
1979	34	11	2	6	42	11	53
1980	61	4	5	2	58	14	72
1981	63	4	3	4	59	15	74
1982	57	5	1	3	51	15	66
1983	42	5	2	1	41	9	50
1984	37	1	3	3	39	5	44
1985	41	3	2	3	43	6	49
1986	45	8	3	1	43	14	57
1987	53	11	6	3	52	21	73
1988	57	3	13	2	56	19	75
1989	40	5	5	8	51	7	58
1990	50	7	4	4	50	15	65
1991	45	11	7	4	58	9	67

It will further be observed from Table - 5.3 that even while the growth in the total number of students is to some extent impressive, there is a large number of drop-outs between Classes I and II. In fact the females are rarely found studying beyond Class I. Even the number of male students reading in

Class IV is more or less stagnant. As such education has not made even now any big dent in Toto society.

A few years back another primary school has been installed by the Integrated Tribal Development Project at Poargaon, and three teachers were appointed by the District School Board. At present however there is no teacher in that school and no Toto student is also studying there.

Besides, one English Medium Nursery School has been established in the house of Dhaniram Toto on a rental basis by a Christian couple of Oraon origin in 1991. The name of the school is S.B.A. Mission English School. At present 28 students are studying in that school out of whom only 2 belong to the Toto community.

The Swedish Mission has also established a Junior High School at Totopara in 1980 named Dhanapati Junior High School. The school has been duly affiliated by the Board of Secondary Education. Besides this, the Mission also installed two Adult Education Centres from 1976 to 1980. But these centres failed to make any progress among the Totos due to lack of awareness about education. The lack of sincere effort is also held to be responsible for the failure of the adult education programmes. Another reason as to why these centres failed may be due to the fact that the Swedish Mission had to wind up their activities in

TABLE - 5.4

ENROLMENT OF TOTO STUDENTS IN DHANAPATI JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1980-91

Year	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII	<u>Total Toto Students</u>			<u>Total School Enrolment</u>		
					M	F	T	M	F	T
1980	5	4	5	0	11	3	14	21	9	30
1981	1	6	2	4	9	4	13	21	13	34
1982	2	1	5	0	6	2	8	28	14	42
1983	3	1	3	4	9	2	11	40	14	54
1984	0	1	2	1	4	0	4	35	15	50
1985	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	26	20	46
1986	3	1	0	1	4	1	5	22	16	38
1987	2	2	1	0	5	0	5	23	16	39
1988	0	1	2	0	3	0	3	23	11	34
1989	1	1	1	1	4	0	4	24	11	35
1990	7	0	2	2	11	0	11	38	11	49
1991	4	7	0	2	12	1	13	41	16	57

Source : Field Investigation by the author.

Totopara due to the restrictions imposed by the Government. In 1991 there were 57 students studying in Dhanapati Junior High School of whom only 13 were Totos. Of these 13 the number of female students is only one (Table - 5.4). It will be of some interest to note that during the time of the Swedish Mission at least 20 Toto students took their education under the direct supervision of the Mission outside Totopara. Of them 3 were girls students. Gouri Toto, daughter of Dutchiri Toto, studied upto Class VI in 1978 at the Dinhata Swedish Girls Hostel. Bani Toto, daughter of Horna Toto, studied at the Birsha High School upto Class IX in 1979 residing at the house of a Bengali gentleman named Rebati Mohan Sarkar of Chhotoshalkumar. Suchana Toto, daughter of Dinesh Toto, studied initially at Dinhata but completed her study at Rangalibajna High School reading upto Class X in 1979-80. In contrast to these, during the last ten years not a single Toto student has completed their studies from the Dhanapati Junior High School located at Totopara. The number of Toto students has also not registered any progress, as can be made out from Table - 5.4.

The Social Education Department, Government of West Bengal, conducted five non-formal educational centres at Totopara during 1989-90. Instructions at these centres were provided by Smt. Banani Ghosh, Dhaniram Toto, Sachin Toto, Smt. Bani Toto and Smt. Suchana Toto. Ultimately however these centres were closed down due to want of fund. The team also failed to register

TABLE - 5.5

## LITERACY AMONG THE TOTOS IN 1979 AND 1991

Locality	1979						1991					
	Literate			Population			Literate			Population		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1. Panchayatgaon	23	1	24	78	70	148	42	10	52	167	148	315
2. Subbagaon	12	2	14	76	70	146	19	1	20	123	117	240
3. Mandalgaon	1	0	1	34	44	78	6	2	8	50	45	95
4. Mitrang-gaon	3	0	3	30	28	58	9	0	9	46	50	96
5. Pujagaon	2	0	2	26	30	56	2	0	2	34	36	70
6. Dumchigaon	3	0	3	27	26	53	3	0	3	53	57	110
TOTAL	44	3	47	271	268	539	81	13	94	473	453	926

Source : Debendra Dhali (1979), and field investigation by the author (1991).

Note : The total population of Totos in 1979 was 675 according to Dhali; but here the total population is 539 as obtained from the same source. No explanation has been offered for this discrepancy.

any remarkable result except the centre run by Smt. Banani Ghosh from which about 15 females could manage to learn how to sign their names.

It is revealed from Table - 5.5 that the total number of literate persons among the Totos has doubled during the past 12 years. But the picture is not at all satisfactory if the growth of population is taken into account. During the past 12 years the growth of population has been 68.6 per cent whereas the rate of literacy has increased among the Totos from 8.5 per cent in 1979 to only 10.1 per cent in 1991. It will also be observed from Table - 5.5 that education is not evenly spread among all localities. Panchayatgaon and Subbagaon are ahead of others in this respect whereas Pujagaon and Dumchigaon are lagging considerably behind.

The comparative advancement of Panchayatgaon and Subbagaon may be due to the fact that they have a locational advantage over others. These areas are well connected by motorable roads and as such are more often visited by the Government officials and others. Also the Tribal Welfare Centre and other Project Headquarters as also the market are located within these areas. It is also noteworthy that there was no female literates among the Totos in Mitrang-gaon, Pujagaon and Dumchigaon in 1979. Even in 1991 the situation has not changed. As regards male literacy the number of literates in Pujagaon and Dumchigaon have remained

stagnant over this long period of 12 years when the total population in these two localities has increased considerably. It may be recollected here that Pujagaon and Dumchigaon are inhabited by Budubei and Baudhbei clans respectively. As to why these clans are lagging behind others needs closer investigation ( Table - 5.6).

In Pujagaon and Dumchigaon the highest level of education attained by anyone is Class VI. But Panchayatgaon can boast of at least one person who has passed the school final examination and also another three including one female who have studied upto Class X. Subbagaon also has two persons who have studied upto Class X (Table - 5.7). Among the various clans the following seven have made more progress than the rest as far as education is concerned; Dankobei, Dantrobei, Bongobei, Nubebei, Nurenchango-  
bei, Linkaijibei, and Diringchangobei. Among these clans the following are again much ahead of all others; Dantrobei, Nube-  
bei and Linkaijibei.

Some years back Chittaranjan Toto was the first among the Totos to pass the Higher Secondary Examination. Unfortunately however he died of T.B. before taking admission in the college. This was a setback for the Toto community and was variously interpreted by them according to their superstitions. For some time there was an apathy towards modern education but it did not continue for a long time. At present only Bhakta Toto belonging

TABLE - 5.6

## EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AMONG THE DIFFERENT CLANS OF TOTCS IN 1991

Name of Clan	Total Popn	Educational Achievement											
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	S.F.	All
Dankobei	170	3	0	2	0	0	1	3	2	2	2	0	15
Dantrobei	234	6	4	4	1	0	3	6	6	2	4	1	34
Badubei	70	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Baudhbei	110	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Bongobei	96	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	9
Nurenchangobei	77	3	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	9
Linkaijibei	40	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	7
Nubebei	42	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
Diringchangobei	13	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Mankobei	41	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Mantrobei	27	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Manchingbei	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pisochangobei	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	926	17	14	10	6	3	7	11	11	9	5	1	94

TABLE - 5.7

NUMBER OF TOTCS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT LOCALITIES 1991

Read upto Class	Panchayat- gaon	Subbagaon	Mandal- gaon	Mitrang- gaon	Pujagaon	Dumchi- gaon	Total		
							M	F	T
I	13	2	0	1	1	0	14	3	17
II	4	4	2	3	0	1	13	1	14
III	5	3	1	1	0	0	9	1	10
IV	3	2	0	0	0	1	5	1	6
V	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	3
VI	3	1	2	0	0	1	7	0	7
VII	8	2	1	0	0	0	11	0	11
VIII	8	0	1	2	0	0	8	3	11
IX	3	4	1	1	0	0	6	3	9
X	3	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
Passed S.F.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>94</b>

to the Dantrobei clan has passed the School Final examination among the Totos. He took his admission in Class XI but discontinued soon after. He is now gainfully employed in the office of the Commercial Bank opened at Totopara.

An interesting feature of the Totos is that many of them are multi-lingual. At present, besides their mother tongue all the Totos can speak Nepali language fluently. Also, at least 60 per cent of the Totos can speak Bengali. Bengali has been introduced, as mentioned earlier, as the medium of instruction in Totopara. As a result, all the literate Totos have received their education from Primary to Secondary level in Bengali. The situation can be well appreciated if it is remembered that at the beginning of this century Grierson had noted, "They are a very wild tribe, and no non-Toto knows their language. There is said to be only one Toto in existence who knows a little Bengali besides his own language" (Grierson:250). The materials forwarded by Grierson for the purposes of his linguistic survey were put together with the assistance of the only Toto who is referred to above.

It may also be remembered in this connection that during the first census operation that was conducted in Jalpaiguri district in 1871-72, the number of Nepalis in the whole district was a bare 144 (Hunter:253). But in 1961, the number of Nepali speakers has gone up to 1.09 lakhs in the district of Jalpaiguri

(Ray:44). The acculturation with the Nepalis must have come about after the 30s of this century and more particularly after the 50s when the immigration of the Nepalis took a serious turn. It is however quite likely that a number of Totos must have had a workable knowledge of Bhutanese, Mech or Rabha languages in the past in view of their porterage duties and classification of the Toto society into the two moieties of Orangbei and Wantengbei. At present the Totos have no knowledge of Bhutanese language. But a number of them can understand and communicate with the Rabhas, Meches, Doyas and even the Craons (Bhattacharjee:17). Therefore multi-lingualism among the pre-literate Totos is a fact worthy of much closer investigation.

## 5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Prior to Independence the tribal villages of this part of Bengal were badly neglected. The administration used to maintain relation with them only to realise the annual revenue without implementing any developmental programmes or providing social amenities to them. The situation did not change immediately after Independence. Besides the welfare activities of the voluntary organisations like the Bharat Mahajati Mandali, Swedish Mission or Lutheran World Service no comprehensive programme was taken up by the Government for the integrated development of the Totos except undertaking some ad-hoc patch work which had no long term purpose. The Government began taking some specific measures

only since 1965 after the establishment of the office of the Special Officer, Scheduled Castes and Tribal Welfare, in different districts of West Bengal. It has however already been mentioned that the Government had established before this date an Agricultural Demonstration Farm to acquaint the Totos with the modern technique of agriculture besides posting of a Social Welfare Organiser and Assistant Welfare Organiser to look into the interest of the Totos and also to implement some developmental programmes. But no detailed information could be obtained for that period (1951-1964). As has been mentioned previously during this period the Totos were also compelled by forces of circumstances to take up agriculture a little more seriously than ever before. But the Demonstration Farm was winded up before the Totos became sufficiently familiar with settled agriculture or terracing system.

From Table - 5.8 it is found that during 1965-66 to 1973-74 a total sum of Rs. 48,110.00 was spent for improvement of agriculture under different heads. It is found that the maximum amount of 26,460.00 rupees were spent under the head of bullocks. Rupees 4,700.00 was also spent for supplying ploughs and other agricultural implements indicating the eagerness of the Government to introduce settled agriculture among the Totos. But no amount was spent for irrigation. It may be remembered that land alienation had assumed a serious dimension in Totopara during this period. To avert the problem, community ownership system

was abolished in favour of individual land holding. But no serious attempt was made to create viable farm sizes, demarcate them properly and avoid fragmentation.

TABLE - 5.3

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
IN TOTOPARA, 1965-66 TO 1988-89.  
(in Rs.)

Item	1965-66 to 1973-74	1974-75 to 1980-81	1981-82 to 1988-89	Total
Soil conservation, land reclamation, etc.	6,950	2,49,423	3,00,000	5,56,373
Supply of ploughs and other inputs	4,700	78,100	1,00,000	1,82,800
Bullocks	26,460	nil	nil	26,460
Saplings	10,000	5,000	2,78,440	2,93,440
Irrigation	nil	1,849	13,47,266	13,49,115
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,110</b>	<b>3,34,372</b>	<b>20,25,706</b>	<b>24,08,188</b>

Source : Tribal Welfare Department, Jalpaiguri (1965/66-1973/74);  
A Comprehensive Five-year Plan for the Development of  
the Totos Tribes, by S. Das, 1982 (1974/75-1980/81);  
Office of the Integrated Tribal Development Project,  
Jalpaiguri (1981/82-1988/89).

Note : The break-up of expenditure according to different schemes was not available due to some official constraints.

Any agricultural developmental programme in the tribal areas like Totopara should include the following measures :

- (1) Extension of Irrigation facilities;

- (2) Agricultural support programmes like restructuring of cropping pattern;
- (3) Soil conservation, land levelling, terracing etc.;
- (4) Training of the farmers.

From Table - 5.8 it is evident that even though no amount was spent on irrigation in the initial phase a small amount of Rs. 1,849 was spent on irrigation between 1974-75 to 1980-81. Between 1981-82 to 1988-89 the heaviest expenditure was made on irrigation viz. an amount of 13,47,266 rupees. But the schemes executed so far do not appear to have yielded any appreciable result because in a hilly terrain like that of Totopara there is little excess water after catering to the needs of drinking water and other domestic purposes. Still now Totopara suffers from an acute shortage of drinking water for several months in a year.

It is also found from the table above that an amount of Rs. 5.56 lakhs have been spent by the Government since 1965 towards execution of the schemes for soil conservation, land levelling, terracing etc. These schemes are ideally prepared and executed according to the types of soil, topography of the land, rainfall and other climatic conditions. The soil of Totopara is sandy gravel in nature, topography of the village is highly undulated, and the area falls under the heavy rainfall zone of North Bengal subjected to severe soil erosion. The erosion rate

in the northern slopes varies from 5 per cent to 50 percent or more. Even in flattened areas there is considerable scope for wind erosion and sheet erosion. As such it is imperative to undertake only such schemes that would enable the farmers to utilise the rain water resources more effectively and also help the soil to retain its moisture.

On the other hand these types of schemes need regular care and maintenance. As the area is located in the heavy rainfall zone each year a large area of Totopara becomes damaged during the rainy season causing abrupt change in the topography and soil conditions. As such due to lack of proper follow up actions the soil conservation programmes that have been implemented do not yield the expected result.

Further the Totos are very much tradition bound in respect of their cultivation practices which are mainly restricted to maize, inferior millets (marua, kauni and buck wheat), tapioca and small quantities of paddy as at present. They have not yet become interested in growing any vegetable, pulses or fruits. As such agricultural support programmes like restructuring of crops among the tradition bound tribal community like the Totos needs constant effort and also intimate contact of the agricultural worker with his field demonstration which alone can create the confidence among the Totos to venture for new cropping pattern. But since such co-operation and guidance are wanting

the Totos are yet to introduce various new crops suitable for their particular topography, soil type and climatic condition. To acquaint them therefore with the new techniques a more intensive and regular training programme continuing for several crops cycles is needed. But after the agricultural demonstration firm was winded up no such effective measures have been reported from Totopara.

TABLE - 5.9

EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE TOTOS DURING 1965-66 TO 1988-89

Item	(in Rs.)			Total
	1965-66 to 1973-74	1974-75 to 1980-81	1981-82 to 1988-89	
Agriculture	48,110	3,34,372	20,25,706	24,08,188
Animal Husbandry	38,975	1,03,080	1,20,000	2,62,055
Roads & Communication	nil	1,08,200	6,06,945	7,15,145
Dwelling/community hall/Demsha etc.	78,800	39,785	5,71,163	6,89,748
Tribal Welfare Centre, Dept. Buildings etc.	18,128	3,600	80,000	1,01,728
Education, Library etc.	4,150	52,500	1,41,555	1,98,205
Health & Public Health Engineering	14,400	19,780	18,36,069	18,70,249
General Development	nil	nil	7,13,900	7,13,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,02,563</b>	<b>7,11,317</b>	<b>60,95,338</b>	<b>70,09,218</b>

Source : Same as in Table - 5.8

As mentioned in the previous chapter the Totos are still lagging behind the expectation of the Government in livestock rearing due to lack of coordinated approach of the policy planners. From 1965 to 1989 the Government has spent an amount of Rs. 2,62,055 for this purpose but the progress in real terms has not been satisfactory due to a number of factors :

- (1) The Totos like any other tribal community are tradition bound. As such they have knowledge only to rear the cattle and birds which are locally available.
- (2) They have not been offered any prior training about the art of rearing the improved varieties of domestic cattle and birds that are maintained only by stall feeding. The cattles reared by the Totos are left free to roam around and maintain themselves through the process of scavenging over wild growth of vegetation.
- (3) The local varieties have so adjusted with their habitat that they are less prone to diseases on the contrary the high-breed varieties of cattles and birds fall an easy prey to diseases particularly because of the type of fodder provided to them.
- (4) The animal husbandry and veterinary services are closely inter-connected but there was no coordination between these two in Totopara. At present one veterinary centre has been opened there but with limited activities of artificial insemination only.

The Government has supplied a good number of milch cows to the Totos during the past few years. But because the

Totos are not habituated to consume milk there has been only a small progress in this matter. Recently the Himul Co-operative Dairy Farm has opened a milk collection centre at Totopara. They are purchasing pure milk @ 6.25 rupees per litre and non-fat milk @ 4.25. Needless to say that the bulk of the collection comes from the Nepali squatters who have settled all around. It is found that in all only 15 Totos are supplying milk amounting to about 22 litres per day.

The position of piggery, poultry or goats are also not satisfactory. The beneficiaries reported that most of the pigs, goats or birds which were supplied to them were either very small or of such exotic varieties that they died within a short period. During his investigation the author did not find any such scheme in running condition. The few that were there were maintained in a hopeless fashion where the animals and birds looked under-fed.

### 5.3 HEALTH AND HYGIENIC HABITS

The Totos were left outside the purview of modern medical treatment till the country was free from British rule. Till then the health culture was confined within their traditional system which appears to have been overlooked by Dr. Sanyal. During his earlier visit around 1947 Dr. Sanyal found that 'they take no medicines nor they have any for diseases' (Sanyal:26).

In his dissertation, Roy Burman (1957) however not only mentioned about their indigenous treatment system but also named some of the traditional medicine-men among the Totos and the Nepalis. Even after the introduction of modern medicine the Totos are much attached to their traditional practices of exorcism. At present there are 5 Toto and 5 Nepali exorcists in Totopara as mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Dr. Sanyal however gave a good description of the diseases that the Totos suffer from. "Many suffer from ulcers, sores or leucoderma-like white patches on the face, hands and feet. Sometimes the nose swells, becomes red and invades the face. This has the appearance of leprosy" (Sanyal:26). In this connection the Government of West Bengal sent a Dermatologist for the first time to Totopara in 1950. He had diagnosed the disease to be something other than leprosy, but yaws. The cause of such diseases was stated to be want of proper nourishment and adequate clothing. Besides this Dr. Sanyal had found the Totos suffering from fever, malaria, dysentery and other bowel complaints but he did not find any case of cholera, small pox, tuberculosis or any venereal diseases among them.

Dr. Ashish Dutta, L.M.S. was appointed as Welfare Organiser of Totopara in February 1956. He for the first time introduced the modern medicines among the Totos. A health survey was undertaken in the first week of September 1956 by visiting 42

TABLE - 5.10  
INCIDENCE OF DISEASES IN TOTOPARA IN 1956

Disease	Number of persons suffering from			Remarks
	M	F	T	
1. Deficiency diseases	33	45	78	The deficiency most frequent were those of vitamin A, D and B Complex and also of iodine and calcium. A large number of both sex also suffer from unilateral enlargement. Deficiency is more common among female children below the age of 10 years.
2. Cough	31	38	69	Cough is fairly common among all age-groups.
3. Carries	8	7	15	The Totos are addicted to chewing betel leaves and areca nuts. Also they do not wash the mouth after eating. Strangely enough however the number of people suffering from carries is small.
4. Ulcer	11	8	19	Ordinary ulcer is found among people belonging to all ages.
5. Leucoderma	5	2	7	-
6. Toto Sore	4	1	5	A special type of a sore found among the Totos only.
7. Yaws	8	3	11	-
8. Swelling	8	0	8	Males particularly of the age-group 20-24 were found to suffer from the swelling of the testicles.
9. Dysentery	15	15	30	This includes all such cases of people either suffering from the disease during the survey or that had suffered during the preceding 4 months.
10. Malaria	27	24	51	- do -

Toto families in presence of Roy Burman. The classification of the diseases along with their incidence was as given in Table - 5.10.

The survey work was left incomplete due to the resignation of Dr. Dutta in January 1958. After sometime a mobile medical team with headquarters at Madarihat was provided by the Tribal Welfare Department. This team used to visit Totopara from time to time. Later on Rev. Olav Hodne, the then In-charge of the Cooch Behar branch of the Swedish Mission took some initiative in the matter. In the year 1967 the Swedish Mission established a Dispensary at Totopara and appointed John Lakra as compounder. Besides a qualified doctor was appointed by the Mission to visit the Dispensary once a month from Cooch Behar. As a result of the service of Lakra the health situation of the Totos showed some signs of improvement (Das:100). But Lakra left his job within short time. Thereafter a Garo refugee couple from erstwhile East Pakistan, Sri Harendra Mankhin and Smt. Pritilata Mankhin were selected by the Mission to serve the Dispensary at Totopara. Smt. Mankhin was exclusively appointed as the midwife of the Mission but Sri Harendra Mankhin used to look after other activities of the Mission besides performing his duties as compounder. Meanwhile Rabi Toto who had been trained as a compounder by the Mission at their hospital at Jorai in Cooch Behar district was appointed as a helper to Sri Mankhin. This dedicated Garo couple succeeded in gaining the confidence of the Totos and persuading

them to avail modern medicines. The Swedish Mission as mentioned earlier had to wind up their activities in 1982 and accordingly the Dispensary has been closed since then. Of course the couple has continued to stay at Totopara even after the closure of the Mission. They extend their help to the people as and when necessary in their private capacity. In a sense they have helped to keep alive the link of the Totos with modern medical services.

One Homoeopathy doctor Dr. Apurba Sengupta was posted by the Government at Totopara. But he could not make much headway in introducing the Homoeopathy medicines among the Totos whose life style is not in consonance with the same.

Thus even after four decades of the introduction of modern medicines in Totopara the Totos still remain confined within the world of their traditional superstition due to lack of sincere and sympathetic efforts by the modern medical practitioners and welfare organisers. In case of illness still now the Totos take the help of the traditional Baidangi who makes both diagnosis and prognosis of the disease by invoking the spirits and advises the remedial measures - both treatment and penance. Sometimes the Totos have to spend a large some of money by taking loan if necessary from the money lenders, or by selling a part of the land under their possession. The Welfare Organisers also feel shaky to take any effective measure against these practices or force the patient to avail of modern medical facilities due

to the fear of blames that may be heaped on them in case the patient does not recover.

The patient is allowed to go to a modern medical practitioner only after the permission has been given by the Baidangi. From the field investigation by the author it is found that superstition is not the only factor that refrains the Totos from taking the facilities of modern medicine. The economic constraints are also important because modern medicine that are available to them at present are no less costly and cumbersome for them. At present there are four quack doctors who run their medical shops at Totopara Bazar. Most of them have little practical idea or experience about the use and application of modern medicine. They keep some selected medicines in their unauthorised shops and provide the same to the patients according to their ill-informed diagnosis. Needless to say that they are no less interested in squeezing the patients than the Baidangi.

The doctors from Madarihat Health Centre visit the village only when the diseases take a serious turn and the patient is financially capable to fetch him to his place. On the other hand whenever a Toto patient is admitted to the Madarihat Health Centre, some 22 kms. from their village or to Jalpaiguri Sadar Hospital, he feels very helpless. There is none to look after him. Also it becomes very difficult for most of the Toto patients to communicate with the doctor with his meagre knowledge

of Bengali or Hindi. Besides in most cases it is necessary to purchase the medicines prescribed by the doctors at the hospital which is a very difficult task for them due to lack of acquaintance with the environment of the town and want of money. In such situations the Totos are compelled once again to take loan from the money lenders for making arrangement for treatment including the collection of the passage money of the family members or family friends who might accompany the patient. In early 1992 the second son of Pradip Toto was suffering from Tuberculosis. Pradip is quite aware of modern treatment and the facilities available at Government hospitals. But he became nervous because he had no money to send his son to a hospital or health centre for treatment. At last he decided to sell away his bullocks for this purpose. But considering the harassment faced by them in the health centres and hospitals he finally decided to treat his son by a private medical practitioner at Birpara.

At present, after the formation of the Toto Kalyan Samity, the situation has somewhat changed. The Samity workers are taking sincere efforts to increase the awareness among the people and making arrangements to take the patient to the health centre at Madarihat or the town hospitals at either Alipurduar or Jalpaiguri. But they also are facing great difficulties in procuring the money required for treatment. It is however expected that the situation may become easy in the near future after

the opening of the health centre which has been constructed at Totopara a few years back and is lying vacant due to the non-availability of a doctor.

As regards their hygienic habits, it may be mentioned that the Totos are still now lagging far behind the other communities of the locality. Most of the Totos are very dirty and have little concern about cleanliness. But with the intervention of the literates among them they are now gradually becoming conscious about the adverse effect of their unhygienic habits. Some of them have become habituated in using soaps and taking regular bath. Some of them have also become acquainted with the use of washing soaps for cleansing their clothes. But still now their houses and homesteads are left very dirty. Excreta of domestic pigs and other animals and that of men even are found scattered here and there which no one takes the trouble of cleansing.

Very few Totos have any concern for the proper method of procuring, preserving or using of potable water. Recently Bhakta Toto, the only one to have passed the School Final examination among them has purchased a water filter for his domestic use. But a common Toto is neither aware of the functioning of such a water filter nor has the ability to buy one.

Most of the Totos are heavily addicted to drinking Iew (country liquor) and chewing betel leaves and areca nuts. Such

addiction is one of the root causes of their poverty and diseases.

Most of the Totos have no separate kitchen or latrines. At present only 8 Totos have made a separate provision for kitchens and 6 Totos have constructed separate latrines which they use regularly. The latrines which were constructed under the Government Housing Scheme for many other Totos are not used by them. During investigation they stated that they do not prefer to respond to the call of nature in a closed place because they feel suffocated. They would even now prefer visiting the nearby jungles for this purpose or finish up the exercise through a small hole on the raised platform of their dwelling house beneath which the pigs at the ground level would perform the role of scavengers.

Considering their small number the Health Department has not yet adopted any campaign in favour of birth control among the Totos. But it is interesting to note that during the past few years some of the Totos have become acquainted with the birth control measures through their exposure with the mass media. In this regard Dhaniram Toto and Bhakta Toto informed the author that they have now become conscious of the problems of a large family size and therefore the necessity of adopting family planning measures. Harke Toto, a 42 years old Toto, has recently undergone vasectomy operation somewhere outside Totopara by

introducing himself as a Nepali. Thus despite the intention of the government to the contrary, the Totos are fast catching up with birth control practices.

As far as the food habit of the Totos is concerned no particular food item can be identified as staple food for them. One reason as to why it has so happened may be due to the fact that the Totos are not proficient in agriculture and also they do not have a regular access to any particular food. At present the Totos appear to prefer rice. But since not enough rice is grown in their fields nor can be purchased from the shops due to want of money, they purchase whatever they can from the local market at a minimum possible price. Such food items include rice, maize, marua, kouni, tapioca etc. Besides they take almost all types of meat (except that of dog, cat, snake etc.) and fishes which are available in the surrounding areas. The Totos are carrion eaters also. As and when needed they substitute their food items by collecting different types of leafy vegetables, fruits and tubers from the nearby forests. The Totos generally take two principal meals and two supplementary meals a day. The principal meals are consumed by them during early in the morning and at dusk while the small meals are taken any time between two major meals. They generally introduce boiled cereal in gruel form to a baby at the age of three months. Meat and fishes are offered to the baby at the age of five months in case of a female and

at the age of six months in case of a male child. A pregnant woman is not allowed to eat eggs, fish or milk. They believe that these may cause miscarriage. There is no prohibition in taking any food during the menstruation period of a girl. But a lactating mother is tabooed to take milk, butter and eggs. For about a month after the birth of the baby she is restricted to take any food that has been prepared by adding chilli, oil, butter and any other spices. She is allowed to take butter after the Badi-longwa (butter and cloth taking ceremony). These prejudices deprive them from getting certain foods thereby causing serious malnutrition problems among the pregnant and lactating mothers.

The Totos observe the Puruin i.e., the mourning period after death in the house till Singee-te-oume (purification of the house) which takes place after 5 days in case of female and six days in case of male members of the family. At this time they are tabooed to kill any animal in the house but may consume it if offered by others. They are forbidden to take any type of oil or butter whichever was used for anointing the head of the deceased person. But there is no restriction in taking as much Iew as one may like.

With the lapse of time, during the past few decades the Totos have come in contact with several exotic cultures both at the village level and outside the village. It has caused considerable change in their food habit, system of food preparation

etc. At present the staple food of the economically stable families are rice and maize. On the other hand there is no choice for the poorer section who consume whatever they can collect from the forests or can purchase from the shops with the money earned by them by working as a labour.

The literate section of the Totos have given up taking carrion meat and some other insects like spider, leech etc. On the other hand they have become habituated in consuming milk and milk made products which were not taken by them earlier. Oil and different types of spices are now used while cooking their food. The touchability of food prepared or served by persons other than the Totos are now almost totally abolished among the younger generation.

#### 5.4 HOUSING, ELECTRIFICATION AND AMUSEMENTS

With the spread of education among the Totos, their basic housing pattern is also undergoing some changes. But till now only a few Totos like Dhaniram, Bhakta and Sachin have constructed separate house for cattles and made separate arrangements for letrines. The SC and ST Welfare Department has so far executed several house building schemes from 1965 to 1989 at a cost of Rs. 6,89,748. Some of the Totos have been provided with corrugated roofing sheets at a subsidised price by the Government, from time to time. The number of houses so constructed prior to

1982 is not available. During 1982 to 1989 a total of 41 houses have been constructed for the Totos at 100 per cent subsidy. But the houses provided by the Government have not immediately affected the dwelling position of the Totos due to various reasons. The size and design of the house so constructed is not suitable for the ethnic habit of the people. The house building material except the corrugated sheets or asbestos are supplied by the contractors and are of a very low standard. As a result the houses become dilapidated within a short time. Further the new houses do not follow any pattern regarding their height because of which the ground floor of the house cannot be utilised for traditional purposes. Owing to these reasons large number of Totos do not use these houses for dwelling purpose; instead they use it for storing fuel, foddors etc. A few of the Totos have rebuilt their houses according to their needs by employing the Nepali carpenters.

During the past few years electricity has been made available to the Totos by the Rural Electrification Wing of the West Bengal State Electricity Board. Under the 'Lokadeep' scheme 17 Totos have been provided with domestic connections free of cost. Besides another 8 Totos have availed the domestic connection without any Government aid. They are - Bhakta Toto, Rathin Toto, Jite Toto, Sugrib Toto, Arjun Toto, Muktaram Toto, Bimal Toto and Bhusang Toto.

The life style has changed considerably with the implementation of electrification in Totopara. Previously the Totos used to go to bed after taking their evening meal before sunset. At present they visit the market place, VDO hall or any other common place for gossiping etc. in the evening. The newly formed Toto Kalyan Samity has started 4 night schools at Pujagaon, Panchayatgaon and within the market area by availing electricity from the nearby houses. Reading habit among the literate persons has also somewhat increased after electrification. But unfortunately the supply of power in Totopara is very irregular. The supply line which runs through the deep forests is also often disrupted by the wild elephants. A few of the comparatively well-to-do persons are found to be gradually developing a taste for television programmes. Thus even though Totopara is physically far off, it is being drawn near through the communication network within a very short time the full impact of which will be felt in the near future.

Before the electrification programme was undertaken 3 solar lights were also installed by the Government in Totopara, but they soon became ineffective due to mechanical defects and have remained inoperative since then. The District Industries Centre also took the initiative of installing 12 bio-gas plants for lighting purposes. But these plants remain unused due to lack of awareness on the part of the Totos and the absence of any coordinated follow-up by the administration.

Most of the Totos have given up putting on their traditional costumes. Only a few elderly persons of both sex are found wearing their own garments. Traditionally the Totos were not accustomed to put on coloured dresses but now the younger generation does not appear to have any special fascination for white dresses. The younger boys and girls have become sufficiently habituated to wear pants, shirts, sharees or saloar-kamijes. In the selection of dress material modern Hindi Cinema has greatly influenced their choice. Further the use of luxury goods like snow, talcum powder, scented hair oil, wrist-watch, torch-light, cassette recorders etc. have become very popular among them. Rathin, Muktaram, Runche, and Hanu among the Totos have purchased cassette recorders which they are very fond of playing during their pastime.

Nowadays radio has reached even in the remotest areas of the country and Totopara is no exception to that. A good number of Toto families possesses transistors over which they listen to mainly the Nepali and Hindi programmes. The radio is thus playing a vital role to arouse awareness among them of the outside world and in moulding their tastes and opinions. Television however is yet to reach the common people. At present only Bimal Toto has a television set. Of course apart from him there are a number of non-Toto households where television is available. The Totos sometimes frequent the house of Bimal Toto or others to have a glimpse of the audio-visual programmes. It is therefore

expected that television will play a bigger role in near future. The Totos also are developing a habit of visiting the VDO parlour that has been opened in the market area of Totopara by a Behari businessman.

There was a time not long ago in the past when the Totos were illiterates. As such the reading of news papers, magazines or story books was a distant dream for them. Bhakta Toto and Dhaniram Toto were the first among them to begin reading news papers or literary magazines whenever such things were available to them. At present (February 1992) 5 among the Totos have become regular subscribers to a Calcutta based daily named 'Overland'. They are : Bhakta Toto, Dhaniram Toto, Bimal Toto, Muktarām Toto and Sachin Toto.

### 5.5 OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSIFICATION

In the past life was comparatively uniform among all Totos. Tungcha-hwa (food gathering), Lenging-kong-hwa or simply Kong-hwa (slash and burn cultivation), Hui-hwa (porterage duties under Bhutanese administration), Picho-hwa (long trade tours) or Angda-hwa (short trade tours mainly for barter purposes) were the important economic activities in which every one participated. As such there was no occupational division among the Totos. In course of the struggle for their livelihood the different families would cooperate with one another through the established

custom of Nengbei-suwa and Lingcha-suwa (reciprocal exchange of labour) and any one violating this practice would be punished by the Latchi-Jangoa (village council) in the presence of the Kazi.

However with the passage of time occupational diversification has taken place. Settled agriculture in one form or another has become the most important occupation for most of the Totos. Even the Totos who are primarily engaged in service or business are directly or indirectly connected with agriculture. Of course, besides agriculture, some of the Totos are trying to adapt themselves with other non-traditional occupations. Some of them have even entangled themselves with such economic activities as money lending or illegal felling of trees.

The land of Totopara has become overburdened with growing population. The share of per capita agricultural land has become totally uneconomic. After the closure of the Bhutan border the gleaning area of the Totos have been reduced considerably causing serious disruption to the collection of different types of vegetables, tubers, fruits and animal fodder. It would be our endeavour now to examine how the Totos are making adjustments with the changed situation and also what are the consequences of such adjustment.

In Table - 5.11 the total population of Totos has been first classified into three major categories; Children, Adults

and Aged. 234 persons belonging to the category of children are either dependents or helpers in minor domestic works. The remaining 86 are engaged in studies.

TABLE - 5.11

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN AMONG THE TOTOS IN 1991-92

Description of Age-group	Occupation	Number of persons	Percentage to total
Children			
	Dependent and helpers	234	25.3
	Students	86	9.3
Adults			
	Housewifery	186	20.1
	Agriculture	215	23.1
	Cattle keeping	48	5.2
	Business	24	2.5
	Service	20	2.2
	Day labour	93	10.1
Aged			
	Elderly dependents	20	2.2
TOTAL		926	100.0

Source : Field Investigation by the author with the help of Dhaniram Toto and G.P. Sharma.

Among the Totos there are 186 women who are engaged in household works like rearing of children, cooking, preparation of foddors for the pigs, collection of fuels and vegetables from the nearby forests etc. Besides these they also lend their hands in agricultural operations during the sowing and harvesting times.

The single largest category of agriculture keeps busy 215 persons or 23.1 per cent of the total population. However this figure needs some qualifications. It should be remembered that most of the Totos including even those who are employed in service sector are directly or indirectly connected with agriculture. We have included under this category only such persons for whom agriculture is the mainstay. Of course this applies equally well about the other categories.

Among the business people, there are 10 bullock-cart owners whose clan names are shown against their personal names in the list given below : Rathin Toto (Nubebei), Loura Toto (Nubebei), Harke Toto (Dankobei), Gechung Toto (Dankobei), Sugrib Toto (Dankobei), Bimal Toto (Linkaijibei), Surdas Toto (Dantrobei), Garbe Toto (Dantrobei), Lashe Toto (Dantrobei) and Durga Toto (Dantrobei). The owners themselves do not always ply the carts but engage their family members in the main or occasionally engage labourer for the purpose. The carts are usually deployed for carrying sands or stone chips, fodders, fuel and fire wood, bamboos, soil for the construction of oven, and also for carrying areca nuts and gingers to the market. There are 14 other persons of both sexes who engage themselves in different types of minor business. Recently 3 of the Toto youths have started a grocery shop at Totopara Bazar after taking loan from the local Kshetriya Gramin Bank. Another 5 Totos are dealing in

mainly bamboos, areca nuts, vegetables and oranges. However orange business has suffered considerably after the diversion of the trade route from Totopara to Funtsolling. There are 6 other women traders who are engaged in brewing illegal country liquor (Iew) and selling them in the market place.

Some 20 Totos including 3 women are now employed in different Government services within the village itself. Though none of them has passed the Madhyamic Examination (except Bhakta Toto) they have got employment owing to the sympathetic attitude of the State Government. The Government has taken a special resolution at the Cabinet level to give special consideration to the underdeveloped tribes like the Totos of Jalpaiguri and Lodhas and Birhors of South Bengal in matters of employment. The salary and nature of job of most of the employed Totos excepting Bhakta, Dhaniram, Muktaram, Bimal and Sugrib are not significant. Still, their economic condition is somewhat better because they enjoy a greater security than others which in turn has helped them attain a superior position in their own society.

There are 86 persons who are students reading in different schools. Among them 67 students comprising 58 boys and 9 girls are reading in Totopara Primary School (Toto Kalyan Bidya Mandir). Another 12 boys and only one girl are reading in Dhana-pati Junior High School, Totopara. Besides them 4 Toto boys and one girl are reading in the Mahakalguri Mission High School, and only one Toto boy is reading in Rangulibajna High School.

It has already been mentioned that the entire production system of the Totos was based on mutual reciprocity. As such no day-labourer system was prevalent among the Totos. But at present there are about 93 persons who earn their subsistence requirements by rendering wage labour to others. In Totopara there is little scope for getting work throughout the year. Sometimes they are being provided by the Gram Panchayat or the Forest Department or employed by the private contractors. Due to lack of their proficiency in certain types of construction work the contractors usually do not like them. As a result they often have no work at hand or offer their services to look after the kitchen gardens or cattle of non-Totos who have settled in their midst. Needless to say that most of such labourers live in a very miserable condition.

During the past few years the Bhutan Carbide and Chemicals Ltd. and the Geological Survey of India (Bhutan) have installed their work site at Hourri valley within Bhutan about 5 kms. from Totopara towards north-west. They require a large number of labourers during seasons for quarrying the necessary minerals for preparation of carbide etc. At least 200 labourers are at present deployed by them as labourers on daily wage basis of whom about 30-40 persons are Totos of both sexes (Table - 5.12). They are paid @ 20.00 rupees for male and @ 16.00 rupees for female labourers. The Senior Engineer of the mine informed the

author that 7 Toto female workers are now getting Rs. 18.00 per day as wages because of their sincere and skilful performance.

TABLE - 5.12

NUMBER OF TOTOS ENGAGED IN THE MINES AT HOURI VALLEY  
(BHUTAN) AS DAILY WAGE LABOURER IN 1991-92

Period	Male	Female	Total
Nov 1991	22	12	34
Dec 1991	20	13	33
Jan 1992	21	12	33
Feb 1992	12	21	33
March 1992	18	24	42
April 1992	27	38	65
May 1992	13	18	31
Average	19.0	19.7	38.7

source : Field Investigation by the author.

Note : Apart from those shown in the table there are 6 Master Roll regular workers from among the Totos serving with the Bhutan Carbide and Chemicals Ltd.

### 5.6 SAVING AND INDEBTEDNESS

According to Toto social control mechanism it was customary to provide the share of excess production of cereals, bamboo or any other thing to his neighbours who may be in distress. In fact 'reciprocity involves exchange of goods between people bound in nonmarket, nonhierarchical relationship with one another' (Eohannan:232). It is in this spirit that Angda-hwa or the

so-called minor trade tours of the Totos were conducted in the past. It may also be remembered in this connection that according to Toto social custom all the personal belongings of the deceased including cash, ornaments and even the radios or the wrist watches were buried along with the dead body in the grave.

The situation however began to change drastically after a branch of the Uttar Banga Kshetriya Gramin Bank was established at Totopara Bazar on 25 May 1984 in a house rented by Rabi Toto. Initially the Totos were very shy about the Bank. Meanwhile the Bank employees started campaigning among the Totos in which task they were assisted by Bhakta Toto and Sugrib Toto, the Supervisor and Peon of the Bank respectively, and also by the local Gram Panchayat Members. In the year 1991, there are a total of 585 savings accounts and 185 recurring deposit account in the Bank out of which the number of accounts possessed by the Totos are 153 and 7 respectively.

During the past few years the Gramin Bank has involved itself in the development schemes for the Totos taken up by the Gram Panchayat. The Totopara-Ballalguri Panchayat Samity undertook several schemes with a view to generate self employment among the Totos. These schemes include dairy, piggery, supply of bullocks etc. Accordingly 150 such schemes have been implemented covering 150 Toto families costing an amount of Rs. 6,00,000.00 including margin money and subsidy. Out of the total amount the

Bank has provided Rs. 2.50 lakhs as loan to the Totos. Even though more than 80 per cent of the account holders among the Totos are carrying on their business on a regular basis, the mode of repayment of loan instalments is not satisfactory. In fact the Totos have become habituated in getting non-refundable 100 per cent subsidised loans from the Government. As such they are less interested in repayment of loans that might be offered to them. Also no significant improvement has been noticed as regards the economic condition of the Totos even after implementation of the schemes. Lack of technical knowledge on the part of the Totos and coordinated efforts by the relevant Departments like agriculture, animal husbandry, veterinary, panchayat etc. are some of the constraints in the way of success of the schemes.

But still a large number of Totos, even including those who have availed of the facilities provided by the Bank, are used to taking loans in cash or in kind from the local money lenders at an exorbitant rate of interest to perform their penances and worships for which the Bank would not come forward. Their addiction to alcohol is also often responsible for leading them to the doors of money lenders who charge an interest rate ranging from 50 to 100 per cent for a period not exceeding one year.

The author had undertaken a survey of indebtedness among the Totos in 1981, a few years before the Gramin Bank was established. The situation must have changed somewhat after the Bank

came into existence. However the situation as prevailing in 1981 can be taken to be an indicator of the direction in which the Toto society was making its move.

The author had surveyed 77 families out of 131 families of Totos that were there at that time. Out of these 77 families 52 had taken some cash loan while 12 had taken crop advances (Table - 5.13).

TABLE - 5.13

INCIDENCE OF INDEBTEDNESS AMONG THE TOTOS (1981)

Total number of Toto families	131	
Number of families surveyed by the author	77	
Number of families taking loans in cash	52	
Number of families taking crop advance	12	
Number of money lenders :		
Toto	nil	
non-Toto	14	
Number of persons providing crop advance :		
Toto	6	
non-Toto	6	
Amount of total cash loans		Rs. 12,349.50
Amount of crop advance provided by :		
Toto		Rs. 1,390.00
non-Toto		Rs. 6,170.00
Total		Rs. 7,560.00

It was found during the survey that one Marwari merchant

alone had offered Rs. 3487.00 to 23 Totos. On the other hand one unidentified merchant had invested Rs. 3750.00 as crop advance against bamboos. From Table - 5.13 it is revealed that cash loan was provided by 14 money lenders all of whom were non-Totos. On the other hand among the 12 money lenders who have made crop advances 6 belonged to the Toto community itself. This indicates that the Totos were violating their own social customs and have also begun exploiting their own people.

A few years after the survey made by the author, Dhaniram and Bhakta Toto had conducted another survey of indebtedness among the Totos in 1986. Neither of these surveys were conducted on the basis of any random sampling and therefore any estimate of the population total is unwarranted. They however serve the purpose of providing a fair idea of the nature of loan transactions, the type of parties involved and also the amount of loan along with the collateral securities if any. The data obtained by Dhaniram and Bhakta are presented in Table - 5.14 which may be read along with the data collected by the author a few years before the latter survey was undertaken to see that the situation has not changed for the better immediately after the setting of the commercial Bank at Totopara.

It was found during the survey that the Totos were deprived of getting actual price for their plantation crops whenever they took crop advances. It was also found that the Marketing

TABLE - 5.14

## NATURE OF LOAN TRANSACTIONS AT TOTOPARA IN 1986

Description	Ethnic identity of lenders	Number of Toto borrowers	Amount in Rs.
Crop Advance :	Marwari- 1	4	525
@ Rs. 100 to 150 per 100 bamboos & Rs. 1 to 2 per <u>pan</u> of arecanuts (80 nos.) for the particular season.	Behari - 2	2	470
	Toto - 6	16	1390
	Bengali- 1	2	950
	Oraon - 1	1	400
	Others - 1	1	3750
Cash loan :	Marwari- 3	28	3677
@ 100 per cent interest for one year or part of the year.	Behari - 5	30	2877
	U.P.Muslim - 1	7	1585
	Nepali - 4	4	650
Loan against mortgage of land :	Nepali -13	13	14700
@ 100 per cent interest for one year or part of the year.	(All of them are migrants from Nepal issuing loan to the Totos against mortgage of land measuring approx. 202 bighas)		
	Nepali - 1	1	160
	(This is a migrant from Assam issuing loan to the Totos against mortgage of land measuring approx. 5 bighas)		
	Nepali - 1	1	400
	(This is a migrant from Bhutan issuing loan to the Totos against mortgage of land measuring approx. 10 bighas)		

Co-operative Society which was formed for the benefit of the Totos had failed to make any dent into the marketing network.

Also the process of illegal money lending against the mortgage of land was going on unabated. However both the money lenders as also the borrowers were very secretive about disclosing the facts to any body. It was also alleged that sometimes some of the Totos lease out their areca-nut plants to more than one persons and therefore the traders have to be very cautious while extending crop loans to them these days.

The Co-operative Marketing Society was formed at Totopara to save the Totos from the exploitation of the contractors and unscrupulous merchants. After formation it started transaction of bamboos between Totopara and the neighbouring tea estates. For sometime the society earned a good profit for its members and the exploitation by the merchants was reduced considerably. But during the past few years the society has become defunct and the house occupied by the society at one time has been rented out to the local merchants.

The Life Insurance Corporation is yet to make any impact upon the Totos. An LIC Agent has made during the past few years a few visits to Totopara but to no avail. At present only Bhakta Toto is the only policy-holder of LIC at Totopara.

Among the companies dealing in mutual and chit funds, one Favourate Investment Ltd. had started its activities in Totopara about 5 years ago. Many non-Totos and two of the Totos had

become the clients of the saving company. But it stopped functioning after sometime.

Next to that one Dependable Small Savings Company began functioning at Totopara. At least 7 Totos became subscribers to them. But after a few months the Agent stopped the collection of instalments from them. The money accumulated so far was also not refunded to the subscribers and the Totos were deceived once again.

In the recent past the Peerless General Finance and Investment Company Ltd. has started its activities in Totopara. They have appointed Agent from among the Toto community itself. In 1991 the number of Toto subscribers to the various savings schemes of Peerless stood at 25 with a total collection of a premium of Rs. 5,000.00 per month. Among the Peerless subscribers Chimshe Toto, Budhbare Toto and Bhushang Toto were found to contribute Rs. 1,000.00 per month.

#### 5.7 INEQUALITY OF INCOME AND STRATIFICATION

At present the whole Toto community can be stratified into several income groups according to the income level of the different households. The author had made a survey into this phenomena with the help of Dhaniram Toto, Bhakta Toto and G.P. Sharma in 1991-92. The classification into groups has been

determined according to the given proforma of the District Rural Development Agency, Jalpaiguri, and the result so obtained is presented in Table - 5.15 (the detailed list is presented in an Annexure to this chapter).

TABLE - 5.15  
STRATIFICATION OF TOTO HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO  
ANNUAL INCOME 1991-92

Level of income (in Rs.)	Status	No. of Families	Percentage to Total
Above 11,000	Above poverty level	35	19.5
8,500 - 11,000	Below poverty level	20	11.1
6,000 - 8,500	Very Poor	55	30.5
4,000 - 6,000	Very Very Poor	21	11.6
Below 4,000	Distressed	49	27.2

It should be mentioned that the data presented in Table - 5.15 is a rough approximation of the situation and the precision which is often the characteristic feature of such data could not be ensured with 100 per cent accuracy under the circumstances in which they were collected by the author himself. In some cases the total income was estimated with the help of the head of the household or other responsible members through discussion with them in the presence of Dhaniram Toto, Bhakta Toto and G.P. Sharma.

The families living above the poverty level according to the norms adopted by the DRDA constituted 19.5 per cent. Among them those who are engaged in different government services have a stable income. The people in this category also earned from their agricultural crops, from business or arecanut plantation or bamboo groves. Among them 20 families mainly depend on service and partly on agriculture. Two of the families depend partly on service and partly on illegal activities like felling of the trees or sale of home-made liquors in the local market. Money lending and letting their houses on rent are the other source of income of some of the families besides agriculture. Among them only a few families including that of Bhakta Toto, Dhaniram Toto and Sugrib Toto are gradually acquiring the qualities of middle class both culturally and economically. They represent the best qualities of both continuity and change. Accordingly they are trying hard to retain and promote their traditional cultural traits on the one hand and adopt the qualities of mainstream Indian culture on the other.

At the other extreme there are 49 households constituting 27.2 per cent of the total whose economic condition is miserable and they are identified as distressed. Sometimes they cultivate their small plots of unfertile land and produce a meagre quantity of food grains which hardly satisfies their requirements even for a few months. This group of people are not proficient in agriculture or in any other occupation excepting

their traditional callings. They mainly supplement their income from forest collection. The women folk among them spend almost the whole day collecting pipul, soap nuts, naglata, wild cinnamon, cassia leaf etc. from the forests and selling them to the merchants at Totopara Bazar. Till recently they used to earn a considerable amount during certain parts of the year by carrying oranges from Bhutan to Totopara. But after the border has been sealed and the orange trade diverted via Funtsolling, their gleaning area has dwindled causing irreparable damages to them. After the arrest of Ujen Toto in February 1992 inside Bhutan the poor among the Totos have become afraid of entering Bhutan and therefore their condition has further worsened.

In between these two extremes are the general category of majority of Totos who live below poverty line and manage their existence through a pragmatic blend of assorted activities like agriculture, business, day labourer etc. With rare exceptions among them the cultural level leaves much to be desired.

#### 5.8 PROGNOSTICS AND SECULAR TRENDS

Looked at from the angle of the various clans among the Totos, the Dankobei and the Dantrobei clans appear to have considerably adapted themselves with the transformed socio-economic situation and modernisation of the village. One reason as to why it has so happened is that the members of both these clans have

been traditionally settled in areas contiguous to the Totopara Tribal Welfare Centre. The Social Welfare Organiser entrusted with the task of implementation of developmental programmes initially came into contact more frequently with the Dankobeis and Dantrobeis. The Agricultural Demonstration Farm, the Primary School and also the headquarters of the Swedish Mission were all located within the area inhabited by these two clans. Thus their greater exposure as compared to others may be the prime reason for their comparative advancement.

It may be recollected here that the Subba and the Gapu among the Totos were selected traditionally from the Diringchango-bei and Dankobei clans respectively. During the British period the Gapu became more important with the administration and thus the centre of power was transferred to the Dankobei clan. The Dankobei clan members appear to have consolidated their position during the long British Rule. The situation must have remained unchanged till the introduction of the statutory Panchayat System. During the early days no one from among the Totos was selected as a Panchayat member. One Mech from Khayerbari village was selected as the Panchayat and was entrusted to collect the Chowkidari taxes from villages including Totopara. After a few decades one Panchayat and one Chowkidar were appointed for Totopara from among the Toto tribals. Since then a third front was opened in the power politics of Totopara with the appointment of the Panchayat, besides the Kazi and the Gapu. This time the centre of

power shifted in favour of the Dantrobei clan from whose ranks the Panchayat was selected. During the 50s and early 60s Gendra Toto belonging to the Dantrobei clan was the most powerful Panchayat member. On the contrary the traditional Gapu, Dhanapati Toto, who was contemporary to him, was a very timid person. Dhanapati often failed to exert his power. As a result Gendra Toto began to wield greater power than him at the level of intra-village and inter-village relations. He also became the main liaison between the villagers and the Government officials. After him his adopted son Amepe Toto became the Panchayat of Totopara. He was also a very powerful person and was held in high esteem by everyone. Muktaram Toto, the present Pradhan of Totopara Gram Panchayat, also belongs to the Dantrobei clan.

Since the last few years a new type of leadership is emerging from among the literate Toto youths. There has been a Poikimsha or Club house in Totopara. Initially it was a thatched house. Later on a pucca house was constructed with the aid of the Government. The Toto youths used to gather there regularly and discuss their community affairs and also practise their traditional cultural functions. After sometime however the house was occupied by the Toto family on whose land the Poikimsha was constructed and the Club house for the Totos was no longer there.

In the recent past some of the educated Toto youths have taken the initiative of forming a voluntary organisation named

Toto Kalyan Samity. The Samity has taken up basically a two-fold programme, viz. (a) to preserve and promote the traditional cultural heritage of the Totos, and (b) to spread literacy and modern outlook among them by creating an awareness against superstitions, drunkenness etc. In this connection they have begun holding regular classes at 4 adult education centres set up at different localities of Totopara without any Government help. They have also begun organising practice sessions of their traditional dances and songs. The organisation also provides help to the sick persons by providing them with medical care and taking them to the hospitals if necessary. Thus at present the centre of power is once again making a shift and both the Gram Panchayat and the Samity should come to terms if they intend to avoid a possible collision. But what is interesting is to observe that the leadership of the Samity is in the hands of Dhaniram Toto and Bhakta Toto both of whom belong to the Dantrobei clan. Also this non-political organisation is gradually becoming popular among the Totos. Even some of the more important decisions concerning the village are being taken at the Samity level thereby superseding the Latchi-Jangoa on occasions.

There was a time when allowing outsiders to stay at Totopara for the night was an offence. Under the forces of circumstances, a large number of non-Totos particularly the Nepalis have already settled at Totopara for all intents and purposes. In this, responsibility cannot be fixed upon the Totos universally.

However a new phenomenon completely contrary to the older traditions has set in. To let houses on rent was totally unknown to the Totos. But at present at least 7 Totos have let out their houses on a rental basis. There are two types of houses which have been let out on hire - firstly, the houses which were provided to them by the Government under Indira Aabash Yojana and, then, the houses constructed by them on their own (Table - 5.16):

TABLE - 5.16

HOUSES LET OUT ON HIRE BY THE TOTOS IN TOTOPARA 1991

Sl. No.	Name of the owner	Name of the Tenant	Monthly rent in Rs.
<u>Houses constructed under I.A.Y.</u>			
1.	Sharmasing Toto	Mr. Dan Lama (Yolmo) and Mrs. Suchana (Toto)	50.00
2.	Kabiraj Toto	A Bengalee Carpenter	50.00
3.	Mindu Toto	A Nepali of Bhutan origin	50.00
4.	Habule Toto	A Nepali of Bhutan origin	50.00
<u>Houses constructed by oneself</u>			
5.	Rabi Toto	U.B.K. Gramin Bank, also Grocers and Merchants	300.00
6.	Bimal Toto	Merchants	500.00
7.	Krishna Toto	A Behari running a VDO hall	300.00

Not only this. A more significant event has taken place in 1992 when for the first time a well-off Toto has purchased a

few acres of land in Ballalguri in the nearby plains, where the soil is much fertile and suitable for wet cultivation. This is one of the indication of their growing awareness of the need to adjust with the changing circumstances thereby opening the avenue for future migration in search of better livelihood.

As may be observed from Table - 5.16 that a Toto lady is living at Totopara as a tenant under a Toto house owner. The case of Smt. Suchana Toto is revealing. Suchana has been the daughter of Dinesh Toto, the late Gapu of the village. She read upto Class X but was expelled from the community by the Latchi-Jangoa for having sexual relation with a non-Toto (a Mech primary school teacher). Later on she married a Nepali Christian youth named Dan Lama of the Yolmo community. For the first time among the Totos she and her brother have been converted into Christianity in December 1991. Her brother Dilip Toto is a student of Class IX and reading in Mahakalguri Mission High School. Suchana is living with her husband in a house rented in from Sharmasingh Toto at Totopara itself. Both she and her husband are earning an amount of Rs. 900.00 per month from their service under the Government. The house and its interior decoration is very simple, but maintained neat and clean which deserves special mention. Sometime back Suchana came to the author and asked him if she was entitled to get a share of her father's properties. The author could not give a firm reply as the matter was complicated. Firstly Suchana has been ex-communicated by the Latchi-Jangoa

for her sexual relation with a non-Toto. Secondly according to the traditional Toto custom the properties are divided on the principle of male equigeniture, and a married daughter has no right on her father's property. Finally Suchana has become a Christian in 1991. So she can no longer be considered as their kith and kin by the Totos. The author raised the question to the Toto youths belonging to the Toto Kalyan Samity. They were unanimous that Suchana had no claim because of the above reasons upon the properties of her father. When she was told by the author about it Suchana expressed her desire to approach the judicial courts to establish her claims at an appropriate time.

From the above episode it is clear that the traditional system of property rights is proving inadequate to cope with the modern times but no new concept has yet emerged to replace the old orthodoxy.

In this connection reference may be made to another episode that has taken place during the middle of 1992. The sister of Dhaniram Toto fled away with a Nepali youth. Under normal circumstances she should not have any further links with Totopara. But Dhaniram was concerned about his sister and traced her after lot of enquiries here and there at a place near Dhaulabari in Nepal off the Naxalbari border of Bengal. Dhaniram went there and stayed for a few days with his sister. He was happy to find her moderately well placed in a middle level peasant family with her husband.

Desertion or migration from Totopara by the Totos has taken place even in the past but it never assumed any serious dimension. The Totos have been compelled to leave the village under three different situations. They are, (1) search of better livelihood, (2) ex-communication from the village by the Latchi-Jangoa, and (3) elopement with the non-Totos.

It is very difficult to obtain a full record of all such migrations. The events which had taken place long back in the past cannot be recollected with absolute accuracy even by the elderly respondents. However if such events are grouped together over a certain time period then the possibility of errors may be minimised as far as practicable. Roy Burman had mentioned that some Totos would migrate to Bandapani Tea Estate whenever they faced economic hardships at home. But he did not make any probe into the matter. It is possible that after their orange gardens had died out and before they could diversify their occupations, a number of Totos preferred migration rather than starvation (Table - 5.17).

The data regarding migration was collected by the author from Bandapani Tea Estate, Totopara Welfare Centre and also from discussion with the Toto and Nepali respondents. It is not the exactness of the data which is pertinent for our discussion but the general trend as manifested in the same. It is found that of the 32 cases of migration, 8 migrated in search of better livelihood, 4 were ex-communicated obviously for one offence or another,

TABLE - 5.17

## MIGRATION OF TOTOS FROM TOTOPARA

Period	Reason of Migration			Place of Migration	Sex of Migrants	
	Search of better livelihood	ex-commu-nication	elopement		M	F
Upto 1950	5	2	-	**Calcutta	1	-
				Bandapani	4	2
1951-1960	2	2	2	Shillong	1	-
				Bhutan	-	1
				Ballalguri-	-	1
				Suktee T.E.-	-	1
				Untraced	1	1
1961-1970	1	-	5	Bhutan	1	-
				Ballalguri-	-	1
				Khairbari	-	1
				Bandapani	-	2
				Untraced	-	1
1971-1980	-	-	6	*Totopara	-	2
				Bhutan	-	1
				Assam	-	1
				Untraced	-	2
1981-1990	-	-	3	Nepal	-	1
				Bhutan	-	1
				Ballalguri-	-	1
1991-1992	-	-	4	Nepal	-	1
				Bhutan	-	1
				Untraced	-	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>

\*At present living in Totopara.

\*\*In 1951 Census conducted by A. Mitra one person was enumerated at Calcutta as Toto speaking.

and the single largest category of 20 cases were migration with elopement. It is also significant to observe that from around 1961 all cases of migration have been that of elopement of Toto females.

Gosta Toto son of Lengdia Toto who had left for Shillong later on came back to Totopara and is now living there. He has been accepted by the Toto society after performing a Sangai-lawmei or penance as prescribed by the Latchi-Jangoa. There are 8 persons comprising 4 males and 4 females who had migrated to Bandapani Tea Estate from time to time upto 1965. Among them only Dorje (Lamba) Toto and Goicharan Toto returned to Totopara after sometime and were allowed to stay there for the rest of their lives by the village council. But they were not accepted as the full member of the Toto society. Their property rights were forfeited and they no longer enjoyed the right to participate in the Omchhu and Maiyu festivals. Another two persons Domerom (Maila) Toto and Bange Toto never returned to their native village. They died there at the Bandapani tea garden.

In 1992 Doli Toto, daughter of Domerom Toto, who is now about 42 years of age was discovered by the author at Bandapani. She is now married to one Ratan Thapa, a Nepali of Mongar extraction, and has herself been sufficiently acculturated as a Nepali. She told the author that she had once visited Totopara to meet her cousin brother Setenji Toto but was not interested to return permanently to her ancestral village. Only one female among those

who had migrated to Bandapani named Kali Toto had returned to Totopara but was not accepted by the Toto society. She died in January 1992 in a wretched condition all alone in the streets of Totopara Bazar. There are two other females who are living in Totopara at present after their return home but they also have not been accepted by the Toto society. It is possible that they also may face the fate of Kali Toto or else they may be silently ignored to lead a honourable life like Suchana Toto or the sister of Dhaniram.

But from all that has been narrated so far it is perfectly clear that the Toto society is poised for a big transformation where the communal solidarity will have to come to terms with the freedom of the individual. As mentioned earlier even the singing of songs or playing of any musical instruments on occasions other than religious and by anyone other than the authorised persons have been a taboo according to the Toto social customs. But with the spread of education and influences of the neighbouring cultures, particularly that of the media, the sound of music can no longer be resisted. During one of his recent visits to Totopara on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of Birman Toto with the daughter of Wancheng Toto held on 12.4.1992, the author found that Hindi and Nepali popular songs were being played over the loudspeaker. Not only that, soon afterwards some Toto youths themselves began to play musical instruments

resembling the bakumq (secred drums) and also the bamboo-made flutes. A number of boys and girls assembled together and began dancing with the rhythm of music. And the author stood by silently as a witness to the collapse of the dead-weight of traditions and the pioneering of the new.