

PREFACE

The thesis on “**Socio-Economic Status of Tribal People in Mal Subdivision of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal: A Geographical Analysis**” is the outcome of my research work carried on during the years 2011-2017. This is an honest attempt to highlight the gram panchayat level spatial distribution of different tribal groups and their social, economic and cultural conditions based on the data obtained from the extensive field survey and secondary sources of information. This study focuses on some of the neglected areas of research because not much work has been done on the spatial organizations of tribal society living in Dooars region and their social structure as expressed in identities such as economic conditions, community, language, custom, education and religion at the grass root levels. The scholars from Sociology, History and Anthropology studied more about the tribal people rather than the Geographers.

There are historical and sociological backgrounds of the socio-economic pursuits of the study region. Attempts have been made in the present thesis to discuss the historical legacy of plantation economy and migration of the Dravidian tribal people from Chhotonagpur plateau region. For these interpretations, outcome of different historical and sociological researches are incorporated to draw a clear picture of the tribal society of the region.

In handling spatially-disaggregated data, I realized the limitations of census data as well as other official data, especially when the areal unit of study is gram panchayat (GP). It was, therefore, necessary to generate primary data from the field to establish the ground truths about the economic and socio-cultural information. In the present study, in order to focus on socio-economic status of tribal people of Mal subdivision, three social variables such as demography, health, education and three economic variables such as farming systems, employment conditions and infrastructural facilities are studied. I have tried to use statistical techniques in cause-effect analysis to solve the problems of tribal people by Pearson’s product moment correlation, chi-square test and HDI indices to assess the status of different tribal groups. The hypothesis assumed in the thesis has been proved by acute statistical techniques and analysis.

The present study is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter is aimed to discuss the introductory part of the research and location details of the study region. The second chapter briefly traces the physical and cultural background of the study area. Third chapter is concerned with the spatial distribution of major tribal groups living in the study region. This chapter describes the individual tribal communities in the light of their socio- economic

conditions. Chapter 4 deals with the social status of tribal people. Similarly, chapter 5 elaborates the economic status of tribal people. These two chapters are most vital in the thesis where comparative analyses are also made between the tribes and non-tribes to evaluate the status of tribal people. Sixth chapter in the thesis focuses the impact of modern technology upon the tribal society and economy above all tribal livelihood. Seventh and eighth chapters describe the problems and probable solutions of the tribal people respectively. All the above discussed aspects have been dealt within the thesis in a holistic manner. Attempts have been made to give most recent and up to date data and examples in each chapter.

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