

PREFACE

Education is the process by which transmission of established cultural and social values is made and new ideas and thought-patterns are created in individuals. Through the performance of this function, individuals are inducted into the cultural values and socially approved behaviour-patterns and their orientations towards social institutions are formed. Education is thus an organised effort on the part of the society.

In a society that is rapidly changing and becoming more independent, an individual is required to learn new skills and learn to interact with people of different categories. In the present times therefore, education is carried out through a large and highly complex organisation with established goals, defined structure and procedures for reaching these goals. Education is thus not only deliberate instruction, it is also organised instruction.

Formal education system is now considered as a very important means in achieving rapid economic development and in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal

opportunity. Educational backwardness in general and among the backward communities in particular, therefore, is considered by the nation as a bottleneck to the country's developmental process. Expansion of educational facilities among the scheduled tribe communities in India, therefore, forms the major programme of special development of these communities. This expansion is considered as a social investment by the nation to achieve rapid socio-economic development of these communities. It postulates increases in productivity, job-opportunity, economic development and social justice to them.

People belonging to the tribal communities are also experiencing a great impact on their social, political and economic life as a result of some factors. Social changes are taking place among them in a greater degree after the Indian Independence and especially after launching the development plans. Social change is, however, a complex phenomenon; it is the result of interplay of a number of factors. Education is one of these factors in case of the scheduled tribe communities. The spread of education to such communities has had repercussions on every aspects of their life. The present study seeks to ascertain the role of education in bringing about changes among the scheduled tribes of

North Bengal. It is to be stated, however, that education can not be viewed as the only responsible factor for social changes in these communities; but it is one of the important factors in the complex process of social change.

The present study aims at analysing the impact of education on the attitude-expectation and behaviour pattern of tribal people of Nimitjhora T.L. and Menderbari villages under Kalchini P.S. of the Jalpaiguri district. The reports and studies on educational backwardness notwithstanding, there is hardly any comparative study of the impact of education on them in different social settings and culture.

This work seeks to throw light on some of the important aspects of tribal societies of North Bengal. Whether the process of socio-economic development of scheduled tribe population has been facilitated by the spread of education and if so, what is the rate of impact of education at different levels? Do all of them realize equally the importance of education? Are they becoming conscious of modern and rational values towards their major social institutions? Do they break away from their traditional occupational pattern? The complexity of the problem called for the use of various techniques during the course of field study.

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The analysis presented in the following pages shows the trend of changes in the attitudes, social institutions and social behaviour of the tribal people of North Bengal, which education has brought in its wake. It also reveals the extent to which educational progress among the scheduled tribes of North Bengal in different settings has been instrumental in bringing about social changes and in what respects has it failed to penetrate in their traditional pattern of behaviour.

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