

ABSTRACT

The Scheduled tribes or Adivasi people in India are considered as the earliest inhabitant of the country. To relate with their distinct way of life often the phrase Jal Jungle and Zameen is used as they prefer to live their life maintaining a strong kin relationship with the mother nature. The Constitution of India in Article 366(25) defines the Scheduled Tribe. Also the Constitution of India gives many a social safeguards to the scheduled tribe people by special provisions in it. The present study region, Siliguri sub-division of Darjiling district, is situated between the latitudinal extension of 26°23' N to 26°57' N and longitudinal extension of 88°07' E to 88°31' E. Presently the sub-division consists of one municipal corporation i.e. Siliguri Municipal Corporation (part) and four community development blocks i.e. Matigara C.D. Block, Naxalbari C.D. Block, Phansidewa C.D. Block & Kharibari C.D. Block. And these consist of 22 Gram Panchayats and 14 Census Towns. According to census 2011, in the study area 15.08 percentage of the total population is tribal population and only 51.93 percent of this population is literate. With this trend it is obvious that higher education percentage is also significantly low. So, there is an ample scope to study the present educational development status of the tribal people, to find out the hindrances to their educational development and come up with possible ways to address those problems.

The present research work is an attempt to assess the educational development status of tribal population in the study area. Therefore, to do so the following objectives are set:

- To study the socio-economic conditions of tribal population.
- To study the educational status of the tribal population
- To study the controlling factors of tribal education.
- To examine the relationship between the level of education and economic conditions of tribal population.

In order to fulfill these objectives, database has been the main focus in the present study. Both the primary and secondary data are collected for the entire study. Also various statistical techniques like Mann-Whitney U-test, Z-test, χ^2 test, Kruskal-Wallis H- test, Logistic Regression have been used at different stages.

Over the years, the number of scheduled tribe population in the study area has increased. According to census of India the ST population in 2011 has increased to 9,71,120 from that of 1,30,832 in 1951. Though during this time frame the lowest decadal of ST population growth can be witnessed in 2011 (18.63 percent). According to the secondary data, highest concentration of ST population has been found at Phansidewa C.D. Block (with LQ value of 2.030) in the sub-division (Census 2011). Also, the distribution of population data shows 93.64 percent of tribal population lives in rural areas in the study region. The sex ratio of tribal population in the study area is 1029 which is more than the overall sex ratio of the sub-division (954). The National Youth Policy 2014 has classified the age group of 14 to 29 as Youth Population. In the sub-division the percentage of this Youth Population is 36.18 percent which is highest single age group constitute in the study area. Also age group below 30 years shares 57.33 percent of the total ST population in the study area.

In order to assess the first objective various socio-economic parameters have been analyzed through field survey data. Block and GP wise three Development Indices; Social Development Index, Housing Development Index & Economic Development Index, have been prepared from the primary data. These three Development Indices have been prepared with the help of Dimension Index. From these three Development Indices an overall Composite Index of Socio-Economic Condition has been derived to find out the status of socio-economic condition of tribal people in the study area. To prepare the Social Development Index out of the all discussed social parameters, five social variables have been taken into consideration; Total Literacy Rate, Male Literacy Rate, Female Literacy Rate, Female Married below 18 years of Age & Sex Ratio. The result of the Social Development Index shows that Phansidewa C.D. Block is the least socially developed block and Naxalbari C.D. Block is most socially developed block among the four C.D Blocks in the sub-division. Out of the 12 least developed GP, 5 Gram Panchayats belong to this C.D. block only. GP wise Chathat Bansgao GP in Phansidewa C.D. Block has the lowest Social Development Index value and Matigara-I has the highest Social DI value among all the 22 Gram Panchayats in the sub-division. To find a relationship between Tribal Female's age of Marriage with Literacy Mann-Whitney U-test has been applied with 5 percent significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The result of the statistical test establishes a positive impact of literacy on female's age of marriage. The field data shows, child marriage percentage in the study area for tribal girl child is 48.51 percent for illiterate child and this percentage comes down to as low as 27.12 percent for literate girl child. This proves our first hypothesis too. To prepare the Housing Development Index, out of various housing development variables 06 variables, Household with One Room,

Pakka House, Household Using Latrine Facility, Water Facility near Premises, Household having Electric Facility, Household having LPG Connection; have been taken into consideration. The result of the Housing Development Index value shows Block wise Matigara C.D. Block tops the list and Phansidewa C.D. Block is at the last position. GP wise best Housing DI value has been found in Lower Bagdogra GP and worst has been found in Hetmuri GP. Similar to the first two Development Index, Economic Development Index has been prepared to find out the economic status of the study area. To do so, out of various parameters discussed, 07 variables, Work Participation Rate, Male Work Participation Rate, Female Work Participation Rate, Main Workers, Male Main Workers, Female Main Workers, Household Monthly Income above 10000, have been taken into consideration. The result of the Economic Development Index shows Block wise Matigara C.D. Block and Kharibari C.D. Block are with best and worst Economic DI value respectively. GP wise Lower Bagdogra GP tops the list and Raniganj Panisali GP is at last. Compiling these three Development Index a Composite Index of Socio-Economic Condition has been prepared to assess the overall Socio-Economic status of the study area. This Index value shows that in the study area the overall socio-economic condition is at best condition in Matigara C.D. Block and at worst in Pansidewa C.D Block. And Gram Panchayat wise best Composite Index value is in Lower Bagdogra GP and worst can be found in Raniganj Panisali GP.

In order to assess the second objective Coefficient of Equality has been prepared for Tribal and Non-Tribal literacy rate in the study area by using Census 2011 data. This shows in the sub-division the value of Coefficient of Equality is 76.64, which also shows a higher no-tribal literacy percentage than tribal has. Comparative study of Gender Parity Index of tribal literacy by using Census 2001 and 2011 data has been done. The result shows female literacy has increased from GPI value of 0.56 in 2001 to GPI value of 0.74 in 2011. Gender Disparity Index in tribal literacy by using primary data has been prepared to check the disparity status in literacy in Gram Panchayats and as well as in Rural-Urban areas in the sub-division. The primary data of present age group wise literacy rate shows a huge improvement in literacy percentage from age group of 30-44 years to 15-29 years. The literacy percentage has improved from 40.20 percent for age group of 30-44 years to 80.64 percent for 15-29 years of age group. And in addition to that the literacy percentage for present group of 7-14 years of age group is 91.01 percent. This improved literacy percentage is mainly the results of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (launched in 2001-2002). The main boost has come up by the act Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009; which gives right to free education up to class 8 in neighborhood schools. Though the tribal literacy percentage has improved in the study area but the educational attainment status of

the study area reflects a huge concern. The field survey data shows only 18.50 percent of tribal population has educational attainment certificate above middle level in the study area. Which indicates towards a huge percentage of dropout among tribal students. The awareness about different educational schemes those are helpful for the tribal students to continue their studies, is in grave concern. The primary data shows, in the study area about the dedicated schemes like Pre-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Scholarship, Sikshashree, the awareness percentage is below 40 percent.

The two main controlling factors of tribal education in the study area are Illiteracy and Dropout. The primary data shows tribal illiteracy is mainly controlled by five factors in the study area, Transport Barrier, Household Work, Poverty, Lack of Awareness and Health Issues. Among these five factors Poverty (43.12 percent) and Lack of Awareness (35.78 percent) among tribal guardians are the main two contributors. The Dropout is the burning problem of the tribal educational development in the study area. The field survey data shows almost 53 percent students get dropped out in the study area. The Dropout is controlled by mainly eight factors in the sub-division, Transport Barrier, Household Work, Required for Income Generation, Education Cost, Not Interested in Study, Repeated Failure, Marriage and Health Issues. The main factors for male and females of being dropped out are different. For tribal male students the main contributors are Required for Income Generation (42.29 percent) and Not Interested in Study (35.32 percent). But for tribal female students the main two contributors are Required for Household Work (28.57 percent) and Marriage (25 percent). Interestingly it has been found in the study that the male dropout percentage (56.54 percent) is higher than the female dropout percentage (48.19 percent). Here the statistical technique Z-test has been applied to test our hypothesis *Female dropout rate is higher than the male dropout rate* and it has been rejected with rejection area at 5 percent level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

To find out the relation between level of education and economic condition of tribal population two statistical techniques have been used. Firstly, the χ^2 test has been done to analyze the relation between employment opportunities and level of education. The result shows a positive impact of level of education on employment opportunities. Also the field data shows 76.33 percent of illiterate tribal population is associated with Plantation work and only 0.64 percent is associated with Business and Service Sector. But as the level of education increases the percentage of tribal population living upon plantation work decreases and association with Business and Service Sector increases. Only 10.84 percent of tribal people having educational attainment level of secondary level are associated with plantation work and with the same educational level 51.81

percent are associated with business and service sectors. The Kruskal-Wallis H- test has been done to analyze the relation between income and level of education. The result of the statistical test also shows a positive impact of level of education on income of tribal people. The data shows, as the level of education increases the monthly income of tribal people also increases. Only 2.34 percent of tribal illiterate people have monthly income more than 5000/-. But the percentage increases to 24.45 percent for tribal people having educational level of middle level, to 50.60 percent for tribal people having educational level of secondary level and to 95.65 percent for tribal people having educational level of Graduation level.

The major findings of the research work can be summarised as follows:

The tribal population in the study area is very young. 57.33 percent population is age group of below 30 years.

Literacy rate of the tribal people in the study area is improving by government initiatives. Male-Female disparity in literacy is also decreasing.

Almost 53 percent tribal students get dropped out from schools. Even 90.76 percent of dropout occurs within secondary level. This is a burning problem to the tribal educational development.

Over dependency on plantation work is ultimately making the tribal community an economically weaker section. 53.24 percent of tribal working population is associated with plantation work.

In spite of being a community with very high working population (48.74 percent), 71.70 percent of tribal households in the study area are having monthly family income not more than rupees 10000/-.

Based upon the major findings of the research work some suggestive measures have also been suggested by the researcher. The suggestive measures are as follows:

Government should ensure implementation of government approved daily wage rate in tea gardens; as during survey it has been observed that on ground level many of the plantation workers are still not getting the Govt. approved daily wage. Also yearly basis increment of minimum wage has to be ensured by the government.

Over dependency on plantation sector to be reduced by diversifying the working sectors with the convergence of government departments like agriculture, horticulture, fishery, animal husbandry with MGNREGA to create community based income opportunities. Government department like

Anandadhara can play a major role to promote community based household industry with the systematic and efficient collaboration with other Government departments.

Each school must take responsibility to ensure cent percent coverage of each Government educational schemes to each eligible student. Whole procedure of each scheme must be initiated and completed by the school authority itself.

Anganwadi centers to be upgraded to develop interest of tribal students in studies at very early ages.

Other curriculum activities to be in focus in schools to provide the tribal students a more joyful and attached school life.

A suggestive monitoring framework namely *Systematic Monitoring and Sensitization Program for Tribal Educational Development* has also been recommended by the researcher to restrict the dropout percentage and to monitor the enrollment of students in educational institutions at different stages from Anganwadi to atleast up to high school level.

The research work finally concludes with the necessity to understand that to achieve a sustainable overall development of tribal community in the study area, Siliguru sub-division, educational development will be the foundation stone and this can be only achieved through collective compassionate efforts by the government institutions, society and the tribal community itself.