

Impact of Different Development Programmes on The Scheduled Tribe People in West Bengal: A Case Study on Lodha Community

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Abstract

In West Bengal, the tribal communities are distributed in varied ecological environment. Despite, the tribal population of W.B. are engaged themselves in various sectors in economy. Yet 85.44% are engaged in agricultural sectors of which 19.47% are cultivators and 70.70 % are agricultural labourers. Another important source of livelihood of the tribal people is forests. They collect minor forest products along with various plants, roots, tubers, small animal for their own consumption and also for medical use. the progress is very poor.

Keywords: Tribal, Per Capita Income.

Introduction

The Lodhas are found in Mayurbhanj of Orissa, Singhbhum of Jharkhand and western part of West Bengal. The Lodhas claim themselves as Savars' and preferred them to be called as 'Lodha' - Savars. Besides, another group, the Kherias, live in the hilly and forest clad areas of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa and in these three states they are categorically supposed to identify as single tribe. In the census of India Lodha/Kherias have been identified as same group. Consequently, the benefits extended for the Primitive Tribal Groups have been equally provided to the Kherias despite there are distinct cultural differences among these two groups (Lodha and Kheria).

Formerly, they depended upon forests for their living. But the forests were fast denuded by land-holders and the Governments for agriculture and for establishing new villages. The Lodhas did not, however like to be settled, nor were they rehabilitated to the changed order of life. This economic and territorial displacement under a new setting affected their old pattern of economic life and upset the equilibrium of the whole society.

Most of the Lodhas have mud-built thatched huts with more than one room. The rooms are provided with small windows and doors with shutters. A few agricultural families have small kitchen gardens attached to the huts, including a small courtyard. They generally keep cattle or goats in one side of the verandah attached to the huts, the walls being constructed with branches of trees or bamboo pole placed vertically. Mud-Built walls are also noticed. The majority of the forest huts have no windows, although small doors with plank shutters are found in every hut. This hut is mostly consisting of single room. In Lodhas religious practices Vaishnava influence has also been noticed. Lodhas believe that some of their God and Goddess are benevolent and some are malevolent. Sitala and chandi are considered to be the chief deities of the Lodhas. Baram or Gara is another deity worshipped by the Lodhas and some Lodha regarded Baram as the chief deity of the forest. They also worship Manasa and worship Basumata or mother earth. Lodha observe some festivals associated with agriculture and others allied activities. Few Festivals are performed at community or at family level. Now a days the Lodhas are participating in sarbajanin Durga, Kali, and Saraswati puja etc. which are generally arranged by the higher caste group. In western part of West Bengal most of the Lodhas speak a dialect composed of distorted Bengali, Oriya and words Mundari origin.



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The Lodhas generally inhabit the jungle tracts of West Midnapore and have spread out in small numbers in some of the contiguous districts of West Bengal, Mayurbhanj (Orissa) and Singhbhum (Jharkhand).

Lodha households in Jaralata & Radhanagar villages of Jhargram block and in Talai village of Sankrail block under Paschim Medinipur district. Three villages are situated adjacent to metal road and a few k.m. Away from block head quarter. Jaralata is a village where two tribal groups viz Santal together within two district separate location. The forests are located nearby the Jaralata village and the Lodhas of this village are very much attached with this forest. Talai is a village of Sankrail block which is adjacent to agricultural field, goava garden of CADC project and the Kelaghai (Kalandi) river has been flowing a very few K.M. away from Talai village.

Review of Literature

D.S Selva Kumar and S. Siva Kumar (2014) evaluate a study of current socio-economic conditions of the tribal communities in Nilgiris district of Tamilnadu. This study is based on the objectives to know the socio-economic conditions and to propound some instrument for progress the per capita income, social status, GDP, expenditure pattern and life style of tribal population. They found that the tribal was divergence in terms of social organisations, ceremony and marital customs from the other part of the state. And also tribes were poorer and illiterate. However the government expenditure increased to improve the status of the tribes, still it was not realised in the district, the GDP, per capita income, health issues, expenditure pattern, social status and life style was still not improved appropriately during the time period in that district.

Pal, Biswajit, et al., (2015) considered a block wise study of socio-economic status in four different tribal sub castes such as Santhal, Sabar, Oraon and Toto from two districts of West Bengal. In this study they were examined about the general socio-economic condition of the tribal sub caste. They were found that the four tribal sub castes under this study are not same socio-economically. They have lots of difference which reflected that their education level and income level inequality. But they are not considering those actions that were taken to remove the difference of socio-economic conditions of these tribal sub castes.

Jayakumar, A. and P. Palaniyammal, (2016) evaluated socio-economic status of scheduled tribes in Kalrayan hills of Salem district in Tamilnadu where they demonstrate the socio-economic condition, resources availability and educational facility of tribal peoples in that region. They found that nowadays tribal communities are attached in economic profession ranging from hunting to stable agriculture and urban or industrial engagement. The government has shown much interest in the development of the tribal people's educational facility, transport facility and also banking institutions became liberal in granting loans to tribals in that area. Though the government has taken lot of schemes to benefiting them, the whole benefits was not reached them

properly due to lack of proper awareness and understanding about the tribals, that's the reason there is only partial development in the socio-economic status of the tribals.

Nautiyal, Sunita, (2017) Considered a Comparative study of Educational Problems of Tribal and Non-Tribal Students of Higher Education in Garhwal Himalayas region in Uttarakhand. Here they explain about the major problems in higher education among tribal and non-tribal students with the objectives are to investigate the problems of tribal and non-tribal education with medium of instruction and adjustment with schedule of institution. And they found that except some PG science class students none of the other tribal and non-tribal students whether studying in UG or PG classes have any problem with medium of instructions in Hindi. And also there was not found any problems of adjustment with schedule of institution among them. Here author only consider medium of instruction and adjustment with schedule of institution of male students. But they are not considering most of the social and economic aspects which are related with the education of the students, where the lot of the problems arises among tribe and non-tribe students.

Sample Design

Two stage sampling procedure has been followed for identifying the sample households in rural areas of Balarampur, Bagmundi and Jhalda-I blocks of Purulia district. Selecting sample village is the first stage of sampling and selecting sample households is the second stage of sampling. For the sample study, four villages have been randomly selected for the Santhals from Jhargram block and one village from each block out of two blocks namely Bagmundi and Balarampur of Purulia district on the basis of random sampling.

Three villages from three blocks of Purulia district viz. Bagmundi, Balarampur and Jhalda-1 have been selected for sample study for Birhor tribal community, these three villages have high concentration of Birhor community.

From each village requisite numbers of households have been selected randomly which constitute the sample for study of the socio-economic condition of this scheduled tribe community.

Sources of Data

The data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources

The primary data on the socio economic conditions of the Birhor have been collected through personal interview at the field study.

Secondary Sources

The secondary data have been collected from various publication and report of the Government organization like census report published by Bureau of applied economics and development statistics of the Govt. of India, Reports on SC & ST development if any, bulletin published by Cultural Research Institute, Backward classes welfare Department of W.B. Govt. etc.

Methodology

Average value of each parameter has calculated.

Objectives of the study:

1. To examine the impact of different development programmes taken by both the Govt. and Non-Govt. on the educational development of the Lodha.
2. To examine the impact of different development programmes taken by both the Govt. and Non-Govt. on the per capita income development of the Lodha.

Hypothesis

To fulfill the above objectives the following hypothesis are fitted

H₀₁

No educational development of the Lodha community inspite of different development programmes taken by both the Govt. and Non-Govt.

H₀₂

No change in per capita income of the Lodha community inspite of different development programmes taken by both the Govt. and Non-Govt.

The following table reflects the occupational distribution Lodha people of my study area.

Occupational Distribution of The Lodhas in The Study Area**Table – 1**

S. No.	Occupation	% On Total Male	% on Total Female	% on Total Population
1	Wage Labourer	15.28	11.50	16.50
2	Fishing Agri labourer	16.33	24.32	18.77
3	Fishing wage labourer	7.12	8.11	6.53
4	Fishing	4.08	-	2.33
5	Wood Collector	9.16	13.51	10.47
6	Govt. Service	2.04	-	1.16
7	Service in private sector	2.04	-	1.16
8	Business	3.39	-	1.76
9	House wife	-	8.11	3.49
10	Folk Artist	2.04	2.70	2.33
11	Beggar	-	1.89	0.82
12	Unemployed	20.15	10.81	16.20
13	Student	18.37	19.05	18.48
TOTAL		100	100	100

Sourcec: Field Study (2018)

From the above table it is observed that a large number of Lodha people economically depend on wage labour. The proportion of male is comparatively higher in this context. Along with daily wage labour activities they are engaged themselves Fishing in Kalandi (Kelaghai) river. The fishing activities are only performed by the Lodha inhabitants of Talai village as it is nearby the Kalandi (Kelaghai) river. Generally, the Lodhas are used traditional techniques like bamboo basket (locally known as Ghooni) and net to catch the fish and sell the procured fish to the local people in the local market on their own initiative. Though, they are not getting the normal market price of the product.

It is also observed an important proportion Lodhas particularly females are engaged in fishing along with agricultural labour works. Though, they engaged themselves as agricultural labour particularly in two months viz Shraban (Rainy season) and Aghraayan (winter season). Besides, they also work in Goava garden, which is planted through village development programmes assisted and financed by CADC project of the state Govt.

The proportion of service holder (both in Govt. Sector and Private sector), businessman, is quite low in the Lodhas of my study area.

The low proportion of housewife vindicate the truth that the Lodha females are also participate in economic activities along with their male counterpart to stultify their domestic needs. It is observed from the above table an important proportion Lodhas economically depends on forest produces like firewood etc. In this regard the proportion of female is higher. During study it is observed particularly the Lodhas inhabitants of Jaralata are dependent on forest produces.

A few proportion Lodha of Talai village involved themselves in Folk culture like Jhumur and Chang dance and earn through performing the art in various places.

It is also observed a few old aged females are begging a nearby localities, though the begging activities quite unacceptable in this community.

The proportion of unemployed, particularly in male category is remarkably high. The following table reflects the detail unemployed economic of Lodhas of my study area.

Age-Wise Distribution of Unemployed of The Lodhas Table – 2

Age Group	0-3		4-5		6-15		16-55		61-	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Unemployed	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	14.28%	10.71%	16.66%	4.35%	37.5%	25%

It's observed from the above table that remarkable proportion children of Lodha community in my study area are not going to school.

In working age group (16 - 55) an important proportion Lodhas are just whiling out their days without any economic activities. The proportion Lodhas are just whiling out their days without any economic activities. The proportion of male in this regard quite higher in compare to female category.

In and above 56 years of age, particularly in male category as well as in female category the proportion of unemployed is quite higher.

Study on Economic Conditions of Lodha Community

The following table the Per-capita monthly income of the Lodhas in our study area in detail.

Distribution of Per-Capita Monthly Income of The Lodhas in The Study Area

Table – 3

Per-Capita Monthly Income Groups	Percentage of Total Population
0 — 333.00	Below Poverty Level 13.89
334.00 — 500.00	Poverty Level 20.37
501.00 – 700.00	Tolerance Level 12.96
701.00 – 1500.00	
1501.00—2500.00	Moderate Level 11.11
2501.00 and above	
	Total 100.00

Source: Field Study

A remarkable proportion Lodhas i.e. more than thirty four percent in our study area belong to below poverty level and poverty level. Thus, it is evident that a significant number of Lodhas in our study area are within the grasp of poverty.

It is also observed from the above table that more than the half population of Lodhas in our study area belongs to tolerance level. So, it is apparent that an important proportion Lodhas ceaselessly struggling to met up the domestic needs.

Only eleven percent of them belong to Moderate level. Those who are belongs to moderate level they are in rather comfortable position to stultify their needs and maintain comparatively fair standard living.

Conclusion

From the above discussion the following conclusion can be drawn

1. The proportion of wage labourer in Lodha community of my study area is significantly high. As per existing environmental opportunities, they engaged themselves in various labour works in different seasons through out the year.
2. The proportion of their evolvment in wood collection and fishing activities through traditional techniques, reflect their dependency directly on natural resource like forest, river etc.
3. The proportion of service holder in both sectors private and public is significantly low.
4. A few proportion Lodhas of my study areas are able to skilled themselves in agricultural activities particularly the Lodha inhabitants of Talai village and performed agricultural activities in their own agricultural land and others.
5. The proportion of unemployed particularly in old aged person of Lodha community of any study area is quite high. The propotion of unemployed

in female category is comparatively lesser than male.

6. A significant number Lodhas of my study areas are struggling to get rid of from the clutches of poverty.
7. A very few proportion Lodhas in the study area have been maintaining a fair standard of living.
8. It's observed during study that a significant number old aged Lodhas are getting old age pension. Still, a few of them are not getting this financial assistance despite their health are not permitting to do any labouring work. The criterion in connection with the age should be relaxed for this Primitive tribal Group of West Bengal.

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