

Present Socio-Economic Scenario of Toto Tribe of Alipurduar

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ABSTRACT

The tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. According to 2011 census, there are 705 tribes as STs and among them 75 tribes are recorded as primitive tribal group. In India Bhil (37.7%) is the largest tribe according to 2011 census. Chhattisgarh is known as the tribal heart of India. There are 38 tribes in West Bengal, together comprise about 2% of entire population. Santal (51.8%, largest), Oraon, Munda, Bhumij, Bhutia, Sherpa, Toto, Rabha, Lodha etc. are some of them. Alipurduar district is the hometown of various ethnic tribes like Rajbanshi, Metch, Madasia, Santhal, Bodo, Toto which makes the place more labyrinths. Toto is one of the unique tribe of the world live in Toto para of Madarihat block in Alipurduar district of West Bengal. The present article is going to present a clear scenario of present socio-economic condition with impact of modernism on their daily life and focus on recommendation leading to various problems of Toto tribe of Madarihat block of Alipurduar district in the state of West Bengal.

1. Introduction

Oxford Dictionary refers tribe to "a social division in our traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious or blood ties, with a common culture, dialect, typically having a recognised leader". Tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture. Though India has developed its various sectors, but after six decades of Independence, still the tribes of our country are drowned in several problems. India is a vast geographical area with diversified ecological, cultural and linguistic areas have given shelter more than 500 tribal community constituting 0.86% (104281034 population in 2011) of total population (1210193422 population in 2011). This article is about present socio-economic scenario of Toto tribe. Toto para rely on primitive way of livelihood and has their own hall mark cultural heritage.

2. Background

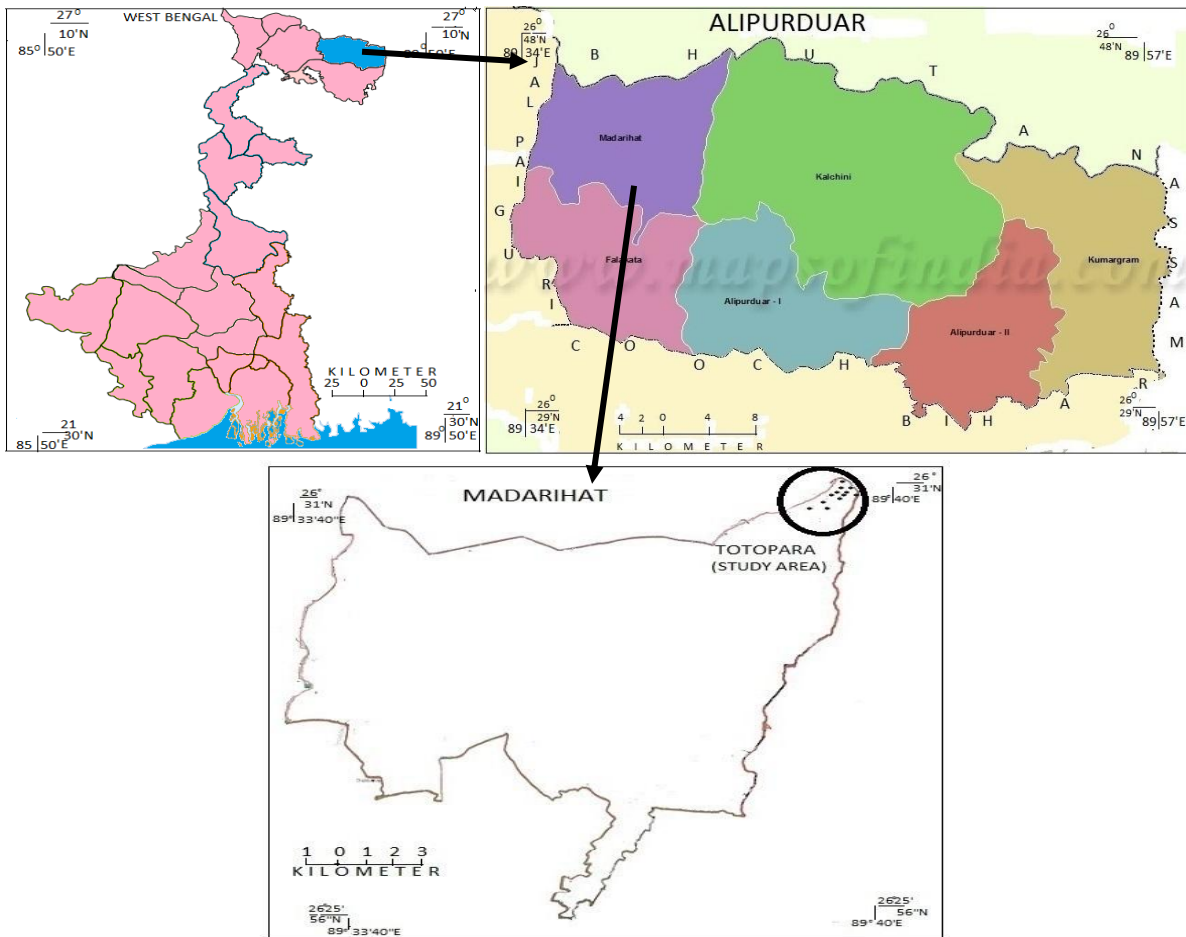
Totos, a tribal population of India is known all over world for its unique heritage, culture and language. They settled mostly live ecologically marginal areas of hills, forests and other places isolated from main stream. The Toto is a primitive Indo-Bhutanese tribe residing in small enclave called Toto para in the Alipurduar district of West Bengal. Totos were nearly extinct in 1951 when there population was only 321 (census 1951), but now there number is increasing very slowly. Toto family is patrilineal in nature dominated by nuclear type. Totos

mainly live in elevated bamboo huts. Totos are mainly Hindus. Therefore, they have two main Gods viz. Ishpa and Chiema. Though Toto make their main food from Maura (a kind millets), the staple food the Totos are now rice, chaura (parched rice), milk, curd, meat of poultry, goat, and fish of all kinds.

3. Study Area

Small village Totopara is located at 89°20' E of longitude and 26°50' N of latitude in Madarihat block of Alipurduar district in the state of West Bengal. Totopara is surrounded by the foothill of Bhutan in north, Torsa River (Picture 2) to the east, and Hauri River and Titi reserve forest on the south-west separated by Hauri River. The area of Totopara is known as Laxmi-Duar or Lucky -Duar. The village is linked with National Highway 31 through a single lane motor able road. Study area is confined by many small seasonal creeks namely-Chuati, Japti, Datingti, Dungti, Se-ti and Hauri. The arrangement of the rivulets confine a trapezoidal piece of land that is divided into twelve small hamlets: i) Dhumchi Gaon, ii) Puja Gaon, iii) Mitran Gaon, iv) Mandal Gaon, v) Panchayat Gaon, vi) Chanbe Gaon, vii) Gayetring Gaon, viii) Pakha Gaon, ix) Parch Gaon x) Gauri Gaon, xi) Mangal Gaon and xii) Subha Gaon. Total geographical area of the village is about 8.08 sq.km. Travelling distance of the study area is about 22km. from Madarihat. The length of the village is 4.02 km. from north-south and east-west breadth length is about 1.6 km.

4. Location Map



5. Objectives

The main objectives of the study area includes are as following:

- I) To investigate present scenario of socio-economic condition of the study area,
- II) To find out modernism impact on the life of Toto tribe,
- III) To find out major problems of the study area,
- IV) To make recommendation for future development of the study area.

6. Methodology

For accessing socio-economic changes of toto tribe a primary survey was conducted in Toto Para in Madarihat block of Alipurduar district. Secondary data was collected from district census hand books (1961, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011). Stratified random sampling method was followed during Primary survey (15 samples from each 12 hamlets, total 180) with the help of unstructured questionnaire. Secondary data also collected from relevant journals, annual reports, websites, magazine, publication etc.

The collected data has been analyzed and presented through chats, diagram and various cartographic techniques by using MS Excel software.

7. Present socio-economic scenario of Totopara:

Toto para once under control of Bhutan and became free after 1956. After that the area was underdeveloped. People were very poor, dependency rate was higher and most of the habitant was illiterate. Their living house condition was very poor and most important they were declining population. But now their socio-economic condition is changing but very slowly. Some gaon has developed compared to others. Present socio-economic scenario of Toto para is discussed below:

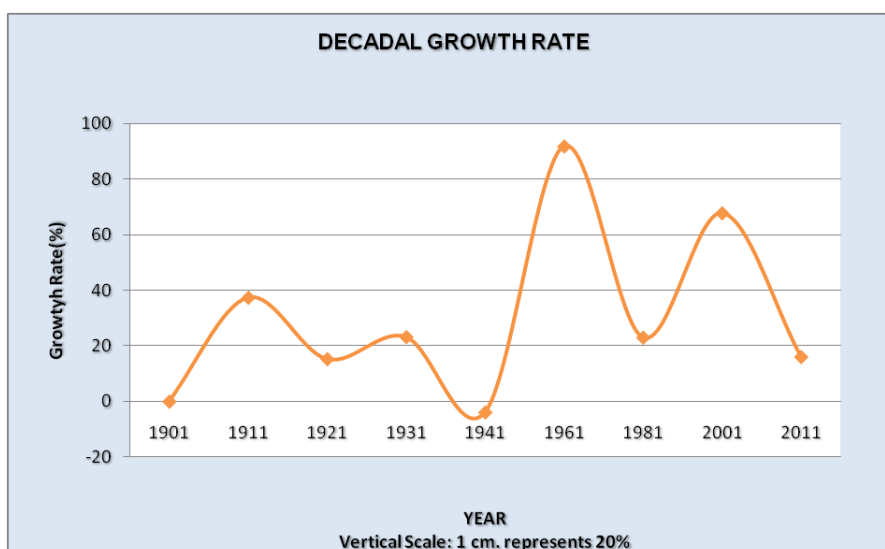
7.1) Demographic Characteristics:

Toto para area was under control of Bhutan before 1865. From the table it is clear that total number of population is increased in every census except census year 1941. Before independence, age-sex ratio was higher than 1000, after that it is decreased (table 1). In 2011 Toto tribe shared only 23.46% of the total population of Toto para (Das, 2014). Besides Toto, twenty six other communities live in Toto para (Das, 2014). Decadal growth rate was lower and higher respectively before and after independence.

Table 1: Basic population Statistics of Toto Tribes

Year	Population		Total Population	Sex Ratio (Female/1000males)	Decadal growth Rate (%)
	Male	Female			
1901	72	99	171	1375	Initial year
1911	125	110	235	880	37.42
1921	140	131	271	936	15.31
1931	130	204	334	1569	23.25
1941	159	162	321	1019	-3.89
1961	206	189	395	917	91.90
1981	362	350	712	962	23.05
2001	620	575	1195	927	67.84
2011	737	650	1387	882	16.07

Source: District Census Handbook and Das, 2011.



7.2) Occupation:

Totos cultivated land. They are not active farmer and hence do not a particular crop to a great extent. Toto tribe mainly engaged in agricultural activities. Most of the Toto tribe are engaged in primary occupation. Cultivation of agricultural crops is their main primary occupation. Besides, they also engaged in business, 100 days of worker and government service. The female are mainly house-wife and also engaged in collection of wood from the forest and some of them 100 days worker. In 2011, about 31% workers of Toto para were involved in agriculture. Every Toto home has a kitchen garden surrounded by bamboo fences; in this garden they grow vegetables, potatoes and bananas, maize (Picture1). Totos raise cows and pigs as an occupation. They are actively engaged in transportation of orange from south Bhutan to Toto para and Toto para to Madarihat during winter. They do not like to move far away to earn due to their close racial affinity and unity. In most of the area is characterized by Betel nut garden. It is one of the important cash crops of the area.

Table 2: Occupation status

Types Of Work	Percentage
Labours	29%
100day Work	18%
Cultivation	46%
Govt. Service	6%
Others	1%

Source: Primary data by authors

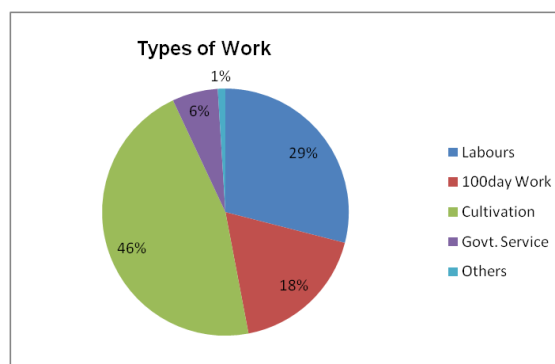
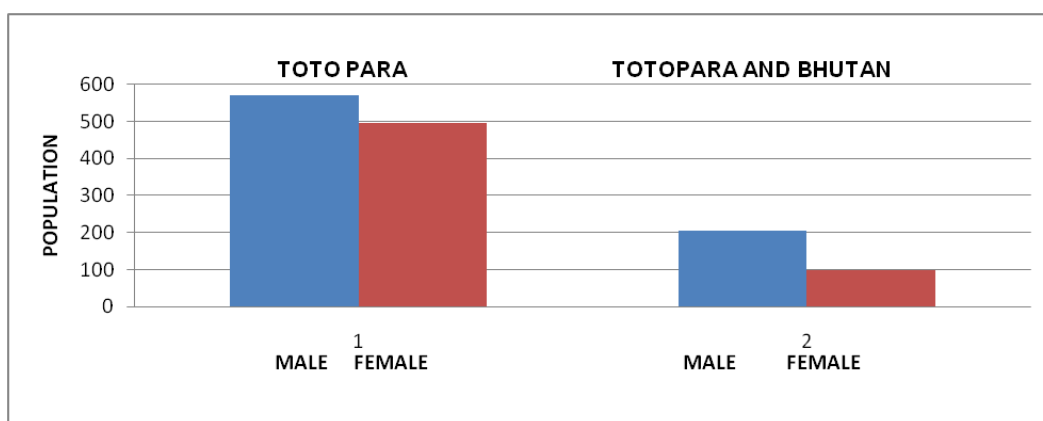


Table 3: Table showing working places of Toto tribe

NAME OF GAON	WORK PLACE					
	TOTOPARA		TOTOPARA AND BHUTAN		OTHERS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
DHUMCHI	30	63	37	0	4	2
MITRAN	50	62	20	0	0	1
PUJA	48	54	14	0	0	0
MONDAL	32	54	19	0	0	0
SUBHA	124	118	12	0	6	0
PANCHAYAT	150	101	20	02	3	0
GAYETRING	15	12	36	0	1	0
PAKHA	24	12	02	14	0	1
GAURI	26	34	41	25	6	3
CHANBE	41	15	12	32	1	4
MANGAL	15	21	20	03	0	5
PARCH	65	25	10	23	12	5

M=MALE, F=FEMALE.



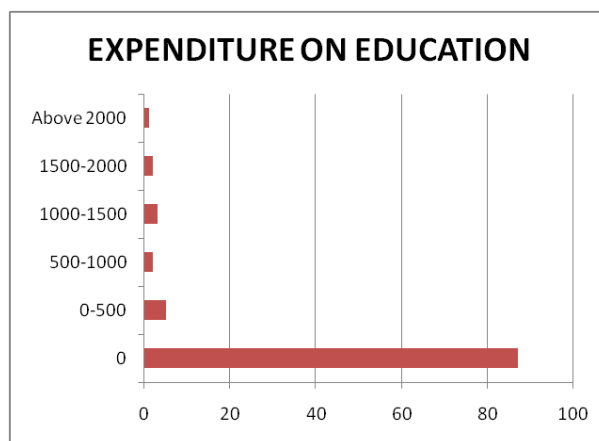
7.3) Expenditure on Education:

Economically Totos are very weak and their level of income is very low. They are not able and conscious about educational expenditure. Tuition teacher is not available in the area. We meet one person named Nikhil Ranjan Ghosh who is appointed by education department for educational development of children of the study area. He stays their one night and two days in every week. From the table it will be clear that they spend very little amount in education.

Table 4: Expenditure on education

AMOUNT(RS)	PERCENTAGE (%)
0	87
0-500	05
500-1000	02
1000-1500	03
1500-2000	02
Above 2000	01

Source: Primary data by authors.



7.4) House Type:

Totos live in small bamboo huts. These huts are placed on high machas or elevated platform and have straw thatches. There is a single log placed to get the hut and the log is removed during night. These kinds of houses are not found in all the gaon. These removed with some pucca and kwacha houses. According to survey 30% houses are pucca with the help of Government.

8. Modernism of Totos

Toto para is a hilly village of famous and unique Toto tribe. Toto para was once upon a time was very much under developed. But now the area is developing in some sectors but very slowly. According to primary survey, modernism glimpse is mainly found in young generation. Most of them use two-wheeler like Bajaj Pulsar 180CC, TVS Apache RTR 180.4G mobile network of Jio, Airtel, Vodafone (Picture3) are available in the study area. Now Totos use mobile phone. Young boys and girls use high prices mobile phone. Television facilities are found 45% houses of the study area. Solar Street light is found in almost every part of the area. Monogamy is common form of marriage among them. According to survey, love marriage of Totos ceremony with Nepalese is found. The change in the

socio-economic status is also changed based on the development of infrastructural facilities. Most of the gaon are interconnected by roads which results decrease in the inter-regional disparities. Food habit and materials culture is changing gradually. The young wear modern dresses, use cosmetics and metal ornaments. Pattern of celebration is also changed. They are now educated and do not want to dance in traditional pattern.

Young Totos are now engaged in small business like grocery or other type of shops and services like in Veterinary Assistant, Backward Classes Welfare Department (Rita Toppo, first graduate woman).

Pictures Of Various Areas In Totopara



Picture 1: Maize cultivation of Gauri gaon



Picture2: Torsha river



Picture3: Network coverage



Picture4: Water tank Of Panchayat gaon



Picture5: Totopara High School



Picture6: Author with Toto children

9. Problems of the study area

- i) The Totos remain socially isolated due to lack of various infrastructural facilities and own traditional cultural practices,
- ii) During rainy season study area remain separate from the adjacent town. The road became very dangerous due to continuous rain.
- iii) Majority of them is characterized by socio-economic backwardness.
- iv) There is very less number of educational institutes, one primary School and one High School (Picture5).

- v) Literacy rate is very low in the study area due lack of consciousness among them. Female literacy is lower compared to male literacy.
- vi) Dependency rate is higher. Work participation rate is fairly low female than males.
- vii) Drinking water facility is not available in each parts of the area. This leads to various diseases discussed already earlier.
- viii) Health condition is too bad. Most common tropical diseases are hookworm, cold, cough, dysentery, diarrhoea, malaria, ulc

er, deficiencies of vitamin A, D, B complex iodine and calcium diseases and these are very common in Toto para. These are due to un-hygienic way of life and deficiency of nutrition.

- ix) Totos occupied the lowest stratum of the society and have minimum contact with the mainstream.
- x) Transport and communication system is poor.

10. Recommendations for future development

To minimize the problems of Totos, following suggestion may be necessary for future developments.....

- i) Development programmes includes land development, creating irrigation sources for boosting agriculture and horticulture, extended market linkage of traditional handicraft, imparting skill training etc.
- ii) Necessity to developed infrastructural development like well quality of road, maximum number of buses between Toto para to Madarihat, so that they can move easily any time to the nearest town.
- iii) Encouraging forest produce collection by ensuring minimum support price and market linkage.
- iv) Offerings loan and subsidy plan for small business.
- v) Government need to create opportunity of increased livelihood through self help group based activities like kitchen garden, cattle or goat rearing etc.
- vi) Though one primary health centre is situated in Toto Para and it is very clean and Doctor is available all time, but the habitants are not so aware to visit doctor for treatment. So, need to create health awareness and health camp.

vii) Literacy rate and literate people is not satisfactory. It is very important to increase literacy rate because education can remove social, personal and economic backwardness of Totos.

- viii) Construction of more water tap (Picture4) is essential in the area, because the water of that area is mixing of minerals like dolomite which creates diseases.
- ix) Need to setup Higher Secondary School because education facility is up to Madhayamik level.

11. Conclusion

Different tribes had different magnitude of socio-economic status. The present social context has compelled the present socio-economic scenario of Toto para with impact of modernism. Previously, Totos were very much underdeveloped in respect of social, cultural, economic and personal aspects. The main problem in the primitive was that they are diminishing due to lack of population, but now there number is increasing but slowly. The effective family size and number of children is minimum. Maximum of them still illiterate. Maximum part of the area still under developed though Government takes various plans to minimize their problem. Besides, social awareness as well as contribution of various Non-governments agency is necessary for minimizes problems and all-round development of Totos.

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