



Impact of Ethno-regionalism on Educational status among the Toto Tribes: Issues and Challenges

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INTRODUCTION:

Ethno-Regionalism is the expression of a common sense of identity and purpose by people within a specific geographical region, united by its unique language, tradition, culture, heritage, lifestyle etc. Toto tribe belongs to Ethno-regionalist group. Toto people belong in Indo-Bhutanese tribal community. They live in isolated hilly forest village Totopara. Number of Toto is 1387 (census 2011) and only 30.35% of the Toto's are literate.

After the independence of India, the government has been trying to spread education for all people of our country. But education for the tribal communities is not remarkable spread in our country. We see the picture of children of inequality in educational opportunity among the tribal communities in comparison with that for the other higher communities. Now, the Toto tribes' community is being deprived social, cultural and educational opportunities to fit themselves to the modern civilization of the society in West Bengal as well as in India.

So, Toto's own Ethno-regionalism will affect their education status. So researcher will try to study **Impact of Ethno-regionalism on educational status among the Toto Tribes: issues and challenges.**

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

After reading the review of literature researcher find out the huge researchable knowledge gap about the study. So researcher selected a title of the problem is **"Impact of Ethno-regionalism on Educational status among the Toto Tribes: Issues and Challenges"**.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study will be framed for this study-

1. To find out the impact of Ethno-regionalism on Educational status among the Toto Tribes.
2. To identify the Toto's ethno-regionalist hindrance factors on education status among the Toto's.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

'Toto' is a rare community not only in West Bengal but also in India. This community is far behind in education than the other communities. The people of this community have not come into contact with education, socio-economic status, language, culture, occupation, health, family status, food habit, religion and life style of the present days. They are in the habit of primitive culture. They are backward mainly in education. So, Toto's own Ethno-regionalism will affect their education status and create some issue that's hampering their education. They are also faced many challenges during education time. **"Impact of Ethno- regionalism on Educational status among the Toto Tribes: Issues and Challenges"** in this study researcher will be taken for discussion to give a vivid analysis for the betterment of the Toto tribes. This data will help also to know about Toto's Ethno-regionalism. This data will help also government to take various development policies for Toto tribes' Educational status as well as socio-economic status.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

The research question of the study will identify for this study-

1. What are the impacts of Ethno-regionalism on Educational status among the Toto Tribes?
2. How to affect Toto's ethno-regionalist hindrances factors on education status among the Toto Tribes?

METHODOLOGY:

For this study is based on mainly secondary data and some data are collected from different newspaper, journals, books, website etc. methodology applied for this study is totally depends on documentary analysis.

DETAILS ABOUT TOTO TRIBES ETHNO-REGIONALISM:

Religion:

Toto's define them close to nature, they mainly perform Nature worship. They have two main gods whom they worship:

- Ishpa - He is supposed to live in the Bhutan hills, and causes sickness when displeased. The Toto's offer him animal sacrifices and Eu.
- Cheima - She keeps the village and its people safe from troubles and sicknesses. She is also offered rice, fowls and Eu. The Totos have priests; also offer their worship and sacrifices on their own. Ishpa is worshipped in the open outside the house and Cheima inside the house. Of late some Toto's, are a few Christian converts among the tribe, largely attributed to Christian missionary works.

Economic activities:

Toto's are cultivating land. The Toto's are not active farmers and hence do not cultivate a particular crop to a great extent. Every home has a kitchen garden surrounded by bamboo fences; in these gardens they grow vegetables and bananas, among others. Some Toto's raise domestic animal like cock, cows and pigs as an occupation. At different stages of history, the Toto tribe has been moving away from a subsistence economy to market economy. Further, the transformations of the village from community ownership of land to individual land capture and from isolated tribal group to a multi-ethnic habitat have also taken place in the recent past.

Society:

Nature of Toto family nuclear type mainly. However, joint family is not rare. Monogamy is common form of marriage among the Toto but polygamy is not prohibited. If a man's wife dies, he may marry the deceased wife's younger sister, but a woman cannot marry her deceased husband's brother. On the death of a spouse, the husband or wife must remain single for twelve months before he or she is free to remarry. There are various ways of acquiring mates' viz., (1) marriage by negotiation (Thulbehoea), (2) marriage by escape (Chor-behoea), (3) marriage by capture (Sambehoia) and (4) love marriage (Lamalami). Divorce among the Toto's not a custom.

Food habits:

Toto's main food is Marua (a kind of millet), the staple food of the Toto's now includes rice, Chura (parched rice), milk and curd. They eat also meat, generally goat, pork, venison, poultry and fish of all kinds. Women eat the same food as men and there are no restrictions of any kind on the widows. Toto's also drink a fermented liquor called Eu, made from fermented Marua, rice powder and malt, which is served warm in Poipa (wooden glasses). Eu is drunk on all occasions of Toto's.

Houses:

Toto's live in elevated bamboo huts. These are raised on Machas (raised platforms), and have straw thatches. There is a single log placed to get to the hut, and this log is meant to be drawn up at.

Language:

Toto is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken on the border of India and Bhutan, by the tribal Toto people in Totopara. This language is used to communicate with family members. Similarly, Toto language is used with relatives primarily for the communication purpose. When they interact with other community people they use mostly Nepali language for their communication. Similarly, they use Nepali language in market (hat). Bengali language is the medium of instruction in school. Hence they study through Bengali language. The educated Toto people use Bengali language for official communication. This is because they are exposed to the outer world very less. Hence they communicate within the community.

TOTO'S PRESENT SCENARIO OF EDUCATION:

Now the percentage of education has reached to nearly 50 percent among the Toto children of present generation from a complete illiterate community just within few decades and it has become possible due to initiatives of missionaries, government and few other agencies. Presently the students are going to different schools located in the village and outside. Few children of economically sound families are studying outside of the village from primary level. However, most of the Toto students somehow continue their study up to class X in village high school. But primarily due to poverty mostly they start to lose the interest for continuing further education. Because of deforestation, land transfer, soil erosion, pressure of non-Toto's the Toto's are facing difficulties to earn their livelihood from the minimum resources left. Now most of the Toto's are below poverty line. The parents fail to provide money every day for travelling and food to their students. Their poor economy does not allow separate rooms and required materials for continuing education. Even the school going children from the age of 10 and above years go to Bhutan for earning. They are bound to protect their minimum agricultural crops from destruction by the wild animals every season rather attending the school. Apart from poverty, they face a lot of difficulties to read book in several other languages. Due to their poor educational foundation in the primary/basic level they fail to understand the subject matters properly and the same problems continue in their higher education and due to this reason, they lose the interest to go to school and study further.

IMPACT OF TOTO'S ETHNO-REGIONALISM ON EDUCATION:

Many Impact of Toto's ethno-regionalism in the field of Toto's education. They are as follows:

- Language is one of the important constraints of Toto tribal children which prevents them access to education.
- Physical barriers create a hindrance for the children of a Toto's village to attend the school in a neighboring village.
- The economic condition of Toto's people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labor power and allow them to attend schools. As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the Toto's parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- In the remote Toto's tribal areas the teacher absentness is a regular problem and this affects largely the quality of education.
- Lack of proper monitoring of coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and School Education Department.

All these facts are seriously causing the early drop out and providing quality education to the Toto students from the school and it is a major drawback of the educational progress of the Toto's.

CONCLUSION:

Education is the key of development. But Toto's own Ethno-regionalism will affect their education status. Toto's children have very low levels of participation in Education. Though the development of the Toto's tribes is taking place in India, but the process of development has been rather slow. If govt. will not take some drastic steps for the development of Toto's education, the status of education among tribes will be a story of distress, despair and death. Hence time has come to think it seriously about Toto's education and inclusive growth. So, there is an urgent need for various govt. interventions, planners and policy makers to address this problem and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for Toto's education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the Toto's children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development.

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