

Educational Impact of the Bediya (Snake Charmers) Community in West Bengal, India

Sanjoy Mura

Ph.D Research Scholar,
Department of Anthropology, Visva-Bharati University

Abstract: The study area conducted on the Bediya community. The Bediya tribes lived in the rural village Nimo-Malpara in East Burdwan district in West Bengal, India. This Bediya communities peoples are known as snake charmers or sapuria (Bengali local term). The snake charmers people are belonging to the Scheduled Tribe (S.T) and their sub-caste is Bediya. Their traditional occupations are snake catch and charming. The catch snakes keep them in the basket and breed them love and with care. And carrying them in the baskets slinging from their shoulders, they wander from one locality to another place to entertain the masses showing their pet snakes playing to their enchanting tunes, folk song and live out of doles received from their patrons. The villagers are offered to the snake charmers some rupees, rice and other some foods etc. Their lives style belonging to the semi-nomads group. The low level income are can't support for their child education. At that time to see the snake charmers peoples are interested to their child education. Basically to see the snake charmers women are variously involved to their children education. Their child's are go to the ICDS centre, primary school, and secondary school. And some cases to see the children's dropout from the primary and secondary school.

Keywords: Semi-nomads, Occupation, Education, Dropout.

Introduction:-The snake charmer communities habitation situated on the rural village Nimo-Malparain PurbaBurdwan district, West Bengal. The snake charmer communities have a traditional occupation snake based culture. Their traditional occupations depend on their subsistence live and death practices life with the deadly snakes. The homogenous culture carry on to generation to present generation. In the last 2011 census report of India's total Bediya population are 55,979 and the total percentage of the total Bediya population (1.3%).

Education began in prehistory, as adults trained the young in the knowledge and skills deemed necessary in their society. In pre-literate societies this was achieved orally and through imitation. Story-telling passed knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the next. As cultures began to extend their knowledge beyond skills that could be readily learned through imitation, formal education developed. Schools existed in Egypt at the time of the Middle Kingdom.

The term enculturation has gradually replaced the word acculturation as a term for that process of psychological change that makes the individual a part of his own culture band society. "A process of conscious or unconscious conditioning, exercised within the limits sanctioned by a given body of custom" (Herskovits). "The process by which a human being adapts to his culture and learns to fulfil the function of his status and role" (Winick). De Laguna states that "it is through his membership in a social community and in his participation in the cultural tradition – his 'enculturation' – that the human being develops his congenital rationality and becomes a man".

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves. Educations commonly divided formally into such stages as preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and then college, university, or apprenticeship.

According to Risley Mal is a Dravidian caste. He also remarks, "Beyond the vague statements currents among the Mal's of Eastern Bengal that they were wrestlers (Molla, Mala) at the court of the Dacca Newabs and gained their name from this profession". (1891 : 11 : 46). Beverly thinks that Mal's and Mal-Pharias as also Oran's and Santal's are of the same origin (1953:74) Chandal's and Namasudra's of Bengal may also have absorbed large sections of the Mal's. Manbhun (Mallabhum) and Maldah may owe their names to Mal's. Risley conjectures that the Mal's of Western Bengal and Central Bengal seem on the whole to be the most typical representatives of the original Mal tribe. Among them the traditional role of exogamy is in full force. A. Das, B.K.RoyChoudhury and M.K.Raha (1966) .

E. Thurston and Rangachari(1909) View that the term 'kela' has been derived from the work 'kela' which means dances or from 'khel' which means 'play' but in common vocabulary at implies those people who along with their family member leave their house and breath and continuously move from place to place showing their snakes and skills in snake charming jugglery and acrobatic teats "(1989).

There are different views as to the origin of the 'Mal'. Singh (1993) notes that the word 'Mal' is derived from 'MallaKhastriya" which means wrestler or soldier caste. Bhattachrjee (1980) notes that the word 'Mal' driven from their original habitat of upland (Manbhun) area in central-east India. However, according to the Mal's are in habitants of hilly area who are expert in catching

and charming snakes and also, curing snake bite. Risley (1981) also mentions that the Mal is a “Dravidian cultivating caste of western and central Bengal, many of when are employed as ‘chaukidars’ or village watchmen and have gained an evil reputation for thieving propensities” (p.41:11). Despite apparent difference in opinion all scholar considered that the “Sapurua Mal” is semi-nomadic occupationally specialized caste like group operating within the broad from work of the agro-economic structure of the caste based Hindu society in rural India.

Objectives:-

- How to their occupational status are belonging to the present time?
- How to study their present educational status of the snake charmers community?
- How to dropout from the education?

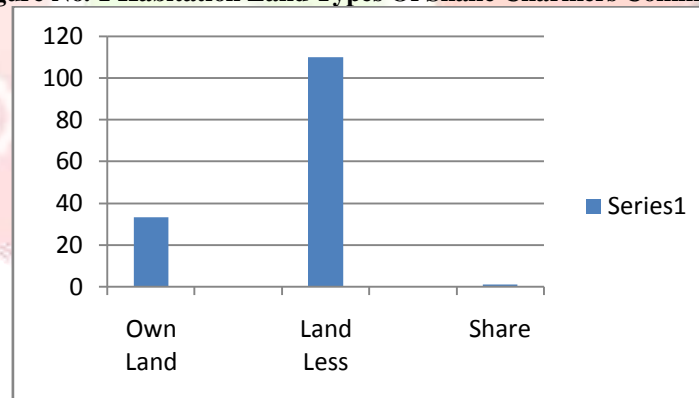
Methodology:- The purposive sampling method used for data collection. The field areas both primary and secondary methods used for the data collection. The primary data are observation, census scheduled, questionnaire, interview, case study, photographic and audio-visual recording methods etc. The secondary data are book review, article, Indian census report, Government administrative support local peoples share knowledge are help for the final research report writing.

Result and Discussion:- The snake charmers people are belonging to the Scheduled Tribe (S.T) and their sub-caste is Bediya. Their traditional occupations are snake catch and charming. The catch snakes keep them in the basket and breed them love and with care. And carrying them in the baskets slinging from their shoulders, they wander from one locality to another place to entertain the masses showing their pet snakes playing to their enchanting tunes, folk song and live out of doles received from their patrons. The villagers are offered to the snake charmers some rupees, rice and other some foods etc. Their lives style belonging to the semi-nomads group. The low level income are can't support for their child education. At that time to see the snake charmers peoples are interested to their child education. Basically to see the snake charmers women are variously involved to their children education. Their child's are go to the ICDS centre, primary school, and secondary school.

Table No. 1 Habitation Land Types Of Snake Charmers Community

Village Name.	No. Of Family	Habitation Land Type					
		Own Land	%	Land Less	%	Share	%
Nimo-Malpara	144	33	19.07	110	63.58	1	0.57

Figure No. 1 Habitation Land Types Of Snake Charmers Community



The study villages total household family are 144. In this total families habitation land types are different types. To examine the two villages total own landed habitation making are 33 (19.07%) and other total land less habitation are 110 (63.58%). To see the others cases two family are share with their kin family. This communities approximate habitation types are land less. The present time snake charmers peoples are continue moved on the permanent own land habitation.

Table No. 2 Occupational Status Of Snake Charmers Community

Category	Male	%	Female	%
Snake Charmers	174	29.14	32	5.36
Day Labour	9	1.50	5	0.83
Begging	4	0.67	7	1.17
House Work	11	1.84	168	28.14
Others	1	0.16	4	0.67
Total	199	33.33	216	36.18

Total Population= 597 Male= 291 and Female= 306

Figure No. 2 Occupational Status Of Snake Charmers Community

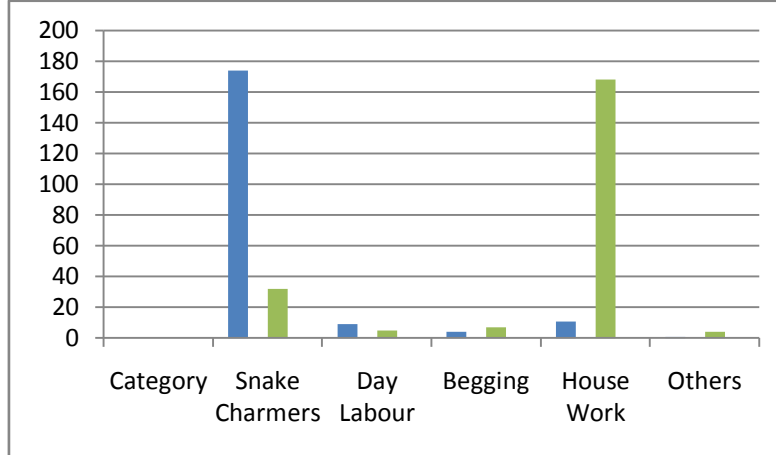


Table no.2 represent that the snake charmers total population are 597. In this population total male are 199 (33.33%) and total female 216 (36.18%). The study areas total population are employed to the snake charming work, day labour, begging work, others work etc. The traditional snake charming work total male are 174 (29.14%) and total female snake charming are 32 (5.36%). Day labour work total male are 9 (1.50%) and total female are 5 (0.83%). Begging work total male are 4 (0.67%) and total begging work female are 7 (1.17%). House work total male are 11 (1.84%) and total female are 168 (28.14%). Others agriculture work male are 1 (0.16%) and total others female work (leaf mat making, tea shop and agriculture work) are 4 (0.67%).

This table are shown that the snake charmers communities principle occupations are variously depend on the snake charming work. The snake based culture are interlinked by the snake charmers community.

Skill and Relation With Snake:-The snake charmers people catch the snakes from the forest, agriculture field and mound etc. Snake catching time used the stick and basically own belief, braveries and hand technique used for the snake catching time. The catch snakes keep them in the baskets for long time snake charming work. The deadly snakes love and with care for their subsistence lives. The snake charmers offered grass hopper, fish, frog, rat etc. foods for the baskets bound snakes And weekly two time clean the snake baskets. And the snake bite treatment purposes used the blade or weapons and hot water etc. These are all thing, belief, practice and knowledge carry on to the present time. The snake charmers peoples are follow the both Hindu and Muslim religion and worships for their traditional snake charming work. .



Snake catch and charming pattern

Educational Status Of The Community:-

Table No. 3, Present Time Family Members Wise Children Education

Category of Family	Members of Family	The Present Time Different Stages Student Numbers											
		ICDS		Primary		Junior		Secondary		H.S		Dropout	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Old Family Groups	1 and 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuclear Family Groups	3, 4 and 5	14	10	18	28	12	10	5	3	2	2	5	6
Joint or Extended Family Groups	6, 7, 8, and 9	6	4	7	8	7	3	1	0	0	0	1	1
Total		20	14	25	36	19	13	6	3	2	2	6	7

M= Male, F= Female, (I-IV)= Primary, (V-VIII)= Junior, (IX-X)= Secondary, (XI-XII)= Higher Secondary

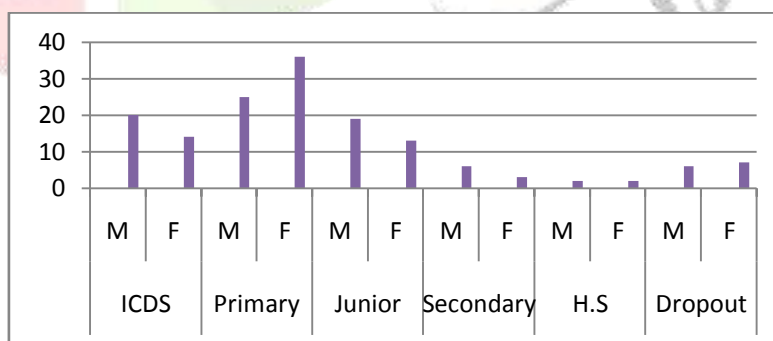
The present time child educations are mainly depend on their families earning activity and family members responsibility.

Old Family Groups:-Table no. 3 are represent that the one and two members of families have not present students.

Nuclear Family Groups:- The nuclear groups (3, 4, and 5) members of families total ICDS centre going to total male student are 14 and female student are 10. This groups total primary school (i-iv) going total male students are 18 and female students are 28. Junior school (v-viii) going total male students are 12 and total female students are 10. Secondary School (ix-x) going total male students are 5 and female students are 3. Higher Secondary (xi-xii) School going both male and female are equal 2. This groups total dropout male are 5 and total female dropout are 6.

Joint or Extended Family Groups:- The joint or extended families (6, 7, 8, and 9) members of groups families total male students are 6 and female students are 4 going to the ICDS centre. The Primary School (i-iv) going total male students are 7 and female students are 8. Junior School going total male students are 7 and female students are 3. The Secondary School going total male student are 1 and this groups female students are not present. No record of the Higher Secondary school going student in the present time. This groups dropout total male and female student are both equal 1.

Figure No. 3, Present Time Family Members Wise Children Education



Causes of Dropout:-

- Families low level income.
- Parents are do not proper care for their education.
- When their parents are go to the far area snake catching and charming then that time child are security their home. And female child's are engaged to the cooking and with care own little brother or sisters.
- Day by day child's are engaged to the house work and employed to the other occupation based work for their families subsistence lives. So, the child's are elimination from their education.
- Mainly the children are engaged to the snake charming to the local area, village market and other nearest rail station platform. The entertaining peoples pay to the some rupees for their snake charming work.

Conclusion:-The present time snake charmers people habitations are permanent and long lives stay in the study areas. There is a common occupational status is snake catch, snake charming and keep them snakes in the basket with love and care. The deadly snakes based earning mainly depend on their family subsistence lives. The low level income are can't support to their child's education. The Government's organized many education purposes scheme are applied for their communities education development. To observed the some cases the snake charmers women are variously involved to their child's education. Basically, to see the snake charmers people are employed to the secondary occupational work for extra earning. From the all sources common earning are help for their families survival lives. Analytical result are represent that the latest time their families boys and girls are go to the primary and secondary school. And some cases to see the child dropout from the both primary and secondary school. Dropout major problems are low level economic status of the families. As a result, to see the some families socio-economic status and life style pattern are moved on to the modern culture or civil society. The educational system are can change their mind and own justice for the community empowerment.

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