

Impact of Globalization on Tribal Communities with special references to Coochbehar District of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Globalization, in general sense, is a process of transformation of regional or local phenomena into global ones and it is making a considerable impact on all aspect of human life directly or indirectly in everywhere in the world and also multidimensional. Most of tribal communities are colonial among them, but, since some decades their social and cultural life mixes with others and other world mix with them due to globalization. Here, tribal culture are affected by innovations, urbanization, modernization, socialization etc. On the basis of some selective indicators, it is noticed that tribal communities of Coochbehar district of West Bengal progress their life style, i.e., house pattern status, literacy rate, medicinal treatment, agriculture, industry, etc. Literacy rate among tribal communities of the Coochbehar district increases since last decades where medicinal practices are not improved due to their own culture.

Keywords: colonial, ethno-medicinal, literacy, urbanization, tribe, globalization

Introduction:

Every society of community or every person have certain capacity or limitation to build up their socio-economic cultural life. With the emergence of some phenomena certain change have occur in every sphere of life of every community. Globalization is one of these which effects on socio-economic, political and cultural sphere of any society of the world. The quality of life is not including only the the wealth or employment, it is also included socio-economic, political and cultural sphere of life. The tribal people or community live their life in remote and isolated areas or regions, which are rich in resources.

About Coochbehar tribes:

People lives their life style with ancestors, custom and traditional process are known as tribe. The tribal communities of Coochbehar district who have hailed from *Mongoloids*, they have come to India from Tibet through Nepal and Moimansingha of Bangladesh. So, the people of tribal community are found living in the district since time immemorial. Multilingual and multicolored tribal communities like *Rava*, *Mech*, *Garo*, *Santhal*, *Oraon*, *Munda* have been found living in Coochbehar(SD), Tufanganj(SD), Mathabhanga(SD), Dinhata(SD) and Mekhliganj(SD). Highest majority of tribal communities have found in Coochbehar sub-division[27.02% of total tribal population of district] where Mekhliganj sub-division has lowest tribal population [only 12.95%of total tribal population of district, census of India, 2011]. 97.95% of the tribal communities of Coochbehar district inhabit in rural areas where remaining only 2.05% of them reside in urban areas[as per Census of India, 2011]. Specially *the Mech*, *the Rava*, *the Garo* are most ancient occupant/inhabitant of the area. Their language, literature, culture and behavior cast greater influence on other tribal communities and diffusion occurs among tribal communities.

About the Study Area:

Coochbehar district is known for its own royal traditional culture and this term derived from the name of Koch tribe.This is situated at foothill of the Eastern Himalaya and north-eastern district of West Bengal with the latitude of 26°57'47''N to 26°36'02''N and longitude of 89°54'35''E to 88°47'44''E. the area of the district is 3,387 sq.kms, which contributes to 3.82% landmass of the state of West Bengal. The district is bounded by the district of Alipurduar in north-east corner and Jalpaiguri in north, west of Assam state in true east and Bangladesh in the south. The other peculiar feature of the district is that there are a few enclaves commonly known as *Chhit Mahals*, which are outlying and detached tracts of land situated inside the district of Rangpur in Bangladesh.

Rationality of Selecting the Topic and Area:

Coochbehar district is one of the most oldest and royal traditional culture place with various culture. Different culture population are found and they communicate each other through beautiful way with their needs. Not only royal culture is found but also various tribal communities are found in this district i.e., *the Mech*, *the Garo*, *the Rava*, *the Santhal*, *the Munda*, *the Oraon*, etc., most of the tribal communities adopt

themselves to this environment and society. They adopt learning of language, education, food habits, agriculture etc. Culture of tribe do not change totally only few things they took, i.e., they learn language, agriculture where few things of their culture they do not change i.e., medicinal practices and life style. Tribal community of the Coochbehar district at present living between two different world; one is their own world which totally transition and another is new society with changing tradition along globalization and modernization. For this reason, the researchers have interestingly tried to observe and analyze their cultural diffusion.

Objectives of the Study:

The objective of this study as,

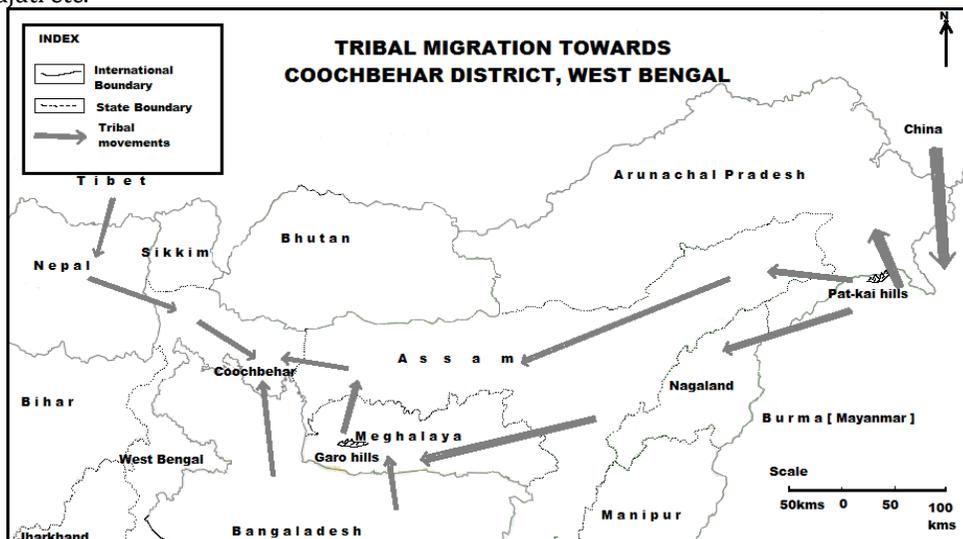
- i) How the standard of living or quality of tribal communities of Coochbehar district have improved by adapting with new culture or society;
- ii) How far they have been improved since last decades with various govt. policies;
- iii) How far tribal people should develop or diffuse their culture with other societies along globalization.

Methodology of the Study:

The study of this topic is mainly based on primary and secondary data. The tribe of Coochbehar district have been taken for this study. For this study, primary and secondary data of some decades have been taken to analyze how the globalization impact on tribal communities. These data are analyzed through statistical process and diagram.

About Cultural Trends of Coochbehar Tribe:

According to socio-cultural survey, most of Coochbehar tribal communities belong to Mongoloid units. Before the Birth of Jesus Christ, they have entered into North Bengal [northern part of West Bengal] from China via Tibet to Nepal and then to North Bengal; from Myanmar via Pat-kai hills to Garo hills. From there tribe spread out North-eastern part of India. These primitive inhabitants are also found in Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Most of them had been unknown with agriculture, they always used shifting cultivation, lumbering and fishing, it means they were mostly related to primary sector of economy. The ancient habitat of tribe of Coochbehar district is Rampur, Boxirhat, Nayarhat of Tufanganj sub-division; Garo para of Dinhata; Chilapata forest basti of Coochbehar; Rajarhat, Banesar etc. They are identified by different names based on their economical or historical or cultural or ecological characteristics as Adivasi, janjati, vanajati etc.



In 1947, after the partition of country the tribal communities have been displaced from their farmland when the refugees coming from Purba Banga settled down at *Dooars* and *Terai* area. In recent time, people of tribal have got their land back for the initiation of *Tribal Land Prevention Act and Sold Land Extradition Act* [shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in]. As per this act, the tribals have retained some land for cultivation.

The Rava are Pantheist from the religious view point. In their term of deity are Bari and a place of worship of *Boridan*. Different elements of nature, like tree, stone, river, flower, stream etc. are invested with the

attribute of Dietism/Godliness. The female members perform their puja daily and special puja is celebrated in the month of Baishakh. They are found at Atiamochar of Tufanganj sub-division nearby Rashikbil. Now-a-days, the Rava community are attracted much to Christianity: Christianity has entered the Rava society and upgrading their social, economic and educational status.

The Mech is a primitive tribe of North Bengal, primarily the worshiper of nature. Their chief deity in Bathou or *Bathau Siju* tree is the symbol of *Bathau*, is celebrated at Baisakh of every year. Most of them do not accept Christianity where only few support. Coz, converted to the Christianity do not perform their old rituals. The greatest festival of the Mech community is *Baishagu* which is celebrated at the month of Baisakh. The important cultural perform is *Buguomba*, perform at spring festival, *Baishagu Gelenai* etc. Their social set is formed consisting of different *Ari's* or groups like other tribal societies, their group are known as *Foroihol* in their term. Most of them change their group term in touch of new cultural and environmental set up of Coochbehar and other district of West Bengal, terms as follows;

TABLE 1.1: CHANGES OF SOME GROUP TERM OF MECH

SL NO.	OLD TERM OF GROUP	NEW TERM OF GROUP
I	Hazoari	Hazari
II	Bodgoari	Borogaon
III	Bosumatari	Basumata
IV	Narzari	Narjinary/Narjinari
V	Mushahari/Mushahary	Mochari/Mochary
VI	Iswlary	Iswarary/Iswarari

Source: Primary Field Study at different parts of Coochbehar

Traditional Medicine Practices:

Recently, 97.95% of Coochbehar tribal population inhabits in rural areas and many of them reside in the remote forest basti and use various plants in the medicinal treatment. Indigenous healing practices have been culturally accepted during all phases of human culture and environmental evolution. As per Ethnomedicinal survey report, in the tribal residence of Coochbehar district, we found the use of medicinal plants particularly to treat common physical problems like smaller injuries, stomach ache and abdominal disorder. Some medicinal plants are listed as follows;

TABLE 1.2: MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY TRIBALS OF COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT

SL NO.	PLANT NAME	LOCAL DISTRIBUTION STATUS	USES
I	<i>Amarathys spinosus</i>	Common wild	Leafs taken as vegetable to treat anemia; root paste applied on stomach to treat urinary disorder
II	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Commonly cultivated	Leaf extract to treat jaundice, dried leaf extract to treat body pain
III	<i>Cassia occidentalis</i>	Common wild	Root extract applied to treat snake bite
IV	<i>Calotropis gigantean L</i>	Common wild	Leaf used to treat rheumatism and cuts; latex used in dog bites
V	<i>Vitex negundo</i>	Common wild	Extract of leafs used against whitening of hair and memory losing, also to treat cancer.

Use of medicinal plants among tribal communities of Coochbehar district in treatment of various disease has definitely been out numbered today by the allopathic treatment. But, their still dependence on plants of their surroundings to get relieved from day to day ailments is unquestionable.

Tribal Population Trend:

Tribal population of Coochbehar district have been accumulated from different country or region and some of them have been displaced from their own land during partition of the country. Population of tribal

communities of the studied area have been continuously changing since post-independence. In 1951, total tribal population is only 3457 and it has reached 17225 as per Census of India 2011. Table 1.3

TABLE 1.3: TRIBAL POPULATION TREND OF COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

Years	ST Population	Population Growth(%)proportion to the previous year	Growth Type
1951	3457	----	-----
1961	8809	154.81	Positive(+)
1971	10611	16.98	Positive(+)
1981	10105	-4.77	Negative(-)
1991	13203	30.66	Positive(+)
2001	14246	7.89	Positive(+)
2011	17225	20.91	Positive(+)

Source: Census of India, 1951, 1961, 1971,1981,1991,2001, 2011; calculated by researchers

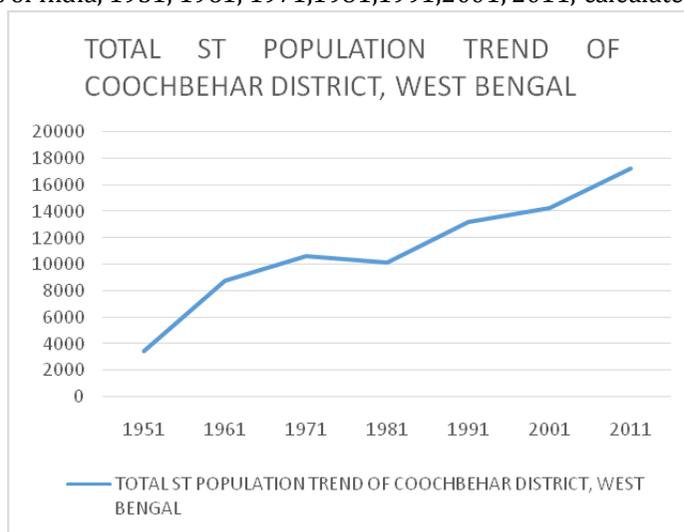


Fig 1.B: Population Trend of Tribal communities of Coochbehar district, West Bengal

shows the population trend of Tribal communities of Coochbehar district where the highest population had grown between the year of 1951-1961 with the growth rate of 154.81% and the negative growth are found between 1971-1981 with decreased 4.77% proportion to the previous year ST population due to push & pull factors of traditional migration of tribes.

Scheduled Tribe Population Distribution:

Tribal population of Coochbehar district of West Bengal has been unequally distributed among all sub-divisions of Coochbehar. In the census year 2011, the total tribal population of the studied area is 17225, or 0.61% of total district population. The highest ST population are found at different areas of Coochbehar SD, i.e., Guriahat, Baneswar, Chakchaka, Kharimal Khagrabari, Takagach etc. But the ST population of Coochbehar SD and Mekhliganj SD have been declined by 3.11% & 2.87% than the last census year, where ST population of the rest sub-division,

TABLE 1.4: Sub-division wise Scheduled Tribe Population Distribution 2001, 2011

Sl No.	SUB-DIVISION	2001	2011	% OF ST POPULATION PROPORTION TO THE TOTAL DISTRICT ST POPULATION '01 (%)	% OF ST POPULATION PROPORTION TO THE TOTAL DISTRICT ST POPULATION '11 (%)
I	MEKHLIGANJ	2254	2231	15.82	12.95
II	MATHABHANGA	2448	3114	17.18	18.08
III	COOCHBEHAR	4292	4654	30.13	27.02

IV	TUFANGANJ	3472	4344	24.37	25.22
V	DINHATA	1780	2882	12.50	16.73
	TOTAL	14246	17225	100	100

Source: Census of India 2001, 2011

TABLE 1.5: ST Rural & Urban Population of Coochbehar District 2001, 2011

SL NO.	Population Type	2001	2011	% OF POPULATION TYPE PROPORTION TO THE TOTAL ST DISTRICT POPULATION, 2001	% OF POPULATION TYPE PROPORTION TO THE TOTAL ST DISTRICT POPULATION, 2011
I	RURAL	13136	16872	92.21	97.95
II	URBAN	1110	353	7.79	2.05
	TOTAL	14246	17225	100.00	100.00

Source: Census of India 2001, 2011

i.e., Mathabhanga SD, Tufanganj SD & Dinhata SD have been increased by 0.90%, 0.85% & 4.23% than the previous census year. It should be noted that the intensity of residing at rural area is more than the urban. Table 1.5 shows that tribal community has been highly found at rural area than the urban where the rural ST population is increased by 5.74% with decreasing interest to reside at urban areas during 2001-2011 decade, due to pull factor of cultural colonialism and they are originally floating settler migrating from oneplace to another for work.

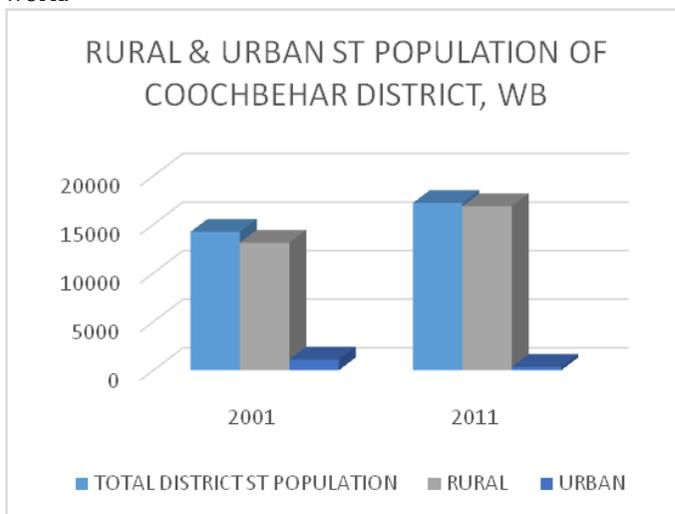


Fig 1.C: Rural & Urban ST population, Coochbehar district, WB, 2001.2011

Education of Coochbehar Tribal People:

Education plays an important role in any society or community to develop a culture. During pre-independence period, tribal communities were not comfortable with education or literacy and didn't go to school or Pathsala. They always used learning process in traditional way since pre-migration, such as hunting, lumbering, making fishing net by using bamboo, etc. Since post-independence, Govt. has taken various policies to upgrade their socio-economic, cultural & educational life. To make them advance and integrated with other society and to introduce themselves with the modern world many development programs have been taken, i.e., tribal welfare scheme regarding education & occupational activities.

TABLE 1.6: LITERACY RATE OF COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT TRIBAL PEOPLE, WEST BENGAL 2011

Sl No.	Sub-Division	Total ST population	Literate	Illiterate	% of literacy proportion to the total ST population of Sub-division	% of illiterate proportion to the total ST population of Sub-division
I	Mekhliganj	2231	1002	1229	44.91	55.09
II	Mathabhanga	3114	1581	1533	50.77	49.23

III	Coochbehar	4654	3068	1586	65.92	34.08
IV	Tufanganj	4344	2629	1715	60.52	39.48
V	Dinhata	2882	1682	1200	58.36	41.64
	Total	17225	9962	7263		

Source: Census of India 2011

TABLE 1.7: TREND IN LITERACY OF TRIBAL PEOPLE OF COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

Sl No.	Year	Total District ST population	Literacy	Illiterate	% of literacy proportion to the total ST population of District	% of literacy proportion to the total ST population of District
1	2001	14246	6592	7654	46.27	53.73
2	2011	17225	9962	7263	57.83	42.17

Source: Calculated by Researcher; Census of India 2001,2011

Table 1.6 shows that the Coochbehar sub-division has highest literacy rate with 65.92% followed by Tufanganj sub-division with 60.52% where remaining 3 sub-divisions are comparatively poor in literacy rate. It is to be noted that the culture of education has been changed by various govt. policies. Table 1.7 has described that literacy rate of tribal people of Coochbehar district has been increased by 51.12% and illiterate decreased by 5.11% than the previous year 2001.

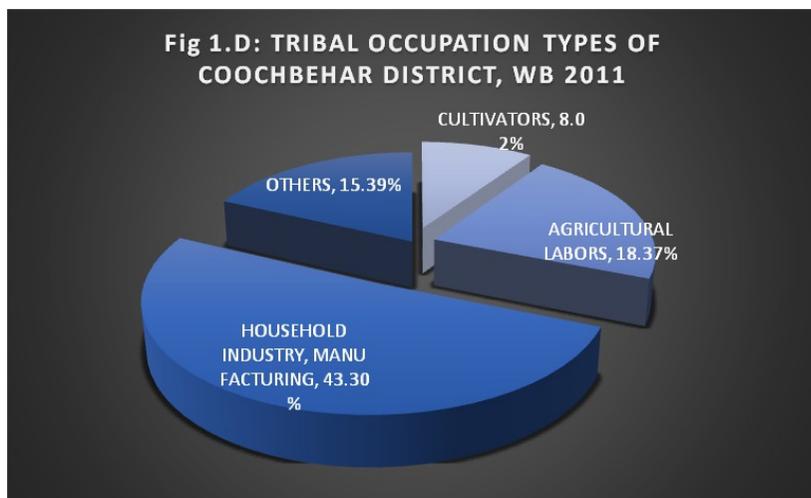
Occupation of tribal people of Coochbehar District:

From the anthropological view point, tribal people didn't know about the agricultural cropping process and used shifting cultivation, hunting, fishing etc. But now-a-days, occupational improvement is really important to any state's economic development. And Govt. of India, Ministry of Social justice And Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal welfare have taken some measures for economic development. These are, i) Income Generation Scheme(IGS) which includes agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation, animal husbandry, social forestry, WADI etc. ii) Job oriented scheme such as tool room training, computer course, manufacturing training etc. after getting those opportunities they leave their traditional livelihood process. Some reservation processes have been taken for tribal people. As a result of these scheme, occupational pattern of tribal communities have changed as data shows (Table 1.8& Fig 1.D)

TABLE 1.8: TREND IN OCCUPATION OF COOCHBEHAR TRIBAL SOCIETY

Sl No.	Worker Types	2001 (in %)	2011 (in %)
I	Cultivators	12.14	8.02
II	Agricultural labors	15.72	18.37
III	Household Industry, Manufacturing	32.32	43.30
IV	Others	14.12	15.39

Source: Census of India, 2001, 2011



More than 40% tribe of the district are engaged to various govt. & private sector. In the other hand they lose their land due to industrialization, which results decreased in the percentage of cultivators and increase in the agricultural labors. Here, it has been noticed that occupation of tribal community have been affected by industrial development which drives them to change their occupation.

Findings:

The programmes of regional development launched in India since the beginning of the planning era have left their impact on the tribal society. As noted earlier, tribal community of Coochbehar district are mostly (97.95% of total district ST population) concentrated in remote villages and the forested tracts of this district. As a result, they have not received outside influenced which could transform their economies on a perceptible scale. This, to a very large extent, explains the underdeveloped conditions of their economies. However, with the gradual opening up of the tribal areas, the primary or traditional modes of economy and the resultant relations of production started responding to qualitatively new changes. These influences were mostly negative and the tribal did not gain much from such exposures. For one thing, the transfer of technology to the tribal areas of this district has been very slow.

So, some policies should be attached with govt. planning to improve tribal policies, i.e.

- i) Land acquisition and Tribal land prevention act should be maintained by the concerned authorities.
- ii) Improvement in infrastructure and other easy facilities regarding education, should be provided to them in easy way.
- iii) More opportunities in employment generation.
- iv) Researchers should be interestingly engaged to observe and analyze the tribal issues that can help them to improve their life, etc.

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