EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PH.D. THESIS

ON

“EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF FOUR VILLAGES IN LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT OF ASSAM.”

By

Dilip Kumar Bhuyan
Research Scholar
Deptt. Of Sociology
Dibrugarh University
Dibrugarh -786004

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INTRODUCTION

The principal onus of the present study was to examine the role of education in bringing social change among the villagers. The basic assumption is that education can bring change in the attitudes of the village people towards different social institutions i.e. caste, marriage, family, and religion, age old agricultural practices, political participation and also in the matter of saving. Education can certainly play a decisive role in motivating the rural people for giving up traditional practices and to welcome change and development. Education, in this study refers to the formal schooling through which an individual receives some new ideas and which in turn motivates him to come out from tradition. Another key concept of the study is social change which refers to change in the attitudes of villagers towards family, caste, marriage, religion, status of women, adoption of agricultural methods, political participation and formation of saving habit etc. The concept of village in this study is used by the researcher as a group of people who have possessed arable land, sometimes held in common and which is characterized by predominance of agriculturally vocational people, a close relationship of them to the natural cohesion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are-

1. To describe and analyze the socio-economic background of the villagers.
2. To investigate the role of education in bringing about social change in the social institutions, viz. caste, family, religious beliefs and practices, status of women and marriage.

3. To examine whether education succeeds in introducing scientific methods of agriculture among the villagers.

4. To probe the extent of political participation of the villagers.

5. To look into whether the villagers have developed the habit of saving.

FIELD OF STUDY AND METHODOLOGY:

In this study, the researcher adopted the scientific methodology from the selection of the problem of research to obtaining of data and generalization. We have selected the topic” Education and Social Change: A Sociological Study of Four Villages in Lakhimpur District of Assam.” and the study was conducted in four villages of Lakhimpur district in Assam. Out of the four villages one is developed village, i.e, Panigaon which is nearer to a town in terms of distance, a backward village, i.e Burhaburhi which is situated far away from the town, one scheduled caste village i.e. Bochagaon and another one scheduled tribe village, i.e Kanhi Dower. From the selected villages altogether 500 respondents were selected on the basis of simple random sampling. For collection of data three techniques were applied, viz. survey, village schedule and interview schedule. In this study the research design adopted is exploratory research design. Primary data were collected from the field by canvassing interview schedule to the respondents and secondary data were collected from office records and information furnished by the people.
The data were classified on question wise. The classification of responses of the respondents was done on the basis of the similarities and dissimilarities. The classified data were put into table. Tabulation was done by hand employing the method of simple frequency count. The unit of analysis was village. The data were analyzed statistically according to the tables.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The major findings of the study are -

(i) Of the total respondents of the universe of the study 464 (92.80%) were male and 36 (7.20%) were female.

(ii) The mean age of the respondents of the universe of the study was 46.35.

(iii) Of the total respondents of the universe of the study a large majority i.e. 238 (47.60%) were found engaged in cultivation. Next to agriculture it is business where a sizeable number of respondents i.e. 113 (22.60%) were found to engage. As many as 81 (16.20%) respondents were found to engage in government service.

(iv) In the universe of the study it was found that the respondents have attained different educational standards. Out of the total respondents 3 (3.33%) of the village Burhaburhi, 38 (13.97%) respondents of the village Bochagaon and 14 (24.14%) respondents of the village Kanhi Dower were found illiterate. In all 55 (11%) were found illiterate.
(v) In the entire universe of the study it was found that 26.60% respondents were tied up by the joint family and 73.40% respondents were nuclear family in nature.

(vi) The present study finds that as many as 72.80% respondents of the universe of the study viewed that education bring change in social institutions viz., family, caste, marriage and religion.

(vii) With regards to the changes that are taking place in the institution of family the identified areas are improved economic status of the family (33.24%) respondents, increased preference towards children’s education (40.38%), motivation towards nuclear family (9.62%), increased mutual relation among family members (6.59%), increased in socio-cultural aspects (4.40%) and adoption of modern life style (5.77%).

(viii) With regards to changes in the caste system the areas identified by the respondents of the universe of the study are developments of liberal attitude of higher castes to low castes, providing of equal social status to members of all castes.

(ix) Regarding institution of marriage, the respondents of the universe of the study have stated growing prevalence of inter-caste marriage (38.74%), replacement of arranged marriage by romantic marriage (32.14%) and partial change of
traditional marriage rituals (29.12%) etc., are gaining prominence.

(x) Regarding changes in the sphere of religion the respondents have viewed that a new ‘ism’ propagated by the Asom Sankar Sangha is growing popularity among the villagers and religion is being emancipated from dogmatic beliefs and practices (21.98% respondents) due to influence of education. On the other hand 78.02% respondents were found to observe simple rituals and customs in the performance of sacraments.

(xi) In the present study it was observed that the spread of education in the villages has brought a lot of change in the sphere of empowerment and employment of women. In the studied villages in all 94.80% respondents have supported the empowerment of women while 93.80% respondents have supported the employment of women in gainful economic activities.

(xii) In the entire universe of the study 90.20% respondents were found to engage in the cultivation while 9.80% were non-cultivators. The agriculture is the primary source of livelihood of the respondents of the studied villages.

(xiii) The present study has revealed that there exists a relation between adoption of improved methods in cultivation and the economic status of the farmers. It is found that the economic condition of the respondents of the village Panigaon is much
more improved than the other studied villages. As many as 86.96% respondents of the village were found to adopt improved methods in their agricultural fields.

(xiv) Another notable thing observed in this study is that the villagers whose formal educational standard was Class Xth standard and above were found to be more interested in economic development and therefore they adopted improved methods of cultivation.

(xv) In the entire universe of the study 77.8% respondents were found to exercise their franchise rights in the last Panchayat and Parliament elections.

(xvi) This study finds that 153 (30.60%) respondents were interested in politics while a large majority i.e. 347 (69.40%) were not interested in politics. Educated Young (30+) as well as older people (60+) whose occupation is non agriculture and those who are exposed to the contents of mass media and urban culture find interest in politics.

(xvii) The present study reveals that education plays an important role in arousing the idea of saving money among the villagers.

(xviii) It is gathered that the formation of saving habit among the people is developed to a large extend among the villagers due to influences of education and also the availability of banking facilities. In the universe of the study the respondents of the village Panigaon and Bochagaon were found ahead of the
respondents of Burhaburhi and Kanhi Dower in the matter of saving in financial institution due to access to education of the villagers and easy availability of banking facilities.

CONCLUSION:

The findings stated above suggest that there is a relationship between education and social change. The study has revealed that the villagers whose educational level is Xth standard and onward are guided by rational thinking and as a result of which change occurred in the social institutions viz. family, caste, marriage and religion, methods of cultivation, political involvement and attitude towards savings and women’s empowerment etc.