CHAPTER - VIII

IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION ON THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE DISTRICT.
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The expansion and improvement of education, specially primary education are very much important from the point of view of the various changes they bring in the life of the community. It is useful for any national development plan to know the actual effect it brings about and also to know whether these are the very ones we wanted to have. This investigation was taken of for two main reasons, firstly because this has a practical importance for the educational Planners, administrators and sociologists alike, and secondly because this study might be able to make some theoretical and practical contribution to the social change studies in broad.

The society itself is an ever-changing phenomenon which is constituted with various social units, such as - family, the educational institutions, religious institutions etc. Social change refers to changes in the structure as well as functions...
these units. And thus, human life in the society is also under a constant change in the ideas, attitudes and values of an individual. This changing process bring changes in the social structure and in other social aspects also. This process may be rapid on some societies and slow in the case of others, but no society in this world can escape from this process of change and transformation.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to study carefully the impact of primary education on the social life of the Goalpara District. The people of Goalpara have a rich socio-cultural heritage. The new knowledge of three R's has brought many changes in the socio-cultural life of the people as a whole.

Our study reveals that since the attainment of independence, a great desire for change in social, economic and educational conditions are found all over the district. Things and objects which the people use to-day were never dreamt of by the forefathers. Different types of machines, vehicles of transport and entertainment devices which are in common use to-day were not even heard of a hundred years ago.
Not only this, new problems and challenges are now confronted by the people in all fields of life and endeavouring to find solutions through researches, investigations and up-to-date inventions and thus, the styles of living are changing so fast today that it is difficult to keep pace with the changing ideas, beliefs, life styles and material pursuits for more and more human welfare.

In order to bring social change, education plays an important role. By disseminating new knowledge, education encourages dynamism and simultaneously brings about a positive and desirable change in the society. Truely speaking, in Goalpara due to developmental activities in the fields of education during the various Plan Periods, there was a considerable change in the standard of living both in urban and rural areas of the District. Planning and developmental activities have exerted positive results in the social life of the people. The social structure has vastly changed with a corresponding change in social outlook. Progressive ideas and taste for decent living are being increasingly growing up in the outlook of the people in the rural and urban
areas along with wide diffusion of education and knowledge. Saving habits are also now on the increase. More attention is now being paid towards health, hygiene and sanitation, nutritious food, dress and proper education of children. Parents in most cases are now quite anxious for higher education and good health of their children. The Centre, States and Local Bodies have provided facilities for the poorer section of the people through free schooling, providing free books, scholarships and stipends. These facilities have become great factor in bringing about social change in rural as well as urban life of the people in the District.

The impact of the progress of education is evident in the following aspects such as - other stages of education, trade and commerce, socio-economic and cultural change and various other aspects of the district. It is observed that during the last seven decades, especially after independence, a wind of educational progress has swept all over the district. Growth of primary education and expansion of different educational facilities has led to the opening up of many other types of educational institutions.
in different parts of the District.

Spread of primary education has led to the expansion of secondary and higher education in the District. During the first year of the First Five Year Plan Period there were 113 Middle Schools with 9,024 students and 37 High Schools with 8,47 pupils in the District. At the end of the Plan Period, some new Senior Basic Schools were opened and the number of High Schools increased to 46 and Middle Schools to 186. Students of these institutions totalled 3,72,13,452 and 13,140 respectively and thus, secondary education progressed at a rapid rate during the subsequent period.

Secondary education at present is imparted in various categories of schools such as - Middle English schools, Middle Vernacular Schools, High Schools and Higher Secondary and Multipurpose schools. The medium of instruction in Secondary school is mother tongue of important linguistic communities and study of Hindi is compulsory in all the secondary schools. Special State Grants are also being given.

to schools for teaching Hindi. All these indicate a change in the outlook of the people to bring about a social change to cope with the modern society.

The spread of knowledge of 3 R's has also brought changes in the field of higher education of the District. For the training of Secondary school teachers, B.T. Colleges are established in the District. At the Collegiate level progress is also noticed. A large number of colleges have been established in different parts of the District for imparting higher education to the students. Some of them provide possible facilities like Hostel, Library, Scholarships etc.

The Commercial College of Dhubri provides instruction in type-writing, short-hand and similar courses. Similarly, Industrial Training Institute, Bongaigaon provides facilities for technical education such as training of Craftsmen and skilled artisans. The institute also provides a certificate course of one and half years duration.¹ There is also a Law College in the District, affiliated to the Gauhati University.

¹. Goalpara District Gazetteer, P. 462.
Along with these, the programme of Social Education has been made an integral part of the Community Development movement in the district since 1952. Each Community has one social education organiser and one Lady Social Education Organiser who looks after social education in their respective areas. The course comprises pre-literacy and post-literacy phases. Block Development Officers strive to promote economic development of all the individuals within their working areas. Social legislation also provides protection, training and livelihood to abandoned ladies and reformatories to cure the young criminals. Since 1968-69, apart from literacy centres, a number of Adult Schools are also functioning in the District under the general supervision of the District Social Education Officer, Goalpara.

During the last few decades, with the spread of literacy, Goalpara has also made much progress in the learned profession, such as teaching, medicine, and surgery, engineering and legal practice fields. As a matter of fact, spread of education has gradually faded away the caste system of the old days in relation to its particular occupation from the society. 

1. op.cit, Gazetteer, P. 465.
developmental activities in the fields of education, public health and sanitation, communities etc., considerable change is noticed in the standard of living both in urban and rural areas of the District.

The wave of change is also noticed in the field of girls' education. With the increase in the number of school-going girls, the disparity between male and female is declining from the society. At present the only impediment standing on the way of female literacy, is economic backwardness of the indigenous people of the District who are mostly Rajbangshis. The child marriages are not so much evident in the District. The recent trend shows that females have become more conscious about their education and this has taken firm roots in the District and would rapidly thrive and attain such structure as was not even dreamt of by the optimistic predecessors. The result has been reflected in the gradually increased rate of female literacy in the District.

The spread of education has also lead to the establishment of new industries in various concerns. The tea industries of the District absorbs the largest number of female workers in the district. The Employment Exchange market information reveals that
women workers represented in 1975 more than 12 percent of the total employment in the District.

Along with this, it has been observed that after independence the Government has given much emphasis on the spread of education among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Attempts are made to bring all round development to the standard of living of the people belonging to backward classes. From the beginning of the First Five Year Plan, efforts were made to eradicate illiteracy among the tribals by establishing primary and middle schools in the areas predominantly inhabited by the tribal people. They were also benefited by the scholarship schemes both in secondary and collegiate stages of education. There are also reservation of seats in the technical and professional institutions of the State. Almost all the departments of the State Government earmark a portion of their total allotment for the development of the backward classes including the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. At present, the children of Harijan, Scheduled castes and tribes have equal rights and opportunities with other children at school. Scholarships and stipends, free supply of books etc. are now available for
them. In many cases tuition free education is provided not only in schools, but also in higher educational institutions. These amenities are boon to the poor students and is a great factor in bringing about a change in the society.

Moreover, in pursuance of the provisions of Articles 16(4) and 335 of the Constitution, the State Government has decided that there should be reservation of vacancies to members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in making appointments to services in connection with the affairs of the State Government. These are -

(1) Scheduled Castes - 7 percent.
(2) Scheduled Tribes (Plains) - 10 percent.
(3) Scheduled Tribes (Hills) - 12 percent.

Spread of education has also brought changes in cultural life of the people. Throughout the District there are a number of cultural organisations either Government registered or getting financial assistance regularly. These institutions promote Art, Literature, Culture, Music, Dance and Drama. Name of these organisations may be mentioned viz. - Mayors

Silpi Samaj, Bilasipara; Assam Sangha, Dhubri; Kranti Silpi Sangha, Dhubri; Kala Tirtham, Gauripur; Iparia Tarun Sandha, Kokrajhar; Raisumari Affat, Kokrajhar; Bihorai Affat, Kokrajhar; Demgalai Affat, Basugaon; Narsan Affat, Borobazar and Rumaibor Affat, Sidli; Sialmari Cultural Club, Manikpur and Magurmari Koch-Rabha Kristi party, Kokrajhar are Bodo cultural organisations and they stand for the promotion of Bodo Culture in and outside the State. The Bodo literacy Association has also its branches in various parts of Kokrajhar sub-division of the District.¹

At present the Bodos have become more conscious of making use of the Assamese Alphabet and the Roman Alphabet on a modified form to suit their needs. A section of the Boro Sahitya Sabha has accepted the modified Assamese Script for use in their books and literature, while another section is in favour of Dev Nagari Script.² At present the Bodo literature consists of the vast amount of oral literature including folksongs, folktales, ballads, and proverbs and of the considerable amount of written

¹. op.cit., District Gazetteer, P. 467.
². Ibid.
and published literature comprised of books relating to prayers and songs, poems, stories on the one hand and journals and magazines with different types of prose and verse on the other hand. There are unpublished novels and dramas also. All these are bringing change in the social life of the district.

Various social organisations in the District are also playing their important role to spread education among the people of the neighbouring villages, mostly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. One of such kind of organisations in the District is Sakti Ashram. This organisation runs one secondary school with technical sections like carpentry, weaving, tailoring and blacksmithy. The Lower Primary Schools opened by the Ashram are now under the State Board of Elementary Education. It has also maintained since its inception an orphanage where some orphaned and poor children are given free shelter and are now imparting education up to the secondary stage. They are also given some training in technical subjects by the Ashram.¹

¹. Goalpara District Gazetteer, P. 508.
Similarly, 'Goalpara Harijan Sevak Sangha works for the removal of untouchability in many towns of the district. Harijan Seva Samity in the District urges Harijans to send their children to schools to impart lessons aimed at improving the standard of living.1

Among various other voluntary social organisations of the district, mention may be made to Mahila Samities which aim at all round development of women in urban and semi-urban areas of the district. Child welfare and maternity works are also included in the programme of some Mahila Samities. Public Libraries-cum-Child welfare centres are also functioning in various parts of the District.2

For the advancement of the socially and economically backward classes of the district, a number of voluntary social service organisations have been formed by the students belonging to such communities. Such organisations run various institutions like Purabi Tribal Students Association Library, Tipkai; Goalpara Boro Students Union Library, 12th Union Tribal Students Association and Library, Pekhram.

1. op-cit., P. 509.
2. Ibid.
The Department of Social Welfare, Government of Assam, offers grants-in-aid to deserving voluntary organisations through the District Social Welfare Officer, Goalpara with headquarters at Dhubri. Under the grants-in-aid to Voluntary Social Welfare Organisations Scheme, the State Government has provided financial assistance to various Mahila Samities, Youth Centres, Child and Women Welfare Centres etc. in the District.¹

A social consciousness has also developed for the physically and orthopaedically handicapped persons. The Department of Social Welfare also offers financial aid to physically and orthopaedically handicapped persons for purchase of artificial limbs, wheel chairs, hearing aids etc. Another famous women's organisation called Ladies Club at Dhubri, also carries welfare activities amongst women and children.²

At present there are a number of branches of Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samity in most of the towns and advanced villages of the undivided District which carry on different relief and charitable works amongst the people.

¹ op.cit, District Gazetteer, P. 509.
² Ibid. P. 510.
A wave of change is also noticed in trade and commerce in the nooks and corners of the District with the spread of education. Various developmental activities such as construction of roads, bridges, buildings and new industries have increased along with import of various materials. Iron sheets, coal, kerosene, petrol machineries and machine parts, tools, raw materials etc. Sports goods, cosmetics, clothes and yarns, garments, fancy goods, leather and leather products and luxury goods are also imported in larger quantities than before. Now-a-days roads and rails have penetrated deep into the villages and modern vehicles move, where bullock carts reigned supreme. Villages which were not well-defined units before, have gradually become more homogenous units having schools, colleges, hospitals, dispensaries, post-office and other basic amenities of life.

In the industrial sector of the District, the number of workers have increased in all categories. At the household industry, the number of female workers have also increased. The increase of workers in manufacturing industries other than household industry; mining, forestry, livestock, agricultural plantations etc.; construction; trade and commerce
and transports, storage and communication is a happy trend of the economy of the District towards industrialisation. The installation of large scale industry like the Second Oil Refinery and Petro Chemical Complex further gives a filip to the industrial basis of the economy and thus enhance the importance of industry as a source of livelihood of the people in the District.

Along with this, the electrification of some key villages has further imparted a sense of decent living in rural areas and all these have vastly improved the standard of living over what it was before independence.

Here, one thing has to be mentioned that the rate of educational progress has increased the unemployment problem in the District. The additional employment opportunities generated during the Five Year Plan Periods have not sufficiently kept pace with the increased number of unemployed problem. Since 1965, a large number of individuals have registered their names in the District Employment Exchange, Dhubri. Along with this, a Vocational Guidance Unit is also functioning at the District Employment Exchange, Dhubri, since 1970, where the Vocational
Guidance and Employment Counselling programmes are designed to give intensive Vocational Guidance to those who seek such assistance. The Vocational Guidance Unit since its inception has been successfully carrying its responsibility in the problems of job seekers and others in the District.

Our investigation reveals that in addition to the efforts of the national and State Governments, our society itself is showing signs of awakening and striving to achieve more and more progress in various fields of society. With the spread of education, caste isolation is decaying gradually. Feelings of untouchability, degradation and finding out the solutions of the multitude problems are beset of our society to-day. It has been universally accepted that education for all at all levels and ages of children has become the only remedy to meet these challenges and bring about the desired social change in the District.

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