



CHAPTER 8
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SUGGESTIONS AND SCOPE
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
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8.1 CONCLUSION FROM THE STUDY

The study tries to identify the need of information of the Lodha community and gives an idea of their social, economic and cultural life after recognizing their information seeking behavior.

The Lodhas are regarded as a marginalized and economically backward community when compared to other tribal groups. It is mainly because of their social structure, illiteracy and ignorance. No separate reservation system exists for the Lodha community alone. The reservation relates to all the tribal groups at large. So, the advanced groups among the tribal communities like the Santals in this district who are comparatively much more educated avail the major benefits of reserved quotas. The West Bengal Government, however, allots only separate allocation for the Lodha development and a large amount of it is either misused or mishandled. As a result, they do not get as much benefit as they should have got (Employment and Backward). The under-development of the Lodhas is mainly due to the shortage of their information needs and the reluctance or lethargy for information seeking. They are less informed about what happens in the outside world. Very few of them listen to radio or TV news or read newspaper. They are not aware of the developments around them and also benefits that the Central and State Government provide to them. As a result even after 73 years of independence when we think of “Digital India” most of these people live below poverty level even though various developmental programs and projects are designed by the Government to bring about a change for the betterment of their socio-economic condition.

8.2 SUGGESTIONS

This study suggests the following for the betterment of the lifestyle of the Lodhas:-

8.2.1 Education

Education requires the top priority as education make them conscious of their information needs and information sources. This again, will ultimately help them to get benefits sanctioned for them by the Government. Primary School should be established in all the Lodha villages. DI (District Inspector) of Primary Schools should frequently visit the schools and supervise their studies. Upper Primary, Madhyamik and upper class students should come under coaching schemes of the Government in their respective schools and/or villages. To support the old persons, night schools may be introduced for the adults of the Lodha villages.

8.2.2 Health and Hygiene

This community is not conscious about health and hygiene. They generally do not visit Government hospitals where they can avail free treatment and use their own tribal medicine. Announcements regarding the facilities at Government hospitals and health camps from the Governmental level can raise their awareness. “Ayushman Bharat Yojana” may be introduced in all the Lodha villages. Sanitation systems are rarely maintained by them. They neither wash their clothes nor take bath regularly. Importance of hygiene must be clearly explained to them. For this, the local Panchayat and Anganwadi and health workers can take initiative. Measures should also be taken to control alcohol intake and drug addiction in this community. Street-corner drama performance showing health and hygiene consciousness may be organized by the local Panchayat or NGOs.

8.2.3 Drinking Water

Pure drinking water poses a problem in almost all the tribal villages, especially for the Lodha villages. Rig-bored tubewells should be installed in all the Lodha villages and their maintenance may be entrusted to the educated and trained Lodha youths.

8.2.4 Road and Transportation

Most of the Lodha villages are situated in the deep forest though some of them lie near the road. The forest villages where Lodha people live must be connected by forest roads or Panchayat roads so that they may come to nearby urban agglomeration to sell their forest products. The villages must be connected by Autos and Toto services.

8.2.5 Electricity

The villages predominantly with Lodha population should be connected with electricity. Free electric connection with one lamp per family would be of much help to them. Solar energy must be provided in a cluster of Lodha houses where their socio-economic condition is comparatively better. Trained Lodha youths must be entrusted to look after the solar plates for the better service of this solar energy.

8.2.6 Rationing System

The Lodha people sometimes cannot get the benefit of the rationing system at present in West Bengal. Food inspectors should be motivated to see that they get the benefit of the ration system regularly.

8.2.7 Patta Land

The Lodhas having their own land or patta land cannot cultivate their land for want of bullocks and other necessities for cultivation. Sometimes they cannot cultivate land for want of proper records of their rights on the land (ROR). Land and Land Reforms (Settlement) Department should see that they are not deprived of ROR of their land.

Agriculture department should also take initiative for the cultivation of their lands by the supply of irrigation water, seeds, and mini kits to them properly.

8.2.8 Housing

A large number of people belonging to this community rarely have any *pucca* house to live in. They need proper housing for good living. The Government must chalk out a suitable policy for them. It would be better if by spending a lesser amount of money the houses are built by using the labour of the individual beneficiary and indigenous raw material for walls (clay) and a roof (tiles, straw etc.) under the proper supervision of the block SAE (Sub Assistant Engineer) concerned.

8.2.9 Occupation and Economic Stability

The Lodhas generally live in the forest and depend on the forest for their livelihood. They collect roots, shoots, leaves etc. from the forest surrounding their villages. They collect flowers from the Mahua trees of the forest either to sell in the market or prepare alcohol from them. Lodha families having their own land or patta land use it for agricultural purpose. They should be trained to produce vegetables and fruits along with paddy with the help of the Agriculture department. They also prepare ropes from *sabai* grass. Some of them work as labourer in agricultural field or in construction work in urban areas. Some of the educated Lodhas work in Government service and railways.

Their economic stability mostly depends on their income from collecting forest goods, agriculture, working as labourers etc. Lodha hamlets within a village of other communities may also be motivated to introduce Pisciculture. They may also be trained in keeping goats and rams and also poultry keeping to increase their income.

8.2.10 Socio-Cultural Development

The Lodhas should be motivated to celebrate their socio, cultural activities and festivals to get out of their monotonous poverty-stricken life.

8.2.11 Role of Library cum Community Information Centre for their Total Development

The role of library and community information centre has never been realised this way in the past as it is realised now. The library and community information centre may take a leading role for the total development of these people. In a Lodha village a library may be established along with a community information centre where the Lodha members along with their *Mukhias* may sit once or twice a week preferably in the evening (as they are out of house throughout the day). Block level supervisor in-charge of different government schemes may be present there. He will discuss the different schemes meant for them, how to involve these people in those schemes and how to implement the schemes. Social functions may be organised there to attract the Lodhas. This will help them to understand the value of the library cum community information centre. This will again encourage them to send their children to the schools to enhance literacy rate and reduce drug addiction of the Lodha youths. However, proper monitoring of the schemes must be under taken in right earnest so that the schemes are implemented as per schedules involving the Lodha beneficiaries. One thing should be mentioned here that Government report about their development is always expressed in terms of money spent for them not in terms of real benefits accrued to these people with that fund. So a post facto implementation assessment or survey must be undertaken by a third party entrusted by the concerned Collector/District Magistrate for further action in this respect and their report should be re-evaluated by the concerned authority.

From my experience gained in course of my field survey and discussion with the Lodha people both male and female and the educated persons among them, I presume that this may be of some help to bring about a real revolution in the life style of the Lodha community.

8.3 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

- This study is confined to Multistage Random Sampling Method therefore the study areas like Daspur I, Keshiary, Salboni which appears from the sampling has been taken but the researcher found in general that other blocks like Narayangarh, Kharagpur I, Debra in Kharagpur sub-division and Midnapore Sadar in Midnapore sub-division also have enough Lodha population and may be studied at a later stage for getting more diverse results.
- Different projects may be prepared by observing the result of this study which can help to change the social standard and also ensure the overall socio-economic development.
- Other places in West Bengal (viz.the district of Bankura and Purulia) along with all other states of India like a district of Singbhum in Jharkhand state and the district of Mayurbhanj in Odisha state where Lodha people generally live may be covered in further research work.
- This type of study can be conducted on any of the disadvantaged community and the results can be compared with this study.

REFERENCES

“Employment and Backward Class Welfare.” *Paschim Medinipur Zilla Parishad*, 2019, zpmidwest.org/backclass.php. Accessed 20 June 2019.