

Society and Culture of Toto Tribe after Colonial Period

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Abstract: *There are three indigenous tribes of West Bengal is the Toto tribe among them. They now change in various activity like society-culture and Primitive mentality. They mixed with different caste and race which not seen before independence of India. During the colonial period this area capture from the Bhutan. They isolated from the British influence after that they faced different hard trouble and moved outside for marketing. This paper trying to understand with the analysis of different secondary source and interpret different historical information about them on Society and Culture of Toto Tribe after colonial period which gradually change. This paper tries to say that their origin and development and Political influence.*

Keyword: Tribe, Political, Culture, Society, Isolation, Community, Indigenous, Origin

1. Introduction

The most notable of the three indigenous tribes of West Bengal is the Toto tribe among them. They live in six villages in Totopara on the Indo-Bhutan border under Madarihat police station in the newly formed Alipurduar district of North Bengal. In ethnographic terms, the Toto community is a branch of the Tribet-Mangloid ethnic group. At present, various changes have taken place in this indigenous community over time. In the social, economic and religious spheres, the relaxation of traditional rules as in the past can be noticed. The influence of other neighboring communities has been increasingly affecting their public life in various ways. There has been some progress in the field of education at present. Although their main livelihood is agriculture and animal husbandry, at present there is a growing tendency among them to take up other livelihoods. More than 40 people from the Toto indigenous community are employed in government and non-government jobs. The Toto community is no longer subject to restrictions on social activities, including marriage. A touch of modernity can also be noticed in the costumes and food list. In the field of religion, the influence of other religions has also been seen in the Toto indigenous community, which worships nature in recent times. Like the present Toto indigenous community, the population is 1,585. Of these, 622 are males and 63 are females now increased. Each gotra or gosthi has its own self-esteem. However, in spite of the Gaetra division, it can be said that there is no racial division among the Toto community. Because there is no ups and downs in Toto. Toto's Gaetra division is still incomplete. Some of the gotras also have sub-gaitras. The Totora were once a forested tribe. Their main livelihood was hunting, wood and weaving fruits. At that time, they were also accustomed to cultivating 'Jhum'. But with the change of era, their way of life and livelihood has also changed. At one time there was a good orange orchard in Totopara. The people of the plains used to buy oranges and wood from the Toto's.

Society and Culture of the Toto Tribe

In the 21st century, Toto society and culture Totora used to cultivate land. They also earned money by selling betel nuts. But gradually these paths of their income are closed. The orange orchards are ruined. Plain timber traders have cut down the fir trees. In need of livelihood, they once carried oranges from Bhutan to the orange groves on the plains. But

their financial constraints never paid off. Since the acquisition of Doars by the English, the Toto have gradually abandoned their traditional livelihoods to become farmers and day laborers. The British government reserved 1993.69 acres of land in the name of the then Toto patriarch Dhanpati Toto in 18 to protect Toto's farmland from foreign aggression. But under the Land Reform Act of 1979, most of Toto's farmland became khas land. As a result, the Totora are now expatriates in their homeland. Most of their agricultural land has been occupied by outsiders. Today, most of the 343 Toto families have become landless farmers. Their lives are being lived in extreme poverty. At present (as of January 31, 2017), only 37 Totos have been involved in various government and semi-government jobs. No accurate information is available on how the people of the Toto community began to live in Totopara. The data collected by various researchers shows that about seven men started living here before. Before that, they or their ancestors used to roam in the forest. Used to hunt. they used to collect forest fruits, herbs, dead animals' hands and teeth etc. They used to complete their livelihood by exchanging collected items with the people of Lekalaya and collecting their necessities. It is known that during the Second Bhutan War in 1864-65, the people of this community were employed in the logistics of the army. Shane goes, those who are in this war are Toto. It is said that today's Toto's are the descendants of those who carried Toto's. Many people think that they are known as Toto because they used to wander in the forest, mountains and river banks. There is a legend prevalent in this context.

The Toto tribe crossed inaccessible forests, rivers and canals and finally took refuge in the foothills of Bhutan. A Bhutanese people lived in the mountains next door. They are known as the 'Dia' race. Disputes arose between the two over land and other matters. As a result, war broke out between the two groups on the banks of the river Sati. The river Sati turned red with blood. As a result, the Toto people did not drink the river water. Later, they crossed a few hills and went further south to Toto Para as the motherland of the Toto tribe. As a result of the Toto race, Toto Para is now known to all. "There is disagreement among researchers about naming Toto. However, the language and culture of the Hayek Toto people are completely different from other Mongol peoples. At present the names of the six villages of Toto Para are as follows: (1) Dumsigaon (2) Puja Gaon (3)

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Mitrang Gaon (4) Subba Gaon (5) Mandal Gaon (6) Panchayat Gaon: In these six villages, the people of Toto community live in 6343 families with a total population of 61,575. (622 males, 63 females. As on 30.05.2018). Although there are some legends about this, there are doubts about their historical truth. Dr. Charuchandra Sanyal did not find anyone in Toto's village in 1945 who had any information about Toto's ancestry. In 1898, Mr. Sander heard from an old Toto that seven or eight men had lived in four other places in the West Doars before their settlement.

Toto also has special features in home construction. The Totos call their home — na-ke-sha '. There is an impression of primitiveness in the construction of this house. They build houses with thatched roofs on bamboo or wooden poles. The houses are 12 to 15 feet long and 8 to 10 feet wide. The floor of the house is usually made of Gaeta bamboo or bamboo kabari at a height of 5/6 feet from the ground. The house is fenced with bamboo Bari (house). There is only one door (lapung) to enter the house. In front of this door is an open veranda eight feet wide. The porch is made 8/10 inches below the deck of the house. A notched tree trunk is used to climb the stairs to the stairs. This staircase is called "Kaibu". There is only one room in Toto's bamboo house. They worshiper of nature. There are no idols in the temple of the Toto tribe. They worship rivers, trees, hills and lands as gods. Although there is a house deity in every family, the main deity of Toto is Ishpa, the deity of both men and women. Her name as 'Mahakala' in the male form and 'Saijhani or Mahakali' in the female form. The second chief deity of the Totos is Ishpa's cousin Mainang or Pidua. But he has a relationship with Satan or the gods. Toto wants to keep Pidua happy to protect her from ghosts, demons and demons. Toto has various rituals throughout the year. A team of 16 priests was formed under the leadership of the chief priest to conduct these ceremonies. The chief priest is called Toto by Devpao or Kaiji and his assistants by Deosi. The priests wear clean clothes before sitting in worship. During the worship of Mahakala and Mahakali, the priest has to eat his own food. The two biggest religious festivals of the Totos are Omchu Puja and Mayu Puja. These two deities are dedicated to the deity Ishwar. Every year at the end of July or the beginning of August 'Omchu' puja is held with pomp. It is also called 'Kauni' Puja as a new Kaun arises at this time. Totoro does not believe in idol worship. Dhale-ai (bakung), two large baras, are worshiped as symbols of Mahakala and Mahakali. Names of the two shields: (1) Chigaimu. (2) Mugaimu. Throughout the year, the shield is hung in two puja houses (demsas). During the Omchu Puja, two shields are lowered and religious music is played. After the offering of wine-meat-kaun to the chief priestly deity, the feast of Toto begins. Earlier, 'Omchu Puja' lasted for five days. But at present the puja ends in three days. The Mayu Puja begins on the date of the new moon 22 days after the Omchu Puja. Earlier this puja lasted for 9 days but now 'Mayu' puja lasts for only five days. This 'mayu puja' used to have the practice of sacrificing cows, but now it is almost non-existent.

The identity of the primitive Toto people is that in the Toto society, according to the Gotra, a family or a few families worship the Gotra-Kul deity. This is worshiped every two years or five years. The name of the cult is in Toto language

- "Chai Sun". Basically, it is customary to sacrifice one or two cows in this cool puja. The priest recites the mantra by placing the head of the sacrificed cow inside the house. Outside, the beef is cooked. Married sisters-in-law must come to this puja. Because Mama is introduced to her nephews at home this time. Drink all day long. Rice and meat are eaten in the afternoon. In Toto society, social norms are prevalent in general oral form. (1) Three 'lachijanwa' should be done in a year in Kaiji house or Demra. Lachizanwa is the annual meeting. (2) If there is a family problem or personal problem in this Lachijanwa puja, a proposal has to be submitted for discussion in the meeting. (3) Both Kaiji and Gangu are required to attend such meetings. (4) Those whose problems are to be discussed must apply by submitting two jugs to the meeting. (5) Toto is considered a member only if he is eighteen years of age. (6) Girls do not need any member chada or anything else. (6) When the first son is sixteen years old, he is considered a member after the father. (6) In the trial period, of course, there is a need for an adult. The verdict should only be pronounced by Kaiji or Gangu. The first opportunity to expand education in Toto Para came through the non-governmental N.G.O. The first agricultural project was set up in Toto Para panchayat village. Mr. Jogan Sarkar is the Director of Education and Agricultural Projects. Mihir Ganguly later took over the post in 1970. Later, in 1962, Santosh Bhattacharya of the Tribal Welfare Organization of the Government of West Bengal officially joined. Toto could not understand or speak Bengali then. Amepa Tota, a local Toto Panjayet, helps the Toto people to start their education. Amepa Toto is the last dynasty of the Toto's. The later elected panchayat system was introduced in 1986.

The first government primary school was played in a warehouse in Subbagaon, i.e. Kaiji Para. Baren Basumatari taught in Toto Para for several years. Due to family reasons, he left his job and returned to Shamuktala. The only Santosh Bhattacharya Mahasaya endured many hardships and continued his education in Totopara. Language becomes a strong obstacle. Because there was no one in Toto Para who was fluent in Bengali. Finally, Hon'ble Gharmaprasad Sharma from Chamurchi joined as a teacher. He himself knew both Nepali and Bengali. Jehan Ekka from the Lutheran World Service joined here in 1982 as a teacher. But since that year, the Tribal Welfare Department and the primary school have been separated. Santosh Bhattacharya and Gharmaprasad, two members of the Welfare Department, contributed to the Welfare Department. Mr. Haren Shaivya joined as a primary school teacher in 1982. In 1964, missionary teacher Navneeta Malkin and assistant teacher Samuel Tia joined. Muktaram Toto passed the first fourth class. He later passed the eighth grade. In fact, he was the first pioneer of education in Totopara. But for various reasons his secondary examination was not given. Chittaranjan Toto is the first secondary school graduate. First graduate Rita Toto. 36 people working in various government and semi-government departments. He is even working in the army and police department one by one. One hundred and forty-nine students have passed the secondary / higher secondary and undergraduate level at present (2016). This is how the education of Totopara is going on. At present there are two primary schools and one secondary school in Totopara. An English school has also been set up

in Toto Para with the help of the non-governmental organization Big gap in England and the Toto Welfare Association. At present the number of schools going students is increasing. In Toto Para, 'Omchu' and Mayu 'Puja — festivals are the largest and most popular puja festivals of Toto. The Omchu Puja festival is held at the end of July or the beginning of August every year. Earlier this puja festival was held for five days. But due to economic reasons, this puja festival is currently held for three days. It is held twenty-two days after the Omchu Puja festival, the biggest puja festival of the Totos, Mayu. This festival also used to last for nine days. But at present this puja festival lasts only five days. Two more festivals of Toto are also mentioned here. The people of the Toto community have a spring worship festival. The name of this spring puja-festival is Sarde's festival. Usually this puja-festival takes place in the middle of the month of Chaitra. At this time new oranges and citrus flowers come. This puja festival is held to protect this new fruit. It is forbidden to eat this fruit from this time until the 'Mayu' is worshiped.

In the 21st century, Totosamaj and culture, this 'Sarde' puja is held on the banks of the river Gayati in the spring. Pigs are sacrificed collectively. At the end of the puja, the soup is eaten with pork. In the evening, the new youth group was accustomed to dancing and singing in front of Demsar. In the old days, it was the artists who accustomed them to dance and song. Eating on the occasion of this puja festival, especially U's are eaten arbitrarily. This puja is performed on a specific stone altar on the banks of the river Gayati. People from the entire Toto community happily participate in this spring puja festival in the month of Chaitra. Another festival of the Toto community is the 'Arsing' festival. While preparations for Durga Puja were in full swing on the plains, Totor and Singh were busy preparing for the festival at Toto Para. During the Durga Puja, preparations are made for the three-day Toto Para 'Arsing Utsav' from the seventh to the ninth. The Arsing Festival is known as the Toto's Jamaishthi Festival. Son-in-law of Toto community when the son-in-law came home, he and his daughter were given new clothes. Goat, chicken or pork is cooked from noon to night. When the sun sets in the mountains of Bhutan, the melody of the song is heard. And with this song comes the night dance song (Ananda Hulloor). But the son-in-law also has a responsibility to make the time goes on. Fruits, sweets or new clothes are not needed for mother-in-law. All you have to do is take a special U-shaped home made with Maraya. It is considered unfortunate if a son-in-law does not come to this Arsing festival. This special festival of the people of this community is customary for the affection of the son-in-law. The people of the Toto community have their own mother tongue. The Toto's call their own language - "Yawea". Although there is no script in this language, it is a complete language. Why not this language is a medium of communication between a people and it has its own structure and rules. From a genetic point of view, the original source of the Toto language is Sino-Tibetan. The Himalayas are a branch of the 'Vet-Burmese' language belonging to this family. Many languages of Nepal, North and Northeast India have originated from this language group. In Toto society, there are some restrictions on pregnant women. Pregnant women are not allowed to go out alone after dusk. It is advisable to avoid heavy work as much as possible. There is

no objection to light work. It is objectionable to touch or visit any corpse. The news of the birth of a child received a happy response in Totopara. Usually, Toto women help the mother during childbirth. During pregnancy, they take the help of Pau or Ojhar to protect themselves from evil spirits. Although they can participate in other household chores after childbirth, Toto girls cannot enter the Tagore's house or Demsa during the puja before the 'Jadi-Pai-Pa-A' ceremony. Jadi-pai-pa-a', the ceremony is a naming ceremony in Toto society. The program is usually held on five, seven, nine or eleven days. Through this ceremony, the newborn is recognized as one of the Toto community. Adequate amount of U or alcohol is used in this ceremony. The baby is given a garland of cotton and durba grass around his neck. Its name is known as Shandri'.

In the twenty-first century, the Totosamaj and culture are painted in the hands of a child in yellow, cut with a cotton swab, weeds and tied to a piece of turmeric to protect it from the evil spirits, it is called 'Jani'. In Toto society, after the birth of a child, a newborn baby is bathed in cold water and 'U' or alcohol is used in the ceremony. The baby is given a garland of cotton and durba grass around his neck. Its name is Shandri'. The baby's hands are dyed yellow, cut with a cotton swab, weeded and tied to a piece of turmeric — to protect it from evil spirits, called 'Jadi'. In Toto society, after the birth of a child, it is customary to bathe the newborn in cold water and touch his mouth with alcohol. Toto conducted the naming ceremony of the newborn. 'Pau' does not take salty foods or drinks on the day of the naming ceremony. Give a drop of 'pau' to the baby's face. Everyone who attends later drinks U or alcohol. After the naming ceremony, the baby's mother is allowed to take part in all the activities. Everyone presents blessed the child. Later, Maeral, eminent persons, Pau and others took the child and informed the neighbors about the naming of the child. Meals are usually served at one year or later. There is a custom that a wedding cannot take place until this meal has taken place. That is why food has to be served before the wedding ceremony. The feast is called Balidanwa in Toto language. There is a custom of sacrificing Maerg in this ceremony. Mantras are also recited. The name of the event is 'Sa-Gai-Lanwa'. The mantra is uttered in the name of the newborn by placing wine in a bowl. The ceremony is to give 'pauke meat rice'. Pau puts ghee on the newborn's head and recites mantras. A piece of cloth is needed to hold the baby on the back. In this society, it is customary to accept this piece of cloth through a ceremony. This program is called 'Badilangmi'. No priest is required for this ceremony. They can do this on their own. However, at the present time, it has been created in this society to take the advice of a doctor at the time of child birth and for the need of child care. Infant mortality rate has also come down a bit in this society at present.

Toto society has a tradition of burying dead bodies. After receiving the news of the death, first everyone went to the house of the deceased and collectively expressed their grief through tears. Some rituals are followed before burial. The corpse is placed with the head facing east. Homosexual people make wooden coffins. The coffin is called 'hako'. The corpse is oiled. The coffin is covered with six banana leaves. He came and arranged for the body to be taken to the

cemetery. "One person has disappeared from our society today," he declared. Before being taken to the grave, a pot of firewood and a torch of fire were sprinkled around the graveyard three times. Somewhere came and took a piece of straw from the rice of the house, burned the straw and turned it around six times and threw it away. The head of the corpse is placed on the north side and the coffin is laid in the grave. Next to the corpse, drink, betel nut, lime, wine, clothes, weapons, etc. of the deceased are all buried with the corpse. A bamboo equal to the corpse was cut and handed over to the deceased's wife. For a year, the widow carried a bamboo stick. It is customary to plant a betel tree on the grave as a memento after the burial. At present, some people bury the graveyard with cement. However, this was not the case before. Impurity is observed for six days if it is male and five days if it is female. Some rules and regulations have to be followed in Toto society during uncleanness. (1) No animal may be killed in the house during uncleanness. (2) At that time the hair of the head cannot be combed. (3) It is not possible to climb a tree. (4) The trunk of a tree cannot be climbed. (5) No turban can be worn on the head. (6) Umbrella can be given on the head.

In the 21st century, Toto society and culture have to be thrown into the water. At present, however, hand sticks are used and thrown into the river for twelve days. After purification, both men and women can remarry of their own free will. Of the dead in the afterlife ceremonies. For the peace of the disembodied soul, his favorite food items, alcohol drink, betel nut etc. are brought to the graveyard in his name. The priest recites a mantra in his name, wishing him peace of mind. It is unknown at this time what he will do after leaving the post. However, they believe that man comes from where the sun rises, and man goes back to where the sun sets. Even today, many Toto's believe that the source of their birth and death is in the Badu hills north of Totopara. There are various marriage customs prevalent in Toto society. In the past, betrothal marriages were common in Toto society. Although the practice of child marriage is not prevalent in this society, the talk of their marriage matures at a very young age. However, marriage does not take place in self. Nubibe and Danbe are two different groups, but they do not get married. Because in both cases there is a brotherhood. There is no betting practice in Toto marriage. Widow marriage is common. They usually believe in one marriage custom. Although it is customary to marry a sister-in-law, it is not possible to marry the wife's elder brother.

Mantras will be recited in the names of boys and girls for the purpose of introducing the primitive Toto people. The name of this program is in Toto language - 'Chang-Pitwa'. In Toto society, marriage ceremony is held at the son's house. Although there is no betting system, some of the donations are given by the girl's family. There are two ways. The new groom comes to the daughter's house on his return. In the Toto language, the practice of biragramana is called - "samoonya". Donations from the girl's home are delivered by the girl's brother or grandfather or other relatives. Toto has a wide range of food and drink arrangements for this type of wedding. Wine is used arbitrarily. After the two of them sipped their beers, the turn of drinking of the invited guests started. In Toto's marriage, there is no custom of

exchanging garlands, wearing vermilion, etc. Those who have fewer financial means - they get married in a six-marriage or 'tai-pawa' method. In this marriage, a woman goes to her daughter's house with a jug and pot, saying that she has already spoken. Other relatives of the groom's party also go with him. The priest came there and recited mantras to the gods in the name of the bride and groom. In the evening some women go to the groom's house with the bride. This time the wedding is arranged on any auspicious day according to one's ability. If for some reason a child is born in Madhur's womb, the priest performs penance at the groom's house with a piglet. Worship etc. are done. This atonement ceremony is called in Toto language - "Sa-Gailnova". Even if a child is born after the atonement, the marriage ceremony must be performed. Toto gets married but is usually ostracized. Some such incidents are seen in Totopara at present. Although the importance of religious ties in Toto's marriage is comparatively less than in other societies, the socio-economic aspect is more important in the marriage of this society. The fact is that a new person comes into the family when they get married, so according to Toto, this is a real picture of the married life of the young people of the primitive tribe.

In Toto society, the custom of feeding banana leaves to all the invitees of the village to various puja-parvanas and wedding ceremonies is still practiced in this society. However, instead of banana leaves, the use of shalapata dishes and other dishes is now introduced. Earlier, oysters were cut in marriages, but now, instead of oysters, pork or goat meat is cooked in Toto society weddings. There is also a ceremony called "Perae-Ang-Wa" in this society on the day after the wedding. In this society, it is customary to feed the rest of the pot prepared for the wedding and the meat by inviting many people the next day. There has been a lot of Toto society and culture in the 21st century. At one time, Toto's farming system was known as common jhum system. After that, they have gradually acquired the skills of cultivating jhum as well as plowing the land with plows and oxen. In the dry season, they have become accustomed to cultivating maize, marua, ginger, pulses, kaun and some areas of paddy and vegetables. There used to be an orange orchard, but now there is none. At one time, Toto used to earn some money by carrying oranges from different parts of Bhutan. Many Toto families were involved in transporting these oranges. Another of Toto's most lucrative crops is betel. The land of Totopara is quite suitable for betel cultivation. Almost every family is encouraged to cultivate betel. They make a lot of money by selling these betel nuts. Bamboo is also a profitable crop in Arai here. Before that, Toto used to earn good money. At present it is almost non-existent — bamboo is almost extinct here due to various rages. Economically, the current situation of this community has become critical. In most cases, they have been involved in manual labor in Bhutan to earn a living. Earlier there was an opportunity to earn some money through Shimul mill, turmeric, cotton, betel leaf etc. but now it is almost non-existent. They also had skills in other cultivation. Due to the destruction of the saplings due to the wealth of the timber thieves, they have also been deprived of this lac cultivation. Animal husbandry is also a major livelihood for the Totos. Raising pigs, chickens, cows, buffaloes, goats, etc. in almost

every household helps them in their economic life to some extent.

2. Conclusion

Trying to say that, despite Toto's strong social ties, the practice of marrying a boy or girl from another caste under the influence of a mixed culture is now seen. In that case, if a Toto boy marries a girl of another caste, he has to make atonement by inviting the elders of six villages to the veg with a 4/5 pitcher pot and a pig. However, if the marriage is to be recognized, the girl is allowed to marry only if she is greeted by her groom's uncle or one of the Pisa family's grandfather or father. Education facilities of this tribe is very low but in case some boys and girls take education village or outside the village. Toto tribe gradually decrease in number by various type of disease. Communication facilities is very poor. Primitive Cultivation system now abandoned. They adopted new income source like stone collection, Picnic spot income etc.

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