

Psycho-Social Effect of Ethnic Conflict on the High School Students with Reference to Parbhatjhora Sub-Division of Kokrajhar District

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Abstract: *School education is one of the most important and beautiful stages of education in one's life. School should provide proper teaching-learning facilities to the students, for growth and development of the students. It is regarded as a second home of the students. Good school environment must be provided to them, so that they can learn better. But in today's world, students are not free from any kind of disturbances due to ethnic conflict. The purpose of this study is to investigate the psycho-social effect of ethnic conflict on the students with reference to Parbhatjhora sub-division of Kokrajhar district. Descriptive survey method was adopted for the present study. A sample of 17 high schools and 800 students from class X were randomly selected from different schools. A self-made questionnaire on psycho-social effect of ethnic conflict was used for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were mentally disturbed and had adjustment problem due to conflict. The investigator feels that, this present study will create awareness regarding the negative effect of ethnic conflict on the students. It is hoped that, this study will be helpful to the researchers and academicians to conduct further research in the country.*

Keywords: Psycho-social effect, ethnic conflict, high school, students

1. Introduction

Education has manifold functions to perform in the development of the society. Educationists like John Dewey and Raymont stress on the development of social qualities in a child so that he can work for the development of the society (Aggarwalla, 2011). The Education Commission of 1964-66 has remarked as, "Education cannot be considered in isolation or planned in vacuum. It has to be used as a powerful instrument of social, economic and political change and will, therefore, have to be related to the long-term national aspirations, the programme of national development in which the country is engaged and the difficult short term problem is called upon to face". Education must basically aim at social service, citizenship and social efficiency. It should prepare a child to live as an effective member of society. It should aim at the welfare and progress of the society. Every individual must be prepared for the betterment and development of the society (Aggarwalla, 2011). School education is one of the most important and beautiful stages of education in one's life. Schools should provide proper teaching-learning facilities to the students, for growth and development of the students. It is regarded as a second home of the students. The school is a special environment where a certain quality of life and certain types of activities and occupations are provided with the object of securing child's development along desirable lines (Pathak & Deka, 2013). Good school environment must be provided to them, so that they can learn better. But in today's world, students are not free from any kind of disturbances due to ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict has become one of the serious issues in the region.

Erickson's Stages of Psychosocial Development and High School Students discusses about the various causes of psychosocial problems among adolescents like poverty,

cultural values and societal roles, abuse or neglect, family dynamics, peer influences, mental health, physical health and malnutrition, disabilities and stress. All these factors contribute to the psychosocial problem in the adolescents. Attaelmanan, et. al. article, "Socio-Psychological Impact of the Darfur War on Women and Children", discusses the consequences of war on the people and violence against women. It also describes displacement of children and behavioural deviations and the drug trade. Basumatary's article, "Psychological Impact of Conflict on Tribal Girl in NorthEast India and its Intervention", discusses about the different psychological effects of conflict on tribal girls living in relief camps. This study brings awareness about the psychological problems to the people as well as to the policy and plan makers. Gawell's, (2016) "Mental Health and Psychosocial Effects of Armed Conflict and Violence", is a collection of workshop report from international workshop, Stockholm. This report discusses the effects of armed conflict among the people and tries to bring some qualitative reform in the society. Hassan & Shafi's, (2013) "Impact of Conflict Situation on Mental Health in Srinagar, Kashmir", examines the effect of conflict on the mental health of the kashmiri people. The study reveals that mental illness resulted in deterioration of their physical health and unawareness of people about any rehabilitation centers and showed grievances towards the Government. Mir, et. al., "Effect of Armed Conflict on the Mental Health of Youth in Kashmir", compares the level of neuroticism, overall anxiety, mental tension, guilt proneness, level of maturity, suspiciousness and level of self control in youth of Kashmir. The findings reveal that there is a significant difference in the level of neuroticism overall anxiety, mental tension, guilt proneness, level of maturity, suspiciousness and level of self control in youth.

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2. Need of the Study

The 2012 ethnic conflict that had occurred in Kokrajhar district and in some parts of Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD), Assam, had brought tremendous negative effect on school going students. Many studies have been conducted on different issues of ethnic conflict in the country but no particular study has been conducted on psycho-social effect of ethnic conflict on the students. Therefore, the investigator felt the need to undertake this present study. It is hoped that this study brings positive outlook in the minds of the people and the Government and try to minimize the problem in the society. It is also hoped that the findings of the study will help the readers, researchers and policy makers to create better school curriculum.

3. Objective of the study

To study the psycho-social effect of ethnic conflict on the students in Parbhatjhora sub-division of Kokrajhar district.

4. Methodology

Descriptive survey method has been adopted for the present study. The population consisted of Provincialised, venture recognized and private high schools in Parbhatjhora sub-division of Kokrajhar district. Samples of 800 students both male and female from 17 high schools were randomly selected. A self-made questionnaire on Psycho-social effect of ethnic conflict was used for data collection. Taking account the mediums of the students, the main questionnaire in English language was translated to vernacular mediums like Bodo and Assamese language. The data obtained from field survey were analyzed carefully by using percentage technique. Descriptive statistics like tables and pie-charts were also used.

5. Analysis and interpretation

Table 1: Showing the responses regarding mental disorder experienced by the students

Disorder	No. of respondents	Percent
Emotional insecurity	425	53.13%
Sleeplessness	262	32.75%
Anger	113	14.12%
Total	800	100%

Source: Survey (2016)

Table no.1. shows that, 53.13% respondents have experienced emotional insecurity during ethnic conflict. 32.75% have experienced sleeplessness disorder and while 14.12% experienced feeling of anger. Most of the students were not able to overcome these problems till today. These mental disorders deteriorate the students' performance in studies. If they are not able to overcome these problems, then it can lead to other serious problems. Therefore, parents and teachers should observe their behaviours frequently. Guidance and counseling should be provided to them so that they can get rid from these problems.

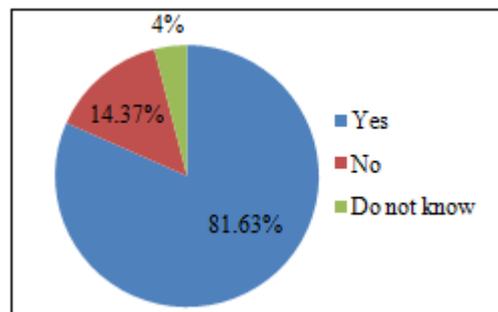


Figure 1: Recalling the incidents that occurred during ethnic conflict

Source: Survey (2016)

Figure no.2, reveals that 81.63% respondents recall the incidents that took place in the society. 14.37% respondents said that they do not recall it. Whereas, 4% respondents said that they do not know or remember anything about the incident. This type of mental tension among the students can affect them in their studies and future career. Teachers and parents should try to overcome this problem through proper counseling service in the school.

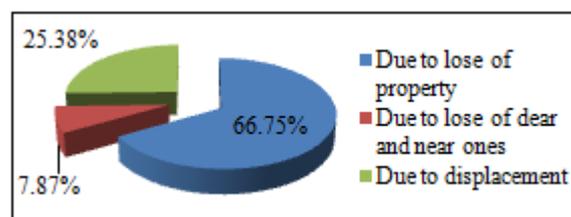


Figure 2: Reasons for wanting to commit suicide during conflict

Source: Survey (2016)

From figure no.2, it is found that 66.75% respondents wanted to commit suicide at the time of conflict due to lose of property. 25.38% respondents due to displacement and 7.87% respondents wanted to commit suicide due to lose of dear and near ones. It is not an easy task to commit suicide or perform any fearful activity. In order to do this act, one needs courage. Only mental disorder people can commit suicide. The investigator feels that ethnic conflict has affected the students badly and they are struggling in their life to overcome these problems. Special attention should be provided to those students, who are facing this type of problem in the school and society and bring solutions to the problems.

Table 2: Responses regarding behavioural problem

Behavioural problem	No. of respondents	Percent
Created eating disorder	456	57%
Felt revengeful	129	16.12%
Made chain smoker	215	26.88%
Total	800	100%

Source: Survey (2016)

It is revealed that 57% respondents had eating disorder during conflict. 26.88% respondents became a chain smoker and while 16.12% felt revengeful at the time of conflict. The bad habits which they have inherited during conflict are serious matter. It needs to be discussed properly among the parents and teachers. Eating disorder and smoking can create harmful effects in their body. Young children are not aware

of various diseases. So they should be made aware regarding the various consequences of these behaviours. School should give them proper training on moral behavior and conduct.

Table 3: Reasons for adjustment problem

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percent
Due to frustration	325	40.63%
Felt isolated in the class	275	34.37%
Felt neglected in the school	200	25%
Total	800	100%

Source: Survey (2016)

It is found that, 40.63% could not adjust well in the school and society due to frustration. 34.37% respondents felt isolated in the class, so they were not able to adjust well with their friends and 25% respondents said that they felt neglected by other students. All these factors had contributed them in adjustment problem in the school. Most of them said that, they felt very uneasy to meet and talk to their own classmates after the incident. It has brought disturbances in their social life. If proper treatment is not given to them as early as possible, this can lead to more serious problem. So, teachers should try their best to solve this type of problem in the school.

Table 4: Showing reasons for not participating in any school activities after the conflict

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percent
Due to humiliation	283	35.37%
Due to lack of interest	321	40.13%
Felt isolated	196	24.5%
Total	800	100%

Source: Survey (2016)

The above table shows that, 40.13% respondents have not participated in any school activities, due to lack of interest after the incident. 35.37% respondents did not take part in any programme due to humiliation by their friends and on the other hand, 24.5% respondents did not take part because they felt that they were isolated and no one wanted to talk freely to them. It is also found that majority of the students were very active prior to conflict in the region. This type of personality will block the goodness of an individual and thus making him an introvert. Participation in any school activity is very important because, it helps an individual to grow and develop the sense of co-operation, feeling of brotherhood and dignity of labour.

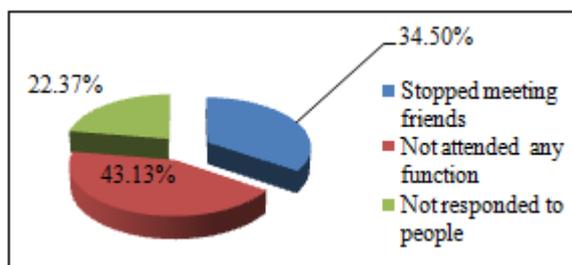


Figure 3: Responses regarding getting disturbed in social life

Source: Survey (2016)

From figure no. 3, it is observed that majority of the respondents have not attended any function in the society after the conflict. 34.50% respondents had stopped meeting

friends and 22.37% respondents had not responded to anyone. Ethnic conflict has hampered the social life of the students in various ways. It is very difficult for them to forget the incidents that had occurred in their life. It is the duty of the school to help students get back normalcy in their social life.

6. Conclusion

Ethnic conflict had an adverse effect on the school going children. It had created mental disorder, behavioural, adjustment problem etc. Majority of the school going children from Parbhatjhora sub-division of Kokrajhar district had been affected very badly. Students are affected both psychologically and socially due to ethnic conflict in the area. Schools should try to build positive personality among students through some activities. Regular guidance and counseling services should be provided to the students in the school. Special attention should be given to those affected students. School management committee, parents and teachers should conduct workshops, lectures and seminars on different issues of ethnic conflict. Cultural exchange programmes and inter-school competition on various issues should be conducted time to time, in order to help students develop positive attitudes towards the society. The investigator felt that this study would help the readers, Government, policy makers and Academicians to make proper school curriculum to the students. It is also hoped that, it will help the future researchers to conduct better research on the similar topic and bring positive outlook in the society.

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