



A STUDY ON THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF THE MOG COMMUNITY IN TRIPURA (INDIA)

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Introduction:

The Mogs are the sixth largest tribe in Tripura. Their position is next to the Tripuris/Tripura, Reangs, Jamatias, Chakmas and Halams. Mogs migrated to Tripura from Arakan Hills where they were once the main tribe. This migration took place first at Chattagong Hill Tracts and then in Tripura. In 1951 their population was 3,789 and in 1971 their population was 12,273 in Tripura. As per census report 2011 their population increased to 37,893. Their major concentrations are at Subroom, Santirbazar, Belonia and Ambasa.

Mogs are followers of Buddhism. But, not unlike other tribal groups, they have their local deities like Chinni and Chichi. Besides, they also worship Hindu goddesses like Kali, Durga and Ganga beside many household deities. Every Mog village has a Buddhist temple. A priest (shamphura), who takes a vow of celibacy, is in charge of the temple. Due to modern wave of life, recently some families of this community have taken Christianity as well as Hinduism as their religion.

They are a Tibeto-Burmese tribe known to be originated from Burmese and Arakan tribes. They have their own written script in Arakan Language format. They are generally free from any intra-communal or inter-group class distinctions. As a community, the people are very disciplined, peace-loving and meek. By nature they are not so much active for the advancement of life. They are satisfied with their existing life style and their demands always remain within limitations. The Mogs women are strong, stout and industrious, performing all the household activities, besides weaving their own garments. Mog's economy is based on forest-oriented activities, plain-land agriculture, rubber plantation, their traditional wine preparation, wage earning through physical labour in different sectors and unspecified occupations. Their women also work equally with the male members in the family to raise income.

In fact Mog's social culture and belief are centralized with Burmese culture. Their folk tales and songs are really melodious and touch the core of heart. Mog community by tradition is famous for their medicine. Besides their normal economic activities some of them earn through indigenous treatment. The Choudhury who is the leader of the social council presides over the council meetings and has the power to levy a fine. They have social administrative council. The council functionaries are elected on the basis of their wealth and social status

Wah is the main festival of the Mog Community. During this festival they have the opportunity of getting together. The boat festival, which takes place in September-October, and the water festival, which is similar to the Hindu festival of Holi, is the two important festivals observed by the mogs. However, the Mogs settled in Tripura do not celebrate the boat festival, which is observed on a full-moon night. Maha Muni Mela is also another important festival of Mogs observed by them with joy at Santirbazar Sub- division. There is a combination of folk songs and dance during this festival. They have another popular item of entertainment which is observed on the first day of the Bengali New Year by throwing stones on a particular number erected in front of them at a particular distance. During this game they are divided between two groups and the winning team is awarded with the payas prepared by milk and defeated team is awarded with the payas prepared by molasses. Many tribal and non-tribal people also participate in this festival. The staple food of the Mogs is rice. They are fond of meat and dried fish than vegetables. The poorer sections among the Mogs gather edible roots and plants from the forests. However, now-a-days their food habit has been changed with a view to health care and modern ways of life.

The Mogs have two types of marriage; Marriage by Negotiation and by Service. Love marriage is also allowed. Divorce and remarriage are permitted without social complications. Weddings are conducted in simple ceremonies. It is not essential for the Mogs to give large community feasts on the occasion of marriage. That shows the Mogs are a liberal community.

The progress of the education among the mog community is poor. . As per 2011 census the average literacy rate of the state is 87.75%and the rate among the tribal is 56.50%. The average female literacy rate of the state is 64.90% and among the tribal women is 44.60%. The incidence of higher education in this community is dismally low. Educational backwardness of this community is due to social deprivation, economic poverty, and absence of the well equipped modern government school and the ignorance of the parents. In the primary stage language stands as a great barrier for mog students because they use their colloquial language known as mog language in their houses whereas when they get admitted to school, their medium of instruction becomes Bengali as well as English. So a child whose mother tongue is mog language has to stare in the face in teacher in the class room as he is unable to understand what the teacher teaches.

The present work specially emphasized the investigation and documentation of Education, Culture, Customs and health consciousness of the Mog Tribal Community of Tripura. This study will help other researchers as well as people belonging to Mog community to know the basic problems of education so that they may find out the solutions. In these circumstances the present researchers choose the title “A Study on Issues and Challenges of the Mog Community in Tripura”

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the issues and challenges relating to education of Mog Community;
2. To describe their socio-economic problems;
3. To study their consciousness about health and treatment systems;
4. To study their cultural activities, customs and religions.

Significance of the Study:

Mogs are one of the major tribes of Tripura tribal community according to their population strength. They have a distinct culture, language and customs which make them completely different from other tribal communities of Tripura. This paper will apprise others about the culture, customs and traditional life style of the mog community. Though they are good in number, they are lagging behind in education. This study will help other researchers as well as people belonging to mog community to know the basic problems of education so that they may find out the solutions. They believe and use different types of plants and herbs for their treatment and health care. These plants and herbs have also been proved to be useful. Through this study the present researchers want to highlight that system of treatment. Though Wah is their main festival, other tribal and non-tribal communities participate in it and as a result a comprehensive understanding and unity develop among those communities. The present researchers want to know the barriers responsible for the backwardness of their education through this paper so that the Govt, NGO, researchers as well as other people may come forward to solve these problems.

Review of Literature:

Deepa Ghosh, December, 2014 studied on Mental Health of the College Students with respect to Gender, Community and Domicile. Results further reveal that, the college students from both the community possess poor mental health. The results of the present study can be used retrospectively for ensuring psychological intervention to improve the mental health of the college students.

Biswajit Ghosh and Tanima Choudhuri, 2012 ventured a study on Gender, Space and Development: Changing conditions of Tribal Women in Tripura. This paper speaks of the volume of changes that the rural and urban tribal women in Tripura, a state in North-East India, have faced and are facing today.

Koushik Majumdar* and B K Datta, January, 2006 studied on ethno medicinal usage of plants among the folklore herbalists and Tripuri medical practitioners: Part-II. The present paper provides the ethnomedico-botanical use of 50 medicinal plant species by *Tripuri* community for the treatment of both chronic and temporary diseases.

Debnath*, B., Debnath, A., Shil sharma, S. and Paul, C. studied on Ethnomedicinal knowledge of Mog and Reang communities of south district of Tripura, India. The present work specially emphasized the investigation and documentation of common medicinal plants used by two ethnic communities (Mog and Reang) of south Tripura District.

Methodology of the Study:

The study was done during the period of December 2015 to February, 2016, covering some areas of the Tripura, where lived in Mog Community. Information was collected mainly from the 100 aged traditional hillers and experienced people of the study area. Translator's help were taken wherever the local languages are problematic. The methodology employed in this study for obtaining data is through primary and secondary sources. We have collected the relevant Secondary data from the Directorate of Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Tripura. The Primary data were collected by following interview method and for this purpose we personally visit some inhabitation.

Table: 1

Education Status of Scheduled Tribes in Tripura (2001)

Scheduled Tribes	Male	Female	Total
Tripura	73.7	50.2	62.1
Reang	58.8	27.3	39.8
Jamatia	72.5	47.9	60.2
Chakma	59.5	35.0	47.6
Mog	61.6	40.9	51.4
Halam	76.5	44.5	56.1
Munda	43.8	22.8	33.6
Kuki	81.9	63.8	73.1
Garo	75.3	58.3	66.4
Total	68.0	44.6	56.5

Source: Office of the registrar general.

Table: 2

Education Status of Scheduled Tribes in Tripura (2011)

Scheduled Tribes	Male	Female	Total
Tripura	75.54%	63.39%	69.51%
Reang	65.62%	50.02%	57.92%
Jamatia	79.73%	70.02%	74.85%
Chakma	70.37%	54.79%	62.70%
Mog	69.62%	57.78%	61.06%
Halam	77.43%	69.03%	73.24%

Munda	59.40%	48.14%	53.88%
Kuki	80.01%	74.86%	77.40%
Garo	78.14%	71.95%	75.01%
Total	73.26%	60.97%	67.17%

Source: Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Table: 3

Details Educational Data in Mog Community (2011)

Educational Status	Total	Male	Female
Population	37,893	19,086	18,808
Illiterate	14,755	6,365	8,390
Literate	23,138	12,721	10,417
Literate without education	1,057	510	547
Below Primary	8,412	4,464	3,948
Primary Level	6,783	3,778	3,005
Upper Primary	4,197	2,381	1,816
Secondary Level	1,072	604	368
Higher Secondary	1,143	683	460
Technical Diploma	36	23	11
Graduate and above	343	224	119

Source: Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Table: 4

Sl. No	Test Item	Yes	No
1.	Do you think there are sufficient teachers in the schools of the Mog inhabited area?	33%	67%
2.	Do you think there should be the facility of primary education through Mog language?	97%	03%
3.	Are there sufficient infrastructures in the schools of you locality?	55%	45%
4.	Do the higher authority including I.S visit the schools of you locality regularly?	38%	62%
5.	Which language do you use in your house	76%(Mog)	24% (Bengali)
6.	Can your children read and write the letters of Arakans language?	09%	91%
7.	Do you think that the culture and customs of Mog Community should be included in the curriculum of primary education?	80%	20%
8.	Are the household activities and early marriage responsible for the backwardness of the Mog Community in education?	72%	28%
9.	Are the children of the Mog Community being deprived of education due to the shortage of school?	03%	97%
10.	Does the school of your locality perform all the activities like an ideal school?	21%	79%
11.	Do you think the shortage of job opportunity is one of the main reasons for the disinterest towards education in mog community?	87%	13%

12.	Are the facilities ensured through RTE -2009 available in your locality?	34%	66%
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Table: 5

Sl. No	Test Item	Yes	Indifference	No
01	Do you think that the culture of the mog community is the most popular and attractive of all tribal cultures?	41%	6%	53%
02	Does the Wah festival make your community united?	86%	01%	13%
03	Do you think that the Boat festival and Water festival of the mog community are being declined gradually?	74%	06%	20%
04	Do you think that the Maha Muni Mela held at Santirbazar act as a bond of unity among the tribal and non-tribal people?	90%	04%	06%
05	Is the traditional life style of the mog community being changed with the influence of the modern science and technology?	71%	11%	18%
06	Do you think that the females of the mog community have more important role in family than the males?	73%	10%	17%
07	Do you think that one of the most important causes for the backwardness of the mog community is their addiction to wine prepared by their own process?	37%	06%	57%
08	Are you agreeing with the opinion that the non-tribal and other tribal communities deprive and oppress the mog community taking the advantage of simplicity and ignorance?	63%	13%	24%
09	Do you think that the unrestricted relationship among the youths of the mog community is an obstacle to their all round development?	28%	14%	58%
10	Do the people of mog community have the tendency of avoiding hardwork?	72%	07%	21%

Findings of the Study:

- Mogs are far behind the total literacy rate in Tripura as well as other tribal communities as per census report -2011. The tribal literacy rate in Tripura is 67.17% whereas the literacy rate of the mog is 61.06%. It has been found that a major portion of the literacy among them is below primary level. Out of 23,138 literate people, the educational qualification of 8,412 people is below the primary level.
- As per our observation the women literacy rate among the mog is not satisfactory. The present literacy rate of women is 57.78% which is about 12% (App) less than the male literacy rate. The women of this community are also far behind the average tribal women

literacy rate which is 60.97%. It is a matter of hope that they are gradually progressing in education as their literacy rate in 2001 was 40.90%.

- We observed many reasons for drop-outs of the mog community student's i.e. poor economic conditions of the family, excessive involvement of children in domestic work, negligence of parents, shortage and irregularity of the teachers, lack of mother tongue as medium of instruction, traditional teaching method and educational background of the parents. Child marriages are also affecting the drop-out rate.
- We have observed that the parents who are educated and conscious about the importance of education are very careful about the education of their children and they are sending their wards to the school regularly. As a result they are progressing remarkably in the field of education. Apart from this, there is another reason which lying behind the backwardness of education among the mog community is the absence of well equipped schools (Without Dharmadipa School, situated at Manu Bankul, Sabroom).
- In the primary stage language stands as a great barrier for mog students because they use their colloquial language known as mog language in their houses whereas when they get admitted to school, their medium of instruction becomes Bengali as well as English. So a child whose mother tongue is mog language has to stare in the face of teacher in the class room as he is unable to understand what the teacher teaches. Though the Department of Education, Govt. of Tripura introduced recently the Mog language in the primary stage mainly in the mog inhabited areas, the scheme is yet to be implemented properly due to the shortage of books and qualified teachers who are well known to the language. It has also been found that there are youths who know the language well but they don't have the required qualification as well as training for being appointed.
- Even students who have successfully completed the secondary and higher secondary education are unable to secure jobs. Besides schooled children neither have the ability nor inclination to take up manual jobs to contribute to the household economy. This leads to further impoverishment of the family. The disconnection between the education and their prospects in the economy results in the reluctance of parents to send their children to

schools. In our observation it was found that 87% of the parents opined that the shortage of job opportunity even after the completion of secondary and higher education is responsible for developing disinterest among them towards education.

- Jhum cultivation is the main farming practice of Mog Community in Tripura. But now-a-days tribal are shifting from Jhum cultivation to plain land cultivation due to social transition and modern wave of life. This is good step for global warming and their earning for family as well as nation. Recently a major portion of mog population engaged themselves in rubber plantation and some of them have been earning their livelihood by working in this plantation as a taper.
- The present researchers also noticed that a good number of people belonging to the poor section of the society have taken the preparation of the wine using their indigenous process as their profession and the local administration does not impose any hard and fast step to prohibit the preparation of wine though the matter is illegal. As drinking wine in their society is open to a great extent, young people even in their adolescence are being addicted to alcohol.
- The people belonging to mog community use a number of herbs, leafs, barks and plants for their treatment. For example Amra's bark with *Piper nigrum* fruit is crushed and juice is taken with water for diarrhoea, *Bougainvillea glabra* (Choicy) is used for lowering the blood-sugar level, *Moringa olifera* Lam whose Stem and bark are crushed in water to cure hook-worm and cough etc. Besides their traditional method of treatment they avail the treatment facility available in the govt. hospitals. They prefer boiling items of food with less spice. This type of consciousness keeps them healthy. In spite of the treatment facility provided by the government there spreads the diseases like diarrhea and malaria in the mog inhabited areas.
- The *Mog* people have a rich historical, social and cultural heritage which is totally distinct from that of the mainland Indians. Even though the present world is changing and people have to keep up with modernization but its people should preserve the rich culture

that their ancestors have bestowed upon them. The tribal citizen should have a keen interest in enriching their valuable culture that should survive in this changing world.

- Mogs are followers of Buddhism. But, not unlike other tribal groups, they have their local deities like Chinni and Chichi. Besides, they also worship Hindu goddesses like Kali, Durga and Ganga beside many household deities. Every Mog village has a Buddhist temple. A priest (shamphura), who takes a vow of celibacy, is in charge of the temple. It has been observed that some families of this community though few in number have converted their religion into Christianity being tempted by financial assistance and other facilities. Besides some young people converted their religion into Hinduism due to their matrimonial relationship with Bengali.

Suggestions of the Study:

- In order to remove the problems of language, special emphasis should be given to develop the curricula and devise instructional materials in mog language at the initial stage with arrangements for switching over to Bengali and English language respectively. Besides educated and promising youths of mog community should be encouraged and trained to take up teaching in mog inhabited areas.
- Regular monitoring and supervision of schools activities are very important for increasing the female literacy rate of the mog community. Developing a very good infrastructure and appointment of required number of teachers as per norm of RTE 2009 is to be ensured for the proper functioning of the school. This will make more attractive to students which will help in increasing the enrolment and retention in schools as well as improving the quality of education.
- Establishment of residential hostels, teaching method and curriculum must be in tune with their socio-economic and cultural background. Regular health checkups, regular and timely supply of reading and writing materials are very essential for speeding education of the mog community. Administrator should regularly evaluate the implementation of Right to Education and Inclusive Education programmes.
- In order to preserve the rich culture of mog community which is going to be extinct the Tribal Welfare Department, TTAADC, ICAT, NGO, Electronic and Print media should

come forward and organize programmes like seminar, workshop etc on their culture, customs and religious activities.

- In order to make the teaching learning process more attractive to the students, teachers should use the relevant teaching learning materials and they should use the demonstrative as well as project method to a great extent instead of lecture method.
- Presence of women moga teachers is mandatory in every primary school situated in moga inhabited area. Girl education should have the priority as community agenda. Every school must have with minimum facilities like drinking water, toilets, playground, games and sports materials and so on.
- For the consciousness of the illiterate and ignorant parents a mass campaign may be organized by the local Panchayat, ICAT department, NGO, Political leader and educated youths should come forward for this campaign. Local teachers must take the responsibility to sensitise the illiterate parents and community leaders of moga on the schemes and incentives for them and to motivate them to educate their children.
- For the removal of the financial backwardness of the moga community some effective steps like the introduction of job oriented course, proper utilization of the govt. beneficiary schemes, installation of industry based on rubber should be taken.
- Government should make an awareness programme about the bad effect of the wine, prepared by them in their indigenous way so that they may not become addicted to it. Besides early marriage particularly of the girls should be strictly prohibited by the society and violators of this customs should be punished by the law.
- Though the mogas use a number of herbs and plants for their treatment, they should be encouraged to avail themselves the facilities of the government hospital. In order to face the seasonal diseases like malaria, diarrhea, small pox special health camp should be organized.
- It is suggested to appoint more tribal teachers and female teachers in the moga inhabited areas. The ecological, cultural, psychological characteristics of tribal children should be considered carefully by the teachers in tribal areas.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion it can be concluded that there is a significant development in the overall educational scenario of mog community in Tripura. Though, the enrolment ratio in the primary and secondary level has been increased under the flagship of SSA and RMSA but it is seen that due to the poor social and economic conditions many of them are unable to proceed for higher education. This study also reflected about the culture, customs and traditional life style including the medical treatment practice of the mog community in Tripura. We have made an attempt to find out the causes of backwardness in education and also advocated some helpful suggestions for their improvement in all spheres of life including the education.

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