

Role of Education in Transformation of Agrarian Structure: A case study of Bhagamur Village in Dibrugarh District of Assam

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Abstract

Education is considered as a backbone of modern civilization. It is a process of equitation of knowledge, skills, values and habits. It is a key for social change, development and transformation. Considering education as an important vehicle of transformation. The discussion in the present paper traces the role of education in transformation of agrarian community. The basic objectives of the paper are to examine present scenario of education and occupation of the inhabitants under study, secondly, to focus educational and occupational aspirations of the inhabitants under study. The study has been confined as case study in the Bhagamur village of Dibrugarh District of Assam. The village is exclusively inhabited by the Kumar Kalita population, which is traditionally known as Potter community in Assam. Both primary and secondary data have been used in the present paper. The head of the family were the respondents in this study. The study revealed that educational attainment is gradually increasing among the villagers under study. Their educational and occupational aspirations are also increasing in the upward directions for their future generation, which is a positive sign of social charge, development and transformation of the agrarian community.

Key Words: Education, Occupation, Transformation, Aspiration

Introduction

Education is always considered as a potential instrument of social change, development and transformation. It provides necessary knowledge and skills which can enable an individual to function ideally and effectively in the society. Without educational development a community as well as society cannot uplift their socio –economic status. In this context, we may mention about Francis J. Brown and John Dewey’s remarks on education. Brown remarks that it is a process which enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of the society and make positive contribution to the progress of the society (Rao, 2000:374). Dewey (1950:49) stated that it is a process of development of all those

capacities of the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities.

The very term transformation implies a marked change in form, nature or appearance. It is a process of profound and radical change that orients people of the society in a new direction. The concept social transformation refers to the change of society’s systematic characteristics. This incorporates the change of existing parameters of a societal system including technological, economic, political and cultural restructuring. In this context, social transformation requires a shift in collective consciousness of a society in the sphere of local, state, national or global, so that reality is refined by consensus. (Oxford Dictionaries Online).

Education is the vital key to social change and transformation. Education is considered as the back bone of modern civilization. To bring about change and transformation in the desired direction, there is a acknowledge role of education. Education is the entire process of learning that broadens a person cognitive horizon and develops the skills to choose, evaluate and to add to the existing stock of knowledge (Atal 2007:20). Education does not mean simply dissemination of existing stock of experiences and knowledge, but also generation of new knowledge and its utilization for the societal good and enhancement, which may bring social change, development and transformation as well. Considering education as an important vehicle of transformation, the discussion in the present paper traces the role of education in transformation of agrarian community. The agrarian community or agricultural society is any society whose economy is based on agricultural production, producing and maintaining crops and farmland. Cultivating in the land is the primary source of wealth of agrarian community. Such a community as well as society may acknowledge other means of livelihood and work habits. In this context education plays vital role, which may open their eyes of mind for new occupational avenues.

In the light of above discussion, the present paper attempts to examine educational scenario and occupational status of the agrarian community under study with emphasis on educational and occupational aspirations for their future generation.

Objective of the study

The following objectives are set forth for the present study.

1. To examine present scenario of education and occupation of the agrarian community under study.
2. To focus educational and occupational aspirations of the agrarian community under study.

Methodology

The field of study : The present study has been conducted as case study in the Bhagamur Village of Dibrugarh District of Assam. The Dibrugarh district is situated on the southern bank and the upper reaches of the river Brahmaputra and lies in the north eastern corner of Assam. The total area of the district is 3381.00 sq. km with 3330.36 sq. km rural areas and 50.64 sq. km urban areas. The total population of Dibrugarh District is 13,26,335 of which 6,76,434 are males and 6,49,901 are females. The rural population of the district is 10,82,605 and urban population is 2,43,730. The average literacy rate in Dibrugarh district is 76.05 whereas male literacy rate is 82.82% and female literacy is 68.99% (census : 2011).

The Bhagamur village is located in the northern bank of the river Buridihing under Kotoha Gaon Panchayat. The village is under the jurisdiction of Western Revenue Circle of Dibrugarh and under Borboruah Development Block. There are one Lower Primary School (established in the year 1946) and one Upper Primary School (established in the year 1963) in Bhagamur Village. Besides, one cultural community hall is also there in the village. There are 732 inhabitants in the village. Out of 732 populations 382 i.e. 52% are male and 350 i.e. 48% are female. (source : Field Data)

Respondents : There are 163 families in the studied village. The village is exclusively inhabited by the Kumar Kalita population. All the heads of the families were the respondents in the present study. Out of 163 respondents 136 i.e. 83.44% were male and 27 i.e. 16.56% were female respondents in this study.

Collection of Data

Both primary and secondary data were collected in the present study. The primary data are collected from the respondents with the help of interview, self structured interview schedule and observation. The secondary data are collected from various books and journals and government records from the concerned offices.

Findings and Analysis

Educational Scenario : Education plays an important role in the life of individuals. It is considered as an important vehicle in bringing social change, development and transformation. As an instrument of knowledge and skill development education plays an important role in the growth of socio-economic aspects of the individual, community and society as well. It also helps to determine individual's status and prestige in society. It seems that the level of education in rural agro-based areas is generally low in contrast to the urban areas. Hence, examining educational standard of the respondents is highly significant in this study. The following table reflects the educational standard of the respondents.

Table –I

Educational Qualification of the respondents

Level of Education	Respondents	%
Illiterate	19	9.82
Barely literate	19	11.66
LP	12	7.36
UP	28	17.18
HSLC	65	39.88
HS	12	7.36
Graduation Above	11	6.74
Total	163	100%

Source : Field Data

The above table I reveals that out of 163 respondents only 11 i.e. 6.74% are graduate and above. From the table it is clear that similar number of respondents i.e. 12(7.36%) are L.P. (Lower Primary) and HS standard passed. The highest number of respondents 65 i.e. 39.88% are HSLC Passed. The table shows that 28 respondents i.e. 17.178% are UP (Upper Primary) level passed, 19 respondents i.e.

11.66% respondents are barely literate, they know four-five alphabet but they have not any formal education and number of respondents 16 i.e. 9.82% are found as illiterate.

It has been noticed from the above table that majority of the respondents are HSLC passed. It is also observed from the table that more than 53% respondents' educational qualification is from HSLC to

graduation and above. This is a positive sign for the upliftment as well as transformation of agrarian community and society at large. Besides, it has been observed in the field situation that respondents as well as parents are highly aware in regard to their children's education.

Occupational Status

Occupation signifies a set of activities usually associated with the earning of the individuals. The social role performed by the adult numbers of society that directly or indirectly yields social and financial consequences and constitutes a major focus in the life of an adult that can be considered as occupation. In defining occupation, Hall (1969:4) in his book

“Occupation and the Social Structure” states that it must be inclusive in two ways. It must first include the great variety of activities that can legitimately be called occupations and second, suggest the fact that an occupation has multiple consequence for the individual and society. Evert Hughes states that “an occupation in essence is not some particular set of activities. The system may be large or small, simple or complex” (ibid :5). Hughes emphasizes not in order to minimize the financial side only but also emphasizes on social relationship surrounding an occupation. This means that occupations are a major component of social structure. The following table shows the present occupation of the respondents.

Table 1-2

Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Respondents	%
Service (Retd.)	3	1.84
Service (Govt. & Private)	12	7.36
Business	19	11.66
Agriculture	118	72.40
Any other	11	6.74
Total	163	100%

Source : Field Data

Any other : includes Car Driver, Carpenter, Mason etc.

It is evident from the above table that majority of the respondents i.e. 118 consisting 72.40% are pursuing agriculture as their present occupation followed by 19 respondents i.e. 11.66% are pursued small and medium size business activities like grocery shop, vegetable selling etc. and a few of them are engaged as contractor at block development level. It is clear from the above table that 19 numbers of respondents are employed in Govt. and private sector services. Among this group

of respondents we found them engaged in professions like police constable, defense personal, school teachers and other department employee of the Government. Besides only a few of them are engaged in various private sector service like working with motor dealers, mobile telephone company and other non Govt. sectors. Number of respondents 11 consisting 6.74% are engaged in other occupation. The lowest number of respondents i.e. only 3 consisting 1.84% retired personal of

various Government departments and they maintain their family form their retirement benefits.

It has been observed in the field situation that most of the respondents pursuing agriculture as their occupation are HSLC passed and above by qualification. Even, two of them are commerce graduate. They opined that education helps them in application of modern technology, use of chemical as well as organic manure and hybrid seeds etc. in the field of agriculture. They produce various robi corps individually and in farming sector.

Educational and Occupational Aspirations

The very word 'aspirations' signifies ambition of achieving something. An aspiration is a joy forever which gives us year by year revenue of pleasurable activity.. It is a general view that without

aspiration an individual or community cannot develop their social status.

Educational aspiration plays a very conspicuous role to raise social status of individuals in society. As education is a key agency for all round development, educational aspirations is highly required for the agrarian community, which will develop the socio-economic status in near future and transform their social outlook. Therefore, it is very essential to examine educational aspirations of respondents under studied. For this purpose researcher put forward two questions for understanding their aspirations towards their children. The researcher put first question to the respondents, that whether they feel educational helps to get higher status in society or not. The opinion provided by the respondents are shown in the following table-3.

Table-3

Education as a means of Higher Status in Society

Opinion	Responses	%
Yes	149	91.41
No	6	3.68
Can't Say	8	4.91
Total	163	100%

Source : Field Data

The above table (3) shows that the majority of the respondents i.e. 149 (91.41%) feel that education helps to get higher status in society. The noticeable fact is that number of respondents 8 i.e.4.91% failed to provide a proper reply. The table shows that 6 respondents i.e. 3.68% do not feel that education is helpful to get higher status is society. It has been observed from the data stated in the table-3 that some of the respondents are still

ignorant about the value of education for which they provide negative opinion against the statement of the query. Of course, most of the respondents (91.41%) feel that education helps to get higher status in society. For this portion of respondents, researcher put another question specifying some educational aspirations towards their children and to acquire more knowledge about the perspective. The respondents aspiration

towards their children's education are shown in the following table.4

Table -4

Aspirations of Respondents towards their Children Education

Aspirations	Responses	%
To get white collar job	39	26.17
To get a job that earns money	89	59.73
To raise social status	21	14.10
Total	149	100%

Source : Field Data

The above table-4 clarifies that most of the respondents i.e. 89 consisting 59.73% have aspirations towards their children to get a job that earns money. Number of respondents 39 i.e. 26.17% have aspirations towards their children to get white collar job like Doctor, Engineer, Professor, Lawyer etc. and rest 21 respondents i.e. 14.10% have aspirations towards their children to raise their social status. This group of respondents thinks that without education they cannot uplift their status in society.

It has been observed that the group of respondents i.e. aspirant of getting white collar job and aspirant to raise social status are highly status conscious. They think that status is the main element for surviving and established as well in the society today. But most of the respondents have aspiration to get a petty job in any Government or Government undertaking departments so as to maintain their family smoothly. It has also been observed in the field situation that education helps them in opening their eyes of mind for new as well as changing occupational avenues.

For understanding occupational aspiration, researcher put a question to the respondents to know respondents hope for a better job for their children. In this context majority of the respondents i.e.

145(88.96%) have earnest hope for a better job for their children and rest 18(11.04%) respondents have no any hope for a better job for their children, because this portion of respondents children are poor in studies and some are dropout in education.

It has been observed in the field situation that beside agriculture and allied activities as occupation of the agrarian community under studied, they hope a better job either government or undertaking sector for their children. Such a attitude reflects their occupational aspirations for future generation.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it may be concluded that education highly impact among the agrarian community. The study reflects that due to impact of modern education the agrarian community acquire new knowledge of agricultural technology. The study also reveals that educational attainment is gradually increasing among the agrarian community. Their educational and occupational aspirations are also increase in the upward direction for their future generation. Hence, it seems that education plays very significant role in changing attitude of the agrarian community. Education helps them in opening their eyes of mind for new occupational avenues apart from

agriculture. Overall, it may be stated that it is a positive sign of social change, development and transformation of agrarian social structure.

We have already stated earlier that this study has been confined only in one

village, based on sociological stand point. Hence, there is earnest need to study about agrarian community in a wider framework from different perspectives of social science discipline to draw a conclusive remark on agrarian transformation.

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