

**EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG THE KAIBARTTAS:
THE STUDY BASED ON THREE URBAN FRINGE
VILLAGES OF SIVASAGAR DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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Education in present day society is most powerful agency of social change, modernization and development. Education enables one to aspire for better future. Without educational development a community cannot uplift their socio-economic status. In this context, we may be mentioned about the 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 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.

Education is considered as the backbone of modern civilization. To bring about change in the desired direction there is acknowledge role of education. Education is the entire process of learning that broadens a person's cognitive horizons and develops the skills to choose, evaluate and to add to the existing stock of knowledge (Atal 2007: 20). Education does not means 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 social emancipation as well. Mention may also be made here that "educational attainment is a major determinant of career patterns and mobility" (Lipset and Bendix 1959).

Social and Educational Mobility

Social mobility as defined by P A Sorokin (1959) refers to "the transition of an individual or social object or value anything that has created or modified by human

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activity from one social position to another. Sorokin has used two terms – ‘horizontal mobility’ and ‘vertical mobility’ to describe the movement, by horizontal mobility he means the movement from the one position to another situated on the same level. In vertical mobility shifting occurs from one social position to another or from one stratum to another situated in the different levels. It involves change in rank. Social mobility is a much wider term included upward or downward changes in the educational, political, economic or occupational status of either the individual or a whole group.

Considering education as an important vehicle of mobility, the discussion here under traces the educational mobility among the Kaibarttas. Educational mobility is an important parameter of social mobility. Without educational mobility an individual cannot mobilize his or her status in the upward direction. Individuals’ social status is mostly determined by the level of education as well as by educational mobility. So, it is felt highly essential to examine educational mobility in understanding change and development of the community under reference.

The Kaibarttas

The Kaibarttas are the aboriginal inhabitants of Assam and Dravidians in origin (Bordoloi et.al 1994: 1, Sharma Thakur 2008: 62, 63). They are one of the sixteenth Scheduled Castes communities in the state as per constitution (Scheduled Castes) order 1950. The Kaibarttas are the largest Scheduled Caste group in the Brahmaputra Valley and they have comparative better position among the Scheduled Castes of Assam (Sharma Thakur 2008:60). They are scattered throughout the plain districts of Assam. The dictionary meaning of the KAIBARTTA is to live from the product of water as ‘KOI’ means water and ‘BRIT’ means subsist or live (DAS 1986:13). They are the disciple of religious institution (SATRAS) which trace its origin to Mahapurush Sankardeva, the 15th Century great saint and socio-religious reformer of Assam. Besides, most of the Kaibarttas of Upper Assam are the disciple of “Mayamora Satra” originated by Sri Sri “Aniruddha Deva” a Bhaishnava Guru.

There are 6,93,219 Kaibartta Population in Assam and 29,011 in Sivasagar district. The Kaibarttas constitute 31.07% Scheduled Castes population of Assam (census 2011). The Kaibarttas of Assam used to live on the bank of the river side mainly for their fishing profession as fishing is the traditional occupation of the Kaibarttas. Beside

traditional occupation Kaibarttas are nowadays engaged in other income earning activities. They are an important segment of the greater Assamese society for whose socio-economic upliftment various measures have been adopted under Scheduled Castes component plan.

Urban Fringe Village

Urban fringe villages are those which are situated in proximity to urban centers, town or city. These villages are generally located within the rural urban fringe zones. The fringe zone sometimes comprises of gram panchayats or revenue village and a few nagar panchayats or municipal town (Ramachandran 1989:319). Urban fringe villages are contiguous to town or city. The people of the urban fringe villages are primarily based on town or city for their daily earning as well as livelihood.

Objective of the study

The basic objective of the study is to examine educational mobility of the Kaibarttas living in urban fringe villages

Methodology

The field

The field of present paper has been confined in three Kaibartta villages which are situated in the fringe zone of Sivasagar district. The villages are Rajabari, Kamar Phadia (Jugania) and Moupuria village. These three villages lies under the jurisdiction of Sivasagar revenue circle. Among these three villages, the Moupuria village is located under Rangpur Gaon Panchayat of Gaurisagar Development Block. The Kamar Phadia (Jugania) village is located under Nagar Mahal Gaon Panchayat and the Rajabari village is located under Disangpar Gaon Panchayat. Both the villages lies under Kheluwa Development Block of Sivasagar District.

Respondents

There are 529 households in the three studied villages. Out of 529 households 129 household in Moupuria village, 143 households in Kamar Phadia (Jugania) village and 257 households in the Rajabari village. We have selected randomly 212 households (40% from each village) by applying sequential list method i.e. serialization of

households of each village. The villages are exclusively inhabited by the Kaibartta (SC). The head of the family were the respondent in this study.

Collection of Data

Both primary and secondary data have been used in the present paper. The primary data were collected from the respondent with the help of interview, interview scheduled and observation. The secondary data were collected from various books and journals and Government records from the offices concerned.

Findings and Analysis

In the present paper, for assessing the educational mobility among the Kaibarttas data were collected from the respondent for three generations. Though the data were collected for three generation, it is only the respondents who have answered for the two earlier generations. The three generations taken into consideration in this particular study are the respondents grandfather, respondents' father and the respondents' themselves.

The following table shows the educational standard of the respondents generation.

Table 1.1: Educational qualification of the respondents

| Level of Education | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Illiterate | 5 | 2.36 |
| Barely Literate | 9 | 4.25 |
| LP | 21 | 9.91 |
| UP | 88 | 41.50 |
| HSLC | 51 | 24.06 |
| HS | 23 | 10.85 |
| Graduation | 13 | 6.13 |
| Post Graduation | 2 | 0.94 |
| Total | 212 | 100% |

Source: Field data

The table 1.1 reveals that out of 212 respondents only 2 i.e. 0.94% are post graduate, 13 respondents i.e. 6.13% are graduate, 23 respondents i.e. 10.83% are HS Passed, 23 respondents i.e. 10.83% are HS Passed, 51 respondents i.e. 24.06% are HSLC passed. The highest number of respondents 88 i.e. 41.50% are upper primary passed, 21 respondents i.e. 9.91% are LP standard passed whereas 9 respondents i.e. 4.25% are barely literate (They have no any formal education, they simply know to write their names and put signature and they know 2 or 3 alphabets) and 5 numbers of respondents i.e. 2.36% are still found illiterate.

In the same way, we have tried to trace out educational qualification of the respondents fathers generation for assessing educational mobility. The following table shows educational attainment of the respondents' father.

Table 1.2: Educational Qualifications of the Respondents Father

| Level of Education | Fathers | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Illiterate | 38 | 17.92 |
| Barely Literate | 53 | 25.00 |
| LP | 52 | 24.53 |
| UP | 51 | 24.06 |
| HSLC | 14 | 6.60 |
| HS | 04 | 1.89 |
| Graduation | NIL | — |
| Post Garduation | Nil | — |
| Total | 212 | 100% |

Source: Field Data

It is clear from the above table that in the generation of fathers only 4 i.e. 1.89% were H.S. Passed 14 i.e. 6.60%. Were HSLC passed, 51 respondents father i.e. 24.06% were UP standard passed, 52 i.e. 24.53% were LP passed, 53 i.e. 25% are barely literate but no formal education and 38 i.e. 17.92% were found illiterate. But, the highly

noticeable fact is that graduation and post graduations were totally absent in the fathers generation.

In this study respondents mothers educational attainment is also felt necessary. Hence, we have tried to focus respondents mothers educational qualifications. The following table shows educational attainment of the respondents' mothers.

Table 1.3: Educational qualification of the respondents mothers

| Level of Education | Mothers | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Illiterate | 80 | 37.74 |
| Barely Literate | 59 | 27.83 |
| LP | 44 | 20.75 |
| UP | 26 | 12.25 |
| HSLC | 03 | 1.42 |
| HS | Nil | — |
| Graduation | NIL | — |
| Post Garduation | NIL | — |
| Total | 212 | 100% |

Source : Field Data

The table 1.3 reveals that out of 212, only 3 i.e. 1.42% respondents mother were HSLC passed, 26 i.e. 12.26% were UP standard passed, 44 i.e. 20.75% were LP passed, 59 i.e. 27.83% were barely literate and 80 respondents mother i.e. 37.74% were found illiterate. The mentionable fact is the educational standard from HS level to Post graduation level no any respondents mothers were found.

Similarly, in this study we have tried to trace out educational qualification of respondents grandfathers to draw a clear picture of educational mobility among them. The following table 1.4 shows educational standard of the respondents grandfathers.

Table 1.4: Educational qualification of the respondents grandfather

| Level of Education | Mothers | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Illiterate | 149 | 70.29 |
| Barely Literate | 25 | 11.79 |
| LP | 24 | 11.32 |
| UP | 12 | 5.66 |
| HSLC | 02 | 0.94 |
| HS | Nil | — |
| Graduation | Nil | — |
| Post Graduation | Nil | — |
| Total | 212 | 100% |

Source: Field Data

The table 1.4 clarified that in the generation of grandfather educational standard from HS level to post graduation level were totally absent. In this generation only 2 i.e. 0.94% were HSLC passed, 12 i.e. 5.66% were UP level passed, 24 i.e. 11.32% were LP level passed, 25 i.e. 11.79% were barely literate whereas highest number of grandfather i.e. 149 (70.29%) were found illiterate.

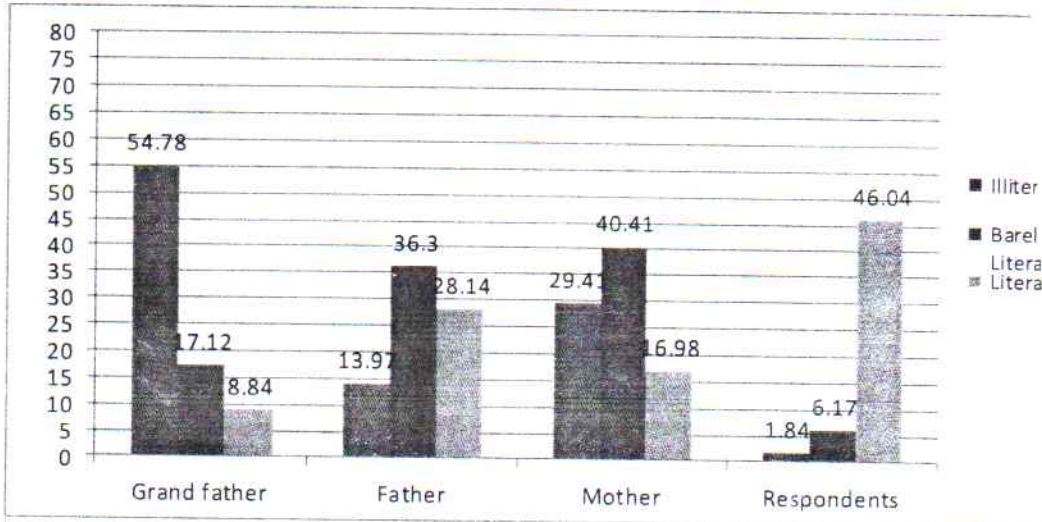
However, to make this educational mobility study more specific the generation wise educational attainment is need to be mentioned. The following table depicts the generation wise literacy level and educational mobility of the Kaibarttas under studied.

Table 1.5: Generation wise Educational Mobility

| Generations | Levels of literacy | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Illiterate | Barely Literate | Literate |
| Grand father | 149 54.78 | 25 17.12 | 38 8.84 |
| Father | 38 13.97 | 53 36.30 | 121 28.14 |
| Mother | 80 29.41 | 59 40.41 | 73 16.98 |
| Respondents | 5 1.84 | 9 6.17 | 198 46.04 |
| Total | 272 100% | 146 100% | 430 100% |

Source: Field data

Table: 1.6: Generation v



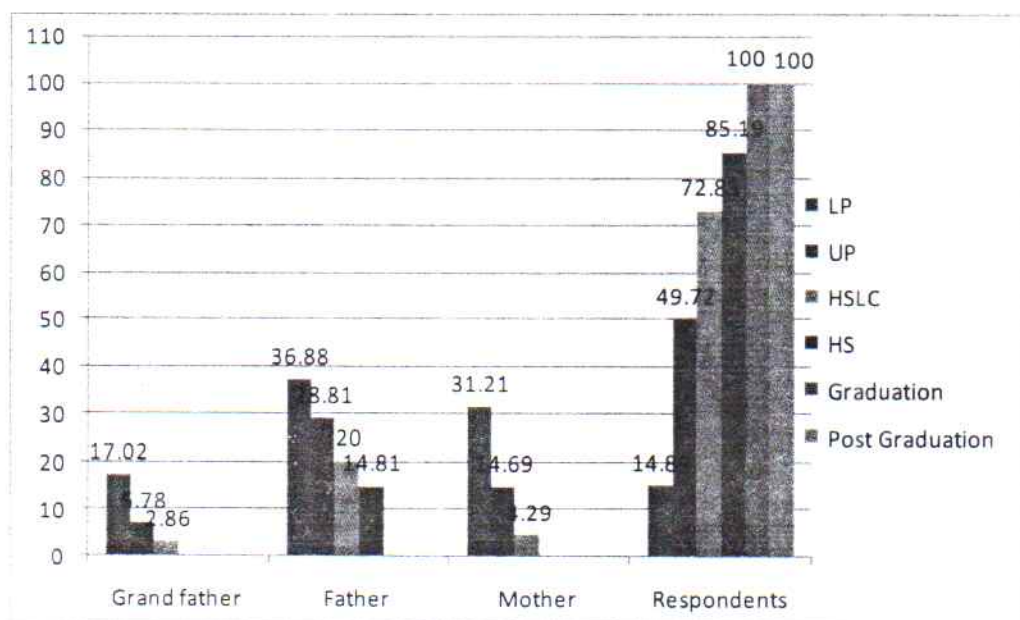
From the above table, it can be inferred that in the generation of grandfathers 149 i.e. 54.78% were illiterate, whereas it was 38 i.e. 13.97% among the fathers generation. At the same time 80 i.e. 29.41% respondents' mothers were found illiterate. But in case of respondents generation it was found only 5 i.e. 1.84%. These percentage are focusing a declining trend of illiteracy down from the generation of grand fathers to the respondents' generation. The table shows that in the grand fathers generation 25 i.e. 17.12% were barely literate, where as it was 53 i.e. 36.30% in the fathers generations. Among the respondents mothers 59 i.e. 40.41% were barely literate. On the other hand, in the respondents generations 9 i.e. 6.17% are found barely literate. At the same time, the table shows that in the grand father generations 38 i.e. 8.84% were literate, where as it was increased upto 121 i.e. 28.14% in the fathers generations. Among the respondents mothers we found 73 i.e. 16.98% were literate. But, in the respondents generation 198 i.e. 46.04% respondents are found literate. The above bar-diagram also indicates a clear picture of increasing literacy and educational mobility among these three generations.

Similarly, for more clear understanding of educational mobility among them, the generations wise educational qualifications of the literate groups are shows in the following table 1.6.

Table: 1.6: Generation wise educational qualification and educational mobility

| Generations | Levels of education | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| | LP | UP | HSLC | HS | Graduation | Post Graduation |
| Grand father | 24 17.02 | 12 6.78 | 2 2.86 | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Father | 52 36.88 | 51 28.81 | 14 20.00 | 4 14.81 | Nil | Nil |
| Mother | 44 31.21 | 26 14.69 | 3 4.29 | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Respondents | 21 14.89 | 88 49.72 | 51 72.85 | 23 85.19 | 13 100 | 2 100 |
| Total | 141 100% | 177 100% | 70 100% | 27 100% | 13 100% | 2 100% |

Source: Field data



From the above table it is clear that in the generation of grandfather 24 i.e. 17.02% were LP passed, 12 i.e. 6.78% were UP standard passed and only 2 i.e. 2.86% were HSLC passed. The very fact is that among the grand fathers generation educational standard from HS level to post graduation level were totally absent. In the generation of fathers 52 i.e. 36.88% were LP passed, 51 i.e. 28.81% were UP standard passed, 14 i.e. 20.00% were HSLC passed and only 4 i.e. 14.81% were HS level passed. During the fathers generations educational qualifications graduation and post graduation were absent. In the same way among respondents mothers 44 i.e. 31.21% were LP passed, 26 i.e. 14.69% were UP passed and only 3 i.e. 4.29% were HSLC passed but from HS level to post graduation level were totally absent. On the other hand, in the respondents generation we found 21 i.e. 14.89% are LP passed, the highest number of respondents i.e. 88 (49.72%) are UP standard passed, 51 respondents' i.e. 72.85% are HSLC passed, 23 numbers of respondents i.e. 85.19% are HS or intermediate level passed, 13 numbers of respondent i.e. 100% are graduate and numbers of respondents only 2 i.e. 100% are post-graduation level passed. In this analyses percentage are calculated from the column total. The above bar-diagram reflects a clear picture of educational attainment as well as educational mobility of these three generations.

These levels of educational attainment among three generations of the Kaibarttas reveal that the education attained by the grand fathers was upto HSLC (only 2 i.e. 2.86%). Among the fathers generation it was upto HS or intermediate (4 i.e. 14.81%), while it is graduation and post-graduation level i.e. 13 (100%) and 02 (100%) respectively among the respondents generation. Thus, an upward educational mobility is evident among these three generations i.e. from grandfathers to the respondents generations.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we may conclude that educational background of the kaibarttas living in urban fringe villages is somewhat different from that of the Kaibarttas living in purely rural areas. The educational attainment of Kaibarttas under study is gradually increasing, which reflects a trend of educational mobility among them in the upward direction. Of course, the females are educationally still lagging behind in contrast to the males. At the same time, It may be stated that because of gradual

development of education, they are now able to engage in variety of income earning activities by throwing up their traditional fishing or related occupations. The growth of education among the Kaiborttas has opened wider avenues for searching new occupations, which impact on their socio-economic structure. Of late, the Kaibartta populations constitute an important socio-economic and cultural potentialities in terms of formations of the greater Assamese society and national development as well.

It may also be stated that though the study reflects a picture of educational mobility, most of the Kaibartta people are still not develop as well as uplift their educational level as expected. In this context, the Scheduled Castes development council and Government publicity media, various organizations should play vital role for all round development of the Kaibarttas and Scheduled Castes in general.

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