PREFACE

During the graduation years as a student of Geography, I visited the tribal areas of Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram and Bankura District. While doing my field works in these areas I came in contact with the local people who are mostly tribals. At that time I could not differentiate the different tribals groups viz Santal, Orao, Bhumij, Lodha, Savara etc. But gradually during the surveys which were essential in the subject Geography, I came in direct contact of these people and became interested in their socio-economic and cultural life.

Thereafter completing my Masters in Library and Information Science, I joined as a Librarian in a school in Garhbeta I block and had the opportunity to get in touch with the tribal people and began to study about them in my library.

When I got the opportunity to pursue Ph.D. as a research scholar in the Department of Library and Information Science in Vidyasagar University, Midnapore my previous knowledge on the tribals and interest to know about their social, economic and cultural life got shape as in the field of Library and Information Science, there is a scope of community study. While going through the literature I found many studies on the information needs and information seeking behaviour of the people of different communities but not of the Lodha Community i.e., one of the tribal communities designated as 'Criminal Tribe' during the British rule. They are also designated as Savara, Savar, Shabar, Saoras. The spelling of Savara is also variant in different literature. But for uniformity in the thesis it has been spelled as Savara. So when I approached my guide to do my Ph.D. work on this topic she gladly accepted my proposal and encouraged me to start the work immediately.

The study is focused on the information needs of Lodha community on the basis of their socio-economic aspects in Paschim Medinipur. Paschim Medinipur District has three sub-divisions: Ghatal, Kharagpur, Medinipur Sadar. Multistage random sampling method has been used to select one block from each sub-division and then two mouzas from each block. Therefore from the three blocks total six mouzas are covered. Studies of their age-sex composition, marital status, house pattern, household size, educational status, occupational status and economic status have been covered. Information needs on housing, food and nutrition, clothing, health, education, employment, agricultural and animal husbandry, political, law and order, cultural, government project and economy have been recognised and the sources of information consulted by them for satisfying those needs are identified. It has been observed that the highest information need is on food and nutrition. The most used source of information for housing is Panchayat, for food and nutrition it is own community, for clothing it is other community, for health it is health unit, for education it is Panchayat, for employment it is Panchayat, for agricultural and animal husbandry it is own community, for politics most active information sources are political leaders and members of own community, for law and order most active information source is members of own community, for satisfying cultural needs most active source of information is members of own community, for government project it is Panchayat and for satisfying economic information needs own community members are the biggest source of information. More than 50% of Lodhas live below poverty line and belongs to lower class as found from the Udai Pareek Scale.

Thus the study helped to understand the socio-economic status of the Lodhas. English (United Kingdom) has been used in the thesis. Transliteration of the terms in other languages has been done.

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