

**Socio-Economic Aspects and Demographic Profile of Totasai Village:
A Study in a Tribal Village of Jhargram District, West Bengal**

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Abstract

The present study is showing the socio-economic aspects and demographic profile of the Totasai village in Jhargram District of West Bengal, India. Santal, Munda and Bagdi peoples are living in the studied village. Total population in the village is 392 where 50.77% are male and 49.23% are female. Munda population are 53.83% which is higher than others community. Santal population is 28.57% and Bagdi community is 17.60% in the studied village. The village is situated beside the Subarnarekha River. The villagers access the river to catch fish to fulfil their daily needs and some time they sell at local *hat* (weekly market). They use the river's water for agriculture and others daily needs. Literacy rate is very poor in the village. High school, Primary School and Anganwari School are located nearby of the village. Perhaps the villagers are unwilling to send their children in the school. Dropout students are increasing day by day in this area. Young generations are being addicted by smart phone and free-fire games. Occupationally all the villagers depend on fishing and cultivation. Now a days number of day labourer are increasing rapidly among the young generations. Health conditions of the villagers are not so good, for an emergency purpose they have no nearest health treatment facilities. They go to Kharika health centre for general treatment, but maximum time they have to go Kharagpur for better health facility.

Key Words: *Munda, Santal, Bagdi, socio-economic, demography, village, occupation.*

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INTRODUCTION

The studied village Totasai is a tribal dominated village. Munda, Santal and Bagdi communities are living inside the village. The Bagdi is belongs to scheduled caste. The study of village communities in India came into fashion in the decade of 1950. Anthropologist shifted their attention from typical monographic study of tribes and concentrated on villages. Village studies provide detailed, context-specific information about the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of rural communities. A village actually stands on the people-land relationship. In a given territory, the residence, landholding and related economic aspects agglomerate; people establish close relationship with each other for easy livelihood. S.C. Dube has perceived the village settlement as a unit of social organization, which represents solidarity different form that of the kin, the cast and the class but plays a vital role as an agency of socialization and social control. Members of a village think for the development of their village in terms of public utilities like the ponds, wells, roads, grave and other establishment like school, health centre etc. in some villages, one caste may be very powerful which is termed as dominant caste. In the village Totasai the Munda tribes have highest concentration than the Santals and Bagdis. The Munda people are an Austro-Asiatic peaking ethnic group of the Indian subcontinent. They speak Mundari as their native language, which belongs to the Munda subgroup of Austro-Asiatic languages. Munda means headman of a village in the Munda-Manki system to govern villages in South-east Chotanagpur. The Santals are the largest homogeneous Scheduled Tribe in India. They form the single indigenous community in the Indian subcontinent with the population of more than 6 million. They are largely found in the Indian States of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan boarder areas. India probably has the largest number of tribal communities in the world (Topal & Samal 2001). The vast majority of the tribal population resides in rural areas of the country. Santals have their habitats in all over West Bengal especially in Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum and Burdwan districts. Traditionally, some of them were forest dwellers but now they have started cultivation either as owner or as agriculture labourers. As per 2001 census in the state of West Bengal the number of Scheduled Tribes was 4,406,794. It was 5.50% of the total population of the state, i.e., 80,176,197.

The Santals in India are in the most underprivileged situation. They are socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged (Biswas & Pal, 2021; Mondal, 2020). As we all know, NEP-2020 aims to achieve 100% gross enrollment to provide quality education from preschool to secondary level by 2030 for all children, particularly those who are economically and socially disadvantaged (National Education Policy, 2020). Education changes the social status economically, occupationally and to some extent politically. Health and economic condition of the villagers are not improved. Therefore, the living conditions of their families are not developed. The Bagdis are indigenous people, descended from people with Dravidian links, found in the Indian state of West Bengal, who were associated with professions like cultivation and fishing. In the 2001 Indian census the numbers of Bagdi populations were 2,740,385 in West Bengal and were 14.9 percent of the Scheduled caste population of West Bengal.

Objectives of present study:

- To know the socio-economic condition, cultural aspects of the villagers residing at Totasai village in Jhargram District.
- To understand the demographic profile of the studied village.

Methodology of the study

The present study was conducted among the villagers of Totasai village, under 3 No. Barokhankri gram panchayet in Jhargram district of West Bengal. An effort was made to include all the individuals in the village who were within co-operate for the purpose of the present study. The age of the child was recorded according to information given by parents or senior members of a given household. The data were collected through schedule method and census was done by going to door to door visit. The data were collected and cross checked for getting correct information. Most of the primary data were collected through observation and interview method.

Study area and Community:

Selection of study area and community are very important factors for a researcher or field worker. The village Totasai of Nayagram P.S., under Jhargram District was selected for field investigation. Munda, Santal and Bagdi community are present in this area. Among the three communities Munda is in the highest concentration. And the rest communities Santal and Bagdi are there. Total population is 393 in the Totasai village.

About the village:

The village Totasai is situated under Baro Khakri Gram Panchayt of Jhargram District. The village is bordered by Subarnarekha on the North side, Rangamati on the south side, Thuria on the east and Valiyaghati on the west side.

The maximum houses of the village are made by mud wall and thatched roof is made from straw, tin and asbestos. Some brick houses are there. Village have paved roads in front side. Villagers have Jaherthan, Shitala and Manasha Temples. There is a post office at Banchukhwadar which is 2 km away. The villagers use bullock carts, bicycles, vans etc. The villagers have to go to Kharagpur Railway Station for train journey.

Gram Panchayet:

Totasai village is belongs to Baro Khakri gram panchayat and the Mouza is at west Totasai under Nayagram Block in Jhargram District of West Bengal, India. This Panchayat is the only source of all developmental activity of Totasai village.

Study Population:

The village Totasai may be termed as a multi ethnic village in view of the facts that it is inhabited by three communities and they are respectively Bagdi, Santal and Munda. One is caste and others are tribe. Among these three types of community the highest number on village residence belongs to Munda community. The total population number is 392 where male is 199 and female is 193.

Occupation

The principal occupation of the villagers is fishing. Maximum people have not their own boat to catch fish but they have own fishing net, before fishing they make a team and hire the fishing boat at the time of season as they are dependent on fishing. In the off-season they work as agricultural labour in others field and do some handicrafts making at home. Out of the total population half of them approximately engaged to the occupation of fishing and agriculture. They catch fish for consume and sale it in their local hat (weekly market).

Settlement Pattern and House Type:

Considering the concentration and arrangement of the house at Totasai village it may be called a nuclear type of village, with linear settlement pattern. The houses are arranged on the either side of the road with main entrance facing the main road of the village.

The houses are mostly mud walled except some cases where the walls are made by burnt brick and cement. Most of the roofs of the houses of the village are covered with paddy straw, potters tiles and asbestos. The roofs of the houses are not so large in fact the average size may be 10-12 foote. The wooden doors are not very high at all and windows are rarely maintained in the houses.

Essential Services in the village:

Drainage and Sanitation:

There is not at all planned drainage sanitation system with in the village. Most of the toilets are open and covered four sides with fence by polythene. Maximum families have not any toilet till now.

Water Sources:

For drinking water villagers depend on tube wells installed by the Government. For bathing and washing purpose villagers depend on tube well and nearby Subarnarekha river in the village.

Shops and Market:

There are two grocer shops in the village run by the inhabitants of that village. The villager depends on the shop for day to day purchase of small quantity of grocery items like spices, salt, sugar etc. and for purchase of large quantity of grocer items, cloths, cosmetic, manure, medicine, etc the villagers frequently visit the daily market of Rohini, Kharika and Gopiballavpur.

The villagers also purchase some daily needs from the itinerant who frequently visit the village for selling different items like domestic utensils, toys, cosmetics and cloths etc. The media of transaction with the itinerant traders are not always based on money but payments in kinds are also meant by the villagers.

Medical Facility:

For major diseases and child birth villagers frequently visit either in primary health centre or hospital located respectively in Kharika and Kharagpur which is far away from the village Totasai.

Education:

For primary and anganwary education villagers sent their children to nearest school situated in the Totasai village. Secondary and higher secondary school is situated at the village. However colleges are located in Gopiballavpur, Keshiyari and Kharagpur.

Religious Places:

The Munda peoples of the Totasai village celebrate birth day and paid floral tributes to the statue of Birsa Munda on occasion of birth anniversary. Villagers have the common place for 'Jaher than', 'gram puja' in front of the village. Every houses have own 'tulsimancha' and 'manasa mandir' for worship.

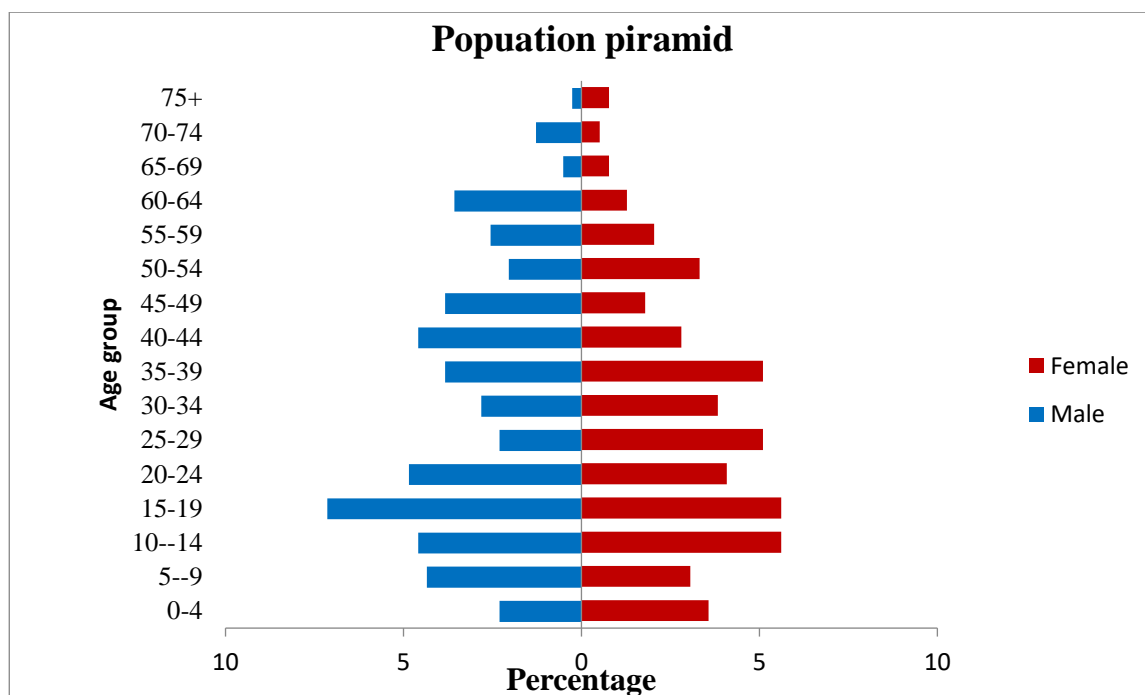
Demography of the village:

Table No. 1
Age Sex composition of Totasai village

Age Group	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
0-4	9	2.30	14	3.57	23	5.87
5-9	17	4.34	12	3.06	29	7.40
10-14	18	4.59	22	5.61	40	10.20
15-19	28	7.14	22	5.61	50	12.76
20-24	19	4.85	16	4.08	35	8.93
25-29	9	2.30	20	5.10	29	7.40
30-34	11	2.81	15	3.83	26	6.63
35-39	15	3.83	20	5.10	35	8.93
40-44	18	4.59	11	2.81	29	7.40
45-49	15	3.83	7	1.79	22	5.61
50-54	8	2.04	13	3.32	21	5.36
55-59	10	2.55	8	2.04	18	4.59
60-64	14	3.57	5	1.28	19	4.85
65-69	2	0.51	3	0.77	5	1.28
70-74	5	1.28	2	0.51	7	1.79

75+	1	0.26	3	0.77	4	1.02
Total	199	50.77	193	49.23	392	100.00

Table shows the total population distribution of Totasai village. The total population of the village is 392 where 199 (50.77%) is male and 193 (49.23%) is female. Within the age group of (15-19) exceeds over the other age group, which constitute (12.76%) among the male and female. In the upper age group populations are decreasing due to high mortality among the elderly persons.

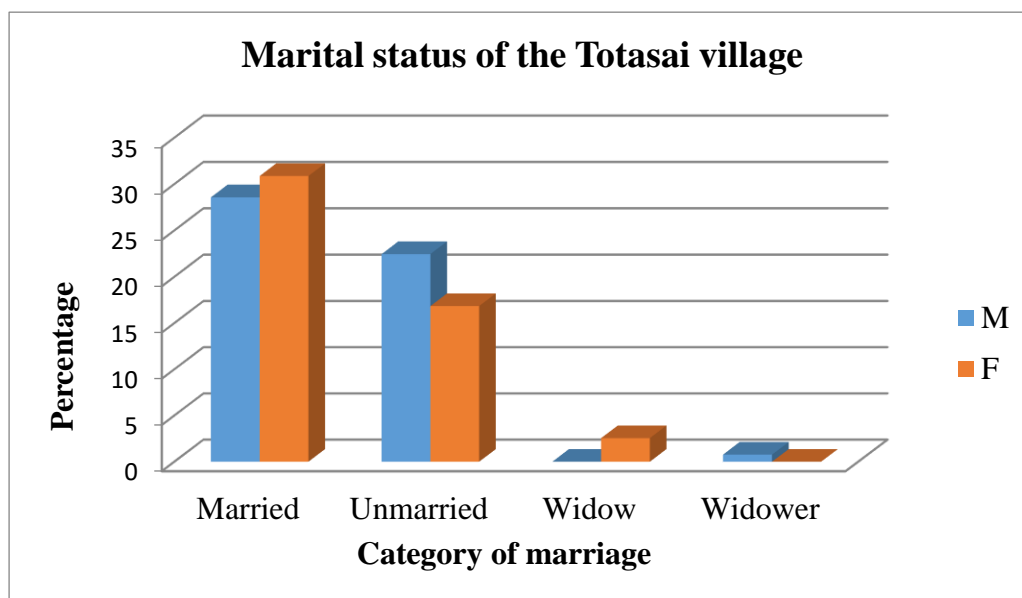


The population pyramid shows age and gender distribution of the population of Totasai village. It is showing that birth rates are not so normal or it's a indication of low birth rate, because the percentage of children between the age group 0-9 and 10-14 are very low. The population decreasing rates are starting from the age group 50 years due to early senescence. Beside this the same incident showing among the female groups, where population decreasing from the age group 40-44 years due to increase of early death before reach to elderly.

Table No. 2

Marital Status of the village Totasai

Marital Status	Male	%	Female	%
Married	112	28.57	121	30.87
Unmarried	88	22.45	58	16.84
Widow	-	0.00	10	2.55
Widower	3	0.77	0	0.00



The table shows the marital status of the villagers living at Totasai. Among the total 392 population the unmarried status is 22.45% male and 16.84% female. Married male and female are 28.57% and 30.87%. Widows are 2.55% where as Widower is only 0.77% among the total population.

Table No. 3

Educational Status of Totasai Village

Educational Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Illiterate	64	16.33	88	22.45	156	39.80
Literate	19	4.85	11	2.81	30	7.65
Can-sign	3	0.77	1	0.26	4	1.02
ICDS	11	2.81	12	3.06	23	5.87
I-IV	29	7.40	27	6.89	56	14.29
V-VIII	42	10.71	26	6.63	74	18.88
Secondary	22	5.61	17	4.34	39	9.95
Higher secondary	8	2.04	5	1.28	13	3.32
Graduate	1	0.26	0	0.00	1	0.26
Total	199	50.77	193	49.23	392	100.00

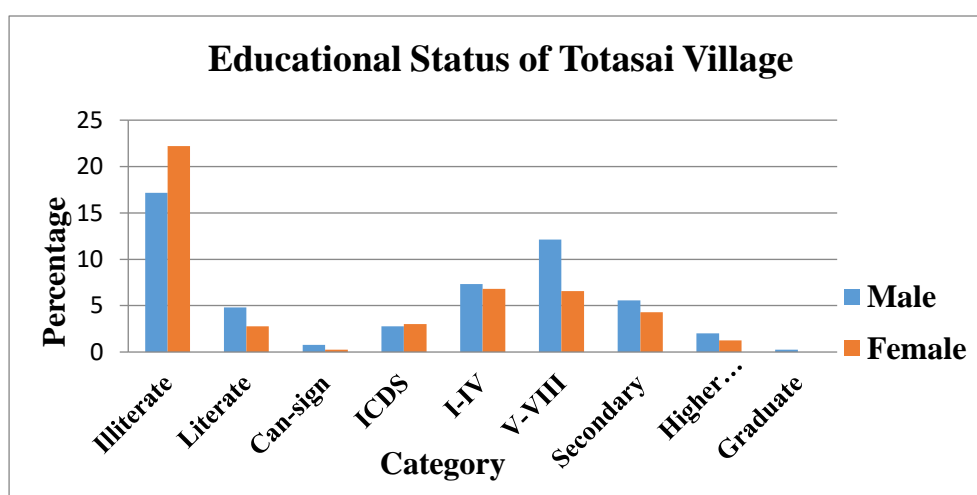
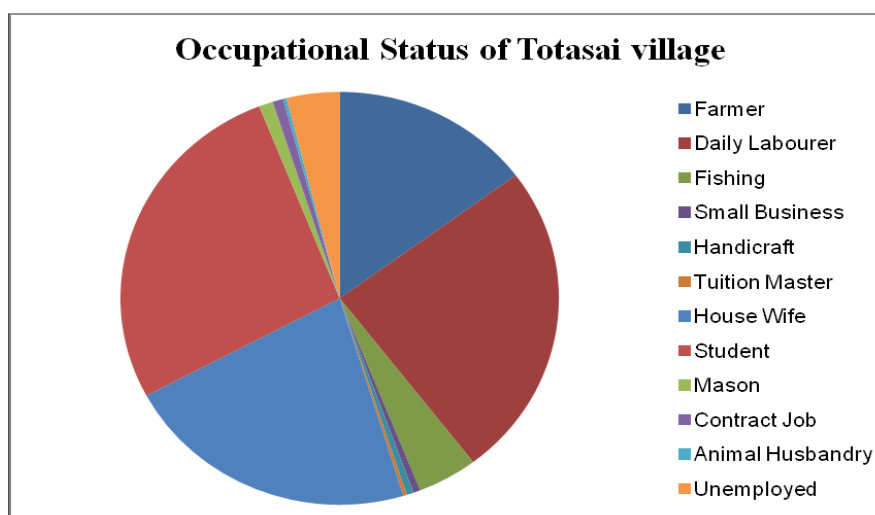


Table shows educational status of totasai village. Among the total population 39.80% belongs to illiterate, 7.65% are literate. Only 3.28% has higher secondary education and graduate is only 0.26% which is very low. Female 'Can-sign' category is showing very low percentage 0.26 in compare to Male that is 0.77%. The 'Illiterate' is also higher percentage among the female than male.

Table No. 4

Occupational Status of Totasai village

Occupation Category	Total	Percentage
Farmer	57	14.84
Daily Labourer	95	24.74
Fishing	17	4.43
Small Business	2	0.52
Handicraft	2	0.52
Tuition Master	1	0.26
House Wife	84	21.88
Student	103	26.82
Mason	4	1.04
Contract Job	3	0.78
Animal Husbandry	1	0.26
Unemployed	15	3.91
Total	384	100.00

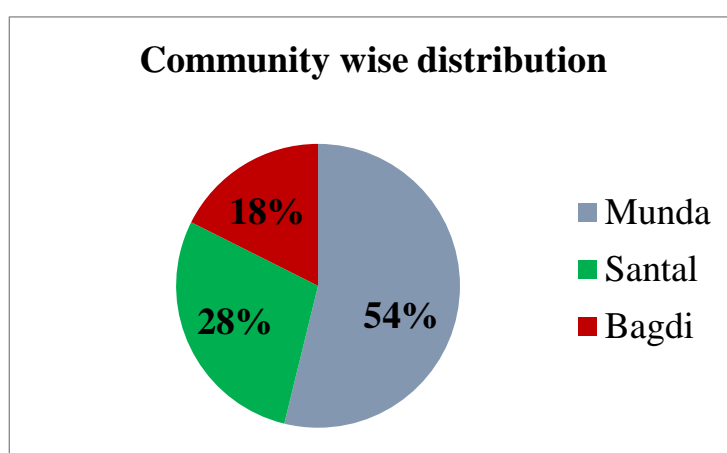


The table regarding occupational status of totasai village shows that the villagers are maximum engaged in farming and fishing. Some peoples have small business, handicrafts at home and engaged in others different works.

Table No. 5

Community wise distribution of villagers

Name of community	No	%
Munda	211	53.83
Santal	112	28.57
Bagdi	69	17.60
Total	392	100.00



The table showing community wise distributions. Total population in the studied village is 392, where Munda tribe is 53.83%, Santal tribe is 28.57% and Bagdi caste is very few in number that is 17.60%.

General observation

During the period of village study at Totasai in Jhargram district, three different communities were studied namely Munda, Santal and Bagdi. The primary data on daily activities, social life, i.e. education, occupation, income and family structure were collected. The studied village Totasai is located at Moraghat gram panchayat under the block of Nayagram in the district of Jhargram. According to demographic data of the studied village total population is 392, out of them 199 are male and 193 are female. Due to modernization various changes have also happened in the social, cultural and material life of the people of Totasaivillage leading to various changes in their mode of living. More peoples are receiving education than before as well as number of drop out also increased. One male graduate is found in the village. It was found that rice is their staple food and they prefer to take *handia* three or more times in a day. They took

meals twice a day and take breakfast at the morning. They also take fish and meat. In their dress pattern, there is no speciality; the male members wear shirt, pant, lungi etc. The female members wear shari, blouse and frock etc. The female use ornaments like earring, nose ring, necklace, bracelets etc. made of silver or metals. In case of house type, it is found that there exist windows in the room and pottery tali, teen and straw thatch the roof. Every front side wall of the houses are decorated by them which looks like an artist's painting. The villagers' life mainly depends on fishing and agriculture. They go to Subarnarekha river for catch fish. They work in their land for produce paddy and vegetables. They also involved in the day labour, sharecropper, mason, handicrafts and small business. There is no arrangement of irrigation system in the agricultural land. So they are depends on the water of rainfall and water of river. Number of kachha houses are higher than pakka house. Semi pakka houses are average in number. There is no scientific sanitation system present in this village. Some houses have sanitation system provided by panchayet. Besides these houses all of them go for open defecation. They have proper electricity in the village. They practice exogamous marriage. Marriage mainly takes place by negotiation and divorce is found very rare. The villagers belong to nuclear family. Broken family and join family are also found. In case of death, they perform their traditional rituals. They cremate the dead body. There is no cremation ground in the village, which is some far from the village. They have their own festivals and deities. Their important festivals are Ganga puja, Gram puja, Manasa puja. Some villagers worship their Jaherthan. They have not their own village panchayet, no political organization. There is no club in this village. The village panchayet settled all disputes of villagers. There is one primary school, one anganwary school and one high school. There are two grocery shops in the village. There is weekly market at village. For daily marketing they go to Kharika, Rohini and Kharagpur. There is a good communication of electricity in the village. Television and cable connections are present at many houses. Maximum households use mobiles for telecommunication. The village road is unmetal and at the rainy season villagers face many troubles. Transport system is very poor in the area. For communication villagers walk to their destination. Bullock carts are still used today for transportation of crops. Few villagers use personal cycle and bike. Health facilities are not so good. There is no health centre in the village. They go to Kharika and Kharagpur for medical treatment on emergency basis, which is far away from the village. Now a days number of dropout students are increasing and school going children are decreasing. Young generations are being addicted by smart phone and free-fire games.

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