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## A Comparison Regarding the Utilization of Development Input among the Lodhas of Paschim Medinipur District, West Bengal

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**Abstract-** In this article compared the utilization of various types of development inputs among the Lodha community (a scheduled tribe) in three administrative blocks of Paschim (west) Medinipur district of West Bengal. The study identified landlessness and poverty as major constraints in implementing developmental programmes among the Lodhas. Distribution of patta land to landless Lodha families by the Government was not done appropriately. No proper planning for developmental inputs like housing scheme (under IAY) was done. In addition, the gadgets like solar cells distributed to the poor and landless Lodha families were not used. Many of them sold the solar cells to the wealthy neighbours. Under this above scenario we compared the utilization of development inputs in the three blocks. In this study I have found that three major development inputs like patta, house and solar cells are lies very worst scenario both in terms of patta and solar cell distribution and its utilisation by the beneficiary families in Binpur-II block.

**Keywords:** *lodha, applied anthropology, land distribution, denotified tribe, marginalized community, development input.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The paper is based on an empirical study on the utilization of various types of development inputs among the Lodha community (a scheduled tribe) in three administrative blocks of Paschim (west) Medinipur district of West Bengal. An attempt has been made in this article to record the comparative findings on the implementation of development programme under the various developmental schemes. The comparative study consists of three administrative blocks of Paschim (west) Medinipur district of West Bengal which was earmarked as a 'Backward district' by the Government of India. A specific development

scheme was launched by the Planning Commission of India and it is known as the Rastriya Sama Vikas Yojna (RSVY). The RSVY scheme is a recent initiative undertaken by the Central Government. The scheme was launched during the period 2004-2005. The scheme aimed at focused development programmes for backward areas which would help reduce imbalances and speed up development. Under the RSVY scheme, the Central Government aimed to cover 100 backward districts in India. Already 50 backward districts have been covered during 2003-2004 and a sum of Rs.15000 crore per year was provided to each of the district for a period of three years, that is a total of Rs. 45.00 crore per district have been released to the State Governments on hundred percent grant basis in installment. The plan document revealed that the main objective of the RSVY scheme would be to address the problems of low agricultural productivity, unemployment in the rural areas, and to fill in the critical gaps in the physical and social infrastructures of the 'Backward region'. Government launched another programme i.e. Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) to develop the personal living condition of the poor rural people. This scheme started operation since 1985. It is a Government of India social welfare programme to provide housing for the rural poor in India. It is one of the major flagship programs of the Rural Development Ministry to construct houses for BPL population in the villages. Under the scheme, financial assistance worth Rs. 45000/- in plain areas and Rs. 48500/- in difficult areas (high land area) is provided for construction of houses. The broad purpose of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to some of the weakest sections of society for them to upgrade or construct a house of respectable quality for their personal living [7] Under this background, an attempt has been made to assess the impact of the various developmental inputs by comparing the developmental set-up among the Lodhas in the three administrative blocks of Paschim Medinipur District in West Bengal.

## II. ABOUT THE LODHAS

In West Bengal there are 38 scheduled tribes distributed mainly in the southwest and the northern parts of the state [1]. Among these 38 scheduled tribes the Lodhas are mainly found in the western part of the

state in the districts of Purulia, Bankura and Paschim(West) Medinipur along with tribes like Santal, Munda, Bhimij and Oraon, who are numerically and economically in a much better condition than the Lodhas. The Lodhas generally live in and around the forest covered areas of the southwestern districts of the state and still largely depend on forest for their livelihood.

In one of the pioneering anthropological study, the Lodhas were depicted as a semi-nomadic community who used to move from one place to another in search of livelihood [2]. According to Bhowmick, the Lodhas of erstwhile Medinipur district depended mainly on food gathering and hunting and some of them were found to be engaged in agricultural as well as non-agricultural activities as hired labourers of the higher caste and wealthy families of the villages. By and large, since dependence on forest produce is not sufficient for them, the Lodhas were also found to be engaged in a variety of occupations to sustain their livelihood [2].

The Lodhas were included as one among the criminal tribes by the British administration [3]. In 1952, the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed by the Government and all the communities who were designated as criminal tribes were reclassified as denotified communities. The Lodhas were also included under the denotified and nomadic tribes along with 19 communities of West Bengal [6] Still later, since 1971 the Lodhas were designated as one of the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) of India [1].

In a paper written much later in the Newsletter of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, Bhowmick explained the socio-psychological processes which created a vicious circle of underdevelopment, poverty and mistrust among the Lodhas. We quotes him below

The chronic poverty and low aspiration level and lack of zeal of these people have created socio-cultural

and economic constraints which, in turn, have made them lazy and lethargic. This has also made them unresponsive to any sort of change or innovation introduced for their uplift. [4].

Mahasveta Devi herself also wrote a number of articles in Bengali and English in which she depicted the ground realities regarding the problems of the implementation of development inputs and schemes among the Lodhas. In one of her articles published in the Economic and Political Weekly in 1983, Mahasveta Devi cited examples of some Lodha villages in the present Paschim Medinipur district in which government schemes have failed to reach the beneficiaries, although they were badly in need of the development programmes [5].

### III. OBJECTIVES

- Listing of development inputs and their utilizations by the beneficiaries.
- To find out the overall variation toward the utilization development inputs in the three administrative blocks of Paschim Medinipur District.
- To find out reason behind the variation in the same community of different locations.
- An attempt would be made to formulate some recommendations for better implementation of development inputs in the three blocks.

### IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary data for the research have been collected through intensive anthropological fieldwork conducted for about two consecutive years. These data included qualitative and quantitative information collected through household census, structured and unstructured questionnaire schedule and also with the help of genealogy, case study, participatory observation, focus group discussion, and panel interviews.

<b>Methods and Techniques Employed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Household Census.</li> <li>2. Interview with structured and unstructured schedules</li> <li>3. Observation</li> <li>4. Collection of data from district administrative departments.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Structured and unstructured schedules</li> <li>2. Focus group discussions.</li> <li>3. Panel interviews.</li> <li>4. Observation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group Discussions.</li> <li>2. Reading of Literature.</li> <li>3. Panel interviews.</li> </ol>
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### V. STUDY AREA

The primary data for the research have been collected from three hundred thirty two (332) Lodha households (the total population is 1382) in the three

blocks of Paschim (west) Medinipur district, West Bengal, viz., Binpur II, Nayagram and Narayangarh. The fieldwork was conducted during 2005-06 and 2008-2011.

*Table 1:* Block-wise household and population

SL.NO	BLOCK	HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL POPULATION	MEAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE
1	Binpur-II	87(26.20)	319(23.08)	3.7
2	Nayagram	182(54.82)	720(52.10)	3.9
3	Narayangarh	63(18.97)	343(24.82)	5.4
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>332(99.99)</b>	<b>1382(100.00)</b>	<b>4.2</b>

*Figures in parentheses represent percentages*

## VI. FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

In order to understand the variation that existed among the utilisation of the various inputs, we have chosen three major types of development inputs, viz., (i)

distribution of patta land, (ii) utilisation of the financial assistance in house building, (iii) distribution of solar cells in the three administrative blocks of Paschim Medinipur district.

*Table 2 : Utilization of Patta land in the three blocks*

Total no. of households	No. of households who received patta	No. of households utilizing the patta land	No. of households who received the patta but could not utilize the land
332	45 (13.55)	27(8.13)[60.00]	18(5.42)[40.00]

( ) Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total number of households.

[ ] Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total Patta holder.

This table shows that only forty five households (13.55%) received patta land out of three hundred thirty two households but 8.13 percent beneficiary families

utilized the patta land out of the total number of households, whereas 5.42 percent beneficiaries could not utilise the patta land.

*Table 3 : Utilization of House under IAY in the three blocks*

Total no. of households	No. of households who received financial assistance for house construction	No. of households who fully utilized the financial assistance for house construction	No. of households who received financial assistance for house construction but could not use it properly.
332	175 (52.71)	102 [58.29] (30.72)	73[41.71] (21.99)

( ) Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total number of households.

[ ] Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total household's beneficiaries.

The financial assistance for the construction of house presents a better scenario than distribution of patta land to the Lodhas. A little more than half of the total number of beneficiary families received financial assistance for house building. From this table 58 percent beneficiaries have been fully utilized of this

development input. About thirty one percent of the families of the total population have fully utilized the aforesaid financial assistance while twenty two percent of the households could not use the financial help properly.

*Table 4 : Utilization of solar cell in three blocks*

Total no. of households	No. of households who received Solar plate	No. of households fully utilizing Solar plate	No. of households who received the solar plate but after few days they have either sold the Solar plate or those became non-functional
332	105 (32.63)	64[60.95](19.28)	41[39.05](12.35)

( ) Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total number of households.

[ ] Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total household's beneficiaries

The solar cells were distributed to the Lodha beneficiaries in the study area under the RSVY scheme for using them for domestic purpose. We have found that at the time of our fieldwork out of 105 families sixty four were found to use the solar powered cells to glow

lamps in their house but at the same time it was also found that about 39.05 percent of the families have either sold them at a low price to the well-to-do neighbours or those gadgets were lying non-functional.

*Table 5 : Profiles of patta records among the lodha /sabar households in Binpur -II, Nayagram & Narayangarh blocks of paschim medinipur*

No. of Households who received patta record				No. of Households found to be actually cultivating patta land			
Binpur -II	Nayagram	Narayan garh	Total	Binpur -II	Nayagram	Narayan garh	Total
10 [11.94] (3.01)	28 [15.38] (8.43)	17 [26.98] (5.12)	45 [13.55] (13.55)	01 [10.00] (0.30)	11 [39.28] (3.31)	15 [88.28] (4.51)	27 [60.00] (8.13)

( ) Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total number of households.

[ ] Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the block wise Patta holder.

The above table shows the scenario of patta land distribution by the Government and its utilisation by

the Lodha families in the three blocks of the study area. It is found that the condition of the Binpur-II block was

worst both in terms of patta distribution and its utilisation by the beneficiary families. About twelve percent of the total number of surveyed households received patta land from the Government and only one family was found to use it whereas, in Narayangarh twenty seven

percent of the total number of families received patta land and as high as eighty eight percent of the families were found to cultivate their land. In Nayagram the percentage of recipients was about fifteen, while the users turned out to be thirty nine percent.

*Table 6* : Profile of housing scheme distribution and used among the lodha households in Binpur -II, Nayagram and Narayangarh blocks of Paschim Medinipur.

No. of Households who received financial assistance under the scheme					No. of Households who actually utilised the benefits of the scheme			
Total	Binpur -II	Nayagram	Narayangarh	Total	Binpur -II	Nayagram	Narayangarh	Total
332	36 [41.37] (10.84)	124 [68.13] (37.35)	15 [23.81] (4.52)	175 (52.71)	12 [33.33] (3.61)	75 [60.48] (22.59)	15 [100.00] (4.52)	102 [58.29] (30.72)

( ) Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total number of households.

[ ] Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the block wise house holder.

From the above table it is found that the highest percentage of families of the Nayagram block received financial assistance from the Government to build their houses and the lowest percentage was found among the Lodhas of Narayangarh. But the financial assistance towards house building was best utilized by the Lodhas

of Narayangarh indicating awareness of the beneficiaries. In Nayagram also the scenario of utilization was found to be fairly good whereas the utilization percentage at Binpur II was found to be very poor

*Table 7* : profiles of solar cell distribution and utilisation among the lodha /sabar households in Binpur -II, Nayagram & Narayangarh blocks of Paschim Medinipur.

No. of Households who received Solar Plate				No. of Households found to be actually Use the Solar plate			
Binpur -II	Nayagram	Narayangarh	Total	Binpur -II	Nayagram	Narayangarh	Total
23 [26.64] (6.92)	82 [45.05] (24.69)	Nil	105 (32.63)	04 [17.39] (1.20)	60 [73.17] (18.07)	Nil	64 [60.95] (19.28)

( ) Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the total number of households.

[ ] Figures in parentheses represent percentages out of the block wise solar holder.

The distribution of solar cells by the Government was done in Binpur-II and Nayagram. The Lodha families of Narayangarh block were not covered under this scheme. Our respondents of Narayangarh reported that according to Government officials, the families of this block were considered to be in a better economic condition so they were not provided with solar cells. The percentage of families who received solar cells was much higher in Nayagram and we have also found better utilisation of this gadget in this block. In Binpur-II only four families out of twenty three were found to use solar cells. Most of the families in Binpur II were found to have sold out the solar cells at very low price to outsiders in order to meet their domestic needs.

## VII. COMPARATIVE SET-UP OF DEVELOPMENT INPUTS AMONG THE LODHAS IN THE THREE BLOCKS

In this part, I have made an attempt to compare the utilisation pattern of the three major (Patta land, House and Solar cell) development inputs given to the Lodhas in the study area which contains three blocks of the Paschim Medinipur district. The rationale behind the comparison is twofold. Firstly, through this comparison we have presented the overall scenario of the utilisation vis-à-vis non-utilisation of the development keys by the study population at a glance.

Secondly, the comparison also reveals the variation among the households in the three blocks in the utilisation of the development keys.

In Binpur-II block, 79 beneficiary families have received three major development inputs. In Nayagram Block, 236 beneficiary families have received three major development keys. But In Narayangarh block, they received two major development keys, their beneficiary families are 32.

The comparative scenario of the utilization of the three major development keys in the three blocks among the Lodhas showed a marked overall variation. Variation was also found in terms of the type of development input. Let us enumerate the variations.

1. The development inputs given to the Lodhas have been utilized by them most successfully in the Narayangarh block and interestingly, solar plates have not been distributed in this block.
2. The most horrible scenario is found in the Binpur-II block in which non-utilisation of all the development inputs predominated the scene. Nayagram lies in the middle position in terms of the utilisation of the development keys.

3. The utilization of financial assistance for house construction given as a development input showed that even the overall worst performers (Lodhas of Binpur-II) have made a substantial utilization of house construction as a development key.
4. Regarding patta land, we do not find full utilisation in any of the blocks studied but in case of house we find full utilisation in Narayangarh Block.
5. The development assistance given in the form of high technology solar cells revealed a grim scenario both at Binpur II and Nayagram blocks while the Solar cell has not been given to the Lodha families of Narayangarh block. But the beneficiaries of Narayangarh block showed the overall best performance towards the utilisation of other development keys was found to be fairly well.

The following bar graph shows the comparative scenario of utilization and non-utilization of development inputs among the three administrative Blocks of Paschim Medinipur District.

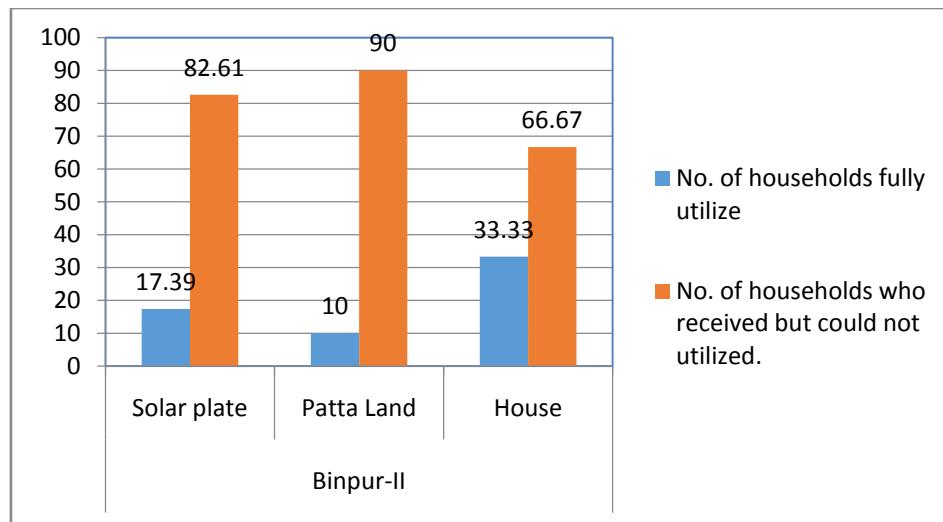


Figure 1

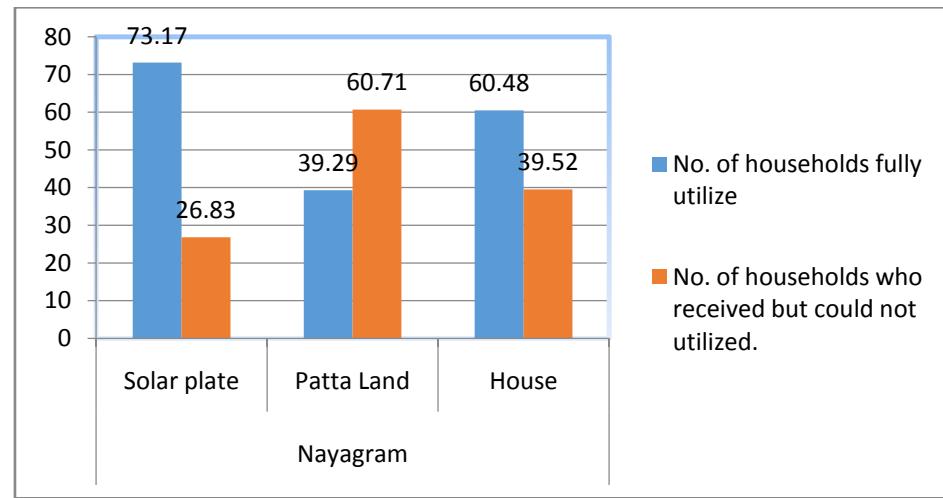


Figure 2

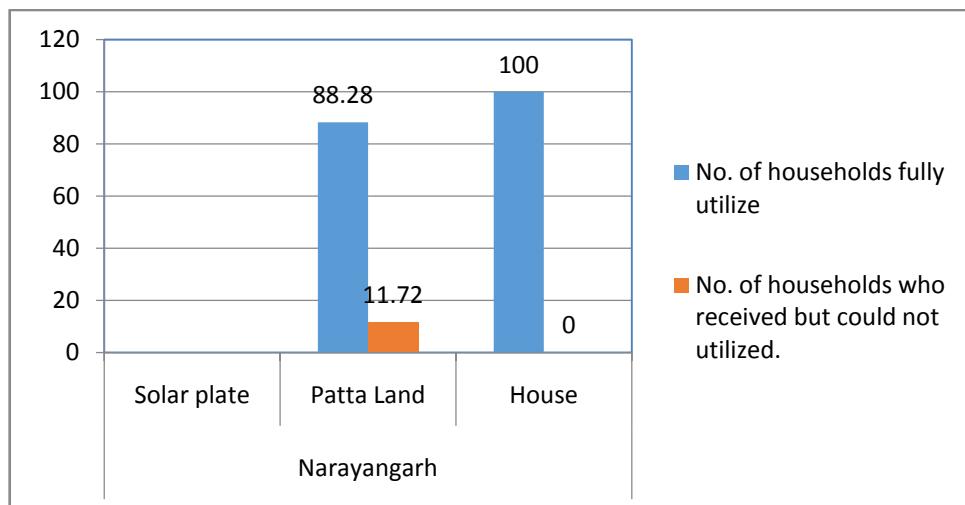


Figure 3

### VIII. CONCLUSION

In this study I have found differences in terms of the utilisation of the developmental inputs by the Lodha families of the three administrative blocks of Paschim Medinipur district. The findings of this study exposed that the 83 percent Lodha beneficiaries have not used the solar cells in Binpur-II block, whereas about 27 percent beneficiaries have not used the gadget in Nayagram block but in Narayangarh block the solar cell has not been given. In case of Patta land 90 percent beneficiaries have not used because the Lodhas have received the patta record in paper but they have not seen the plot. About 61 percent beneficiaries of Nayagram block have not used the Patta land lack of agricultural implements and proper irrigation. But I have found in Narayangarh block they were about 90 percent beneficiaries utilized the patta land. Another development inputs house, about 67 percent unutilized conditions in Binpur II block and 40 percent unutilized in Nayagram block because the house building made by government department, The major reason behind the non-utilisation of constructed houses lay in poor and non-participatory nature of planning towards the construction of the houses by the concerned department of the Government. But in Narayangarh block they were fully utilized the inputs.

In Binpur II block, the beneficiaries suffered from terrible communication and transport system, and lack of access to the panchayat members of the area although the local panchayat leader belonged to their own community. The central and state Governments both have not yet been able to organize any skill development training programmes for the Lodhas towards implements the development schemes.

In Nayagram block, the Lodhas were found to be in better condition than they were in Binpur-II, in terms of communication and access to local panchayat

leadership. Here the Government had also taken up some training programmes vis-à-vis awareness programme through an NGO. I have also found in this block the NGO played a good role towards monitoring the implementation of the development keys.

In Natrayangarh block, the Lodhas also seemed to be more aware about the development inputs than their counterparts in the other blocks studied in this study. They also owned cultivable land and got training in agriculture and other skill development training programmes organized jointly by an NGO and the state Government. In this block, there is an Anthropological Institute viz., Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology (ISRAA) established by eminent anthropologist Prof. Probodh Kumar Bhowmick.

Under this backdrop, I have made an effort to detail a list of recommendations which may be considered by the concerned departments of the Governments and the policymakers for the better implementation of the developmental keys according to the specific needs of the Lodha community in the study area. The Recommendations are given below,

- The Lodha families to whom patta land have been issued on paper should immediately be given the actual right of possession with full protection against all chances.
- The Lodha families who are cultivating on patta land but does not possess agricultural implements and bullocks should be given those items with proper arrangement of training by the concerned department of the Government.
- Skill development and agricultural training should be given to all the Lodhas of three administrative blocks. And here also special attention should be given to the level of awareness of the community members in each specific location.

- Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme may be undertaken to monitor the implementation of the developmental inputs.
- The beneficiary families were given the liberty to plan and construct the houses according to their specific needs and demand.
- The High technology gadget (Solar cells) should not be given to individual Lodha families without enquiring into their socioeconomic conditions. Here also the level of education and consciousness of the community members should be studied first.

## IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express our gratitude to the members of the Lodha community in the surveyed villages and other villagers of Binpur, Nayagram and Narayangarh blocks of Paschim (west) Medinipur who helped us in all possible ways to carry out the fieldwork.

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