



Socio-Cultural Changes and Its Impacts on Environment: A Study on Sabar Tribe in Purulia District of West Bengal

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19542421>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 27-03-2026

Published: 10-04-2026

Keywords:

Tribal culture, Social change, Religion, Festivals, Food habit, Environmental Impacts.

ABSTRACT

We know that the habitats of tribes in India are very closely to the nature and they are traditionally lived in hilly or forest region in the country. In West Bengal, Purulia and Alipurduar are the main part where tribes are lived. In Purulia, tribal population are concentration in different forest area of different block. Tribal people in Purulia district who are mainly belong of Proto-Australoid group of ethnicity. In the total population of Purulia, 7% is the highest proportion of this type of tribes . The tribal population called Adivasi in purulia as well as West Bengal. The “SABAR” tribes in Purulia are one of the oldest Adivasi who are mainly nomadic in characteristics and Sabar tribes has been remains their own traditional social –culture in purulia. But recently we can notice that there is a problem of changes in socio –cultural field of Sabar tibes. During the colonial period they were known one of the “criminal tribes” of Purulia under Criminal Tribes Act 1871, and suffer from social stigma in modern times. This paper will try to explore the current fact of this tribe of socio-cultural change of the ‘SABAR’ tribes in Purulia by the field survey method where we can see that the probable positive socio – cultural changes and development of this tribes.

INTRODUCTION : In India, the word “TRIBE” has their own tradition of socio –cultural field where they try to continue their unique culture, but recently a big change have been shown in socio- cultural field of ‘Sabar’ tribe in purulia, westbengal. In India, the Sabar tribe also known as ‘SAORA’. The Sabar or Saora are a small group of tribal who live in mainly in Jharkhand



,Odisha and westbengal . Sabar tribe finds mention in the Hindu mythology, as well as in ancient and mediaeval literature. The thirteenth book of Mahabharata.

(Majumder,vol.I,1963,PP.35-36) In the puranas described them as Dakshina-Patha-Vasinah and Vindhyaaulika(Matsya Purana,p1/4),to be specific in the chapter nineteen of Mahabharata, Drana parba, there a mention of sabar and several other tribes,like shok, kirat, and barbar who took an active part in combat. In Ramayana , there is also the celebrated reference to sabari or seori, who an aged ascetic woman ,offered hospitality to Rama during his wandering in the jungles (Elwin,op.cit.21). As per the records of the Anthropologists of the Indian Territory Sabar is one of the ancient tribes in the whole country. In Westbengal,as well as Purulia ,Sabars are one of the Munda ethnic group of tribe .They also known as Kheriya in westbengal and also purulia.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

1. Puttaraja and O.D.Heggade (2012) Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their society. They are considered as an economic asset in social, cultural, economic and religious way of life. But they are still lagging far behind in the various walks of life like education, employment,good health, and economic empowerment etc. Empowering may be understood as enabling weaker sections like poor women, especially tribal women to acquire and to possess power and resources.
2. P. Verma (1959-1960) ,has discussed the socio-cultural organizations of tribals,where he discussed about Sanria paharias, Mai-Paharias and Knmarbhag. He has examined various phases of tribal life, like fertility, pragnency, widow marriage, religion , place of women society etc.
3. P.K.Bose (1979-81),In his paper says that stratification pattern among Indian tribes on the basis of caste hierarchy or 'sacred' hierarchy or division on class basis, which is observed in the Gujrat tribes. He discussed about regional variations in occupations, use of modern machinery etc.
4. Renuka Pameche(1985), In her paper, she says and elaborate political aspects of Bhil society and traditional political system of Bhils which can reflect the impact of the modern system .
5. Vyas (1971) described the development of tribal in Rajasthan.
11. R.C. Majumder (1963) 'The History of Bengal'vol-I(Hindu period), where discussed about origin of the Sabar Society

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- (1) To highlight the socio-cultured changing status of tribal community.



(2) To study the existing tribal art & culture.

(3) To trace out the socio-culture factors which all hindering the promotion of tribal in modern social process.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on both primary & secondary sources of data but more emphasis given on primary data which are collected by field survey. There was 80 household of Sabar Tribe . On the basis of random sampling I have been taken 40 household to interview from the study area. The secondary data have been collected from B.D.O office of “PUNCHA” Napara Gram Panchayet and google net.com.

LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA: Damodarpur is a unique rural village area of purulia district under Puncha Block in West Bengal. Damodarpur is situated 40km away from the Purulia main town and 15km away from Manbazar Town and 2.6km away from Puncha Block. This village is just located aside of the Hura-manbazar metalled road and latitudinal extention of this village is $23^{\circ}16'E$ latitude to $86^{\circ}36'N$ longitude. The communication system is better than other Sabar villages. According to census 2011 the location code of village code of Damodarpur village is 331042. The total geographical area of village is 448.28 hectares. According to past survey report (2014-2017) in this village has total population of 2303 peoples in which 390 are sabar tribe and 181(46.41%) male , 209(53.59%) female ,out of 390 (100%) .

LOCATION MAP OF THE STUDY AREA

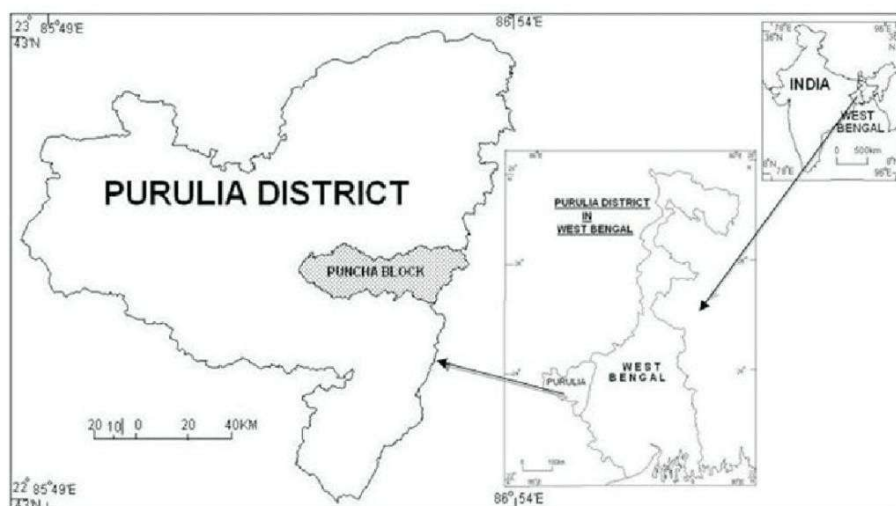
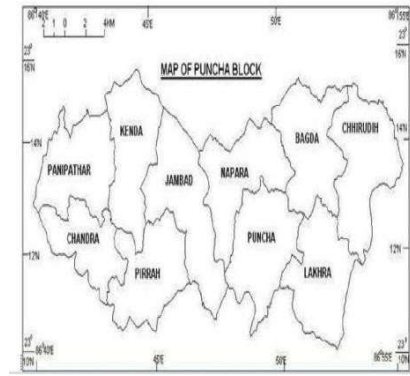


Fig I:--location map.



- TYPES OF SABAR : According to their geographical distribution Sabar tribes are mainly thretype .1)
 HILL KHARIAS : Mainly concentrated in to eastern part of the country
 2) DEHLKI KHARIAS : Mainly concentrated in to western part of the country.
 3) DUDH KHARIAS : Mainly concentrated in to central part of the country. In this paper discussed about the Hill kharia.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT:

EDUCATION : Education is an important instrument of social change. Education can play a great role of his / her development direction of life. In whole life education is an input not only for economic development of tribes but also create for inner strength of tribals which helps them the new challenges of their future life. According to field survey, only 28% of peoples are literate among sample people in Damodarpur village and out of this 38% male are literate and 30% female are literate. The most of the literate population are primary educated . Field survey reported that , more than 70% educated people are primary passed and remnant percentage middle and secondary passed . Graduate and post graduate passed are nil.

Village name	Total interview	Male %of literate	Female% of literate	Total %of literate
Damodarpur	40	38.67	30.14	28.97

PRIMARY SCHOOL OF VILLAFE

NGO



SOURCE :FIELD SURVEY 2022

In this primary school total 72 students are enrolled ,in which 66 student is belong in Sabar Tribe and other is “Hate Khari” founded by Pratigya Foundation, non Governmental organization .

PHYSICAL FORM OF THE PEOPLE : The physical form of the Sabar tribe are characterized by short to below medium structure with medium brown to very dark brown complexion of their face . In some cases it has been black to brown and yellow brown. Generally their

conjunction with medium stature,which the lighter shades ,such as medium brown and yellow brown. They have fatish and broad nose with medium to deep depression at the root of the nose. Their lips are generally thick and slightly averted. The hair on the head is wavy and curly.Their eyes are very inner corner and oblique type . Basically they belong in proto – austroloid racial group but some of them like Thurston has quoted fawcett, according to whom their “face is distinctly Mongolian , the obliquity of the eyes being sometimes very marked inner corner of the eyes are generally very oblique(Thurston,op.cit,pp.304-305) .But Majumder denies that there is any Mongoloid elements in the racial composition when he conducted Anthropometric investigations among 100 sabars in Ganjam in Orrisa(op.cit.p-32)





Changes between previous & recent physical form of Sabar Tribe of male & female.

RELIGION : According to 1961 census all the SABARS of purulia exit in HINDU RELIGION. They believe in God in the existence of Supernatural power of universal. They believe that supernatural power or spirit of world ,which try to propitiate by them ,if they not properly appeased them ,then The God angry on them ,that will be a cause of spread disease ,death, other calamities of their family and society .In the sabar village there may be almost one or more Gram Debtas which different name in different ares . Hill khariya sabar have already accepted the Hindu deities. The following God and Goddesses are very much recognized among them.

A) DHARAM DEVTA OR GRAM DEVTA.

B) HILL SPIRIT-PAHAR DEVTA.

C) BURHA –BURHI.

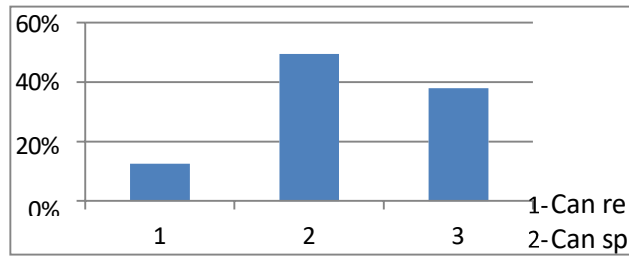
D) BHAGUT OR TIGER SPIRIT.

LANGUAGE : I n the earlier period Sabar tribe have been classified as Dravidians by Dalton an d Risley (op.cit),but Grierson (1906,vol-IV,P-217) also includes the sabar language in the Munda ethnic branch of the Austo- Asiatic sub family of Austric family of languages .According to field survey, however in Westbengal as well as purulia sabars have practically forgotten their ancestral language ,most of them speak in Bengali. Their own language locally known as kheriya in purulia.

KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

Level of knowledge about language	YES in %
Can read, write and speak	12.5
Can speak only	49.5
Can neither read nor write	38%
Total interview	100%

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING PERCENTAGE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR LANGUAGE



SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2022

DRESS OF SABAR TRIBE : In the primitive stage the Sabars wear their tradition dress which was barks of trees by covered the lower part of the body and the upper part remained base in the case of males as well as females.

Middle age the common items of dress in use in the daily life, which was mill-made dhoti or gamcha from the waist up to the knees. Females wear mill-made sarees of full lenth.

DESIRE FOR WEARING OF TRADITIONAL DRESSES

Desire for wearing of traditional dresses	Yes in %
Like to wear all time	0%
Like to wear in the festival time	25 %
Like to wear only modern dresses	75 %
Total interview	100%

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING DESIRE FOR WEARING OF TRADITIONAL DRESSE





SOURCE:FIELD SURVEY 2022

FOOD HABIT : The daily routine of food habit in sabar tribe in purulia are mainly cheap and locally available food for their livelihood. It is sure , that they suffer from the availability of food but they all have good health with maintaining adequate growth of body and mind. The food habit deeply related to culture of an individual group of population. According to field survey their daily food habits and timings are in the following page.

1) DIFFERENT LEAVES AS A VEGITABLE FOOD : Sarla , Shushni(Marsilea minuta), Hinch(a)(Enhydra flactunas Lour) , Chinti etc.They locally called this type of vegetable as a ‘saag’ in purulia. These all are traditional and ayurvedic foods of them .

2) DAILY FOOD HABIT:

TIME	FOOD ITEMS(few years ago)	FOOD ITEMS (present)
6.00 am to 7 am	Salted tea	Sugar tea
8:30am to 9:00am	Breakfast with Phanbhat/Pantabhat/with vegetables	Breakfast with Phanbhat/Pantabhat with vegetables
6.00pm to 7 pm	Dinner with rice(vegabhat)and vegetables or non-veg depend upon the hunting.	Dinner with cooking rice and vegetables

3) Alcoholic practice : Alcohol has one of the daily habitual drinker of sabar tribe. ‘Mahul’ (Madhuca Longifolia) is a popular drinking of indigenous tribes.

Types of food	%
Forest food	20%
House food	80%

HOUSE TYPE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN : The huts of sabar’s are small and their walls are made of mud with lateritic soil. The house construction are small in size and has small entrance door made by bamboo splits and have no windows. Every house has a courtyard through of a small area. Four wooden or bamboo pillars are vertically planted in four corners of their house. The floor is always plain and

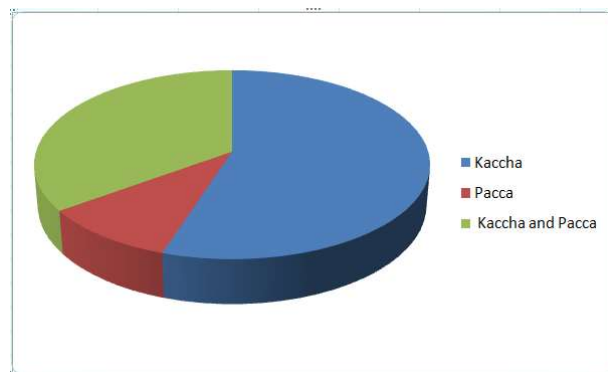


leveled by soil. Settlements are randomly scattered pattern in the village. All the settlements are hamlet type and spreading in a particular area.

But at present govt. has support them to build up house by Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojona (PMAY)

House type	%
kaccha	55%
pacca	10 %
Kachha and pacca mixed	35%

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF THEIR HOUSE TYPE



BY FIELD SURVEY 2022



SOURCE :FIELD SURVEY 2022

FAMILY PATTERN : The families are mostly nuclear type , but according to field survey different type like joint ,extended, broken are found. They do not like continue to live in joint or extended due to economical factor. The family generally consist of husband ,wife,and unmarried children . They live in



same roof of house and same room, but some cases found that married children are also live with their parents in same roof of the house.

FESTIVALS : Damodarpur , there are a number of festivals among hill khariya in purulia , westbengal. The festivals are associated with their first hunting , first food gathering, and first seasonal crop collecting etc. This festivals are also with their family festivals. Some of the festivals associated with their protect of disease, fruit and honey collecting from forest . Hill khariya villages generally isolated from civilization but damodarpur ,one is the except them.

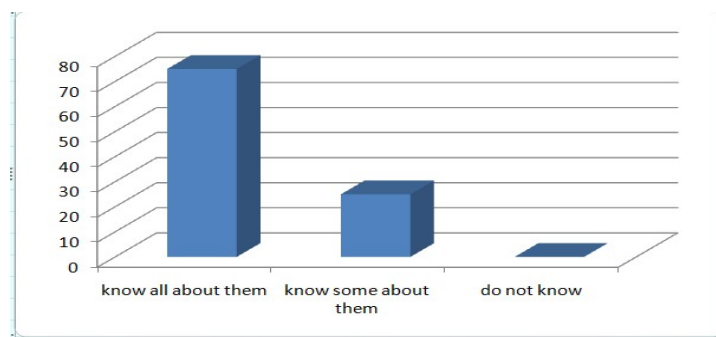
They are vey close to modern world. Following are the main festivals of them.

- 1) Phagun or spring festival ,2)Rohini parva,3)Gram puja , 4)Akhyan jatra ,5)Aghan sankranti
- 6) Kali puja, 7) Gouri puja ,8)Laxmi puja 9)Ashari puja etc and recently they organize a festival ,which they called ,Sabar Mela ,

Knowledge about the festivals : Due to the impact of Globalization Sabar tribe also change their traditional festivals and accept new socio –modern culture. According to field survey, more than

Knowledge about festivals & Rituals	Yes in %
Know all about them	75%
Know some about them	25%
Do not know	0%
Total interview	100 % (40)

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING PERCENTAGE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THEIR FESTIVALS:



SOURCE : FIELD SURVEY 2022



MARRIGE SYSTEM : The society of Sabar Tribe of hill kharia is descent pattern which is mainly patrilineal. In their society four kinds of clan among them like Bhuiya, Tessa, Kamar,

Laha. Marriage system within own clan is prohibited among them of purulia. The “Hill Kharia” “Sabars” have three types of marriages though theses system are optional but still exist in them.

(A) Sejha-Biha (marriage by negotiation)

(B) Sanga (second marriage)

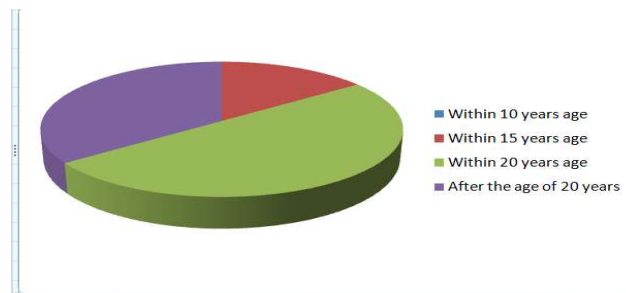
© Sikar-Biha (marriage by force)

The third type is rare occurrence in the villages.

AVARAGE AGE OF MARRIAGE OF THE FEMALE PERSONS IN THE FAMILY .

Average age of marriage (female)	Number of responded%
Within 10 years age	0
Within 15 years age	15
Within 20 years age	50
After the age of 20 years	35
Total nos of interviewed	100 (40)

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING PERCENTAGE AVERAGE AGE OF MARRIAGE IN THEM.



SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2022

MACKING HANDICRAFTS FREM BAMBOO : They made different types hand made handicrafts from bamboo like, basket,broom,hat, hand fan etc . They said that most of the time they are engaged in macking of this bamboo product and sell those local market and also purulia main baza

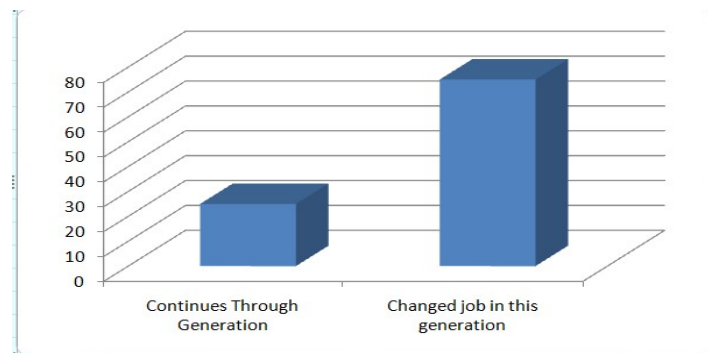
THIS STUDIES ON PERCEPTIONS AND IMPACT TOWARDS THEIR ENVIRONMENT:

Ongoing to conduct of field survey and complete the study of socio-cultural changes with man-environment relationship of them, I have been achieve very important knowledge about them. The close relationship of man-environment relationship has been slowly change and they prefer to change their socio –cultural status. Followings are the aspect of impact on envoronment about them.

NATURE OF CHANGING JOB : Generally, it is expected that job can be change with change of generation. The field survey ,it has brought out a big change about them, where In the colonial period due to economical crisis they involved with unsocial activies in society and they got social-stigma of criminal tribes in purulia. But ,in present they change their occupation to salve economical problem of family. They prefer to earning money by migration in other state of Westbengal and the field of agriculture. Following a table to show their changing of job.

CHANGING JOB IN THIS GENERATION	YES IN % (TOTAL INTERVIEW- 40)
Continues through generation (agriculture)	25%
Changed job in this generation(migration)	75%
Total interview	100%

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING OFPERCENTAGE CHANGING JOB IN THIS GENERATION



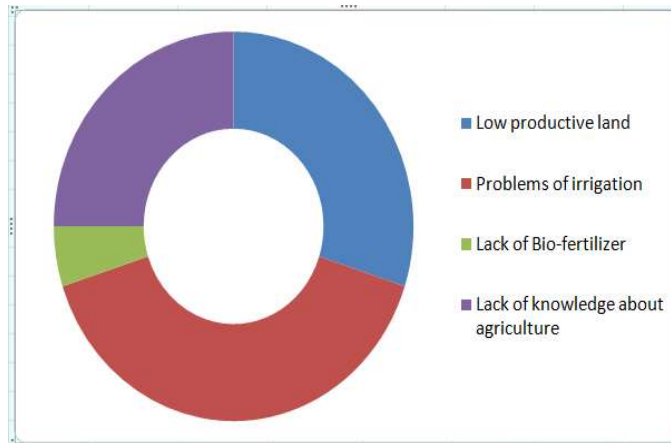
SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2022 AGRICULTURAL HAZARD OR PROBLEM AFFECT THE FARMERS

Types of agricultural hazard or problem	Number of yes %
Low productive land	30%
Problems of Irrigation	40%
Lack of Bio-fertilizer	5%



Lack of knowledge about agriculture	25%
Total nos interview	40(100%)

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL PROBLEM OF THEM

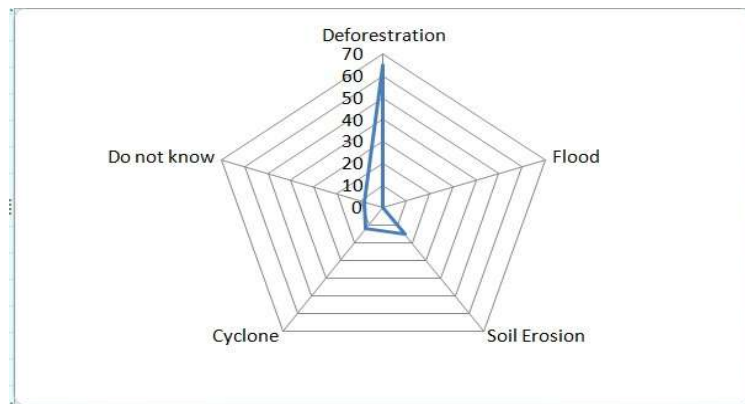


SOURCE : FIELD SURVEY 2022

THE CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARE GROWING IN THEM

Types of environmental problems	Yes in %
Deforestation	65%
Flood	0%
Soil Erosion	15%
Cyclone	12%
Do not know	8%
Total interview	100%(40)

DIAGRAM FOR SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THEM



SOURCE:FIELD SURVEY 2022



CONCLUSION : In this study the socio-cultural changes of Sabar tribe of Purulia, it has been already proved the expected outcomes that there was a big change in their Socio-Cultural life. In education literacy percentage of them proved their consciousness of education. In the primary school 66 students out of 72 students belong to the Sabar Society. And recently there is a non- governmental organization (Pratigya Foundation) in Sabar Palli, which help to grow their conscious about education, and a Madrasa School in their locality. In the cultural field , they have forgotten their primitive culture like wearing traditional dress, some food habit (salted tea), culture of their own language etc. They prefer migration to other state due to earning money for their family. Their concepts are developed about different modern process of living life. Their concepts of hazards in Agriculture and Environmental problems are the impact of their environment because of their social-cultural changes. So it is clear that there is a big change in their socio-cultural life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS : Thanks to every one ,without whose help and support would not have been able to complete this paperwork . Especially thanks to B.D.O. Office of Pancha block and Napara Gram Panchayet Official member to cooperate and help me individual information about Sabar palli of Damodarpur village. And lastly thanks to teacher of the primary school,who help me sharing the information about school.

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