

## **Educational impact on livelihood technique and culture of rural people in Sundarban coastal area**

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### **Abstract**

This article will investigate into the daily lives of those who reside close to the Sundarbans coastal area in West Bengal, India. In 2011, the literacy rate of the people in the Sundarbans was 25.71% compared to West Bengal's 76.26%<sup>1</sup>. Due to lacking of education the region failed to upgrade their livelihood either in terms of social standpoint or unable to raise economic standards to eradicate their social barriers. In this study it was observed that at how family assets their livelihood methods, and outcomes vary between families and how farming and mangrove resources play a role in those livelihoods. It also observe how vulnerable these ways of life are, particularly to the cyclones that occasionally hit the area. These topics' policy solutions will be assessed. The foundation for sustainable livelihoods that will be discuss. In this paper will be construct on Family surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups. According to this study, will be focus lower income, family development on forest resources, which contribute to the eradication of poverty and income inequality. The main risks of the mangrove-dependent families were access restrictions, resource fluctuation, pirate attacks, and wildlife attacks. On the other hand, is there any relation between educational qualification and cultural change will be discuss. However, higher income shrimp farming and forest honey harvesters were more at risk following a cyclone than the poorer collectors from mangrove resource. The cyclone disrupted the supply of services, destroyed property, and forced people to flee. It was found that institutions in charge of resource management underperformed in terms of ensuring livelihoods and resource conservation, and that policies relating to disaster, aquaculture of shrimp and crabs, and forests are insufficient, inconsistent, and inappropriate. According to the report, policy approaches that guarantee fair growth should be employed. These approaches should aim to build a livelihood structure with a balanced basis of assets while implementing numerous interventions at once. This will help the families near the coastal area achieve favourable livelihood results and would be helpful to the managers of coastal communities in terms of reducing poverty and promoting environmentally sustainable livelihoods, where education does matter.

**Keywords:** *Culture, Livelihood, Honey collection, Crab hunting, Fisherman, Farming, Households, Shrimps Farming, Educational effects.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Geographical and sociological aspect is responsible for our way of livelihood. Our environment makes us the way we are. The mangrove forest of West Bengal, the Sundarbans plays a pivotal role in the life of the inhabitants. These people depend on the natural resources of the mangrove forest. This dependency makes a strong bond between these people and the world heritage site, the Sundarbans. Through generations, they recognise themselves as forest-dweller. The Sundarbans is a unique forest in many ways; it is the only mangrove wetland tiger habitat in the world. It is an abode of crocodiles, tiger, deer, various fish, snakes, Honeybees, red crabs etc. On the one hand, the inhabitants have to fight with environment for the survival as well as they have to depend on the environment for their sustenance. This livelihood reflects in their culture through their festival, marriage system, Taboo and totem, Preparation of traditional food, agricultural system, house building, songs, art, religions and myths. Their identity cannot be isolated from the forest. Though initially during the British rule, the British men encouraged to clear out the forest for making human habitat. However, gradually people realised the importance of forest in their life, because they collect several things from Sundarban area which are

the parts of their socio-economic system. For this reason they have built many believe, taboo, totem on this forest.

However, our Sundarban area are consisted with two district one is South 24 Parganas district and other is North 24 Parganas district. There are thirteen Blocks In south 24 Parganas those are as Sagar, Namkhana, Kakdwip, Patharpratima, Mathurapur-I, Mathurapur-II, Kultali, Joynagar-I, Joynagar-II, Canning-I, Canning-II, Basanti, Gosaba and six blocks are in North 24 Parganas those are as Hingalganj, Hasnabad, Sandeshkhali-I, Sandeshkhali-II, Haroa, Minakhan.

**Objectives of the study:** Every study have some objectives like those, my research paper is not different than other. It has also some objectives; those are under below:

1. To find out Educational status of Sundarban People.
2. To find out which branches are related with the Livelihood Technique on Sundarban People?
3. To study the culture of rural people in Sundarban coastal area.
4. To discuss the relations between Education with Livelihood Technique and culture of rural people in Sundarban area?
5. To find out are there any educational impacts on Culture and Livelihood Techniques on rural people in Sundarban coastal area?

All kind of matter will discussing in this paper.

### **Methodology of the study:**

In this study, mixed method has been adopted. The researchers have relied on both primary and secondary data for the study. For secondary data, research has taken from Government census report 2011 and various sources of journals, books e-sources. These data have been reviewed, analysed and relevant data have been incorporated in the study. Primary data has been collected from thirty respondents of Debipur village and Bhubaneswery village, Vasagurguria village in Kultali block, South 24 Parganas. In this present study Purposive sampling has been used. Those who are dependent on the forest and egriculture for their livelihood are selected as respondents. Data has been collected through interview method.

## **II. Review of related literature:**

From various area Human came to settle in the Sundarban. At first, they cleaned the forest after the long time it would suitable for cultivation. There are some conflict among the historian people regarding the settlement in the Sundarbans. Some people also said that scattered human settlement was there in the near about early medieval period and a theory of depopulation of the Sundarbans in the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century was prominent. It has been declared by UNESCO in 1987 that, Sundarban is the world heritage site.<sup>2</sup> Although Indian Sundarban has 102 Islands of which 54 are inhabitant by the people. while the rest of the area is covered by forests. Also, while India owns 40 percent of the total area of Sundarbans, the rest of the area is being owned by Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup>

P. Biswas, Suptendu; (2020) “People-Nature-Culture of a Place: Understanding Festivals of the Sundarbans.” In duration of his study, he has made several fieldwork. He find out five Key components in culture; that has been seen in Sundarban area.

Place-specific culture in the Sundarbans, to me, is the central idea that comes out of its festivals and related discourses. Such a culture in the region is formed by relationships between five key components: Religion, Ritual, Narrative, Occupation and Nature. These five components are conceived as linked planes, which, as a whole, represent the culture of the place.

Most of the local festivals are of the subalterns. Gajan is ‘egalitarian’ in its celebration performed by common people in rural societies (McLane, 2002(1993), pp. 87-89). The festival equalizes the society and gives the power to the weak. Dakkhin Rai puja in Dhaphdapi, too, observed by similar groups of people and rituals are extensions of that followed in Shiv Gajan. Cults of Bonbibi, Maa Manasa, Maa Sitala and the like, underline the power of women goddess, and are influenced by the Shaktism. All these bring out the story of the ‘weak’ gaining power and, consequently, alternative discourses of power emerge out of new social, religious and cultural relationships.<sup>4</sup>

Halder, Jhuma; (2016), “Educational outcome: identifying social factors in south 24 parganas district of west bengal” In her paper she wants to find out what are the problems to grow up the basic education in Sundarban region. End of the discussion of this research article she gave a conclusion that, the social backgrounds of the children should be kept in mind particularly in underdeveloped regions like Sundarban forest area and other similar regions. There have been a lot of efforts to reduce the social gap particularly in children’s education since Independence. But, even after six decades of Independence, the ground reality remains the same, particularly in areas like Sundarban, and more so for socially and economically backward sections like SCs and STs. Therefore, specific attention needs to be given to children of socially backward and

geographically remote regions. The dual effect of social and geographical backwardness makes the region more backward in terms of basic education.<sup>4</sup> Hence region- centric policy intervention is required for the entire district.<sup>5</sup>

Patel, Varsha; and others, (2009) “Fishing community issues in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve: a case study” in this paper the authors try to discuss Regulations on Fishing, Sundarbans: Fisheries and Fishing Communities, Livelihood Issues in the STR, Lack of consultation with women, etc. In this study also said that, The Sundarbans, a unique ecosystem, is an important breeding ground of fish and a habitat for tigers. It is also home to a large population of people living in scattered, often remotely located, islands, with poor access to basic facilities such as health, education, roads, sanitation, potable water and electricity. Livelihood options are limited, and fishing is one of the most important sources of livelihood.<sup>6</sup>

**Educational status of Sundarban People:**

All the 19 blocks of Indian Sundarban, six from North 24 Parganas and thirteen from South 24 Parganas are taken into consideration for the present study. The Sundarban of India covers some parts of North and South 24 Parganas of West Bengal with an area of 9630 Km<sup>2</sup> it consisted of 120 islands. According to 2011 census report; of which only 54 islands are inhabited by 4.2 million people. Here, is given some educational status of nineteen blocks under bellow.

**Table-1:** Literacy rate of Sundarban (Nineteen Blocks of South & North 24 Parganas).

District	Block	Population	Literate People	Percentage of Literate people
South 24 Parganas District	Sagar	212037	156476	73.79
	Namkhana	182830	138117	75.54
	Kakdwip	281963	192692	68.34
	Patharpratima	331823	237955	71.71
	Mathurapur-I	195104	123647	63.37
	Mathurapur-II	220839	151186	68.45
	Kultali	229053	134101	58.54
	Joy nagar-I	263151	165987	63.07
	Joy nagar-II	252164	148676	58.96
	Canning-I	304724	184241	60.46
	Canning-II	252523	139058	55.06
	Basanti	336717	195366	58.02
	Gosaba	246598	172781	70.06
North 24 Parganas District	Hingal ganj	174545	119630	68.53
	Hasnabad	203262	127403	62.67
	Sandeshkhali-I	164465	100978	61.39
	Sandeshkhali-II	160976	98805	61.37
	Haroa	214401	136679	63.74
	Minakhan	199084	122283	61.42

Source: census report 2011, Govt. India

In Sundarban area according to census 2011 average literacy rate is = 64.44% but literacy rate in West Bengal census 2011 is 77%. So Sundarban area's literacy 12.65% less then West Bengal literacy rate. Here, given how many Pre-primary, Primary, Upper-primary, secondary, Higher-secondary and Degree colleges are in nineteen blocks in Sundarban. During my survey, I found several responded said that they did not achieve higher education due to not having degree college in their area. Although they had good marks but their socio-economic status is so poor that is why, they did not go nearest town where the degree college is situated.

**Table-2:** Numbers of Educational Institute in Sundarban area.

District	Block	Pre-primary school	Primary school	Upper Primary	Secondary school	Higher Secondary	Degree college of arts sceince & commerce	Degree college of engineering
	Sagar	42	42	32	25	19	2	2
	Namkhana	34	34	28	18	15	0	0
	Kakdwip	39	39	35	30	20	1	0

South 24 Parganas District	Patharpratima	87	87	55	39	22	1	0
	Mathurapur-I	83	82	27	18	10	0	0
	Mathurapur-II	27	27	24	18	14	1	0
	Kultali	42	42	24	16	11	1	0
	Joynagar-I	60	60	22	16	10	2	0
	Joynagar-II	4	4	19	13	10	1	3
	Canning-I	51	51	23	14	8	1	0
	Canning-II	54	54	23	18	9	2	0
	Basanti	63	63	41	21	15	0	0
	Gosaba	50	50	39	33	15	1	0
North 24 Parganas District	Hingalganj	39	39	23	21	11	0	0
	Hasnabad	70	70	20	20	14	0	0
	Sandeshkhali-I	30	30	18	14	10	1	0
	Sandeshkhali-II	24	24	18	18	9	0	0
	Haroa	78	78	29	13	10	0	0
	Minakhan	56	56	23	11	9	1	0

Source: census report 2011, Govt. India

We see from the above data there are few institute having in Sundarban area. It is truth education can change in the structure and function of human society. Where people literacy rate is quite low there human life is something isolated. So people of Sundarban life are not constant change in the ideals, attitudes and values of an individual's which affects social attributes and social structure.

#### **Which branches are related with the Livelihood Technique on Sundarban People**

The indigenous plants, extraction of honey and catching fish from rivers, lakes and rivulets have good economic value in surroundings markets. The local community were highly attached to their land, air, water, animals and plants of this sundarban area, which have simultaneously became part of their culture and tradition over the years. They survive in this difficult area helping by their Livelihood Technique. Which livelihood Technique are seen in Sunderban area as are following.

- Livelihood technique on farming.
- Livelihood technique on preservation knowledge.
- Livelihood technique on animal hunting in Sundarban forest.
- Livelihood technique on crab hunting and honey collecting.
- Livelihood technique on Fishing in Sundarban river.
- Livelihood technique on uses of Medicines practice.
- Livelihood technique on Food Processing.
- Livelihood technique on making of Vehicle.
- Livelihood technique on various Handicraft.

All above aspect are fully related with livelihood technique. These are not learn from school or formal way. This kind of technique learn by people from generation to generation by their ethnic practice. Fisherman, Honey collector, Crab harvester every community are surviving in this difficulty area by practices of their livelihood technique.

#### **Culture of rural people in Sundarban coastal area**

As the discussion of the matter, at first the question arises; what is culture? According to Edward B. Tylor in his book 'Primitive Culture', he said that; "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." In sundarban area, there are many people are migrated from their native place for searching a new jobs. The people who have been leaving here are came from Bangladesh, Midnapur, Bihar, Chotonagpur, and other places. Now a days several religion people as like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddha, Jain have been living here with peacefully. Here have given some data of different religion people who have been living in Sundarban area.

Table-3: Population of various community in Sundarban area

District	Block	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddha	Jain
	Sagar	186346	24879	117	30	19	16
	Namkhana	157185	25368	42	31	17	16

South Parganas District	24	Kakdwip	232263	48181	207	31	27	23
		Patharpratima	295027	35566	725	29	32	26
		Mathurapur-I	115977	78835	68	22	13	14
		Mathurapur-II	181262	33935	5308	23	23	14
		Kultali	159897	68386	254	23	18	15
		Joynagar-I	138544	123307	555	62	38	21
		Joynagar-II	118591	131704	1381	49	13	13
		Canning-I	188849	114252	978	33	30	16
		Canning-II	78472	169389	953	23	12	42
		Basanti	176715	151101	7693	62	56	24
		Gosaba	217155	21286	3200	38	54	29
North Parganas District	24	Hingalganj	153550	20623	75	25	21	8
		Hasnabad	88112	114869	121	18	6	3
		Sandeshkhali-I	113793	50029	353	5	8	7
		Sandeshkhali-II	124229	35855	694	21	6	11
		Haroa	83088	131050	85	15	8	5
		Minakhan	95091	102733	1031	8	10	11

Source: census report 2011, Govt. India

All the different religion they have different belief system, art, morals, law, custom, taboo, totem and other habits. That is why, different religion build their different cultural identity. There is quite a large number of residence ethnic groups (tribes/castes/sub-castes/clans/sub-clans) in Sundarban. Bagdi, Maal, Tiyaor, Kaibarta, Namahshudra, Bedia, Haari, Muchi, Dhopa, Munda, Turi, Kandra, Bhuina, Pod (Pundra) are the majorities to name with. A part of the Hindu population living in and around the Sundarban also either converted or migrated from other place following the religious teachings of Jain Siddhacharyas and the Tantrayani Buddhist monks.

The people of Sundarban are habitude different culture. As those are following:

**1. Various fair and festival:** In Sundarban area, several fair and festival are organized through the entire year. Surrounding the fair and festival every people are enjoy and gathers together. As like Andhamunir mela, Adibasi mela, Bishalakshmi mela, Dakshin Rai mela, Mnikpirer mela, Nabanna Utsab, Idhar mela, Pir Gorachander mela, Pithepuli utshab, Goshatha mela, dharmothakurer mela, Banbibir mela, Banbibir Utshab and Sundarban mela, Cookfight, etc. are the most popular fair and festival in Sundarban area.

**2. Performing art:** Performing art is one of the popular culture in Sundarban area. Here, this performing art has been seen in several fair and festival. Some performing arts Pupperty, Gajan, Dakshin Rai palagaan, Banbibir palagaan, Dukhumiya Palagaan, Jatra Palagaan etc. are the most popular event in Sundarban area.

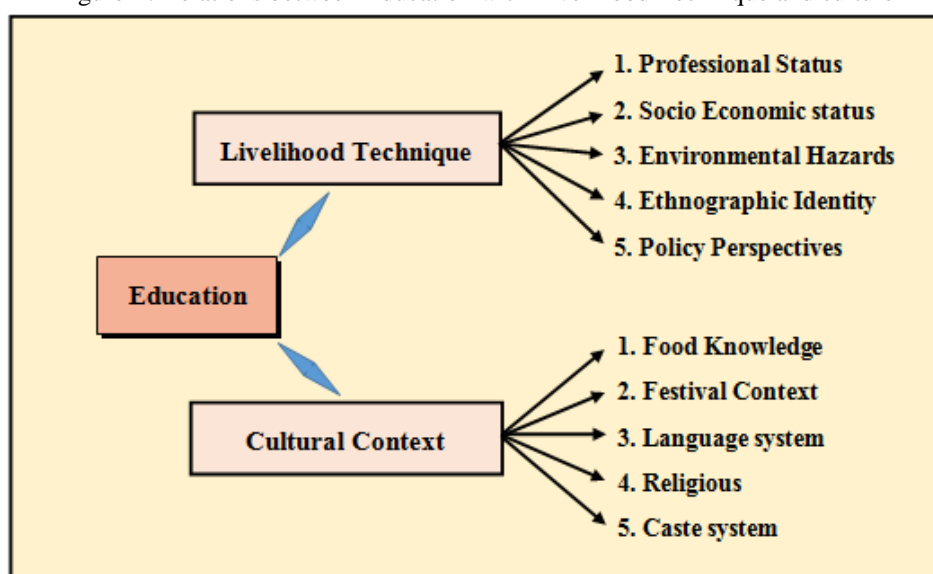
**3. Food Habits:** Any community or any race or religion have their unique food habits. Food habits are one of the most important identity of any culture. In Sundarban there are many community as like as Bagdi, Maal, Tiyaor, Kaibarta, Namahshudra, Bedia, Haari, Muchi, Dhopa, Munda, Turi, Kandra, Bhuina, Pod (Pundra) are live in this area. They are also different food habites and it makes them different cultural identities.

**4. Various Deity:** In the great description of the Gods and Goddesses of the Sundarban, at first the one needs to be mentioned, she is Banbibir. The major people of Sundarban who has been leaving in coastal area are depend on Sundarban forest. Therefor Banbibir is the main Goddess for those who are dependent on Sunderban forest. Besides this Gagi-Kalu-Champabati, Dakshin Rai, Tusu, Makal Thakur, Ganga Debi, etc. are the popular Gods and Goddesses in Sundarban area.

### **The relations between Education with Livelihood Technique and culture of rural people in Sundarban area**

Recurrent disasters result in a change in livelihood and adaptation strategies as they limit the livelihood options. Agriculture, which is the major occupation of the area, has seen a shift in the pattern and rotation of the crops. For example, paddy has become a monocrop which used to be cultivated twice in a year. Now a day the cultivation is the combination of education and livelihood technique. Culture and education are two inseparable subject though they are interdependent. Any educational structure gets its guidance from the cultural patterns of a society. So, education is relate deeply with livelihood technique and cultural context. Here is the diagram by which we can understand how they are interrelated with each other.

Figure-1: Relations between Education with Livelihood Technique and culture



Source: Author's analysis and prediction

### **Educational impacts on Culture and Livelihood Techniques on rural people in Sundarban coastal area?**

Culture and livelihood Technique closely related with the education. Education has great influence on livelihood technique and culture. On the other hand culture also influence on education. Let us know some social branches that are influence by each other.

- ❖ Influence of social structure
- ❖ Influence of political condition
- ❖ Influence of economic condition
- ❖ Influence of religious condition
- ❖ Influence of social thought
- ❖ Influence of social change

All the above structure partially or fully influences by each other. How culture and livelihood technique are interrelated and how education has been influencing on culture and livelihood technique? All aspect will be discussing in the findings part that are under bellow.

### **III. Findings and discussion:**

In this paper, 'Educational impact on livelihood technique and culture of rural people in Sundarban coastal area' had some objectives. Although all over the matters, it has founded that 'Livelihood techniques' and 'Culture' are being influenced by 'Education'. Why education influences to the Livelihood techniques and culture all are discussing on the findings and discussion part of the paper are under following:

1. Educational status of Sundarban People is very low. All over the West Bengal percentage of literacy rate is 77% according to census report 2011. Where is, Sundarban literacy rate near about is 64.44% according to census report 2011. Therefor we can say that they are lagging from their education basis of all over the state. Education is the way of life of light, where education is high the culture change rapidly or quickly. Where education is very low the culture is isolated and very conservative. It is the fact; here is the same phenomena, lacking of education various knowledge, belief system, art, morals, law, custom, taboo, totem and other habits are seeing in Sundarban area.

2. In this paper, second objective had which branches are related with the Livelihood Technique in Sundarban People. Every year there are several natural disaster have fall in to the Sundarban. Inhabitant have been surviving against this disaster with their livelihood technique. They apply their livelihood techniques their traditional knowledge on farming, preserving many things, hunting animal in Sundarban forest. The people who have been living in coastal area are depend on crab hunting and honey collecting fishing in river this kind of job fully depend on livelihood technique, this kind of knowledge or techniques are not acquired by man through formal education. They learn this kind of knowledge through their previous generation to generation. Except this the Medicinal opportunities is one of the important part of every community. The Sundarban area has not good medicinal facilities so they have different medicinal practice to surviving in this difficult area. They have different food processing and preserving technique. Different kinds of handicrafts and vehicles are made in this area that do not see in other place.

3. Third objectives was that, what kind of culture are carrying by the inhabitant in Sundarban coastal area? The Sundarban is one of the ancient heritage of mythological and historical place. Interactions of humans with nature and wildlife have given rise to a new aspect of cultural landscape in Sundarban; basically by them, who have been living in coastal area. Mostly 3.5 million people directly or indirectly in depend on the provisional and cultural services of Sundarban for their livelihood. After Collecting and analysing the all culture in Sundarban, it is going classified into three part those are as following:

- ❖ **Intangible culture** = Spiritual connection, Values and Identity, Community family, Sacred practice, Sense of ownership, Traditional Knowledge System
- ❖ **Tangible culture** = Small scale Fishing, Farming, Honey collection, Wood collection, Community gathering, Place and Architecture, Religious Festivals
- ❖ **Mixed culture** = Cultural Heritage, Music and Dance, Local Myth, Food preparation, Medical Plants

4. The forth objectives was relations between Education with Livelihood Technique and culture of rural people in Sundarban area? In order to understand the relationship between education and livelihood technique and culture, some important questions need to be discuss: What is livelihood technique and culture? How it is related with education and livelihood technique? What is the relationship between formal education and informal education in societal context? In what ways does the acquisition of education (Formal Education), livelihood technique and culture (Informal Education) contribute to the social development process such as empowerment, socioeconomic development, Physical development of persons, social equality and political accountability? Social development needs moral balance that provide culture and formal education, Structural function and symbolic interaction are the important part in our society. Livelihood technique is one of the vital part to balancing the social structure and function in our society. Livelihood technique: being able to read, write, and calculate will help Sundarban people to consider what, when, and how much they should invest in livestock, paddy rice, vegetables, and forests. For example, inhabitant of Sundarban traditionally raised various farm for their need and manure (waste used as an organic fertilizer. Education can help the people in their daily farming practices by getting medicine for sick livestock, reading the instructions on products (seeds, fertilizers, breeds and so on) so that they purchase the appropriate commodity for their better life.

5. To find out are there any educational impacts on Culture and Livelihood Techniques on rural people in Sundarban coastal area? it was our fifth objectives. Suppose Inhabitants of Sundarban are gradually developing their education then it would be impact on livelihood technique and culture by education. We know there are many livelihood assets have in our society as like as:

**Human Capital:** household member, active labour, Knowledge and skills.

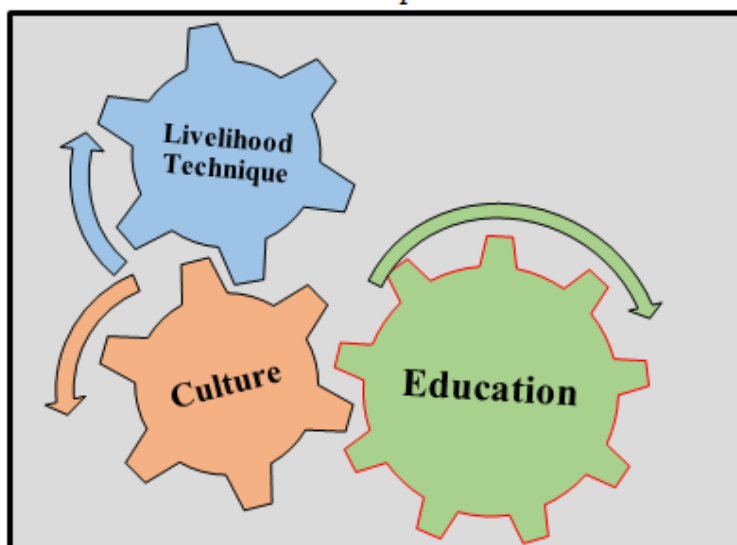
**Physical capital:** livestock, equipment, vehicles, house, irrigation pump.

**Natural capital:** access to land, forest, water, grazing, fishing, wild products and biodiversity.

**Financial capital:** saving/debt, gold/jewellery, income, credit, insurance.

**Social capital:** kin network, group membership, social-political voice and influence.

**Figure-2: Educational impact on Culture and Livelihood technique**



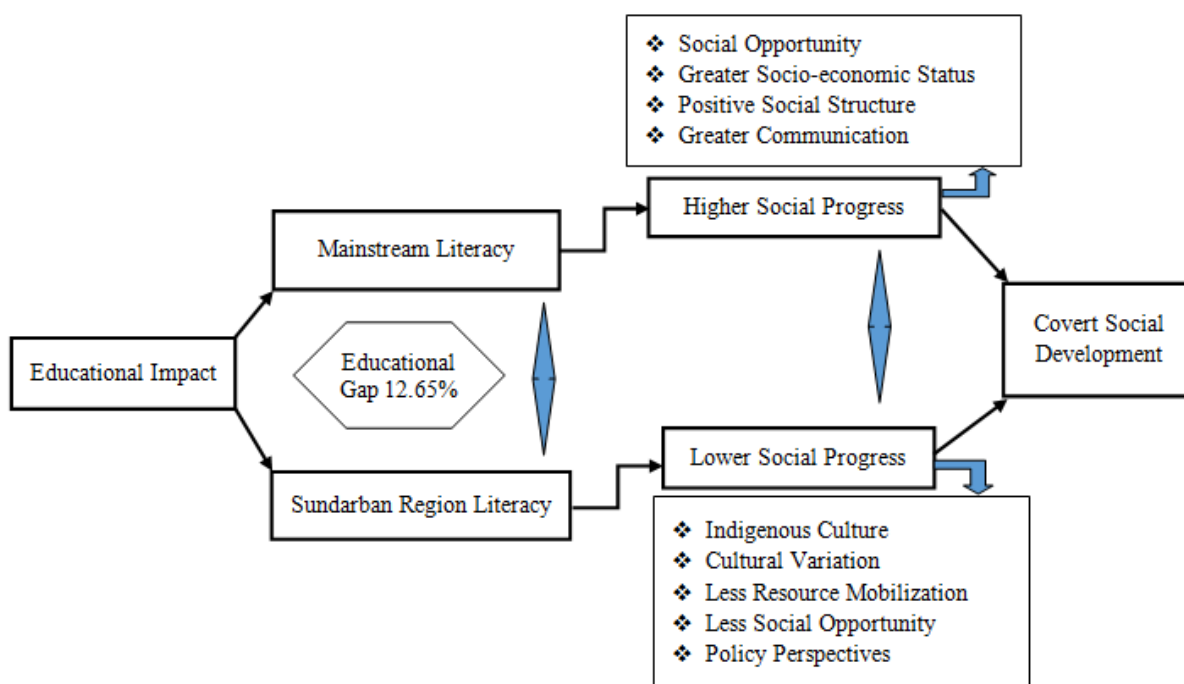
Source: Author's analysis and prediction

All above the elements are going to make develop in our society urban to modern through the education. Education is the big element to change our society. On the other hand our culture have also some features as like knowledge, believes, art , moral, law, customs, habits, etc. are destroy by the increases of education. Here the diagram by which we will properly understand how the education work over the livelihood technique and culture. Education, livelihood technique and culture are the elements in our social structure. Suppose, education and culture are the two wheel and they are staying side by side. If education wheel is rotating in clockwise and it denote to progress by which cultural wheel is rotating anticlockwise that denote to deteriorate in progress to culture. On the other hand, wheel of the livelihood technique is rotating by cultural wheel that denote progress of livelihood technique. Analysing all perspectives we can say that the relation of education and culture is opposite polar. But livelihood technique has some difference approach when education will progress livelihood technique also be forward toward progress.

**IV. Conclusion:**

End of the paper it is concluded that Education has big impact on livelihood technique and culture of rural people in Sundarban coastal area. Honey collector, Crab harvester, Wood collector, Fisherman every community are surviving in this difficulty area by practices of their livelihood technique which are involve in Informal education. In Sundarban, cultural landscapes and wetlands are the most important global issues for economic growth and balancing of ecosystems because their education is very poor. On the other hand, I have discussed that the position of education and culture are the opposite polar. Where education level has increase there the culture has lost it’s own protective power. If we want to increase the education in sundarban area we should change he educational status of both parents because, a positive impact on the schooling of children, both boys and girls is inevitable for their development and their causes can be classified as under bellow:

- i. Literacy Gap
- ii. Indigenous Culture
- iii. Cultural Variation
- iv. Educational Motivation
- v. Resource Mobilization



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