

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TRIBALS IN WEST BENGAL: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DISTRICT OF PURULIA

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Abstract

The objective of the paper is to uphold the educational status of the tribals in West Bengal with special emphasis on the district of Purulia, which happens to be the most vulnerable district in West Bengal, in terms of literacy, poverty, health. According to Indian census, a person, aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language is taken as literate. Total population of West Bengal, according to census 2011, is 91347736 in which the number of tribals people is 5296953 which share 5.79% of total population. Tribal of this land are considered the most backward, marginalized, and deprived communities. It is evident that these people are aloof from fruits of modernization and technological advancement. It is universally accepted that education is the only weapon which could emancipate the subaltern class from their age old curse of backwardness and deprivation.

Key words: Scheduled Tribe (S.T), Backward, Literacy rate, Development, Marginalized

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Introduction

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” – Nelson Mandela

No civilization could flourish without educating its people. India is the largest democratic country in the world with 1.2 billion people from different sect, caste, religion, culture, as well as it is home to 10.2 crore aboriginal people which share 8.6% of total population (2011 census). This section of the tribal community is considered the most backward, under privileged and deprived section of Indian society. Government has taken several steps and initiatives for up gradation of socio-economic and educational status of tribals of this land since independence but unfortunately the pace of development among the tribals is very sluggish. Now it becomes the biggest challenge for the government to take some drastic steps to spread education among the tribal communities without which the vision of present government which is “sab ka sath sab ka vikash” (together with all development for all) would not work out. Education is the most effective means to nurture the potentiality among the tribals and can cultivate and make them dexterous and transform them from a mere human being to a resourceful person, so they can be self reliant and easily overcome the barriers of their day to day life.

If we analyse the educational status of the district of Purulia which is one of the backward tribal populated district in West Bengal in terms of literacy and elementary school enrolment, poverty, hunger, we will see that over the last few decades, growth rate of literacy and development among the tribals of this peripheral area is not satisfactory. Purulia is the third most tribal populated district in west Bengal after west Midnapur and Jalpaiguri, sharing 10.52% of total tribal population in west Bengal (census 2001). Literacy rate of all social groups in Purulia is 64.48 whereas tribal literacy rate is mere 53.68 % (census 2011).

Study Area

Purulia came under the state of west Bengal in the year 1956, is located in western most part of the state of West Bengal. The Northern, Western, and the Southern part of the district is bounded by the state of Jharkhand, the eastern part bounded by the district of Brrdwan, Bankura, and

Pashim Medinipur. The district lies between 22°4'to 23°45' North Latitude and 85°55'to 86°55'East Longitude. The area of total district is 6259sq. km.

Objective of the study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To study the total scheduled tribes population in the district.
2. To study literacy rate of the tribal of the district.
3. Comparative analyses of literacy rate of the tribal.
4. To study changing literacy trends in the district.
5. To study gender literacy disparity.
6. To analysis the district wise tribal literacy rate

Source of data

1. To understand the literacy scenario of the district following database and methodology are being applied. Maximum secondary data are evaluated from Indian census 2011 and 2001, primary census abstract (PCA) of West Bengal, data from the backward cast welfare (BCA), data are also taken from Statistics of School Education-2010-2011, information from statistical hand book, west Bengal 2005 and 2006 and report of Ministry of Tribal affairs 2013 are also analyses
2. Field trips to different tribal villages to understand basic issues of literacy in the district.

District wise S.T population in west Bengal

In west Bengal there is 40 different groups of tribal reside (census 2001), most of them are found in Southern, western, and Northern part of the state. According to census -2001 total tribal population of the state was 44,06,794 among them 22,23,924 person were male and 21,82,870 were female , which share 5.5% of total population of the state

. Table: 1

District wise S.T population in west Bengal, 2001

district	Total S.T	S.T male	S.T female	% in respect of total population of the district	% in respect of total population of the West Bengal
West Bengal	4406794	2223924	2182870	100	
Purulia	463452	235097	228355	18.27	10.52
Burdwan	441832	221773	220059	6.41	10.3
Birbhum	203127	101831	101296	6.74	4.61
Bankura	330783	166723	164051	10.36	7.51
Purba medinipur	26507	13241	13086	0.59	0.60
Pashmim medinipur	772177	390541	381636	14.87	17.52
Howrah	19168	9959	9209	0.45	0.43
Hooghly	212062	105453	106609	4.21	4.81
North 24 pargana	198936	101488	97448	2.23	4.51
South 24 pargana	84766	43101	41665	1.23	1.92
Kolkata	9810	5471	4339	0.21	0.22
Nadia	113891	57475	56416	2.47	2.58
Murshidabad	75953	38518	37435	1.29	1.72
Uttar dinaj pur	124865	63123	61742	5.11	2.83
Dakshin dinajpur	242317	122442	119875	16.12	5.50
Malda	227047	113537	113510	6.90	5.15
Jalpaiguri	641688	324250	317438	18.87	14.56
Cooch behar	14246	7425	6821	0.57	0.32
Darjiling	204167	102287	101880	12.67	4.63

Source census 2001

It is important to note that a vast population of S.T which is almost 10.5% of the total tribal population of West Bengal, reside in purulia and 18.27 % of the total population of the district is S.T. we can see that Purulia is the 3rd most tribal populated district (see Table : 1) in West Bengal after Pashmim Medinipur and Jalpaiguri.

Educational status of tribal

Literacy rate is one of the most popular and effective method of measuring the percentage of literate among the population. Here we analysis the tribal literacy rate of Purulia district along with decadal change in literacy rate with gender disparity as well as district tribal literacy rate with the state and national average literacy rate of tribal

Table : 2

Comparative analysis of percentage S.T literacy rate by sex, 2011

	Literacy rate of All social group (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Gap in male/female (%)	Total S.T literacy rate (%)	Literacy rate S.T male (%)	Literacy rate S.T female (%)	Gap in male/female (%)
India	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68	58.96	68.53	49.35	19.18
West Bengal	77.08	81.69	70.54	11.15	57.92	68.16	47.71	20.45
Purulia	65.38	77.86	50.52	27.34	53.68	67.71	39.54	28.17

Source census 2011

Compare S.T literacy rate in terms of differences

It is very clear from the above table that the status of tribal education in India is not much optimistic and situation is even worse in Purulia district. National literacy rate according to census 2011 is 58.96% where in Purulia it comes down to 53.68% and it is also lagging behind from West Bengal average tribal literacy rate which lies in 57.92%. So we find a gap of 4.2 in S.T literacy rate of Purulia with the S.T literacy rate of West Bengal, and the gap is even higher if we compare it with national S.T literacy rate which is as much as 5.28. So by analyzing the above table it is clear the prevailing tribal educational scenario in Purulia is really a matter of concern for the government.

Compare S.T literacy rate with all social groups

If we analysis literacy rate of all social group with Scheduled Tribes literacy of the same district, we can see that there is huge gap lies between them which is as much as 11.7(see table 2), and the situation is even miserable when we compare the literacy rate tribal people of Purulia district with the literacy rate of all social group of national average and state average. National literacy rate of all social groups is 74.04% where the literacy rate of tribal people of Purulia is 53.68% so the gap is about 20.36. Situation is more vulnerable when we compare literacy rate of tribal people of Purulia (53.68%) with West Bengal total literacy rate (77.08%), where the gap between them is 23.4. Now it is clear from our comparative analysis, the status of tribal education in Purulia is not encouraging enough, they are far lagging behind from other social groups in national as well as in state level.

Compare S.T male female literacy rate

The data we get from census 2011, which reveals the reluctance of tribal women in pursuance of education and their indifferent attitude towards education. Here we separately analysis male and female literacy rate of tribal community of Purulia district and compare it with national and state level literacy rate of S.T male and female as well as with the literacy rate of all social group. The situation is very disappointing when we compare the literacy rate of male of all social groups with the literacy rate of S.T male at national level, we find a huge difference lies between them, the difference is as high as 13.61. The scenario is more or less same at the state level, which is about 13.53%. In case of Purulia, situation is quite better than national and state level as the difference between the literacy rate of S.T male with the literacy rate of male of social groups, which is 10.15%. If we see the literacy rate of tribal male in India (68.5%), West Bengal (68.16%) and in Purulia (67.71%), the situation is very similar among them with very nominal differences, which is more or less 1%.

Scenario of female literacy rate in India is more vulnerable, literacy rate of tribal female in India, West Bengal and in the district of Purulia lies below 50% with 49.35%, 47.71% and 39.545%. Differences of S.T female literacy rate and literacy rate of female of all social groups at national level 16.11, and it goes up to 22.83 in west Bengal but the gap between literacy rate of tribal female and female of all social group is lesser in purulia which about 10.98%. Literacy

rate of tribal female in Purulia which is 39.54%, is really a matter of concern as it lies much below than the west Bengal as well as countries tribal female literacy rate .

Here we discuss the differences between male and female literacy rate. Difference between male and female literacy rate in India is 16.68% (see table 2), Where the difference between tribal male and female literacy in India is 19.18%. In West Bengal gap between male and female literacy rate 11.15% (see table 2) and it is almost double, in the case difference between tribal male and female literacy rate (20.45). The differences between male and female literacy rate in district of purulia is as high as 27.34% which is more than double of west Bengal(11.15). The differences between tribal male and female literacy rate in Purulia is higher than the state and country as well, with 28.17%.

Table: 3

Changing pattern of S.T literacy rate 2001-2011

District/state/nation	(%)Literacy rate S.T census - 2001			(%)Literacy rate S.T census - 2011			Change of total literacy(%)	Change of male literacy(%)	Change of female literacy(%)
	total	male	female	total	male	female			
India	47.10	59.2	34.8	58.56	68.53	49.35	11.86	9.33	14.55
West Bengal	43.4	57.38	29.15	57.92	68.16	47.71	14.52	10.78	18.56
Purulia	42.64	61.26	23.4	53.86	67.84	39.77	11.22	6.58	16.37

Source: census of Indi 2001 & 2011, census of WB 2001 & 2011, data of

BCW, WB

From the above table, we can analysis the literacy rate of tribals at all India level increased from 47.10% to 58.96% in 10 years (2001 – 2011) hence the decadal change of tribal literacy is 11.86% at all India level. when we compare it with S.T literacy rate of Purulia in terms of decadal changing pattern, the growth is quite at par with national level with 11.22%. The scenario is quite optimistic in terms of decadal growth of S.T literacy rate of West Bengal which quite higher than national as well as Purulia’s decadal growth rate with changing rate of 14.52 in

10 years (2001-2011). If we analysis the tribal literacy rate of Purulia from 2001 census , we can see the S.T literacy rate 42.64% which is lower than West Bengal S.T literacy rate and also lower than national average S.T literacy rate (see table 3). But the situation quite optimistic for Purulia when we compare its male literacy rate of tribal people with S.T male literacy rate of India and with west Bengal. Tribal male literacy rate of Purulia in 2001 is 61.26% which higher than the national as well as West Bengal male tribal literacy rate (see table 3). But growth of literacy rate of tribal male of form 2001 to 2011 is lower than national as well as from West Bengal. From 2001 to 2011 change of tribal male literacy rate of Purulia is 6.58% where it goes to 10.78% for West Bengal and 9.33% for India. In 2001 female literacy rate of S.T of Purulia is 23.4% (see table 3), which is lower than West Bengal tribal female literacy as well as national female tribal literacy rate and situation continues in 2011 where female literacy rate of tribal of Purulia is still lower.

Table : 4**Changing pattern of S.T literacy rate district wise 2001-2011**

District/state	Literacy rate S.T census - 2001			Literacy rate S.T census - 2011			Change of total literacy	Change of male literacy	Change of female literacy
	total	male	female	total	male	female			
West Bengal	43.4	57.38	29.15	57.92	68.16	47.71	14.52	10.78	18.56
Purulia	42.64	61.26	23.4	53.86	67.84	39.77	11.22	6.58	16.37
Burdwan	41.83	55.36	28.19	54.74	65.41	44.22	12.91	10.05	16.03
Birbhum	31.2	44.17	18.17	47.48	57.57	37.67	16.28	13.40	19.50
Bankura	49.6	67.84	31.13	59.37	72.93	46.01	9.77	5.09	14.88
Purba and Pashim Medinipur	47.97	61.24	33.29	62.15	72.88	51.27	14.18	11.64	17.98
Howrah	52.6	61.16	42.19	70.86	77.08	64.23	18.80	15.92	24.04

Hooghly		45.45	59.23	31.94	60.67	71.39	50.29	15.22	12.16	18.35
North pargana	24	46.09	58.38	33.27	64.78	72.90	56.40	18.69	14.52	23.13
South pargana	24	43.29	56.33	29.88	59.72	69.03	50.17	16.43	12.07	20.29
Kolkata		73.39	83.66	67.07	82.06	86.81	76.57	5.67	3.15	9.50
Nadia		40.63	51.78	29.2	57.75	65.35	49.98	17.12	13.57	20.78
Murshidabad		35.79	46.17	25.01	51.34	59.15	43.32	15.55	12.98	18.31
Uttar dinaj pur		28.68	39.51	17.63	43.76	51.96	35.48	15.08	12.45	17.85
Dakshin dinajpur		42.82	55.14	30.22	57.02	65.54	48.50	14.20	10.40	18.28
Malda		32.16	44.72	19.63	46.86	55.83	37.86	14.70	11.11	18.23
Jalpaiguri		42.59	54.24	30.67	58.70	67.93	49.51	16.11	13.69	18.84
Cooch behar		55.31	66.38	43.3	68.89	74.82	58.35	11.58	8.44	11.05
Darjiling		55.48	67.07	45.85	74.26	81.50	67.16	18.78	14.43	21.31

Source : census of Indi 2001 & 2011 , census of WB 2001 & 2011 , data of

BCW, WB

According to census 2001 S.T literacy rate of Purulia is 42.64%, which is lower than the West Bengal tribal literacy rate, but it is higher than the district of Jalpaiguri, Uttardinajpur, Maldha, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Burdwan, Nadia, but within 10 years (2001-2011) the development of tribal literacy of the district Burdwan, Jalpaiguri, and Nadia is 12.91%, 16.11%, and 17.12 % (see table 4), where the change of tribal literacy rate of Purulia within this 10 years is 11.12%. Howrah ranked top in decadal change of tribal literacy with 18.80%, where West Bengal decadal change is 14.52%. In terms of the development of male literacy rate from 2001 to 2011 situation of Purulia is not encouraging , it ranks 3rd from the bellow (6.58) only after Kolkata (3.15) and Bankura (5.09), where the state's average change is 10.78. In terms of change in S.T female

literacy rate within this 10 years , district of Howrah ranked top with 22.04 and Purulia lies in 16.37 which is again bellow than the West Bengal average rate

Table: 5

Development of literacy rate of S.T and all social group of W.B, 2001-2011

District	(%)Change of literacy rate 2001-2011 All social group	(%)Change of literacy rate 2001-2011 S.T
West Bengal	8.44	14.53
Purulia	9.24	11.22
Burdwan	6.15	12.91
Birbhum	8.74	16.28
Bankura	7.11	9.77
Purba and pashim medinipur	8.18	14.18
Howrah	6.21	18.80
Hooghly	6.96	15.22
North 24 pargana	6.46	18.69
South 24 pargana	8.41	16.43
Kolkata	3.83	5.67
Nadia	9.03	17.12
Murshidabad	12.48	15.55
Uttar dinaj pur	11.5	15.08
Dakshin dinajpur	9.22	14.20
Malda	12	14.70
Jalpaiguri	10.17	16.11
Cooch behar	8.28	11.58
Darjiling	7.05	18.78

Development of tribal literacy rate of West Bengal in 10 years (2001-2011) is 14.53% which is higher than the development of total literacy rate which is only 8.44% (see table 5). We can see that there is variation in district level, in terms development of S.T literacy rate in that decade. From the above table it is quite evident that the changing pattern of literacy rate of S.T's in 2001

to 2011 is higher in all district in comparison with the changing pattern literacy rate of all social group. We find by analysis the census of 2001 and 2011 that development of literacy rate of tribal people in that decade is highest in Howrah district (18.80%) and lowest in Kolkata (5.67%). Some of the districts like Darjeeling (18.78), Jalpaiguri (16.11), Uttardinajpur (15.8), Malda (14.70), Murshidabad (15.55), Birbhum (16.28), Nadia (17.12), North 24 Pargana (16.43), Hooghly (15.22), and South 24 Pargana (16.43) have higher decadal development tribal literacy rate than state average (14.52). Changing literacy rate of purulia is quite significant, it is higher than the state average as well as higher than other district except Mursidabad (12.48), Uttardinajpur (11.15) and Jalpaiguri (10.17) (see table 5). But the scenario is changed when we compare the development of S.T literacy rate of Purulia (11.22%) from year 2001 to 2011 ,which is much bellow than the state average (14.53). In terms of development of tribal literacy rate in that decade Purulia ranked 3rd from the bottom only after Kolkata and Bankura.

Reasons for the educational backwardness of S.T in Purulia

Purulia is one of the most backward districts of west Bengal in terms of poverty, education, health. Only 65.38% people are literate which is far below than the state average, and status of tribal literacy is even worse, here only 53.86% tribal people are literate (census 2011). There are several reasons for its educational backwardness, these reasons are as follows.

1. Poverty is a common feature of this dry land. Agriculture production is very low in Purulia because of the shortage of rain fall and industry is not flourished properly. The socio-cultural ignorant attitudes have burdened the people with poverty, prove to be a great hindrance to the development of education in this district.
2. It is become luxury for the parents to send their children to school, rather they send their children to work, so they can support their family to counter poverty
3. Maoist insurgency is one of the most important factors for under development of this region. For more than a decade Maoist activities were extremely in operation in this region and severely affected the investment in this region, and due to this entire district of Purulia is suffered and deprived of economic and educational initiatives
4. Lack of adequate school in tribal areas affected educational enhancement in Purulia
5. Absence of basic infrastructural amenities in the school is one of the important reason for sluggish growth of literacy among tribals

6. Reluctance of the teachers to work in remote areas of the district also make barrier in development of education in this area.
7. Lack of awareness of the parents about education, is one of the reason of educational backwardness.
8. Some parents hesitate to send their daughter to co-educational institution.

Conclusion

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore is education” – Franklin D. Roosevelt

Education is the driving force of history, no civilization could flourish without educating its people. Various attributes of population like fertility, mortality, occupation pattern, mobility and so on are greatly influenced and can be measured by education. Education gives us a glimpse of equality of society and also links the understanding of socio-economic and demographic structure of society.

Educational status of tribal people of West Bengal, even after passing of 70 glorious years of independence, is not satisfactory only 77.08% people are literate and scenarios even worse in tribal literacy rate which is 57.92%. Regional disparities and imbalances are visible in different district of West Bengal in terms of development of tribal literacy. Literacy rate of tribal people are significantly high in advanced district like Kolkata and its surrounding but it comparatively low in Northern district and jangal mahal (Purulia, Bankura, Medinipur)

We hope situation will be better in near future and government would take some effective initiatives to eradicate such imbalance prevailing among the district. Government has already introduced many effective programme like Kannyashree, Sabuj sathi, Jubo shree, and various scholarship for tribal students, these programme are highly successful to bring the student into the school arena. Finally no government could done this mammoth task by herself it is also the responsibility of every section of the society to take part for educating the nation.

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