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Tanusree Dey
Research Scholar, Department
of Education, Swami
Vivekananda University, West
Bengal, India

Dr. Jayati Maiti
Assistant Professor,
Department of Education,
Swami Vivekananda
University, West Bengal, India

A study of the status of tribal women of Purulia district of West Bengal reference to education

Tanusree Dey and Dr. Jayati Maiti

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Abstract

Education is a key factor for the empowerment and development of any community, especially the marginalised and vulnerable ones. Tribal women in India face multiple challenges and disadvantages due to their socio-economic, cultural, and geographical conditions. According to the census of India (2011) tribal population share about 8.6% of total population in this country and their literacy rate is about 58.96%. West Bengal being one of the popular tribal concentrated states in India having almost 5.79% tribal people of the total population (Census 2011). The study was exploring the educational status of tribal women of Purulia district of West Bengal, one of the most backward and tribal populated districts in the country. Tribal women in India are often considered as the most deprived and discriminated section of the society. This paper would like to particularly focus on three major tribal communities: Santal, Kheria Sabar, and Birhor, who have distinct and diverse characteristics and needs. Primary and secondary data sources are used to analyses the levels of literacy, enrolment, attainment, and dropout among these tribal women. The present study also examines the factors that influence their educational participation and outcomes, such as poverty, gender roles, cultural norms, access to schools, quality of education, etc. This study will provide useful information and suggestions for improving the educational status and empowerment of tribal women in Purulia district.

Keywords: Empowerment, tribal women, literacy, dropout, educational status

Introduction

“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.” - Swami Vivekananda.

Education is the basic necessity of every human being beside food shelter safety etc. Education helps in self-confidence and courage to overcome the problem they face in their daily life. The female literacy of tribes in West Bengal is only 47.7% compare to male literacy 68.2% and that there is a significant gap between rural and urban area. In Purulia district have four major tribal community, they are Santal, Kheriar, Sabar and Birhor. In this community, female education are mostly backward under privileged and deprived in term of literacy. Education is an important tool to improve human development and social economic development too. To increase the literacy rate of women probable solution are required. After independence, the State and the Central Government prepared scheme for women empowerment and for the implementation of the scheme, motivation as well as animation is required with the help of various NGOs and social workers.

Study Area

The study area consists of Purulia district of West Bengal. Purulia district is located in the western part of West Bengal, the latitudinal extension are from 22°42'35 N to 23 °42.00 N and longitudinal extent is from 85 °44'25E to 86 °54'37 E, respectively and the total area is 6.259 square kilometers as per the 2011 census. In West Bengal, Tribal population is 52, 96, 963 as per Census 2011, which is about 5.8% of the total population of the State. The literacy rates among tribal population in West Bengal and Purulia district are 57.92% and 53.86% respectively, both the data are comparatively low than the average total literacy rate of India (Census of West Bengal 2011). In West Bengal female literacy of tribes is only 47.7%.

Objectives

The basic objective of the study are as follows

1. To find out the educational status of tribal women.
2. To observe the literacy rate of tribal women of Purulia district in West Bengal.

Corresponding Author:
Tanusree Dey
Research Scholar, Department
of Education, Swami
Vivekananda University, West
Bengal, India

3. To identify the common barriers of tribal women for quitting their studies
4. To find out the solution that help their educational development.
5. To study about the various schemes adopted by central and state government to reduce illiteracy rate and help the educational development of tribal women.

Methodology

To complete the present study, secondary data have been used. Before entering into the study, a large of literature have been reviewed. Data are used collecting from secondary sources like - handbook on social welfare statistics and different journal articles and ebook based on women education and its status in West Bengal, most of the data from census 2011 and educational policies and schemes etc.

The purpose of the study was educational status of tribal women at Purulia district in West Bengal. Purulia district has 20 blocks, some blocks are Urban and some blocks are rural. For data collection some blocks were selected where the population of tribal people are more.

Analysis

Education is the most important elements in the development of any community literacy rate is the one of

the most significant determinates to measure the percentage of literate among the people.

Table 1: District wise ST literacy (Total and female) in West Bengal (2001 - 2011)

SL. No.	District	Literacy Rate			
		2001		2011	
		Total	Female	Total	Female
1	Darjeeling	55.48	45.85	74.26	67.16
2	Jalpaiguri	42.59	30.67	58.7	49.51
3	Cooch Bihar	55.31	43.3	66.89	58.35
4	North Dinajpur	28.68	17.63	43.76	35.48
5	South Dinajpur	42.82	30.22	57.02	48.5
6	Maldah	32.86	19.63	46.86	37.86
7	Murshidabad	35.79	25.01	51.34	43.32
8	Birbhum	31.2	18.17	47.48	37.67
9	Bardhaman	41.83	28.19	54.74	44.22
10	Nadia	40.64	29.2	57.75	49.98
11	North 24 Pargana	46.09	33.27	64.78	56.4
12	Hooghly	45.45	31.94	60.67	50.29
13	Bankura	49.6	31.13	59.37	46.01
14	Purulia	42.64	23.4	53.86	39.77
15	Howrah	52.06	42.19	70.86	64.23
16	Kolkata	76.39	67.07	82.06	76.57
17	South 24 Pargana	43.29	39.88	59.72	50.17
18	Medinipur	47.97	33.29	62.15	51.27
		45.04	32.78	59.57	50.38

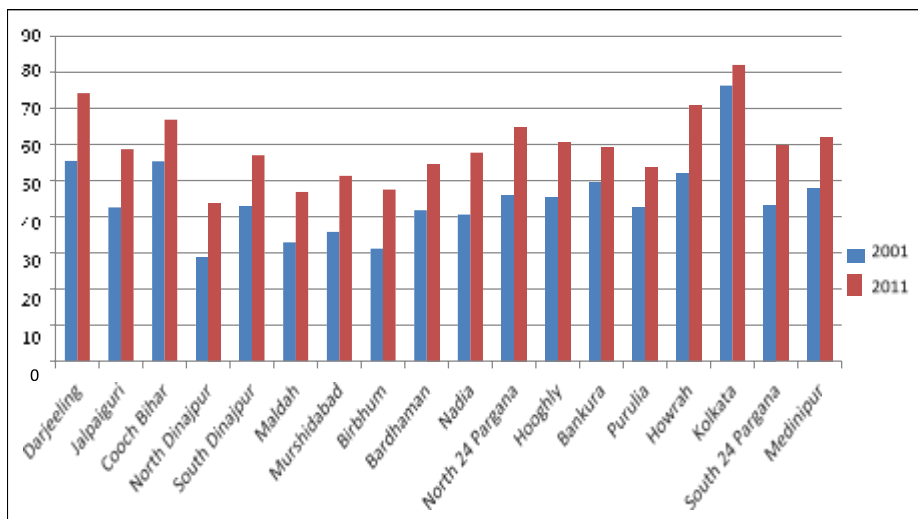


Fig 1:

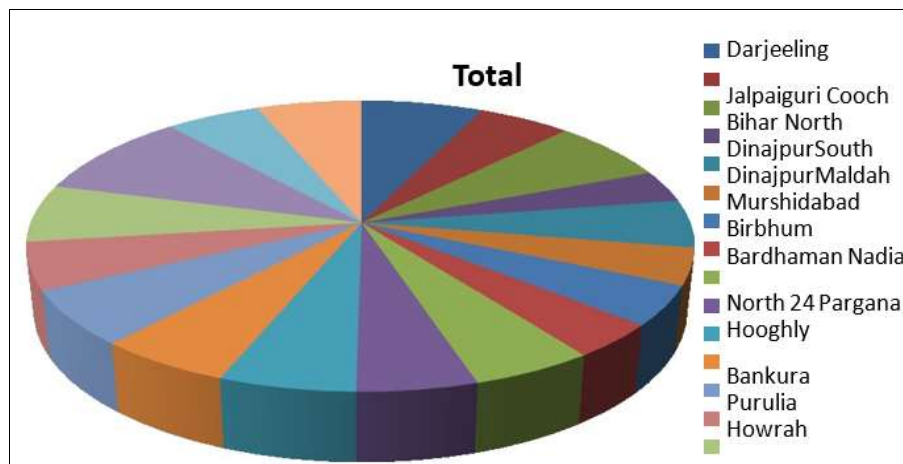


Fig 2:

Total ST Literacy Rate

This table indicate the literacy rate of tribal women in the state of West Bengal and necessary action should be taken to make education available to the tribal community scheduled tribe (S. T) of female literacy of West Bengal is very poor condition only 47.7 1% S. T females are calculate as literate in 2011 census, according to the census highest S. T female literacy is observed in Kolkata 76.57% and lowest is found in Uttar Dinajpur 35.48%. The table states that Purulia district female literacy rate is 23.40, total literacy is 42.64.

Table 2: Block wise literacy rate of schedule tribes Oman in Purulia district (2011 census)

Block	ST Female
Jaipur	34.01
Puruliya-2	38.86
Para	44.78
Raghunathpur II	41.50
Raghunathpur I	37.40
Netureitya	38.48
Santuri	41.68
Kashipur	47.73
Hura	46.30
Puruliya-I	41.02
Puncha	44.85
Arsha	31.80
Jhaldah-I	43.22
Jhaldah-II	31.13
Bagmundi	32.82
Balarampur	32.62
Barabazar	36.86
ManbajarI	41.58
ManbajarII	39.46
Bundwan	40.23
Puruliya	39.77
West Bengal	47.71

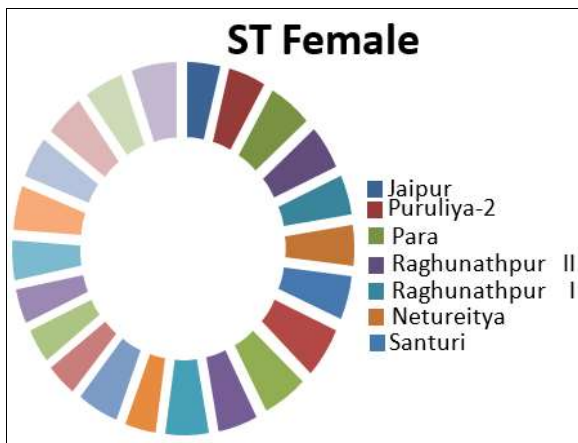


Fig 3:

This table shows that literacy status of the Schedule Tribe women or Purulia district. According to the census of 2011, the literacy rate of tribal women in Purulia district was 48.06%, which was much lower than the national average of 58.96% for tribal women. There are various factors that affect the educational attainment of tribal women, such as poverty, social norms, cultural barriers, lack of infrastructure, and government policies.

The study focused on the rural literacy in Purulia district and its 20 blocks, used census data from 2001 and 2011 to

calculate the literacy rate, gender gap in literacy, and literacy growth. The study found that the rural literacy rate in Purulia district increased from 45.08% in 2001 to 62.73% in 2011, which was still lower than the state average of 76.26%. The study also found that the gender gap in literacy decreased from 28.69% in 2001 to 28.77% in 2011, which was still higher than the state average of 18.63%. The study also found that the literacy growth rate varied from block to block, ranging from 10.91% in Balarampur block to 29.67% in Hura block.

Barriers of tribal women education

Purulia is one of the most backward district of West Bengal in terms of education. Here, only 53.86% tribal people are literate according to census 2011. There are some barriers for educational backwardness due to the following reasons -

1. Negative parental attitude towards women education. They consider education as being and useless process.
2. Lack of female teacher is one of the important barriers to women education.
3. Lack of infrastructural facilities in schools is also one of the major problems in development of women education in Purulia district.
4. Lack of hostel facilities for girls is a major cause for dropouts. Many girls are desirous of pursuing education above middle level, facilities for which are away from their homes.
5. Location is a factor of tribal woman towards Education. Most of tribal communities are living in the forest or hilly areas.
6. Language is also a barrier for education of tribal women.
7. Early marriage of the girls is also major reason for the dropout of tribal girls from school.

Probable Solution

The probable solution for elimination of women's illiteracy are as follows -

1. A mass programme must be taken up to strengthen the efforts for elimination of illiteracy.
2. Implementation of vocational education free of cost for women would support women financially and becomes self-reliant.
3. Implementation of vocational education fee of cost for women would support women financially and become self-dependent.
4. Conducting educational awareness camp in the rural areas would also be one of the probable solution.
5. Setup community base learning centre in rural area which can provide safe and inclusive space for women to learn.

Schemes implemented by the Govt

The following schemes have been implemented by the State as well as the Central Govt.

1. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya: The Kasturba Gandhi Balika established by the Govt of Indian for the girls belonging to the weaker section which is a residential secondary school.
2. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (Sabla): It is a Central Government programme initiated in 2012 mainly for the benefit of adolescent girls, providing nutrition, education and helping young women self-reliant by providing vocational training.

3. **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:** This is a campaign of Govt of India to Save and Educate girl child since January 2015.
4. **Uddan:** A scheme that provides girl child education, mainly for students poor socio- economic background.
5. **Mid - Day Meal Scheme:** This Scheme in India provides mid-day meal in the schools to improve the nutritional levels of the students and to improve and attract enrollment in schools and reduced dropouts.
6. **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana:** This is a saving account scheme which can be open at any India post office or branch of authorised commercial bank encouraging parents to build funds for the future education of their girl child.
7. **Kanyashree Prakalpa:** This Schemes helps to improve the condition and status of girls belonging to economically backward families. This Schemes has two components -
8. **K1** which provides Annual incentive of Rs 750/- to be paid annually to the girls of age group 13 to 18 years.
9. **K2** is a One Time Grant of Rs. 25,000/-, to be paid as soon as a girl complete 18 years, provided that she is engaged in studies or some training and is unmarried.
10. **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE):-**This scheme launched by Central Government of India, is given to SC/ST girls studying in class 9 and all students from Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, unmarried and below 16 years an amount of Rs, 3000/- fixed deposited for each girl students which she can withdraw after the completion of class 12 and reaching 18 years of age.
11. **Merit Scholarship Schemes for students reading in Classes 9 - 12 and 5-10:-** The State Government provides two types of Schemes - 1. Merit Scholarship Scheme for ST students studying in classes 9 - 12, 2. Merit Scholarship Scheme for ST girl students studying in classes 5 - 10.
12. **Distribution of bi - cycles for ST Girls students:-**ST girl student studying in class 11 - 12 in the Left - Wing Extremism affected Blocks of Purulia, Bankura and Paschim Medinipur districts were provided bicycles.

Conclusion

The study of the status of tribal women of Purulia district of West Bengal with reference to education reveals that these women face multiple challenges and disadvantages in accessing and completing their education. The study shows that the tribal women of this region have low levels of literacy, enrolment and that there are significant disparities across communities, villages and urban-rural areas. The study also identifies the various factors that affect the educational status of these women such as poverty, hunger, lack of infrastructure, social discrimination and cultural barriers. The study suggests that there is a need for more research and intervention to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes for these marginalized groups. The study also highlights the importance of education as a tool for the empowerment and development of tribal women. The study suggested some strategies for improving the female education among the tribal communities such as enhancing awareness, motivation and participation of the parents and community leaders; providing incentives, scholarships, and free textbooks to the female students; ensuring adequate infrastructure, teachers and curriculum in

the schools promoting vocational training and skill development programmes for the tribal women and creating a conducive environment for the preservation and promotion of the tribal identity and culture. The study concluded that education is a vital tool for the sustainable development of the tribal women in Purulia district, as it can enhance their self-reliance, dignity, and social status. The study also highlighted the need for more research and intervention on this issue, as well as the collaboration of various stakeholders such as government agencies, NGOs, civil society groups, and academic institutions.

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