



Educational status of scheduled tribe people with locational variance towards their girls' education: A case study in birbhum district in west Bengal

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Abstract

Education brings changes in the traditional outlook of the people, and it develops insight for judging things in their context. It is assumed that more the percentage of educated people more will be the rate of development. As all we say that Education of a girl is like educating a family while educating a boy is merely educating a person. The importance of female education in a society and its spreading to all section of the life is well appreciated and documented to solve existing and emerging problems of the society. There is ample evidence that children from better educated parents more often go to school and tend to drop out less (UNESCO, 2010). Parents who have reached a certain educational level might want their children to achieve at least that level (Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997). For educational enrolment of girls, education of the mother might be especially important (Emerson & Portela Souza, 2007; Shu, 2004; Kambhampati & Pal, 2001; Fuller, Singer and Keiley, 1995). Mothers who have succeeded in completing a certain level of education have experienced its value and know that it is within the reach of girls to complete that level.

Keywords: scheduled tribe, locational variance, Birbhum District

1. Introduction

Education is considered as the most powerful instrument of social change and development and means of reducing inequality in the society. It helps the individual to raise its social status in many ways. It acts as a catalyst in improvement in many other aspects of life also. The role of education as an investment in human resources has been increasingly recognized in all countries including India. But in a caste ridden and hierarchical society like India's access to educational opportunities is unequal and unjust. However, after the independence the 'Directives principles of state policy' enables the state to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward class of citizens like ST, SC etc. Articles 15(4), 29, 30, 45-46 and 350-A are the relevant provisions in the constitution pertaining to educational development of the people. Education has a special significance particularly for the weaker sections of the society in the country. Since independence, the Government is making serious efforts to promote literacy among the STs by providing free education, awarding Scholarships, reservation of seats and granting loans to them. In spite of all these privileges, their literacy has not improved satisfactorily. They have to go a long way to come up in the field of educational development.

The Scheduled tribe throughout the country occupies the lowest rank in the caste hierarchy. The Scheduled tribes include several Castes in the Hindu Society. As per Scheduled tribe and Scheduled Tribes order act 1976. West

Bengal has sixteen castes categorized as Scheduled tribes in the state. Initially they were known as depressed class of the society. But according to the constitutional provision, from the year 1950, sixteen castes have been known as Scheduled tribes in West Bengal. Lack of education and its improper implementation is also one of the socio-economic cause of the backward communities specially Scheduled tribe people. Though the literacy rate among the Scheduled tribes has increased 10.28 in 1961 to 66.101% in 2011 in national level but some Scheduled tribe communities still continue to remain educationally lagging behind and there are some who do not have any single literate person in their family. The rate of literacy does not necessarily indicate the level of educational achievement in modern times. Increase in enrolment and decrease in dropout are also the two important indicators for measuring the educational development.

After formation of Birbhum District the government of India as well as West Bengal government has taken a number of steps to strengthen the educational base of ST people in Birbhum District. But still in Birbhum district education and socio-economic status of ST population is not all satisfactory. So there is need a systematic study on exploration of education of Scheduled tribe population in this area. In this regard, a systematic study is conducted on Scheduled tribe population under Birbhum Development Block of Birbhum District. So this study will help us to know the educational status of ST people in the studied area. And it has the great significance in the modern age of education.

2. Objectives

The study was designed with the following objectives:

- To study the educational status of the ST people under Birbhum Development Block of Birbhum District.
- To study the causes of educational backwardness of ST people in the studied area.

1. Methodology: For the present study the researcher has used descriptive research and survey method only. Data has been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. For the primary sources of data mainly survey has been conducted in the four villages under the Birbhum Development Block of Birbhum District. Selection of the sample has been randomly. Head of the households, head of the village, head of the educational institutions of this particular area and the ST students were selected as respondents. Interview is used as a part for the present study. On the other hand, the secondary data and information have been collected from different statistical records of the Government of West Bengal, various local bodies, different books and journals, published Research papers and articles, etc.

2. Findings of the Study: The Birbhum district is situated at easternmost corner of the region .The total

geographical area of the district is 1674.94 square km. However in Birbhum District where people of different community are staying since long back and their educational and socio-economic status is not all satisfactory particularly ST people. The study found that the ST people in this district are still lagging behind in educational development and achievements. The socio-economic and socio-familial factors, inadequate government funds and incentives, lack of proper planning and proper implementation of government policies and SThemes are playing as the major barriers of ST education in this area. The total ST population in Birbhum district is 38,844(2011 census) and among them 23,840 is literate and 16,004 is illiterate. In the studied area I mainly concentrated ST groups of four categories which are Jhalo-malo, Harijan, Namasudra, sutradhar and Baniya. There have a number of Elementary SThools, high and higher secondary Schools, private and venture Schools and colleges in this area .But the enrolment of ST students is not all satisfactory. The demographic profile of the studied area is shown below:

Table 1: The demographic profile of villages under Birbhum Development Block of Birbhum District

Name of the villages	Area of villages in hectors	Community	Total House holds	Male	Total popula tion	Female	Population (0-6)
Aismali	125.76	Jhalo-malo/Bania	36	142	271	129	22
Dayabari	217.76	Muchi	27	99	176	77	17
Duttapulia	339.95	Namasudra	22	73	141	68	17
Kalipur	226.84	Baniya/sutra dhar	15	46	76	30	12

Source: Field study

To study the educational status of ST people we should know about their educational level and their attainment. So

in my field study I have collected some data from the studied area. These are shown below:

Table 2: Educational level of the ST people of the four villages under Birbhum Development Block of Birbhum District.

Name of the villages	Illiterate		Literate								
	Persons	%	person	%	Below primary level	Primary (I-V)	Middle (VI-VIII)	secondary (IX-X)	Secondary Passed	Higher Secondary passed	Graduate
Aismali	130	47.9	141	54.2	79	23	19	12	04	04	Nil
Dayabari	84	49.72	92	50.2	49	19	12	08	02	02	Nil
Duttapulia	62	43.59	79	56.5	44	17	13	04	01	00	Nil
Kalipur	26	33.34	50	66.8	29	07	02	06	04	02	01

Source: Field study

It is observed from the table that educational achievement of ST people of these villages is not all satisfactory. The educational level shows that the below primary level literates is much high. In the Secondary and higher Secondary level enrolment of ST students is much low. And there is only one graduate in the above four villages. It is observed in the field study that there are large-ST school dropouts during and after the primary stage of education among this community which is primarily due to financial hardships.

In my field study, I have taken some views from the respondents regarding the education of ST people. These are given below.

Teachers’ opinion about causes of backwardness of Scheduled tribe students in Education

During my survey, the majority of the teachers have opined that, financial problem, low attendance of the ST students, lack of effectiveness of government policies and programmes and illiteracy of STs parents remain as the major backwardness of ST education in this area. They also mentioned that the enrolment of ST students in secondary and higher Secondary level is not satisfactory and dropout rate is very highly alarming.

Views of ST students on various matters regarding their education:

The majority of the ST students opined that they do not get the facilities of various government Schemes like

Scholarships, home tutors, and parental guidance in addition to unhealthy household condition. The views of the ST students clearly reveal that they play a role of only earning member of the family in most cases.

Views of parents and pradhan of the villages regarding the causes of educational lagging

The majority of the parents and pradhan of the villagers opined that their financial constraint is the main reason of educational lagging. Because of poor economic condition they are not able to provide their children good education. And they also mention about the insufficient government funds is the main cause of their educational backwardness. They also mentioned that at present guardians are more conscious about their child, as a result some of the parents send their children to the School and government policy like SSA motivate them for educating their students further.

Major findings of the study

The educational level of STs is dissatisfactory in the study area. They enjoy mainly a low educational status. The enrolment and retention of ST students goes much lower and dropout rate goes much higher as the level of classes goes higher. Guardian's unconsciousness, lack of guidance, financial problem remains as major backwardness in Scheduled tribe education.

Education has a significant impact on their economic conditions but due to limited aspirations, job insecurity and poverty the majority of ST students are not at all motivated to opt for secondary or higher education.

A large percentage of Scheduled tribe students are deprived of government financial incentives. The Government assistance is not all availed by the ST people for whom the provisions are made mainly.

They are not aware about their rights and constitutional provisions provided to them. Lack of awareness of ST people regarding educational importance, educational concessions, Scholarships, reservation etc. provided for them.

Scheduled tribe children because of their socio economic conditions, find it quite tough to be in Schools. They are not all benefited by the reservation policy because of lack of education they are not able to take benefits of the policy provided by the Govt.. They are not able to apply for higher education and better jobs which are reserved for them.

Lack of progressive outlook and under privileged conditions for centuries prevails in them fails to motivate them towards receiving education.

Suggestions

Therefore, to overcome the problem of ST education it is suggested that the concerned authorities might take proper steps to provide proper facilities for participation of ST population education in the district to overcome the problems of ST people for accurate information regarding provision made in the constitution of India for the upgradation of the ST people to provide wide publicity through mass media like radio, television, newspapers etc. Otherwise ST people will remain same status as before.

Conclusion

Analysis of data reveals that the participation of Scheduled tribe students is not satisfactory compared to the general caste students. But if we compare the students self concept,

self-motivation they are not all lower compared to the higher caste students. But their enrolment ratio to the higher education is very less. This can be achieved through various central and state government Schemes in providing equal status to them. But overall the society's mind set must be changed towards the disadvantaged group.

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