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### **The Educational Status of Tribes in Burdhawan: A Study**

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#### **Abstract:**

*In my present paper I tried to uphold the overall educational details of the tribal of West Bengal with special emphasize on the district Burdhawan. As per the census of 2011 the percentage share of schedule tribe population in West Bengal is 5.79% compare to total population of West Bengal. Tribals are the most backward people in India as well as in West Bengal. Though the Government of India has launched several plan and programme to enhance the tribal education still the overall percentage of tribal education is much lower than the other communities in India. It is the fact that only education can improve the tribal population from their age old curse of backwardness and deprivation. Though the attendance rate of ST students in rural areas has increased but it is still not satisfactory. The school dropout rate is more, as a whole the educational advancement of ST s in West Bengal has not progressed much.*

**Key Word: Tribal Literacy, Gender Gap, Education, West Bengal, Barddhaman**

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**Introduction:** The tribal in India, were the most neglected lots have now been receiving increased attention. India is a home to a large variety of tribal peoples. India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8.6 % of the total population of the country according to the census of 2011. In the Indian context, tribals are the earliest settlers of the mainland. In India appreciable progress has been made in this direction- still much more remain to be done. Tribal society is far behind in education and in raising their social and economic status. The large majority of population in tribal areas is backward due to the co-relation and least adoption of educational technology. Several anthropologist, sociologist etc have defined tribes as per their own view point.

According to Ralph Linton ‘Tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in culture, frequent contacts, and a certain community of interests.’

According to D.N.Majumder ‘Tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or

castes, without any social obloquy attaching to them, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.’

T.B .Naik has given the following features of tribes in Indian Context

1. A tribe to be a ‘tribe’ should have the least functional interdependence within the community.
2. It should be economically backward
3. There should be a comparative geographic isolation of its people from others.
4. Culturally, members of tribe should have a common dialect which may be subject to regional variations.
5. A tribe should be politically organized and its community Panchayat should be an influential institution.
6. The tribe’s members should have the least desire to change.
7. A tribe should have customary laws and its members might have to suffer in a law court because of these laws.

Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to Scheduled Tribes as those communities, who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. This Article says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes. Accordingly, as per the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, as amended up-to-date, 40 Ethnic groups has so far been notified as Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal. In West Bengal, Tribal population is 52, 96,963 as per Census 2011, which is about 5.79% of the total population of the State. Tribal population of West Bengal constitutes about 5.08% of total Tribal population of the Country. Tribal communities are present in all the Districts of the State. Higher concentration of Tribal population is seen in the Districts like Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura, Birbhum, Burdhan and Purulia.

**Purpose of Study:** Tribal education is one of the most emerging problem in contemporary India. Tribes are most isolated community in India they are socially, economically and politically backward people. Diversity among the tribes are vast in India and each of them has their unique culture and lifestyle. For any community education is the key component for overall development. In India the overall education is increased day by day but tribal people show low rate of literacy due to several factors. Tribes have subsistence economic pattern and majority of them are live under the poverty line. They have community oriented value system which is also differ by tribes to tribes. Due to lack of educational knowledge they are not able to take advantage of new economic opportunities. The socially developed people are always exploiting them. Thus education can enlighten the tribes. Although the government has taken several measures yet there is lot to improve.

**Overview of Tribal’s Education:** India Is the Second Populous Country in The World With 8.6% of Tribal Population. Most of The Tribal People are poor, Illiterate and inhibited in inaccessible forests and hilly areas. They lag behind in all spheres of life in comparison with other sections of the population. The Government of India has launched a number of

schemes for the promotion of education and welfare among the Tribes. In spite of these efforts the rate of literacy has not been improved. In case of the primitive tribes it is very poor and among tribal women it is very low. In any situation literacy is the key for socioeconomic development of any section or region.

According to census 2011 the literacy rate among the tribal population is 58.96% against the general literacy of 74.04%. Even in the States with the predominant tribal populations are also showing the low literacy rate among the tribal community. While the state with sizeable tribal population the literacy gap between the tribal and non-tribal community is as high as 18-26 %. According the census 2011 the literacy rate among the Tribal women is only around 50%.

**Literature Review:** A literature review is an overview of the previously published works on a specific topic. The term can refer to a full scholarly paper or a section of a scholarly work such as a book, or an article.

The Hindu (2018) indicates that Tribal dropout is increased after the school merging process under SATH-E project adopted by the NITI AYOOG in tribal belt as a reason of low quality education. Students were dropout because govt. doesn't provide them financial support and medium of instruction is not the mother tongue. It also criticized that the governments took decision to stop funds for ashram schools without providing a viable alternative

According to Virginius Xaxa (2015), the colonial state did almost nothing to improve the socio-economic conditions of the tribals other than providing them protective measures. India also adapted the same policy with little modification such as providing certain percentage of seats in state sponsored educational institutions and government services. Around 7.5 per cent jobs were reserved both in central and state government for tribal community and although this opened an opportunity for Government jobs to them but however the lack of educational qualifications and necessary skills denied them of the jobs. The condition is even worse for higher grade services, as candidates with necessary qualifications are not available.

Jay & Srihari (2014) studied on Paniyan tribes of Kerala and try to find out the low rate of literacy among the tribal people. He explored that Most of the dropped out children are living with their parents who are dropped out and illiterate. That's why unemployment and poverty problem is constant in their family. But now, with the help of different govt. schemes and awareness programme parents are aware that govt. want to up liftment their life style by providing the free and compulsory education. So, financial burden is not the cause of dropout, individual attitude is totally responsible for dropout problem. Against of this statement studies also identified that low socio economic status and negative parental attitude demotivate the students from education, as a result they are not interested to go to school and take education (Mathur, 1999). Most of the cases the tribal population choose to do any work which can reduce the financial burden of their family instead of going to school (Gouda.S & Sekhar,T.V, 2014)

Sarangi.C (2009) also admitted that most of the students in tribal regions were dropout due to the reason of low infrastructure facilities which causes a low literacy among the tribal youth.

Gaurang Rami's (2012) paper discusses the status of primary education in the tribal district of Dang in Gujarat. The paper concludes that most of the schools have buildings, but they fail to attract the girl students owing to lack of other essential.

Pradhan and Sanjay Kumar (2011) describe that despite special initiatives like Ashram schools, introducing vernacular at primary level, and teaching in local dialects, the tribal are still lagging behind. Under such circumstances, the government and policy makers should put best efforts to improve their educational status.

Arun Kumar Ghosh's paper (2007) provides in-depth literature on the tribal education in Jharkhand and West Bengal. He says that few tribals are badly in need of special attention for literacy and basic education. He discusses the causes for low literacy among the tribals of "Ho" and "Mahali" in Jharkhand and "Lodha" in West Bengal. He observed that the female enrolment ratio of the tribals is much lower among these tribals than that of their males. A further sharp decline of enrolment was observed immediately after the primary education, and this trend continued among males and females. During the cultivation period, the drop-out rate is more because children are required to assist their family members in sowing, weeding, plantation, and harvesting activities. Economic hardship is also a major factor for the drop out of the tribal children. To achieve gender equity in education, a number of suggestions have been given by the author such as motivation of parents to send their daughters to school, curriculum to be customized to the needs of tribal children, separate toilets for girls.

A study conducted by Narmadeswer Prasad (1991) among the traditional and modern system of education and tribal higher education. After a comprehensive study he found that tribal communities want that type of education which may enables them to fit in to the modern world. Most of the cases students are dropping their education because the present syllabus and educational activities does not adjust with tribal culture as in India several tribal groups' practices their won customs and norms. He indicated that the tribes should concentrate more on skilled based occupations for that it is important that there should be setting up of special schools for them where adequate attention for them is ensured. Though the Government provides special educational and occupational safeguards to them but due to administrative apathy it is not implemented properly.

Bairathi (1991) has conducted a study on the infrastructural condition and the other major reasons about the dropout of students among the tribal communities. He found that the school condition in tribal areas is very much unsatisfactory. Also he pointed out that about the unsatisfactory availability of teachers in tribal regions, even teachers of that regions are not even properly trained. There exist single teacher problems, low infrastructures of the schools, drinking water facilities, playground, unavailability of

appropriate classroom etc. In such a condition quality education cannot be attained which leads them to demotivated from education and this force them to drop their study. He suggests that by improving the infrastructure facilities to improve the conditions of education can reduce the Drop-out.

Gadgil and Dandekar (1991) have studied about the problem of tribal students who enrolled themselves for primary education but not completed their primary education. They find that fifth Dropouts from school before completing the final grading of primary education constitutes wastes; and the incidence of wastage is computed from the proportion of Drop-out to the initial enrolment in the first grade. He reached the conclusion that special attention by the teacher to a great extent can remove drop out as in tribal areas the teachers are not properly associated with the students even some teachers are not willing to work in such unsatisfactory condition.

Infrastructural facilities of educational activities are also very poor in the tribal regions. In her research on Yenadi tribe, Sujatha (1987) found that most of the tribal schools lack basic infrastructural facilities like school building, toilets, teachers' availability, chairs, tables etc. In respect to pedagogy, she found that the rigid system of formal educational system which emphasizes discipline, routine norms, teacher-centered instruction, etc. made the tribal children wary of school. This went against the culture of free interaction and absence of force as embedded in the tribal cultural ethos. She concludes that little effort has been given to understanding the cultural peculiarity and ignorance of the tribes as in India variety of tribal communities maintains different cultural norms.

The dropout rate among the tribal children is higher than general students. Sujatha (1994) also found that one of the major cause behind the high drop-out rate of tribal students in their inability to establish communication link with the teacher.

According to E. V. Rathnaiah (1977) poverty is one of the main constraining factors in the education of the tribal children. He found that the schools in the tribal areas are very few in number and located far behind from the tribal habitation. Hence, students had to cover great geographical distance to be reach at school. Moreover, the schools did not address tribal festivities and celebrations. Therefore, tribal attendance was found to be low during certain seasons. He also found that the tribal students were most of the cases show disinterest in co-curricular and extracurricular activities offered by the schools as they did not belong to tribal tastes.

According to N.K. Ambasht (1970) there exists social and cultural distance between the teacher and the students in the tribal areas. Most of the teachers in those regions are non-tribal and were typically found to be dissatisfied with their job in the tribal dominated areas. He identified that such a mainstream-designed education system tends to change the way of life and the social aspirations of the tribal people which leading to the destruction of tribal norms.

To quote in the words of C. Haimendorf (1985), who narrates the predicament of unsuccessful tribal graduates: “tribal students who read up to tenth standard but fail to pass the final examination have few chances of employment in government services? Yet more than ten years at school have given them the ambition to find an occupation other than ordinary farm work for which they are no better qualified than their illiterate contemporaries.” (Haimendorf, 1985: 132).

As per A.B Bose (1970) Indian states with higher literacy rate in the general population also have a higher literacy rate in their tribal population, but it is found that the tribal literacy rate is far lower than the general literacy among those states.

T.B. Naik (1969) conducted a brief survey on Bhills and concluded that children of upper strata of Bhil society have been able to go to school and take all advantage available to the tribals by the Indian Government. While there was a low rate found among the lower and the middle socio-economic groups among the same tribe, which clearly suggests that lower the socio-economic condition lower the literacy rate.

Sachchidananda (1967) found that the irregularity of attendance and dropout rate is much lower in the case of better acculturated tribes than the lower strata.

**Problems:** In spite of constitutional remedies and other efforts tribal communities are continuing having an educational lag behind the other communities in India. Although some significant amount of research work in this area has been conducted however there has been a lack in identifying the key factors and proper categorization of the same that will help in getting a proper insight on the issue.

**Reason for Low Literacy Rate among Tribal:**

1. Attitude of Other Students
2. Social Factors
3. Economic Factors
4. Lack of Interest in Formal Education
5. Teacher Student Communication
6. Lack of Facilities
7. Language Difference
8. Geographical Barriers
9. First Generation Learner
10. Caste Problem
11. Quality of Education

**Objectives:**

1. To study the literacy rate among the tribal population of the district Burdhan.
2. To review the different educational programmes and their impact on Tribal population.
3. To study the problems of students in the family and school that hinders the education.

4. To study the different factor and attributes which are responsible and play a significant impact for lower level of education among tribes.
5. To identify the assistance given by the Government for tribal education and its Utilization.
6. To analysis the factors and identify the glitches and propose a holistic overview and generate insights for a suitable remedies.

**Methodology:** Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for the study, this ensured that both statistical and non-statistical analysis was used in order to support the findings of the results of the study. I mostly did a documentary study which was based on the official documents and the secondary data. The main primary source of my data is the Government report and the books and for the secondary data I took the help of the census of India report. Selected educational statistics Ministry of HRD, Government of India, Annual reports, on this study is mainly based on data collected from various research studies including census data, committee reports on tribes, annual reports of tribal welfare ministry, Report on Selected Educational Statistics, and also NSS reports, etc. . The data obtain were subjective to percentage analysis.

**Data Analysis:**

6.1 Table 1 - Trends of Literacy Rate of STs in West Bengal, 1961 to 2011

Year	Person	Male	Female	Gender Gap
1961	6.55	11.2	1.8	9.4
1971	8.92	14.49	3.09	11.4
1981	13.21	21.16	5.01	16.15
1991	27.78	40.07	14.98	25.09
2001	43.40	57.38	29.15	28.23
2011	57.93	68.17	47.71	20.46

Source: Census of India, 1961-2011.

As per the data collected from the census report 2011 the literacy rate among the tribal population of West Bengal is 57.93% which is much higher compare to the literacy rate in 1961, it has significantly increased from 6.55% to 57.93%. In case of female education the tribal women were still below the expected literacy rate among the overall population. Though the literacy rate among the tribal females has increased significantly from 29.15% in 2001 to 47.71% in 2011 which is a positive indication of female education among the tribal women. But compare to the tribal male the literacy among the females are still low, even in the year 2011 more that 50% of tribal women are not able to read and write. The gender gap in literacy rate among tribal tended to increase from 9.4% to 28.23% during 1961 to 2001 and it declined thereafter to 20.46 percentage point in 2011.

6.2 Table 2 - Percentage S.T Literacy Rate By Sex, 2011 (A Comparative Study With the District Burdhan)

Place	Overall	Male	Female	Gap	Literacy	Male	Female	Gap
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	<b>Literacy Rate</b>				<b>among ST</b>			
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
Burdhawan	81.54	87.31	75.43	11.88	54.74	65.41	44.22	21.41

Source: Census of India, 2011

From the above table it has been clearly concluded that the situation of tribal education compare to the other social groups are below the satisfactory level. In case of India and West Bengal the status is very poor. In case of Burdhawan it has been shown that the literacy among the tribal population is 54.74% which indicate the same scenario like the other parts of West Bengal. In Burdhawan the literacy among the other social groups are higher than the state overall literacy rate as well as the literacy rate in India but the position of tribals are still in very poor, which indicate that in this district the community facing lots of problem to adequate literacy and hence they become a backward marginalized population as well.

The Gender gap between the male female literacy is also high compare to the State as well as with India. It has been shown that in case of the Tribal population it is 21.41% which is higher than the state in case of West Bengal it is 20.45%. The condition of female literacy among the tribal women in 2011 was only 44.22% which is not satisfactory.

6.3 Table 3 - Changing Pattern of S.T Literacy Rate 2001-2011

Nation/State/Dist.	ST Literacy as per 2001 (%)			ST Literacy as per 2011 (%)			Change of total literacy(%)	Change of male literacy(%)	Change of female literacy(%)
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female			
India	47.1	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
Barddhaman	41.83	55.36	28.19	54.74	65.41	44.22	12.91	10.05	16.03

Source: Census 2001 & 2011

From Table - 3 we can analyze the percentage change in the tribal literacy rate from 2001 to 2011. It has been shown that the rate of literacy in India increased from 47.10% to 58.96% in 10 years for which we can get the decadal change of tribal literacy which is 11.86% at all India level. The change in decadal ST literacy rate we get quite optimistic result it is more than the national level but less than the state level decadal ST literacy change.



The literacy among the ST male as per the census 2001 is 55.36% which is lower than the state ST literacy rate among state as well as India. Compare with the report of the census 2011 the literacy among the ST male has been increased by 10.05% which gives a positive indication among the male literacy among the tribal communities in Burdhawan. But in case female literacy among the tribal we get a different scenario. Though it has been increased by 16.03 % but the rate is lower than the state level as well as the national level.

**Reason for Low Literacy among the Tribal Population in Burdhawan:** As per the data collected from the census report it has been concluded that Burdhawan is a backward district for the tribal community in terms of poverty, education, health etc. The status of tribal education rate is worse, only 54.74% tribal people are literate as per the census 2011. There were several reasons behind this some of those are as follows:

1. Poverty is one of the major reasons for tribal community of this district for not attaining the proper education.
2. 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.
3. To send the children to school for the tribal parents become luxury, rather they want to send them to the field for work. Which can help them to sustain?
4. Lack of school in tribal areas affected the education.
5. The amenities provided to the tribal community are not attracted them towards education.
6. The syllabus is not decorated as per their need.
7. Lack of teachers' availability in tribal schools.
8. Absence of basic infrastructural amenities in the school is one of the important reasons for sluggish growth of literacy among tribal community.
9. Most of the tribal children are first generation learner; hence it is very difficult for them to getting any assistance for education at home.

**Conclusion:** Tribal community is the most marginalized community of the society. No civilization can be flourished without the enhancement of education as it is the weapon which can eradicate the backwardness of any community. 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 75 glorious years of independence, is not satisfactory. Regional disparities and imbalances are visible in different district of West Bengal in terms of development of tribal literacy. As the Government of India has introduced several programmes for the tribal education we hope a better scenario in near future for the enhancement of the education level of this community. But it should be monitored by the Government officials that whether the facilities are properly reached to these marginal community. The Government of West Bengal also introduced the programme like Kanyasree, Sikhyasree, Sabuj Sathi, Jubo Sathi etc for eradicating this imbalance. But it is the responsibility to all of us to bring this community into the mainstream of the education. 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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