



A Decadal Analysis of Literacy Among Scheduled Tribes in Murshidabad District: 2001–2011

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Abstract

This present study conducts a comprehensive decadal analysis of literacy among Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Murshidabad district, West Bengal, drawing on data from the Census of India for the years 2001 and 2011. The objective of this study is to evaluate the progress in literacy rates over the period, with a focus on gender and rural-urban disparities within the ST population. The findings reveal a significant improvement in literacy levels among STs, particularly among females. In rural areas, overall literacy among STs rose from 34.9% in 2001 to 50.05% in 2011, with female literacy showing an impressive growth from 24.0% to 42.0%. Urban STs displayed relatively higher literacy rates, improving from 58.0% to 72.56%, indicating better access to education and infrastructure in urban settings. Despite these gains, the ST population in Murshidabad district still trails behind the general population of the district, and even more so compared to the State (West Bengal) and National averages. The data points to a continued educational gap between tribal and non-tribal communities, and also between rural and urban areas. Moreover, while the gender gap in literacy has narrowed, it remains a concern, particularly in rural regions where cultural, economic, and infrastructural barriers persist.

Keywords: Education, Literacy, Murshidabad District, Scheduled Tribes, Tribal People.

Literacy is one of the most critical indicators of social development and economic empowerment. It plays a foundational role in shaping individuals' ability to access information, participate in civic life, and improve their socio-economic conditions. It is to be noted that- *Literacy is a basic tool of self-defence in a society where social interaction often involves the written media* (Drèze & Sen, 1996, p. 109). In India, while significant strides have been made in improving literacy rates across the country, the benefits have not been evenly distributed-particularly among Scheduled Tribes, who continue to lag behind the National averages. Murshidabad, a district in the state of West Bengal, is home to a diverse population, including a significant number of Scheduled Tribe communities. These communities, often concentrated in rural and remote areas, face multiple socio-economic challenges such as poverty, limited access to education and social exclusion. As a result, literacy among the tribal communities in Murshidabad district has historically remained low, even as the overall literacy rate in the district and State has seen gradual improvements. Over the period of study, various Government initiatives, including the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Right to Education Act* aimed to enhance educational access and

reduce dropout rates across all communities. However, the progress among tribal populations has been uneven and warrants closer examination. This study aims to analyze the trends and changes in literacy among Scheduled Tribes in Murshidabad district over the period from 2001 to 2011.

Murshidabad district has been chosen for the present study, which is located almost in the central position of West Bengal state in India. The Padma River flows through the entire eastern boundary, separating the district from Malda and Rajshahi in modern day Bangladesh. Burdwan and Nadia are on the southern border and Birbhum and Pakur (Jharkhand) are on the western border of the district. The river Bhagirathi, flowing from north to south through the district, divides it into two almost equal portions; the tract to the west of the river is locally known as *Rarh* and the tract to the east as *Bagri*. As per the Census report of 2011, total area of Murshidabad district was 5324 square kilometers, including 5,048.06 square kilometers rural area and 275.94 square kilometers urban area (Census of India 2011, p. 8), it was population of 7103807 peoples, out of which urban population were 1400692 while rural population were 5703115 (Census of India 2011, p. 43), and density of population was 1334 per square kilometers (Census of India 2011, p. 45). The study period spans from 2001 to 2011, allowing for a longitudinal analysis of literacy trends among the Scheduled Tribes. This period includes Census Reports and captures the impact of major educational reforms and Government initiatives such as the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, Right to Education Act (2009) and various welfare schemes which are focused on tribal communities.

The historiography of tribal education in India is deeply intertwined with the history of colonialism, nationalism and post-independence state policies, while reflecting on-going struggles over identity, autonomy and cultural survival. Tribal communities in India have a diverse history of engaging with imposed educational systems, marked by both resistance and adaptation, as they navigate the suppression or revitalization of their traditional knowledge while striving for education that respects their culture, language, and worldview. The early studies primarily focused on the socio-economic backwardness and cultural isolation of tribal communities, more recent research has shifted towards analysing the impact of state-led interventions like the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, Right to Education Act and Tribal Sub-Plan on educational access and outcomes. In the context of Murshidabad district, limited localized studies exist, but regional analyses and Census data provide insights into persistent literacy gaps, gender disparities and infrastructural deficiencies in tribal-dominated blocks. Scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of contextual, community-based approaches to tribal education, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive curricula and grassroots participation. The historiographical trend thus moves from generalized assessments to more nuanced, district-level investigations that consider both statistical trends and lived experiences of tribal populations.

The present study employs a historical research methodology combined with a comparative approach to examine literacy trends among Scheduled Tribes in Murshidabad district from 2001 to 2011. It utilizes primary sources such as Census of India data, district statistical handbooks, and Government policy documents to trace changes over the decade. Quantitative analysis is used to compare literacy rates across 2001 and 2011, while qualitative insights help explore the socio-cultural and policy-related factors influencing

these trends. The comparative aspect of the study involves analyzing literacy levels of Scheduled Tribes in Murshidabad in relation to State and National averages, as well as with non-tribal populations, to highlight disparities and regional specificities in educational development.

According to **Oxford English Dictionary**- *A tribe is a social group primarily consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, sharing a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader* (Oxford University Press). According to the **Constitution of India**- *“Scheduled Tribes” means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution; – Article 366(25) (Constitution of India)*. In India there are over 730 Scheduled Tribes notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India and constitute approximately 8.6% of the population of India numbering around 10.4 crores (*Press Release: Press Information Bureau, 2022*).

As far as the Scheduled Tribes Population in Murshidabad District is concerned it is important to know about their number & decennial growth rate in this district. The following table provides information about the number & decennial growth rate of Scheduled Tribes (STs) Population in Murshidabad district from 1961 to 2011 (Census of India 2011, p. 49):

Census Year	Urban Scheduled Tribes Population	Rural Scheduled Tribes Population	Total Scheduled Tribes Population
1961	483	30969	31452
1971	882 (82.6)	38065 (22.9)	38947 (23.8)
1981	948 (7.5)	44354 (16.5)	45302 (16.3)
1991	1710 (80.4)	59803 (34.8)	61513 (35.8)
2001	2751 (60.9)	73202 (22.4)	75953 (23.5)
2011	5031 (82.9)	86004(17.5)	91035 (19.9)

Note: Figures within brackets indicate decennial growth rate in percent.

The above table provides information about Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Murshidabad district, West Bengal, across six Census years: 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011. The population is divided into urban and rural categories, with percentage growth from the previous decade shown in parentheses. The fact revealed out of the above table that, between 1961 and 2011, the total Scheduled Tribes (ST) population in Murshidabad district nearly tripled, rising from 31,452 to 91,035, reflecting a sustained growth in both urban and rural areas, though at varying rates across decades. In 1961, the ST population was overwhelmingly rural, with only 483 individuals (1.5%) living in urban areas, while the rest (30,969) resided in rural settings. In the most recent decade, 2001–2011, the urban ST population nearly doubled again with an 82.9% increase, while the rural ST growth slowed further to 17.5% – the slowest rural growth rate across the entire period – culminating in a 19.9% total growth for the ST population. Overall, while the ST population remains predominantly rural, the urban segment has grown significantly faster, especially since 1991, indicating increasing urban migration likely driven by better employment opportunities, education, and accessibility to public services in towns and cities.

The following table provides information about the Number & percentage of Scheduled Tribes population in Sub-districts in Murshidabad district as per the Census report of 2001 (Census of India 2001, pp. 95–97) & 2011 (Census of India 2011, pp. 62–63).

Name of Sub-districts	Total population		Total Scheduled Tribes population		Percentage of Scheduled Tribes population to Total population	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Farakka	220,049	274111	3807	5165	1.7	1.88
Samsanganj	211,844	284072	20	164	0.0	0.06
Suti-I	139,445	179908	394	261	0.3	0.15
Suti-II	213,217	278922	18	493	0.0	0.18
Raghunathganj-I	154,371	195627	2659	2602	1.7	1.33
Raghunathganj-II	192,530	265336	397	86	0.2	0.03
Lalgola	267,641	335831	284	168	0.1	0.05
Sagardighi	252,293	310461	16882	19811	6.7	6.38
Bhagawangola-I	163,466	202071	138	227	0.1	0.11
Bhagawangola-II	129,899	158024	76	45	0.1	0.03
Raninagar-I	154609	189105	284	489	0.2	0.26
Raninagar-II	156,159	190885	324	550	0.2	0.29
Jalangi	215,586	252477	1417	2918	0.7	1.16
Domkal	311,679	363976	613	1219	0.2	0.33
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	200,258	234565	11536	12326	5.8	5.25
Nabagram	196,608	227586	14393	16770	7.3	7.37
Khargram	234,780	273332	1918	2442	0.8	0.89
Kandi	193,093	220145	2603	3390	1.3	1.54
Berhampore	37,884	446887	9822	10809	2.6	2.42
Hariharpara	221,741	257571	1700	3040	0.8	1.18
Nawda	196,246	226859	1437	1526	0.7	0.67
Beldanga-I	259,237	319322	29	252	0.0	0.08
Beldanga-II	210,188	250458	626	541	0.3	0.22
Bharatpur-I	150,896	172702	83	428	0.1	0.25
Bharatpur-II	153,133	176368	155	197	0.1	0.11
Burwan	224,397	257466	2357	2955	1.1	1.15
Area not under any Sub-district	-	559740	-	2161	-	0.39
Murshidabad	5,866,569	7103807	75,953	91035	1.3	1.28

Note: The table is constructed by data collected from the Census report of 2001 & 2011.

The above table provides information that, Murshidabad district had a total number of populations of 5,866,569 and 71, 03,807 as per the Census report of 2001 and 2011 respectively of which 1.3% with 75,953 populations belonged to the scheduled tribes in Census report of 2001 and 1.28% with 91,035 populations population belonged to the scheduled tribes in Census report of 2011. The Census data reveals that the CD Block of Nabagram has consistently maintained the highest proportion of Scheduled Tribe (ST) population within the Murshidabad district, registering 7.3% with a population of 14,393 in 2001, which saw a modest rise to 7.37% with 16,770 individuals by 2011, underscoring its significance as a stable centre for tribal communities. Conversely, five CD Blocks – Lalgola, Bhagawangola-I, Bhagawangola-II, Bharatpur-I, and Bharatpur-II—exhibited an inconsequential ST population of merely 0.1% in the year 2001. Moreover, three CD Blocks

exhibited a negligible ST population in 2001, presumably encompassing Samsorganj, Suti-II, and Beldanga-I, which demonstrated only negligible growth by 2011. By 2011, there was still a spatial discrepancy, with the lowest ST percentages (0.03%) in Raghunathganj-II and Bhagawangola-II C.D. Block, with 86 and 45 individuals, respectively. The general trend shows that ST people in Murshidabad district are still mostly concentrated in a small number of areas, with little dispersion throughout the district, notwithstanding minor demographic changes in certain CD Blocks. According to the Census report of 2011, out of total population of 5,59,740 of all Statutory Towns (area not under any Sub-district) of the district, 2,161 (0.39%) are from Scheduled Tribes.

According to the Census report of 2001, Scheduled Tribes constituted 1.4% (73,202 individuals) of the rural population in Murshidabad district. Among its 26 Community Development (CD) Blocks, six had higher ST percentages than the district average, while 17 blocks recorded lower percentages. Samsorganj, Suti-II, and Beldanga-I had negligible Scheduled Tribe populations. In urban areas, the ST population was 0.4% (2,751 individuals) out of a total urban population of 732,734. Baharampur Urban Agglomeration had the highest ST population in absolute terms (1,429), while Kasim Bazar census town recorded the highest percentage (3.1%). Whereas ten census towns namely Dhusaripara, Uttar Mahammadpur, Kankuria, Chachanda, Serpur, Shajadpur, Paschim Punropara, Charka, Jot Kamal, Khodarampur have recorded no scheduled tribe population.

According to the Census report of 2011, the rural population had increased to 5,703,115, with the Scheduled Tribe population rising to 86,004, making up 1.51%. Sagardighi CD Block had the highest ST population (19,811), while Raghunathganj-II had the lowest (24). The highest percentage was recorded in Nabagram CD Block (7.37%), and the lowest again in Raghunathganj-II (0.02%). In urban areas, the total population was 1,400,692, with 5,031 Scheduled Tribe members, making up 0.36%. Berhampore Municipality had the highest number in absolute terms (1,104). Eight urban census towns namely Dhusaripara (CT), Madna (CT), Kakramari (CT), Bhabki (CT), Charka (CT), Dafarpur (CT), Khodarampur (CT) and Harharia Chak (CT), each recorded only one ST individual, while 17 urban units reported no ST population at all. Banjetia census town recorded the highest percentage of STs (3.92%), while nine towns had the lowest percentage (0.01% each).

As far as the present study is concerned about literacy, it is important to note that education and literacy are interconnected which is important in individual development and social progress. Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, they represent distinct dimensions of learning and understanding. Education is a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills acquired through structured curriculum and formal instruction, whereas literacy focuses specifically on the ability to read and write. Literacy is a step to education; it revolves around learning while education demands the ability to translate the learning into practical application. Literacy meets education where knowledge reflects in action. *Literacy refers to; A person aged seven (7) years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language is taken as literate. A person who can only read but cannot write is not literate. It is not necessary that to be considered literate, a person should have received any formal education or passed any minimum educational standard. Literacy could also have been achieved through adult literacy classes or through any non-formal educational system. People who*

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are blind and can read in Braille are treated as literates (Census of India 2001, p. 27). UNESCO
 defines literacy as:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. Generally, literacy also encompasses numeracy, the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations. The concept of literacy can be distinguished from measures to quantify it, such as the literacy rate and functional literacy (Literacy | UNESCO UIS).

The following table provides information about literacy data from the Census report of 2001 (Census of India 2001, p. 108) & Census report of 2011 (Census of India 2011, pp. 78-79) which provide significant insights into educational progress among different demographic segments, particularly focusing on Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Murshidabad district, and comparing them with broader district, state, and national averages.

(in percent)

Areas	Literate Males/ Females/ Persons (total population)	Census Year	
		2001	2011
Scheduled Tribes – Rural, Murshidabad	Males	45.4	57.94
	Females	24.0	42.00
	Persons	34.9	50.05
Scheduled Tribes – Urban, Murshidabad	Males	64.5	78.35
	Females	50.8	66.11
	Persons	58.0	72.56
Murshidabad District – Total Population	Males	60.7	69.9
	Females	47.6	63.1
	Persons	54.4	66.6
West Bengal- Total Population	Males	77.0	81.7
	Females	59.6	70.5
	Persons	68.6	76.3
India- Total Population	Males	75.85	80.9
	Females	54.16	64.6
	Persons	65.38	73.0

Note: The table is based on data extracted from the Census reports of 2001 and 2011.

The fact revealed from the above table that, between 2001 & 2011, literacy rates among Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Murshidabad district showed notable improvement, yet stark disparities persist when compared with the general population at the district, state, and national levels. In rural Murshidabad district, the Scheduled Tribes (STs) made notable progress over the decade, especially among females, whose literacy rate jumped from a mere 24.0% in 2001 to 42.0% in 2011 – an 18-percentage point increase. Male ST literacy in rural areas also rose from 45.4% to 57.94%, while the overall literacy among rural STs (both sexes) increased from 34.9% to 50.05%. In urban areas of Murshidabad district, STs are relatively better off. Male literacy increased from 64.5% to 78.35%, and female literacy

improved significantly from 50.8% to 66.11%. The combined urban ST literacy rate rose from 58.0% to 72.56%, nearly closing the gap with the district total literacy rate of 66.6% in 2011. Urban ST females not only improved their literacy more sharply than males over the decade but also came closer to parity with the broader female population of the district. Although literacy among Scheduled Tribes in Murshidabad district has improved markedly from 2001 to 2011, especially among women, they still lag behind the general population – most notably in rural areas.

The following table provides information about the number and percentage of scheduled tribes literates and illiterates people by sex in CD blocks in Murshidabad district as per the Census report of 2001 (Census of India 2001, p. 108).

Name of C.D. Block	Number of Literates			Number of Illiterates			Percentage of Literacy Rate			Gap in Male Female Literacy Rate (in percent)
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
Farakka	834	582	252	2757	1249	1508	30.7	41.8	19.0	22.8
Samserganj	8	4	4	8	4	4	72.7	80.0	66.7	13.3
Suti-I	17	13	4	341	170	171	6.1	9.2	2.9	6.3
Suti-II**	9	5	4	3	1	2	75.0	83.33	66.66	16.67
Raghunathganj-I	306	220	86	2249	1100	1149	15.6	22.1	9.0	13.1
Raghunathganj-II	20	16	4	377	203	174	6.3	9.1	2.8	6.3
Lalgola	42	28	14	242	110	132	19.1	26.2	12.4	13.8
Sagardighi	4896	3318	1578	11986	5321	6665	35.9	47.4	23.8	23.6
Bhagawangola-I	31	24	7	107	46	61	28.2	41.4	13.5	27.9
Bhagawangola-II	7	6	1	69	32	37	12.7	20.7	3.8	16.8
Raninagar-II	95	62	33	229	102	127	35.3	44.3	25.6	18.7
Jalangi	340	232	108	1077	482	595	29.7	39.8	19.2	20.6
Domkal	87	64	23	526	251	275	18.0	25.5	9.9	15.6
Raninagar-I	33	17	16	246	121	125	11.82	12.31	11.34	0.97
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	3918	2514	1404	7618	3363	4255	41.4	51.7	30.5	21.2
Nabagram	4395	2895	1500	9998	4387	5611	37.7	49.0	26.1	22.9
Khargram	665	440	225	1253	541	712	42.3	54.9	29.2	25.6
Kandi	672	436	236	1931	844	1087	32.5	42.7	22.6	20.1
Berhampore	287	1845	1033	654	2790	3755	37.7	48.9	26.	22.1

	8			5				8		
Hariharpara	163	11 5	4 8	153 7	754	783	12.1	16.8	7.2	9.6
Nawda	223	14 6	7 7	121 4	585	629	19.4	24.6	13. 9	10.7
Beldanga-I	7	6	1	2 2	8	1 4	30.4	66.7	7.1	59.6
Beldanga-II	131	94	3 7	4 9 5	227	268	25.8	35.7	15. 2	20.6
Bharatpur-II	84	54	3 0	7 1	30	4 1	65.1	80.6	48. 4	32.2
Bharatpur-I	43	28	1 5	4 0	19	2 1	62.3	73.7	48. 4	25.3
Burwan	648	44 7	201	170 9	739	970	34.5	46.2	22. 1	24.2
Total:	20,55 2	13,611	6,941	52,65 0	23,479	29,171	34.9	45.4	24. 0	21.4

*** In the Census report of 2001 it is evident that in Suti-II block the literacy was 100% but in actual calculation it is evident the information is wrong and the correct percentage of literacy rate (75%) is mentioned in the above table.*

The above table provides the information about the, literacy statistics of Scheduled Tribes population for different Community Development (C.D.) Blocks in the Murshidabad district, including the gender gap in literacy, the number of literate and illiterate people by gender, and the corresponding literacy rates as per the Census report of 2001. The fact revealed out of the above table that 20,552 persons are literate and 52,650 are illiterate among the scheduled tribe population of rural Murshidabad district. That means only 34.9 percent of the scheduled tribe population were literate among which 45.4% were male and only 24% were female, which is showing a gap of male-female literacy of 21.4% points. Among the various CD Blocks of the district Murshidabad, the highest percentage of literacy rate was registered by Suti-II CD Block (75) followed by Samserganj Block (72.7) and Bharatpur-II CD Block (65.1) and in Suti-I CD Block (6.1) and Raghunathganj-II (6.3) have incredibly low literacy rates; it draws attention to the stark differences in educational achievement among the blocks. Among males and females, the highest literacy rate is observed in Suti-II CD Block. On the other hand, the lowest literacy rates are observed in Suti-I CD Block for both males and females (9.2 and 2.9 respectively) and in Raghunathganj-II CD Block for both males and females (9.1 and 2.8 respectively). The largest gap in male-female literacy rate is found in Beldanga-I CD Block (59.5%) while the lowest in Raninagar-I CD Block (0.97%). While analysing the literacy situation prevailing in different CD Blocks it is important to keep in mind the very small numerical size of population of Samserganj, Suti-II, Bhagwangola-II and Beldanga-I CD Blocks for considering only proportion would not give the clear picture in relation to large population of other CD Blocks.

The following table provides information about the number and percentage of scheduled tribes literates and illiterates by sex in CD blocks (rural) in Murshidabad district, as per the Census report of 2011 (Census of India 2011, pp. 76-77).

Name of C.D. Block	Number of Literates			Number of Illiterates			Percentage of Literacy Rate			Gap in Male Female Literacy Rate (in percent)
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
Farakka	1353	800	553	3082	1415	1667	37.68	44.97	30.52	14.45
Samserganj	31	18	13	20	10	10	70.45	78.26	61.90	16.36
Suti-I	89	55	34	164	83	81	39.91	44.35	34.34	10.01
Suti-II	20	12	8	44	18	26	39.22	50.00	29.63	20.37
Raghunathganj-I	889	521	368	1652	760	892	40.71	47.15	34.11	13.04
Raghunathganj-II	9	4	5	15	6	9	56.25	57.14	55.56	1.58
Lalgola	106	65	41	62	31	31	74.13	78.31	68.33	9.98
Sagardighi	8474	5015	3459	11337	5091	6246	49.80	57.77	41.50	16.27
Bhagawangola-I	71	33	38	156	75	81	36.79	36.26	37.25	-0.99
Bhagawangola-II	14	9	5	31	16	15	36.84	42.86	29.41	13.45
Raninagar-II	200	120	80	350	158	192	44.25	53.81	34.93	18.88
Jalangi	1161	658	503	1757	830	927	46.80	51.81	41.54	10.27
Domkal	476	266	210	743	343	400	46.67	51.95	41.34	10.61
Raninagar-I	166	71	95	238	120	118	47.70	42.77	52.20	-9.43
Murshidabad- Jiaganj	6054	3638	2416	6272	2760	3512	56.55	65.46	46.93	18.53
Nabagram	7690	4570	3120	9080	3785	5295	53.20	63.43	43.03	20.40
Khargram	1025	607	418	1417	638	779	48.44	56.57	40.08	16.49
Kandi	1397	810	587	1993	866	1127	48.16	56.84	39.77	17.07
Berhampore	3972	2238	1734	5469	2446	3023	49.45	56.64	42.49	14.15
Hariharpara	1193	650	543	1847	919	928	45.99	48.44	43.37	5.07
Nawda	638	354	284	888	449	439	48.93	52.06	45.51	6.55
Beldanga-I	165	96	69	79	41	38	74.32	77.42	70.41	7.01
Beldanga-II	265	149	116	276	117	159	55.79	64.22	47.74	16.48
Bharatpur-II	123	65	58	68	29	39	77.85	85.53	70.73	14.80
Bharatpur-I	108	66	42	320	154	166	31.95	37.93	25.61	12.32
Burwan	1150	654	496	1805	823	982	46.02	53.04	39.18	13.86
Total:	36839	21544	15295	49165	21983	27182	50.05	57.94	42.00	15.94

The above table provides a detailed overview of literacy statistics of Scheduled Tribes population across various Community Development (C.D.) Blocks in the rural areas of Murshidabad district, showing the number of literate and illiterate persons, categorized by gender, along with literacy rates and gender disparities as per the Census report of 2011. The average STs literacy rate in the district was 50.05% with a male literacy rate and female literacy rate of 57.94% and 42.00% respectively. The average gap in male-female literacy rate of STs in the district is given as 15.94. Rural unit wise data shows that the highest STs literacy rate was found in Bharatpur-II C.D. Block with 77.85% and the lowest in Bharatpur-I C.D. Block with 31.95%. Sex wise analysis of literacy rate also reflects the same picture. The highest male and female literacy rate among STs was found in Bharatpur-II C.D. Block with 85.53% and 70.73% respectively. Bhagawangola-I C.D. Block recorded the lowest male literacy rate (36.26%) and Bharatpur-I C.D. Block recorded the lowest female literacy rate (25.61%). The highest male-female literacy rate gap was found in Nabagram C.D. Block with (20.40%) and the lowest in Raninagar-I C.D. Block with (-9.43%).

From the above two tables it's evident that in 2001, only 34.9% of the ST population was literate, with a significant gender gap—45.4% male literacy versus 24% female literacy. The highest literacy was recorded in Suti-II (75%), and the lowest in Suti-I (6.1%) and Raghunathganj-II (6.3%). By 2011, the literacy rate had improved to 50.05%, with male literacy at 57.94% and female literacy at 42.00%. Bharatpur-II led with the highest overall literacy (77.85%), while Bharatpur-I had the lowest (31.95%). The gender gap narrowed slightly to 15.94 percentage points. Notably, Raninagar-I saw a reversal, with higher female literacy than male. However, stark regional disparities and gender imbalances persist, especially in blocks with smaller populations, where percentages alone may not reflect the true educational scenario. This underscores the need for focused literacy interventions and gender-inclusive educational planning.

The following table provides information about the distribution of villages by literacy rate range for scheduled tribe population in rural Murshidabad district as per the Census report of 2001 (Census of India 2001, p. 109) & 2011 (Census of India 2011, p. 77)

Range of Literacy Rate for villages	Number of inhabited villages having Scheduled Tribes		Percentage distribution of villages		Scheduled Tribes population		Percentage distribution of population	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
0	39	114	8.0	14.38	590	271	0.8	0.32
1 - 10	45	7	9.2	0.88	5123	613	7.0	0.71
11 - 20	59	26	12.0	3.28	8551	1580	11.7	1.84
21 - 30	81	42	16.5	5.30	16321	5266	22.3	6.12
31 - 40	89	70	18.2	8.83	20179	11352	27.6	13.20
41 - 50	65	151	13.3	19.04	10394	25151	14.2	29.24
51 - 60	32	90	6.5	11.35	5900	24686	8.1	28.70
61 - 70	25	74	5.1	9.33	5113	9723	7.0	11.31
71 - 80	16	50	3.3	6.31	436	5166	0.6	6.01
81 - 90	3	27	0.6	3.40	29	1697	0.0	1.97
91 - 99	2	8	0.4	1.01	433	202	0.6	0.23
100	34	134	6.9	16.90	133	297	0.2	0.35
District: Murshidabad	490	793	100.0	100.00	73,202	86004	100.00	100.00

Note: Literacy rate of the Schedule tribes as per the Census report of 2001 & 2011 is 35.8% and 50.05% respectively in rural areas of the Murshidabad District.

The fact revealed out of the above table that, over the decade, significant improvements in literacy among the ST population can be observed, reflecting both increased educational outreach and socio-economic development. In 2001, the ST literacy rate stood at 35.8%, which increased to 50.05% in 2011, indicating a positive upward trend. The most notable shift is seen in the distribution of villages across different literacy rate ranges. In 2001, a large proportion of villages (over 56.9%) fell within the lower literacy brackets of 0 to 40%, with significant ST populations in these ranges—highlighting widespread educational backwardness. However, by 2011, the distribution had significantly shifted. The number of villages in the lowest literacy range (0%) dropped from 39 to 114, but these now hosted a much smaller portion of the ST population (0.32% in 2011 vs. 0.8% in 2001), suggesting that while some villages remained extremely under-literate, they were home to very few ST

individuals. On the other hand, the proportion of villages with moderate to higher literacy rates (41–100%) increased notably from 177 villages in 2001 to 534 in 2011. Particularly, the number of villages with a literacy rate between 41–50% more than doubled (65 to 151), accommodating 29.24% of the ST population in 2011, compared to just 14.2% in 2001. Even more impressive growth is observed in the 51–60% bracket, where the ST population rose from 8.1% in 2001 to 28.7% in 2011 – an indicator of a growing literacy base. Additionally, villages with very high literacy rates (81–100%) increased sharply in number – from just 39 in 2001 to 169 in 2011. While these still housed a smaller proportion of the overall ST population, the relative growth is noteworthy. It points toward a rising number of villages where educational attainment among STs is reaching near-universal levels. Overall, the data reveals a transformative shift in educational attainment among the STs in rural Murshidabad. The number of illiterate or low-literacy villages is declining, and a larger segment of the ST population is now concentrated in moderately to highly literate villages. This reflects both demographic mobility and possibly the success of rural education schemes targeted at marginalized communities.

The following table provides information about the number and percentage of scheduled tribes literates and illiterates by sex in towns in Murshidabad district as per the Census report of 2001 (Census of India 2001, pp. 109-110):

Name and urban status of Town	Number of Literates			Number of Illiterates			Percentage of literates			Gap in Male-Female Literacy Rate (in percent)
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
Anup Nagar (CT)	2	1	1	2	1	1	50.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
Aurangabad(CT)	2	0	2	0	0	0	100.0	0.0	100.0	-100.0
Berhampore(M)	547	279	268	568	260	308	56.7	59.9	53.7	6.2
Beldanga (M)	93	92	1	11	11	0	97.9	97.9	100.0	-2.1
Chachanda (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chrka (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dafahat (CT)	2	2	0	1	0	1	66.7	100.0	0.0	100.0
Dhulian (M)	10	5	5	2	0	2	90.9	100.0	83.3	16.7
Dhusaripara (CI)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Farakka Barrage Township (CI)	167	92	75	49	16	33	91.3	98.9	83.3	15.6
Fatellapur (CT)	0	0	0	36	18	18	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ghorsala (CI)	0	0	0	44	20	24	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Goaljan (CT)	2	2	0	74	43	31	3.3	5.3	0.0	5.3
Gora Bazar (CI)	9	6	3	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0
Harharia Chak(CT)	4	3	1	1	1	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0
Jagtaj (CI)	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Jangipur (M)	99	65	34	113	59	54	55.6	64.4	44.2	20.2
Jiaganj-Azimganj (M)	85	47	38	192	87	105	36.2	38.8	33.3	5.5
Jot Kamal (CI)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Kandi (M)	55	33	22	34	10	24	74.3	86.8	61.1	25.7
Kakramari (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kasim Bazar (CT)	202	120	82	112	41	71	69.7	80.0	58.6	21.4
Khodarampur (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Murshidabad (M)	64	36	28	108	49	59	45.7	52.9	38.9	14.1
Paschim Punropara (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sahajadpur (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Serpur (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Srikantabati (CT)	34	17	17	26	12	14	64.2	70.8	58.6	12.2
Uttar Mahammadpur (CT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
District (Urban) : Murshidabad	1,377	800	577	1374	628	746	58.0	64.5	50.8	13.6

The fact revealed out of the above table that, the overall literacy rate for the urban ST population in Murshidabad district stands at 58.0%, with male literacy at 64.5% and female literacy at 50.8%, revealing a notable gender gap of 13.6 percentage points. This average, however, masks significant variation at the town level. For example, towns like Gora Bazar (CT) and Harharia Chak (CT) have achieved 100% literacy for both males and females, indicating strong educational outreach in those areas. Similarly, Beldanga (M) also shows an impressive literacy rate of 97.9%, with female literacy even reaching 100%, suggesting that ST women in this town have gained near-equal access to education. However, several towns show starkly low literacy or complete illiteracy, such as Fatellapur (CT), Ghorsala (CT), and Jagtaj (CT), each recording 0% literacy across both genders. The town of Aurangabad (CT) presents an unusual case, with 100% literacy for females and 0% for males, creating a negative gender gap of -100%, which may reflect either a very small sample size or anomalies in data reporting. A similar imbalance, but in the opposite direction, is observed in Dafahat (CT), where male literacy was 100% and female literacy was 0%, resulting in a 100% gender gap—highlighting how gender disparities can sharply vary even within short geographic distances. In larger towns, such as Berhampore (M), the literacy rate was more moderate at 56.7%, with a relatively balanced gender gap of 6.2 percentage points, reflecting slightly better gender equity in educational access. In contrast, towns like Kandi (M) and Kasim Bazar (CT) show higher overall literacy rates (74.3% and 69.7% respectively) but suffer from larger gender gaps (25.7 and 21.4 percentage points), indicating that improvements in overall literacy have not been equally distributed between males and females. Some municipalities, such as Jiaganj-Azimganj (M) and Jangipur (M), show moderate literacy rates (36.2% and 55.6%) but relatively large gender gaps (5.5 and 20.2 points respectively), again pointing to the persistent lag in female education. Dhulian (M) stands out with a high literacy rate of 90.9%, with male literacy at 100% and female at 83.3%, showcasing an encouraging example of inclusive education, though the gender gap still exists.

The following table provides information about the number and percentage of scheduled tribes literates and illiterates by sex in towns in Murshidabad district as per the Census report of 2011 (Census of India 2011, pp. 78-79):

Name of Town	Number of Literates			Number of Illiterates			Percentage of literates			Gap in Male-Female Literacy Rate (in percent)
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
Farakka Barrage Township (CT)	237	126	111	37	12	25	91.51	95.45	87.40	8.05
Srimantapur (P) (CT)	5	1	4	0	0	0	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00
Benia Gram (CT)	287	170	117	159	79	80	71.57	75.56	66.48	9.08
Arjunpur (CT)	0	0	0	3	3	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sibnagar (CT)	0	0	0	2	2	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Anup Nagar (CT)	7	2	5	19	8	11	36.84	28.57	41.67	-13.10
Jafrabad (CT)	3	1	2	5	0	5	50.00	100.00	40.00	60.00
Kankuria (CT)	43	24	19	33	19	14	71.67	75.00	67.86	7.14
Dhusaripara (CT)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Serpur (CT)	1	0	1	1	1	0	50.00	0.00	100.00	-100.00
Madna (CT)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ramakantapur(CT)	1	1	0	1	0	1	50.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Nayabahadurpur (CT)	0	0	0	3	3	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fatellapur (CT)	2	2	0	0	0	0	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jagtai (CT)	178	102	76	210	88	122	53.78	60.00	47.20	12.80
Aurangabad (CT)	7	3	4	4	3	1	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00
Dafahat (CT)	10	6	4	4	3	1	90.91	100.00	80.00	20.00
Paschim Punropara (CT)	2	1	1	1	0	1	66.67	100.00	50.00	50.00
Ichhlampur (CT)	2	1	1	1	0	1	66.67	100.00	50.00	50.00
Kakramari (CT)	1	0	1	0	0	0	100.00	0.00	100.00	-100.00
Khanpur (CT)	5	4	1	3	2	1	62.50	66.67	50.00	16.67
Bhabki (CT)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ghorsala (CT)	20	9	11	8	3	5	80.00	81.82	78.57	3.25
Srikantabati (CT)	19	9	10	9	3	6	73.08	90.00	62.50	27.50
Charka (CT)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dafarpur (CT)	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mirzapur (CT)	2	2	0	1	0	1	66.67	100.00	0.00	100.00
Mithipur (CT)	5	3	2	4	2	2	83.33	100.00	66.67	33.33
Jot Kamal (CT)	6	3	3	22	9	13	22.22	25.00	20.00	5.00
Osmanpur (CT)	0	0	0	2	2	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sahajadpur (CT)	4	4	0	2	0	2	66.67	100.00	0.00	100.00
Khodarampur (CT)	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donalia (CT)	7	5	2	5	1	4	63.64	83.33	40.00	43.33
Teghari (CT)	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bara Jumla (CT)	1	0	1	1	0	1	50.00	0.00	50.00	-50.00

Islampur (CT)	39	14	25	45	24	21	55.71	50.00	59.52	-9.52
Harharia Chak(CT)	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Goaljan (CT)	32	14	18	9	3	6	88.89	93.33	85.71	7.62
Kasim Bazar (CT)	130	70	60	55	19	36	82.28	88.61	75.95	12.66
Banjetia (CT)	170	98	72	238	107	131	49.56	57.99	41.38	16.61
Sibdanga Badarpur (CT)	176	101	75	81	26	55	74.89	84.87	64.66	20.21
Gopjan (CT)	83	44	39	20	8	12	88.30	95.65	81.25	14.40
Gora Bazar (CT)	18	9	9	3	2	1	94.74	90.00	100.00	-10.00
Ajodhya Nagar (P) (CT)	28	17	11	3	1	2	93.33	94.44	91.67	2.77
Chaltia (CT)	153	86	67	151	66	85	56.25	64.66	48.20	16.46
Haridasmati (CT)	14	8	6	4	0	4	77.78	100.00	60.00	40.00
Barua (P) (CT)	5	2	3	3	2	1	100.0	100.00	100.00	0.00
Salar (CT)	4	3	1	2	0	2	66.67	100.00	33.3	66.67
Dhulian (M)	40	24	16	37	18	19	56.34	61.54	50.00	11.54
Jangipur (M)	95	51	44	39	17	22	84.07	86.44	81.48	4.96
Jiaganj- Azimganj (M)	260	157	103	171	77	94	68.60	73.71	62.05	11.66
Murshidabad(M)	203	117	86	99	44	55	75.46	81.82	68.25	13.57
Kandi (M)	59	27	32	33	16	17	84.29	93.10	78.05	15.05
Berhampore (M)	849	505	344	255	120	135	84.14	87.83	79.26	8.57
Beldanga (M)	18	12	6	3	1	2	94.74	100.00	85.71	14.29
District (Urban): Murshidabad	3231	1838	1393	1800	798	1002	72.56	78.35	66.11	12.24

It is evident from the above table that, the overall urban literacy rate among STs in the district stood at 72.56%, with male literacy at 78.35% and female literacy at 66.11%. While this reflects a substantial improvement over the 2001 figure of 58.0%, the gender gap in literacy remains significant at 12.24 percentage points, indicating that ST women continue to lag behind their male counterparts in educational attainment. Several towns, such as Srimantapur (CT), Aurangabad (CT), Barua (CT), and Fatellapur (CT), report 100% literacy rates for both or at least one gender. Farakka Barrage Township (CT) is another notable case, with a high overall literacy rate of 91.51%, showing strong male (95.45%) and female (87.40%) literacy. However, the data also highlights several towns with alarming educational deprivation. Towns like Arjunpur, Sibnagar, Nayabhadurpur, Charka, and Osmanpur (CTs) report 0% literacy, revealing either extreme marginalization, very small or transient populations, or possible issues with enumeration. Similarly, towns like Dhusaripara and Madna (CT) also recorded no literates among the ST population, underlining the persistence of socio-educational exclusion in certain areas. In Ramakantapur, Fatellapur, Sahajadpur, and Mirzapur (CTs), literacy was confined to one gender, with the other reporting 0% literacy – resulting in extreme gender gaps of 100%. In Anup Nagar, surprisingly, female literacy (41.67%) outpaces male literacy (28.57%),

leading to a negative gender gap of -13.10, a rare occurrence that may reflect a small sample or local factors favouring female education. Some towns with moderate literacy rates show wider gender gaps, such as Jagtai (53.78%, gap: 12.80), Kasim Bazar (82.28%, gap: 12.66), Murshidabad (75.46%, gap: 13.57), and Chaltia (56.25%, gap: 16.46). This trend implies that while access to education may be improving overall, female STs are still disadvantaged in many urban pockets. Interestingly, towns like Gora Bazar (CT) report higher female literacy (100%) than male literacy (90%), yielding a negative gender gap, again pointing to unique local dynamics or small population quirks. The Census report of 2011 shows clear progress in ST literacy across urban Murshidabad district compared to the Census report of 2001, particularly among males. However, the data reveals deep regional disparities, with some towns excelling while others remain almost entirely illiterate.

The analysis of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes in Murshidabad district from 2001 to 2011 reveals a gradual but uneven improvement in educational attainment. Over decades, there has been a gradual improvement in literacy rates, largely driven by National and state-level educational initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Right to Education (RTE) Act, and various tribal welfare programs. However, despite these efforts, the ST population in Murshidabad district continues to lag behind the general population in terms of literacy, especially in rural and remote areas. Factors such as economic hardship, limited access to quality education, gender disparities, and language barriers continue to hinder educational advancement. Although, the literacy rate cannot be considered as an important parameter to measure educational achievement of any community, to investigate the real situation of educational attainment, it must cover Primary to Higher Education; otherwise, the overall educational position of that social community cannot be analyzed.

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