

Socio-Psychological Determinants of Educational Backwardness of Tribes: A Study on Selected Tribes of West Medinipur

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ABSTRACT

West Midnapore has become the focus of global attention as it has been hailed in development debates centered on human development. Its mode of development in the West Midnapore "model" is now historically proven. A model that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable has been widely adopted. Central to the "model" is its broad social base. However, despite the pat on the back for enabling a highly developed society to achieve an HDI (Human Development Index), the "model" is used to hide many dark areas. In particular, there is not enough attention to honestly address and analyze the problems faced by marginalized communities, especially tribal people, despite constant emphasis in policy circles. Sending children to school is a social norm in West Midnapore, a state that has achieved 100 percent literacy and has health and HDI indicators comparable to the United States. Is it true for tribal communities? West Midnapore has launched several tribal education schemes of the inception of the Development Plan. As a result, the literacy rate among the people has improved considerably. Yet, the literacy gap between tribal communities is still large compared to other groups in the state. Affirmative action aimed at bringing this group at par with other communities in the state has been slow but successful. Tribal representation in secondary education, higher education and employment is not satisfactory. In this context, a small scale study is conducted to understand the reasons behind the backwardness of tribal communities in education in West Midnapore. The main findings of this study indicate that the main reason for the low educational attainment and low aspirations of the tribal people is their poor social and economic status. Besides their economic status, intra-community differences in socio-economic status and education status are wide among them. Most of the government incentives for their educational purposes are untapped.

Keyword:- Tribal, Education, Modle, Literacy, Development, Social, Economic.

INTRODUCTION

Education, being a process for the overall development of a nation, plays an important role in realizing national integration. Emphasizing the above fact, our Government, both Center and State, have given due attention to the promotion of education among our citizens, especially among the marginalized. Article 46 of the Constitution of India states that the State shall give special care to the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people. Education Commission Report (1964-66), Education of Backward Classes in general and Tribals in particular is a major program for equality and national integration. No cost is too high for the purpose (Government of India, 1966). The third five-year plan document states in the introduction to the section on education that: Education is the single most important factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress in building a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity.(Government of India, 1967). Realizing these facts, the Government of India and the State Governments are implementing various special education schemes and programs for the socio-economic development of the tribal people. Tribal people have made some educational and health improvements since the 1930s although there are still significant gaps between tribal people and non-tribal people (Singh, 1982). According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes in India is 58.96 percent, while that of the general population is 72.99 percent. West Medinipur started the tribal education scheme from the beginning of its developmen the plan. As a result, the literacy rate among the tribal people has improved considerably. Yet, it still lags far behind the district's general literacy level. As against the general literacy rate of 79.04 per cent in 2011, the tribal literacy rate was 14.60 per cent. A clear disparity in literacy exists between men and women and widens at higher levels of education. Low literacy rate can be due to various factors: ineffectiveness

of educational planning; Inadequacy of funds; Non-utilization or underutilization of funds etc. Are the tribal people unaware of the educational development plan? Are they using these facilities properly? Are the schemes properly designed? Is it possible to improve the schemes, increase awareness and ensure efficient use? We aim to address these questions in this study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For proper analysis of the research question, review of previous studies helps a lot. The article makes an attempt to evaluate the previous studies to provide a suitable frame work for the present study.

Some of the studies which indicate that tribals are apathetic and apathetic towards education and lack the necessary motivation are, Renuka Roy Committee (1959), Ambasht (1965), Das Gupta (1963), Satchidananda (1967), and Rathnaih (1977). Their residence in isolated areas from mainstream society has also been identified as a factor (Kailas, 1991).

Another set of such studies pointed to the economic status and lack of educational opportunities of tribals as barriers.

Studies on Purus in Manipur (Das, 1945), ho-tribal children (Majumdar, 1950), in Sakharshet area of Maharashtra (Mutatkar, 1994) and primary school children in Odisha (Singh and Nayak, 1997) may be. As an example mentioned.

In an early study on the Bhils, Naik (1950) noted that the existing arrangements for their formal education were irrelevant and inefficient. The same author noted in another study that the schemes could be used only by a good section of the tribal people (Naik, 1959). Another major shortcoming of the schemes was the lack of sufficient initiative among them to arouse the interest of the target group and attract them to education. In fact, the majority of the target group is aware of such plans (Subrahmanyam, 1986). Misappropriation of funds was also a major obstacle leading to dropout of school by children in the target communities (Fuchs, 1982). NCERT (1994) conducted a comprehensive study on tribal education covering five states including West Midnapore. Helping parents in their work/occupation, looking after younger siblings and looking after the home are the three most important household tasks performed by school-going children. Yet another study says that despite all the talk about empowerment of SC/STs, there has not been a complete transformation in their lives.

Interest in the tribal situation of West Midnapore began in the last decade of the 19th century. Previous studies were conducted by historians, sociologists and anthropologists. Inquiries about the living conditions of tribals in particular began after independence. The problems of educational development of the tribals came into focus only later. Among the earlier studies, pride of place goes to Thurston (1897) who published valuable information about Panian. According to him, in the 1850s, the intrusion of the plainsmen into the settlements of the Panians began. Plains dwellers were purchasing land with the Panians as chattels to use as slaves.

Cultivable land. Thurston's next research was on the traditions, belief systems, customs and religious practices of various tribal communities (Thurston, 1907).

In the mid-1950s a government-appointed committee inquired into the living conditions and economic hardships of the tribals in Travancore and Cochin. The committee came up with recommendations for development projects for Muthuvan, Hill Pulai and Kadar in Cochin. Educational development schemes, particularly the development of vocational education, received special attention in its recommendations (Government of Travancore-Cochin, 1956).

After the formation of West Midnapore (in 1956), the educational problems of tribals received greater attention from the government, as evidenced by the appointment of various commissions and committees. The Evaluation Committee on the Welfare of Backward Communities came out with a report in 1963 which made several suggestions, including increasing fee concessions for school and college education of children from these communities (Government of West Midnapore, 1963). The Nettur Commission and the Kumar Pillai Commission were concerned with the question of job reservation for backward communities in West Midnapore. These commissions recommended, inter alia, greater educational facilities for the children of the respective communities (Government of West Midnapore, 1965; Government of West Midnapore, 1970). Among the tribals there is unemployment including unemployment of the educated. It was also observed that their level of education was low, non-utilization of educational concessions was high, aversion to technical and job-oriented courses was strong, and awareness of job opportunities was low (Government of West Midnapore, 1983).

Apart from government agencies, some individual scholars have also looked into the socio-economic and educational problems of the tribals of West Midnapore in recent years. Some of these studies are at the college level (George, 1975);

others have explored the causes of underdevelopment and identified lack of educational facilities as a major factor (Rajendran, 1978); some studies have looked at dropout problems among tribal students (Krishnan, 1999).

Others trace the historical roots of the present-day problems of tribals, such as land-use segregation, labor bondage and indebtedness (Mathur, 1977); At least one scholar has pointed out that the tribes of South West Midnapore are more advanced than those of North West Midnapore (Kunhaman, 1980) and this difference mainly stems from the difference in patronage extended by the rulers of these two areas during the British period, duration. Inter-community variation in socio-economic and educational status (Paul, 1989; Balakrishnan, 1989; Krishnan, 2004) and gender differences in educational level among tribal people (Bashir, 1994) have also come up for research.

Varghese (2002) concluded in his doctoral research that although both public and private organizations are working for the betterment of tribals, even today, a large number of tribal families are still not benefited by these organizations. The author emphasizes the need to give high priority to education in both formal and job-oriented sectors to empower the indigenous people. George (2011) in his paper has made an attempt to find exclusionary trends in education, especially higher education. It is very difficult for SC/ST to get admission in unaided educational institutions. Surprisingly, the share of SCs and STs in Industrial Training Centers (ITCs) is mostly run without any financial support from the government and is much less than that of government-owned Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). The author also argues that poverty or other financial constraints alone do not bar SCs and STs from enrolling in professional educational institutions. The very limited number of SCs and STs in the political arena of West Midnapore is an important reason why their voices are not heard.

According to Oommen and Shyjan (2014), if the concept of social inclusion in India is taken beyond the confines of rhetoric it can be made a meaningful component of integrated strategic planning and decentralized governance. The paper attempts to argue that local governments are constitutionally uniquely qualified to undertake the task of working toward social inclusion, mandated to "plan for economic development and social justice" at the local level. In the study, data from the BPL Survey 2009 for West Midnapore, which was largely based on the Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011, was used to develop an indicative model to illustrate the huge potential towards achieving the goal of social inclusion. It is possible to identify village panchayats by country SCs, STs and fisherfolk and take steps to remedy various levels of deprivation by households.

Joy, Jobin and M. Srihari (2014) tries to understand the causes of increasing school dropout among ST students in West Midnapore's Waynad district with special reference to the Paniya tribe. Qualitative analysis and case studies were evaluated to determine the reasons behind the increase in the dropout rate of tribals in the district. Lack of awareness about the value of education among Scheduled Tribes is the main reason behind the increase in dropout rate.

Under the circumstances, it is clear to implement effective awareness and motivation programs for the tribal people to recognize the value of education.

Nithya (2014) describes the plight of tribals especially in the era of new economic reforms. He argues that the deprivation of land and forests is the worst form of oppression that the tribals suffer. It is argued that even after sixty years of statehood; Adivasis are still facing all kinds of oppression and remain the most marginalized community in West Midnapore. The new economic reforms coupled with developmental projects and developmental dreams of the state have brought further deprivation among tribals and this has widened the developmental divide between tribals and non-tribals in the state.

The author examines that the instrument of globalization has not brought any positive impact in meeting the intended goal of social security for the indigenous people. Paul, Binu.P (2013) underlined that although not the only factor, high opportunity cost of education at high school/senior secondary school going age in tribal communities plays a significant role in increased drop out in that age group.

Previous review shows that the educational status of tribal communities is lower than rest of the communities. However, precise and reliable answers to questions about awareness and utilization of educational development facilities available to tribal people are rarely available. All studies have looked at the causes of prolonged educational backwardness of tribal people. Two types of factors have been identified; (i) those relating to tribal people and (ii) those relating to schemes. At this juncture, this study are positioned to provide some empirical evidence towards these questions.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to understand the marginalization of tribal communities in the field of education in West Midnapore. Specific objectives include:

To examine the status of tribal education in West Midnapore.

To understand the causes of barriers to education of indigenous people.

To analyze whether there are inter-tribal differences in educational attainment.

To investigate intra-regional and intra-regional status of tribal education in West Midnapore.

METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary sources have been explored for data collection. Primary data was collected from selected tribal households. A multi-stage stratified random sampling method was adopted to select the families. The study was restricted to West Medinipur district which was selected on well-established basis. First, it is the most primitive and its homeland

Finally, West Midnapore is one of the districts with poor tribal literacy. The Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) survey conducted in West Midnapore has identified five major tribes in the district. Together, they constitute 82 percent of the total tribal population. As the present study focuses on intra-tribal differences in educational aspirations, the first task is to identify the region where all the above-mentioned tribal communities are living. So, in the first phase, community development blocks where all major tribes are found have been identified

Secondary sources include publications of the State Planning Board, Department of Economics, Integrated Tribal Development Program (ITDP), and available information including Tribal Development Department, census reports, books and journals. Along with these, critical and objective observations made by the researchers are also used to supplement the data.

Tribal population of education

Most of them are engaged in the collection of minor forest products. Their basic disability is rooted in their physical isolation and associated psychological barriers. The tribals of West Midnapore have long been subjected to various forms of exploitation and their lives have been characterized by poverty and misery. Indiscriminate contact with outcasts from different cultural backgrounds has led to sexual and economic exploitation. By the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Committee the Government of West Bengal has unequivocally stated that sexual assault and crude abortion methods are widely practiced by upper castes on tribal women in West Midnapore district. The social structure of tribal society tends to stagnate; It has no inherent capacity for change and no occupational mobility of its members even under conditions of rapidly changing relations of production.

The tribal communities of West Midnapore stand at unequal levels of socio-cultural development. The tribal economy, from time immemorial, was forest-based. Forest provides everything for their existence. Their days begin and end with fighting for food and they rarely find time to earn for other essential needs. The availability of forest land provides them ample opportunity to practice slash and burn type cultivation (shifting cultivation) for long periods. Large-scale migration of settlers and continuous deforestation have disrupted the subsistence economy of tribal people and rendered landless to traditionally farming tribes (Government of West Bengal). Landless laborers among the tribal people are more common in the northern districts of West Midnapore due to migration of farmers from Travancore area to tribal settlements. At present the burning problem of tribal West Midnipur is their land alienation and thirst for land ownership. The tribal people of West Midnapore were foragers and hunters, shifting cultivators, agricultural laborers and agriculturists. At present most of them are agricultural labourers. In all other occupations the proportion of tribal people is low. Their job opportunities, even in agriculture, are shrinking.

As a prelude to our detailed discussion of the educational condition of the tribals in West Midnapore, we may place the problem against an all-India perspective.

Despite such efforts by the Central and State Governments, Scheduled Tribes do not seem to have made appreciable progress in terms of literacy and education. A few states, especially in the Northeast region, have achieved higher levels of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes, even compared to the general population. Although there are regional differences in the rate of growth, the trend of tribal literacy continues to rise. The top ranking states are Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Nagaland, Manipur and Himachal Pradesh. A wide disparity exists in the literacy rate between the general population and the Scheduled Tribe population. Discrimination is also found between Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.

Number Of Education Institution In West Medinipur

SL. NO.	TYPES	NUMBER
1	Primary School	520
2	Secondary School	31
3	College	39

The number of educational institute is moderate in the district of west medinipur. The total numbers of primary schools are 520. The total numbers of secondary schools are 31 and the total numbers of colleges are 39. So, the number of educational institution is good for total area of west mdinipur district. As a result, the education level is low than others district of West Bengal.

Level Of Education In West Medinipur

SL. NO.	TYPES	Percentage
1	Non Literate	43.79
2	Primaty	27.58
3	Middle	17.72
4	Secondary	5.18
5	Higher Secondary	4.29
6	Non Technical Diploma	0.01
7	Tehchnical Diploma	0.05
8	Graduation & Above	1.40

According to educational date the total number of educated tribal population is 43.79 percent and total number of non educated tribal population is 56.21percent. There are primary educated person is 27.58 percent middle educated person is 17.72 percent and secondary educated person is 5.18 percent and higher secondary educated person is 4.29 percent and Non Technical Diploma educated person is 0.01 percent and Technical Diploma educated person is 0.05 percent and Graduation and above educated person is 1.40 percent.

CONCLUSION

Education of tribals has become a major instrument of equality and national integration. Since independence, the government has made concerted efforts to improve the level of education of the Tirbals through various incentives and special educational programmes. Substantial progress has been achieved as a result of these initiatives. But, it is a sad fact that the education rate of tribals lags behind that of Scheduled Tribes. Even in fully literate states like West Midnapore, tribal literacy is at the lowest end. Inter-state and inter-regional variation in literacy is still a major pain in the neck. In the context of West Midnapore, tribal and fisher communities are considered outside communities. In the specific background of the present study, it can be safely concluded that the incentives provided by the government are insufficient to inculcate the need for education among them, resulting in large dropouts and even non-enrolment. Awareness about the scheme for their development is low and hence its utilization is also low. Most of the important schemes are found missing by these communities. Hence, the study calls for urgent attention on the part of the government to mainstream tribal communities through visionary policies. The following suggestions emerged from the study to make their educational development projects more objective and fruitful.

Organizing awareness programmes, improving the level of awareness is urgently needed so that maximum utilization of various government educational development schemes among tribals is possible.

The educational backwardness of tribals can be improved only if the state improves their economic condition.

Since the opportunity cost of education is found to be high among tribal students, considerable attention should be given to this aspect while determining the amount of educational incentives for this marginalized population.

Considering the rate of inflation, the lump sum grants given to marginalized communities like SCs and STs appear to be less than the scholarships given to communities falling under minority groups. Hence, the present single grant for STs should be replaced by a similar scholarship for minorities.

Intra-regional and intra-regional disparities in literacy standards can only be addressed through region specific policies.

A large number of tribal parents have no formal education. This calls for an urgent need for parental counseling. Finally, mainstream communities should consider themselves to be in an era of inclusive growth.

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