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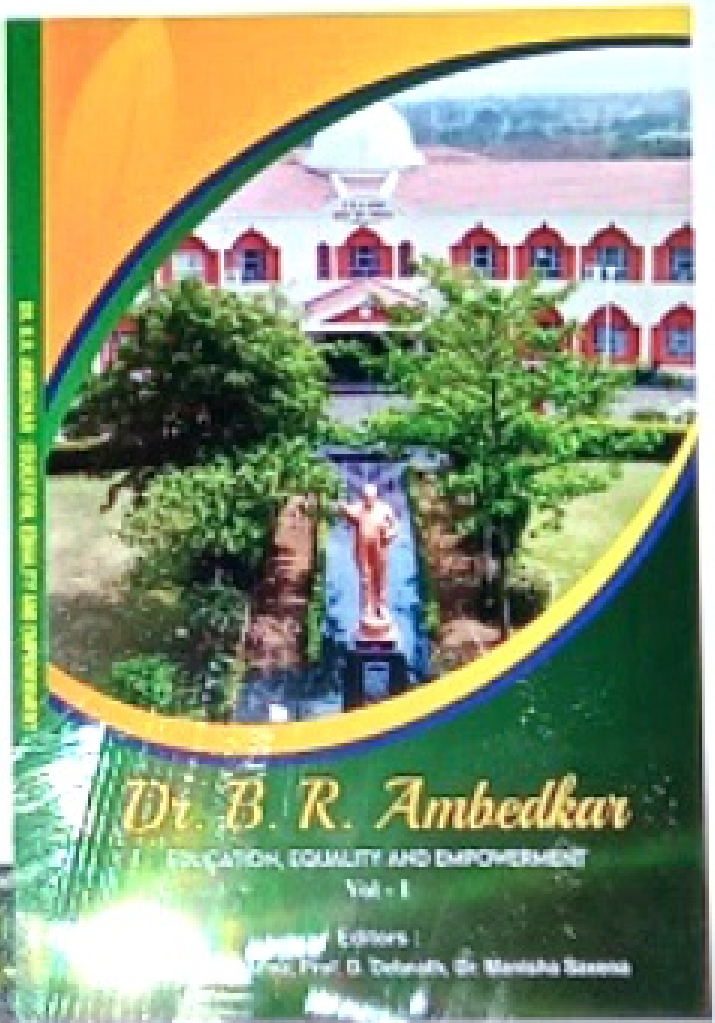


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A Comprehensive and Authoritative Reference Work

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EDUCATION, EQUALITY AND
EMPOWERMENT
Vol - I**

Editors

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**EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO AMONG THE PVTG'S IN
SOUTH BENGAL**

**Santanu Panda
Rubi Adak**

Abstract:

Educational status is the indicator of the socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects within a community. Education is an essential part of the development process. Empowerment of the tribal community means to develop their capacity building and to ensure their rights towards sustainable living. Education is not only indicative of formal education, but it is also essential for awareness regarding health, hygiene, knowledge of social and economic development schemes. In this paper we have made an attempt to study the problems regarding the educational status among the PVTG's of four administrative districts in West Bengal. The first objective of the study was to find out the literacy status among the PVTG's in the study area. Secondly, found the level of education among the male & female. We can divide the literacy status only on the basis of how many people are literate and illiterate. The level of education is the procedure of understanding the achievement of literacy according to age and sex. It is the way to identify adult education, child education, female education, and education among the elderly. Therefore, we have categorized the level of education under segments such as can sign, read & sign, pre-primary education (ICDS school), primary level (I-IV), upper primary (V-VIII), secondary level (IX-X), higher secondary (XI-XII), under-graduate, post-graduate, technical education, diploma and certificate courses and any other training courses. In our study, we have recognized all the categories of education, but the number of people having passed higher education is very few. In conclusion it is observed that the PVTG's are extremely backward in our study area. The employee under BCW of Government of West Bengal which has been motivating and helping out PVTG children to take up education so that they can motivate towards improve the education. Most the parents are not paying attention towards their education properly. So, children went to forest for forest product collection and rearing goat to sustain their livelihood.

Introduction

The 'Education' is an integral part of the empowerment procedure. Therefore, it is most essential and important for the development of any nation and society. It is also said that, education is a key of balanced in economy development. Hence, it is the most valuable tool for human beings to understand the society and the people in his positive point of view and live or manage him accordingly. Empowerment of the tribal community means capacitating tribal communities to secure access and control of their land, forest and water resources as well as sustains and promotes practical alternatives for security of their livelihoods. The tribal communities are found throughout the country. They are primarily residing in hilly, forest and mountainous regions. They are dependent upon the natural environmental conditions for the sustenance of their living conditions. 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. Empowerment thus is an interactive process whereby tribal communities are enabled to participate actively in local governance.

Schemes for Promotion of Education

There are several centrally sponsored schemes for this purpose:

- i) Free Education: The SC children are exempted from payment of any tuition fee for Entire education right up to the university level.
- ii) Free textbooks etc.: At the elementary stage, they are entitled for free text books and Learning materials.
- iii) Free Mid-day meals: Under the new schemes, all children in primary schools are Covered under free midday meal programme, which covers the all children?
- iv) Free Uniforms: There is a scheme of providing two sets of free uniforms to the children belonging to ST/SC in elementary schools.
- v) Stipends: The SC children are entitled to stipends at varying scales at different stages of education.

In the post independent scenario, several schemes were implemented for the upliftment of STs' education status. However, the tribal's are occupying a unique position in Indian culture and civilization; the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of

India are living in the remote area. Still they are living with primitive agricultural practice, lowest literacy rates, widespread poverty with miserable picture of income and expenditure. Their educational status has been seen very poor and worst because of the isolation, inaccessible communication facility, poor health condition, hostile environment, poor economic condition, and superstitious beliefs,

Policies and programmes

Recognizing that the STs Count among the most deprived and marginalized sections of Indian society, a host of welfare and developmental measures have been initiated for their social and economic development. In this regard, particular reference has to be made to the tribal sub-plan approach which came into existence as the main strategy from the Fifth Five Year Plan. Along with core economic sectors, elementary education has been accorded priority in the tribal sub-Plan approach. Elementary education is considered important, not only because of constitutional obligation, but as a crucial input for total development of tribal communities, particularly to

Build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms. Since primacy was accorded to elementary education, a broad policy frame for education was adopted in the tribal sub-Plans according equal importance to quantitative and qualitative aspects of education.

A second important development in the policy towards education of tribal's came with recommendations of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 which specified, among other things, the following:

Priority will be accorded to opening primary schools in tribal areas.

There is need to develop curricula and devise instructional material in tribal language at the initial stages with arrangements for switchover to regional languages.

Promising ST youths will be encouraged to take up teaching in tribal areas.

Ashram schools/residential schools will be established on a large scale in tribal areas.

Incentive schemes will be formulated for the STs, keeping in view their special needs and lifestyle.

The unique feature of the policy is its recognition of the heterogeneity and diversity of tribal areas. The policy also proposed the transformation of the structure of primary education with special emphasis on improving access in tribal areas. The policy has also underlined the importance of instruction through the mother tongue for effective teaching and encouraged incorporating locally relevant content and curriculum, besides emphasizing the localized production of textbooks in local dialects. Based on these considerations, the norms for establishing primary schools were relaxed to suit tribal areas in order to improve access to education. For instance, Andhra Pradesh has gone to the extent of establishing schools in habitations where there are even twenty school-age children; Madhya Pradesh has steadily decreased population size norms in order to open schools in habitations with 200 populations. However, in spite of such relaxation of norms many tribal localities are still without school, as they do not meet even the relaxed criteria.

Problems of Tribal Education

This review clearly underlines that in spite of constitutional guarantees and persistent efforts, tribal communities continue to lag behind the general population in education. The reasons for this can be categorized as external, internal, and socio-economic and psychological. The external constraints are related to problems and difficulties at levels of policy, planning, implementation, and administration. Internal constraints refer to problems associated with the school system, content, curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, academic supervision, monitoring, and teacher-related problems.

The third set of problems relates to social, economic, and cultural background of tribal's and psychological problems of first-generation learners.

External Constraints

The perspective adopted for educational development among tribal communities fails to adequately address the specific disadvantages characterizing tribal population.

For instance, the population and distance norms formed by the government have not been beneficial to tribal locations because of their sparse population and sporadic Residential patterns. Further, in formulating policies and programmes for tribal education it is essential to understand the complex realities of tribal life and the expectation of tribal's from the system, and this has never been done either by the tribal welfare department or by the education department. Consequently, no worth while

Policy for tribal education has been formed. One of the major constraints of tribal education at planning level is the adoption of a dual system of administration. The tribal welfare department deals with tribal life and culture and administers development work at the local level, including education. But the tribal welfare department lacks expertise in educational planning and administration in general and academic supervision and monitoring in particular. On the other hand, the education department is the sole authority for planning of educational development at state level. It formulates implementation guidelines and instructions regarding curriculum, textbooks, teacher recruitment, transfer policies, and so on. In this the department tends to formulate uniform policies for the entire state. The school calendar is a case in point, where vacations and holidays cater to the needs of the formal school set up in a non-tribal context, with little consideration for local context and tribal's festivals. This lack of sensitivity to their problems and failure in understanding tribal social reality, coupled with faulty selection and appointment of teachers in tribal areas, have resulted in poor performance and teacher absenteeism in tribal schools.

Factors affecting Tribal Education

Attitude of Other Students: Attitude of other student is one of the important factors for the promotion of tribal student's higher education i.e., environment factor is one of the crucial factors for the development. The negative attitude we can reflected in university and other higher educational centre mainly located in big cities.

Social Factors: More allocation of funds and opening of schools do not go far in providing education to the tribal's. Formal education has not been necessary for the members of tribal societies to discharge their social obligations. Hence they should be prepared to accept education and it should be presented to them in such a way as to cut the barriers of superstition and prejudice. There is still a

widespread feeling among the tribal's that education makes their boys defiant and insolent and alienates them from the rest of their society, while the girls turn modern or go astray. Since some of their educated boys felt alienated and cut off their bonds with their families and villages after getting education and good employment. Some of the tribal groups vehemently oppose the spread of education in their midst. Besides, some of their superstitions and myths also play their part. Some tribal groups believe that their gods shall be angry if they send their children to schools run by 'outsiders'.

Economic Factors: Some economic factors too are responsible for lack of interest shown by the tribal people in getting education. Since most of the tribal people are living in poverty, it is not easy for most of them to send their children to schools.

Lack of Interest towards Formal Education: In many states tribal children are taught through the same books which form the curriculum of non-tribal children of the urban and rural areas of the rest of the state. Obviously, the content of such books rarely appeals to the tribal children who come from different cultural backgrounds. Under the traditional tribal set up a child enters adulthood with confidence. He knows his environment thoroughly, knows how to construct his own house, cultivate his field, weave his cloth; in short he acquires all the skills to lead a reasonably comfortable life within the limitations of his culture. The simple skill of reading and writing acquired in an over formal school is no match for this. We cannot afford to push him back to his environment naked. Therefore, a curriculum should be framed in the welfare of tribal people. Certain tribal activities like agriculture, dancing, hunting, tribal games and archery must be allowed to find fullest expression in the extra-curricular activities of the school, thus providing some continuity of the traditional values and forms of organization. A scheme is to be worked out through which the school children will be able to link up the school and the teacher with their parents and the tribal activities. The school has to act as a centre of dispersal of simple technical know-how beyond the skills of reading and writing to become an effective agent of social change. This studentteacher-parent continuum should be able to generate a congenial atmosphere, so that the broad purpose of education, which is to enable an average citizen to comprehend the social, political, economic and other processes and forces around him, is fully served.

Suitable Teachers: Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in tribal areas. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal children show little appreciation of tribal way of life and value system. They approach tribal people with a sense of superiority and treat them as

'savage and uncivilized' and hence fail to establish proper rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission's report says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak tribal language. Only so can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide to the tribal people. Actually the gulf between teachers and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.

Lack of Facilities: One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. Most of the tribal languages and dialects are in the most rudimentary stage and there is hardly any written literature. Most of the states impart education to tribal and non-tribal children alike through the medium of the regional language, which makes the education uninteresting and also hurts tribal sentiments.

Nature of habitat: Most of the tribal villages are scattered. This entails long travels to attend schools. Unless the school situated very close to their villages and its site approved by the local people the result shall not be encouraging. School building also plays an important role in the growth of education among the tribal folk. Due to mismanagement, bungling and sometimes financial constraints, the building and sometimes-financial constraints, the building is seldom suitable to run an educational institution.

Number of teachers: Most of the primary schools run in the tribal areas are "Single teacher-managed whose presence in the school is more an exception than a rule". The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing of school hours in different seasons. It should not clash with their important socio-economic activities.

To many observers of the situation, the problem of education in tribal areas is the problem of wastage. It is not that wastage and

stagnation are peculiar to the tribal communities alone but the extent of wastage is much larger in their case. The problem of

Absenteeism is a serious one in tribal areas. One sees a large number of students on the rolls but the actual attendance is really low, and the number of students passing out at the final examination is even lower. The real problem is to create such economic conditions as could be conducive to the students developing sufficient interest in their studies. Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the Socially Disadvantaged Groups, all out efforts should be made to improve the educational status of these groups, especially that of the women and the Girl Child. In fact, the educational backwardness, prevalent amongst these people, necessitates an added thrust on their education, training and skill up gradation, as it will bring forth not only social empowerment but also economic empowerment.

Environment of family : Surrounding or environments is one of the importance factors influence for the development of a person generally and particularly in educational development. Most of the tribal parents are agricultures and labours; they have little knowledge relating to modern world and modern environment. Their environment narrows that created narrow mentality. And most of tribal fathers are addicts to alcoholic and other beverage items that creating some problem in mentally and economically end result students will fail exams.

Communication: Communication one of the key factor affecting the development of tribal education. Due to isolation tribal are facing problem for expressing modern and regional languages. For understanding tribal language is very difficult generally in the case of society and particularly in teachers. So the students are facing problem for discussing their doubt with teachers. So their doubt continuing and automatically tribal students became the last in the class.

Literature review

Article 46 of the Constitution directs to promote special education and economic interests of the economically weaker sections of the society, particularly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Apart from the Constitutional provisions, the major bases of the educational policy of India are various committees and

commissions that are appointed. Within the course of time, improvements and changes take place within the system of education. In order to cope up with these changes, there is a need to bring about reforms in the system of education. In accordance to the new educational policy, there are establishment of ashram schools for the students, belonging to tribal communities. Apart from ashram schools, there are also establishment of anganwadi centers, non-formal and adult education centers¹⁸.

A study has been done by Arup Dey in the International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology to study the impact of Glovalozation level of education, work participation rate and evolution of Tribal culture among the various tribals in West Bengal. The findings of the study depend on secondary data like census data. The study revealed that the 'Bhutia' has the highest literacy rate (72.6%) among any other scheduled tribe while 'Munda' has the lowest (41.0%). 48.8 percent of the ST population has been recorded as workers, which is close to the aggregated national average for STs (49.1 percent). Out of the total workers, 65.7 percent have been main workers and 34.3 percent as marginal workers.

A search in the literature through the Google and various cross references in the existing works, it was revealed that there is virtually no empirical research on the level of education or literacy conditions on the PVTG's in West Bengal. Apart from social anthropological and ethnographic works mentioned in the previous section, studies on the literacy status of the scheduled tribe in India have been done by some researchers of social sciences (Mete & Mondal, 2012: 1-4; Mandal & Mete, 2012: 1-9). I have found an article in the Sociological Bulletin entitled 'The Gender Gap in Literacy and Education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal'. In this article the author described his empirical findings revealed that the gender disparity on education and

¹⁸Akula, S. (2013). Education for Children of Tribal Community – A Study of Adilabad District. *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 192-196. Retrieved July 15, 2019 from

responsible factor for dropout among the tribal children of Jharkhand and West Bengal states.¹⁹ (Ghosh, 2007)

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

Tribal communities are often identified by some specific signs such as primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness to contact with the community at large and backwardness. Along with these, some tribal groups (75 in number) have some specific features such as dependency on hunting, gathering for food, having a preagriculture level of technology, zero or negative growth of population and extremely low level of literacy. These groups are called Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

The criteria of inclusion of a tribal community under

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) are:

- i) pre-agricultural level of technology
- ii) a deficient level of literacy
- iii) declining or stagnant population
- iv) Subsistence level of economy (Meena, 2009).

In 1975 U.N. Dhebar commission identified these groups as PTGs.

Particularly vulnerable tribal communities face severe problems of survival. As their habitats shrink their lifestyles of hunting and food gathering are severely eroded, their survival threatened, while some of the communities are on the verge of extinction. No serious attention has been paid to the uniqueness of the ecological niches that they live in, the peculiarities of their lifestyle, the specialty of the needs and the threats to survival that they face on daily basis. PVTGs are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a significant chunk of the tribal development funds, because of which PVTGs need more funds directed for their development. In this context, in 1975, the Government of India initiated to identify the most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called PVTGs and declared 52 such groups, while in 1993 an additional 23 groups

¹⁹Ghosh, A.K, 2007. 'The Gender Gap in Literacy and Education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal' in Sociological Bulletin, Vol. 56, No.1pp-109-125.

were added to the category, making it a total of 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes, spread over 17 states and one Union Territory (UT), in the country (2011 census). In 2005 it was renamed as PVTGs.

Since PVTGs are the most vulnerable tribal community, it becomes necessary to allocate adequate funds from Central Sector/Centrally sponsored and State Plan schemes for the socio-economic development of PVTGs. However, it was observed that funds provided under other schemes for STs were not reaching the PVTGs adequately. Therefore, in 1998-99, a separate 100% Central Sector Scheme for the exclusive development of PVTGs was started. Based on the gathered knowledge and experience, the scheme was improved during the year 2007-08, to make it more effective. The scheme has been made very flexible because it enables every State to focus on areas that they consider are relevant to their PVTGs and their socio-cultural environment.

In addition to the schemes the aegis of Department of tribal development, there are welfare schemes (MGNREGA, NRLM, PMAY, Swachh Bharat Mission etc.) run by the Department of Rural Development with its primary objective of alleviation of rural poverty and ensure improved quality of life for the rural population especially those below the poverty line where PVTGs can also be a part as these objectives are achieved through formulation, development and implementation of programmes relating to various spheres of rural life and activities, from income generation to environmental replenishment.

However, it has often been felt that the schemes, even though designed especially for the PVTGs failed to get desired outcome. The possible reason might be the schemes overlooked the basic principles of tribal development which emphasized comprehensiveness and holism as well as keeping the cultural heritage of the tribal communities in a respectable level.

In West Bengal, the Tribal population is 52, 96,963 as per Census 2011, which is about 5.8% of the total population of the State. The tribal population of West Bengal constitutes about 5.08% of the total tribal population of the country. Tribal communities are present in all the districts of the State. A higher concentration of tribal population is seen in the districts like Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Bankura

and Purulia. Three tribal communities have been identified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in West Bengal. The three

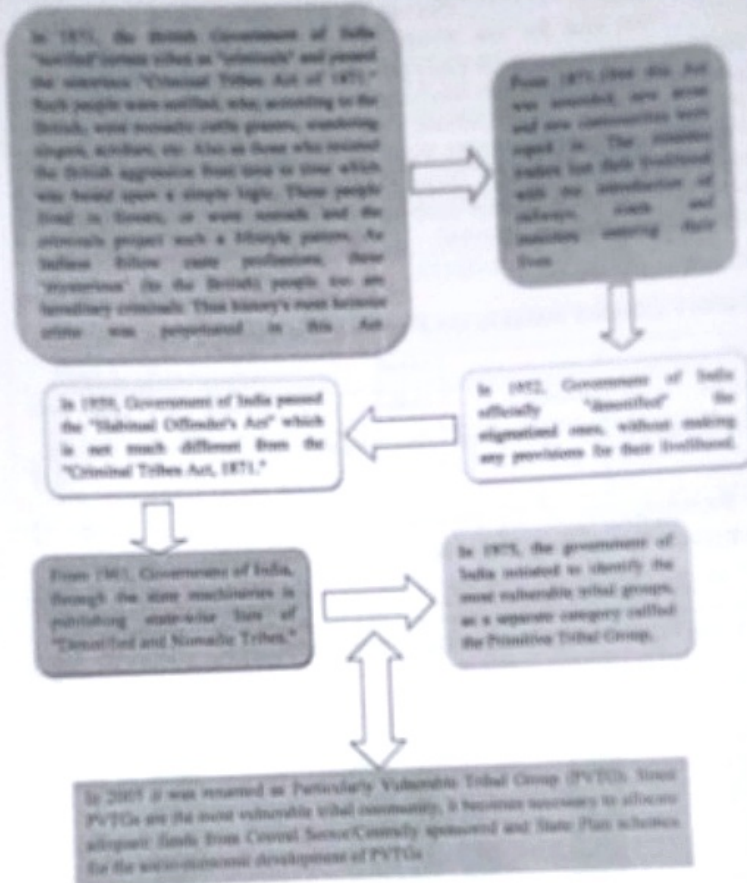
'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' are discussed here viz. Birhor, Lodha and TOTO.

Who are PTG/ PVTG?

A PTGs or PVTGs may be a tribal community; a sub-tribe or a part of a tribe. In other hand, among then hundreds of Tribal communities living across the length and breadth of the community, some are relatively more isolated, archaic, vulnerable, deprived and backward. These tribal are the most neglected among the tribal. While we have entered their territory, we have seen that they are live in small, scattered habitats in remote and inaccessible areas.

Definition: "The groups of an aboriginal who constitutes simple and small scale societies, are culturally homogenous, have lifestyle isolated and inaccessible tracts of hill and forests and continue to pursue an archaic way of life and absorb the change slowly are known as PVTGs".

A FLOW CHART



Objective of the study:

Find out the educational status among the PVTG's in south Bengal districts in West Bengal.

To understand the people perception towards the actual reason behind the poor educational status among the PVTG

Methods for Data Collection

The data for this article has been collected as part of the research carried out of the first authors project work through intensive anthropological fieldwork conducted during November, 2019 to April 2020 among the Lodha/Sabar& Birhor Purulia, Bankura, Jhargram& Paschim Medinipur districts in West Bengal. Both qualitative and quantitative data through household survey, unstructured interview scheduled and help of case studies, participant observation and group discussion have been collected.

Result of the study

Table 1 Literacy status in the Bankura district

Male		Female		Total
Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	
(50.20)243[24.79]	(49.79)241[24.59]	(39.91)198[20.20]	(58.02)288[29.38]	970

() Representation of the percentage out of total male & female
 [] Representation of the percentage out of the total studied population.

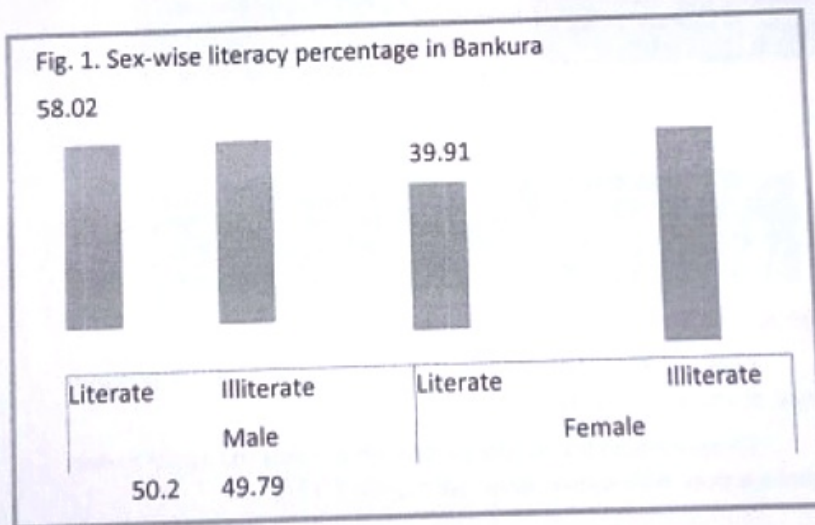
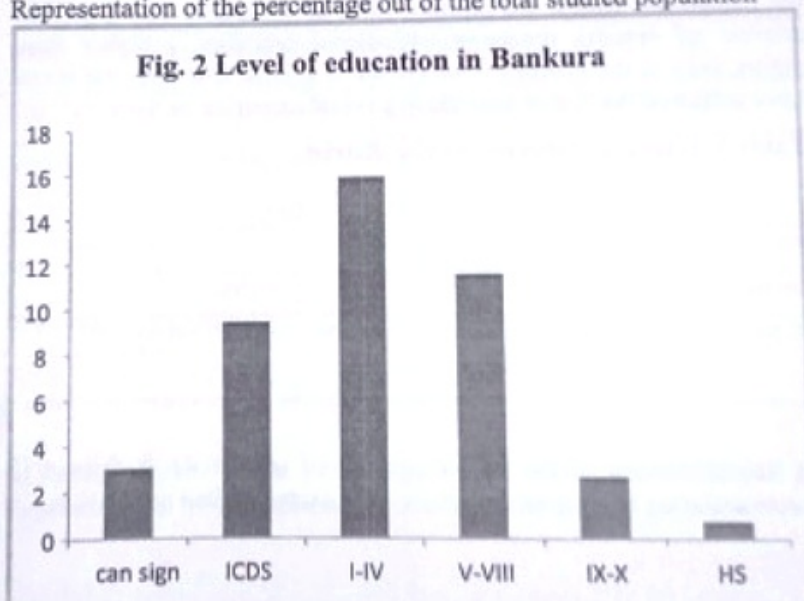
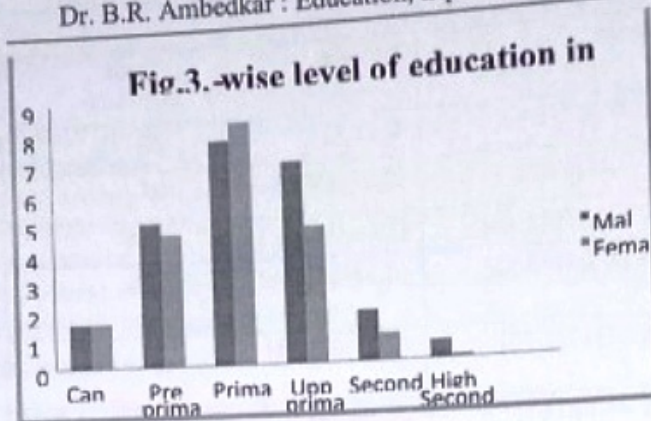


Table 2. Level of education in Bankura district

Education Category	Male	Female	Total
Can sign	(3.09)15[1.53]	15[1.53]	30
ICDS	(10.12)49[5]	(9.07)45[4.59]	94
I-IV	(15.70)76[7.75]	(16.53)82[8.36]	158
V-VIII	(14.04)68[6.93]	(9.27)46[4.69]	114
IX-X	(3.51)17[1.73]	(1.81)9[0.91]	26
HS	(1.24)6[0.61]	(0.20)1[0.10]	7
Graduate	0	0	0
Total	(50.20)243[24.79]	(39.91)198[20.20]	441

○ Representation of the percentage out of total male & female
 □ Representation of the percentage out of the total studied population





Description

From the above tables and graphical representation, the study reveals that there is no candidate above the higher secondary level of education among the PVTGs in Bankura district. Most of the candidates have achieved their level of education up-to-the primary level. The level of education among the male members is higher in all the categories, except the primary level of education. However, the number of females receiving educational facilities is higher than males, only at the primary level (I-IV). It studied that both the sexes have achieved the higher secondary level of education in Bankura.

Table 3. Literacy status in Purulia district

Male		Female		Total
Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	
(51.98)144[25.17]	(48.10)133[23.25]	(53.90)159[27.79]	(46.10)136[23.78]	572

() Representation of the percentage out of total male & female []
Representation of the percentage out of the total studied population

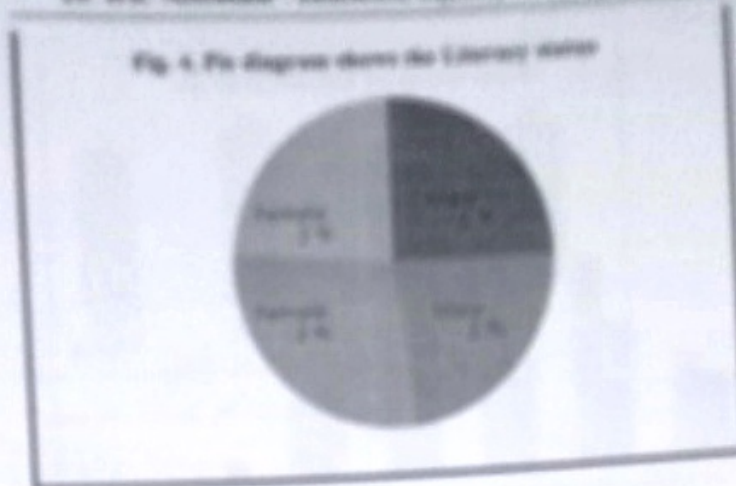
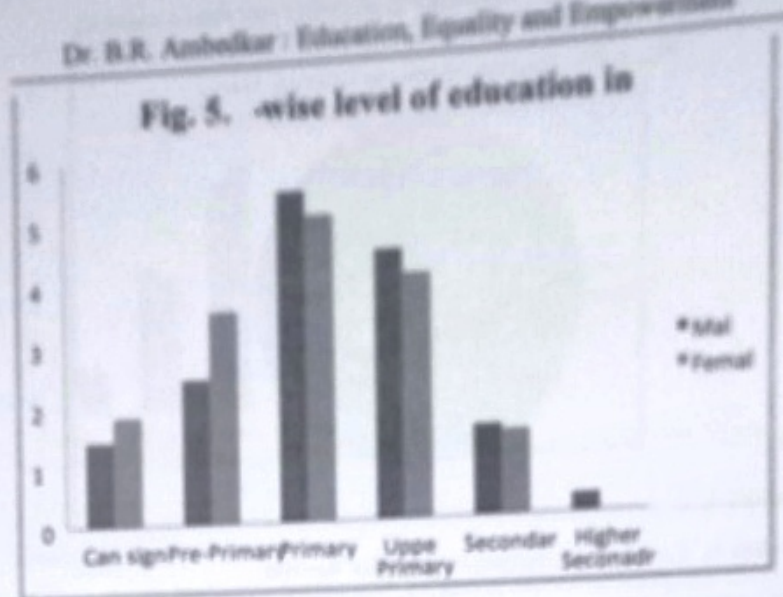


Table 4. Level of education in Purulia district

Education Category	Male	Female	Total
Can sign	(5.05)(14)(2.45)	(6.03)(18)(3.13)	11(15.58)
ICDS	(8.66)(24)(4.19)	(11.86)(35)(6.12)	20(28.31)
1-5	(19.49)(54)(9.66)	(26.92)(81)(9.74)	46(64.40)
6-10	(15.88)(46)(7.48)	(13.35)(43)(7.03)	29(40.51)
11-12	(5.42)(15)(2.62)	(4.79)(14)(2.45)	10(13.77)
13	0	(1.01)(3)(0.52)	3(4.14)
Graduate	(1.08)(3)(0.51)	0	3(4.14)
Total	144(25.39)	153(27.79)	297(53.18)

() Representation of the percentage out of total male & female
 □ Representation of the percentage out of the total studied population



Description

The above tables and graphical representation exhibit the literacy status and level of education among the PVTGs of Purulia district. It shows that there is no candidate above the higher secondary level among the PVTGs in Purulia district. Most of the people have achieved their level of education up to the primary level and upper-primary level in Purulia. The level of education shows the male members are higher in primary and upper-primary level. In comparison, the female members are higher in number under the categories of 'can sign' and 'pre-primary' education. Interestingly, only male members have accomplished the higher secondary level of education in Purulia.

Table. 05. Literacy Status in Jhargram district

Male		Female	
Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate
(46.98)429[25.53]	(53.01)484[28.81]	(38.98)299[17.79]	(64.01)468[27.85]

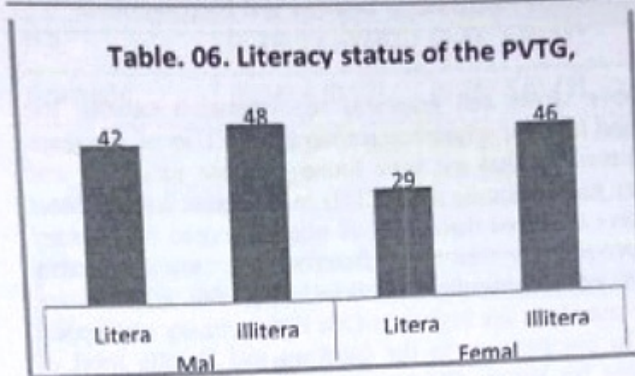
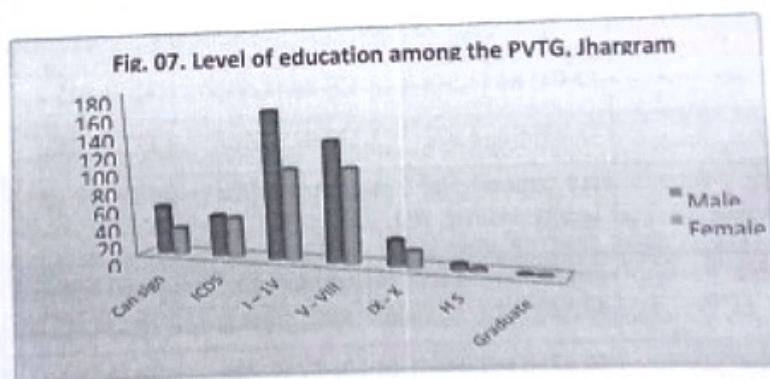


Table 06. Level of education in Jhargram

Education Category	Male	Female
Can sign	(12.59)54[3.21]	(10.03)30[1.79]
ICDS	(10.72)46[2.74]	(14.72)44[2.62]
I - IV	(37.53)161[9.58]	(33.44)100[5.95]
V - VIII	(30.54)131[7.80]	(34.45)103[6.13]
IX - X	(6.76)29[1.73]	(6.02)18[1.07]
H S	(1.63)7[0.42]	(1)3[0.18]
Graduate	(0.23)1[0.06]	(0.33)1[0.06]
Total	(46.98)429[25.53]	(38.98)299[17.79]



Description

The above tables and graphical representation exhibits the literacy status and level of education among the PVTGs of Jhargram district. It is interesting that we have found graduate candidate and higher secondary passed among the PVTGs in Jhargram district. Most of the people have achieved their level of education upto the primary level and upper-primary level in Jhargram. A sound number population achieved their madhyamic level. The level of education shows the male members are higher in Can sign, primary and upper-primary level. In comparison, to the Bankura and Purulia level of education is little bit better. Illiterate population is high than the literate. School dropout has been found in this district. The poor communication, lack of awareness, distance of school, absence of parents during school time is the main reason for the illiterate. Younger generation are educated but the above 40 populations are not educated.

Table. 07. Literacy Status o Paschim Medinipur

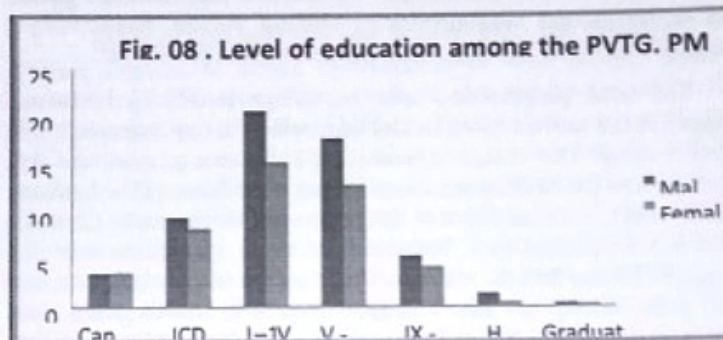
Male		Fem		ale	
Literate	illiterate	Literate	illiterate		
(48.86) [24.78]	580 (51.14) [25.93]	607 (38.65) [19.05]	446 (61.35) [30.24]		708

Table. 08. Level of Education

Education Category	Male	Female	Total
Can sign	(2.94) 35 [1.50]	(3.12) 36 [1.54]	71 [3.03]
ICDS	(7.83) 93 [3.97]	(7.11) 82 [3.50]	175 [7.48]
I - IV	(17.27) 205 [8.76]	(13.08) 151 [6.45]	356 [15.21]
V - VIII	(14.83) 176 [7.52]	(11.01) 127 [5.43]	303 [12.94]
IX - X	(4.47) 53 [2.26]	(3.64) 42 [1.79]	95 [4.06]

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H S	(1.18) 14 [0.60]	(0.43) 5 [0.21]	19 [0.81]
Graduate	(0.34) 4 [0.17]	(0.26) 3 [0.13]	7 [0.30]
Total	(48.86) 580 [24.78]	(38.65) 446 [19.05]	1026 [43.83]



Description

As we can see from the above table 07 illiteracy rate of male i.e. 25.93% of total population is higher than literacy rate i.e. 24.78%. In literacy status of female is worse than male as literacy rate of female from total population is 19.05% and illiteracy rate is 30.24%. As we can see in both the cases the illiteracy rate is higher in number than literacy rate.

From the Table 08 & Fig. 08, it is evidently that very low in percentage the i.e. 0.30% from total population is graduate out of which 0.17% male and 0.13% female. Only 3.03% from total are able to sign only their name. 7.48% out of the total population are children are going to ICDS. In the total population 15.21% belongs from I-IV category from which 8.76% are male and 6.45% are female. As the category are increasing the number of literate people are decreasing as from the category V-VIII only 12.94% belongs to this category out of which 7.52% male and 5.43% are female. Very few in numbers belongs to the category IX-X i.e. 4.06% (2.26% male and 1.79% female). Only handful number of people has gone to class XI-XII i.e. 0.81% out of which 0.60% are male and 0.21% are female.

Village wise observation from the field

Village: Debhog, Block: Sabang, District: Paschim Midnapore,

Debhog village is located in the Sabang block of Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal. Midnapore and Sabang is the district & sub-district headquarters of Debhog village, respectively. As per 2009 statistics, Debhog village is also a gram panchayat.

The total geographical area of village is 355.72 hectares. Kharagpur is the nearest town to Debhog, which is approximately 47 kilometres away. The village is located at a distance of around fifty kilometres from the Midnapore town. Living conditions of the Lodhas are weak, to say the least. Most of the houses are kutcha made of mud, soil and has a thatched roof. But there are some exceptions as well. Some of the houses had tin roofs and their condition is better than the kutcha ones. Many of the villagers acquired houses from the Government under the Indira Awas Yojana but the condition of the homes is deplorable.

Level of Education

The status of formal education among the Lodhas is even more alarming. There is a local school supported by ICDS²⁰ (Khichudi School as they call it) in the village where the parents send their kids for formal education and mainly for 'supplement nutrition' (khichuri is provided). Most of the adult members are uneducated and only a few can sign their names. Majority of them have studied till the seventh or eighth standard. However, there were a few (around two to three persons) who passed the higher secondary examinations. The proportion of school dropouts is staggeringly high. The wide discrepancy between the literacy levels of male and female, which was a common feature among the Lodhas of other villages, was almost absent. More than fifty-five percent of the villagers were illiterate.

Village :Amlasol

Block: Binpur II, District: Jhargram

²⁰ ICDS: Integrated Child Development Services. The school is commonly known as anganwadi

Amlasol village is located in Binpur II block of Jhargram district of West Bengal, India. The district and sub district headquarters of Rimradanga village is Jhargram & Lalgah respectively. Banshpahari is the Gram Panchayat of this village. The nearest town to Amlasol is Jhargram which is approximately 79 kms away.

Living Conditions:

Most of the villagers got houses from the Backward Class Welfare Department of the Government of West Bengal under the Lodha Unnayan Prakalpa. Some of them also got houses under Amar Bari Scheme and Indira Awas Yojana. These houses are mostly pucca and are in a good condition. Most of the houses do not have electricity. Some of them got it by illegally tapping the power lines (hooked). Another important aspect regarding their living condition was the availability of toilet. Majority of the households have got toilets under the Mission Nirmal Bangla Scheme (Government of West Bengal) and they are being properly utilized. Quite a few of those toilets do not have a door or a roof. Thus they still defecate in the open compromising their health and privacy.

Education level:

In matters of formal education, the condition of this village is comparatively good. There is a local school supported by ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) commonly known as Anganwadi where the villagers send their wards for basic formal education and supplement nutrition. Majority of the villagers are literate. The illiteracy level among the females is more in this village compared to their male counterparts (65% of the males are literate whereas 46% of the females are literate). They have mostly studied between fourth to eighth standard. Only one or two of the villagers have passed the tenth standard. No one has studied beyond that.

Village: Banskanali JL no. : 84 Block: Ranibandh, District: Bankura

Banskanali is a village comprising of 17 families located at the Ranibandh Block of Bankura District. It is located at a distance of 34 km from the Sub Divisional Office of Ranibandh. As per 2009 stats, Machatora is the gram panchayat of Banskanali village. The total geographical area of village is 113.22 hectares. Banskanali has a total population of 694 peoples. There are about 138 houses in

Banskanalivillage. Khatra is nearest town to Banskanali which is approximately 28km away. The village was located in a remote area surrounded by dense forest. Both sides of the road were covered with thorny scrubs. The road which leads to the village was kutcha.

The living conditions were also found to be poor and unhealthy. Most of the houses are kutcha (made of mud), soil and has thatched roof but they were also not in good condition. Some of the houses which they owned by themselves do not have proper door nor windows. But there are exceptions as well. Some of the houses had tin roofs and their condition was better than the kutcha ones. Only a handful was lucky enough to get a pucca house from the Government under Geetanjali, Pradhan Mantri AwasYojna, Indira AwasYojna. The majority of the houses had electricity but the lines were hooked due to where they have received an electric connection from the government but it has been cut due to nonpayment of an electric bill. So due to that, they have to hook the electric line. Another important aspect regarding their living condition was the bathroom. Few of those who got it from the government got damaged due to storms, so they were used as storerooms.

Level of Education

Regarding education, the conditions are even more tragic. There is a local school supported by ICDS²¹ (Khichudi School as they call it,) in the village where the parents send their kids for formal education and mainly for 'nutrition' (khichuri is provided). The ICDS scheme was found to be very poorly implemented, primarily due to the lack of trained helping hands. Most of the adult members are not formally educated and a few of them can sign only their names. The proportion of school dropouts is staggering. The primary reason is that the girls are married off at a very early age of 15 or 16 years. Some of them even have one or two children at 16 or 17 years of age.

Village: Popo and Ghatihuli

Block: Bandwan, District: Purulia

Popo and Ghatihuli village is located in Bandwan block of Purulia district in West

²¹ ICDS: Integrated Child Development Services. The school is commonly known as anganwadi

Bengal Popo is situated 8.6km away from sub-district headquarter Bandwan and 67.4km away from district headquarter Purulia. The total geographical area of village is 804.78 hectares. Popo has a total population of 766 peoples.²² Ghatihuli village is situated 8.5km away from sub-district headquarter Bandwan and 56.6km away from district headquarter Purulia. The total geographical area of village is 193.25 hectares. As per 2009 statistics, Dhadka is the gram panchayat of both the villages. Tata is nearest town to Popo and Ghatihuli which is approximately 58 km and 54 km away respectively.²³ Here we mostly concentrated mainly on the Lodhas because they were the most destitute among the rest of the tribal communities. The roads were pucca which were constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

Regarding formal education the conditions of the Lodhas are even more alarming. There is a local school supported by ICDS²⁴ (Khichudi School as they call it,) in the village where the parents send their kids for formal education and mainly for 'supplement nutrition' (khichuri is provided). The situation of ICDS at Popo village was in a very poor condition due to lack of infrastructure. The literacy rate is very poor in both the villages. Majority of the adult members are uneducated and only a handful can sign their names. The proportion of school dropouts is staggeringly high. In comparison, the literacy levels of girls are less than their male counterpart. The reason behind this is that the girls are married off at a very early age around 14 or 16 years.

Village : Bhupatipally and Bareria

Block : Bagmundi, District : Purulia

Birhors owe their origin to the Santhal clan. There is no specific record of their arrival in Purulia district. But they certainly immigrated from Hazaribagh, the homeland of the Birhors. These communities are distributed in the villages, namely Bhupatipally and Bareria, under Bagmundi block of Purulia district. Bhupati Pally village is located in Bagmundi Tehsil of Purulia district in West Bengal. It is situated 9.8km away from sub-district headquarter Pathardihi and 66.2 km away from District Headquarters of Purulia.

²² <https://villageinfo.in/west-bengal/puruliya/bundwan/popo.html>

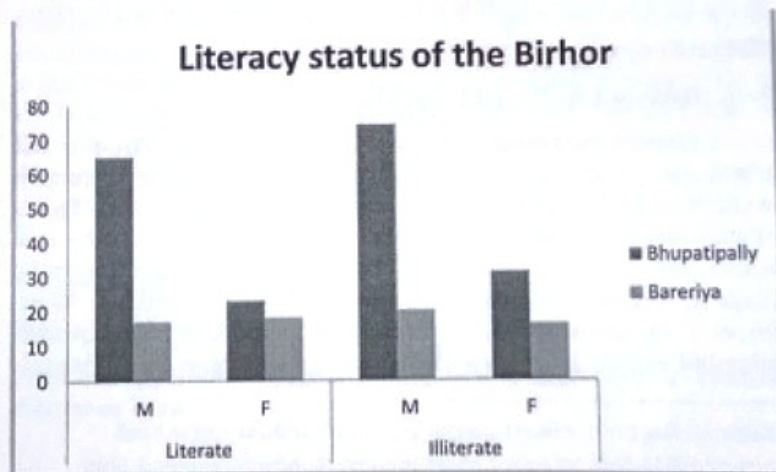
²³ <https://villageinfo.in/west-bengal/puruliya/bundwan/ghatihuli.html>

²⁴ ICDS: Integrated Child Development Services. The school is commonly known as Anganwadi

Baghmundi is the gram panchayat of Bhupati Pally village. The total geographical area of village is 203.96 hectares. According to the 2011 census, this village has a total population of 188 people. There are about 60 houses in the village. Balarampur is the nearest town to Bhupati pally, which is approximately 27km away. Bareriya village is located in Bagmundi block of Purulia district in West Bengal. It is situated 1.4km away from Sub-district headquarter Pathardihi and 63.9km away from District Headquarter Purulia. Baghmundi is the gram panchayat of Bareriyavillage. The total geographical area of the village is 1708.59 hectares. According to the 2011 census, this village has a total population of 79 people. There are about 19 houses in the village. Balarampur is the nearest town, which is approximately 28km away.

Educational scenario

Village Name	Literate		Illiterate	
	M	F	M	F
Bhupati pally	65	23	74	31
Bareriya	17	18	20	16



Regarding formal education, the conditions of the Birhorsare quite reasonable compared to Lodhas. There is a local school supported by ICDS²⁵ (Khichudi School as they call it,) in the village where the parents send their kids for formal education and mainly for



'supplement nutrition' (khichuri is provided). But while conducting the research, the teachers complained that the students come in fewer numbers during the classes and the majority of them arrive only during lunchtime. There is a junior high-school in the village as well. But the proportion of Birhor students is estimated to be very less. After interviewing the school authorities, we interpreted that most of the students, beyond standard four, move to other schools where they can find hostel facilities and other facilities such as shelter, food, clothing, etc. We also found that it was for the first time that two girls from the Birhor community passed the Madhyamik Examination in the year 2018. Currently, they will be appearing for their Higher Secondary Examinations this year (2020).

Besides this, the literacy level among the Birhors generally varied between classes four to eight pass. However, few passed the Madhyamik Examination. We found only one Graduate among them at Bhupatipally village who works as a guest teacher at a school. Here again, if we compare the literacy levels, then the literacy levels of girls are estimated to be



less than their male counterparts at Bhupatipally, whereas at Bereriya the literacy level of girls is higher than boys. The reason behind this is that the girls are married off at a very early age.

²⁵ ICDS: Integrated Child Development Services. The school is commonly known as Anganwadi



Discussion and Summary

The above tables and graphical representation shows the literacy status and level of education among the PVTGs of Paschim Medinipur district. It shows that there are very few candidates above the higher secondary level among the PVTGs in the district. Most of the people have achieved their level of education up to the primary level and upperprimary level. The level of education shows the male members are higher in all education categories. In comparison, the female members are higher in number under the categories of 'can sign'. Interestingly, male & female members have talented in higher level of education in Paschim Medinipur district which are not found among other two districts.

Factors Contributing Low Literacy among the PVTG

- Socio-economic factors contribute significantly to disparities in literacy and educational attainment among the PVTG's in South Bengal. High poverty rates and dependence on forestry call for increasing rates of child labor force.
- Majority of the parents are not showing much interest to send their children to the school due to economic reasons and they considered their children as economic asset to them. Because of their illiteracy they do not know the value of education. Large majority of the school going age children among the PVTG's are not psychologically comfortable to enrol in the school and their mental attitudes always bending towards the traditional cultural activities. Even the children contribute their family incomes. The informal education to the illiterate parents is much needed to solve this kind of problem in the study areas.
- The main reason of this is that the school timing and the working hour of the tribal normally clash and since the

children help support their parents to earning, they do not enrol either in the school or in dropout if enrolled.

- Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in studied villages. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal children show little appreciation of tribal way of life and value system. They approach PVTG people with a sense of superiority and treat them as 'backward or savage and uncivilized' and hence fail to establish appropriate rapport with their students.
- Most of the Anwanwadicentre runs in the PVTG's hamlets are Single Madam, how she managed the centre? Is she cooked the food (Supplementary nutrition) or teach the student? Therefore, the presence of teacher or in-charge of it is most important. The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing. Each centre has more than 30 PVTG students, it is too much for a single guide to manage both informal education and provide supplementary nutrition.

Conclusion

Article 46 of the Indian constitution has stress to promote the ST and SC people with special care in the educational and economic establishment. The spread of education among the ST during the last four decade has been quite uneven. Ignorant and illiteracy among tribals should be minimized and rooted out, by providing proper education and awareness programme. In our study, we have recognized all the categories of education, but the number of people having passed higher education is very few in reference to the total studied population, which are below one percent. Graduate only

0.30 percent. In conclusion it is observed that the PVTG's are extremely backward in our study area. The employee under BCW of Government of West Bengal which has been motivating and helping out PVTG children to take up education so that they can motivate towards improve the education. Most the parents are not paying attention towards their education properly. So, children went to forest for forest product collection and rearing goat to sustain their livelihood. The level education of the

PVTG's of South Bengal is improving little. In the three districts Paschim Medinipur is better than two districts.

Recommendation

To improve the level of education among the PVTG in South Bengal, the following observation and suggestions may be adopted.....

Some suggestions are advanced which can be acted upon on priority basis in collaboration with the educationist as well as government and quasi- government agencies.

1. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission's report says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak tribal language or the local language, through which the students are comfortable to gain knowledge. Only so can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide and a real guru to the tribal people.
2. Actually, the gap between teachers and student can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.
3. The literacy and educational status is very low among the selected PVTGs. The chronic problem of teacher absenteeism needs priority attention. This aspect has to be addressed to with all sincerity of efforts so that the teaching – learning situation is improved among the PVTG's in South Bengal.
4. Thus, emphasis should be given on priority basis for promotion of PVTG's education than the other Tribal communities. Necessary infrastructure and the appointment of teacher belonging to the community should be encouraged. If no such teacher is available, others with a positive attitude and understanding about tribal community should be employed in the area. Teachers must be provided free accommodation facilities in the school campus to reduce the drop out.
5. Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness about the importance of education among each Lodha/Sabar and Birhor villages.
6. Social security of students, especially of adolescent girls is of great concern in residential schools.
7. Need some awareness for the guardian to enroll their children for better environment and nutrition.