

Low educational attainment among Tribal people and Hindrance to continue their education

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines about the educational attainment of tribal people lived in Dakshin Dinajpur, a backward district of West Bengal, India. Using the secondary data of the latest Census-2011, it is vivid that scheduled tribe people have low attainment in gradually upward level of education as well as there is male-female and rural urban variation of literacy and educational attainment among major scheduled tribes. Taking a primary survey of 100 samples it has been estimated that there is an association between the socioeconomic condition and their decision to stop or continue the study of tribal children aging 14-24 years old. The result of logistic regression shows economy, educational level of parents, household size of tribal people have a great influence on taking the decision about their further educational attainment, carrying on or not.

Key Words : Educational attainment, Literacy, Scheduled tribes, Sub-tribes, Socio economic Status

INTRODUCTION

Educational attainment is an important indicator of social-cultural development and high educational attainment plays a role in emergent mobility as well as economic development. Though education definitely has an affirmative impact on the society, some disadvantaged groups of people (like scheduled tribes) are not able to reach the factual stage of development that can be accomplished through education (Sujatha, 2002; Sahu, 2014). And in India the Scheduled Tribes are known as most disadvantaged people who suffer from various diurnal as well as long term existing societal and economical problems. In the way of education, language in educational institution plays a role of barrier in communication and teaching-learning process for the tribal people (Sahu, 2014) who feel very much comfortable to communicate with their mother tongue or their local language. Most of the tribal people are not able to come forward to reconstruct their educational and economic status, though they have understood that modernization in various sectors has been taking place gradually (Malyadri, 2011). And they are still facing the problem of poverty and economic weakness, poor health and illness, social discrimination, primitive occupational structure, indifference attitude of teacher towards them, underprivileged educational facility in their locality etc. (Mehta and Shepard, 2006; Radhakrishnan *et al.*, 2006) which are acting as the causes of drop out or discontinued in the study and leads to low educational attainment among tribal people (Malyadri, 2011). If the present situation of tribal educational progress is going on, it will take a long time to overcome the problem prevailed among them and to lead them in the main stream of the societal development (Mehta,

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The present paper is the study of an underdeveloped district Dakshin Dinajpur which is situated on the north-eastern part of the state of West Bengal, India (Fig. 1). The district has two Sub-Divisions, viz., 1) Balurghat, 2) Gangarampur. There are a total of 8 Community Development (C.D.) Blocks in the district of which Kumarganj, Tapan, Balurghat and Hilli C.D. Blocks belong to Balurghat Sub-Division while Kushmandi, Banshihari, Harirampur and Gangarampur C.D. Blocks belong to Gangarampur Sub-Division. As per the latest Census (2011), the total population of Dakshin Dinajpur district is 1.67 million, which constitute only about 2 per cent of the total population of West Bengal. Dakshin Dinajpur district occupies an 8th position in terms of Scheduled Tribe population in the state as the district has 275,366 tribal population constituting 16.43 per cent of the total population of the district.

Objective :

The main objectives of the work are to study about the literacy and educational attainment of tribal people in Dakshin Dinajpur and to estimate some socioeconomic impact on educational attainment among tribal people.

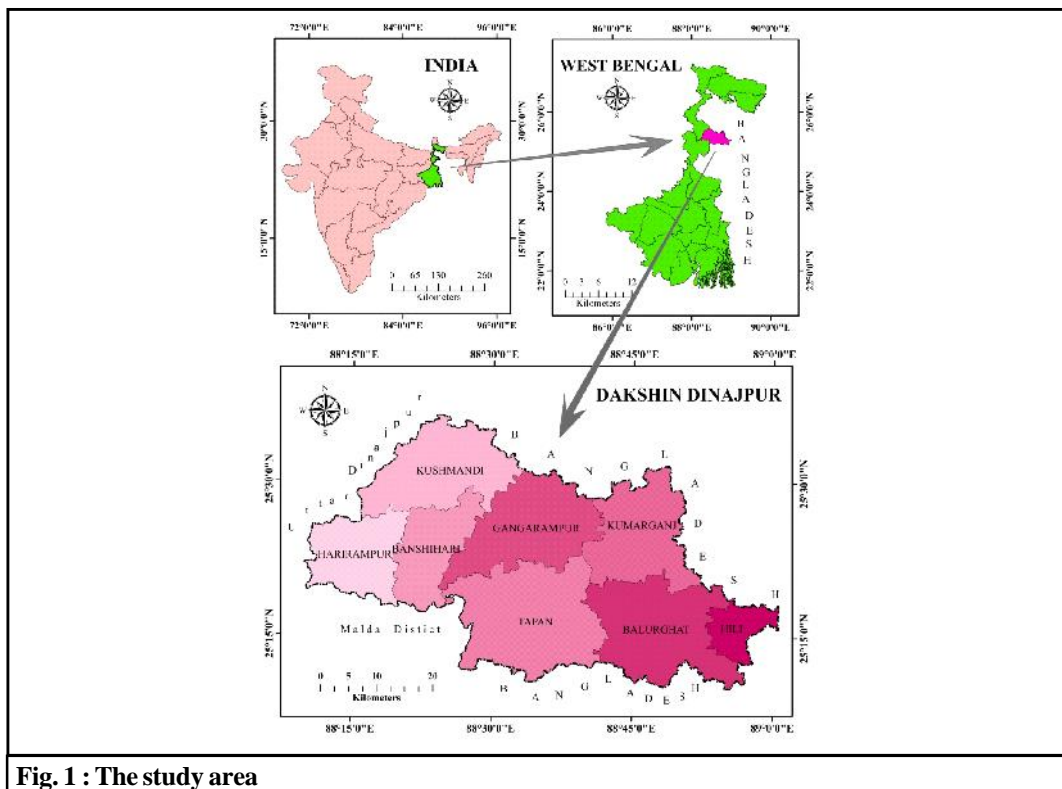


Fig. 1 : The study area

Tribal Literacy and Educational attainment in Dakshin Dinajpur :

The literacy rate among scheduled tribe is not satisfactory, though they have a slight improvement in respect of acquiring literacy, which is indicating slow progress in their literacy rate. According to the latest census (2011) literacy rate of scheduled tribes is 57.02 per cent, which is lower than the country's as well as state's average. Block wise distribution of literacy rate gives a

spatial variation in literacy of Dakshin Dinajpur district. In Hilli, Balurghat and Gangarampur Blocks more than 60 per cent people are treated as literate. On the other hand in the block of Kushmandi and Harirampur less than 50 per cent people belong to literate. If male-female literacy rate is observed, it is clear that condition of tribal female literacy is more severe than male. In respect of the Scheduled tribe (ST) female literacy rate Harirampur and Kushmandi blocks scored only 35.48 and 38.40 per cent, respectively.

Table 1 : Literacy rate among STs in Dakshin Dinajpur district, 2011				
Country/State/Dist. /C. D. Blocks**	ST Population (%)			
	All ST	Male (ST)	Female (ST)	Gender gap
India	58.94	68.53	49.35	19.18
West Bengal	57.93	68.16	47.71	20.45
Dakshin Dinajpur	57.02	65.54	48.49	17.05
Kushmandi	46.24	54.53	38.40	16.13
Gangarampur	61.46	64.47	46.54	17.93
Kumarganj	57.62	66.73	48.47	18.26
Hilli	65.46	73.49	57.19	16.30
Balurghat	63.56	71.21	54.49	16.72
Tapan	55.56	63.42	47.60	15.82
Banshihari	52.42	61.20	43.81	17.39
Harirampur	44.81	54.55	35.48	19.07

Source: Census of India, 2011 **Community Development Blocks

No blocks have scored more than 60 per cent in regard to ST female literacy rate in Dakshin Dinajpur district. Average gender gaps in literacy is 17.05 percentage point which is less than country's (19.18) and the state's (20.45) average. Harirampur, Kumarganj, Gangarampur have high gender gap compare to the rest blocks.

Educational attainment in different level of education is the indicator of actual development in the education of a society. According to Census of India, nine educational levels have been classified as follows:

1. Literate without Educational level
2. Below Primary level
3. Primary level
4. Middle level
5. Matric or Secondary level
6. Higher Secondary (H.S) /Intermediate/Pre-University/Senior Secondary
7. Non-Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree
8. Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree
9. Graduate and above

In Dakshin Dinajpur district all the scheduled tribes are almost excluded from the educational level of 'non-technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree' and 'technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree' mentioned above and these two levels of education has not been included in the following illustration. Fig. 2 gives the picturesque of sex wise rural and urban differential in educational attainment for all scheduled tribes.

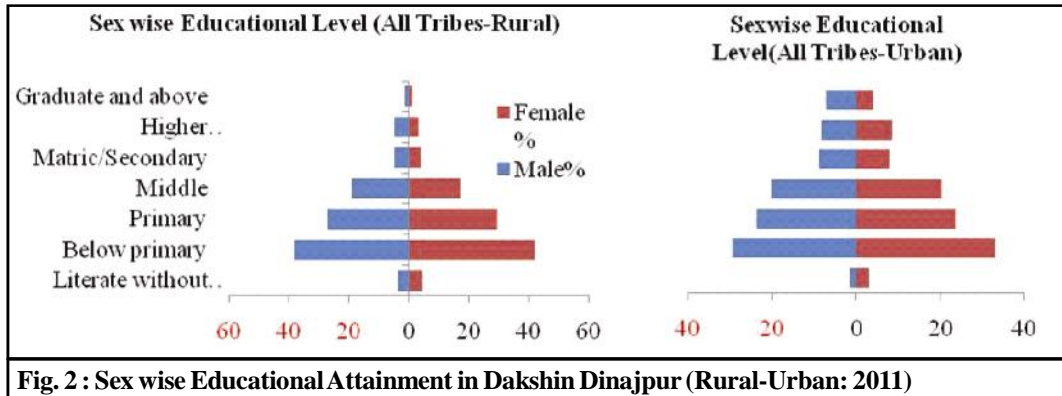


Fig. 2 : Sex wise Educational Attainment in Dakshin Dinajpur (Rural-Urban: 2011)

Scheduled tribes mainly live in rural areas and very few ST people belong from different sub-tribes live in urban areas in Dakshin Dinajpur. The illustration says that a very few tribal people complete the graduation and above level of education in comparison with primary and below primary level and the condition of urban area is a slight better than rural area. The present situation of educational attainment of the major tribal groups in Dakshin Dinajpur has been figured out with reference basically to the rural population below according to the data accumulated from Census of India, 2011.

The illustrations of sex wise educational level of different sub-tribes (Fig. 3) give an apparent picture of low educational attainment gradually to the upward educational level among almost all the sub-tribes. And there is an abrupt change from middle or upper primary level to the upwards educational level, *i.e.* secondary, higher secondary, graduate and above which indicates that very few numbers of tribal people associated with higher education.

Estimating Socio Economic aspects on Educational Continuation :

Conscious people are persistent to achieve a good academic standard as education plays a key role in social and economic transformation (Darder *et al.*, 1997). In spite of that, there are number of socioeconomic variables which may obstruct to the educational attainment in higher level (Garcia and Bayer, 2005) for any disadvantaged group of people like Scheduled Tribes. There may various socioeconomic aspects which may affect the educational attainment of an individual, such as family background, home facility, individual aspects, health condition, alcoholism, distance from school etc.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study primary data and information have been collected from rural tribal villages and tribal associated urban wards with the help of the proper schedule in the selected study area randomly. The survey includes 100 samples and the concerned respondents are belonging to the age group ranges between 14-24 years old.

The primary data have been collected from the field survey during 2017-2018 relating to the ongoing study of Scheduled Tribes with full consent of the respondents as well as parents or guardians, where the respondents are under 18 years old and they had been assured that the information collected from them will be used only for academic purpose and will be helpful for policy makers and planners for development of their poor educational scenario.

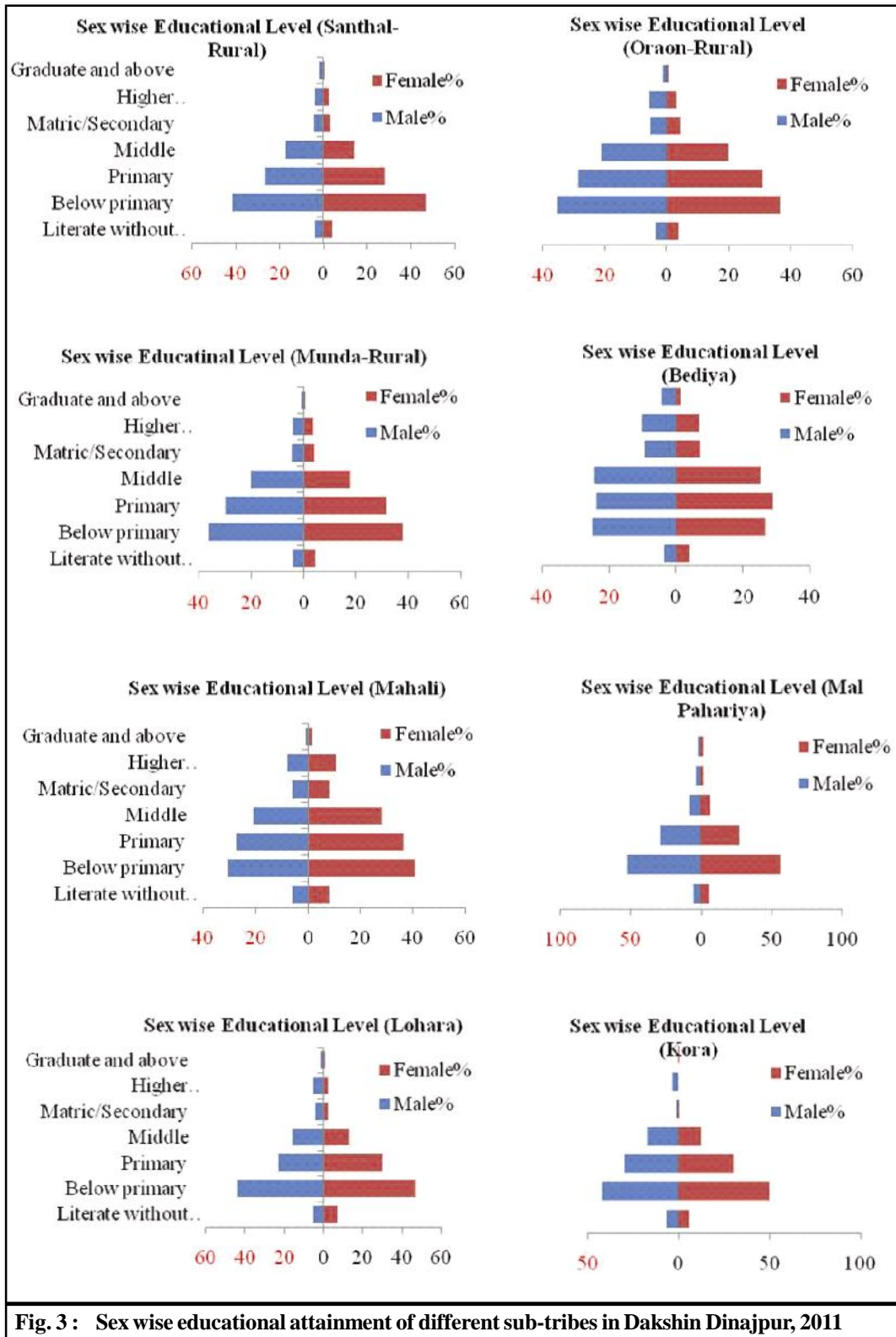


Fig. 3 : Sex wise educational attainment of different sub-tribes in Dakshin Dinajpur, 2011

Table 2 : Characteristics of respondents based on schedule survey	
Categorical variables	Percentage (%) of frequency
Gender	
Male	44
Female	56
Main occupation	
Government Service	30
All Others	70
Family Income	
Low (Rs. <5000)	37
Medium (Rs. 5000-10000)	23
High (Rs. >10000)	40
Residence	
Rural Area	79
Urban Area	21
Continuation in Education	
Stop	67
Continue	33

Source: Primary Field Survey, 2017-2018

The key variables to estimate the continuation of education among the scheduled tribes, included in the study are dependent variable and independent variables. Continuation of education of tribal persons (age group: 14-24 years old) has been selected as the dependent variable. The respondents were asked to answer the question whether they are continuing their study or not which are coded as 1 or 0 respectively.

Out of the total sample, 67 per cent reported that they were not continuing their study. On the other hand gender, household size, parental education, the main occupation of the family, family income and residential area are identified as dependent variables. The household size has been taken as a continuous independent variable where the family sizes ranges from 3 to more than 7 members. Parental education is another independent variable which is a combination of father's education and mother's educational level. Parental education has been identified from illiterate to the educational level of higher secondary (H.S.) and more. The mean of parental education score is 2.105.

To predict the continuation of education in association with some selected socioeconomic variables an effective statistical tool (Morgan and Teachman, 1988) binary logistic regression has been incorporated in which the dependent variable can be explained with the help of the log odds ratio, which indicates the frequency of occurrence in one category related to not occur in that same category (Bohrstedt and Knoke, 1994; Gil-Flores *et al.*, 2011). Value of odds ratio greater than 1 (one) reveals the more likelihood of event occurrence where as odds ratio with below 1 (one) depicts less likelihood occurrence of an event.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The logistic regression was performed to ascertain the effect of gender, family size, parental education, family income, main occupation and residential area on the likelihood that the respondents are continuing their education. The model is statistically significant, Chi square (χ^2) 54.341, $p < 0.0005$.

In the perspective model the significant predictors are explaining 58.3 per cent of the variance concerning about continuation of education and correctly classified 88.00 per cent of cases.

The resultant Table 3 of logistic regression shows that \hat{a} (the regression coefficient) for the variables like household size ($p < 0.015$), parental education ($p < 0.017$) and family income ($p < 0.013$) are significant predictors of estimating the respondents' continuation in education. On the other hand, gender, main occupation and residence area have not been playing a significant role to estimate the educational continuation in the analysis, though they have an important responsibility to predict about continuation of education or achieving more educational attainment.

Table 3 : Effect of some selected variables on the decision of tribal people to stop or continue their further education

Background Variables	Continuation in Education (Age Group: 14-24 Years old)	
	\hat{a}	Odds ratio
Gender (Female ®)		
Male	0.278	1.321
Household/Family Size	-0.669*	0.521
Parental Education	1.159*	3.186
Main Occupation (Others ®)		
Govt. Service	0.069	1.072
Family Income (Low ®)		
Medium	1.322	3.750
High	2.574*	13.122
Residence Area (Rural ®)		
Urban	-1.461	0.232

*Significant at 95% level (p value <0.05)

® Reference category

Boys / Girls with Parental education (H.S. or more) are 3 times more likely wanted to continue their study than the boys/girls with illiterate parents. Boys / Girls with higher family income of Rs. >10000 are about 13 times more likely to continue their study than the boys/girls with low family income of Rs. <5000. For household size, the probability of continuation in education is contingent on household size level or score. Higher score in household size indicating less likely to continue in education. That means continuation of education of tribal boys/girls during the age group of 14-24 years old is decreasing with the increase of household size / family size.

Major Findings :

From above analysis it is apparent that educational attainment among all the tribal people has dramatically lower down specially after upper primary or middle level which indicates low educational attainment prevailed among them. That means tribal people have a tendency to drop out of school at the level of upper primary and middle or secondary stage.

In the present study among various socioeconomic variables, their parental education, family income, household size/family size play a crucial role in having deprivation in educational attainment. Due to economic and family pressure most of the scheduled tribe children are compelled to stop their study mainly at upper primary as well as at the secondary stage. Illiteracy and minimum educational level of parents produce an extra catalyst to discontinue their education. As the tribal people are remaining in low socioeconomic condition previously, gradual economic deprivation

gives birth of poverty and pressure on the family. To get relief from poverty of the family, children have to take part in economic activities with low income at the age of school education. Though the family can get instant relief from poverty they have to live within the low standard of living. In this way a vicious cycle of low socioeconomic condition is sustaining among the tribal people.

Limitations :

The study has limitation in some aspects. The present study only considers some selected socioeconomic variable to estimate continuation in education among tribal people. But there are other variables such as interest of the individual, early marriage, addicted to local alcohol, household, educational facilities, and distance from the educational institution which also may have an influence on their decision to continue or stop school education and these aspects are not included in the model of the present study.

Conclusion :

The study reveals that literacy rates among tribal males is apparently greater than tribal females. But in respect of educational attainment males and females both are in lower section means both of them discontinue their study at the earliest stage. And now-a-days developmental activities reached to most of the tribal people and they are coming into the mainstream of the society. But educationally they are still backward in spite of having educational development schemes provided by the government. Actually, they cannot get access of educational facility as they are not continuing or are not able to continue as well as complete their next level of education to avail the better advantages thereafter. More minute investigation is needed to unearth the factors hide behind the low educational attainment prevailed among the scheduled tribe population.

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