

The Changing Trend of Tribal Education in West Bengal with Special Emphasis on the Girl Students

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Abstract

Education is an investment towards development. Gender gap in education is common among the backward classes of people in India. Aim of this study is to understand the recent trend of tribal education among the Scheduled Tribes of West Bengal. Study covered four districts from different zones of West Bengal. These were Alipurduar from north, Birbhum from central part, Purulia from west and South 24 Pargana from the southern part. The selected villages were chiefly inhabited by the tribal population. Secondary data related to tribal education were collected from Census of India (2011) and Statistics of School Education (2010-11), while primary data were collected through field work in four districts. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were followed. A structured schedule was used for collection of household level data, which covered education related questions. Personal interviews with the teachers, parents and case studies of the students supplemented the quantitative data. Fourteen different tribal groups were studied in the selected areas during field work. Secondary sources suggest educational backwardness and gender gap among the tribal population. Findings show district wise and community specific variation in status of education among the studied population. A positive development was observed in case of girl's education. The gender gap is gradually decreasing. Among many factors responsible for this changing trend, major was development programmes meant for girl's education in West Bengal.

Keywords: Education; Tribal girls; Gender gap; Development Schemes; Change.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. It is one of the essential requirements for man-making and nation building. One of the avenues to speedy development is education (Sachhidananda 1992). Challenges of Education - A policy Perspective (1985) notes that, "Education helps to bridge the gap of disparities between people, socio-economic groups and region and thereby reduces



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of Utkarsh Yojana, are getting a chance of exposure to free education in the top public schools of Chhattisgarh. Selected students are getting special coaching at Prayas Awasiya Vidhyalaya for appearing in the competitive examinations for admissions in engineering and medical courses. A good number of tribal students are inclined towards vocational education, higher education, and also doing professional courses after school education. *Krida Parisar* (sports complexes) are producing a number of sports personals by exploring the natural hidden talents of tribal students. Gradually, the infrastructure and facilities for school education in the remote tribal areas of Chhattisgarh are getting improved.

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