

## **Educational Advancement of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal (1947-2011)**

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### **Abstract:**

*The present paper focuses on the educational advancement of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal. The Government has taken up various welfare schemes for the educational advancement of Scheduled Tribes. Literacy rate of STs of West Bengal significantly increased from 6.55 per cent in 1961 to 57.93 per cent in 2011. The literacy rate of ST females is substantially lower than that of ST males. The fact is that even in 2011 more than fifty per cent of tribal women were illiterate. Only 0.6 percent of tribal females in rural West Bengal obtained graduation level education in 2011-12. In rural West Bengal the attendance rate of STs increased from 32.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 47.4 per cent in 2011-12. But the attendance rate of STs has not progressed much. The attendance rate of tribal females was also lower than that of the tribal males. The school drop out rate of ST students was alarmingly high. Specifically, for Classes I-X the drop out rate was more than 80 per cent upto 2010. On the whole, the educational advancement of STs in West Bengal is not satisfactory.*

**Keywords:** *Scheduled Tribes, Educational Schemes, literacy rate, general education, current attendance rate, dropout rate.*

### **1. Introduction**

Education is the foundation for any kind of socio-economic development. it forms a significant part in the overall advancement of persons, enabling them to attain superior attentiveness, better conception of their social, political and cultural atmosphere and also facilitates the development of their socio-economic circumstances. Education is a very important component of human resource development and management. Education provides nothing less than a total and integrated approach to the life of an individual for the pleasant advancement of his whole individuality in relation to the community to which he belongs.<sup>1</sup> Educational advancement is an essential obligation for social and economic advancement of any community. This is particularly true of tribals in India Education of Scheduled Tribes assumes added importance in the sense that it elevates

their social status and equips them with the sharpness to take advantage of the emerging opportunities both in employment and other economic performance.

Tribes are primitive communities that constitute a significant part of the national population. They constitute an integrated part of Indian society. It is in appreciation of this vital requirement that in the Directive Principles of State Policy, as part of the Constitution of India, the encouragement of educational security of the Scheduled Tribes has been made a specific liability of the Governments at the Centre and in the States.<sup>2</sup>

Education is important for the general improvement of the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes. Education is not only an important input for the economic development of tribes but also for developing their inner strength in meeting the new challenges of life.. Bhowmick & Bhowmic say ‘‘education can help the tribals to build their inner strength and equip them to meet the present day challenges.’’<sup>3</sup>

During the Pre- Independence Period the Scheduled Tribes Communities were most backward. Therefore, after Independence the political leaders took care to ensure that provision for all round development of the people of the backward societies was included in the Indian Constitution.<sup>4</sup>

Since Independence various strategies have been adopted at the national level for safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Tribes of the country. Attempts have been made to protect them from social and economic prejudices and for bridging the existing gaps and inequalities between different sectors of population and thereby accelerating the process of national incorporation. While this aims in view an exact requirements have been made in the Constitution of the Republic of India to adopt policies and programmes for promotional process of educational concentration for the Scheduled Tribes.<sup>5</sup>

After independence, the Indian Constitution has recognised the vital importance of education for social uplift of the tribal people. Hence, the provision of education to the tribal peoples has been assured through Article 46, under the Directive Principles of State Policy. Besides this, provision of special amenities and rights has been an approved for the tribal peoples through Article – 15(4), 29(1), and 350-A, etc. The Constitution of India devolves responsibility for education upon the Central as well as the State Governments. The philosophy of tribal development and also to fulfil the constitutional obligations (Constitution of India, Articles 45& 46) both the State and Central Governments have been making some efforts to increase education among the tribes.

The Government has taken up various extensive welfare schemes to implement the advancement of tribal communities. Out of these welfare schemes, educational schemes are the most important, as without modern education, the Scheduled Tribes would not be able to enjoy the benefits of the modern developmental attributes.

After a long period of Independence, India is yet to achieve the required level of education. This is most evident in the case of tribal societies. Each of the tribal communities has its own cultural characteristics. But in general they are very poor. Educational backwardness lies at the root of their economic, social and political backwardness. The present study highlights the educational advancement of the Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal.

## 2. Literature Review

Tribal education is a significant subject which has been broadly discussed before time of independence in India. Many social scientists, educationists, planners and social workers have worked in this field. They used different methods to study the different aspects of tribal education. The present review tries to find out the research trend and states why the present work is fairly different from previous studies of education among the tribals of West Bengal.

Roy Chowdhary (1964)<sup>6</sup> has studied the education among the few tribal communities in West Bengal (viz., The Santal, Munda, Oraon, Bhumij and the Malpaharia) and has made an in-depth observation of the socio-psychological factors and other associated factors. Sachchidananda (1968)<sup>7</sup> has studied the change in social values, consequent upon the progress of education among the women of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. Dani (1979)<sup>8</sup> wrote – “poverty and lack of education are very closely related ... the social and geographical isolation of the tribal communities is the cardinal factor responsible for the slow progress of education among them”. Bhowmik, Chowdhury and Sarkar (1988)<sup>9</sup> had made a situational analysis of tribal literacy of West Bengal and data based only on census reports. Tarafdar (1990) highlights the secondary education amongst the scheduled tribe girls.<sup>10</sup> George (2004) wrote – “...education has come as an enlivening and empowering agent for women and all other weaker sections of the society...”.<sup>11</sup> Lewis and Lockheed (2007) confirmed the concerned situation of tribal female education and wrote – “Among the tribal community, tribal girls form the most neglected group, and are least likely to be educated”.<sup>12</sup>

In a study on the tribes of Andhra Pradesh, Sujatha (2001)<sup>13</sup> contends that ‘the educational development of tribal communities fails to adequately address the specific disadvantages characterizing the tribal population.’ Jha & Jhingran (2002)<sup>14</sup> have powerfully advocated the use of the mother tongue or home language as the medium of instruction in the early stages of education. This assumes greater consequence in the perspective of the education of tribal children because their mother tongue is often fairly different from the main languages of the state or the regional languages and it is attract difficult to a local teacher from the same tribal community. Sundaram (1966)<sup>15</sup> has observed that in different states of North-East India the average level of literacy and education is higher than even in the superior areas of India. In the western part of India, i.e. Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharastra the tribal image is of a different character. Biswas (1966)<sup>16</sup> has appropriately remarked that the cultural multiplicity of the Indian tribes makes any educational programme concentrating on them a very complicated and somewhat dangerous activity. He also recommended that the educational schemes should be formulated in such a way that the adult tribals as well as their children could benefit from these. Nair (2007)<sup>17</sup> has laid emphasis on non-formal education in tribal areas predominantly to reach out to the hardest-to reach group of children in inaccessible areas. Abdul Raheem(2011)<sup>18</sup> explained that ‘education is an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy and the policies have to focus on inclusive rather than divisive growth strategies.’

Bhowmick & Bhowmick (2000)<sup>19</sup> crucially observe the issues and problems about tribal literacy and lay down a set of policy guidelines. The book covers a broad range of factors accountable for acceptance and rejection of tribal literacy programmes. Chowdhuri (1992)<sup>20</sup> in his article 'Tribal Literacy from Planning Perspective' has identified police stations in the state of West Bengal where tribals signifying substantial number of their population concentrations are marked with low literacy level. The author analysed the data on the basis of different ranges of literacy rate along with tribal attendance in different numbers; male, female and general population figures of the tribals have been dealt with here.

The brief review of literature on tribal development reveals that tribal educational development programmes have been inadequately analysed in the existing literature. The present paper thus deals with the government (both Central and State) initiatives in general and social protection schemes for the development of tribal education and analyses the development of tribal education in the context of West Bengal.

### **3. Government of India Initiatives for Tribal Educational Development**

Since the nation's Independence in 1947, the Indian government sponsored a variety of programmes to address the problems of illiteracy in both rural and urban India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Minister of Education, envisaged strong central government control over education throughout the country, with a reliable educational system. The Union government recognized the University Education Commission (1948–1949) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952–1953) to develop proposals to modernise India's education system. The Resolution on Scientific Policy was adopted by the government of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister. The Nehru government sponsored the development of high-quality scientific education institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology. In 1961, the Union government formed the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as an autonomous organisation that would advise both the Union and State governments on formulating and implementing education policies.<sup>21</sup> In 1962 the commission for STs, in addition to the reservation of seats has recommended the relaxation in admission criteria as well as in the age limit for the entry of the students of these communities in educational institution as well as an employment.<sup>22</sup>

Based on the report and recommendations of the Education Commission (1964–1966), the then government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the first National Policy on Education in 1968, which called for a "radical restructuring" and make equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national assimilation and better cultural and economic development.<sup>23</sup> The Education Commission (1964-66) also emphasized, "Different tribal people are at varying stages of economic development. There is much difference in the skills they have attained and in the technologies they use."<sup>24</sup>

The government of the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy on Education in May, 1986,<sup>25</sup> the new policy called for "special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity," especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities.<sup>26</sup>

The New Education Policy documents emphasises to concurrence on priority bases-

- i) The opening of primary schools in tribal conquered areas,
- ii) Starting residential schools for tribal including Ashram Schools,
- iii) Introduction of Anganwadi Centres, non-formal an adult education centres in areas mostly inhabited by the STs. It is also deliberate that programme at all stages of education will be planned to create consciousness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people as also of their enormous inspired talents.<sup>27</sup>

The 1986 National Policy on Education was customized in 1992 by the P.V. Narasimha Rao government.<sup>28</sup> Programme of Action (PoA) 1992, under the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, envisaged behaviour of a common entrance examination on all India bases for admission to professional and technical programmes in the country.

In free India, the State and Central Govt. have been making a number of efforts to increase education among the STs and to eliminate difference between STs and non-STs yet, the literacy percentage among the STs in most parts of the country is very low and there still exists an extensive gap between the tribals and other communities on this particular proportions.<sup>29</sup> Besides governmental goal directed efforts, the social and economic pressures have also generated a sense of compulsion among some traditionally unexposed families towards schooling.<sup>30</sup>

#### **4. Educational Schemes for STs in West Bengal**

##### **4.1 Centrally Sponsored Schemes**

Educational advancement is a way to economic and social development, and the most valuable implement for empowering the tribals. The Education Division of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs makes all efforts to enhancement the efforts of the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the State Governments/UT Administrations by administering various schemes with the object of creating an attractive way to education through infrastructure by way of construction of hostels for ST students, establishment of Ashram Schools, Vocational Training Centre as well as to maximize maintenance of ST students within the various stages of school education and promoting higher learning by providing economic incentives in the form of scholarships such as Pre-Matric Scholarship, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship and National Overseas Scholarship for ST students.

##### ***Feeder School***

The feeder schools at primary level for the tribal boys and girls have been recognized to feed the Eklavya Model Residential Schools. These are English Medium schools from class-I to V. The students passing class V in the feeder schools as a rule join the Eklavya Model Schools in Class VI. The Eklavya Model School under the scheme will ultimately come under CBSE Board.

##### ***Eklavya Model Residential School***

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) are set up in States with grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India. The objective of EMRS is to provide quality

middle and high level education to Scheduled Tribe students in remote areas, not only to enable them to avail of reservation in high and professional educational courses and as jobs in government and private sectors but also to have admission to the best opportunities in education at par with the non ST population.

To provide superiority education to STs boys and girls from class VI to XII, five Ekalavya Model Residential School's are functioning in the State in the Districts— 1)Bankura, 2) Purulia, 3)Burdwan, 4) Paschim Medinipur and 5)Jalpaiguri with funds from Government of India. Each school has a capacity of 420 students. The students admitted to these schools are provided with scholarship, free food and lodging etc. Computer education has been introduced in all the schools from class VI.

***Centrally Sponsored Pre-Metric Scholarship to the children of those engaged in Unclean Occupation***

The beneficiaries of this scheme are the students of those parents are flayers, tanners, scavengers, or engaged in similar other profession. The day scholars and hostellers of this category also obtain grants (Table 1).

**Table 1: Hosteller and Day Scholar Grants for ST students in West Bengal**

Hosteller	Day Scholar
III to X –Rs. 700/-P.M for 10 months only.	I to X Rs. 110/- P.M. for 10months only.
Adhoc Grant Rs. 1000/- P.A.	Adhoc Grant Rs. 750/- P.A.

Source: BCW Dept. Government of West Bengal.

***Girls / Boys Hostel for ST Students***

The scheme for construction of ST girls' hostels was started during the Third Plan Period. A separate scheme for construction of hostels for Scheduled Tribe boys was launched in 1989-90. Both schemes were merged into one scheme during the 10th Five Year Plan. The Scheme was revised with effect from the financial year 2008-09 (i.e. 01-04-2008). The objective of the scheme is to support literacy among tribal students by providing hostel accommodation to such ST students who would otherwise have been unable to continue their education because of their poor economic condition, and the remote location of their villages.

At Central Hostel students at post-matric level from different educational institutions can stay. The BCW Department has set up a number of Central Hostels for both boys and girls with the Govt. of India's assistants in ST conquered areas. Presently under the Babu Jagjivan Ram Chatrawas Yojna, Govt. of India in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment provides 100% assistants for construction girls' hostel and 50% assistants are also available for ST students from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

***Post- Matric Scholarship for ST Students***

The scheme has been in operation since 1944-45. The objective of the scheme is to provide financial support to the Scheduled Tribe students studying at post-matriculation or postsecondary levels to enable them to complete their education. The income of

parents / guardian should not exceed Rs.2, 00,000/- per annum. The rates of post matric scholarship have been revised with effect from 01/07/2010.

The State Govt. follows the rates fixed by the Govt. of India. However, the West Bengal State Govt. pays at higher rates (Rs.750/- per month) and therefore additional burden is borne by the State Govt. The scholarship is given for study in various accepted post secondary courses from recognized educational institutions. Since the maintenance allowance for different courses vary broadly, the same have been grouped into four categories and shown below as I, II, III, and IV. Tuition fees and compulsory non refundable fees are also paid as per an accepted rate of the Govt. organization (Table 2). Amount utilized and the number of beneficiaries of ST students for post-matric scholarship in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11 are given in table 3.

**Table 2: Post Matric Scholarship for ST Students in West Bengal**

Group	Course of Study	Rate of maintenance allowance (Rs. Per Month)	
		Hostellers	Day Scholars
I	Medical/Engineering/B.Sc(Agri)/C.P.L/M.Phil Ph.D/L.L.M etc	1200	550
II	B.Pharm/ B.Nurshing/ L.L.B/Hotel Management/ Post Graduate Courses etc.	820	530
III	General Courses / ITI/ Polytechnic Courses	750	300
IV	Classes XI and XII in 10+2 system Intermediate courses / ITI/ Polytechnic Courses	750	230

Source: As in Table 1.

**Table 3: Amount Utilized and Number of Beneficiaries of ST Students for Post-Matric Scholarship in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11**

Year	Amount Utilized (Rs.)	No. Of Beneficiaries
2007-08	5,79,08,973	17,537
2008-09	14,31,76,279	42,524
2009-10	10,23,00,819	29,720
2010-11	8,88,07,005	27,810

Source: As in Table 1.

***National Overseas Scholarship Scheme (NOS)***

The scheme has been in function since 195455. This was a Non-Plan Scheme, which became a Plan scheme from 2007-08. The objective of the scheme is to provide financial support to selected ST students pursuing higher studies (Masters, Doctoral and Post Doctoral level) in certain specified fields of Engineering, Technology and Science only. 13 Scheduled Tribe candidates and 2 candidates belonging to PTGs can be awarded the scholarship annually for pursuing Post Graduate, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral level

courses. The scholarship is not awarded for pursuing Graduate courses. The scholarship is awarded to ST candidates (one member from each family) below 35 years of age on the date of advertisement, provided the total income of the candidate or his/her parents/guardians does not exceed Rs. 25,000/- per month.

***Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF)***

The Scheme has been launched from the year 2005-06. The objective of the scheme is to provide fellowships in the form of economic support to students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes to pursue higher studies such as M. Phil and Ph.D. This scheme covers all the Universities/Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under section 2(f) of the UGC Act. However, number of Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF) awarded for ST students during 2009-10 to 2011-12 is given below (Table 4).

**Table 4: Numbers of RGNF awarded for ST students in West Bengal, 2009-10 to 2011-12**

Year	Number of Awarded
2009-2010	13
2010-2011	19
2011-2012	19

Source: Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

***Vocational Training in Tribal Areas (VTC)***

This scheme was introduced in 1992-93, revised with effect from 1.4.2009 and is being implemented through the State Governments/UT Administrations, Institutions or Organizations set up by Government as autonomous bodies, educational and other institutions like local bodies and cooperative societies and Non-Governmental Organizations etc. The main aim of this scheme is to upgrading the skills of the tribal youth in various traditional/ modern vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which would enable them to gain suitable employment or enable them to become self employed. The scheme covers all the States and Union Territories. The scheme is exclusively for benefit of the Scheduled Tribes as well as PTGs. As far as possible minimum 33% seats will be reserved from tribal girl candidates.

***Mid- Day- Meal***

Education plays a vital and significant role in fulfilling the basic needs of a common man viz. food, shelter and clothing. The most important aim of Education is to prepare and develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually to lead equality life. Education is a process through which a child is made capable to attain the essential competencies and skills to face the challenges in life to survive, and to make struggle for subsistence.

Various schemes were implemented in the primary education sector by the Government to reach the deprived population. Access to Primary Education was universalized through flagship programmes of Govt. like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, however, despite this; a few

children are still deprived of Primary Education due to incapability of their parents to send them to schools because of their poor economical status. For, these parents, sending their children to school means not only incurring extra financial burden but also depriving them of some money which their children would have earned otherwise by doing Labour. That being the approach of these economically backward parents, one may, perhaps, to inspire the parents and children was to bring their children to school by providing food and nutritional needs.

The concept of mid-day meal scheme is not new in India as its roots can be traced back to pre independence era when British administration initiated a Mid- Day- Meal Programme for disadvantage children in Madras Municipal Corporation in 1925. Government of India launched National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Commonly known as Mid-Day- Meal Scheme) on August 15, 1995 to supply mid-day - meal to the children studying at primary stage.<sup>31</sup> In 2002, the Supreme Court directed the Government to supply cooked Mid-Day- Meals (as opposed to providing dry rations) in all Government and Government aided primary schools. It was revised in September 2004 and in September 2006.<sup>32</sup>

With a view to increase universalize of Primary Education (class I-V) by improving enrolment, attendance, retention and learning levels of children, especially those belonging to deprived sections and to improve nutritional status of students of primary stage, the Mid-Day-Meal Programme was started in West Bengal in 1100 schools of six districts from January, 2003.

The main objectives of the Programme are:

- a) To increase enrolment, retention and to tone up the learning abilities of the beneficiaries, especially of children belonging to poor and down trodden sections of the society.
- b) To provide nutritious meal to the school going children to achieve the goal of Healthy mind in Healthy body.
- c) To encourage companionship and feelings of common brotherhood among the children belonging to different caste, colour and creed by providing meals to them together and also to increase their retention in schools.

#### **4.2 Schemes for STs of Govt. of West Bengal**

The Backward Classes Welfare Department executes a good number of educational schemes aimed at spreading education among the ST in West Bengal. Details of educational schemes executed by the BCW Department are as follows:

##### ***Book Grant for ST Students***

The scheme provides financial support for purchase of books to the students of classes V to X in Government / Govt. aided schools. Family income ceiling for eligibility is up to Rs. 36,000 /- per annum. The class wise rates of such grants are given in Table 5. Number of ST beneficiaries and utilised amount for book grants in West Bengal from 2007-2008 to 2010-11 shown in table 6.

**Table 5: Rate of Book Grant for ST Students from Classes V to X in West Bengal**

Class	Rate
V	Rs. 20/-per annum
VI	Rs. 150/-per annum
VII	Rs. 200/-per annum
VIII	Rs. 280/-per annum
IX	Rs. 300 /-per annum
X	Rs.275/-per annum + Exam. Fees (As charged by the Board )

Source: As in Table 1.

**Table 6: Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilised Amount for Book Grants in West Bengal from 2007-2008 to 2010-11**

Year	Amount Utilized (Rs.)	No. Of Beneficiaries
2007-08	5,09,32,905	2,72,817
2008-09	6,06,04,850	3,05,098
2009-10	6,13,02,839	3,11,474
2010-11	7,23,30,824	3,65,844

Source: As in Table 1.

**Maintenance Grant for ST Students**

Scheme provides maintenance grant to eligible ST day scholar Rs. 40/ per- month. The aim is to provide impetus to the parents for sending their wards to schools. This grant helps the students to meet their conveyance and other expenses. There is ceiling of parent's income of RS. 36,000 / per annum. The quota for ST students is unlimited. The number of ST beneficiaries and utilised amount for maintenance grants in West Bengal from 2007-08 to 2010-11 given in table 7.

**Table 7: Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilised Amount for Maintenance Grants in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11**

Year	Amount Utilized (Rs.)	No. Of Beneficiaries
2007-08	7,98,01,880	1,69,415
2008-09	9,73,46,480	2,02,805
2009-10	12,39,32,520	2,07,424
2010-11	12,59,34,920	2,62,368

Source: As in Table 1.

**Other Compulsory Charges for ST Students**

Under the scheme each ST student gets RS. 35 / per annum to permit them to pay various compulsory charges to the school such as development fee, library fee etc. Family income limit has been fixed at RS. 36,000 / per annum as a condition of eligibility. Here highlights the number of ST beneficiaries and utilised amount for various compulsory charges in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11 (Table 8).

**Table 8: Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilised Amount for various Compulsory Charges in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11**

Year	Amount Utilized (Rs.)	No. Of Beneficiaries
2007-08	69,58,615	1,89,161
2008-09	77,09,378	2,20,519
2009-10	85,73,635	2,43,013
2010-11	98,63,095	2,56,271

Source: As in Table 1.

***Hostel grant for ST students residing in school attached Hostels***

Each boarder gets hostel grant for 10 months only Rs. 750 / per month. Income ceiling limit for the parents has been fixed Rs. 36,000 / per annum. The number of STs beneficiaries and utilised amount for hostel grants in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11 shown in table 9.

**Table 9: Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilised Amount for Hostel Grants in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11**

Year	Amount Utilized (Rs.)	No. Of Beneficiaries
2007-08	18,67,84,200	31,462
2008-09	21,34,60,080	39,291
2009-10	21,31,10,631	43,606
2010-11	25,98,40,258	39,199

Source: As in Table 1.

***Ashram Hostel***

The scheme is operational in tribal sub plan States and UT Administration since 1990-91. The Scheme has been revised with effect from the financial year 2008-09 (i.e. 01-04-2008). The objective of the scheme is to promote and extend educational facilities to Scheduled Tribe students including PTGs. Ashram Schools provide education with residential facilities in an environment conducive to learning. The funding for the scheme to the State is done on matching (50:50) basis, while cent percent assistance is given to UTs.

Ashram Hostels for ST boys and girl students are set up by the BCW Department within the campus of the recognized schools. Students studying in Class I to X get admission into such hostels. For maintenance, the students are paid at the rate of Rs. 750 / per month for the entire academic year. In addition, they are given costs, bedrolls, garments, soap, kerosene etc.

***Merit Scholarship Schemes for students reading in Classes IX to XII and V to X***

The State Government runs two types of schemes i) Merit Scholarship Scheme for ST students reading in classes IX to XII and ii) Merit Scholarship Scheme for ST girl students studying in classes V to X out of its own resources (Table 10).

**Table 10: Merit Scholarship Scheme for ST Student in West Bengal**

Parents / Guardians Income Ceiling	Classes V to X and XI to XII	Quota
60,920 /- Per Annum	V to VI –Rs.100/-P.M.	3000
	VII to VIII Rs. 125/- P.M	
	IX to X Rs. 150/- P.M.	
36000/- Per Annum	XI to XII Rs. 400/- P.M	1200

Source: As in Table 1.

***Upgradation of Merit Scholarship for Students reading in Classes IX to XII***

The objective of the scheme is to upgrade the merit of Scheduled Tribe including PTG students in classes IX to XII by providing them with facilities for all round development through education in residential schools so that they can compete with other students for admission to higher education courses and for senior administrative and technical occupations. A Package grant is given with the following break- up (Table 11). The number of ST beneficiaries and utilised amount for up- gradation of merit scholarship in West Bengal from 2007-08 to 2010-11 (Table 12).

**Table 11: Grants for ST Students for Competitive Exam. In Classes IX to XII, West Bengal**

Grants	Rs.
1. Boarding and lodging charge for 10 months.	7000/-
2. Pocket money for 10 months	2000/-
3. Books and Stationery.	2500/-
4. Honorarium to Principal, Expert and other incidental charges.	8000/-
Total	19500/-

Source: As in Table 1.

**Table 12: Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilised Amount for Up- Gradation of Merit Scholarship in West Bengal, 2007-08 to2010-11**

Year	Amount Utilized (Rs.)	No. of Beneficiaries
2007-2008	5,62,725	58
2008-2009	2,58,375	20
2009-2010	No Fund	-----
2010-2011	4,64,575	35

Source: As in Table 1.

***Pandit Raghunath Murmu Residential Schools***

BCW Dept. of West Bengal decided to construction 5 residential schools for ST students in the districts of Bankura, Purulia, Burdwan, PachimMedinipur, Purba Medinipur and Jalpaiguri V to XII in the name of Pandit Raghunath Murmu, important cultural reformer and discoverer of “Olchiki” script for the Santali language. These schools are Govt. sponsored Bengali Medium and recognized by the WB Board of Secondary Education

and WB Council of Higher Secondary Education. The Schools are under the management of the School education Department.

***Belpahari Residential Girl's Schools for ST***

In deliberation of the backwardness of scheduled tribes girl students, a residential higher secondary girls' school has been established at Belpahari in Jhargram subdivision of Midnapore district. The total intake capacity of the school is 360 scheduled tribes girls. The students are provided with boarding, lodging, garments, medical treatment and educational equipments at Government cost.

***Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Medha Puraskar***

500 ST students are selected each year for award of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Medha Puraskar on the basis of the result in the Madhyamik Pariksha conducted by west Bengal Board of Secondary Education. The cash prize of Rs. 5000/ and a Certificate of merit is being awarded to these meritorious students.

***Joint Entrance Coaching***

16 centres each with 40 students for providing specialized coaching of ST students aspiring to appear in the joint entrance examination for admission to Medical and Engineering courses are running in different districts. A reputable coaching organisation is entrusted with the task. Students are selected jointly by the Institute and the PO-cum-DWO/DWO of the concerned districts. The entire spending of the coaching is borne by the State Government. Students are also paid a small stipend during the period of coaching.

These programmes offering incentives for educational advancement of tribal population contributed to the improvement of status of their education, which we discuss in the section that follows.

**5. Status of Education of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal**

Literacy is an important pointer of development among tribal groups. Literacy and education are reasonably good indicators of progress in a society. Spread of literacy is generally connected with necessary traits of today's civilisation such as modernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, communication and commerce. Higher levels of education and literacy lead to a superior attentiveness and also contributes in development of economic conditions. It acts as a means for social upliftment attract and the returns on investments made in almost every feature of development effort, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental deprivation control, or empowerment of women and weaker sections of the society. Improved levels of literacy are also fundamental for acquiring various skills. According to Census of India, 'A person who can both read and write with understanding in any language is to be taken as literate'.

According to 2011 Census the literacy rate of scheduled tribes in India is 58.96 per cent of which 68.53 per cent are male and 49.35 per cent female. The tribal literacy rate in some of the states is below the national average (58.96 per cent). For example, in West Bengal the tribal literacy rate was only 57.93 per cent out of which 68.17 percent were male and 47.71 per cent female. In West Bengal, as per 2011 Census report, the total

population was 9,12,76,115 out of which the **Scheduled Tribes** population was 52,96,953 (5.8 per cent).

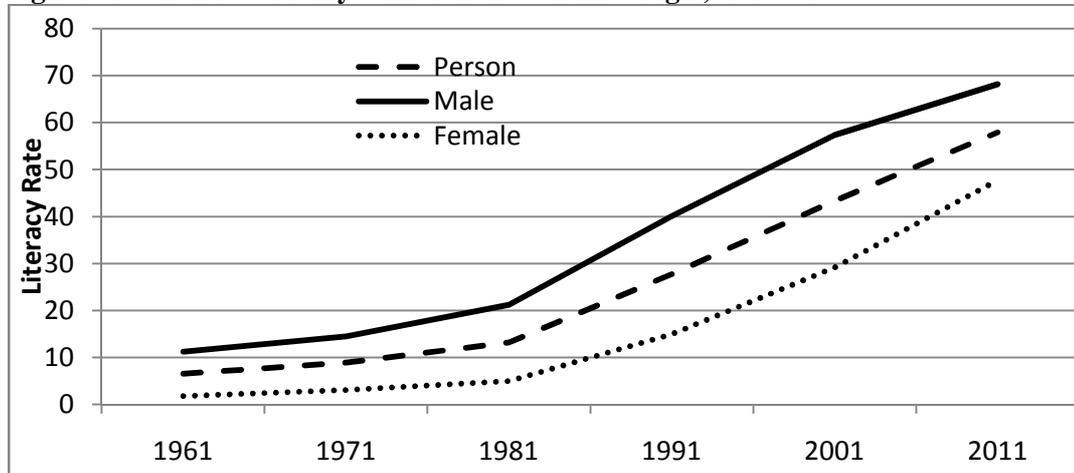
Literacy rate of STs of West Bengal significantly increased from 6.55 per cent in 1961 to 57.93 per cent in 2011. Literacy rate of ST Female of West Bengal significantly increased from 1.8 per cent in 1961 to 29.15 per cent in 2001. In the last decade it significantly expanded from 29.15 per cent in 2001 to 47.71 per cent in 2011. The literacy rate of ST female is substantially low than that of male. The fact is that even in 2011 more than fifty per cent of tribal women are not able to read and write (Table 13).

**Table 13: Trends of Literacy Rate of STs in West Bengal, 1961 to 2011**

Census Year	Person	Male	Female	Gender gap
1961	6.55	11.2	1.8	9.4
1971	8.92	14.49	3.09	11.4
1981	13.21	21.16	5.01	16.15
1991	27.78	40.07	14.98	25.09
2001	43.40	57.38	29.15	28.23
2011	57.93	68.17	47.71	20.46

Source: Census of India, 1961-2011.

**Figure 1: Trend of Literacy Rate of STs in West Bengal, 1961-2011**

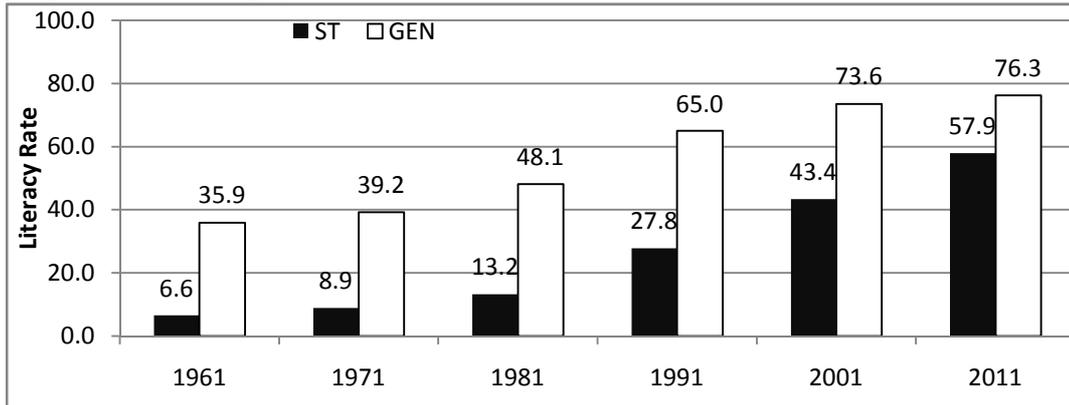


The literacy rate among tribal females was lower than that among males during the period from 1961 to 2011. The gender gap in literacy rate among tribals tended to increase from 9.4 to 28.23 percentage point during 1961 to 2001 and it declined thereafter to 20.46 percentage point in 2011.

The literacy rate of STs was also lagging behind than that of other community like General Caste. In 2001, the literacy rate of GEN was 73.6 per cent but it was only 43.4

per cent for STs. In 2011 the literacy rate of GEN was 76.3 per cent but it was only 57.9 per cent for STs. The gap of the literacy rate between GEN and STs were not declined (Figure 2).

**Figure 2 Literacy Rate of Scheduled Tribes in Comparison with General Caste people in West Bengal, 1961 to 2011**



Source: As in Table 13.

If the adult members of the family are literate or highly educated there is scope of participation in more remunerative economic activities and hence there is a scope of increase of income. But among STs a significant person of adult members are not literate. If we compare with the SC and GEN caste, the STs are still lagging behind in respect of literate adult members. In 1999-2000, in rural West Bengal, there were no literate adult members in 49.2 per cent households and no literate adult female members in 77.9 per cent households. During the course of the time the households having no literate adult members/ female members were gradually decreasing. In 2011-12 about 32.5 per cent households were no literate adult members and about 43.4 per cent households were no literate adult female members. In urban West Bengal relatively lower numbers households with no literate adult members/ female members in comparison with rural West Bengal. Here the gap between STs and GEN was also relatively low. But the fact is that relatively lower numbers of STs are located in urban West Bengal. They are predominant in rural area (Table 14).

**Table 14: Percentage Share of households with no literate adult member and adult female member by Caste in West Bengal, 1999-2000 to 2011-2012**

Year	ST		SC		GEN	
	No Literate Adult member	No Literate Adult Female	No Literate Adult member	No Literate Adult Female	No Literate Adult member	No Literate Adult Female
<b>Rural</b>						

1999-2000	49.2	77.9	31.4	57.8	24.4	45.4
2004-05	37.7	59.0	26.0	50.3	20.1	36.3
2009-10	24.6	38.2	19.1	38.4	15.1	27.5
2011-12	32.5	43.4	16.8	37.8	17.5	31.5
<b>Urban</b>						
1999-2000	25.9	64.1	25.5	49.4	8.5	25.6
2004-05	7.8	12.5	13.2	24.1	5.9	10.8
2009-10	12.1	18.1	8.2	19.5	3.7	8.4
2011-12	2.6	13.7	7.9	18.2	4.5	11.1

**Source:** Employment and Un- Employment situation among social group in India, NSSO Report No. 469, 1999-2000. NSSO Report No. 516, 2004-2005. NSSO Report No. 543, 2009-2010 and NSSO Report No. 563, 2011-2012.

Graduate and above level educated persons are insignificantly low in ST community of West Bengal. Only 2.1 per cent of rural male and 0.6 percent of rural female of STs Community have education level Graduate and above in 2011-12. Overtime there is no indication of increase of graduate and above educated ST males or females in rural West Bengal. In rural West Bengal ST community are still deprive in higher education (Table 15).

**Table 15: Percentage of Persons (15+) by general education of ST in West Bengal from 1999-2000 to 2011-2012**

Year	Not Literate	Primary	Middle	Secondary	H.S	Graduate and Above	Diploma
<b>Rural Male</b>							
1999-2000	53.9	9.0	11.7	3.2	2.2	1.5	-
2004-05	46.5	34.4	12.5	3.5	1.0	2.1	00
2009-10	28.9	42.4	15.7	8.3	2.6	1.1	0.9
2011-12	40.8	33.8	8.0	10.7	4.4	2.1	00
<b>Rural Female</b>							
1999-2000	81.5	3.5	4.2	1.1	0.5	0	-
2004-05	69.8	19.3	5.4	1.8	3.1	0.4	0.1
2009-10	49.5	33.2	11.9	4.8	0.4	0.2	00
2011-12	53.5	29.3	11.8	4.1	0.7	0.6	00
<b>Urban Male</b>							
1999-2000	23.6	20.2	14.8	8.6	3.9	8.0	-
2004-05	12.1	30.1	26.2	14.6	10.0	7.1	0.1
2009-10	13.1	24.8	22.5	13.1	10.9	15.6	00
2011-12	10.7	20.9	13.9	17.9	20.3	16.3	
<b>Urban Female</b>							
1999-2000	56.4	11.0	2.6	6.8	3.6	8.2	-
2004-05	27.4	26.8	27.4	9.6	7.8	0.9	00

2009-10	34.6	27.2	11.0	9.8	12.8	4.7	00
2011-12	27.9	28.2	10.1	11.4	14.5	8.0	00

Source: Same as Table 14.

Overall attendance rate of STs has increased over time. In rural West Bengal it increased from 32.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 47.5 per cent in 2011-12. In urban West Bengal it increased from 44.8 per cent in 2004-05 to 46.5 per cent in 2011-12. But the attendance rate of rural females was also lower than that of rural males (Table 16).

**Table 16: Current attendance rate of STs in Educational Institution (0-29 Yrs) age groups in West Bengal from 1999-2000 to 2011-2012.**

Year	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
2004-2005	37.7	26.9	32.6	49.3	40.6	44.8
2009-2010	36.3	34.3	35.3	64.5	34.7	34.6
2011-2012	49.6	44.9	47.4	45.8	47.7	46.5

Source: Same as Table 14.

Overall attendance rate of tribal females has increased over time. In rural West Bengal it increased from 26.9 per cent in 2004-05 to 44.9 per cent in 2011-12. In urban West Bengal it increased from 40.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 47.7 per cent in 2011-12. But the attendance rate of tribal female members was also lower than that of SC and OBC female members in rural as well as urban West Bengal (Table 17).

**Table 17: Current Attendance Rate of Females (0-29Yrs) in Educational Institution by Age Groups and Castes in West Bengal, 1999-2000 to 2011-2012.**

Year	Rural			Urban		
	ST	SC	OBC	ST	SC	OBC
2004-2005	26.9	38.7	42.0	40.6	40.7	47.7
2009-2010	34.3	40.3	46.1	34.7	42.9	47.1
2011-2012	44.9	45.3	48.5	47.7	48.6	54.1

Source: Same as Table 14.

For retention of students in school Government has introduced different schemes like mid- day- meal, right to educational act, book grants etc. But this policy and programmes are not effective for retention of ST students. The dropout rate was more than 40 per cent for the Classes I to V, more than 65 per cent for the Classes I to VIII and more than 80

per cent for the classes I to X during 1989-99 to 2009-10. In the latest year, in 2010-11, the dropout rate is substantially lower than the earlier years. This dropout rate has evident for both boys and girls students (Table 18).

**Table 18: Drop out Rate of ST Students in West Bengal**

Year	Classes I-V			Classes I-VIII			Classes I-X		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1988-89	61.94	68.75	64.53	76.21	81.45	78.08	84.87	89.91	86.72
2004-05	48.93	47.71	48.40	81.06	73.01	78.47	89.55	83.41	87.90
2005-06	57.75	55.76	59.91	80.91	74.61	78.83	87.90	83.63	86.64
2006-07	41.76	52.53	47.02	80.93	74.87	78.93	88.03	84.97	87.04
2007-08	45.09	48.53	46.76	80.54	74.97	78.39	87.94	84.18	86.70
2009-10	44.27	39.76	42.17	65.41	67.37	66.37	86.33	82.65	84.91
2010-11	31.4	24.8	28.3	49.4	46.9	48.2	77.3	70.9	74.6

Source: Working Papers, National Commission for Women, New Delhi, 1988-89.

Statistics of School Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2004-2005, 2005-06, 2009-10, 2010-11. Department of Higher Education, New Delhi, 2007.

## 6. Conclusion

Education is the key to tribal development. The Scheduled Tribes Communities of this state have made some progress in the field of education during the post- Independence period as a result of the educational schemes implemented by the Government of West Bengal. Yet it is to be noted here that we cannot be satisfied with this improvement because there are many factors which are always hindering this advancement of education. Hence it is the most important duty of the Government now to get a quick impetus through which the Scheduled Tribes of the state of West Bengal may come up at par with the other advanced sections of the society, at least in respect of modern education. Eleven Five Year developmental Plans have been completed yet the development of education among tribals is absolutely slow. Thus, it seems reasonable to find out the barriers to education and the reasons as to why even with various amenities and concessions to tribal students, their educational advancement is not satisfactory.

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