

A Study on Barriers of Higher Education for Women Scheduled Tribe Students of Bishnupur in North 24 Parganas

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ABSTRACT

present study entitled “A study on Barriers of Higher Education for Women scheduled Tribestudents of Bishnupur in North 24 Parganas”. Bishnupur village has higher literacy rate compared to West Bengal. In 2011, literacy rate of Bishnupur village was 79.07% compared to 76.26% of West Bengal. From the census report 2011, it is found male and female literacy rates of Bishnupurrural area are 84.06% and 73.78%. But ST female literacy rate of Bishnupurrural area is 1.15% and female ST literacy rate of Higher education in Bishnupur rural area is 0.15%. From the census report we see that by comparison- female literacy rate of total Bangon area is less than female ST literacy rate of Bishnupur rural area. Investigation of the causes of backwardness of ST female students in Higher Education of Bishnupur rural area is the main problem of Researcher. The present research is a qualitative and quantitative research and research population of ST students of West Bengal and selected are students of Bishnupur rural area. The Research tool for collection of primary data has been the interview schedule. This Survey study was done in the rural area of Bishnupur and the ST women students as the participants. The interview schedule has been constructed open-ended and close-ended both and non-standardized teacher made question.

Keywords: Obstacles, Higher Education, Women students, Scheduled Tribe.

Introduction:

To enhance social and national progress now a day, emphasis is given on Women education, particularly education for Women of backward classes as they share a great proportion of total Women population. So, many facilities like “Kanyashree, Pre-Matric, Post-Matric, Sikhyasree, and IncentiveScheme” for Common Women students and special facilities for ST Women students are being provided. Yet, the rate of Women education is still lower than the expected goal.

Historical development of Women Education

The history of Indian women can be divided into three periods i.e. Ancient, Medieval and Modern.

The East India Company established its rule over India since 1757, which is called modern period. During this period education of men was modernized and institutions were opened to promote this but nothing was done to promote women education.

In 1858, the British government took upon itself the direct responsibility of the administration. But in spite of this, they did not pay any attention towards the education of women of this country. In 1904, Annie Besant established Central Hindu Girls’ School at Benaras and Prof. Karue established SNDT Women’s University at Poona for the promotion of women education.

After independence, India’s national government introduced some committees and commissions for the development of women education in India, i.e. Radhakrishnan Commission or University Education Commission(1948), Smt.Durgabai Deshmukh committee (1959), Smt. Hansa Mehta Committee (1962), M. Bhaktvatsalam Committee to look into the causes of Public Support particularly in Rural Area for girls Education and to public Corporation, Kothari Commission (1964-64), Resolution on the National policy on Education (1968), Report of the Committee on the status of women in India(1974), Challenge of Education (1985), National policy on Education(1986), Programme of Action(1986), and (1992),etc. On the other hand, to develop the primary education and to achieve the aim of universalization of primary education up to age level 6-14 years, some schemes or programmes like, OBB, DPEP, SSA, NLM, National Programme of Nutritional Support of Primary Education (NPNSPE) or (Mid-Day Meals), RTE Act 2009 and Knowledge Commission etc. were introduced to achieve the national goal i.e. hundred percent literacy. Despite these government efforts to the education, Still women are lagging behind than men. Women of India generally remained unlettered and uneducated. As a result of ignorance, women become victims of man dominated society.

Policies for the development of S.T

At the time of framing of India constitution, the need for special provision to safeguard the interest of ST the most disadvantaged section of the society was felt and sincere effort was made to disperse the fruits of development of free India equally all sections of the society. According special provision have been included in our constitution to promote the social educational and economic interests of these two weakest of the weaker sections of the society and guidelines issued for implementation of these safeguards adequately.

Constitution of India guarantees the following safeguards-

1. Equality before law (Article-14)
2. The state to make special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Tribes. [Article -15(4)]
3. The state shall promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the scheduled Castes, and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. (Article- 46)
4. The state to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class citizens which in the opinion of the state is not adequately represented in the services under the state [Article-16(4)]
5. Appointment of a commission to report on the administration of the Scheduled areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the states (Article-339)
6. Appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations to remove such difficulties to improve their condition (Article-346)
7. The state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article-46)
8. Grant-in-aid the consolidated Fund of India each year for promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Areas [Article-275(1)]
9. Protection of interests of Minorities (which includes S.T.), (Article -29)
10. Right to conserve distinct Language, Script or Culture. (Article- 350)
11. Instruction in Mother Tongue. (Article- 350)

Not only provisions of safeguards in the constitutions were made and guidelines were issued but a commission was also established in 1978, titled “National commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes” to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided for Scheduled Tribes.

Policies of Educational development of ST students:

Prior to 1950, the Government of India had no direct programme for the educational development of Scheduled Tribes with the adaptation of the constitution, the promotion of education of Scheduled Tribes has become a special responsibility of the central as well as the state Government. Keeping the different problems of ST students in views, efforts have been made during different plan periods to provide various facilities for the educational development of ST. In this regard particular reference can be made to the tribal sub-plan approach which came into existence as the main strategy from the five year plan and in which top-priority has been accorded to elementary education. The second important development in the policy towards education of the National policy of Education (1986) which specified among other things:

1. Expansion of School provision for ST.
2. Provision of hostel facilities.
3. Subsidizing cost of education by providing incentives like abolition of tuition fees, provision of fee books uniforms, School bags etc.

4. Development of curriculum and instruction material in tribal language at initial stage and then switching over to regional language.
5. Recruitment of teachers within the community by realizing qualification if necessary.
6. Establishment of Ashram Schools on a large scale in tribal areas.

Thus NPE (1986) as updated in 1992 envisages emphasis on intervention for correction of social imbalances and empowerment of women and disadvantaged sections.

Special provision by central government:

The central government on its part supports various initiatives of the state government in this regard. Some of the initiatives taken by the central government envisaging special provision for ST in the field of higher education are:

- Reservation of state for ST in central government institution including IIT, IIM, REC, Central universities, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas etc. There is also realization in the minimum qualifying cut-off stages for universities, colleges, and technical institutions; apart from such reservation U.G.C. has established implementation of the reservation policy.
- Remedial and special coaching is provided to ST students to improve their academic skill and linguistic proficiency.

Statement of the research problem:

From the census report 2011, it is found male and female literacy rates of Bishnupur rural area are 84.06% and 73.78%. But ST female literacy rate of Bishnupur rural area is 1.15% and female ST literacy rate of Higher education in Bishnupur rural area is 0.15%.

From the census report we see that by comparison- female literacy rate of total Bongaon area is less than female ST literacy rate of Bishnupur rural area. Investigation of the causes of backwardness of ST female students in Higher Education of Bishnupur rural area is the main problem of Researcher.

The present researcher states the problem of the present study as **Obstacles of Higher Education for Women Scheduled Tribes Students of Villages of Bishnupur in North 24 Parganas District.**

Operational Definition of the terms used:

Obstacles: Various barriers of Higher Education of Scheduled Tribes women students of Bishnupur rural area.

Higher Education: Any of various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a named degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies. It also includes teacher-training schools, junior colleges, and institutes of technology.

S.T student: Scheduled Tribes (STs) are official designations given to various groups of historically disadvantaged people. The terms are recognized in the Constitution of India and the various groups are designated in one or other of the categories.

Women Students: Here both married and unmarried girls are called women students whose age limit is 18 to 25 years old.

Significance of the problem:

It is seen that the total number of ST Women in these ST dominated villages is 23 among whom 01 women students are dropout before upper primary level, 05 women students are dropout after M.P, 06 woman student reads are dropout after H.S. So 11 women students get admission in B.A. But 03 women student is complete B.A. In spite of the various supports being provided by the governments, there are hurdles in the path of higher education for ST Women students.

The present researcher tries to find out the causes of this phenomenon and suggests possible remedy to resolve these barriers of higher education for ST Women students of 23 ST dominated villages (Bishnupur) of rural areas as it is important for the sustainable development of women students of the country.

Objectives of the study:

- To study the association between mother's level of education and students educational attainment.
- To study the association between father's level of education and students awareness about government facility.
- To study the parent's (father and mother) occupation and students educational attainment.
- To study the causes of apathy on higher education.
- To study the causes of drop-out women students at different stages of education (Primary/Madhyamik/H.S/Higher Education).
- To study the reasons for not availing govt. facility.

Research Questions:

- Are they aware of the facilities given by the state and central governments?
- Are their parents aware of the importance of Higher Education?
- In spite of the facilities given by the state and central governments, Why is the number of ST Women students in higher education limited in rural area of Bishnupur?

Methodology:

The present Researcher is wanted to do an in-depth study of an area which comprise mainly of ST Women population, an area which was lagging behind in higher education and so chose in rural area of Bishnupur as the area for study.

The present research is a Qualitative study with a Quantitative data analysis procedure.

Population-

ST Women students of all rural area in West Bengal are treated as the population of the present study.

Sample-

We have selected the ST Women students of Bishnupur rural area as the sample.

- **Tools-**

The Research tool for collection of primary data has been the interview schedule. This Survey study was done in the rural area of Bishnupur and the ST women students as the participants. The interview schedule has been constructed open-ended and close-ended both and non-standardized teacher made question.

Presentation of data and analysis of data

Researcher takes some data from Bishnupur village area which data is necessary for this research-

Table-1

Mother's Education and Women Students Educational Attainment:

Mothers Education	Illiterate	Primary	M.P	H.S	B.A/M.A
Illiterate	16(69.57%)	4(17.39%)	3(13.04%)	0	0
Literate	0	0	0	0	3(100%)

The table shows, that the Literate mothers are from ST families, that their daughters are going in the Higher Education.

Table-2

Father's Education and Women Students Awareness of Government Facility:

Fathers Education	Total Student	Reservation of seat in a college/School	Provision of other facility	Free Coaching	Not Aware
Illiterate	17	3(17.65%)	0	0	14(82.35%)
Literate	6	6(100%)	4(66.67%)	0	0

This can be seen from the table, that the ST family of illiterate father in sequence was 82.35% women students are not aware of govt. facilities.

Table-3

Mother's Occupation and Women students Educational Attainment:

Mother occupation	Performance of S.T. Women students				
	Dropout before upper Primary	M.P	H.S	U.G/P.G	Total students
House wife	0	2(15.38%)	8(61.54%)	3(23.08%)	13
Service	0	0	0	0	0
Daily labour	1(25%)	1(25%)	2(50%)	0	4
Home servant	0	2(33.33%)	4(66.67%)	0	6

This can be seen from the table, that there are the House wife mothers of ST families, whose women students are more going to higher education.

Table-4

Father's Occupation and Women students Educational Attainment:

Father occupation	Performance of S.T Women students				Total Students
	Dropout before upper Primary	M.P	H.S	U.G/P.G	
Service	0	0	1(33.33%)	2(66.67%)	3
Business	0	1(20%)	3(60%)	1(20%)	5
Daily labour	1(6.67%)	4(26.67%)	10(66.67%)	0	15

This can be seen from the table, that there are the Service man fathers of ST families, whose women students are more going to higher education than the women students of daily labour and Business father.

Table-5

Causes of Drop-out Women students in different stages of education (Primary/Madhyamik/H.S/Higher Education):

Causes of Drop-out	Number of Women students				
	Dropout before upper Primary	M.P	H.S	U.G/P.G	Total
Economical	1(9.09%)	1(9.09%)	4(36.36%)	5(45.45%)	11
Environmental	0	1(100%)	0	0	1
Lack of Guide	0	2(40%)	1(20%)	2(40%)	5
Apathy of Parents	0	1(33.33%)	1(33.33%)	1(33.33%)	3

The table shows that, the ST women students are drop-out in different stages in education, whose main reason is the economic crisis and parental apathy and lack of guide.

Table-6

Reasons for not availing Govt. facility:

Reasons	ST	
	No. of women Students	%
Not Applied	6	30%
Not Aware of Govt. Policy	13	65%
Parents income does not permit	1	5%
No Provision of college and School	0	0
Total no. of not availing govt. facility	20	100%

All the main reason for that is more women students are not aware of the govt. policy and some of the women students do not apply.

The present researcher contacted a local teacher who belongs to the S.T community and sought his views regarding the causes of backwardness of S.T female students. According to this teacher, following are the main reason for the poor performance and backwardness of S.T female students:

Most of the students are first generation learner. So, they cannot get proper guidance from their parents.

Most of the students do not possess ration card, birth certificate, caste certificate and so on. Hence, they fail to get facilities provided by the Govt.

As most of the females here are very poor, the children are forced to earn for their family. Female children also work for their livelihood. Hence, they neglect study.

As both father and mother are out for earning livelihood, the female children take the responsibility of the house hold and thus, they get little time to spend in their study.

As most of the parents are illiterate, they do not understand the significance of woman education. They think that it is useless to waste money for educating their daughters, as they will be married.

Language is another hurdle to their education. As their mother tongue is Alchiki, they very often fails to understand all the terms of their books for most of the books available are written in Bengali or English language. In most school in the neighborhood, Bengali is the medium of instructions. So, they suffer from language problem.

Early marriage is another hurdle to the higher education of S.T girls. At an early stage, they are being married, so they fail to pursue higher education.

Few S.T person who able to pursue higher education and get established, migrate to nearby towns. Thus, they hardly any well educated person to inspire these backward class girls.

Opinion by

Bablu Sardar [Assistant Teacher in Bishnupur Nirmala Prova High School (H.S)]

CONCLUSION:

Form the interview during survey study it was also found that the motivation for pursuing higher education was very low amongst these students. They preferred to earn by doing jobs like Daily labour and Business etc. That is why they were not even eager to know whether any facility was there or not. As most of the students had family of Daily labour and Business and Home Servent, for them education occupied the second place in their priorities. So this diminished their interest towards higher education and also their need to look for privileges so as to pursue higher education.

The government is trying to lend a helping hand to the ST community by providing certain privileges to students like students free coaching, book grants, stipend, free dress etc. The policies can be implemented through the college and School authorities or local authorities. Yet the present researcher finds that these privileges do not percolate down to the grassroots level due to various reasons.

This study has thrown light to some of these obstacles-

Firstly, the present researcher finds their family belongs to lower income, parental apathy and Lack of guide. Secondly, the students in most cases are not aware of the advantages they can take. Thirdly, they suffer from language problem. Fourthly, the students themselves have very poor motivation for pursuing studies. Fifthly, the problems of higher education are large syllabus and library problem and question pattern and time management problem. Sixthly, some important reason of the admission problems in the college which is selection system problem, problem of Admission fees and adjustment problem in new environment. Seventhly, they are not aware of any stipend. Eighthly, At an early stage, they are being married, so they fail to pursue higher education.

Suggestions for further studies:

- This study has taken a tiny part of West Bengal as the sample. This study can be intended on a large Rural area in W.B.
- Comparison of different district, states and countries can be made.
- Further longitudinal study can also be done to see if any improvement takes place.

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