

A Study on Educational status of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes Girl Student's in Birbhum district.

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17606638>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 19-10-2025

Published: 10-11-2025

Keywords:

*Scheduled Castes,
Scheduled Tribes,
Education, Backward*

ABSTRACT

Education is an integral part of human life that contributes significantly to overall development of every human being. People would not be progress far without knowledge of education. That's why education is necessary in every person for development of their life. The present study is an attempt to upliftment of barriers of education of scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes girl's student in Birbhum district. Several research works have been conducted regarding this issue but most of them are at macro level.

Introduction:

Birbhum district is a one of the most backward district in West Bengal. Birbhum is mainly inhabited by Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes people. According to the 2011 census about 29.50% of the total population of Birbhum is Scheduled caste and 6.92 % is Scheduled tribes people live in this district. The major tribes inhabiting in Birbhum are Santal, Konra, Lodha, Oraon, Munda and Mahali etc. In Birbhum district, the Scheduled Caste (SC) population totals approximately 10.33 lakh (1,033,140), consisting of 5.29 lakh (529,001) males and 5.04 lakh (504,139) females. This group represents 29.5% of the district's total population, indicating a substantial presence within the region's demographic structure. The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population in Birbhum district is recorded at approximately 2.42 lakh (242,484), comprising 1.20 lakh (119,787) males and 1.23 lakh (122,697) females. This segment constitutes 6.92% of the district's total population, reflecting a notable representation within the region's socio-demographic

landscape. This study primarily explores the various barriers and challenges faced by girl students belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the district of Birbhum.

Study Area:

The research work was carried out in two blocks school of Birbhum district with significant Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations, specifically Bolpur-Sriniketan Dev. Block and Suri-II Dev. Block.

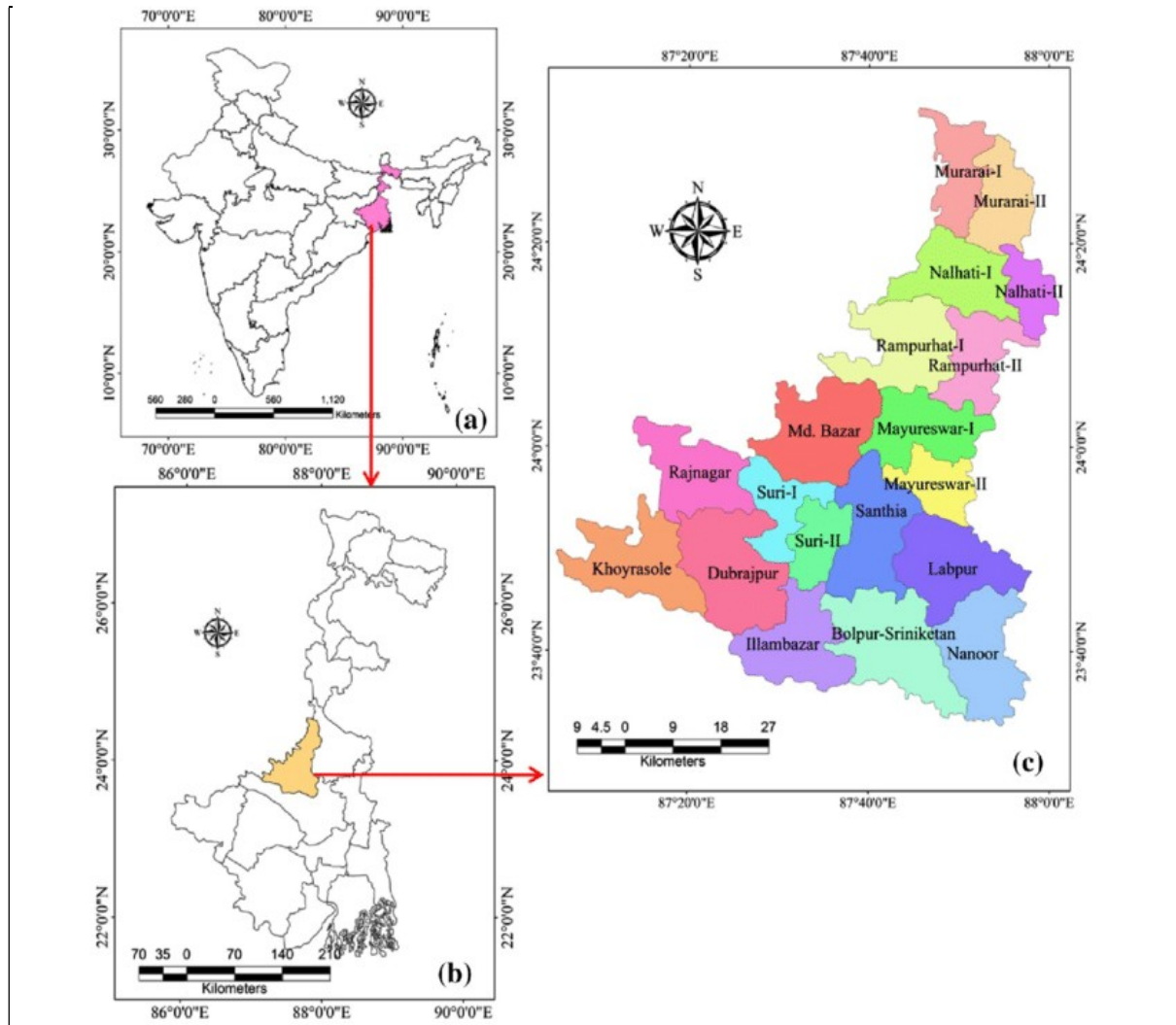


Figure: 1

Source: - Birbhum district website.

Objectives of the study:

1. The objectives of the study were to understand the academic achievement of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribe's girl's student in Birbhum.



2. To find out the causes of factors influencing of drop-out from their educational life.
3. This study aims to shed light on the various initiatives and measures implemented by the government to improve the educational status of girl students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Birbhum district.

Data collection and Methodology:

The study was mainly based on primary data as well as secondary data. Primary Data was collected through Structured Questionnaires administered to SC and ST girl students. Semi-structured Interviews were taken with teachers, guardians, and local education officers. Focus Group discussions held with students and parents to capture lived experiences and perspectives.

Secondary Data was obtained from Government reports and Census data (1971–2011). Educational statistics from the District Education Office and school Management Committees, census Handbook. Both qualitative data and quantitative data used for the study. Quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the educational status of SC and ST girl students in Birbhum district. The primary focus group for the study includes girl students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes enrolled in upper primary, secondary, and higher secondary schools within the selected blocks. Additional insights were drawn from parents, teachers, and community members to better understand the socio-cultural and economic barriers influencing girls' education. A stratified random sampling method was used to select schools and students across different levels of education, ensuring representation from both SC and ST communities. A total of 400 students and 80 stakeholders were included in the sample.

Table: 1 Sample selected for the study

Name of the Block	Total Number of Students selected from each Block	Number of Parents/Guardians selected from each block	No. Of Head Teacher / Class Teacher	No. Of Officials
Bolpur-Sriniketan Block	310	100	20	10
Suri-II Block	190	50	20	10

Prepared from Primary sources



Discussion and Findings:

This study investigated the educational status of scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe girl students in the district of Birbhum. For this research work I have visited many schools, interrogated students, teachers, parents and block officials. The study focused on the problems of dropout rates in the primary level, secondary level and higher education level of scheduled castes and scheduled tribe’s pupil. The literacy rate is a key indicator used to assess the level of educational development in a region.

Table 2: Literacy rate comparison category wise from 1961-2011 in West Bengal.

	Category	1961	2011
West Bengal	General	29.3%	76.26%
	Scheduled caste	13.58%	69.43%
	Scheduled Tribe	6.55%	57.93%

Source: Census Reports 2011, India.

From the above table it has been seen that the literacy rate in West Bengal has shown significant improvement, rising from 29.3% in 1961 to 76.26% by 2011. Among the Scheduled Castes (SC), it increased from 13.58% to 69.43% during the same period, while the Scheduled Tribes (ST) saw a rise from 6.55% in 1961 to 57.93% in 2011.

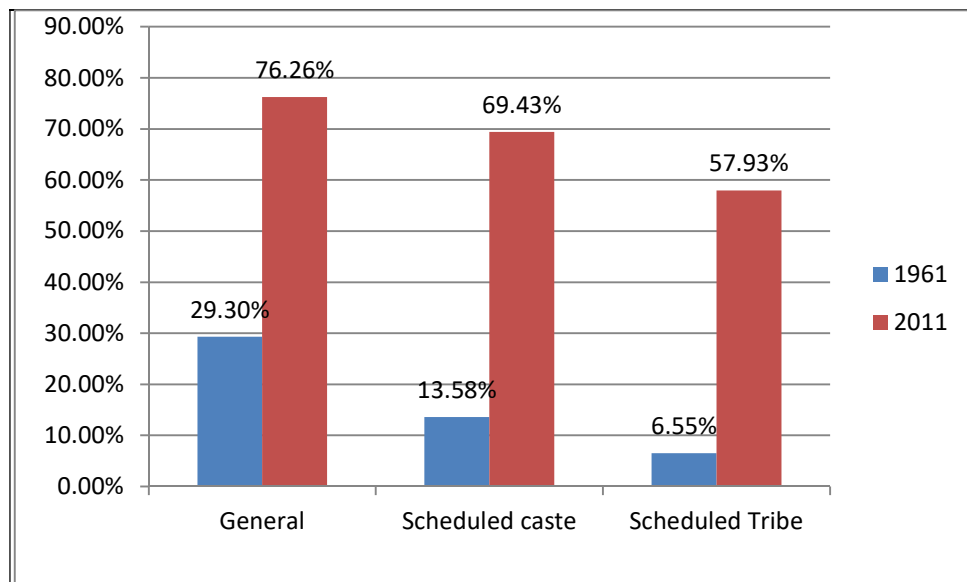


Figure: 2



Table 3: Literacy rates comparison among Birbhum, Bolpur-Sriketan and Suri-II as per Census 2011.

Birbhum	70.90%
Bolpur-Sriniketan Block	70.67%
Suri-II	72.75%

Source: Census Reports 2011, India

From the above table it has been seen that the Birbhum's literacy rate (70.90%) is moderate neither very low nor very high compared to the West Bengal state average (about 76.26%). The literacy rate here (70.67%) is almost the same as the district average (70.90%) the difference is only 0.23%, which is negligible. The literacy rate of Suri-II block is higher than the district average by about 1.85 percentage points. A literacy rate of 72.75% suggests that more people in Suri-II are educated compared to most other parts of Birbhum. Thus, Suri-II stands as a comparatively better-performing block within the district.

Table 4: Enrolment trends of Scheduled Caste Students in Birbhum.

Current enrolled of Scheduled Caste Students at	Education level	Male Students	Female Students	Total no's of Students enrolled	% of enrolled Students
310	Primary level	55	40	95	30.6%
	Upper Primary level	40	30	70	22.6%
	Secondary level	35	25	60	19.4%
	Higher Secondary level	25	20	45	14.5%
	Undergraduate level	18	12	30	9.7%
	Postgraduate level	6	4	10	3.2%



	Total	179	131	310	100%
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Prepared from Primary

sources

From the above table it has been seen that out of the total current enrolled Scheduled Caste students is 310 whereas 179 males and 131 are belongs to female category. It has been seen that 17.7 % of males and 12.9 % of females are enrolled at the Primary level of school. 12.9 % of males and 9.6 % of females are enrolled at the Upper Primary level of school. 11.3% of males and 8.06 % of females are enrolled at the Secondary level of school. 8.06% of males and 6.5 % of females are enrolled at the Higher Secondary level of school. 5.8% of males and 3.9% of females are enrolled at the Undergraduate level.1.9% of males and 1.3% of females are enrolled at the Postgraduate level.

Table 5: Enrolment trends of Scheduled Tribes Students in Birbhum.

Current enrolled of Scheduled Tribe Students at	Education level	Male Students	Female Students	Total no's of Students enrolled	% of enrolled Students
190	Primary level	35	30	65	34.2%
	Upper Primary level	28	22	50	26.3%
	Secondary level	20	15	35	18.4%
	Higher Secondary level	14	11	25	13.2%
	Undergraduate level	6	4	10	5.3%
	Postgraduate level	3	2	5	2.6%
	Total		106	84	190

Prepared from Primary sources



From the above table it has been seen that out of the total current enrolled Scheduled Tribe students is 190 whereas 106 nos. Male students and 84 are belongs to female category of students. Primary and Upper Primary levels have the majority of ST students ~60.5%with slightly more males than females. Secondary and Higher Secondary levels together account for ~31.6% of students, still showing a gender gap but smaller than in primary levels. Undergraduate and Postgraduate students are very few (8% of total), and the gender ratio is roughly balanced. Overall male students (106, 55.8%) slightly out number female students (84, 44.2%) across all education levels.

Table 6: Main reason for dropping out of school of SC and ST Girls Student.

No. Of dropout Students	Family problems	% of Family problems	Financial reasons	% of financial reasons	Early Marriage	% of early marriage	Distance to School	% of distance to school	Parents illiterate	% of Parents illiterate
150	40	27%	30	20%	20	13%	25	17%	35	23%

From the above table it has been seen that financial reasons 20% are the leading cause of student dropouts, showing that economic hardship is the major barrier to continuing education. Early marriage (13%) is the second most common reason, particularly affecting female students. Family problems (27%) also contribute significantly to dropouts, possibly due to lack of support or responsibilities at home. Distance to school (17%) is the least cited reason, but still affects some students who cannot travel easily to school and parents being illiterate (23%) is also one of the major reasons for the dropout of pupils.

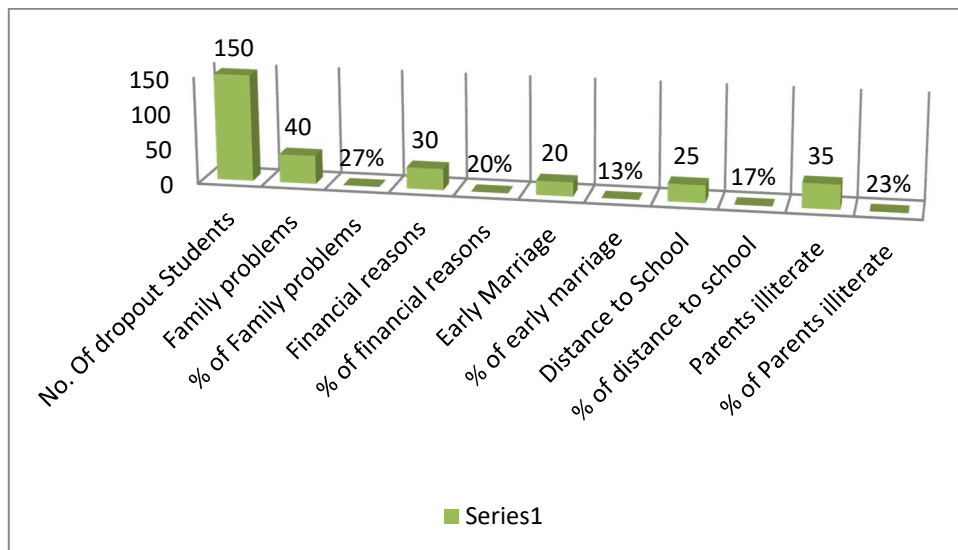


Figure: 3



A number of welfare initiatives have been undertaken to promote the education, particularly among SC and ST girl students.

The Kanyashree Scheme, introduced by the Government of West Bengal in 2013, is a flagship welfare initiative designed to empower girls through education and financial assistance. This program has particularly benefited Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) girls from economically disadvantaged families. By encouraging continued schooling, the scheme has significantly helped to reduce dropout rates and prevent early marriages among girls from backward communities in the Birbhum district. Another major initiative, the Rupashree Prakalpa, was launched in April 2018 by the state government. It provides a one-time financial grant to economically weaker families at the time of their daughter's marriage. This scheme aims to discourage child marriage, promote gender equality, and uphold the dignity of girls belonging to SC and ST communities. Together, these and several other welfare programs implemented by the Government of West Bengal have contributed greatly to the educational advancement and social upliftment of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe girl students in the Birbhum district.

Conclusion

This study brings to light the existing educational realities faced by girl students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Birbhum district. Although there have been positive developments in terms of school enrolment and awareness about education among these communities, deep-rooted social inequalities and economic hardships continue to hinder their academic growth. Issues such as poverty, lack of parental education, early responsibilities at home, and social discrimination are some of the critical factors that affect their regular attendance and overall academic performance. Despite the presence of various government programs aimed at promoting inclusive education, many students still lack access to basic educational resources and support systems. To bridge this educational divide, a more localized and community-driven approach is necessary. Strengthening school infrastructure, improving the quality of teaching, and ensuring consistent follow-up on government schemes can make a significant difference. Moreover, awareness programs focusing on the importance of girls' education, especially within SC and ST communities, should be prioritized. Ultimately, improving the educational status of SC and ST girl students is not just a matter of social justice, but a vital step towards sustainable development and equality in the region.



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