

## IC-021

### Impact of Climate change and how it effect Tribal Women in Paschim Medinipur District In West Bengal: An Analytical Perspective.

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<sup>1,2</sup>B.Ed Semester IV

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#### ABSTRACT

Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the different walks of life like education, employment, good health and economic empowerment etc. Though they are industrious, they have limited control over resources and economic activities. Therefore, the tribal women being economically poor and socially backward live at a low level of scale of the quality life. In this context there is a need for economic empowerment of tribal women in order to overcome inequality, discrimination and exploitation and to achieve their all round development in the society. Hence, the main objective of this paper is to study the empowerment of tribal women in West Bengal, their educational status and the social and economic aspects of Tribal women consider as independent variables. This infers that the empowerment of tribal women is determined by their age, health status, education, vocational training, occupation, amenities in the house, economic status and individual property. But family size indicate negative significance of women empowerment.

Keywords: Tribal Women, Paschim Medinipur, Decision-Making, Educational Status, Political Apathy, Poverty,

KannyaSree, Empowerment.

#### INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of tribal women is one of the central issues in the process of development all over the world. It is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi layered concept. Women empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over material, human and intellectual resources as well as control over decision-making in the home, community, society and nation. However the tribal women faced many problems in our society. There is basic cultural and psychological tendency on the part of men to dominate the women, which is also seen among the tribal men. On the part of the tribalwomen too, due to sociological or cultural reasons, they are unable or unwilling to come out of their clichés. Ofcourse, ignorance and illiteracy play a major role in hampering the empowerment of tribal women. It is indeed a herculean task on the part both of government and voluntary agencies to find different ways and means to assist the tribal societies in general and the tribal women in particular to climb the ladder of knowledge, awareness, development and progress. The tribal societies in India are considered as the weakest sections of the population in terms of common socio-economic and demographic factors such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of developmental facilities and adequate primary health facilities. For many decades, 'growth with equity and social justice' has remained on the development agenda of developing countries, but from the historical point of view Indian society suffers from substantial disparity in education, employment, and income based on caste and ethnicity. According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, over 84 million people belonging to 698 communities are identified as members of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in India. But for the development of a society, there is the need of an inclusive progress of all the sections of the society, and for this perspective, it is imperative to bring the deprived, marginalized and weaker sections of the society as tribal women to the forefront of educational revolution in India. This is important for equitable growth of human resources and overall development of the nation. Today education a powerful agent of social change. It unlocks the door to modernisation. It also paves a sure road to economic modernisation and progress. Education is infact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities by which they can improve personal endowments, build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for a sustained improvement in their well-being. It will helps them in improving their immediate living conditions or increase the potential for future living. (Sahu, 2014). Post-Liberalization period (after 1991) in India is no doubt significant because Indian economy, society and way of life of Indian people have changed considerably. Presently India is an emerging nation in the field of consumption, business and Global

politics. Field of education is also sufficiently affected by Liberalization policy. The effect is how much positive or negative it is a matter of controversy. 74.04 % peoples are said to be literate in the country (2011 Census) and for West Bengal it is 77.08%. The Literacy rate and its growth in West Bengal is very close to national average since long past. After 68 years of Independence the picture of literacy and education is not worse but the rate of development is not satisfactory. The most serious problem relating to literacy is hidden in its gross data, which are literacy differentials among different castes, religion, population groups, male-female differentials etc. For example only 57.92% Scheduled Tribes are literate in West Bengal whereas the total literacy rate for this state is 77.08%. Rami (2012) stated that lack of spate toilet facilities in school, 50% tribal girls' dropouts from schools from enrolling beyond 5th standard. Hence, the drop out ratio goes higher among the tribal girls. Gautam, (2003) found that the non-tribal education has very limited value in the tribal cultural it does not match with the lifestyle of individuals and the needs of the tribal community. Medium of instruction is quite different from own vernacular dialect stated by Rami, (2012). Female enrolment ratio is much lower among tribals than that of their males. Due to low overall enrolment ratio of tribals, sharp decline of enrolment immediately after the primary education, and this trend continued among males and females, Ghosh (2007). Rana et al. (2003) cited that SishuSikshaKarmasuchi (SSK) experiment provides the cost-effective primary education particularly to the most underprivileged sections of society. Thus from the above all study it has been found that tribal are the most deprived section in the country and women are more neglected among them. It has been found that many studies were conducted on socio-economic status of tribals in India, but very less study was found on their educational status. Thus the study intended to find out educational status of tribal women in West Bengal. The central theme behind the research study is to find out the change of literacy and educational status of tribal women of different district of West Bengal from 2001 to 2011. The entire study is based on secondary data, Census of West Bengal 2001 and 2011.

## PURPOSES

1. To explore the various programmes promoting socio-economic empowerment of tribal women.
2. To find out the role of tribal women in the decision making process of the state.
3. To analyse the constraints to empowerment of tribal women and to make recommendations for effective participation of tribal women in every sphere of society.
4. To find out educational status of tribal women in West Bengal.
5. To study the socio-economic background of tribal women.
6. To understand the occupational patterns.
7. To examine the economic empowerment of tribal women.
8. To analyse the problems associated with tribal women's educational achievement.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Where secondary information produced by different authors and researchers has been used. Secondary sources of data have been collected from the available literature: Government documents, academic books, research papers of different scholars, journals, website and newspaper articles etc.

### QUANTITATIVE METHODS :

1. Co-relation Method
2. Experimental Research
3. Statistical Method

### QUALITATIVE METHODS:

1. Case Study
2. Process of observation
3. Record keeping

## RESULTS

1. The participation rate of Tribal women in the workforce is much higher than that of other women in the general population .The Government has not formulated separate empowerment policies for schedule tribe women.
2. The studies have not undertaken empirical studies on measurement of schedule tribe women poverty, employment, food insufficient, and unpleasant health.
3. There is also found that majority of the schedule tribe women have less position than tribal men.
4. Scheduled tribe women empowerments have not been adequately and scientifically researched.
5. Due to patriarchal structure women and girls have restricted to access education, access to health facilities, and lower decision-making power, and experience higher rates of violence.
6. The constitution of India is enriched with several provisions for schedule castes and schedule tribes to safeguard and promote their cultural, social, educational, and economic interests in order to bring them in the mainstream of the nation. But these safeguard unsuccessful due to Male dominated society and lack interest to utilize in their life.
7. There is a need to put more attention on educational aspects of scheduled tribes women, education in only one determination to motivate them for future life.
8. Some other study have also analyzed the problems of tribal women empowerment and indicated the educational, economical, employment, health are the main component to help them to achieve the gender equality tribal society.
9. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. That means tribal women contribute immensely to the tribal agriculture.
10. In modern India schedule tribe women are used the natural resources and natural habitat for commercial purposes and thus their potential to damage the life sustenance of goods from the forest and its water bodies.

## DISCUSSION

Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) female literacy of West Bengal is very poor condition. Only 47.71 percent S.T females are enumerated as literate in 2011 census. Highest S.T Female literacy is observed in the Metropolitan district of Kolkata (76.57) and lowest is found in Uttar Dinajpur (35.48). The geographical distribution of S.T. female literacy follows more or less similar pattern of total female literacy except Darjeeling and Koch Bihar, where S.T female literacy is comparatively high. The increase of Tribal literacy is high during the last decade (2001-2011). 14.52 percent tribal literacy is increased in the state of West Bengal. Govt. initiative and different policies relating to S.T development rapidly increase the literacy rate. The percentage of literacy among Scheduled tribes in India and West Bengal were 29.6% and 27.8 % in 1991 which has increased to 59% and 57.9% in 2001 and 2011 respectively.

### **Poverty and Hunger:**

Poverty and hunger are the main reasons for the non-participation of tribal girls in education. Though Indian Constitution secure free universal primary education, this often does not include costs of uniforms, textbooks, travel to school, meals, and other associated expenses which become burden to most tribal families and enrolling girls for higher education become luxury to them.

### **Indifferent Attitude and Lack of Awareness of the Tribal Parents:**

Indifferent attitude of the tribal parents as well as is another hindrance towards tribal girl's education. Most of the tribal parents are unaware about the importance of education and they prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment to add on the family income or to take care of their siblings, to rear cattle, to help mother in house hold chores, in collecting the forest products like dried leaves, seeds etc.

### **Lack of Skilled, Committed and Gender Sensitive Teachers:**

The problem of insufficient number of teachers has been compounded by the problem of lacking skilled, committed and gender sensitive teachers (Calder, &Huda, 2013) in schools of tribal area. Teacher Absenteeism: Teacher absenteeism is one of the major problem in educational achievement in tribal areas.

Lack of Knowledge on Tribal Language and Value System:

Most of the teachers lacking knowledge and appreciation of tribal value system and language which leads to failure in gaining the acceptance and establish a communication link with tribal students which force them to withdraw from education.

**Lack of Basis Infrastructure Facilities:**

Most of schools in tribal areas are without basic infrastructure facilities for example lack of electricity and water, non-plastered floors, lack of proper sanitation facilities to deal with menstrual hygiene affects girls' attendance (Calder & Huda, 2013) etc. are common feature of those schools.

**Language and Communication Problems:**

The problem of language and communication slow down educational attainment of tribal girls. Language skills first. (Mahajan, 2012) Despite several policy documents and a constitutional provision (350A) recognizing that linguistic minorities should be educated in their mother tongue at primary level, there is practically no education in Scheduled Tribe languages. This includes even those like Santhali, Bhili, Gondi or Oraon which are spoken by over a million people (Nambissan, 2000). But, the non-availability of teachers known tribal language and textbooks in tribal languages become challenges in their educational achievement.

**School Timing:**

In the tribal context, school timing is also major problem to tribal girls in attending school regularly. In West Bengal most of the tribal are agricultural labour and they go out for work in early morning and tribal girls are given the responsibilities of looking after their houses and doing various household activities by their parents which leads to irregular attendance and high dropout rates tribal girls.

**Political Apathy:**

Political apathy towards the issue of educational empowerment of tribal women in another important problem. Lack of co-operation and co-operation between various government Departments looking after tribal education i.e. the tribal welfare department and the education department results in low enrolment of tribal girls in school education.

**Lack of Awareness about Various Policies and Programmes:**

Though the above discussed problems are major obstacles towards educational attainment of tribal women another reason for their educational underdevelopment may be their lack of awareness about various policies and programmes which are introduced to secure their Human Rights as well as Tribal Rights by Indian Constitution.

**Low Level of Aspiration and Motivation among Tribal Women:**

Another fact observed among tribal women in West Bengal that most of them are satisfied with their life i.e. with where they are and with what they have which indicates their low level of aspiration and motivation to be a part of developed community with modern advanced India.

**Lack of Access to Education:**

Most of the tribal women work outside their homes and are engaged in various activities. They work in order to earn money for their family. The women's work involves daily labour, agricultural work. Even young children and girls go for work along with their mothers. Most of the time they do not go to school regularly or become drop outs from school. Even the parents in very poor families don't always want to send the children to school because then their helping hands in work would be reduced. Effect of patriarchy could be strongly seen in most tribal groups and so whatever money women get from their work they give it to their husband and the husband very often spends the money on activities like drinking. Household works are done by the female members of the family. Household work involves cooking, cleaning, washing utensils and clothes, collecting fuel for cooking. The young girls who are studying in primary level in schools hardly learn anything in school and they don't study at home also. The government has announced free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years, which nowadays encourage parents to send their children to schools with the hope that if their children receive proper education, then their conditions will improve. The children are given free school uniforms, books and mid-day meals. However, the girls don't continue school at a stretch. Sometimes they go to school, some other times they do not go to school and stay at home and go to work with their mothers and help their mothers at household work. As a result, they tend to forget what they have learned in school. After the girl child attains teenage the parents stop sending them to schools.

**CONCLUSION:**

In spite of various constitutional provisions and policies for the tribals, it is a hard reality that the tribal women still are lagging behind in many respects and they have to face many challenges. The study emphasized

the need for tribal development in West Bengal. The overall literacy picture of West Bengal is not satisfactory even in the year 2011 though the percentage of literate persons is 3.04 percent more than national average. We are hopeful about future because the development during last decade is well and most important thing is that the literacy differentials among Male-Female, Rural-Urban has going to narrow down. The female literacy has increased sufficiently in both rural urban frames. Regional imbalance and inequality is observed among different districts which maintained a zonal pattern. The literacy is high in Kolkata and surrounding districts and comparative low in North Bengal districts and Plateau districts of Bengal. Such type of regional imbalance should be eradicated as early as possible. Tribal literacy has increased significantly (14.52% ) during the period 2001 to 2011. Their low level of literacy makes it vital for a systematic process of tribal development. They work very hard and contribute significantly towards the economic condition of the family, but they are still in poverty mostly because no proper efforts are oriented towards them. During the plan periods, various programmes are taken up for the development of the Scheduled Tribe population and a lot of betterment has been already done, but still, a lot more requires to be done. Education for tribal women is an essential aspect of development. Education is a vital instrument to bring about a change in the cultural norms and patterns of life of the tribal women and to change their outlook and made them economically independent. It would help them to organize themselves to analyze their situations and living conditions and be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Education will enable them to take up jobs so that they can improve their situation. Educated women will be able to face the present day society better than earlier times. Government is providing a lot of support and grant for the education of Tribal women. This will help to increase the literacy rate and it will lead to the right way to development. Thus increasing the literacy rate and providing opportunities for gainful employment for tribal women will be instrumental in bringing about a change in the status of tribal women in West Bengal.

Poverty is one of the barrier against literacy and educational development. Poverty also compels the parents to involve their children to works, rather than sending them to schools. So any literacy programme cannot be success without poverty eradication programme. In this regard the policy implementation of Govt. of West Bengal is satisfactory. Recently the KannyaSree" project is highly successful to reduce drop out of females from the schools.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Various educational schemes should be launch like scholarships, Hostels for their development.
2. Preservation and promotion of cultural & political heritage through the Tribal Research Institutes.

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