



Bridging the Gap: Understanding the Educational, Social and Economic Status of Sabar People in Purulia District of West Bengal

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| <p>Received 21/06/2025</p> <p>Accepted 23/06/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p> | <p>Abstract</p> <p><i>The Sabar tribe is a largely indigenous group that lives principally in West Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh. Still, they are distant from the light of civilization. In West Bengal, they are mainly found in the village of Jhargram, Purulia, Paschim Medinipur close to the forest area. Sabar is one of the poorest tribal communities of Bengal. Their educational status is impoverished and marginalized. They were considered criminals by birth during the British period. Within their community Malnutrition and death during childbirth are unfortunately frequent and widely accepted as part of everyday life. In Sabar community education is just an aristocracy, they think that education is not for them. That's why they don't want to get education. Literacy rate is very low, day by day they depart from education. A huge discrepancy between education and their real-life situation. Barriers to education among Sabar community are often complex and interlinked, stemming from social, economic, cultural and infrastructural challenges. The present study draws primarily on secondary data sources such as the Census of India (2011) and the Report on Selected Educational Statistics issued by the Statistics Division, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi and also other online sources like different research paper, article, journal, book etc. In this paper researcher aims to offer a preliminary insight into the educational status of the Sabar community in Purulia district of West Bengal. In addition to studying the educational status, the researcher also highlights the socio-economic status of the particular tribal group.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Economic Status, Educational Status, Literacy Rate, Sabar Community, Social Status</i></p> |
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Introduction

Education is the key factor driving the effective development of a nation. It plays a vital

role in building the human resources necessary for national progress. This goal, however, cannot be fully realized if any section of society remains deprived of educational opportunities. In particular socially and economically disadvantaged groups must have access to education that is affordable and sensitive to their social circumstances. Every Indian citizen has the right to education because education is a fundamental right. Education helps people to sustain their life but Sabar community don't show more interest on education because Sabar community face different educational challenges, like poverty, geographical location, language etc. That's why the detached from the education system and leading high dropout rate. They think that education as an aristocracy because education not fulfils their basic needs and doesn't help them in their daily life. Government takes different initiatives for them like different scholarships, Eklavya model residential schools (EMRS), Recruiting tribal teacher and developing tribal specific curriculum to improve their literacy. Due to limited access to formal education, tribal communities in West Bengal often remain excluded from mainstream educational systems. Moreover, formal education alone does not guarantee them livelihood opportunities, which contributes to their continued economic and social marginalization.

Review of literature

Maji (2016) In his work titled "Educational status of Tribal Women in West Bengal" he found that Education helps in empowerment of tribal women by developing self-confidence and courage to overcome the problems they face in their daily life. The objective of the paper is to analyse the status of tribal education with literacy rate, gross enrolment ratio, and Gender Parity Index in West Bengal. The analysis is based on secondary data. In West Bengal female literacy of tribes is only 47.7 % compared to male literacy of 68.2% and male - female gap in literacy rate of tribal women from rural area to urban area which are 21% to 14.4% respectively.

Daripa (2017) in his review study on "A comparative study of the Educational status of Tribals in West Bengal: With Special Reference to The District of Purulia" He talks about the educational situation of tribal communities in Purulia. In this land the tribes are the most backward, deprived and marginalized communities. Purulia is the most vulnerable district in West Bengal, in terms of literacy, poverty, health. The main objectives of the study are to study the total population, gender literacy disparity, comparative analyses of literacy rate and literacy rate of STs in Purulia district. In this study Daripa used secondary data which are evaluated from Indian census 2011 and 2001, primary census abstract (PCA) of West Bengal, data from the backward cast welfare (BCA), data are also taken from Statistics of School Education-2010-2011, information from statistical hand book, west Bengal 2005 and 2006 and report of Ministry of Tribal affairs 2013 are also analyses.

Mahali & Bhattacharyya (2023) conducted a study on Socio-economic status & problems of scheduled tribe community in West Bengal: An overview. In many scheduled tribe communities in West Bengal, each with a unique socioeconomic standing. Their study points out the uniqueness of each community or group and claims that future administrators can learn from this study what strategies can result in the overall development of scheduled tribe communities. In this paper secondary data is used to discuss the following topics about the population of Scheduled Tribes: occupation, income, educational status, family size, religion, food habits, lifestyle, etc. The primary sources of secondary data are different journals, encyclopaedias, websites, periodicals,

newspaper stories, etc.

Sivasankar & Premkumar (2020) conducted a study on educational status of scheduled tribes- A gender perspective. In this study they focused on the level of literacy of ST in India and also compared the literacy rate between the ST students who lived in rural and urban areas. He also mentions the literacy gap between the male and female students of rural and urban areas. He found that scheduled castes literacy rate was higher than the scheduled castes both in rural and urban areas. It is clearly observed that constitutional right failed to provide right to education for the tribes. The female scheduled tribe literacy rate had very wretched level than any other social groups in India that's why both state and central government think to reframe their policy to encourage tribal education.

Objective of the study

1. To study the educational status of Sabar community in the Purulia district.
2. To study the social status of Sabar community in the Purulia district.
3. To study the economic status of Sabar community in the Purulia district.
4. To study the literacy rate of tribal people in the Purulia district.

Research Questions

- Q1:** What is the educational status of Sabar people in the Purulia district? **(For objective 1)**
Q2: What is the social status of Sabar people in the Purulia district? **(For objective 2)**
Q3: What is the economic condition of Sabar people in the Purulia district? **(For objective 3)**
Q4: What is the literacy rate of tribal people in the Purulia district? **(For objective 4)**

Methodology of the study

The present study draws primarily on secondary data sources such as the Census of India (2011) and the Report on Selected Educational Statistics issued by the Statistics Division, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi and also other online sources like different research paper, article, journal, book etc. and take interview from some friends, teachers, students and local people of Purulia districts.

Result & Discussion

Table 1: Present Educational Status of Scheduled Tribes

| Location | Overall Literacy Rate (STs) | Male Literacy Rate (STs) | Female Literacy Rate (STs) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| India | 74.30% | 84.30% | 64.10% |
| West Bengal | 57.92% | 68.20% | 47.70% |
| Purulia District (WB) | 53.86% | 67.71% | 39.77% |

Source: census 2011 (Govt. of India)

From the above table it is clear that literacy rate (STs) male is greater than the female in

India, West Bengal and Purulia also.

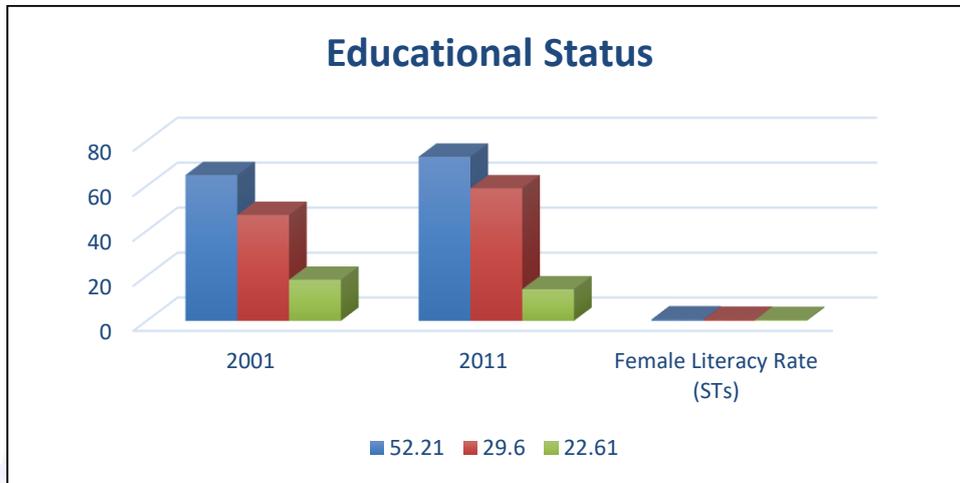


Table 2: Educational standard of Sabar People in Purulia district: Percentage (Approx)

| Sex | Illiterate | I-IV | V-VIII | IX-X | XI-XII | Graduate and PG |
|--------|------------|------|--------|------|--------|-----------------|
| Male | 46% | 32% | 14% | 6% | 2% | 0% |
| Female | 56% | 27% | 11% | 3% | 2% | 1% |

Educational standard of Sabar people in very poor, percentage of illiterate is very high.

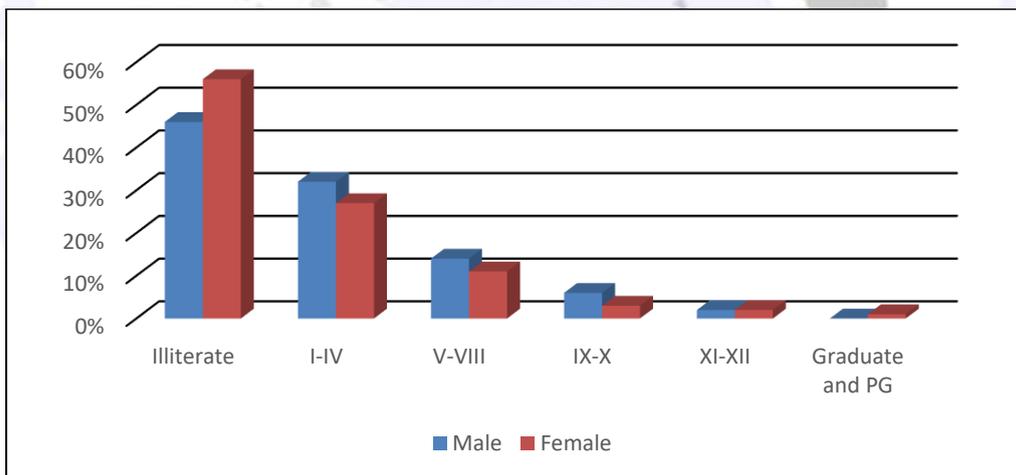


Table 3: Attitude towards education by the Sabar people in Purulia District

| Positive | Negative |
|----------|----------|
| 31% | 59% |

In Purulia district Sabar people shows 31% positive attitude towards education and 59%

shows negative attitude towards education.

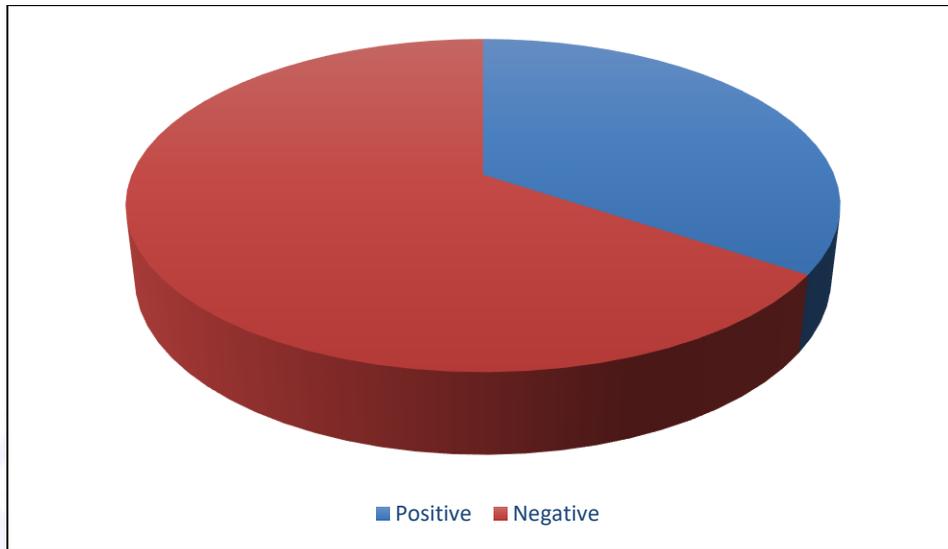


Table 4: Where do you usually use the toilet?

| Opinion | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|----------------|
| In toilets | 0% |
| Open fields | 76% |
| In jungle or bushes | 24% |

The above table indicates that the Sabar people do not use toilets for defecation. Approximately 76% defecate in open fields, while the remaining 24% do so in the jungle or nearby bushes.

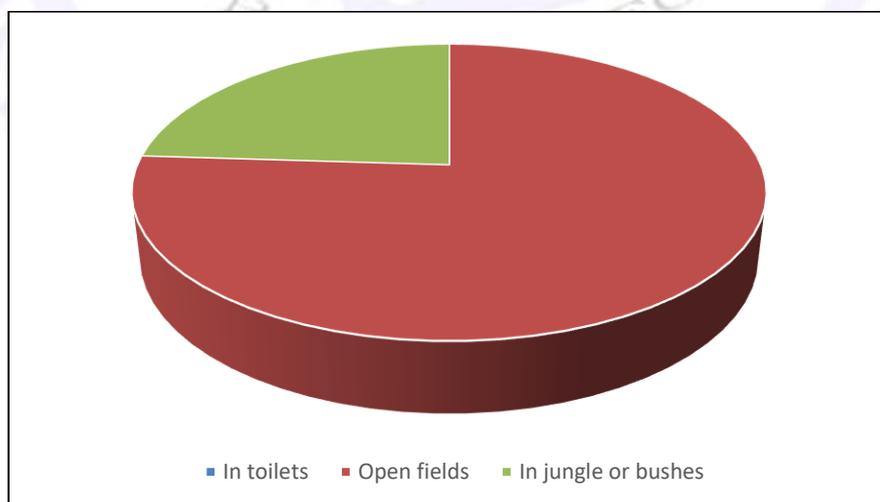


Table 5: House condition of Sabar people in Purulia District

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| House Type | Kutcha |
| | Semi Pacca |
| | Pacca |
| Roof Material | Tin |
| | Mud tiles |
| | Asbestos |
| | Straw |
| | Cement |
| Wall | Mud |
| | Brick with mud |
| | Brick with cement |
| Cooking | Wood |
| | Dry leaves and wood |
| | kerosine |

Above table shows the house condition of the Sabar people like house type (kutcha/semi Pacca/Pacca), roof material (tin/mud tiles/asbestos/straw/cement), wall of the house and the cooking material also.

Table 6: Economic Status of Sabar Community in Purulia district

| Monthly Income | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|----------------|
| < than 4000 | 57% |
| 4000-6000 | 39% |
| 6000-8000 | 4% |
| >8000 | 0 |

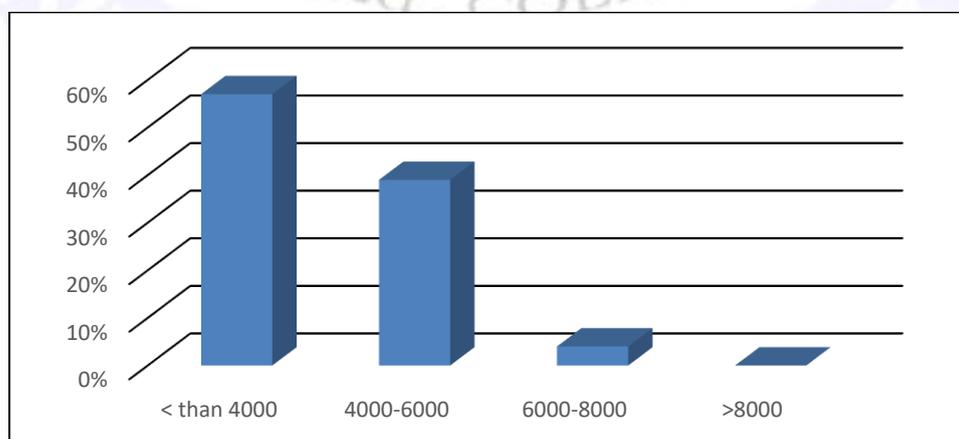


Table 7: Economic Life of Sabar Community in Purulia district

| Income Sources | Description |
|----------------------------|--|
| Owner Cultivation | Some of them have Patta land. |
| Agriculture day labour | If they haven't Patta land. |
| Non-Agriculture Day labour | Some of them are day labour and construction labour. |
| Hunting | Sabar people hunt a variety of wild animals, including rat, deer, rabbit, jungle fowl and different types of birds also. |
| Gathering | The Sabar community gathers an extensive range of edible plants, fruits, timber, honey, red ant eggs (<i>Korkut</i>), and diverse medicinal herbs. |
| Fishing | Fishing in rivers, ponds, and streams is common among the Sabar people, using their traditional techniques. |

Table 8: Meals per day

| Opinion | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 2 times | 2% |
| 3 times | 95% |
| More than 3 times | 3% |

95% of Sabar people in Purulia district take meal thrice a day and 2% of Sabar people takes meal twice every day and 3% people take meal more than 3 times per day.

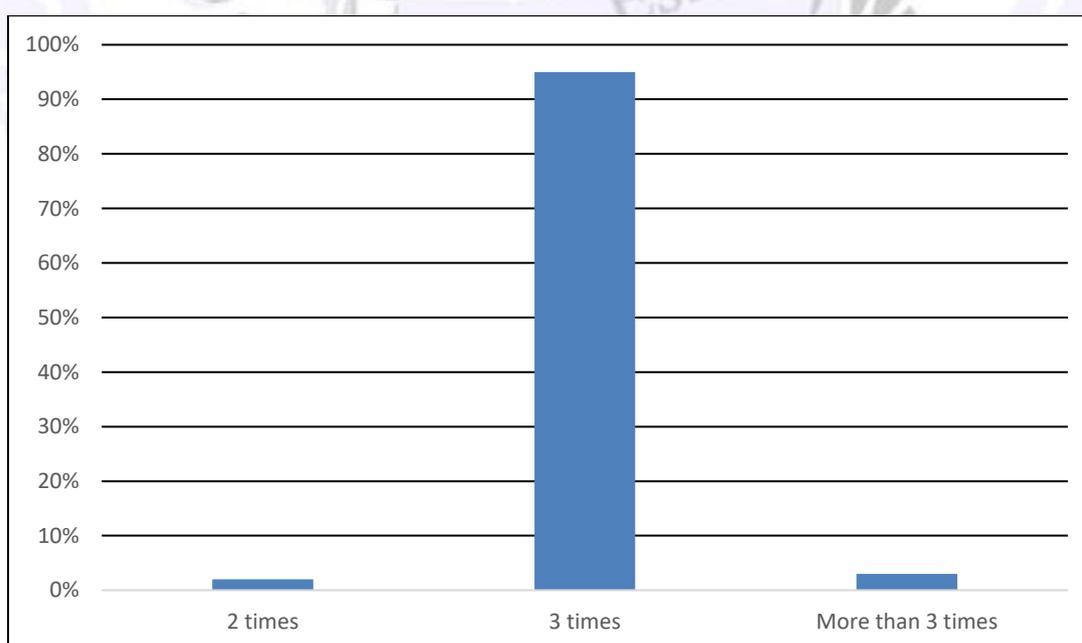


Table 9: Decade-wise Comparative Literacy Rates of STs & Total Population in India (in per cent)

| Year of Census | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Population | 28.3 | 34.45 | 43.57 | 52.21 | 64.84 | 72.99 |
| Scheduled Tribe | 8.53 | 11.30 | 16.35 | 29.60 | 47.10 | 58.96 |
| Gap | 19.77 | 18.15 | 19.88 | 22.61 | 18.28 | 14.03 |

(Statistical Profile of scheduled Tribe in India, 2013)

Table 10: Literacy rate of ST population in the Purulia district

| Name of the sub district | Total ST literacy rate | Male | Female | Difference |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Jaipur | 48.02% | 61.27% | 34.01% | 25.09% |
| Purulia-II | 51.50% | 63.95% | 38.86% | 25.09% |
| Para | 60.60% | 75.51% | 44.78% | 30.73% |
| Raghunathpur-II | 56.73% | 71.45% | 41.50% | 29.95% |
| Raghunathpur-I | 50.32% | 63.06% | 37.44% | 25.62% |
| Neturia | 52.32% | 65.80% | 38.48% | 27.32% |
| Santuri | 54.95% | 68.26% | 41.68% | 26.58% |
| Kashipur | 60.88% | 72.92% | 47.73% | 26.40% |
| Hura | 60.21% | 59.22% | 46.37% | 27.95% |
| Purulia-I | 54.87% | 71.13% | 41.02% | 27.21% |
| Puncha | 58.81% | 60.07% | 44.85% | 28.07% |
| Arsha | 45.48% | 61.23% | 31.80% | 27.42% |
| Jhalda-I | 57.43% | 61.18% | 43.22% | 27.91% |
| Jhalda-II | 45.83% | 60.07% | 31.12% | 28.95% |
| Bagmundi | 47.18% | 61.23% | 32.82% | 28.41% |
| Balarampur | 47.08% | 61.18% | 32.62% | 28.56% |
| Barabazar | 52.59% | 68.04% | 36.86% | 31.18% |
| Manbazar-I | 56.72% | 71.71% | 41.58% | 30.13% |
| Manbazar-II | 54.51% | 69.59% | 39.46% | 30.13% |
| Bundwan | 53.17% | 67.44% | 40.23% | 27.21% |
| Total | 53.68% | 67.71% | 39.54% | 28.17% |

Source: census 2011 (Govt. of India)

Major findings

- Sabar people show negative attitude towards education.
- Most of the Sabar family members eat three times a day and a smaller number of Sabar family members eats only twice a day.
- The preferred defecate in the open field, jungle or bushes instead of use toilet.
- Sabar people are economically very poor.
 - Literacy rate of STs male is higher than the female.

Conclusion

For the Scheduled Tribe government launch various schemes and projects which helps the very much. They got benefits from this scheme and projects. Both state and the central government have provided different developmental inputs like scholarship, different Prakalpa, money for making toilet, house under IAY, establishing residential school, recruiting tribal teachers etc. This schemes and project help the people of Scheduled Tribe including Sabar people in Purulia district, West Bengal as well as India. These developmental inputs increase the education status and socio-economic status of Sabar people.

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