

Chapter 4

Education

Education is the foundation of socio-economic development. It forms a remarkable part in the overall progress of persons, permitting them to accomplish better attentiveness and a cleared conception of the conditions round them. Education is thus a very important component of human resource development and management. It is essential for a total and integrated approach to life.¹ Educational advancement therefore form an essential component for the social and economic progression of any community. It is with this view that the Directive Principle of the Constitution of India recommended that assurance of education of the Scheduled Tribes of India has a precise liability of the Governments at the Centre and in the States.² Education is not only necessary for their economic upliftment but also for developing their inner resources in meeting the new challenges of life. So, Bhowmick & Bhowmick says “education can support the tribals to build their inner strength and equip them to meet the present-day challenges.”³

Christian missionaries did the inaugural work for educational improvement of the tribal people of India in modern times. During the nineteenth century they took great pains to establish schools and hospitals in remotest fragments of the country to convert them to Christianity.⁴ This disturbed the traditional homogeneity of tribal life and culture. Considering that the Caste and Tribes were among the most backward folks of India, special provisions were made in the Constitution of India for providing education to them.⁵

Article 46 of the Directive Principles of State Policy and Articles – 15 (4), 29 (1), and 350-A may be quoted for instances. Article 15 (4) authorizes the State to undertake any special provision for the development of any socially and

educationally backward classes of citizens or for SCs and STs. This provision was included in the Constitution through the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, which amended numerous Articles. This provision has also permitted the State to reserve seats for SCs and STs in educational institutions including technical, engineering and medical colleges and in Scientific & Specialized Courses.⁶

Article 29 (1) provides that “any segment of the citizens inheriting within India or any part thereof having a discrete language, script or culture to its own intend to have the right to preserve the same”.⁷ This Article has special significance for all the Scheduled Tribes. Santhals have a script of their own, viz., Olchiki. But this provision needs not be understood to educate Tribals only in their language and thereby making them isolated. Tribals should be educated in the language of the State as well as National Language to expose them to the outside knowledge.

Article 350 (A) provides that “Every State as well every local authority within the State shall have the responsibility to provide adequate facilities for instructions in the mother-tongue at the initial stage of education to children of the linguistic minority groups, and the president may give such instructions to any State he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities”.⁸ Most tribal societies have their special language or dialect, which is usually different from official language that the State belongs.

In keeping with the philosophy of tribal development and constitutional obligations, both the State and Central Governments consecutively takes some efforts to increase education among the tribes. The Government has taken up various extensive welfare schemes to implement the progression of tribal communities. Out of these welfare schemes, educational schemes are the most imperative, as without modern education, the Scheduled Tribes would fail to enjoy the fruits of the modern

developmental attributes. Even after seven decades of Independence, India has yet to achieve much in the field of education. This is most obvious when the tribal societies are taken into consideration. Even though tribal communities possess their own cultural characteristics. But in general, they are very poor. Educational backwardness lies at the root of their economic, social and political backwardness. We may here consider in brief some of the important studies that have been made so far with regard to the problem of tribal education. Keeping our attention focused on West Bengal, we may start with the following.

B. K. Roy Chowdhary in his article studied the education level among some tribal communities of West Bengal (viz., The Santal, Munda, Oraon, Bhumij and the Malpaharia).⁹ Sachchidananda's attention was drawn to the effects brought about by the spread of education among women of the Scheduled tribes and Scheduled castes.¹⁰ Dani holds Poverty and lack of education along with the social and geographical isolation of the tribal communities as responsible for the slow progress of education among the tribals.¹¹ Bhowmik, Chowdhury and Sarkar have gathered data relating to tribal literacy in West Bengal and data on the basis of census reports.¹² Tarafdar's book brings out details about the secondary education among girls of the Scheduled Tribe.¹³ George addressed that education came up as a stimulating and empowering agent for women and all other feebler sections of the society. ¹⁴ Lewis and Lockheed established the pathetic 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”. ¹⁵

In a study on the tribes of Andhra Pradesh, Sujatha opposes that ‘the educational development of tribal communities fails to effectively address the specific disadvantages portraying the tribal population.’¹⁶ Jha & Jhingran have

strongly advocated the use of the mother tongue or home language as the medium of teaching in the early stages of education. This needs to be carefully considered because the mother tongue of tribal children is often fairly different from the main languages of the state or the regional languages and only a local teacher from the same tribal community can adequately deal with it.¹⁷ P. C. Biswas has correctly commented that the cultural multiplicity of the Indian tribes makes any educational programmed intended on them a very complex rather dangerous activity. He also recommends that educational schemes should be formulated in such a way that both adults and children can benefit from these.¹⁸ Nair points out the advantage of non-formal education to reach out to tribal children in inaccessible areas.¹⁹ Abdul Raheem clarified 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.'²⁰

Bhowmick & Bhowmick crucially observe the issues and problems about tribal literacy and lay down a set of policy guidelines. The book covers a comprehensive range of factors responsible for acceptance and denunciation of tribal literacy programmes.²¹ Chowdhuri in his article 'Tribal Literacy from Planning Perspective' has identified police stations in the state of West Bengal where substantial number of tribals population were marked with low level of literacy. The author analyzed the data based on 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.²²

4.1 Government of India Initiatives for Tribal Educational Development

Since Independence, the Government of India has sponsored a lot of programmes to overcome the problems of illiteracy both at the rural and urban levels.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Education Minister, wanted education to be brought under strong central control all over the country, with this aim in view the Union government formed the University Education Commission (1948– 1949) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952–1953) to advance proposals for modernizing the education system in India. Nehru being the First Prime Minister of India concentrated on the need to develop science and technology to modernize India. A resolution on scientific policy was implemented thereafter and Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) were started. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was formed by the union government in 1961 to counsel both the Union and State governments on the formulation and implementation of education policies.²³ Its functions include investigation, evaluation and research into the problem and prospect of tribal education. It is autonomous in character, and an important organization for educational development of the nation in general and tribal people in particular. In 1962 the ST commission recommended relaxation of the age limit and admission rules in addition to reservation of seats for students of these communities in educational institutions.²⁴

Based on the report and approvals of the Education Commission (1964–1966), the then government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi publicized the first National Policy on Education in 1968, which was called for a “radical restructuring” to deliver equal educational opportunities in order to attain national integration and improved cultural and economic development.²⁵The Education Commission (1964–66) also stressed,“Different tribal people are at varying stages of economic development. There is much variation in the skills they have achieved and in the technologies they use.”²⁶

The government of the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi familiarized a new

National Policy on Education in May, 1986,²⁷ the new policy called for “special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity,” exclusively for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities.²⁸

The New Education Policy has accorded high importance to education of Scheduled Tribes, particularly to the universalization of elementary education. The main purpose is laid on micro-level planning taking family as a unit. The Acharya Ramamurti Committee which reviewed this National Education Policy of 1986, strongly recommended that education should be made socially relevant and meaningful.²⁹ Because this education policy is more socially relevant along with core curriculum, establishment of school complex, providing additional teachers to the single teacher school, opening of hostels in every district, identifying teachers from educated tribes, expanding ashram schools, providing pre-primary education and paying opportunity cost are some of the important schemes found in the Programme of Action (POA). Moreover, it may be stated that the national policy on education, 1986 envisages decentralized and micro level planning in order to cater the local educational needs.³⁰

The 1986 National Policy on Education was customized in 1992 by the P.V. Narasimha Rao government.³¹ 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. Under this section, management of education, the revised programme of action of National Policy on Education, 1992 has incorporated decentralization and involvement of local people. The decentralization implies democratic participation by selected representatives of people in decision making at

the district, sub-divisional and panchayat levels. In pursuance of the POA provision, the state government have been taking steps to set-up the creation of District Board of Education at the district level. The role and functions of Village Education Committee as envisaged by national policy on education are set up as under:

- i. To supervise teachers who tend to be absent from schools for no reasons.
- ii. To involve the community in the management of school so that necessary awareness could be created in the community who send their children to school; and to raise necessary local resources for education.³²

In free India, the State and Central Govt. are taking a lot 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.³³ Besides, governmental goal directed efforts, the social and economic pressures have also generated a sense of compulsion among some traditionally unexposed families towards schooling.³⁴

4.2 Educational Schemes for STs in West Bengal

Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Educational advancement is a way to economic and social development, and the utmost valuable implement for empowering the tribals. The Education Division of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs makes all efforts to enhance the actions of the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the State Governments/UT Administrations by directing innumerable schemes with the aim of creating an attractive way to education through infrastructure like 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 terms 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) have been set up in States with endowments under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India to deliver eminence middle and high level education to Scheduled Tribe students in isolated parts, so that they may find admission to the best educational institutions in the country to be able to compete at par with the non-ST population regarding jobs.

To provide superiority education to STs boys and girls from class VI to XII, five Eklavya Model Residential Schools 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 manages to accommodate 420 students. The students admitted to these schools are benefitted with scholarship, free food and lodging etc. Computer education is also introduced in all the schools from class VI.

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

The scheme is enjoyed by those students whose parents are either flayers, tanners, scavengers, or engaged in similar other profession. These grants are also obtained by

the day scholars and hostellers belonging to this category (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Hosteller and Day Scholar Grants for ST students in West Bengal 2010-11

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

Source: Annual Administrative Report 2010-11, Backward Class Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal.

Girls / Boys Hostel for ST Students

To provide accommodation for ST students whose economic condition or distance from the institution where they study, government has initiated the construction of ST girls hostel from the Third Plan Period. Another distinct scheme for construction of hostels for Scheduled Tribe boys begun in 1989-90. The two schemes combined into one during the 10th Five Year Plan. It was further reviewed with effect from the financial year 2008-09 (i.e. 01-04-2008).

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 of 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 scheme focuses on providing financial support to the Scheduled Tribe students studying at post-matriculation or post-secondary levels to permit them to complete their education. The income of the parents / guardian should not exceed Rs.2,00,000/- per annum. The amount of post matric scholarship has been revised with effect from 01/07/2010.

The State Govt. deliberates 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 endured 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 nonrefundable fees are also paid as per an accepted rate of the Govt. organization (Table 4.2). 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 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Table 4.2 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 4.1.

Table 4.3 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 4.1.

National Overseas Scholarship Scheme (NOS)

The scheme came into existence since 1954-55. This was a Non-Plan Scheme, which

transformed to Plan scheme from 2007-08. The main aim 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 bestowed 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)

From 2005-2006 all Universities and institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under section 2 (f) of the UGC Act. are covered by this scheme. It provides economic supports in terms of fellowships for the assistance of students belonging to the ST in higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. The number of Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF) awarded for ST students during 2009-10 to 2011-12 is given below (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Numbers of RGNF awarded for ST students in West Bengal, 2009-10 to 2011-12

Year	Number of Students 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

It was revised and came into effect from 1.4.2009 and is being instigated 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. To elevate the skills of the tribal youth in various traditional and modern vocations according to their various capabilities the government has launched the present scheme since 1992-93. The aim is to empower the tribal youth to become either self-sufficient or gain suitable employment. The scheme includes all the States and Union Territories. The scheme is exclusively for the assistance of the Scheduled Tribes and PTGs (Primitive Tribal Groups like- Lodha, Toto and Birhar). As far as possible a minimum 33% seats is to be reserved for tribal girl candidates.

Mid-Day-Meal

The right to education is enshrined as one of the fundamental rights in Indian Constitution. But many poor families fail to send their children to school due to poverty. Not only is it a financial burden for them, but it also deprives them of some additional money which their children may have been able to earn through their labour. To attract children to schools and provide necessary nutrition for them, the Government of India launched National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Commonly known as Mid-Day- Meal Scheme) on August 15, 1995.³⁵ It had its precedent in the Mid-Day-Meal Programme for disadvantage children in Madras Municipal Corporation in 1925. In 2002, the Supreme Court directed the Government to supply cooked Mid-Day-Meals (in contrast to providing dry rations) in all Government and Government aided primary schools. It was reviewed in September 2004 and in September 2006.³⁶

With a view to increase universalization of Primary Education (class I-V) by increasing enrolment, attendance, retention and learning levels of children, especially those belonging to underprivileged sections together with to improve nutritional status of students of primary stage, the Mid-Day-Meal Programme was introduced in

West Bengal in 1100 schools of six districts from January, 2003.

The core objectives of the Programme are:

- a) To develop the learning capabilities of the beneficiaries, specifically of children belonging to poor and down trodden sections of the society by increasing enrolment and preventing drop-outs.
- b) To provide nutritious meal to school going children to accomplish the goal of a healthy mind in a healthy body.
- c) To encourage a sense of brotherhood among children belonging to different castes.

4.3 Schemes for STs of Government of West Bengal

In fulfillment of a motion promoted by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on 5th July, 1972, the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was constituted on 15th July, 1972, with 12 members elected by the Assembly from among its members bestowing to the principle of proportionate depiction by means of single transferable vote. The Committee met for the first time on 2nd August, 1972, when the Hon'ble Speaker, Shri Apurba Lal Majumdar, was kind enough to deliver the inaugural address. The Committee met next on the 25th August, 1972 and adopted its internal working rules. At the two informal meetings – one hold on the 24th September, 1972 and the other on 6th February, 1973 with the study group of the Parliamentary Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which visited this State under the leadership of Shri Buta Singh, MP, Chairman of the above Parliamentary Committee, the Committee discussed the various problems relating to the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of this State with a view to find out satisfactory solutions to them. The discussions were cordial and lively.³⁷

The Committee met again on the 24th April, 1973 and discussed the various aspects of

the matter concerning the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and especially, the measures for securing the educational and economic interests of these communities and for protecting them from social injustice and other forms of exploitation.³⁸

The Chief Minister, Shri Siddhartha Sankar Ray, who spoke on the occasion, explained the Government's stand in the matter of welfare of the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Chief Minister opposed the idea of setting up of any separate institution for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as in his opinion; such things would amount to undesirable segregation and would not help promote the cause of these communities. It would not, the Chief Minister emphasized, really be possible to give effect to the principles embodied in the Constitution by setting up separate educational institutions or, for that matter, separate hostels for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as suggested by the same; rather, the society should be so transformed as to embrace the exploited and the down-trodden without any reservation, and the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes must be made to feel that there is harmony with others and not merely "equal but separate". On the question of entitlements of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts under the Government, the Chief Minister stated that the Government is concerned of the issue since long. In fact, the Government had already set up a Cabinet Evaluation Committee for ascertaining if the appointments to services and posts were being made in accord to the principle of reservation, the Chief Minister told, would contemplate the cases of promotion as well.³⁹

The Backward Classes Welfare Department implemented a good number of educational schemes aimed at diffusing education among the ST in West Bengal.

Details of educational schemes implemented 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 4.5. Number of ST beneficiaries and utilized amount for book grants in West Bengal from 2007-2008 to 2010-11 is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5 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 4.1.

Table 4.6 Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilized 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 4.1.

Maintenance Grant for ST Students

Scheme provides maintenance grant to eligible ST day scholars Rs. 40/ per month. The aim is to offer 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 the utilized amount for maintenance grants in West Bengal from 2007-08 to 2010-11 given in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilized 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 4.1.

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 it highlights the number of ST beneficiaries and utilized amount for various compulsory charges in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11 (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilized 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 4.1.

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 to Rs. 36,000 / per annum. The number of STs beneficiaries and utilized amount for hostel grants in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11 is shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilized 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 4.1.

Ashram Hostel

The scheme which has been in operation since 1990-91, it has been reviewed and came into effect in the year 2008-09 (i.e. 01-04-2008) to promote and extend educational facilities to Scheduled Tribe students including PTGs, Ashram Schools also facilitates accommodations together with education in an environment favorable to learning. The funding for the scheme is done on 50:50 basis jointly by the Union government and the State where the school is located. The Centre accepts the entire expense for the scheme in Union Territories. Ashram Hostels for ST boy and girl students are formed by the Backward Class Welfare Department within the confines of the recognized schools. Students from Class I to X may find admission there. The students are paid Rs. 750 per month throughout the academic year. Additionally, they are provided cots, bedrolls, garments, soap, kerosene etc.

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

The State Government operates 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 from its own pocket (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 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 4.1.

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

The core motivate of the scheme is to promote the merit of Scheduled Tribe including PTG students in classes IX to XII by facilitating them for all round development through education in residential schools so that they can get admission to higher education courses and for senior administrative and technical occupations. A Package grant is given with the following break-up (Table 4.11). The number of ST beneficiaries and utilized amount for up-gradation of merit scholarship in West Bengal from 2007-08 to 2010-11 is shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.11 Grants for ST Students for Competitive Exam. In Classes IX to XII, West Bengal

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

Source: As in Table 4.1.

Table 4.12 Number of ST Beneficiaries and Utilized Amount for Up-Gradation of Merit Scholarship in West Bengal, 2007-08 to 2010-11

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

Source: As in Table 4.1.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu Residential Schools

BCW Dept. of West Bengal has convinced to construct 5 residential schools for ST students in the districts of Bankura, Purulia, Burdwan, Paschim Medinipur, 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

At Belpahari in the Jhargram subdivision of Midnapore district, West Bengal a residential higher secondary school for girls has been established. It is capable of providing education to 360 scheduled tribes girl students. The government bears the cost of their dress and food and lodging. They also give free medical treatment and educational equipments at Government cost.

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Medha Puraskar

Each year, 500 ST students are nominated for availing the honor of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Medha Puraskar based on the result in the Madhyamik Pariksha conducted by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. The cash prize of Rs. 5000/ and a Certificate of excellence is awarded to these meritorious students.

Joint Entrance Coaching

16 centers 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 organization 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 remuneration during the period of coaching.

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

4.4 Status of Education of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal

Literacy is a significant pointer of development amid the tribal groups. Literacy and education are sensibly one of the good indicators of progress in a society. Spread of literacy is usually connected with necessary qualities of recent civilization such as modernization, urbanisation, industrialization, communication and commerce. Higher levels of education and literacy results in superior attentiveness and also in development of economic conditions. It turns to be a means for social upgradation and attracts 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 will be considered 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 were 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 has shown a significant increase from 6.55 per cent in 1961 to 57.93 per cent in 2011. Literacy rate of ST female of West Bengal too increased significantly from 1.8 per cent in 1961 to 29.15 per cent in 2001. It significantly expanded from 29.15 per cent in 2001 to 47.71 per cent in 2011. The literacy rate of ST female is considerably lower than that of male. The fact is that

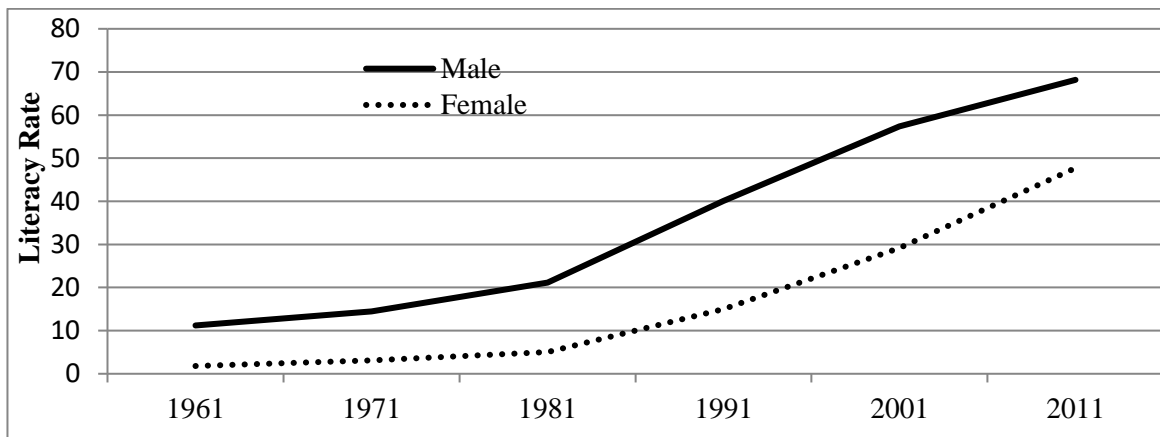
even in 2011 more than fifty per cent of tribal women are unable to read and write (Table 4.13 and Figure 4.1)

Table 4.13 Trends of Literacy Rate of STs in West Bengal, 1961 to 2011

Census Year	Person	Male	Female
1961	6.55	11.2	1.8
1971	8.92	14.49	3.09
1981	13.21	21.16	5.01
1991	27.78	40.07	14.98
2001	43.40	57.38	29.15
2011	57.93	68.17	47.71

Source: Census of India, 1961 to 2011.

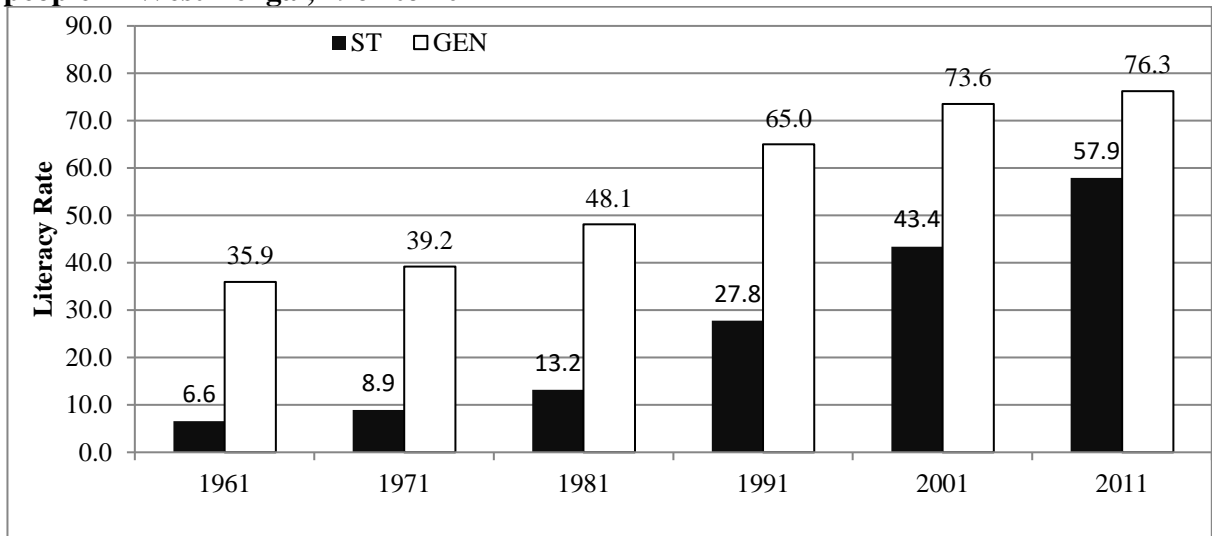
Figure 4.1 Trend of Literacy Rate of Tribal Women in West Bengal, 1961-2011



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

The literacy rate of STs was also lagging behind 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 4.2).

Figure 4.2 Literacy Rate of Scheduled Tribes in Comparison with General Caste people in West Bengal, 1961 to 2011



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 in income. But among STs, a significant person of adult members is 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 there were 32.5 per cent households where there was no literate adult members and about 43.4 per cent households where there was no literate adult female members. In urban West Bengal there was relatively lower numbers of households with no literate adult members/female members in comparison with rural West Bengal. Here the gap amid STs and GEN was also relatively low. But the reality is that relatively lower numbers of STs are located in urban West Bengal. They are predominant in rural area (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14 Percentage Share of households with no literate adult member and adult female member by Caste in West Bengal, 1999-2000 to 2011-2012

	ST		SC		GEN	
Year	No Literate Adult member	No Literate Adult Female	No Literate Adult member	No Literate Adult Female	No Literate Adult member	No Literate Adult Female
Rural						
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
Urban						
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: NSSO Report No. 469, 516, 543, 563; 1999-2000, 2004-5, 2009-10, 2011-12 'Employment and Un- Employment situation among social group in India'.

Graduate and above level educated persons are significantly low in ST community of West Bengal. Only 2.1 per cent of male and 0.6 percent of female of STs Community in rural area were 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 deprived in higher education (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15 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
Rural Male							
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
Rural Female							
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
Urban Male							
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	
Urban Female							
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: As in Table 4.14.

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 4.16).

Table 4.16 Current Attendance Rate of STs in Educational Institution (0-29 Yrs) Age Groups in West Bengal from 2004-05 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: As in Table 4.14.

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 lesser than that of SC and OBC female members in rural as well as urban West Bengal (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17 Current Attendance Rate of Female (0-29 Yrs) 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: As in Table 4.14.

For retaining the 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 withholding 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 much lower than the earlier years. This dropout rate has evident for both boy and girl students (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18 Dropout 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, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2009-10, 2010-11. Department of Higher Education, New Delhi, 2007.

4.5 Obstacles to Tribal Education

Education is closely related to socio-economic development. It is a significant factor determining the course of economic development. The level of economic development, on the other hand, leaves an impact on education. Therefore, education is both cause and effect of development. Despite all the provisions and schemes that have been made in this regard, much still remains to be done. This has been indicated in the reports submitted by the various committees and commissions that have been set up from time to time to go into the problem. Among the factors most frequently addressed as impediments to the growth of tribal education in the country attention may be made on the following: -

The content, curriculum, medium of instruction, lack of parental awareness, socio-economic hitches are faced by the teachers in general. The educational development of the tribal population cannot on the whole be analyzed in isolation. It needs to be integrated with their cultural background. Unless this is done a number of problems hindering the process of education among them are bound to rise. This section will describe few problems that have been identified.

The basic problem is related to poverty. 32.9 percent in rural and 20.6 percent in urban of the Scheduled Tribe families in West Bengal live below the poverty line. L. K. Mahapatra reminds that the living conditions of some tribals have not transformed since Independence.⁴⁰ The variation that is sustained shows that every child is an economic asset or unit in a tribal family because of the low per capita income of tribal families. We must remember that children whom they raise are linked more and more to economic activities as they grow older. More heads are required in agricultural work during the period of cultivation and for this purpose girls and boys in their families are put to work. Boys take the cattle to graze and

collect fodder. Hunting and fishing are their major occupations. The load of girl child is even harder. She has to help in the work, both within and outdoor. It is her duty to look after the young member of the family. Sometimes she has to carry the infants to where their mother work as they need attention. Outside the house the girl has often to work in the field and collect the produce of the forest.⁴¹

Tribal people do not think that the present system of education benefits them. The scarcity of jobs and the high rate of unemployment discourage them. Most parents lose faith in educating their children even at primary level. In familiarizing and endorsing formal education in the tribal areas lots of difficulties have been encountered. The general complain is that there is a large amount of wastage at the primary level; the tribal children and particularly their parents are least interested in education. Since maximum tribal parents are illiterate and ignorant of the outside modern world, they are not accustomed with the benefits one derives out of education.

Verrier Elwin observes, “For a tribal family, to send its grown-up boy or girl to school is an economic proposition and entails dissipation in the traditional pattern of division of labour. Girls give every kind of help to their mothers in the work at home. During the agriculture season tribal boys work in the field with their parents. At other season they are busy in collecting minor forest produce and firewood, watching the crops, bringing water, hunting and fishing. Many parents just fail to succeed to send their children to school.”⁴²

Socio-cultural problems are more complicated than the economic problem. Tribal people have attachment towards their age-old socio-cultural traditions. The mass tribal people came in education after the independence of India. The parents show little interest in their female child than the male children to move here and

there, play the rural traditional games in the lap of nature and swim during midday in village pond or stream in rainy season. Sometimes they fly kites and play different kinds of flute (made up of green leaves, grass, seeds, etc.). Even they practice various types of activities learned in the process of their socialization like trapping, hunting, fishing, collection of forest product, collecting the bird's eggs from the nests, weaving of bamboo, cultivation work, etc. The doings of the tribal children are entangled with their family and society.⁴³

A natural corollary of this is the high rate of dropouts in informal education. Gender discrimination also plays a vital role in this. The level of female enrolment at the school level is less than that of the boys. Girls also registered a higher number of dropouts. Parents show greater interest in the education of boys, because a male child is expected to look after the family in later years and is considered to be a permanent asset of the family. But girls normally leave the parents' house after marriage. So, their education is neglected after the primary levels. Parents are more anxious to find suitable grooms for them. There is also the anxiety that it would be more difficult to arrange marriage for them if they received higher education instate more attention is paid to expertise them in household work so that they face no difficulty after marriage.⁴⁴ In addition to what has been said above, we must keep in mind the prevailing social conditions. The conditions in tribal families are generally not several for higher education. Adult male members spend much time in drinking illicit liquor and quarrelling. Thus, their houses are poorly built and suffer from make of space.⁴⁵

Tribal school has their own problems. Children from tribal families generally want to disengage themselves from studies. Thus, the quality of the teacher, his ability to draw the attention of the students towards the subject that he teaches and make it attractive is obligatory. He must be able to communicate well with those he

teaches. The role of teacher in the education system is dynamic. No new innovation, not even the audio-visual system, can take his place. What a teacher expects from a student is very important in conditioning his response. This is known as the “Pygmalion Effect”. If the teachers’ expectation is low, the student does not want to work to his full capacity.⁴⁶ Unfortunately non-tribal teachers in most cases lack the initiative to urge their students to do well. They have a poor opinion of tribal students. Since the elimination of the test system in schools for class-VIII, there has been a decline in the mental aptitude of students, because they know that they will anyhow be promoted to the next higher stage.⁴⁷

Suitable teachers and a new education policy are essential to spread the education among the tribals.⁴⁸ The lack of educational institutions in tribal areas of West Bengal also act as a barricade to the expansion of education among these group. T.B. Naik has shown in his study that “the lack of provision of school in the village is the major factor for the tribals not sending their children to school”.⁴⁹ The language problem also creates difficulties in the spread of education among the tribals. Most of the tribal language and dialects are in rudimentary stage. The school teachers in several cases are non-tribals with little or no idea about tribal languages and culture. Naturally this prevents effective communication between the teachers and the taught.⁵⁰

It is an acceptable fact that language problem is also a prime barrier in education development of the tribes. The medium of instruction plays a vigorous role in understanding the subject matter. It also creates interest among the tribal students for mass participation in education as well as better result and it indirectly influences the drop-out rate in school education.⁵¹

Any educational policy or plan will be a major success when it directly favors the people. It has a great role not merely in the field of education but also in the development of society and culture. It is also a notable fact that education of tribals has remained problematic for the planners since their intensive efforts from the last four decades have not yielded the desired result. The National Policy of Education, 1968 makes a significant step in the history of education. The Education Policy of 1986 is more favorable to the tribals. But there is no separate programme for girl's education. The micro-level planning is not implemented in study areas according to the latest education policy. The government provides insufficient dress to the primary student, which too is of low quality. Although, conferring to the National Education Policy, 1986 provision of new text books, adequate school furniture, more teachers, proper arrangement of class rooms, mid-day-meal, dress, games and recreation etc. were made, but was implemented partially. The state government recently distributed the low quality of rice occasionally in primary schools to attract the backward and poor rural children in education. The vacant posts of the teachers are filled after a long period of gape. It is observed that the planning and policies of education of the government virtually have little impact on education among the tribal children in present study areas. The primary school going tribal children could not get or enjoy any special kind of facilities, which have been mentioned in National Education Policy, 1986.⁵² But in tribal context, education is only the utmost significant issue of their development. It provides one of the most important channels of transition from traditional to modern sectors. In a tribal society, education is a value in itself and has become part of the economic foundation of modern society. Literacy is therefore, both the index and agent of modernization.⁵³

To conclude, education is crucial for tribal development. The Scheduled Tribes Communities of this state have made some progress in the arena of education during the post-Independence period as a result of the educational schemes instigated 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 issues which are always hindering this advancement of education. Hence, it is the most important duty of the Government 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 segments of the society, at least in respect of modern education. Although the Eleven Five Year Developmental Plans have completed yet the development of education among tribals is absolutely slow.