

Gender Disparities in Education: Insights from Tribal Populations in Jharkhand

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Abstract:

Gender Disparity is a social practice that shows the difference between men and women in access to resources. In this context, the education sector is no exception. Orthodoxy is still carried out that does not allow educating a girl child, thus denying them the basic 'Right to Education'. Educating girl is one of the fore most steps towards achieving empowerment of women. Being one of the educational backward sections of the society, the tribal communities are especially vulnerable in this regard. Thereby, the paper attempts to find the gender gap in literacy between different tribal communities of Jharkhand. The study makes use of doctrinal data from census of India, 2011 to calculate the disparity in literacy using Sopher's index. The paper exhibits a negative relationship between literacy and gender among tribes of Jharkhand.

Keywords: *Gender Gap, Literacy rate, Education level, Scheduled Tribes, Jharkhand*

Introduction

In Indian Context, T. B. Naik (1972) has mentioned some features of tribes like economically backward (Primitive and traditional means of exploiting natural resources), having a common dialect, politically unorganized etc. Literacy is one of the most fundamental elements of education which improves quality of life, reduces mortality rate and empowers women and girls (Sharma and Deogam 2019, p. 16200–207). However, much of the literature has been reviewed for knowing the past and present scenario of gender disparity in male and female literacy. Anant Kumar's (2008) analysis of the status of education on tribal children finds that tribal children feel insulting and offensive because of the class room environment which continuously tries to discriminate of being a tribal student (Pal and Mondal 2021, p. 1–20). Joshi (2010) mentioned that the indigenous children are still unable to access school education and poverty being the main reason behind it. Bose studied Gender inequality in Education in India and reveals that girls are at greater disadvantages compared to their brothers and basically son preferences lead to gender discrimination (Bose 2012, p. 67–91).

Level of Education among Tribal populations in India

According to census 1991, the literacy rate of the tribal population of India was only 29.6 % which rose to 47.10 % in 2001 and again increased to 59 % in 2011. We can see the trend of increasing literacy rate among the tribal population of India (Ramachandra 2019, p. 100–109). ST male literacy rate was 40.65 % in 1991 which increased to 68.5 % in 2011, In case of both male and female we can see the upward trend in literacy (Chaudhuri and Roy 2009, p. 215–38). If we compare it with the total literacy of India, then we can find there is an increase of 12 % of literacy from 1991 to 2001 and again 9% increase from 2001 to 2011 in total literacy (Ramachandran and Chatterjee 2014, p. 157–78). But for tribal population it has increased 18% from 1991 to 2001 and again 12 % from 2001 to 2011(Kumar 2008, p. 3111–23). The tribal literacy is 59 % in comparison to 73% of the total population. The gap between tribal female literacy and total female literacy is about 15% (Dutta 2017, p. 289–306). There trend of increasing in literacy rate of tribal population but still low in comparison to the total literacy of India (Rustagi and Menon 2013, p. 41–58). There is also the trend of decrease in literacy gap of tribal population and total population i.e., from 22.61% literacy gap in 1991 to 14 % gap in 2011 (Ghosh 2007, p. 109–25)

Study Area

Jharkhand has a total geographical area of 79,714 square km. surrounded by the state of west Bengal at its east, by Odisha at its south, by Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh at its west and by Bihar at its north. It lies between 21° 58' 14.73" to 25° 20' 55.74" north latitudes and 83° 19' 52.58" to 87° 58' 42.87" east longitude.

Database and Methodology

For the purpose of the study, the tribal population of the Jharkhand state needs to be taken into consideration. The study is mainly quantitative and analytical in nature and based on secondary data sources. Data has been collected from various sources like "*Census of India 2011*". For calculating the disparity statistical tools like sopher's method is applied for examining the gender gap between male and female literacy rate. Besides some other reports by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on Tribal education, Annual report (2020), Jharkhand Statistical Profile 2020 report, Jharkhand Statistical Abstract 2011 have been used in the study area.

Measuring literacy disparity by using "*Sopher's Index*", is method of calculating disparities, which has been developed by "*David V. Sopher (1974)*".

According to this method:

If X_1 and X_2 represents the respective percentage of value of variables of group 1 and 2 then the disparity index (DI) can be calculated by the formula

$$DI = \log (X2)/(X1) + \log (100 - X1)/(100 - X2)$$

Where, DI = Disparity Index

X2=Percentage of male literates, X1=Percentage of Female literates, i.e. $X2 > X1$

Results and Discussion

The literacy rate of Jharkhand increased from 53.5 % to 66.4% over the decade of 2001- 2011. Although Female literacy increased from 38.8 % in 2001 to 55.4 % in 2011 which shows the increase of 17 % in literacy rate while male literacy has increased only by 9 % from 67.3 % in 2001 to 76.8 % in 2011. The literacy of tribal population is lower than total population.

Table 1 District wise Tribal Population of Jharkhand, 2011

District Name	Total Population	Tribal Population	Percentage share of STs in districts	Distribution of STs in District
Khunti	531885	389626	73.3	4.51
Simdega	599578	424407	70.8	4.90
Gumla	1025213	706754	68.9	8.18
Paschimi Singhbhum	1502338	1011296	67.3	11.70
Lohardaga	461790	262734	56.9	3.03
Latehar	726978	331096	45.5	3.83
Dumka	1321442	571077	43.2	6.61
Pakur	900422	379054	42.1	4.38
Ranchi	2914253	1042016	35.8	12.05
Saraikelakharsawan	1065056	3374642	31.9	4.00
Jamtara	791042	240489	30.4	2.78
PurbiSinghbhum	2293919	653923	28.5	7.56
Sahibganj	1150567	308343	26.8	3.57
Godda	1313551	279208	21.3	3.23
Ramgarh	949443	201166	21.2	2.33
Garhwa	1322784	205874	15.6	2.38

Bokaro	2062330	255626	12.4	2.96
Deoghar	1492073	180962	12.1	2.09
Giridih	2445474	238188	9.7	2.76
Palamu	1939869	181208	9.3	2.10
Dhanbad	2684487	233119	8.7	2.70
Hazaribagh	1734495	121768	7.0	1.41
Chatra	1042886	45563	4.4	0.52
Kodarma	716259	6903	1.0	0.07
Total	329,988,134	86,45,40	26.2	100

Source: Census of India, 2011

With respect to the tribal population of Jharkhand we can see that the literacy rate of STs in Jharkhand was 40.7% in 2001 which rose by 17 % and became 57.1 % in 2011. STs Male literacy increased by 54.0 % in 2001 to 68.1 % in 2011 and Female literacy from 27.2 % in 2001 to 46.2 % in 2011.

Table 1. clearly shows the distribution of tribal population in the state of Jharkhand. The population of tribes can be seen in all 24 district where, highest proportion of tribal population is found in Khunti district (73.25), followed by Simdega (70.08%), Gumla (68.93), Paschimi Singhbhum (67.31%), and Lohardaga (56.86). The concentration of tribal population is less in Kodarma district with only 6,903 (0.1%) followed by Chatra 45,563 (4.4%), Hazaribagh 1,21,768 (7.02%). Figure 2 shows that the distribution of tribal population is highly concentrated in southern part of the state Jharkhand, having more than 60 % of tribal population and less than 15 % of tribal population can be seen in the districts like Koderma, Chatra, Hazaribagh etc. But the scenario is little different when we are concerned only with the distribution of tribal population within the state. Figure 1 is showing that Ranchi has the highest tribal population with 10,42,016 (12.05%), Paschimi Singhbhum 10,11,296 (11.70%), and Gumla 7,06,754 (8.18%), Purbi Singhbhum 6,53,923 (7.56). The districts like Koderma, Chatra, Hazaribagh, Palamu, Giridih, and Dhanbad having tribal population have less than 10%

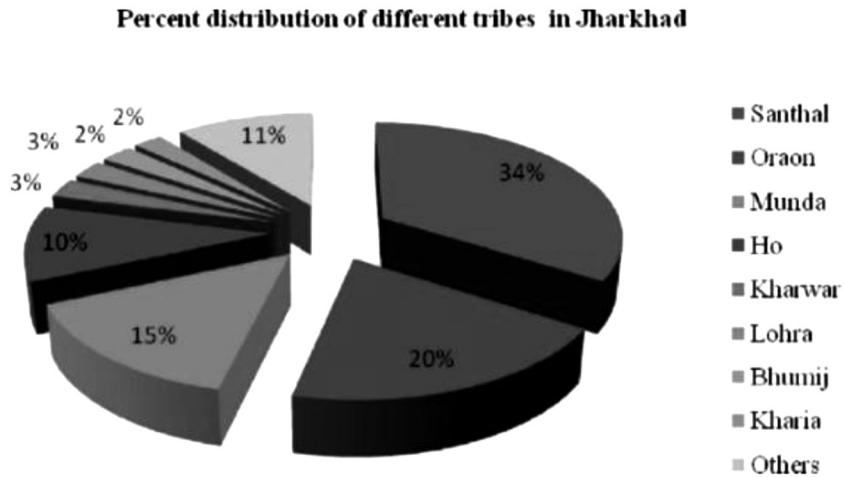


Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of different tribes, Jharkhand 2011

Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349307460>



Fig 2 Tribal Population (% of district population) in each Districts of Jharkhand, 2011

According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of Kavar (54.48%), Oraon (56.39%), Munda (52.47%), Khond (53.39%), Kharia (55.65%), Karmali (52.19%), Chik baraik (54.77%), Chero (52.3%), are above 50 percent. Oraon has the highest literacy (56.39%). Low literacy rate below 30 percent have been found in the tribal groups like Baiga, Birhor, Korwa, Parhaiya and Savar. Santal has the highest male literacy rate (61.38 %) followed by Oraon (56.39%), Munda (58.04%) and Kharwar(59.86%). In context to female literacy rate Oraon (43.73%), Munda (43.73%), Santal (38.61%) and Kharwar (38.31%) are having the highest literacy rate and the lowest literacy rate is found in Banjara, Parhaiya, Savar, Kol. Lowest the literacy of tribal community, the larger the gap will be found, which shows the inverse relation between literacy and Gender gap. Banjara (35.45%), Savar (29.25%), Parhaiya (28.65%) and Kol (27.97%) are showing large gap between male and female literacy.

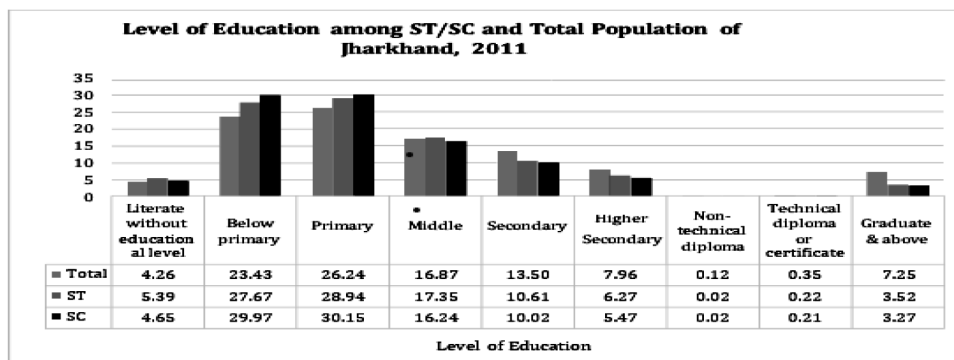


Fig.3 Level of Education among SC, ST and Total Population.

Source: Calculated from Census of India, 2011

Fig.3 also reveals that; female literacy is less than male literacy in all tribal communities. Although, majority of tribal communities showing moderate disparity in literacy. On the basis of above fig.3, three categories have been classified to show the level of disparity in literacy among the tribal communities. Tribal groups have the highest literacy rate among other tribal groups. Oraon (56.39 %), Kharia (55.16%) Munda (52.47%) literacy rate ensures that the value of education is more in them and the main reason behind fewer gaps in literacy among male and females. Performance of tribal communities namely Bedia, Birhor, Chero, Gond, Gorait, Ho, Karmali, Santal, Sauria Phariya, Kavar and Baiga having SI value of 0.31- 0.40 shows medium disparity. The high value of disparity can be seen in Bathudi, Binjhia, Birjia, Banjara, Asur, Kharwar, Kond, Parhaiya, Savar, Bhumji, Kol and Kisan where SI value ranges between (0.40-0.60). The important factor behind these tribal groups showing high disparity is remained primitive who still practices preagricultural systems, like hunting and gathering, rope making and iron smelting (Katiyar

2016, p. 46–69). They are chiefly agricultural labourers and consider all these as their traditional occupation (Kumar 2008, p. 3111–23). In the context of the highest disparity tribal group like *Asur* there is a 26.15% gap in literacy followed by *Kharwar* (23.37%), *Savar* (29.25%), *Pahariya* (28.65 %) and *Kol* (27.97 %). In the lowest disparity tribal groups like *Kharia*, *Oraon*, *Munda* and *Chik Barik*, there is only 9.51 %, 12.56 %, 16.09 % and 16.65 % gap in literacy found between male and females.

Table.1 shows that in Jharkhand out of total population in which 55.55% are literates. In case of ST and SC population, comprising 26.20 % and 12.08% of total population of Jharkhand have literacy of 47.43% and 45.66% respectively. We can see a trend of declining enrolment in different levels of education of different category of population of Jharkhand. The scenario of decline in the enrolment level is not only seen in the tribal community but also in the general population and also SC population. Enrolment of students after matriculation drops down sharply as well as in technical and non-technical education contributes only 0.01% and 0.22% of enrolment. In the case of total population, the scenario is same as among SC and ST. The number of students enrolled gradually decreases from primary level of education towards higher level of education. The reason behind the sharp decline of education level among the tribes is the socio-economic condition of a family, negative attitude of parents towards education, children from the family forced to contribute to family income either directly by working as a labour and also due to the geographical isolation of a tribal community in the remote areas.

Conclusion

The paper presents a descriptive analysis of the gender disparity in literacy among the tribal communities of Jharkhand. It is observed that the high disparity is found in *Asur*, *Savar*, *Kawar*, *Kond*, *Kisan* and *Banjara*. These tribal communities still practice hunting, gathering as their traditional occupation, and they considered themselves as remained primitive, is the major factor showing high disparity. While the tribal communities like *Kharia*, *Chik Baraik*, *Oraon* and *Munda* are showing high literacy rate as compared to other tribal communities and also have less gender gap in literacy. There is a sharp decline of students after matriculation as well as in technical and non-technical. The major reason behind these decline trends is the socio-economic condition of a family, Child labour to earn livelihood and negative attitude of parents towards educating a girl child. Ramachandra Kumar (2019) explains that extreme poverty, tribal exploitation, illiteracy are some of the important reasons behind inclusion from education. The socio-economic condition of the majority of the population does not have basic amenities namely food, shelter, clothing, health and education. In the rural Jharkhand more women and girl child witnessed deprivation and discrimination. The study highlights an inverse correlation between literacy rates and gender disparities. It demonstrates that tribal communities with higher literacy levels exhibit narrower gender gaps, while those with lower literacy levels experience wider disparities in literacy between males and females.

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