

## LOW LITERACY RATE AMONG TRIBAL BOYS: A STUDY ON BIRBHUM, WEST BENGAL

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### ABSTRACT:

The present paper examined that there is a tendency of low literacy rate among the tribal boys. The main objective of this paper is to find out the reason behind that situation. The whole study will try to give some information on the literacy development in those villages of Birbhum district in West Bengal. Observation & Interview technique has been used for primary data collection from the field. The present study revealed the reason behind low literacy rate among the tribal boys in Dhultikuri & Bondanga & Padmabatipur in Birbhum. This situation also gave a deep impact on character development of rural people specially in socio-economic sector. My sole aim is to find out the real situation & how to motivate the boys towards literacy, which will help them in development of their character & finally changing the proper scenario of their villages & this changing scenario will also help in National development.

**Key Words:** Low Literacy, rural development, socio-economic sector, character development.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Education & literacy are closely related with each other. But as the paper is concern tribal boys, as well as tribal people are not aware of both the term. The tribal youth play a very important role in their societal as well as rural development. The term rural development connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality life of rural people. It is comprehensive & multidimensional concept & encompasses the development of agriculture & allied activities, village, cottage industries & crafts, socio economic infrastructure, community services & facilities & overall human resources in rural areas. Rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women & men, to gain for themselves & their children more of what they want & need. Rural development may be used to imply anyone of the above mentioned connotations. Economic growth involves changes in popular attitudes & in many cases even in customs & beliefs. Rural communication is an interactive process in which information, knowledge & skills, relevant for development are exchanged between farmers, advisory services, information providers & research either personally or through media. In communication for development approaches, rural people are at the centre of any given development initiative & view planners, development workers, local authorities, farmers & rural people as communication equals, equally committed to mutual understanding & concerted action. Communication for development is used for: people's participation & community mobilization, decision making & action, confidence building for raising awareness, sharing knowledge & changing attitudes, behaviour & lifestyles; for improving learning & training & rapidly spreading information; to assist with programme planning & formulation, to foster the support of decision- makers. Rural development means as overall development of rural areas social, economic, political & cultural- so that the people are to lead a pleasant life. Agriculture plays the most important & decisive role in rural development.

In any kind of development, literacy plays a very important role. According to, [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation](#) (UNESCO) has drafted a definition of literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy

involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."<sup>1</sup>

The [National Literacy Mission](#) defines literacy as acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and the ability to apply them to one's day-to-day life. The achievement of functional literacy implies (i) self-reliance in 3 R's, (ii) awareness of the causes of deprivation and the ability to move towards amelioration of their condition by participating in the process of development, (iii) acquiring skills to improve economic status and general well being, and (iv) imbibing values such as national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms.

There is hardly an oral culture or a predominantly oral culture left in the world today that is not somehow aware of the vast complex of powers forever inaccessible without **literacy**."(Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Methuen, 1982)

"We expect the contradictory and the impossible. . . . We expect to be inspired by mediocre appeals for 'excellence,' to be made literate by illiterate appeals for **literacy**." (Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, 1961). "**Literacy** is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. "Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy."(UNESCO, 2010)

"The notion of *basic literacy* is used for the initial learning of reading and writing which adults who have never been to school need to go through. The term *functional literacy* is kept for the level of reading and writing which adults are thought to need in modern complex society. Use of the term underlines the idea that although people may have basic levels of literacy, they need a different level to operate in their day-to-day lives." (David Barton, *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, 2nd ed. WileyBlackwell, 2006)

"To acquire **literacy** is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate those techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands: it is to *communicate* graphically.

Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words or syllables--lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe--but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context." (Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*. Sheed & Ward, 1974). According to 2011 census, 77.1% people are literate in West Bengal.

The term Scheduled Tribes first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution". Article 342, which is reproduced below, prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of scheduled tribes.

**Article 342 (1):** The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities, which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory as the case may be.

**Article 342 (2):** Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification. According to 2011 census, Scheduled Tribes (STs) are 8.6% of the total population of India.

The term Socioeconomic refers to things that involve economic and social factors. Socioeconomic status is based on factors such as income, education, occupation, and involvement in your community. Socioeconomics is the study of the relationship between economic activity and social life. It emerged as a separate field of studies in the late 20th century. Socioeconomics or socio-economics is the study of the relationship between economic activities. The 14 rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are the right to work, the right to choice of employment, the right to own property, right to adequate stand.

Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. The attributes provide a standard for behaviour against which we hold ourselves accountable. They permeate all that happens in schools. They bind us together across the lines that often divide us in society. They form the basis of our relationships and of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation for excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning. Excellence in education includes character development. Through character, we find common ground. Character development is about excellence in education, communities that are vibrant and caring, and students who will think critically, feel deeply and act wisely. A quality education is about more than

academic achievement – it is about the development of the whole person. Parents and families have the primary responsibility for the development of their children's character, with the support of their school and community. Student engagement is essential to all character development processes. For their character development process tribal boys needs to attain school. They must have to take education for their betterment. Government already announced various schemes for education because nation wants literate India. If we all understand the importance of education than only we make a developed nation. [http://www.ijmra.us/2014/249-5287-3 \(PDF\)](#)

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### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To find out the low literacy rate of tribal youth of Birbhum district, West Bengal.
- To analyze the attitudes of tribal youth towards literacy.
- To study the initiatives being taken by the government in favour of literacy.

### **RESEARCH MEHODOLOGY:**

**Research Approach:** Qualitative research approach has been used to pick up the data from the respondents and tried to find out the reason of low literacy rate of the tribal boys. Secondary data has been collected from various sources like websites, articles & journals.

**Methods & Techniques:** In this research study, observation & interview method has been applied & open ended questions were used as a tool primary collection from the field.

**Universe & Population:** Tribals of birbhum district West Bengal is the universe of the present study & the populations are subcaste of tribal like santal,sardar (oraon) & kora.

**Sampling:** Here 3 tribal villages have been chosen & from each household there are 1 or 2 respondents has been used as a population. The present paper will help us to analyse the low literacy among tribal boys. The indepth interview of 3 different villages will help us to know the proper scenario. These 3 villages are belongs to 3 different sub tribal groups but the basic nature of them is almost same that is; low literacy.

### **FACT & FINDINGS:**

The development of any nation or region is indicated by the level of education and that too of both genders. That is why 'education for all' is strongly recommended and focused on by our government. India has made a considerable progress in this sector and with all the efforts the literacy rate grew to 74.04% in 2011. But still, India has not achieved what it should have during this period. Low literacy rate means an overall sluggish growth of India, as it impacts every arena of the development. The prime objective of 'Education for All' is not just to maintain a moderate literacy rate. In order to have an educationally stable social order, it is necessary to minimise regional variation in literacy rates at micro level with an uniform spread in education amongst the population. For this purpose, an attempt has been made to see the literacy variation in West Bengal at village level. Lack of education means lack of awareness. Tribal people are much more suffered by the disease of illiteracy. Tribal are the greater workforce in India. Visiting those villages in Birbhum district, West Bengal, it has found that the 30% of them are class VII or VIII & others even cross the primary school levels. There are so many causes existing which are affecting the growth of tribal youth education. Tribal youth starts working from an early age because of poor economic condition. This is one of the major causes behind low literacy. The other causes are like poverty, unavailability of jobs in the rural areas, scarcity of agricultural land resources & behind all that lack of self motivation for obtaining education. This education can solve these major problems & finally this will help them in character development as well as rural development & finally in national development. The another cause is, because they are the male members in their family as well as society, parents are fulfilling all their demands beyond their reach, whether at the same time girl child's are doing every home

making works for their family but unable to get their demands. Now when their parents are unable to fulfil the boy's demands, they himself going to work & earn money for their own luxuries. Because of low literacy they even understand the bad sides of their lifestyle. At the very young age they are addicted with alcohol & tobacco, which causes various kinds of health problems.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The present paper depicted the real scenario of low literacy. Because of low literacy they are exploited in every sphere of life. If we overcome this situation then we have to motivate them towards education. Government has already opt various schemes for education like 'Sarba Siksha Mission', 'Mid Day Meal', 'Education for All' but besides all that there are a huge gap between taking those facilities & literate themselves. Literate persons are aware of every schemes but the tribal, who are in the villages they are unaware of those schemes which is only for them. The proper education can change this situation. But at first we have to motivate them towards education. Because of poverty they are unable to taking education for that also government have already promotes various scholarships for them. Youth are the pillar of success for any society. They are the backbone. The present study shows tribal boys play very outstanding role for the advancement of the society. Without help of the boys we can't able to change the situation. They have to understand the importance of education for their betterment, which only can make a developed nation.

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