

**LITERACY TRENDS AND DIFFERENCES AMONG
SCHEDULED TRIBES IN MEGHALAYA: A COMMUNITY
LEVEL ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

Education is one of the important needs of life. A low degree of literacy is an obstacle to economic growth. In view of the above, an attempt has been made to analyse the literacy trend of scheduled tribe communities of Meghalaya, and comparing the data over a decade (2001-2011). The difference between male and female has also been compared. A special emphasis has been given to the educational status of tribal women of Meghalaya. The present paper is based on secondary sources of data, mainly drawn from Census 2001 and 2011 of India and Meghalaya. Effective literacy rate was calculated based on literate people having age 7 years and above.

According to census 2011, tribal population in Meghalaya constitutes 2.4% of the total scheduled tribe population of India. Literacy rate of scheduled tribes in Meghalaya is 74.53% stands much above the national average. Overall literacy growth of scheduled tribe population

Keywords:

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in Meghalaya between 2001 and 2011 is 13.2%. Dimasa and Kachari communities have witnessed maximum growth. Whereas Pawi community has gone through a reduction over a decade. The male-female literacy gap is also significant. In 2001, it was 4.28% where in 2011 it has come down to 2%.

Focusing on female literacy status, which is still below the state average according to census 2011. The Man community witnessed the lowest literacy rate among female followed by Koch, Hajong, Rava, Mikir and Garo. The fact remains that a large number of tribal women might have missed educational opportunities at different stages and in order to empower them varieties of skill training programmes have to be designed and organised.

1. Introduction

Literacy is an important indicator of development among ethnic communities. According to census, literacy is defined to be the ability to read and write a simple sentence with understanding in one's own language; it is in this context that education has to be viewed from modern perspective. None, whatsoever, can dispute the fact that education is the most important single factor that plays a crucial role in social upliftment and economic development. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of scheduled tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life [1]. Educational backwardness is a distinct gender dimension [2]. The male-female gap in literacy and educational attainment among the scheduled tribes is significant.

Tribe, the term, has been derived from the word 'tribus' which in Latin means to identify a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor [3]. According to census of India 2011 [4], the tribal population of the country is 104 million, constituting 8.6% of the total population. The tribal population in Meghalaya is 25,55,861 which share 2.4% of the total scheduled tribe population of India [4]. Literacy rate is an important parameter to judge the

literacy condition of a nation. Literacy rate is defined as percentage of literates among the population aged seven years and above. Literacy rate of India is 74.04% whereas the same for Scheduled tribes is just 59% [4]. Literacy rate of scheduled caste is 66.07% [4]. This shows that, currently, the tribes lag behind not only the general population but also the scheduled caste population in literacy and education. In view of the above, an attempt has been made to analyse the present literacy trend of scheduled tribe communities of Meghalaya, and comparing the data over a decade [4, 5]. A special emphasis has been given to the educational status of tribal women of Meghalaya.

2. Research Method

The data for the present study have been extracted from Census of India 2001 and 2011 and the state of Meghalaya for 2001 and 2011 [4, 5]. Effective literacy rate and percentage of literacy growth was calculated based on literate people having age 7 years and above.

3. Results and Analysis

According to Census 2011, the overall tribal literacy rate of Meghalaya is 74.53% which is affirmatively much higher than the national average of 58.96%. Among it, the male shares 75.54% and the female shares 73.55%. Highest literacy rate is found among the Naga community with 97.35% and lowest among the Koch with only 59.29% (Figure 1).

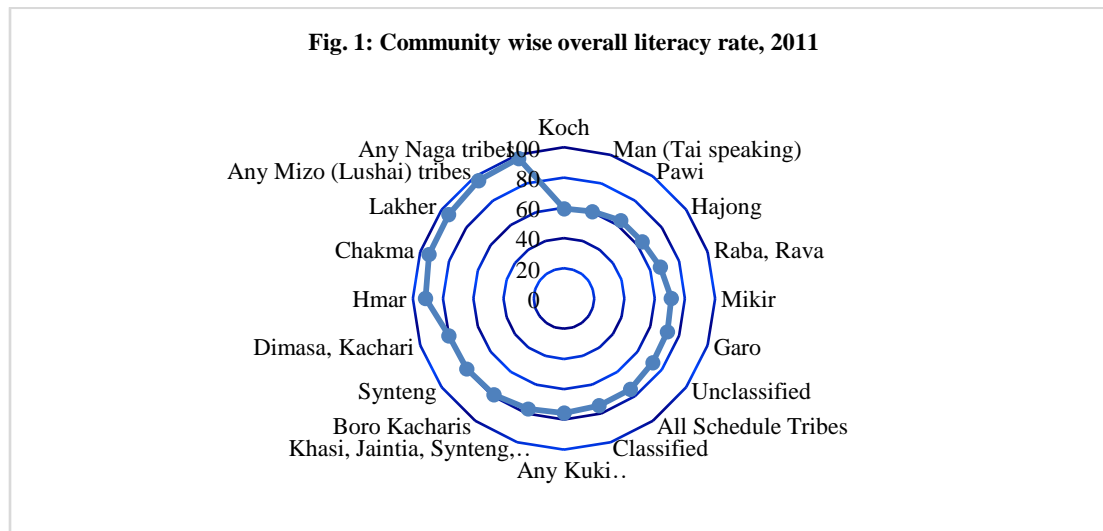


Figure 2 shows that among the male, a 100% literacy rate has been found among the Lakher followed by Chakma with 98.28%. Lowest has been found among the Pawi males with just 60%. Naga, Mizo (Lushai) and Lakher communities have been found to have highest literacy rate among their females respectively with 96.78%, 95.40% and 90% (Figure 3). The male-female literacy gap is found to be highest in Man community with 23.68%.

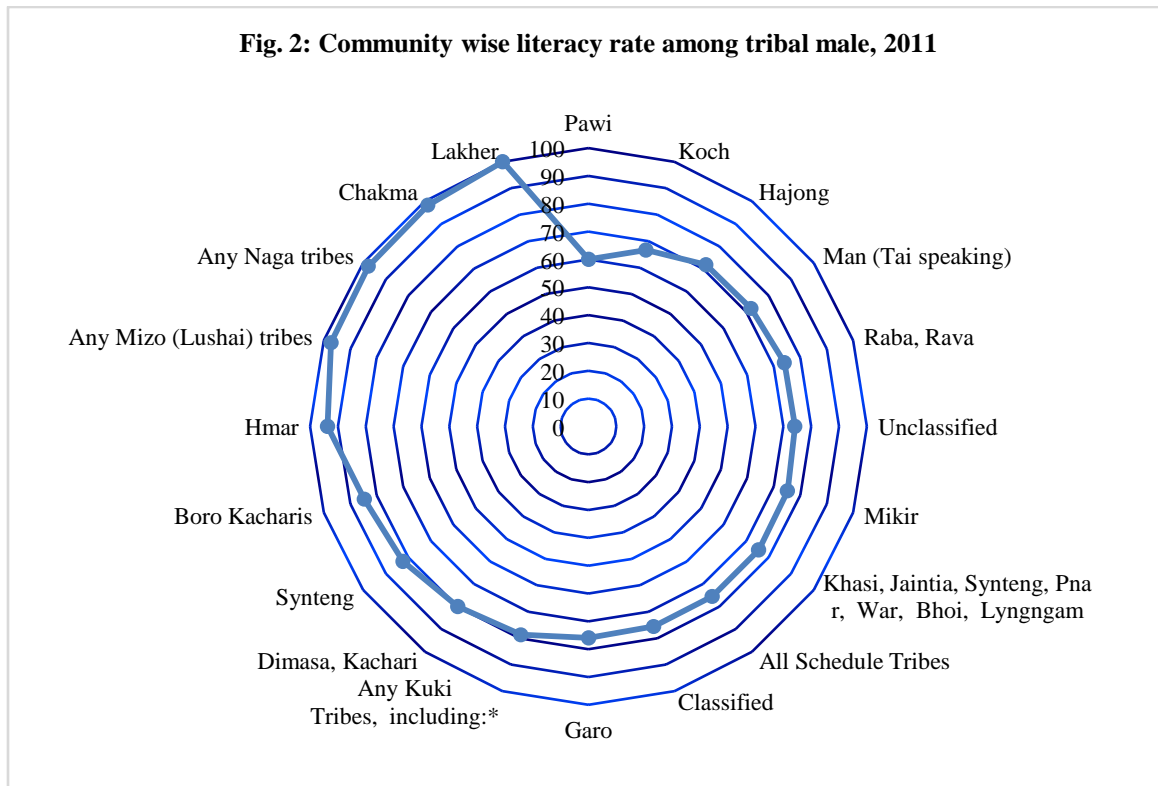
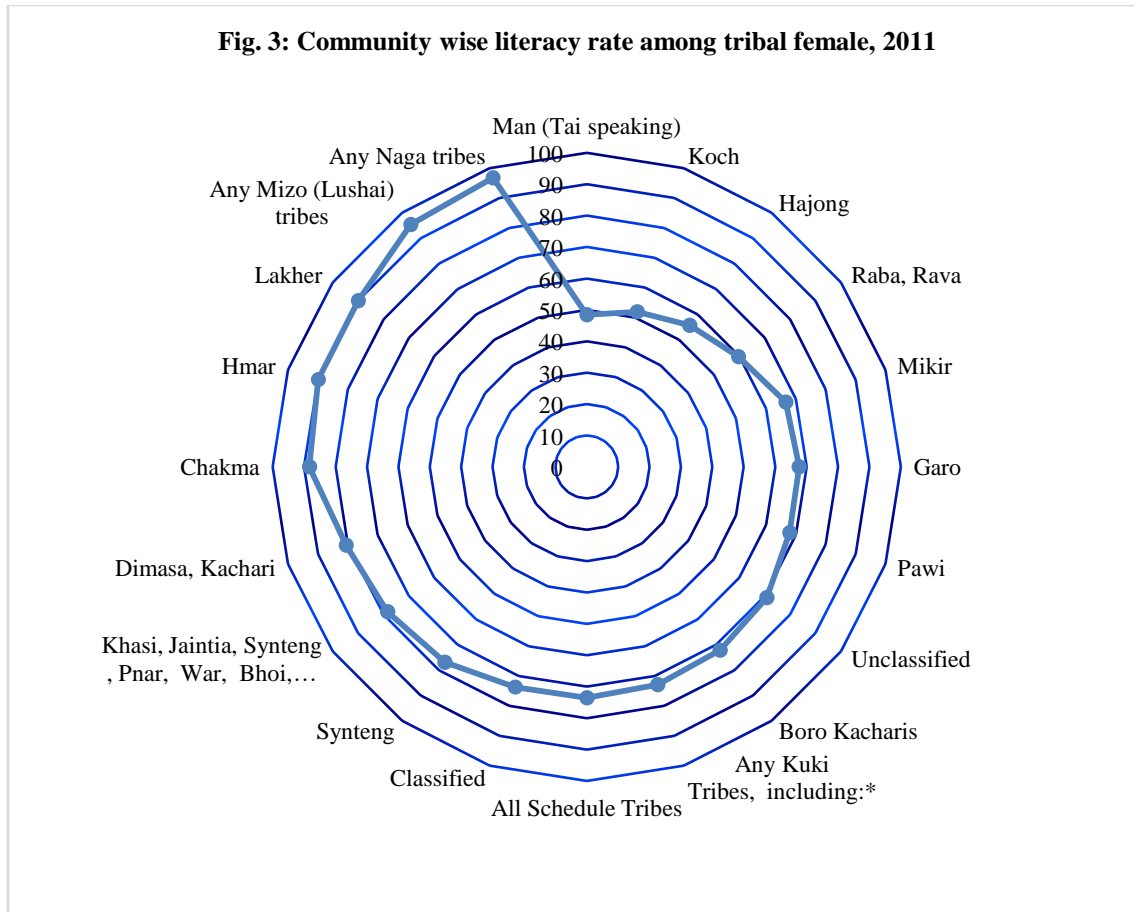


Fig. 3: Community wise literacy rate among tribal female, 2011

A notable disparity has been found between the rural and urban literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes of Meghalaya. In urban, according to Census 2011, the total literacy rate is 91.26% whereas in rural it is 70.98% which is even lower than the State's tribal literacy rate. In urban a 100% literacy rate has been found among the males of Lakher, Man and Pawi communities. Distinctively the Pawi males in rural area have the lowest literacy rate with 55.93%. Among the females in urban areas, Man community shows a 100% literacy rate, whereas in rural scenario highest literacy rate has been found among the females of Mizo (Lushai) community with 93.62% (Figure 4 – 9).

Fig.4 : Overall literacy rate among rural tribes, 2011

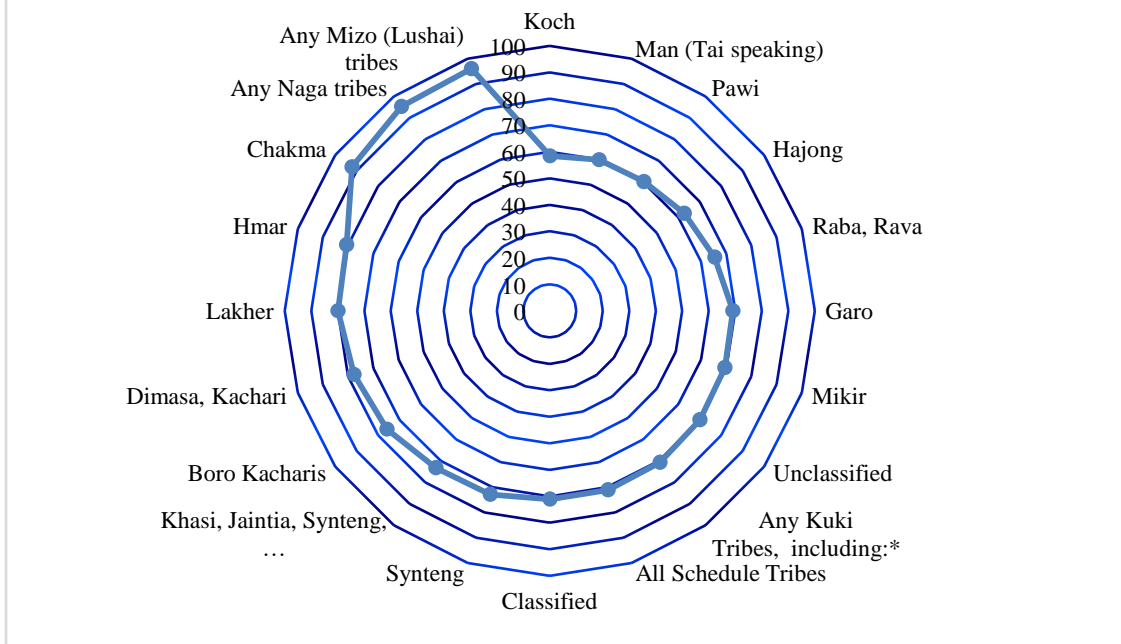
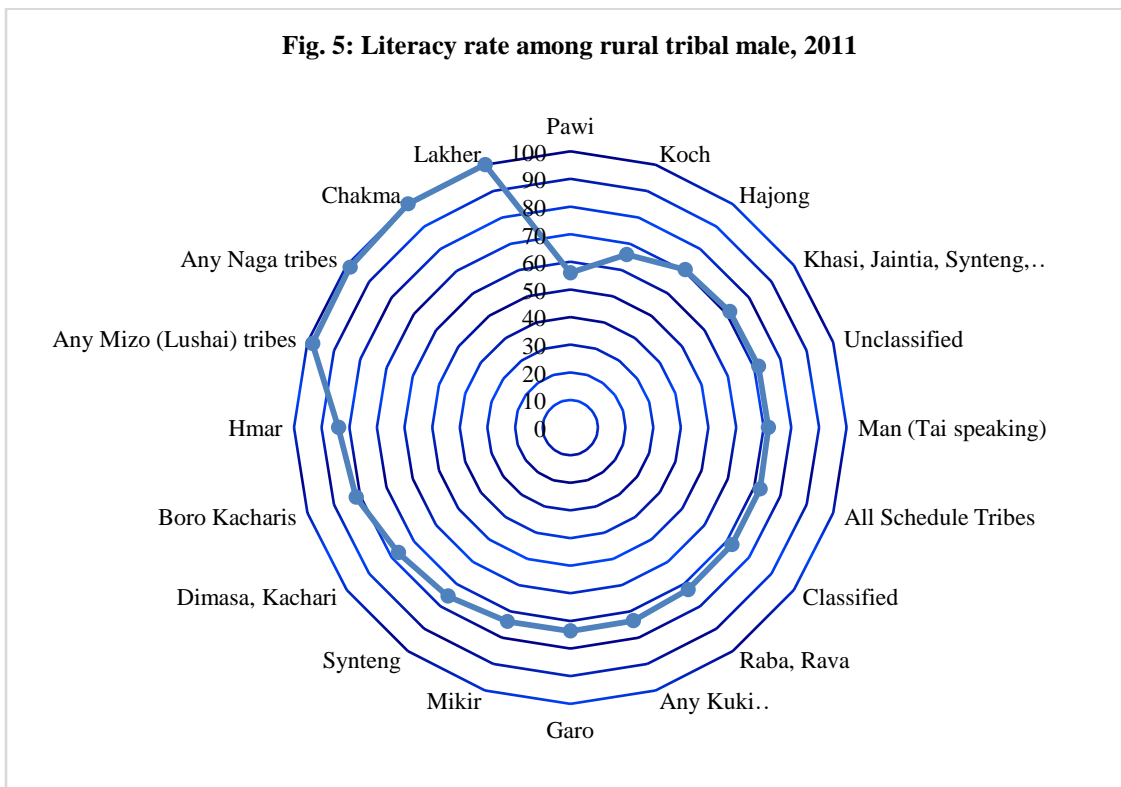
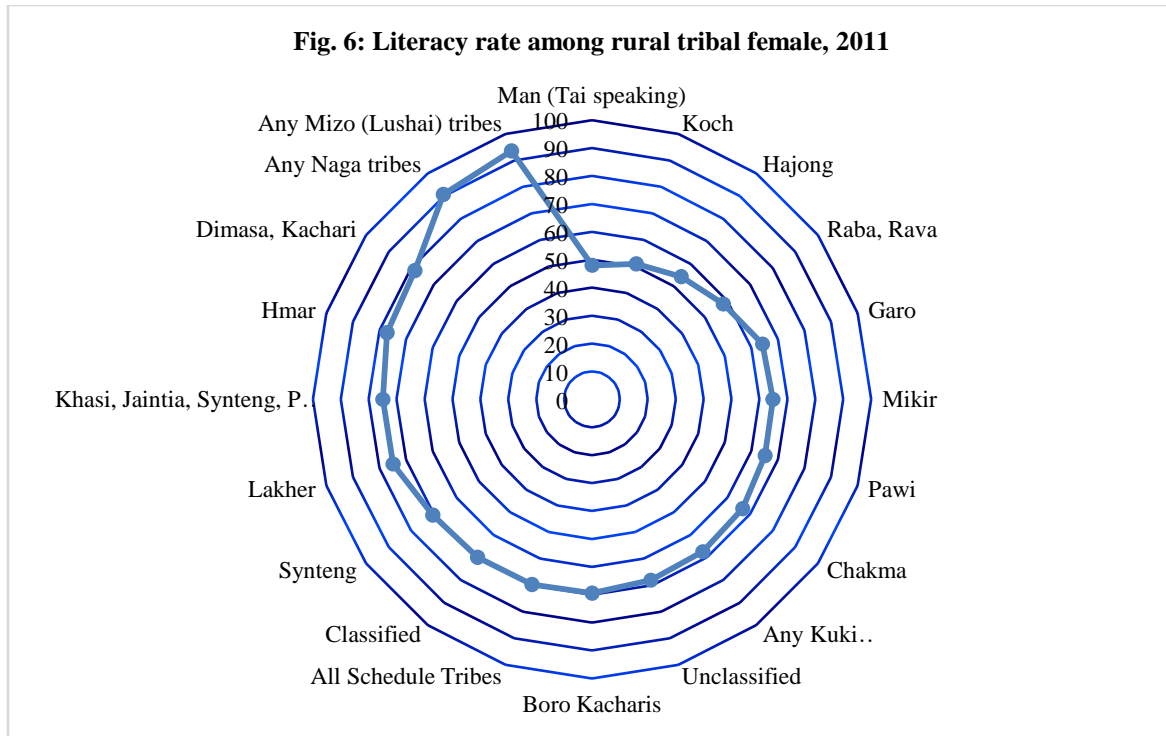


Fig. 5: Literacy rate among rural tribal male, 2011





Looking forward to the male-female literacy gap, Man community has succeeded to equalize the gap with zero literacy gaps among their males and females. On the other hand, Koch community still has a lacuna with a 13.68% of literacy gap among their males and females. The scenario changes while we move to the rural areas with Chakma showing highest literacy gap with 33.33% among their males and females.

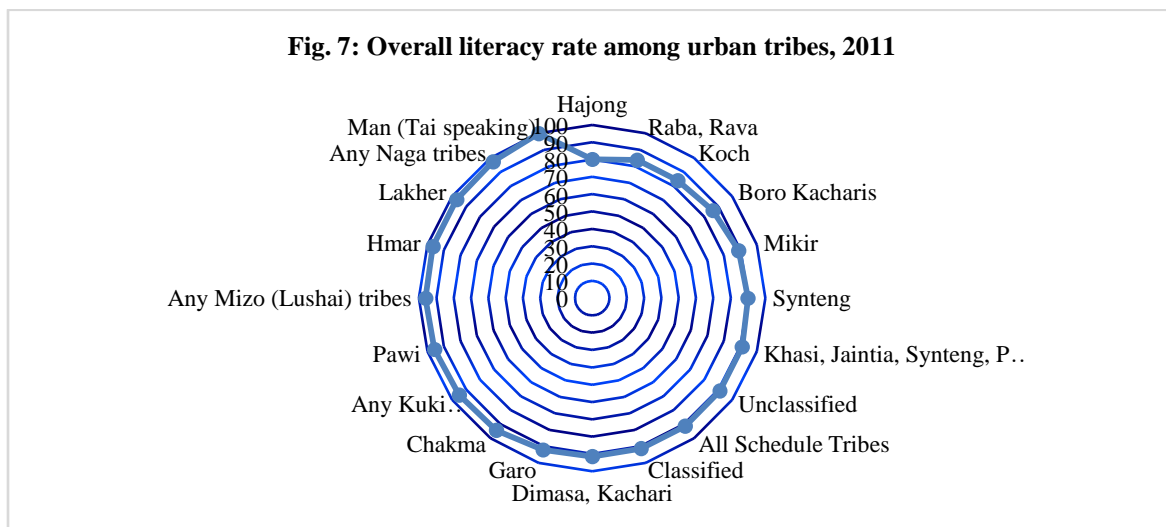


Table 1 shows overall, rural and urban percentage of literacy growth. It has been found to be highest in rural area (25.95%) than in urban area (5.30%). Overall percentage of literacy growth is highest in Mikir community (40%). On the other hand, the Pawi community has gone through a decrease of -36% in their overall literacy rate from 2001 to 2011. In rural area, maximum percentage of literacy growth has been observed in Dimasa, Kachari community (60.76%) and lowest in Lakher community (-20%). In urban area, maximum percentage of literacy growth has been seen among the Hajong community (13.28%).

Fig. 8: Literacy rate among urban tribal male, 2011

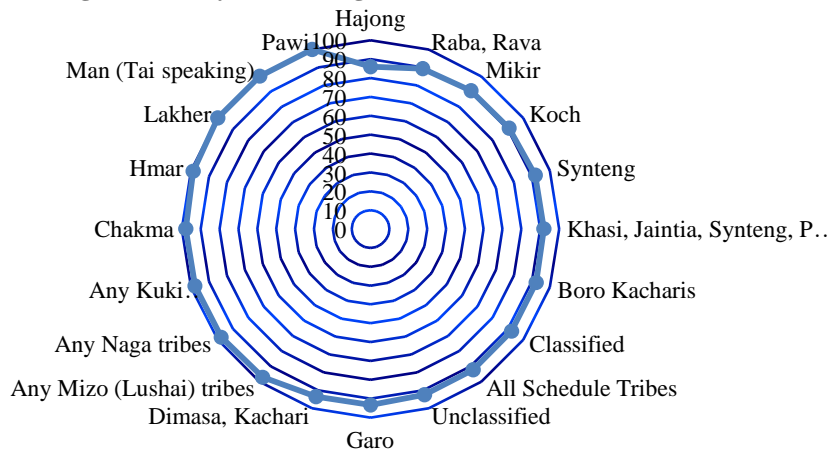
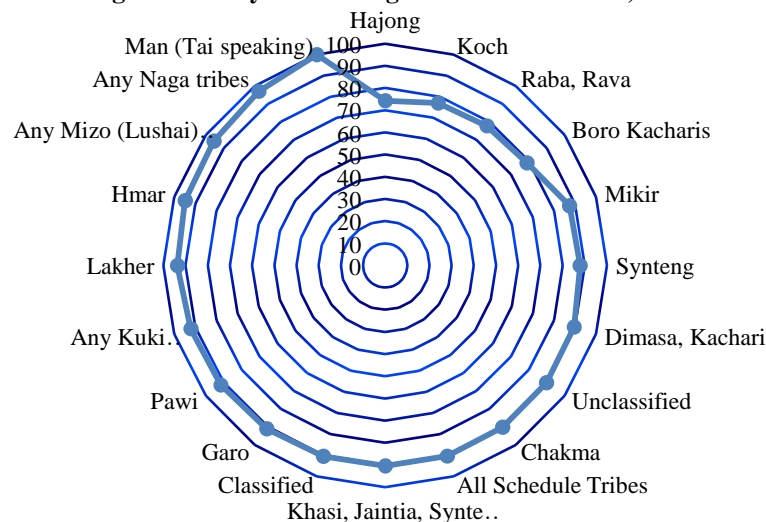


Fig. 9: Literacy rate among urban tribal female, 2011



The Pawi community has again seem to have a fall in literacy growth (-4.17%) along with the Synteng community (-1.51%). In both the rural and urban areas, females have been observed with more percentage literacy growth over a decade (2001-2011) with an increase of 29.28% and 6.81% respectively. The overall tribal literacy rate of Meghalaya over 2001-2011 has also witnessed an increment of 24.23% literacy growth among the tribal females.

Table 1: Comparing percentage of literacy growth from 2001 to 2011.

Tribal communities	Overall literacy growth (%)			Rural literacy growth (%)			Urban literacy growth (%)		
	Overall	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Boro Kacharis	14.24	9.24	20.19	16.34	9.92	25.45	7.11	4.45	8.17
Chakma	11.58	16.48	5.20	15.38	34.48	-33.33	8.01	7.33	1160.00
Dimasa, Kachari	41.46	24.27	71.35	60.76	35.46	106.94	2.21	2.51	3.07
Garos	30.08	25.20	36.25	34.99	29.15	42.59	7.26	5.62	9.07
Hajong	32.47	21.67	50.74	35.86	24.03	56.41	13.28	7.24	21.80
Hmar	12.46	9.63	15.84	23.93	18.50	31.64	2.46	0.59	4.50
Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng	16.64	15.51	17.68	20.18	18.98	21.30	4.67	3.21	6.02
Koch	38.97	30.87	50.88	40.18	31.79	52.60	11.02	8.12	14.88
Any Kuki Tribes, including...	11.90	4.90	21.48	11.31	3.84	21.13	2.42	1.17	5.13
Lakher	4.94	0.00	35.00	-20.00	0.00	-	8.87	0.00	40.63
Man (Tai speaking)	39.12	38.05	40.12	45.42	43.38	47.81	5.26	0.00	12.50
Any Mizo (Lushai)	4.18	2.60	6.24	14.92	10.54	31.06	2.79	1.23	4.53

Tribes									
Mikir	40.11	27.56	57.94	37.79	25.93	54.63	12.53	10.32	15.41
Any Naga tribes	18.97	13.39	27.31	41.81	34.83	50.40	2.94	1.08	5.90
Pawi	-36.29	-40.00	-32.07	-	-	-	-4.17	0.00	-8.33
Raba, Rava	27.53	18.79	38.52	29.96	20.14	45.31	6.39	4.94	7.77
Synteng	29.42	42.43	18.40	49.00	75.47	29.34	-1.51	-2.11	-1.24
Classified	21.66	19.19	24.28	26.09	23.17	29.32	5.24	3.74	6.81
Unclassified	22.00	15.18	31.68	24.40	16.50	34.44	9.16	5.29	7.97
All Scheduled Tribes	21.51	18.98	24.22	25.95	22.94	29.28	5.30	3.77	6.81

Table 2 shows the overall male-female literacy gap of 2001 and 2011. It has been observed that the overall literacy gap has positively come down to 2% in 2011 from 4.28% in 2001. In 2011, maximum gap has been noticed in Man community (23.68%) whereas in 2001, maximum gap has been noticed in Lakher community (33.33%).

Table 2: Comparing literacy gap between male & female.

Tribes	Male-Female literacy gap, Census 2001	Male-Female literacy gap, Census 2011
Boro Kacharis	17.50	12.53
Chakma	0.38	9.90
Dimasa, Kachari	17.31	-0.65
Garo	11.11	8.42
Hajong	21.97	15.99
Hmar	7.96	3.90
Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng	-1.32	-2.97
Koch	16.49	14.69
Any Kuki Tribes,	15.07	5.85

including...		
Lakher	33.33	10.00
Man (Tai speaking)	17.67	23.68
Any Mizo (Lushai) Tribes	5.04	1.91
Mikir	16.67	8.45
Any Naga tribes	10.29	1.09
Pawi	0.00	-7.93
Raba, Rava	19.18	14.29
Synteng	-7.02	5.61
Classified	4.13	1.91
Unclassified	10.52	3.24
All Scheduled Tribes	4.28	2.00

Table 3 shows the rural male-female literacy gap of 2001 and 2011. It has been noticed that, in rural also 2011 has succeeded to bring down the gap to 2.42% from 4.75% in 2001. The Chakma community in 2011 witnesses the highest gap which is 33.33%.

Table 3: Comparing literacy gap between rural male & female.

Tribes	Rural Male-Female Gap, Census 2001	Rural Male-Female gap, Census 2011
Boro Kacharis	18.89	12.17
Chakma	-25.64	33.33
Dimasa, Kachari	18.91	-1.51
Garos	12.02	9.47
Hajong	22.22	16.32
Hmar	12.15	6.68
Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng	-1.88	-3.67
Koch	16.45	14.72
Any Kuki Tribes,	15.16	6.11

including...		
Lakher	100.00	25.00
Man (Tai speaking)	17.50	23.65
Any Mizo (Lushai) Tribes	17.38	4.55
Mikir	16.75	9.06
Any Naga tribes	12.82	7.89
Pawi	-	-9.21
Raba, Rava	20.37	14.40
Synteng	-11.56	4.88
Classified	4.59	2.33
Unclassified	10.85	3.55
All Scheduled Tribes	4.75	2.42

Table 4 shows the urban male-female literacy gap of 2001 and 2011. It has been revealed that the Man community which has shown the highest gap in overall stage (23.68%) has zero literacy gaps in urban scenario which has come down from 11% in 2001.

Table 4: Comparing literacy gap between urban male & female.

Tribes	Urban Male-Female Gap, Census 2001	Urban Male-Female gap, Census 2011
Boro Kacharis	15.35	13.32
Chakma	84.09	7.92
Dimasa, Kachari	4.39	4.01
Garo	5.00	2.40
Hajong	19.15	11.66
Hmar	7.37	3.86
Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng	3.73	1.46
Koch	16.85	13.68
Any Kuki Tribes,	8.98	5.61

including...		
Lakher	33.33	6.25
Man (Tai speaking)	11.11	0.00
Any Mizo (Lushai) Tribes	4.71	1.76
Mikir	6.38	3.18
Any Naga tribes	5.09	0.73
Pawi	0.00	8.33
Raba, Rava	12.87	11.46
Synteng	4.86	3.99
Classified	4.37	1.94
Unclassified	4.66	2.67
All Scheduled Tribes	4.38	1.98

4. Conclusion

Education is the key to tribal development. Though the development of the tribes is taking place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. Focusing on female literacy status, it is 73.55% which is still below the state average [4]. The Man community witnessed the lowest literacy rate among female with 48.39% followed by Koch females with 51.94%, Hajong females with 55.73%, Raba/Rava females with 59.66%, Mikir females with 66.62% and Garo females 67.62% in 2011 census. The fact remains that a large number of tribal women might have missed educational opportunities at different stages and in order to empower them varieties of skill training programmes have to be designed and organised. Implementation of systematic processes like Information Education Communication (IEC) should be done to educate communities placed near to the centre of the radar plot.

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