

## Problems of Dropout of Scheduled Tribe Students at the Upper Primary Level in Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal

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### Abstract:

*The present study has been conducted to study on dropout issue among scheduled tribe students at the upper primary level in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal in India. The samples have been collected from 12 schools (both Bengali and Santali medium) of 8 blocks of Paschim Medinipur district following a qualitative survey method. School records, questionnaire and interview schedule have been used to examine the dropout rate, problems and factors affecting dropout. The study found that dropout rate has been increased from the year 2013-2014 to 2015-2016, then decreased from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 among tribal students at the upper primary level. It is also found that the percentage of dropout of tribal students is more than that of non-tribal students. The study revealed that major problems of tribal students are language barrier and poor economic condition. The reasons associated with dropout are language barrier, poor economic condition, long distance of schools from home and engagement in household works. And non-enrolment to Santali medium schools is due to lack of infrastructure of schools, lack of learning environment in schools and lack of awareness of parents and community towards schooling.*

**Keywords:** dropout, scheduled tribe, qualitative survey, infrastructure

### 1. Introduction:

Education is a means of development of human being. But, so far, the creamy layers of Indian society have enjoyed the scope of this development. The Indian society has enormously transformed after independence. For the homogeneous development of the nation development of weaker section of people was indispensable. In other countries, particularly tropical ones, the scenario was almost same. Recently every government worldwide has taken a deal to spread education amongst the weaker sections of people of their countries. In India for this purpose NPE – 1986; POA – 1992; NCF – 2005; RTE – 2009 have been framed with a view to providing elementary education to people. Compulsory primary education to all has been implemented to the children of all castes, sexes and religions. But tribal children are weaker than the others relating to education.

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For several historical, economical and social reasons the Scheduled Tribes have been economically and educationally backward down the ages. In India about 8 % people belong to *Scheduled-Tribes*<sup>1</sup> accounting approximately 8 crore. Most of the tribal people live in the rural areas. They have a common regional language of each group. Each of the tribal groups has a distinct psychological, cultural, social, economic and political background. These backgrounds make them differ from mainstream education system. The children are facing the communication problem with the teachers at the elementary level in Bengali medium schools. Recently West Bengal Government has started Santali Medium Schools at the elementary level (I-VIII) for spreading educational and welfare facilities among them. But the speed of these welfare activities measured in terms of enrolment & dropout is yet slow. The enrolment of ST(tribal) students in schools is not up to the mark. Dropout rate in schools both in Bengali medium and in Santali medium schools has not been improved as it would have been. It had been expected that regional language would have been helpful to the students, but the result has been not so satisfactory. There are so many factors embedded in the instruction system through regional language (Bengali and Santali in this case). To improve the education level of ST students the first thing to do is to impart elementary education to them. Elementary education has its schemes as (i) Sarva Siksha Avijan (SSA), (ii) Mid-day Meal (MDM), (iii) Teacher Education, (iv) *Mahila-Samakhya*<sup>2</sup>, (v) Providing quality education and educational infrastructure.

In spite of so many schemes available, the long-cherished goal has not been achieved till now. The problem may be in the process of utilization or in the nature of involvement of the population. Among the tribal dominated districts Paschim Medinipur district is remarkable because of its demographic pattern, natural resources, economic structure. This district is surrounded by tribal people of the neighbouring states of India. More than 14% people of the total population of the district are tribes. They are sub-divided as Santal, Munda, Lodha, Bhumij, Kora, Sabar, Kheriya, Mahali etc. Among them Santals are major in population size. Population of Tribes in Paschim Medinipur (14.87%) is higher than that of the state and central rate such as 5.50% and 8% respectively It ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of percentage of ST population (14.87%) following Jalpaiguri (18.87%), Purulia (18.27%) and *Dakhin-Dinajpur*<sup>3</sup> (16.12%).

Though the overall literacy rate of the district is above 70%, the picture is slightly dismal in western part of the district i.e. Jhargram Sub-division (now a district) and certain parts of Medinipur Sadar Sub-division. These area are mainly dominated by scheduled tribes who remain economically and educationally backward down the ages. Two blocks of the Jhargram Sub-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://censusindia.gov.in>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/upload\\_document/Genesis\\_ms.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/Genesis_ms.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.google.com/search?q=the+population+of+tribes+in+paschim+medinipur\(14.87%25\)&oq=&aqs=chrome.4.69i59i450l8.389488256j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=the+population+of+tribes+in+paschim+medinipur(14.87%25)&oq=&aqs=chrome.4.69i59i450l8.389488256j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

division viz. Nayagram and Gopiballavpur – I are considered as Educationally Backward Block (EBB) on the basis of their low female literacy percentage<sup>4</sup>. It may be mentioned here that apart from these two declared EBBs there are some more blocks which are very close to these EBBs by character. Literacy rate depends on elementary education of the children. So, there is a need of research on the low literacy rate of this Sub-division (now a district of West Bengal). The two factors like *school enrolment* and *dropout* play important roles in improving the elementary education and thereby developing literacy rate in a locality.

Elementary education in our state has been distinctly divided into two parts: Lower primary class I-V & Upper primary VI-VIII. The Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) requires education for all up to class VIII and 14 years of age. To ensure this at lower primary level, enrolment at class I including lateral entry at II to V should tend to 100% and dropout at the end V should be 0. Again enrolment at class VI should be 100% and drop out at the end of class VIII to be 0. However, this is only an ideal condition and never realized in practice. To get a comprehensive and detailed view of enrolment and drop out for implementation of UEE, study at two stages of primary education might be more revealing. Therefore, the study on the enrolment and dropout of ST children in the two stages of primary education (Lower Primary & Upper Primary) might help to dig the problem of literacy among the ST students at grass root level. Such investigation could be carried out meaningfully in any tribal dominated area like Paschim Medinipur of West Bengal.

## 2. Review of Related Literatures:

*Kannan-A.(2016)*<sup>5</sup> found that disinterest in study is the chief factor for dropout in secondary school education in Ariyalur district of Tamilnadu. *Thakur-Payel(2016)*<sup>6</sup> found that physical distance of the schools is a major hindrance in respect of school completion in Purulia district of West Bengal. Basu and Chatterjee(2014)<sup>7</sup> conducted a research on tribal students of Paschim Medinipur district and found that the problem of dropout lay on the *long distance of the schools*. Most of the parents do not send their *children especially girls* to schools for this reason. *Maithly-&-Saxena(2008)*<sup>8</sup> found that causes of dropout are *financial difficulties*. *Agarwal(2006)*<sup>9</sup> found that most dropped students are engaged in *household work*. *Premji(2004)*<sup>10</sup> found that *socio-economic* conditions have kept the children out of primary education.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://14.139.60.153/bitstream/123456789/3833/1/District%20Human%20Development%20Report%20-%20Paschim%20Medinipur.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/215643>

<sup>6</sup> <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/197622>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.semanticscholar.org>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2784622/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4242525/>

<sup>10</sup> [www.theglobaljournals.com/ija](http://www.theglobaljournals.com/ija) ... on May25,2015

*Vinoba-Goutam(2003)*<sup>11</sup> found the *language problem* of ST Students. The teachers and the students cannot understand each other completely. *Kamble(1992)*<sup>12</sup> found that facilities available to ST students in Maharashtra are useable to them but not helpful to progress in education. *Bhargava(1989)*<sup>13</sup> found that educational facilities available to ST Students in Orissa are not satisfactory as required.

The researchers identified some perennial difficulties of the educational advancement of ST students. These are: lack of helpful materials, difficulty of communications in school, socio-economic backwardness, over engagement in household works, commutation to distant schools etc. But these researches do not encompass the comparison of enrolment and drop out of ST students at Bengali and Santali medium upper primary schools in any district of West Bengal.

### 3. Need of the Study:

Going through the brief literature the researcher finds that most of the problems are student-parent related. Very few are on the availability of facilities. Although various facilities are available to improve enrolment and reduce dropout among the ST students at the elementary level, for some reasons they are not being implemented properly to achieve the better result. Therefore, there is a need of conducting a study to find out hidden causes. The researcher has thoroughly examined the status of utilization of the facilities and the attitudes of students, parents, teachers, school authorities, members of the community, social organizations and others. Finding out the gaps the researcher has suggested for improvement at the end of the study.

### 4. Statement of the Problem:

As a part of conceptualization of the implementation of UEE, a study on the tribal children lying at the grass root level is most relevant. The issues relating to enrolment and dropout of students at primary level are also important in this context, In order to investigate the problems of non-enrolment and drop out of ST students and identify the reasons behind these, the researcher has chosen the age group of 11-13 years who are included at the upper primary level (VI-VIII) of elementary education in Junior, high/higher secondary schools. Among the tribal belts Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal in India has been considered as it is 4<sup>th</sup> tribal dominated area in West Bengal. The problem of the research has, therefore, been stated as "*problems of dropout*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://jaromproject.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/education-of-tribal-children-in-india-a-janshala-experience.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/156806/8/08\\_chapter%20ii.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/156806/8/08_chapter%20ii.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/156806/8/08\\_chapter%20ii.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/156806/8/08_chapter%20ii.pdf)

of scheduled tribe students at the upper primary level in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal”.

### 5. Objectives:

- i) To study the rate of enrolment and dropout of students at the upper primary level.
- ii) To compare the dropout rate between tribal and non-tribal students.
- iii) To study the reasons of dropout of scheduled tribe students at the upper primary level.

### 6. Methodology:

A qualitative survey approach has been used for this study. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected from selected samples with reference to the above objectives. The population of the study is ST students of class VI-VIII, parents of students (tribal and non-tribal), teachers, community members and non-enrolled children. The questionnaires have been administered to the students and the others. The data of enrolment have been collected from *School-Report-Cards-of-U-DISE<sup>14</sup>* and school records. 12 schools, out of which 9 are Bengali medium and 3 are Santali medium from 8 blocks viz. Binpur-1, Binpur-2, Jamboni, Sankrail, Gopiballavpur-1, Gopiballavpur-2, Jhargram, Nayagram of Jhargram sub-division have been selected. For selection of schools stratified random sampling has been used in ST students based upper primary schools. For selection of parents and others stratified random sampling has been used.

- **Samples:** 418 samples are used for this study such as 280 parents, 80 tribal students, 30 non-enrolled children, 23 teachers and 5 community members.
- **Tools:** 5 tools have been used for data collection such as- (1) Teachers’ questionnaire, (2) Community Members’ Questionnaire, (3) Non-Enrolled Children’s Interview Schedule, (4) Parents’ questionnaire, (5) Tribal Students’ Questionnaire.
- **Collection of data:** Collection of data has been done by administering questionnaires to teachers, parents, community members and students of selected upper primary schools and an interview schedule to non-enrolled children.

### 7. Presentation & Analysis of Data:

The collected data have been analyzed by statistical methods such as percentage, mean, etc. As Santal tribes are big in population size (above 50% of total ST population in West Bengal) in West Bengal, they represent here ST (Tribal) community. Here non-tribal students represent all the students other than ST Students.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://udiseplus.gov.in>

Table-1 : Year wise tribal and non-tribal enrolment and dropout in twelve schools

Sl.	Year	Total Enrolment	Tribal Enrolment	% Tribal Enrolment	Non-Tribal Enrolment	% Non-Tribal Enrolment	Total dropout	Tribal dropout	Non-Tribal dropout	% dropout	% Tribal Dropout	% Non-tribal Dropout
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2013-14	2250	815	36.22	1435	63.78	45	26	19	2	1.16	.84
2	2014-15	2341	907	38.74	1434	61.26	81	36	45	3.46	1.54	1.92
3	2015-16	2357	946	40.14	1411	59.86	131	91	40	5.55	3.86	1.96
4	2016-17	2373	932	39.28	1441	60.72	120	64	56	5.05	2.69	2.36
5	2017-18	2328	908	39	1420	61	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Total	11649	4508		7141		377	217	160	16.06	9.25	6.81
7	Average			38.70		61.30				3.23	1.86	1.37

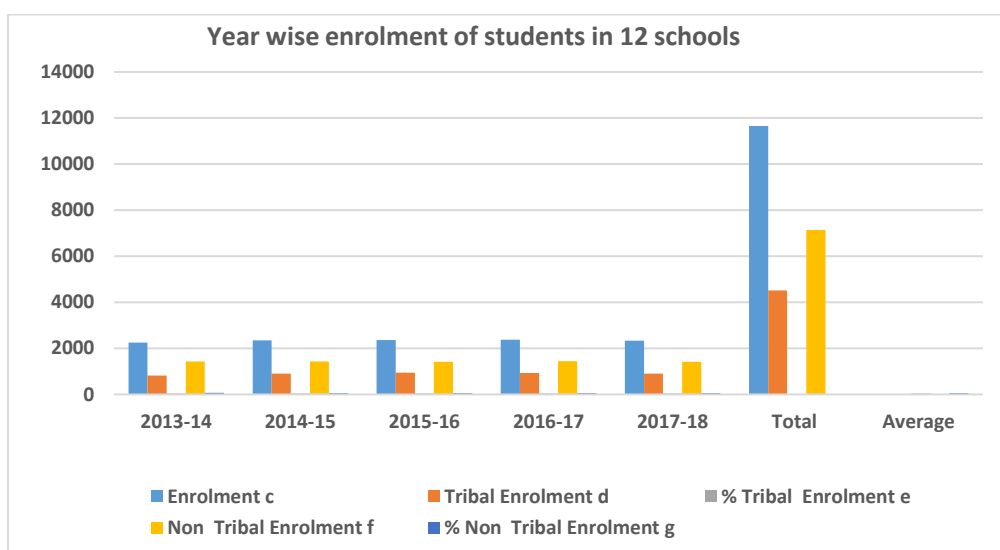


Figure -1(a) : Year-wise Enrolment of Students in 12 Schools

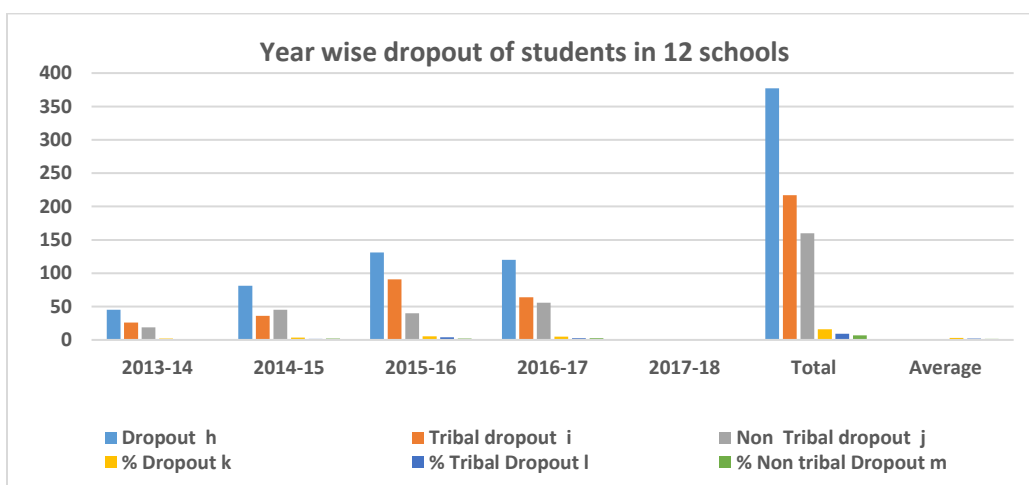


Figure -1(b) : Year-wise Dropout Students in 12 Schools

Table-2: School wise tribal and non-tribal dropout

SL. No.	Name of block	Name of school	Medium	Total no. of students dropped out	Total no. of students dropped out (tribal)	Total no. of students dropped out (Non tribal)
a	b	c	d	e	f	G
1	Binpur 1	Gopalpur Jr. High School	Bengali	8	6	2
2	Binpur 2	Sharpura Jr. High School	Bengali	32	17	15
3	Jamboni	Kanimahuli High School	bengali	55	23	32
4	Sankrail	Rohini Balika Vidyalaya	Bengali	33	20	13
5	Gopiballavpur-1	Bansda SC High School	Bengali	37	27	10
6	Gopiballavpur-2	Beliabera KCM High School	Bengali	62	28	34
7	Jhargram	Andharisole Jr. High School	Bengali	17	8	9
8	Nayagram	Kalmapukuria BSC High Schhol	Bengali	61	36	25
9	Binpur 2	Belpahari SC High School	Bengali	68	48	20
10	Nayagram	Kalmapukuria BSC High School	Santali	3	3	0
11	Binpur 2	Belpahari SC High School	Santali	1	1	0
12	Jhargram	Jamidardanga Jr. High School	Santali	-	-	-
13	Total			377	217	160
14	%				57.56	42.44

Table-3: Medium wise Dropout Tribal Students

Bengali Medium Schools			Santali Medium Schools		
Enrolment of Tribal Students	Dropout of Tribal Students	% Dropout	Enrolment of Tribal Students	Dropout of Tribal Students	% Dropout
4229	213	5.03	279	4	1.43

### 8. Interpretation of Results:

It has been found that tribal students' enrolment has been gradually increase from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016 and simultaneously dropout rate has been increased and from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 enrolment has been decreased and dropout rate also been decreased. On the other hand, non-tribal enrolment has been decreased gradually from 2013-2014 to 2016-2017 and dropout rate has been increased at same time. Only 2017-2018 non-tribal enrolment has been decreased. In 2017-2018 dropout rate has been nil in both categories as per record. The enrolment rate of tribal and non-tribal is 38.70% and 61.30% respectively in five years. Average dropout rate in five years is 3.23%. Tribal dropout (1.87%) is bigger than non-tribal (1.37%). The dropout of tribal and non-tribal students is 57.56% and 42.44% respectively which is just opposite of enrolment. In case of Bengali medium schools tribal students' dropout is 5.03% and in Santali medium schools it is 1.43% in five years.

From this analysis it is said that in spite of increase of enrolment of tribal students, dropout has not been improved. In case of tribal students migrant students are found. In Bengali medium schools tribal students' dropout is higher than that of Santali medium schools.

### 9. Reasons of Dropout:

There are so many reasons behind dropout of tribal students of the upper primary level. In this study reasons have been mentioned by the people of different corners. Here their opinions have been included.

- i) **Parents' Opinion:** The researcher has asked parents of tribal and non-tribal students from 12 schools through questionnaire. Most parents (49%) have said dropout is high due to economic problem (low family income). Some parents (25%) have said family reasons (household works).
- ii) **Tribal Students' Opinion:** The researcher has found that tribal students are becoming dropped out due to engagement in other works. And 75% tribal students are dropped out due to not understanding of Bengali language in classroom transaction in Bengali medium schools. Because, their mother language is Santali.
- iii) **Non –enrolled Students' Opinion:** Majority of children (33%) have said that they are not attending schools due to long distance of schools from home. 26% children have said that their parents are not sending them to schools due to poor economic condition. Their parents engage them to other works.
- iv) **Teachers' Opinion:** Most teachers have opined that most prevalent factors of dropout are language not understood, work at home, language at home and school different. Both personal and school reasons contribute to school dropout.
- v) **Community Members' Opinion:** Community members have opined that lack of infrastructure, teaching staff and text books contributes to dropout especially in Santali medium schools. Economic reason is also related to dropout.

### 10. Major Findings:

- i) The dropout rate in five years is 3.23%.
- ii) Majority of dropout occurs among tribal students (1.86%) compared to non tribal students (1.37%).
- iii) Tribal students' dropout in Bengali medium schools (5.03) is higher than that of Santali medium schools (1.43).
- iv) Tribal students' enrolment is 39% and non-tribal enrolment is 61% of total enrolment.
- v) Tribal students' enrolment is increasing than before, but dropout rate is not improving.
- vi) Tribal students of Bengali medium are facing language problems.



- vii) Language barrier is the most prominent factor of dropout among tribal students.
- viii) Long distance of schools from home and lack of infrastructure of schools are other factors of dropout.
- ix) In few cases engagement in household works of tribal students is a major factor of dropout.

## 11. Discussion:

The research highlighted that the tribal students of Jhargram sub-division at the upper primary level are facing lots of problems which lead to dropout. Main reasons found in the study are-

- i) Poor economic condition.
- ii) Language not understood in Bengali medium schools.
- iii) In Santali medium schools lack of teachers and lack of Santali scripts text books.

These findings support the results as found by Venoba Goutam (2003) and Maithly and Saxena (2008) that language problem of ST students is most prominent in school dropout and financial difficulties cause dropout respectively.

## 12. Conclusion:

Non enrolment and dropout is not merely a result of academic failure and unwillingness to education, rather it is the result of financial problem and language problem among scheduled tribe students. It is also a problem of non tribal children at large. In case of non tribal children it is reducing, but in case of tribal it is not. The problems of it are scattered in socio- economic status of tribal people. Development of financial stability and introduction of Santali language in a large number of schools with sufficient teachers and infrastructure is required to reduce the rate of dropout.

## 13. Educational Implications:

The study has some educational implications for school administrators and parents. They are-

- i) The school administrators can take special drive for enrolling tribal students,
- ii) Parents will be aware of education
- iii) Parents can choose which medium is appropriate for their children.
- iv) This study suggests that unless the economic conditions of the tribal students are properly recovered, the dropout rates can't tend to zero in the tribal society where hunger and malnutrition trail a long shadow.
- v) For the augmenting the better learning among tribal students emphasis should be given on the transaction through Santali medium for the tribal students. Books and support materials should have a bearing on Santhali *Language and Culture*.

- vi) More importance on visuals and concrete objects & ideas should be given while teaching learning as it could alleviate the language difficulty of the tribal students.
- vii) Santhali speaking teachers or teachers of other community with proficiency in Santhali could be engaged in tribal schools.

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