

Status of Tribal Women of Birbhum District of West Bengal with Respect To Level of Education, Aspirations and Socio-Economic Condition

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ABSTRACT

The tribal women being economically poor and socially backward live at a low level of scale of the quality life. Thus the tribal women often face the problems of food insecurity, malnutrition, lack of access to health care services and education and the victim of domestic violence and rape. Unlike the well organised modern communities, the tribal communities and tribal women lag far behind in social networking. This is the nature and dimension of socio-economic disempowerment problem among the tribal women in India. There are a good number of studies, explaining the causes and consequences of women disempowerment. Such studies are related to a general enquiry of women exploitation and dependency. These studies have identified lack of education, absence of skills and training, lack of property rights, social isolation and segregation and male control over resources and re-productive rights as responsible for women disempowerment. This paper has tried to through light on the status and of Tribal Women Empowerment in Birbhum district of West Bengal with respect to level of education, aspirations and socio-economic condition.

Keywords: Tribal Women Empowerment, tribal society, empowerment, status and development, Socio-economic Status, Aspirations.

INTRODUCTION

The Socio-economic structure in tribal communities is markedly different from that of the non-tribal or advanced groups of people. They have a very simple technology which fits well with their ecological surroundings and conservative outlook. Moreover, their economy can be said to be subsistence type, they practice different types of occupations to sustain themselves and live on —Marginal Economy. The tribal of India belong to different economic stages, from food gathering to industrial labour, which present their overlapping economic stages in the broader frame work of the state economy. And the last important point to be emphasized is that a tribe is usually considered as an economically independent group of people having their own specific economy. Empowering may be understood as enabling women, especially tribal women, to acquire and to possess power and resources, in order to make decision on their own or resist decisions that are made by others which affect them. A person may said to be powerful when he/she has control over a large portion of power resources in society (Gowda and Yogish 2006). The extent of possession of various resources such as personal wealth, assets, land, skilled education, information, knowledge, social status, and position held, leadership traits, capabilities for mobilization of resources etc., indicate the level of empowerment.

In modern times empowerment of tribal women is often perceived as an adjunct to a mainstream of society, be it the universal political discourse of rights, liberties, democracy and emancipation. Empowerment of tribal women is that pragmatic situation which state explicitly that the historical structures and humiliating social protocols entailing the elements of injustice now have been replaced by the non- discriminatory social norms that govern the behavior of people in contemporary day. It is also necessary to kept in mind that empowerment of tribal women should be defined not only in terms of the concrete act of discrimination and subjugation but also along with the reference to the historical memory on the one hand and side by side the concrete experiences in the present. Because that is the symbol of reparation and it explicate the resurgence of grassroots mobilization and it involves profound changes in social, economic and political institutional arrangements, traditional practices and in the mindset of the erstwhile subjugated segregated people and ensure full participation of those people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well being of our society. Whatever the geographic location, culture and historical stages of development of a society we may not ignore that people have certain basic needs without which it would be impossible or very difficult to survive.

This basic needs include food, clothes, shelter, basic literacy, primary health care and security of life and property. Expansion of social opportunities is an important indicator for development and it influences the individual's substantive freedom to live better. After the effect of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, in the Eleventh Schedule as many as eleven subjects are directly linked with social opportunity expansion. To cite a few, there are subjects like education including primary and secondary schools, adult and non-formal education, health and sanitation including hospitals, primary health centers and dispensaries, family welfare, women and child development, drinking water etc. Along with those basic needs every person seeks some sort of self respect, dignity or honor and freedom. Freedom means political freedom, economic freedom and freedom from social servitude. As long as a society is bounded by the servitude of men to ignorance, other men, and institutions or dogmatic beliefs it cannot claim to have achieved the goal of development. And the agency that is most suitable for discharging these responsibilities is none other than the state. So to speak, the issue of empowerment of tribal women is such a task which has been impinged by many factors on the endeavor to break through the barriers of want and long deprivation. Not all the factors can be controlled by an individual or even a group of individuals. Thereby state has to come forward and intervene to remove roadblocks for the objective of empowerment of the disempowered.

Methodology of the study:

In the present investigation normative research method has been employed. Every research needs data. So, we want to collect the data by using of certain techniques. An Analytical case study method has been applied for the present study.

Design of the study:

Qualitative and Quantitative both research approaches are employed in order to get empirical data from the field.

Sample of the study:

The study was conducted to estimate the status and development of Tribal Women Empowerment in Birbhum district, West Bengal. Therefore, all the tribal women in the district of Birbhum, West Bengal constitute the population of the study. The sample of the study was selected to satisfy the objectives and hypothesis of the study. Then by adopting random method, rural areas and urban areas were selected. Sample of the study consisted of 150 households of tribal people and 500 tribal women and 500 tribal men were selected from 150 household as sample.

Research Instrument:

The following tools were used for collection of data:

Questionnaire:

It used to gather views pertaining to education, aspiration and socio-economic status of tribal people, selected as sample.

Interview Schedule:

It is used to collect primary and secondary data pertaining to education, aspiration and socio-economic status of tribal people from various experts, social workers, NGO's, Government officials and tribal associations.

Objectives of the study:

The following objectives were laid down for the study:

- 1) To study the levels of education of the tribal women of Birbhum district.
- 2) To study the aspirations of the tribal women of Birbhum district.
- 3) To study the socio-economic status of tribal women of Birbhum district.

Level of Education of tribal women of Birbhum District of West Bengal:

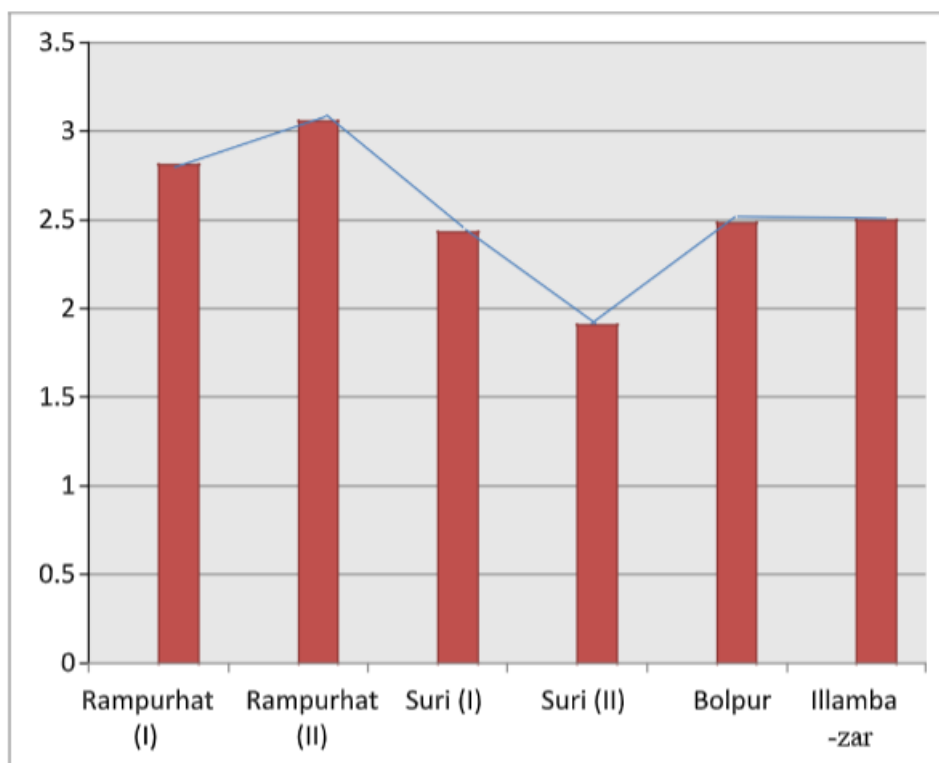
Level of education of a family is determined on the basis of the standard of education of the member of a family. It is the ratio of the sum total of rating on the level of education of the member of a family; for example, total number of members of a family is four and total educational rating score is 11, thus the level of education of the family = $11/4 = 2.75$. By adopting this method, level of education scores of 150 households were calculated. For each sub-division scores of 25 households were added and accordingly average was calculated.

Table 1.1 Showing the average scores on Level of Education of tribal women taken as sample under six sub-divisions in the district of Birbhum

Name of Sub-divisions	No of Respondents	Average score on Level of Education of Tribal Women
Rampurhat I	84	2.81
Rampurhat II	86	3.06
Suri I	87	2.43
Suri II	82	1.91
Bolpur-Santiniketan	80	2.48
Illambazar	81	2.50
Total	500	2.55

Above table indicates the average scores on the level of education. It seems that the rate has increased at Rampurhat II as there having strong conducive atmosphere and SES whereas Suri II sub-division is having reverse plight condition.

Figure 1.1 Showing average scores of the Level of Education of tribal women



The table 1.1 reveals the trends of the level of education of tribal people in the district of Birbhum under six-sub-divisions. The trend indicates that in comparison to other scores, the tribal women of Rampurhat II division are having highest level of education; whereas level of education is the lowest of the tribal women belong to Suri II sub-division. On the basis of average level of education the graphical representation has been made. It is observed that average levels of education of Scheduled Tribe Women of two sub-divisions are above the common cutting point.

Aspirations of tribal women of Birbhum District of West Bengal:

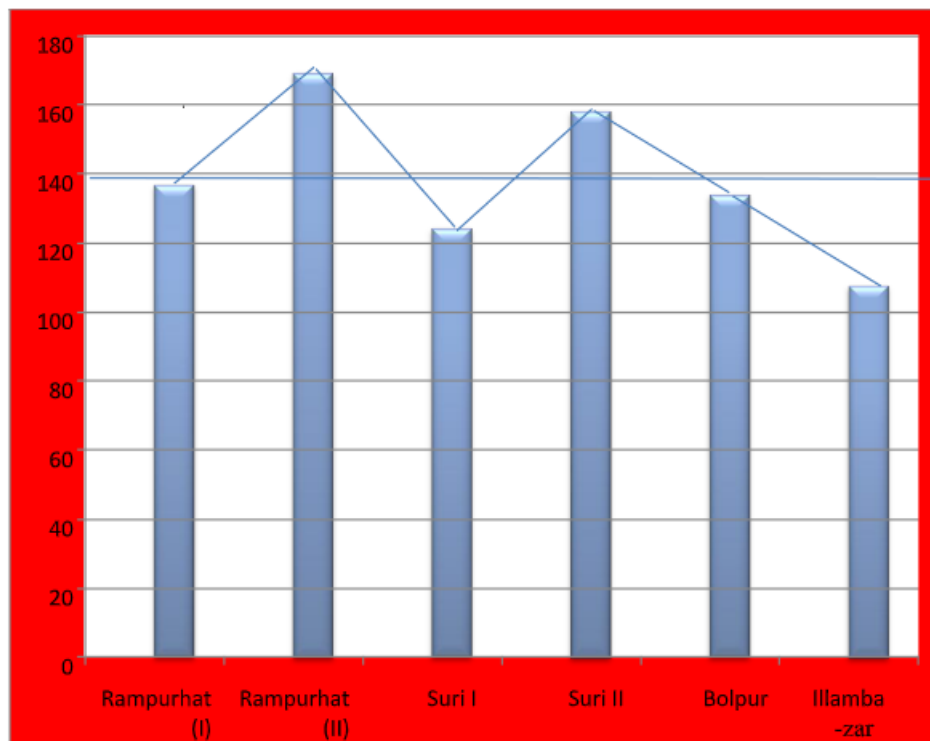
Aspirations indicate a strong desire which motivate people to work harder for achieving higher level. Aspirations are an individual’s strong desire to obtain a status, objective or goal such as a particular occupation or level of education. Aspirations are developed and achieved in certain contexts and they are influenced by circumstances. For instance, educational aspirations and attainment could be influenced by family background, peers, gender, socio-economic status, location and neighborhood. In this study the score on aspiration was considered as the sum total of scores on the response of an individual in different aspect of social, cultural, professional, educational, aesthetic and administrative position etc.

Table 1.2 Showing the average Aspiration scores of tribal women under six sub- divisions in the district of Birbhum

Name of Sub-divisions	No of Respondents	Average Aspiration score Of Tribal Women
Rampurhat I	84	136.91
Rampurhat II	86	169.33
Suri I	87	124.24
Suri II	82	158.40
Bolpur-Santiniketan	80	133.97
Illambazar	81	107.91
Total	500	137.07

Above table indicates the average scores on Aspiration. It seems that the rate has increased at Rampurhat (II) sub-division as having keen desire to possess things required whereas Illambazar having reluctant to do so.

Figure 1.2 Showing the average Aspiration scores of tribal women



The above table reveals the level of aspiration of Scheduled Tribe people in the district of Birbhum of six sub-divisions. The trends indicate that in Rampurhat (II) sub-division, the Scheduled Tribe women are having the highest level of

aspiration; whereas the level of aspiration is the lowest among the people of Illambazar sub-division. On the basis of average aspiration, the graphical representation has been made. The figure clearly indicates the trends of aspiration of tribal women in the district of Birbhum.

Socio-economic Status of tribal women of Birbhum District of West Bengal:

Socio-economic status (SES) is a combined measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. For analyzing SES of a family, the household income, education, and occupation were examined, as well as combined income of the family members with other attributes were assessed. Socioeconomic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. SES, here, is sum total of the scores of family monthly income, land holding, dwelling housing, properties including furniture, luxurious items and other impediments.

Table 1.3 Showing the average scores on Socio-economic Status of tribal women households of six sub-divisions

Name of Sub-divisions	No. of Respondents	Average SES score of Tribal Women
Rampurhat I	84	60.58
Rampurhat II	86	133.65
Suri I	87	78.65
Suri II	82	54.66
Bolpur-Santiniketan	80	68.39
Illambazar	81	74.01
Total	500	78.85

Above table indicates the average scores on the socio-economic status (SES). It seems that the rate has increased at Rampurhat (II) as having strong conducive atmosphere of earning livelihood due to flourishing fertile land and more salaried persons etc whereas deplorable SES has been seen at selected areas of Suri II sub-division because it were a fur-flung situated at Adivasi Para, Paligram, Mongalkote Block where prime livelihoods are marginal farmer, day-labourer, contractual labour etc.

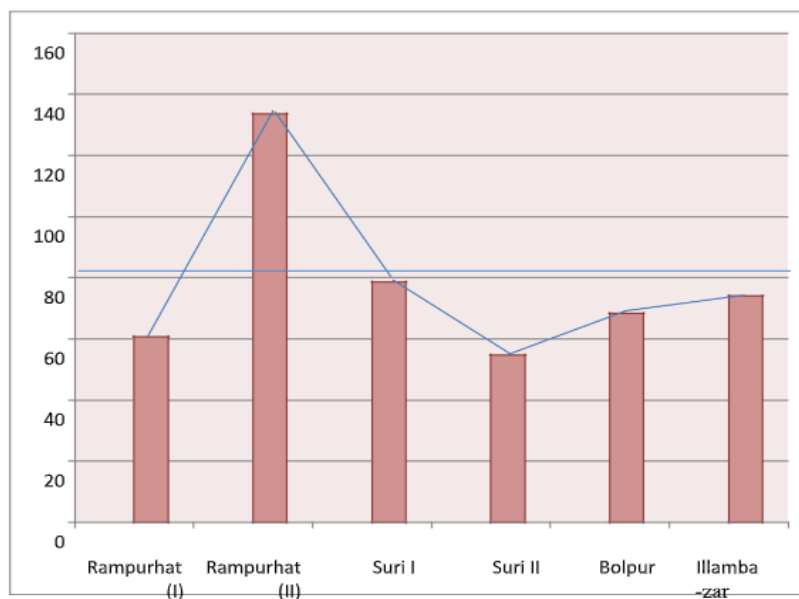


Figure 1.3 Showing the average scores on Socio-economic Status of tribal women

The figure 1.3 clearly indicates that trend of the average Socio-economic Status (SES) of tribal people is the highest at Rampurhat (II) ; whereas it is lowest at Suri II sub-division in the district of Birbhum.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to identify the status and development of tribal women in the district of Birbhum, West Bengal. Besides, the level of education of tribal women in the district of Birbhum, the nature and level of aspiration of them, the socio-economic status of them, aspiration and socio-economic status of them, comparison between the level of education and socio-economic status of tribal people belong to different sub-divisions, comparison between the level of education and socio-economic status of tribal women belong to rural and urban and the interrelationship between level of education, aspiration and socio-economic status of them were also estimated. The study areas were at the six sub-divisions in the district of Birbhum, West Bengal. The locations were randomly selected to make the study intensive and relevant in accordance to objectives of the study. The samples were also selected in accordance with the requirements of the study. In case of the average levels of education, Rampurhat (I), Rampurhat (II), Suri I, Suri II, Bolpur-Santiniketan, Illambazar sub-divisions have 2.81, 3.06, 2.43, 1.91, 2.48 and 2.50 respectively. Here, Rampurhat (II) sub-division has the highest level of education due to flourishing in agriculture and salaried people are more. Hence, parents are happily able to send their wards to school regularly. Whereas, Suri II sub-division has the lowest level of education as the data have been collected from the remote village, named Adivasi Para, Paligram, Suri II where primary livelihood is contractual-labour, day-labour and also a little marginal farming and there hardly anybody has education. It is to say that only new generations are urging and undergoing primary and secondary level of education.

In case of Aspiration of tribal women, Rampurhat (II) sub-division are the highest (Average score-169.33) and the lowest Aspiration scores (Average score-107.91) among six sub-divisions in Illambazar respectively. Though Rampurhat (II) sub-division is rich in flourished agricultural land and more salaried people, yet population are keen to have more and more furniture, amenities and educational level, social and cultural status in the society. Thereby, their Aspiration level is very high. On the other hand, though Illambazar has low level of Aspiration. It may be due to that data were collected from remote village where main livelihood are contractual-labour, day-labour, mining labour or a little bit of marginal farming. The tribal population are somewhat isolated from mainstream and thereby, the tribal women have very low level of awareness and Aspiration.

In case of Socio-economic Status (SES) of Tribal people, Rampurhat (II) sub-division has the highest and Suri II is the lowest Socio-economic Status (SES). Rampurhat (II) sub-division has the highest level of education, flourishing fertile land and more salaried people. Whereas, at Suri II sub-division, data were collected from the remote village, named Adivasi Para, Paligram, is submerged in a deep illiteracy and engaged in day-labour, contractual labour or a little farming or there hardly anybody have a salaried job. It is to say that only new generation are urging and undergoing primary and secondary level of education.

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