

# Causes of Educational Backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women Students at Higher Education Level in West Bengal

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## Abstract:

Scheduled caste women are deprived of education. Literacy level for Schedule Castes female students was much lower than the general population of students. In this paper researcher tried to identify the causes of educational backwardness of scheduled caste women in West Bengal. Four dimensions have been selected to measure the causes of educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women students: family environment, institutional facilities, and institutional climate and government facilities. A self's constructed tool having 40 items have been developed based on above mentioned four dimensions. This study is qualitative in nature and survey approach was applied for collection of the data. Purposive sampling has been used as sampling technique. The study found that family environment is a significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of scheduled caste women in West Bengal. The reasons for dropout are, poverty, inaccessibility for good educational institutions, lack of awareness about advantage and utility of education, language problem (medium of instruction), lack of sufficient infrastructure facilities and teaching aids, lack of good number of qualified and committed teachers for the scheduled caste areas and local cultural traditions.

**Keyword:** Educational Backwardness, Scheduled Caste (SC), Women.

## Introduction:

Women and girls are normally in a disadvantaged position all over the World. However, compared to developed countries, they are in a more disadvantageous position in developing countries due to poverty, other social, cultural, and derogatory customary practices adopted in each country. In India, nearly half of the total population is women. Women constitute 48.46 percent of the total population of India in 2011 (Census of India, 2011). The goal of bridging gender gap in education and women's empowerment has received priority attention in all Five-Year Plans. They play a crucial role in national development. There is a general consensus that Education and training can do a great deal to break the vicious circle of marginalization, exclusion and poverty. Better educated people are more productive, they use whatever capital or land they have in a more efficient way, and they are more likely to innovate and devise new forms of production. Educated women tend to have fewer children, whom they are able to feed and of whom they take better care. They are also more likely to encourage them to go to school, to take an interest in what takes place in school and to transmit some knowledge and practices which will, in turn, contribute to children learning better in school.

But they are lagged in all spheres of life. The Scheduled Caste women constitute an important section/group of the society and their proportion to the total population is 16.6 percent (according to Census 2011). The Scheduled Castes (SC) women are among the most socially and educationally disadvantaged groups in India. Scheduled Castes women have different histories of social and economic deprivation, and the underlying causes of their educational marginalisation are also strikingly distinct. Their proportion of participation at various levels education in comparison with other section of society is found to be lower due to their low socio-economic background.

Table-1: Percentages of Literacy Rate of Different Social Group in India and West Bengal (2011).

	Social Group	Total	Male	Female
<b>India</b>	All Group	74.04	82.10	65.50
	Scheduled Caste	66.10	75.20	56.50
<b>West Bengal</b>	All Group	77.08	81.7	70.5
	Scheduled Caste	69.43	77.22	61.23

**Source:** Census of India 2011.

Table indicates that the literacy rate in India is 74.04 % (male 82.10 % & female 65.50 %) whereas SC literacy rate is 66.10 % (male 75.20 % & female 56.50 %). The literacy rate in West Bengal is 77.08 % (male 81.7 % & female 70.5 %) whereas SC literacy rate is 69.43 % (male 77.22 % & female 61.23 %). The statistics show that female literacy rate among scheduled caste community both in India and West Bengal is considerably lower than that of female literacy of general category. Table also indicates that female literacy rate is comparatively lower than that of male population of Scheduled Caste population at state and national level. So, women among Scheduled Caste community are educationally backward due to several socio, economic and cultural factors. In this context, the researcher intends to find out the causes of educational backwardness of the women among the scheduled caste

### **Review of Related Literature:**

Here a brief summary of related studies and literatures have been presented. A review of related literature is an integral part of research paper. A researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field. Here in this paper researcher has reviewed many literature, some major literature has been shown below.

**Saini and Monika (2010)** conducted a study entitled as “**A study of academic achievement of scheduled caste secondary school students in relation to study habits, home environment and school environment**”. The scheduled caste which are treated as untouchables continue to remain at the bottom of India’s caste hierarchy. They also remain at the bottom of economic hierarchy, having no land of the own and relegated to undertake only menial/dirty and ill paid jobs. The major caused that have kept the scheduled caste down in the society have been poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, and fear and resultants inability to assert themselves. It is their disadvantageous environment which has pushed them for below, as regards academic achievement, study habits and concerned.

**Joshi (1979)** conducted a study on **Educational Problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Baroda District**. The objectives of the study are- to study the educational problems of the SC/ST students arising out of their socio-economic environment; to study the level of aspirations of the SC/ST students; to study the educational difficulties of the SC/ST students with regard to their studies; to find out whether there are any differences in the aspirations, diffidence, rejection, self-conception, perception of the school and the perception of the teacher of the SC/ST students.

**Agarwal (2000)** studied the educational problems of scheduled caste students. The major findings were that more than half of the scheduled caste students possess positive opinion regarding aims and importance of education.

**Chattopadhyay and Mihirkumar (1998)** took up a quasi-experimental study on the educational backwardness of SC secondary school students in some districts of West Bengal.

A Glance in to the above studies clearly demonstrates that majority of the studies are concentrated in studying the psychological aspects and their relevance to the performance. A few, concentrated on the development of the education among scheduled castes and extent of progress attained. Further, it also shows that not many attempts have been made to study the extent of participation of the Scheduled Castes in Education and its consequences for their future. Hence the present study has been formulated to study the causes of educational backwardness of scheduled caste women students in West Bengal.

#### **Statement of the Problem:**

The purpose of the study is to find out the causes of educational backwardness of the women among the scheduled caste community. Hence the problem may be stated as “**Causes of Educational Backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women Students in West Bengal**”.

**Objectives of the study:**

The objectives of the study are as follows-

- To find out the causes of educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women students regarding family environment in West Bengal.
- To find out the causes of educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women students regarding Institutional Facilities in West Bengal.
- To find out the causes of educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women students regarding Institutional Climate in West Bengal.
- To find out the causes of educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women students regarding Government Facilities in West Bengal.

**Methodology:**

Descriptive survey approach was applied for conducting this research paper. The study is also qualitative in nature because qualitative analysis has been done here.

**Sample:**

Purposive sampling was used as sampling technique. Under Graduate and Post Graduate Scheduled Caste women students were selected for the study. Total 60 samples were selected from the district Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar in West Bengal.

**Tool used:**

A questionnaire was developed jointly by the researchers and it has been used to collect data.

**Dimensions of the scale:**

The following four have been chosen to carry out the study.

- Family Environment
- Institutional Facilities
- Institutional Climate
- Government Facilities

**Delimitations of the study:**

The study has the following delimitations:

- The researcher has selected only women from Scheduled Caste women student among Disadvantaged Group.
- The study area has been limited to only three districts i.e. Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar in West Bengal.
- The researcher applied purposive sampling technique for collecting primary data for the study.

- The sample of the study has been selected only under graduate and post graduate women student in West Bengal.

### Analysis and Interpretation: Dimension Wise Analysis

#### *Dimension- 1: Family Environment*

**Table 2:** Percentage of favourable and unfavourable response towards **Family Environment** regarding SC women students in West Bengal.

	Yes	No
Percentage	54	46

#### **Interpretation:**

Table no 2 indicates that family environment is a significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It also shows that 54% respondents made favourable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal and 46% respondents made unfavourable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It can be concluded that family environment is the prime factor for educational backwardness of disadvantaged group. If we provide better family environment to our disadvantaged group of women students, they can perform better progress in the field of education.

#### *Dimension- 2: Institutional Facilities*

**Table 3:** Percentage of favourable and unfavourable response towards **Institutional Facilities** regarding SC women students in West Bengal.

	Yes	No
Percentage	29.5	70.5

#### **Interpretation:**

Table no 3 indicates that institutional facilities is a significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It also shows that 29% respondents made favorable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal and 71% respondents made unfavorable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It can be concluded that institutional facilities is the prime factor for educational backwardness of disadvantaged group. If we provide better institutional facilities to our disadvantaged group of women students, they can perform better progress in the field of education.

### **Dimension -3: Institutional Climate**

**Table 4:** Percentage of favourable and unfavourable response towards **Institutional Climate** regarding SC women students in West Bengal.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	51.5	48.5

#### **Interpretation:**

Table no 4 indicates that institutional climate is a significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It also shows that 51% respondents made favorable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal and 49% respondents made unfavorable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It can be concluded that institutional climate is the prime factor for educational backwardness of disadvantaged group. If we provide better institutional climate to our disadvantaged group of women students, they can perform better progress in the field of education.

### **Dimension- 4: Government Facilities**

**Table 5:** Percentage of favourable and unfavourable response towards **Government Facilities** regarding SC women students in West Bengal.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	32	68

#### **Interpretation:**

Table no 5 indicates that government facilities is a significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It also shows that 32% respondents made favourable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal and 68% respondents made unfavourable response for the development of educational progress among disadvantaged group of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal. It can be concluded that government facilities is the prime factor for educational backwardness of disadvantaged group. If we provide better government facilities to our disadvantaged group of women students, they can perform better progress in the field of education.

#### **Findings:**

The analysis of data revealed the following findings:

1. The family environment is a significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of scheduled caste women students in West Bengal.

2. The Institutional facilities is the prime factor or causes for educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste women students in West Bengal.
3. The Institutional climate is the prime factor for educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste women students among the three districts in West Bengal.
4. The Government facilities are the causes highly neglected for educational backwardness of Scheduled caste women students among the following districts in West Bengal.

### **Conclusion:**

On the basis of above findings the following conclusions were drawn as the outcome of the present study: In this study the researcher found that Family environment, institutional facilities, institutional climate and government facilities are the significant positive cause or factor regarding educational development of scheduled caste women in West Bengal. It clearly shows that there many of the parents are not in favour of girls education. The reasons for dropout are, poverty, inaccessibility for good educational institutions, absence of college, lack of awareness about advantage and utility of education, language problem (medium of instruction), lack of sufficient infrastructure facilities and teaching aids, lack of good number of qualified and committed teachers, defective course content for the remote areas and local cultural traditions, hostel facilities (Minaketan Behera, 2014). A girl is always considered as the property of the others. As this age old notion has been injected into the minds of Indian parents, so they could not easily free themselves of this ideology. Also a daughter with higher degree of education might have faced higher dowry problems. Usually, the parents are not becoming willing to provide higher studies to their daughters for the existing system of the economic problem (Biswarupa Dash, 2014). If we provide better family environment institutional facilities, institutional climate and government facilities to our scheduled caste women students, they can perform better progress in the field of education.

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