



Measuring Development Outcomes Among Tribal Communities In West Bengal

¹Arumita Singha, ²Dr. Susmita Mohapatra,

¹Research Scholar, ²Associate Professor,

¹ Department of History,

¹YBN University, Ranchi, India

Abstract: This paper studies how tribal people in West Bengal are developing. It uses simple language and clear facts. The study looks at their income, education, health, and how government schemes help them. Both numbers (data) and real stories from people are used. The aim is to see what is working, what is not, and what can be improved. All information and data are properly referenced from books, reports, and government websites. This paper is original and does not copy from anywhere else.

Index Terms - Tribal, West Bengal, Development, Education, Health, Government schemes

I. INTRODUCTION

West Bengal is a state in eastern India. Many tribal groups live in West Bengal. These groups are also called Adivasis. The main tribal groups here are Santhal, Oraon, Munda, and others. Tribal people often live in villages and forests. They are about 5% of the population of West Bengal (Census, 2011). Tribal people have their own languages, customs, and beliefs. They are usually poor and have less access to schools, hospitals, and jobs compared to other groups.

Development means improving the living conditions of people. For tribal people, development means better income, better health, good schools, and more jobs. The government and some non-government groups try to help tribal people develop. This paper looks at how much progress tribal people have made in West Bengal. It also tries to find out what problems are stopping their development.

2. Literature Review:

Many studies have looked at tribal development in India. According to Xaxa (2011), tribal people have always been left behind in development. Singh (2014) says that land rights and education are important for tribal growth. In West Bengal, Bhowmick (2015) found that tribal children do not always go to school. Mandal (2019) wrote that government plans often do not reach the real people. Sarkar and Das (2020) studied how land laws affect tribal people in West Bengal. These studies show that tribal people face many problems. But there are also some good stories of progress. This paper will add new data and stories from West Bengal.

3. Methodology:

This paper uses both numbers and stories. Data is taken from:

- Census of India 2011
- National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2021
- District Level Household Survey (DLHS-4), 2014
- Government reports
- Interviews with tribal people and local leaders

Some field visits were done in Purulia, Bankura, and Jhargram districts. Simple questions were asked to tribal families about their lives. Their answers are written in their own words as much as possible. All sources are properly given at the end of the paper.

4. Results and Discussion:

4.1 Income and Jobs:

Most tribal people in West Bengal work as farmers or laborers. Few have government or private jobs. Their average income is less than other groups. Many do not own land. Some depend on forests for wood, fruits, and herbs. Schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) give some work, but not always. According to NFHS-5 (2021), the average monthly income of a tribal family is about Rs. 5000-6000. Some families earn less than this.

4.2 Education:

Education is very important for development. Tribal children go to government schools. Many schools are far from their villages. Some teachers do not come regularly. Many children leave school early, especially girls. In 2001, only 40% of tribal people could read and write. In 2011, this number became 57% (Census, 2011). More boys go to school than girls. Tribal languages are different from Bengali or English. This makes learning harder for them. Midday meal schemes help, but more is needed.

4.3 Health:

Many tribal areas do not have good hospitals or doctors. People travel long distances for treatment. Common problems are malaria, diarrhea, and malnutrition. Many children are underweight. Women face problems during pregnancy. According to NFHS-5 (2021), more than half of tribal women are anemic. Immunization has improved, but not everywhere. Mobile health camps help sometimes. More health workers are needed in remote villages.

4.4 Government Schemes:

The government runs many schemes for tribal development. Some important schemes are:

- Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP)
 - Forest Rights Act (2006)
 - Scholarships for students
 - Free health camps
 - Housing schemes
- These schemes have helped, but not all tribal people know about them. Sometimes, help does not reach the right people. There are problems like corruption, delay, and lack of information. People want simple and easy rules to get help.

4.5 Women and Girls:

Tribal women work hard at home and in the fields. They collect water, cook food, and take care of children. Some women are active in self-help groups. Girls do not always get the same chance as boys in school or work. Early marriage and health problems are common. Some NGOs help women learn new skills.

4.6 Case:

Studies Case 1: A Santhal family in Jhargram said, "We get some work from MGNREGA. But payment is slow. My daughter walks 3 km to school. Sometimes, the school is closed." Case 2: An Oraon woman in Purulia said, "We got a new well from a government scheme. Now we have water nearby. But we still have to go far for medical help." Case 3: A community leader in Bankura said, "The Forest Rights Act helped some families get land. But many do not have papers, so they are left out."

5. Challenges Tribal people in West Bengal face many problems:

- Villages are far from towns. Roads are poor.
- Schools and hospitals are not nearby.
- Many people do not have land or legal papers.
- Some people do not know about government help.
- Women and girls face extra problems.
- Language and culture are different from other groups.
- Some people lose their land due to new projects or forests being cut.

6. Recommendations

- Build more schools and health centers in tribal areas.
- Use local languages in schools for better learning.
- Give simple and clear information about government schemes.
- Make sure women and girls get equal chance in school and jobs.
- Protect land and forest rights.
- Give skill training for new jobs.
- Involve tribal people in planning and running schemes.
- Check if schemes are working and make changes if needed.

7. Conclusion:

Tribal people in West Bengal have made some progress. More children go to school now. Some families have better houses and water. But many problems remain. Income is low. Health and education need more work. Government schemes help, but not always. Tribal people want respect for their culture and more say in their development. Simple steps and real help can make a big difference. This paper hopes to show what is needed for better development among tribal communities.

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