

AN OVERVIEW OF LITERACY IN BURDWAN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a pivotal role in laying a proper foundation for the socio-economic development of any region. Education is an investment, contributes to individual and social development and is a key factor determining the human resource development. Literacy depends on several indicators, i.e. sex, residence, social classes, economic background, religion etc. These indicators have been used to analyze the various attributes of literacy in Burdwan district. The present study is an attempt to analyse the various attributes of literacy of Burdwan district. For this purpose, the indicators of sex, residence, social classes have been taken. Burdwan is predominantly rural in character where 63.06percent people of its total population live in rural areas. However, despite this, literacy rate is not very low except some pockets in the study area.

KEY WORDS: Literacy, Burdwan, Male-Female literacy, Gender Disparity

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is one of the qualitative indicators of social and economic development. It is an instrument for changing the socio-economic status of an individual and society as a whole. Further, extension of education is generally held to be a major determinant to significant economic development and social change.

The 2001 population census, reports a significant increase of literacy rates in India. More than the decline in population growth rate; it is the spurt in literacy rates that makes the present Census stand out from others in the post-independence India. More than three-fourth of our male population and a little more than half of the female population are now literate. Thus, one-third of our population still does not possess even the basic proficiency in literacy.' In the latest population census, India's literacy rates have improved impressively from 52.21 per cent in 1991 to 65.38 per cent in 2001.

STUDY AREA

Burdwan district extends from 22^o 56' to 23^o 53' North latitude and from 86^o 48' to 88^o 25' East longitudes. The district is bounded on the north by Dumka (of Jharkhand), Birbhum and Murshidabad, on the east by Nadia, on the south by Hooghly, Bankura and Purulia and on the west by Dhanbad (of Jharkhand) districts. The river Barakar forms the State boundary to the west; the river Ajay separates Birbhum and Dumka to the north with exception of a portion of Katwa subdivision; the Damodar forms a southern boundary with Purulia and Bankura, while Bhagirathi forms the main eastern boundary with a few exceptions. The maximum length from east to west is 208 Km while the maximum breadth from north to south is 112 km. In shape, the district resembles like a hammer.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are to analyze the literacy differentials at C.D. Block level in Burdwan district with respect to residence, sex, and social groups and to focus on the level of literacy in the district and identify regions on the basis of educational status.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

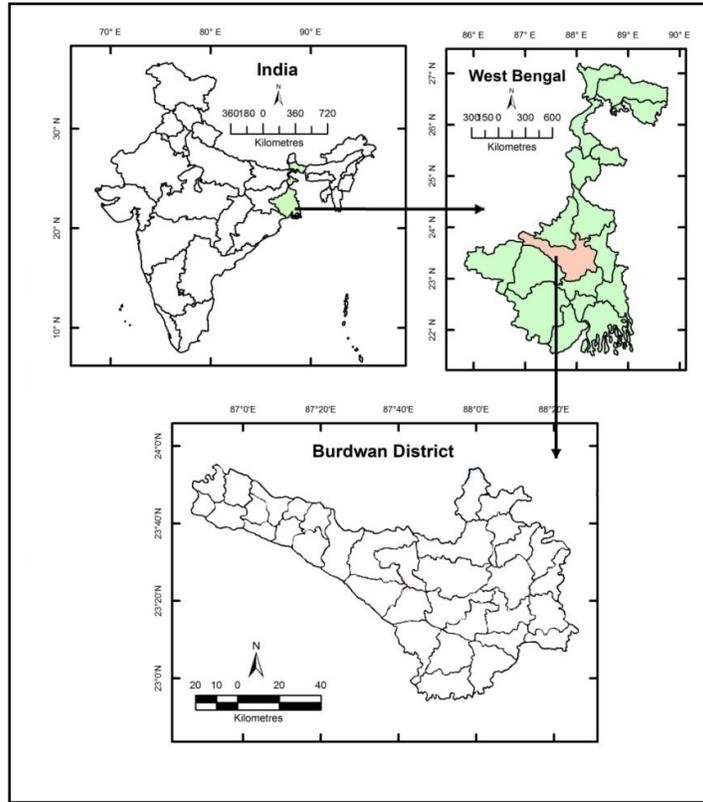
The present paper is based on secondary data. The residence, sex and social group wise literacy data of district have been obtained from District Gazetteer of West Bengal, Annual Administrative report of 2009-10 and District census handbook. Literacy pattern of total population, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe at the subdivision and block levels have been described through the indicators of total literacy, rural-urban literacy, and male-female literacy. These variables have been analysed through a scheme of additive scores to obtain a composite index of the various indicators of literacy used in the study at the sub

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divisional and block levels. At first, the rank scores have been summed up at the block level and the blocks are ranked in descending order to indicate the levels of their literacy. Thereafter, indices of the blocks in each sub-division have been summed up and ranked again in descending order to measure the level of literacy so that the pattern is discernible both at the block and subdivision levels.

To assess gender disparity in levels of literacy, the scheme of analysis adopted by West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 has been used here. According to this scheme, the lowest gender disparity in levels of literacy is ranked 1. This is unlike the methods adopted for analyzing other indicators of levels of literacy, hence a separate analysis has been done here.

MAP 1, LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA



Source: Drawn by Researcher

MALE- FEMALE LITERACY

The proportion of male literates in Burdwan is reasonably high like that of the country, while that of women lag behind to that of India. Burdwan has 78.6 percent male and 61.0 percent female literacy rate in 2001. Literacy rate for both sexes varies from one block to another according to their social, economic and cultural status. Only the northern part of the district has low male literacy. Highest male literacy is found in Kalna while the lowest is in Katwa II. The blocks which are placed in low level of female literacy rate have either physical or social hindrance in availing education for females. The male and female literacy are high in Asansol and Durgapur subdivisions but the difference between genders is prominent. The municipal area is an exception because people here are free of social

taboos and also because of availability of urban infrastructure. Only Raina I & II blocks and Khandoghosh have high male literacy though these are rural area.

GENDER DISPARITY

Gender disparity in literacy is seen at the block level. It varies from 10.3 to 26.1. Table-2 shows the values and ranks of the C.D. blocks, municipality and Municipal Corporation. As the SC and ST composition is not high enough in the whole district, this caste factor does not play an active role in the gender disparity. But the rural urban dichotomy is the main reason behind the discrepancy. From the Table 2, it is clear that only the rural areas have high gender disparity except Jamuria (M) as it is dominated by emigrant tribal people from Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa for working in the coal mines. It is also evident that, the first five blocks having highest gender gap are in the western Burdwan surrounded by Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa and it is the core part of Raniganj Coal belt.

TABLE -2: GENDER GAP IN BURDWAN DISTRICT.

C.D. blocks	Gender gap	Rank	C.D. blocks	Gender gap	Rank
Burdwan (M)	10.3	1	Memari II	18.6	21
Katwa (M)	10.6	2	Raina II	18.6	22
Kalna (M)	11.7	3	Kalna II	18.8	23
Durgapur (MC)	12.9	4	Salanpur	18.9	24
Asansol (MC)	13.3	5	Ausgram -I	19.1	25
Memari (M)	14.2	6	Galsi -I	19.4	26.5
Dainhat (M)	14.6	7	Andal	19.5	26.5
Raniganj (M)	15.7	8	Memari II	19.7	28
Ketugram II	15.8	9	Burdwan II	19.8	29
Ketugram I	16	10	Kulti	20.2	30
Monteswar	16.1	11	Galsi	20.4	31.5
Guskora (M)	16.1	12	Ausgram II	21.1	31.5
Purbasthali II	16.3	13	Kanksa	21.2	33
Katwa II	16.6	14	Pandobeswar	21.9	34
Katwa I	17.1	15	Jamuriya (M)	22.4	35
Raina I	17.1	16	Faridpur-Durgapur	22.8	36
Mangolkote	17.4	17	Raniganj	23.6	37
Khandoghosh	17.9	18.5	Jamuria	25.2	38
Kalna I	18	18.5	Baraboni	26.1	39
Bhatar	18.1	20			

Source- Statistical Handbook of West Bengal 2004 And 2005

URBAN LITERACY

Urban people enjoy better infrastructure and facilities than rural areas. Naturally, people are more conscious about development, progress and standard of living. These help to improve their educational status. The urban dwellers of Burdwan are not exceptional. Like the country and state, the literacy rate in the district is high (77.4percent). Burdwan (M) has the highest literacy rate (84.6percent) as it is the administrative town of the district; the lowest is Jamuria (M). The situation is satisfactory in other areas. Because of adequate transport facilities, industrial agglomeration (Asansol- Durgapur belt), and Agro-based Market centre (Burdwan), the economy is more stabilized than the other districts of West Bengal.

TABLE -3: URBAN LITERACY IN BURDWAN DISTRICT.

Sub –divisions	Urban Literacy level		
	High	Medium	Low
Asansol	Salanpur, asansol (MC)	Raniganj (M), Kulti (M).	Jamuria, Baraboni, Jamuria (M),Raniganj
Durgapur	Galsi, Durgapur (MC)	Andal, Kanksa	Faridpur –Durgapur, Pandobeswar
Burdwan(N)	Burdwan(MC)	Guskara (M)	
Burdwan (S)		Memari (M)	
Katwa	Katwa(M)	Dainhat (M)	Katwa I
Kalna	Kalna (M)	Purbosthali (I & II),kalna(I)	

Source: Computed by Researcher

RURAL LITERACY

In rural areas, the demand for education among the poorer sections of the population is much lower than in urban areas. Poor people in rural areas have to work in order to cope with their daily living and education is not in their priority list unless it is linked to vocational training. Burdwan is predominantly rural in character where 63.06 percent people of its total population live in rural area.

The literacy of the rural Burdwan has a large diversity where in some blocks have literacy rate higher than 70 percent and in some blocks it is below the district average. Basically, the socio-economic situation has a role in the lower Damodar valley. Mangalkote, ketugram I, Katwa II have the lowest literacy (59.4 percent, 59.9 percent and 59.3 percent respectively). The northern most part is surrounded by Murshidabad and Birbhum which is relatively backward district (literacy rate of 55.05percent & 62.16 percent respectively). It seems that social factors and poor economic conditions have played decisive role in poor state of literacy than inaccessibility to school in the northern part, whereas the south and the south western part shows high literacy rate. Another important feature is the type of occupations. Though Burdwan is an agro-based district, there are differences in agricultural productivity between the northern and southern parts.

LITERACY LEVEL ACCORDING TO SOCIAL CLASS

Differences in Literacy level according to social class are evident in rural areas only. Scheduled caste populations in Mangolkote, Ketugram-I and Katwa record low level of literacy.

In rest of the areas, it is under the medium category. A social factor does not make occupational differences. They are engaged in all types of economic activities, whether primary, secondary or tertiary. Generally, it has been observed that wherever number of scheduled castes is less, they are living along with mainstream population; they have utilized fully the schemes and facilities for their development. But wherever the numerical strength of scheduled castes population found high, they have segregated themselves from mainstream. Scheduled Tribe population in Burdwan comprises only 1.75percent to the total population.

TABLE 4, RURAL LITERACY IN BURDWAN DISTRICT

Sub –divisions	Literacy level		
	High	Medium	Low
Asansol		Salanpur, baraboni, Raniganj, Jamuria.	
Durgapur	Andal,	Galsi ,Faridpur – Durgapur, Pandobeswar, Kanksa	
Burdwan(N)		Bhatar, Galsi(I & II) ,Burdwan (I& II) Bhatar, Galsi(I & II),Ausgram(I&II),	
Burdwan (S)	Kalna (I & II), KHandoghosh	Jamalpur, Memari (I & II)	
Katwa		Ketugram II, Katwa I	Mangalkote ,ketugram I, Katwa II,

Source: Computed by Researcher

Therefore, its impact on literacy at the block level is nominal. But, this social group is itself in a low level of literacy because they have immigrated to this area as agricultural labours, household workers or industrial workers.

They are therefore financially vulnerable. Now a day’s, Govt. has started different educational projects to reduce literacy especially for backward classes. Sarbo-Shiksha Avijaan, Diksha have been promoted to abolish illiteracy. The numbers of Sishu Shiksha Kendra, Anganwadi (education) centers under I.C.D.S. have been increased from 1658 to 2670 and 3386 to 4805 respectively till 2004-05 in the whole district.

OVERALL LITERACY LEVEL

On the basis of combined rank scores, the subdivisions are arranged in ascending order with respect to the levels of literacy. Taking into account the entire variable to assess the overall level of literacy, Kalna municipality (90.13 percent- male literacy; 78.37 percent-female literacy; 73.61 percent- SC literacy; 75.43 percent ST literacy; 70.27 percent-total literacy) of kalna Sub-division is on the top while Mangalkote (67.78 percent-male literacy; 50.40 percent-female literacy; 35.72 percent- SC literacy; 25.90 percent- ST literacy; 59.37 percent-total literacy) is in the lowest position.

The municipalities of Burdwan have very high level of literacy while Mangalkote, Ketugram –I & II, Katwa – I & II, Bhatar, Baraboni have low level of literacy. Six blocks are under the category of high literacy levels while twelve blocks have medium level of literacy, and the rest five blocks are in the low level of literacy. After the block level calculation, when the average score of the sub-division is calculated, Burdwan South Sub-division has secured the highest position though Kalna Municipality is the highest individual scorer (Kalna Sub-division).

It could have been possible because of the availability of reasonably good infrastructural facilities, well economic background, and consciousness about development, efficiency of administration, easy accessibility and implementation of various literacy promotion programmes. In Sub-divisional comparison, Katwa shows the lowest level of literacy.

TABLE- 5 LITERACY LEVEL IN DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASSES

Social class	Literacy rate		
	High	Medium	Low
SC	Burdwan (M),Kalna (M),Asansol (MC),Katwa(M). Dainhat(M), Guskora (M), Salanpur, Purbosthali (II)	Pandobeswar, Faridpur-Durgapur, Ausgram(I&II), Baraboni, Jamuria, Raniganj,Andal, Pandobeswar, Faridpur-Durgapur, Kanksa, Ausgram,(I & II),Ketugram II, Katwa I, Purbosthali (I), manteswar, Bhatar, Galsi(I & II) ,Burdwan (I& II),Memari (I& II),Kalna(I & II),Jamalpur, Raina I,Khandoghosh, Raniganj(M), Memari (M),jamuria(M), Kulti (M)	Mangolkote ,Ketugram I,Katwa II
ST	Burdwan (M),Kalna (M),Durgapur(MC), Memari (II), Raina (I & II),	Salanpur, jamuriya, andal,Purbosthali – II,Burdwan –II, Memari (I), Kalna (I & II), KHandoghosh, Asansol (MC),Katwa (M), Dainhat (M), Jamalpur	Mangolkote, Baraboni,Raniganj, Raniganj (M),Jamuria (M),Kulti (M), Guskara(M), Pandobeswar, Faridpur-Durgapur, Kanksa, Ausgram,(I & II),Ketugram II, Katwa (I & II), Purbosthali (I), manteswar, Bhatar, Galsi(I & II) ,Burdwan (I)

Source: Computed by Researcher

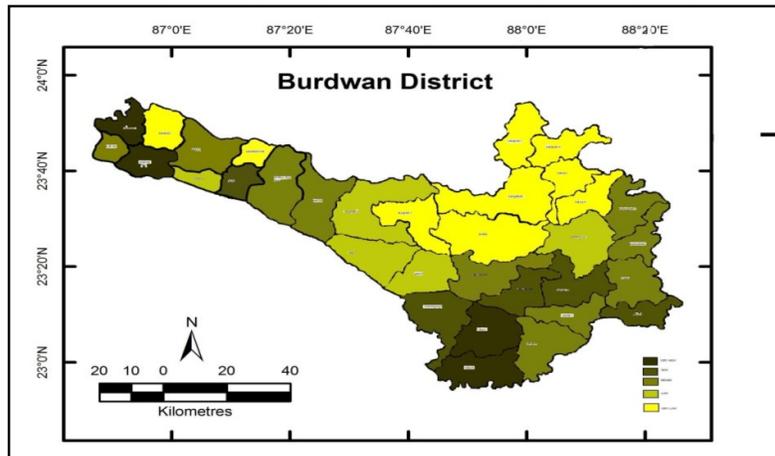
A scrutiny further proves that the blocks which posses higher level of literacy in all the components of literacy differentials also have higher level of aggregate literacy. It is also inferred that the level of literacy among female or scheduled caste has significantly affected the overall pattern of literacy.

TABLE 6, OVERALL LEVEL OF LITERACY

Level of literacy	C.D. blocks/ Municipality/Municipality Corporation
Very high	Burdwan municipality, Durgapur Municipality, Asansol Municipality, Raina- I & II, Memari municipality, Dainhat municipality, Katwa municipality, Salanpur.
High	Andal, Burdwan –II, Memari –II, Kalna –II, Khandaghosh, Guskara (M).
Medium	Jamalpur, Faridpur- Durgapur, Jamuria (M), Jamuria, Kanksa, Purbosthali I & II, Burdwan I, Memari –I, Kalna-I, Raniganj (M), Kulti (M).
Low	Raniganj, , Ausgram –II, Manteswar, Galsi –I & II,
Very low	Baraboni , Mangalkote, Ketugram –I & II,Katwa – I & II, Bhatar, Ausgram –I,

Source: Computed by the author

MAP NO-2: BLOCK WISE LITERACY LEVEL OF THE DISTRICT



Source: Drawn by Author

TABLE 7, AVERAGE SCORES OF THE BLOCKS

Sub -division	Average score	Rank
Burdwan south	131.86	1
Durgapur	106.16	2
Kalna	104.5	3
Asansol	102	4
Burdwan north	95.75	5
Katwa	65.42	6

Source: calculated by the author

STATUS OF EDUCATIONAL AMENITIES

The table 8 shows the status of educational amenities in each sub-division. Burdwan North has scored top position in the number of primary institutions, Burdwan south in middle & High Institution, Asansol in Higher Secondary Institution, Durgapur in Colleges & universities. From the table 8, it is obvious that the number of schools does not affect the overall literacy, it is the result of social and economic milieu of the sub-divisions. It is clear that though Burdwan south has less educational amenities than Burdwan North, it has secured the best position in terms of literacy (Table-8).

TABLE 8, EDUCATIONAL AMENITIES IN VARIOUS BLOCKS

Sub-division	Number of institutions				
	Primary	Middle	High	Higher Secondary	General college and Universities
Asansol	662	10	72	74	8
Durgapur	515	8	64	54	7
Burdwan (N)	837	20	93	59	6
Burdwan (S)	784	31	99	39	2
Katwa	670	26	69	27	3
Kalna	670	26	64	35	2

Source- Statistical Handbook of West Bengal 2004 And 2005

On the basis of teacher-student ratio, the best facility is provided to Burdwan north in Primary, Middle and general college, Katwa in High, Durgapur in Higher secondary. This is because Burdwan is the district head-quarter. Generally maximum number of teacher is required to manage high density of pupils in the schools.

TABLE 9, TEACHER-STUDENT RATIO IN BURDWAN DISTRICT

Sub-division	Teacher-student ratio				
	Primary	Middle	High	Higher Secondary	General college
Asansol	1:47	1:35	1:46	1:49	1:33
Durgapur	1:41	1:33	1:43	1:41	1:37
Burdwan (N)	1:41	1:32	1:46	1:46	1:27
Burdwan (S)	1:43	1:48	1:48	1:50	1:37
Katwa	1:46	1:41	1:42	1:57	1:56
Kalna	1:45	1:42	1:56	1:61	1:55

Source- Statistical Handbook of West Bengal 2004 And 2005

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the study area thoroughly, it is observed that the northern and some parts of western Burdwan is categorized as less developed region and the rest is characterized as more developed region. The study area is characterized by significant spatial differences in literacy between gender as well as social classes, 79.22 percent to 49.88percent in female literacy, 26.1 percent to 10.4 percent in gender disparity, 35.72 percent to 73.61 percent in SC literacy, 25.90percent to 75.43 percent in ST literacy. Also a controversial picture is developed where rural area has high literacy on the contrary of urban area e.g. Raina is more developed than Jamuriya (M). This is because of migration of labour class in the minning area. Though generally in rural area literacy rate is relatively lower and in urban area it is higher. Low status of women in rural area, inaccessibility to educational facilities due to social constraints and socio-economic backwardness is the main reason behind this. However, the gap between these differences has gradually declined through active governmental, social and overall individual participation. The advancement in transport and communication facilities, technological and economic advancement and changing occupational structure may be worked altogether as an accelerator.

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