



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBAL STUDENTS IN PURULIA: A STUDY ON GENDER DIFFERENCE

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

The Socio-Economic Status (SES) of secondary standard tribal students of Purulia District is a key factor influencing their educational participation, performance, and overall growth. This study focus on three major dimension 1: To know the socio-economic status of boys' students. 2: To know the socio-economic status of girls' students.3: To compare the socio-economic status between boys and girls students. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design, suitable for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from a large population across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. For the data collection, the researchers developed an interview schedule. The findings reveal that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often face challenges including financial support, lack of educational resources, and limited parental support, which adversely affect their academic achievement and motivation. On the other hand, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds benefit from greater access to educational materials, better learning environments, and stronger parental involvement. The study explored the need for targeted policy interventions and school-based support programs to bridge these socio-economic gaps and promote equitable educational opportunities for tribal students.

Keywords: *Socio-economic Status, Tribal Students, Secondary Students, Gender*

Introduction

The socio-economic condition for secondary tribal students plays a vital role in shaping their educational opportunities, learning achievements, and overall development. It includes several aspects such as family income, parents' education and occupation, accommodation facilities, and access to basic needs. Together, these factors influence how regularly a child attends school, how actively they participate in classroom activities, and how far they aspire to pursue higher education. Students from economically weaker families often struggle with financial hardship, lack of learning materials, and limited parental support, which can negatively affect their motivation and academic performance.

Understanding students' socio-economic conditions is therefore essential for teachers, researchers, and policymakers. It helps identify inequalities in access to education and learning outcomes, and provides insights for designing effective support systems to promote equity and inclusion. In developing regions, these socio-economic factors often overlap with issues such as social status, gender, and location, which further deepen educational disparities.

The present study emphasizes to examine the socio-economic condition of tribal secondary students, explore the key factors that affect their educational progress, and suggest practical measures to enhance their learning environment and academic success.

Objectives

- i. To know the socio-economic status of boys' students.
- ii. To know the socio-economic status of girls' students.
- iii. To compare the socio-economic status between boys and girls students.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design, suitable for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from a large population across Purulia District belonging Tribal community. This design helps in understanding the current socio-economic conditions belonging to tribal community secondary students in Purulia district. The population of the study includes secondary-level tribal students from government and government-aided schools across the Purulia district of West Bengal. The primary data were collected from the 597 students across the Purulia District. For the data collection, the researchers, consisting of 11

questions related to the current socio-economic conditions of secondary standard tribal student, developed an interview schedule. This study was carried out in the Purulia district of west Bengal specifically in Arsha, Balarampur, Bandwan, Hura, Jhalda I, Kashipur, Manbazar II, Purulia I, Raghunathpur II, Santuri visited by the researchers. The collected data were subjected to analysis using frequency distribution and percentage calculation to interpret the results.

Data Collection Tools

To collect relevant data, the following tools were used

A pre-tested structured questionnaire for (Students) in Bengali was developed, covering:

- Demographic details (age, caste, family size)
- Types of family
- Number of family member
- Parental occupation and education
- Family income
- Ownership of land
- Type of house
- House ownership

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Shows Gender Wise Family Type

			Family Type		Total
			Nuclear	Joint	
Gender	Male	Count	163	134	297
		% within Gender	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%
		% within Family Type	49.2%	50.4%	49.7%
	Female	Count	168	132	300
		% within Gender	56.0%	44.0%	100.0%
		% within Family Type	50.8%	49.6%	50.3%
Total		Count	331	266	597
		% within Gender	55.4%	44.6%	100.0%
		% within Family Type	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2: Shows Gender Wise Total Family Member

			Total Family Members				Total
			Up to 3	4 to 6	7 to 9	9+	
Gender	Male	Count	30	180	56	31	297
		% within Gender	10.1%	60.6%	18.9%	10.4%	100.0%
		% within Total Family Members	42.3%	51.9%	47.9%	50.0%	49.7%
	Female	Count	41	167	61	31	300
		% within Gender	13.7%	55.7%	20.3%	10.3%	100.0%
		% within Total Family Members	57.7%	48.1%	52.1%	50.0%	50.3%
Total		Count	71	347	117	62	597
		% within Gender	11.9%	58.1%	19.6%	10.4%	100.0%
		% within Total Family Members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3: Shows Gender Wise Total Monthly Income

			Total Income of the Family					Total	
			2 to 5K	5+ to 10 K	10+ to 15K	15+ to 20K	20+ to 30K		30+ K
Gender	Male	Count	64	101	61	31	24	16	297
		% within Gender	21.5%	34.0%	20.5%	10.4%	8.1%	5.4%	100.0%
		% within Total Income of the Family	39.8%	58.4%	59.8%	47.7%	44.4%	38.1%	49.7%
	Female	Count	97	72	41	34	30	26	300
		% within Gender	32.3%	24.0%	13.7%	11.3%	10.0%	8.7%	100.0%
		% within Total Income of the Family	60.2%	41.6%	40.2%	52.3%	55.6%	61.9%	50.3%
Total		Count	161	173	102	65	54	42	597
		% within Gender	27.0%	29.0%	17.1%	10.9%	9.0%	7.0%	100.0%
		% within Total Income of the Family	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4: Shows Gender Wise Income

			Source of Income			Total
			Service	Business	Others	
Gender	Male	Count	36	11	250	297
		% within Gender	12.1%	3.7%	84.2%	100.0%
		% within Source of Income	46.8%	50.0%	50.2%	49.7%
	Female	Count	41	11	248	300
		% within Gender	13.7%	3.7%	82.7%	100.0%
		% within Source of Income	53.2%	50.0%	49.8%	50.3%
Total		Count	77	22	498	597
		% within Gender	12.9%	3.7%	83.4%	100.0%
		% within Source of Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5: Shows Gender Wise Number of Earning Member

			Number of Earning Member		Total
			One	More than one	
Gender	Male	Count	113	184	297
		% within Gender	38.0%	62.0%	100.0%
		% within Number of Earning Member	41.4%	56.8%	49.7%
	Female	Count	160	140	300
		% within Gender	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
		% within Number of Earning Member	58.6%	43.2%	50.3%
Total		Count	273	324	597
		% within Gender	45.7%	54.3%	100.0%
		% within Number of Earning Member	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6: Shows Gender Wise Occupation of Father

			Occupation of Father			Total
			Service	Business	Others	
Gender	Male	Count	33	10	253	296
		% within Gender	11.1%	3.4%	85.5%	100.0%
		% within Occupation of Father	49.3%	35.7%	50.6%	49.7%
	Female	Count	34	18	247	299
		% within Gender	11.4%	6.0%	82.6%	100.0%
		% within Occupation of Father	50.7%	64.3%	49.4%	50.3%
Total		Count	67	28	500	595
		% within Gender	11.3%	4.7%	84.0%	100.0%
		% within Occupation of Father	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7: Shows Gender Wise Occupation of Mother

			Occupation of Mother			Total
			Service	Business	Others	
Gender	Male	Count	6	6	285	297
		% within Gender	2.0%	2.0%	96.0%	100.0%
		% within Occupation of Mother	66.7%	54.5%	49.4%	49.7%
	Female	Count	3	5	292	300
		% within Gender	1.0%	1.7%	97.3%	100.0%
		% within Occupation of Mother	33.3%	45.5%	50.6%	50.3%
Total		Count	9	11	577	597
		% within Gender	1.5%	1.8%	96.6%	100.0%
		% within Occupation of Mother	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Shows Gender Wise Ownership of Resident

			Own House		Total
			Own	Others	
Gender	Male	Count	297	0	297
		% within Gender	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Own House	49.9%	0.0%	49.7%
	Female	Count	298	2	300
		% within Gender	99.3%	0.7%	100.0%
		% within Own House	50.1%	100.0%	50.3%
Total		Count	595	2	597
		% within Gender	99.7%	0.3%	100.0%
		% within Own House	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9: Shows Gender Wise Pattern of House

			Pattern of House				Total
			Mud	Bamboo	Brick and Mud	Concrete	
Gender	Male	Count	187	2	66	42	297
		% within Gender	63.0%	0.7%	22.2%	14.1%	100.0%
		% within Pattern of House	51.4%	100.0%	49.3%	43.3%	49.7%
	Female	Count	177	0	68	55	300
		% within Gender	59.0%	0.0%	22.7%	18.3%	100.0%
		% within Pattern of House	48.6%	0.0%	50.7%	56.7%	50.3%
Total		Count	364	2	134	97	597
		% within Gender	61.0%	0.3%	22.4%	16.2%	100.0%
		% within Pattern of House	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10: Shows Gender Wise Number of Room

			Number of Room			Total
			1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 6	
Gender	Male	Count	124	126	47	297
		% within Gender	41.8%	42.4%	15.8%	100.0%
		% within Number of Room	47.9%	54.3%	44.3%	49.7%
	Female	Count	135	106	59	300
		% within Gender	45.0%	35.3%	19.7%	100.0%
		% within Number of Room	52.1%	45.7%	55.7%	50.3%
Total		Count	259	232	106	597
		% within Gender	43.4%	38.9%	17.8%	100.0%
		% within Number of Room	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11: Shows Gender Wise Nature of School Tiffin

			Nature of School Tiffin				Total
			CTFH	GHFT	Purchase	No	
Gender	Male	Count	30	14	117	136	297
		% within Gender	10.1%	4.7%	39.4%	45.8%	100.0%
		% within Nature of School Tiffin	36.6%	51.9%	49.8%	53.8%	49.7%
	Female	Count	52	13	118	117	300
		% within Gender	17.3%	4.3%	39.3%	39.0%	100.0%
		% within Nature of School Tiffin	63.4%	48.1%	50.2%	46.2%	50.3%
Total		Count	82	27	235	253	597
		% within Gender	13.7%	4.5%	39.4%	42.4%	100.0%
		% within Nature of School Tiffin	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Sample Size: The analysis is based on a total sample of 597 tribal students, comprising 297 male students and 300 female students.

Table 1 shows a clear majority of students, regardless of gender, reside in Nuclear families. Specifically, 54.9% of male students and 56.0% of female students come from Nuclear families. Conversely, 45.1% of male students and 44.0% of female students belong to Joint families.

Table 2 shows majority of students for both genders come from families with 4 to 6 members (Male: 60.6%; Female: 55.7%). This suggests that a medium-sized family is the norm in this population.

In terms of variations, female students show a higher representation in the larger family size of 7 to 9 members (20.3%) compared to male students (18.9%). Conversely, male students are slightly more concentrated in the largest category, 9+ members (10.4%), than female students (10.3%). The smallest family size, up to 3, is also represented consistently (Male: 10.1%; Female: 13.7%).

Table 3 shows a significant difference is observed here. 32.3% of female students' families fall into the poorest income category (2 to 5 K), compared to 21.5% of male students' families. Conversely, male students show higher percentages in almost all middle-to-higher income brackets, particularly in the 10+ to 15 K bracket (Male: 20.5%, Female: 13.7%). This suggests a slight but notable pattern where female students are marginally more likely to originate from the most economically challenged households.

Table 4 shows that both male and female students, the family's primary Source of Income is overwhelmingly "Others" (Male: 84.2%; Female: 82.7%). The category of "Others" is typically representative of non-formal economic activities, such as agricultural labour, daily wages, or casual employment, which are often seasonal and less secure.

Income from Service (Male: 12.1%, Female: 13.7%) and Business (Male: 3.7%, Female: 3.7%) is minimal. The near-identical percentages for both genders indicate a universal reliance on non-formal economic sectors for this population.

Table 5 The tribal students' families are almost evenly split between these two categories. However, a slight gender disparity exists:

- Male students are marginally more likely to come from families with "more than one" earning member (62.0%).
- Female students are slightly more concentrated in families with "one" earning member (53.3%).

Table 6 This looks at the father's primary occupation, grouped into Service, Business, and Others.

Collecting of Income data, the father's occupation is predominantly classified as "Others" (Male: 85.5%; Female: 82.6%). This further supports the notion that the socioeconomic base of these families is rooted in non-salaried, potentially primary sector or manual labour roles.

Both Service (Male: 11.1%, Female: 11.4%) and Business (Male: 3.4%, Female: 6.0%) represent a small minority of occupations. There is a small difference here, with a slightly higher percentage of female students' fathers engaged in Business.

Table 7 The findings are striking: the mother's occupation is almost uniformly categorized as "Others" (96.0% for male and 97.3% female students). Data showed in Service (2.0% male and 1.0% female) while in Business (2.0% male and 1.7% female). This strongly indicates that formal employment for mothers is rare, and the majority are engaged in unpaid household work or informal labour activities, which fall under the "Others" category. This pattern is identical for both genders.

Table 8 The data shows near-universal home ownership. 100.0% of male students' families and 99.3% of female students' families own their house. Only 0.7% of female students' families report "Others" (presumably not owning the house). This very high rate of home ownership is a significant feature of the socioeconomic profile, suggesting stability in habitation, even if the quality of the house may vary (addressed next).

Table 9 The data reveals that housing quality leans towards non-permanent structures. The most common housing pattern is Mud (Male: 63.0%; Female: 59.0%), followed by Brick and Mud (Male: 22.2%; Female: 22.7%). The more permanent Concrete houses represent only a small fraction (Male: 14.1%; Female: 18.3%), while Bamboo is negligible (0.7% overall).

Table 10 shows that the majority of students live in smaller homes, with the most frequent room counts being 1 to 2 rooms (Male: 41.8%; Female: 45.0%) and 3 to 4 rooms (Male: 42.4%; Female: 35.3%). Homes with 5 to 6 rooms are the least common significant category (Male: 15.8%; Female: 19.7%).

Table 11 shows a higher percentage of male students (45.8%) do not carry school tiffin compared to female students (39.0%). Conversely, female students are likely to bring "CTFH" (17.3%) as male students (10.1%) and 4.7% male and 4.3% female students going to home for taking tiffin. The percentage of students who "Purchase" tiffin is identical for male (39.4%) and female (39.3%).

Conclusion

The socio-economic condition of tribal students plays an important role in shaping their educational progress and overall development. The study reveals that most tribal students come from economically weaker families with limited parental income; low levels of education and irregular employment often restrict their learning opportunities and aspirations. Despite various government initiatives and welfare schemes, many tribal families have to face social and economical hazards. These are barrier for their children's academic growth.

To bring about real improvement, some essential measures should be taken to strengthen the educational support systems like, ensure effective implementation of welfare programs, and increase community awareness about the importance of education. Through quality education, financial assistance, and skill development we can able to empower them. Thus, their socio-economic status will be enhanced and they can be able to participate meaningfully in the nation's development.

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