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Literacy Status and Trend among SC, ST, OBC : A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract : This paper discusses the literacy and educational progress of SC, ST, and OBC communities. Data was collected through questionnaires, school records, and the census report, employing a descriptive survey design. The study analysed variables including students, caste, economic status, etc. Key findings indicate significant literacy growth among OBCs, with emerging literacy in ST communities and developing literacy in SC communities. While SC student enrolment in higher education is increasing, disparities persist. The desire for higher education is prevalent across all communities, but socioeconomic factors influence educational outcomes. The study concludes that targeted interventions are necessary to address the literacy gap within the SC community, support higher education aspirations, and mitigate socioeconomic challenges impacting educational achievement.

Index Terms - Literacy, SC, ST, OBC, Caste**.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Education equalises the scope, enabling backward or underprivileged individuals and categories to utilise education to develop their socio-economic conditions. The Indian caste system is socially and religiously embedded, forming large groups of ethnicity and caste. About half of the country's population categories include Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Class (OBC). The categories of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are mostly based on caste and community, while OBCs are particularly associated with jobs predominantly for artisans, peasants, and business. Some disadvantages are often noted while studying their educational status. The issue of literacy became a key factor in the pre-independence period. Most socioeconomic causes affect their literacy. Due to beliefs that the three categories have been socioeconomically marginalised, the Indian Constitution came to the rescue. In 1950, the Constitution formalised legal protection against discrimination based on caste, serving as the foundational document for affirmative action protection through Articles 16, 17, 29, and 46. The very reservation policy pointed to educational aspects with other facilities for the categories in the present day. The policy received constitutional support for the specific groups, namely, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in the year 1950, targeted to encourage higher participation in literacy and other domains. While the OBC category was not set up from any homogeneous set of caste groups, unlike the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it was some groups that were decided by the central or state administration, according to their estimation of being previously recorded drawbacks. Despite the encouragement of the reservation, increasing literacy among the categories was running slow. According to the census (2011), the literacy rate in Scheduled Castes is 66.10%, and in Scheduled Tribes it is 59%. NFHS (2005–06) data points to 67.9% of rural and 82.2% of OBC literacy.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

International

Cho Emily (Eun Young) and Dr. Mohanan Manoj (2014) formed a study entitled 'The Impact of Reservation Policy on Education in India: An Evaluation of Karnataka's Gramme Panchayat Presidency Reservation and Children's Education Attainment for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Households (Duke University). The study's objective was to examine the influence of reservations at the local government level. It determines how the reservation of GP presidencies for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) affects children's educational attainment in these communities. The data from 13,408 SC and 6,066 ST children aged 5–18 in Karnataka was collected. A dose-response regression model to correlate reservation rates with average completed years of schooling at the sub-district level. It compared reservation rates and education levels between 2004 and 2008. The study concluded that a higher number of SC and ST Presidents in Gramme Panchayats is linked to improved educational outcomes for SC and ST children. In other words, reservation policies at the GP presidency level positively impact children's education in marginalised communities.

National

Majhi Somnath and Sardar Binod Kumar (2019) framed their study in 'Disparity in Education between the Scheduled Caste Populations in West Bengal, 2011' (IJSS). The key objectives of their study are to find out the literacy rates across different SC communities. A comparison of the educational achievements of various SC groups is also conducted. The study is based on secondary data from census reports, government publications, and research institutes. Cartographic and statistical techniques,

including disparity indices, are also employed. The study explored how urban areas exhibit higher literacy rates than rural areas due to better infrastructure, migration of educated individuals, and increased awareness about education. Significant disparities exist in literacy rates between different SC communities, both in rural and urban settings. A notable gender gap in literacy persists across the studied SC communities.

Roy Haru (2021) conducted a study entitled 'Scheduled Tribe Students Faced Problems in Higher Education in West Bengal: A Study' (PIJR). The research objective of the study was to identify the problems encountered by ST students in higher education. The study also examines social, psychological, and linguistic challenges. Develop strategies to overcome these challenges. The study surveyed 140 ST students from Purba Medinipur and Paschim Medinipur districts. It employed a self-developed scale for data analysis. The study found ST students face multiple hurdles in higher education. Communication and language barriers with their peers and teachers. Inadequate infrastructure and unsuitable mediums of instruction affect them. Poverty and hunger are additional obstacles to them.

III. Objectives of the Study

3.1 To compare Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and OBC categories in terms of literacy and education.
3.2 To examine the development of the literacy of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe and OBC category five years ago and in the present day.
3.3 To study the development in higher education with the literacy among the Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and OBC categories.
3.4 To find out the relation of literacy with the socio-economic condition of the categories.

IV. Research Questions

4.1 Is there any comparison between Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and OBC categories in terms of literacy and education?
4.2 What is the development of the literacy of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe and OBC category five years ago and in present days?
4.3 What is the development in higher education with the literacy among the Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and OBC categories?
4.4 What is the relation of literacy with the socio-economic condition among the categories?

V. Research Methodology

5.1 Variables

The research is based on primary and secondary data sources. Maximum data is collected from the sampling survey from the schools of urban and rural backgrounds. Data was collected from the administration records, as well as from the 2011 census report. The five variables that are students, gender, caste, economic status and family members of the students have been taken for the study. 'Students', 'Gender' and 'Caste' are categorized as Independent Variable as the definition suggests these variables are stable and unaffected by the other variables. While 'Economic Status' is an Indiscrete Variable as it deals with numerical value within a range. The 'Number of people in the family' can be identified as a Discrete variable; it cannot be broken down and measured or expressed. Gender is classified in male and female students. Caste points SC, ST and OBC categories.

5.2 Population & Samples

The study has been limited to four schools of Raghunathpur 1 Block rural area and Raghunathpur Municipal urban area of Purulia District.

5.3 Tools

The study is both quantitative and qualitative. A self-made questionnaire was developed and it has been used to collect data.

5.4 Design

The research design refers to the overall strategy that is chosen to integrate the different components of the study coherently and logically, thereby, ensuring an effective address of the research problems; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.

The study is designed as a descriptive survey. Descriptive research is a type of research that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied.

5.5 Procedures

The study is designed as a descriptive survey. The primary source of data (Literacy) was collected from the students of 4 schools of Raghunathpur 1 Block and Raghunathpur Municipality in the academic year 2022. The secondary source of data was collected from the school register. The data procured from the rating scale were analysed quantitatively, and qualitatively academic achievement records from school registers were analysed in percentages which provided the base for interpretations. The column chart is used.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Objective 3.1: To compare Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and OBC categories regarding literacy and education.

Table 1: Education opportunities for SC, ST and OBC school students

Opinion of the Students	Percentage of Students (Caste Wise)			Total No. of Participating Students (Caste Wise)		
	SC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	OBC
Agree	83%	89%	93%	66	71	74
Disagree	10%	6%	4%	8	5	3
Neutral	8%	5%	4%	6	4	3
Total				80	80	80

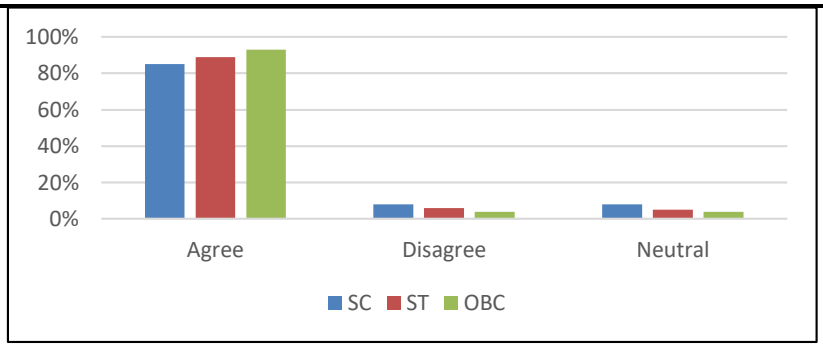

Figure 1: Education opportunities for SC, ST, & OBC students

A sample survey was conducted with 80 SC, 80 ST and 80 OBC students of Raghunathpur High School, Raghunathpur M.M High School, Madhutati High School and Metyal Sahar High School. 83% of SC, 89% of ST and 93% of OBC students agreed with the sample survey questions. While 10% of SC, 6% of ST and 4% of OBC students disagreed with those questions. 8% of SC, 5% of ST and 4% of OBC students remain neutral in their opinion.

6.2 Objective 3.2 : To examine the development of the literacy of the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe and OBC category five years ago and in the present day.

Table 1: Five years of comparative data on the literacy status of SC, ST & OBC

Category	Percentage of Students		Participating Students	
	2022	2018	2022	2018
SC	59%	63%	1983	1865
ST	16%	15%	530	455
OBC	25%	22%	853	661
Total			3366	2981

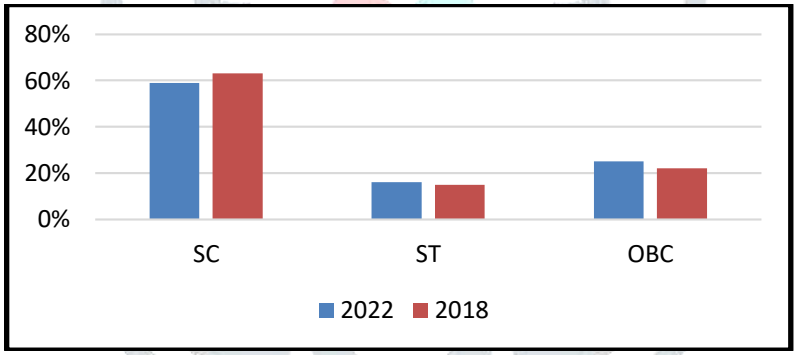

Figure 1: Five Years Comparative Data of Literacy Status of SC, ST & OBC Students.

From the above table, we find the comparison between the years2022 and 2018 of Raghunathpur High School, Raghunathpur M.M High School, Madhutati High School and Metyal Sahar High School. It shows SC students in the schools increased in 2022 than 2018 which is59% to 63%. The percentage of ST students has increased from 1% in the year 2022 to 2018 which is 15% to 16%. OBC students also increased in 2022. From 22% to 25%.

6.3 Objective 3.3: To study the development in higher education with literacy among the Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and OBC categories.

Table 3: Desire to get higher education among SC, ST and OBC students

Opinion of the Students	Percentage of Students (Caste Wise)			Total No. of Participating Students (Caste Wise)		
	SC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	OBC
Agree	44%	60%	79%	35	48	63
Disagree	10%	3%	3%	8	2	2
Neutral	46%	38%	19%	37	30	15
Total				80	80	80

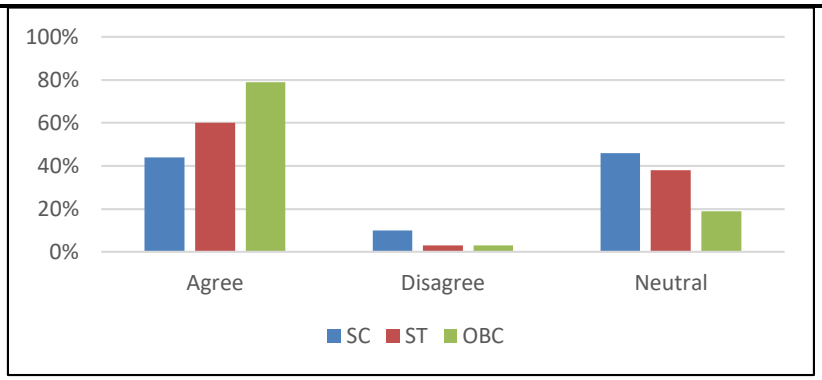

Figure 3: Desire to get higher education among SC, ST and OBC students

From the above table, we find the opinions regarding the development of higher education of SC, ST and OBC students of Raghunathpur High School, Raghunathpur M.M High School, Madhutati High School and Metyal Sahar High School. In the sampling survey where 44% of SC, 60% of ST and 79% of OBC students agreed to get higher studies. 10% of SC, 3% of ST and 3% disagreed with the question. 46% of SC, 38% of ST and 19% of OBC took a neutral opinion and opined to take part in higher studies besides a job.

6.4 Objective 3.4: To find out the relation of literacy with the socio-economic condition of the categories.

Table 4: Socio-economic condition of students of SC, ST& OBC Category

Opinion of the Students	Percentage of Students (Caste Wise)			Total No. of Participating Students (Caste Wise)		
	SC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	OBC
Agree	29%	34%	24%	23	27	19
Disagree	43%	59%	61%	34	47	49
Neutral	29%	8%	15%	23	6	12
Total				80	80	80

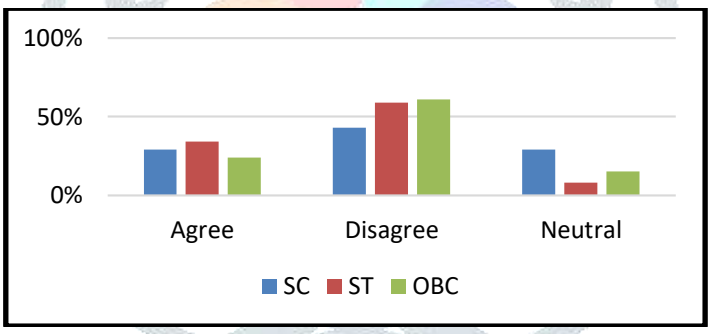

Figure 4: Socio-economic condition of students of SC, ST& OBC category

From the above table, we find the opinions regarding the development of higher education of SC, ST and OBC students of Raghunathpur High School, Raghunathpur M.M High School, Madhutati High School and Metyal Sahar High School. In the sampling survey where 29% of SC, 34% of ST and 24% of OBC students agreed to get higher studies. 43% of SC, 59% of ST and 61% disagreed with the question. 29% of SC, 8% of ST and 15% of OBC took a neutral opinion and opined to take part in higher studies besides a job.

VII. SUMMARY

A thorough analysis of the data yielded the following findings:

1) Regarding literacy status, the OBC category is significantly high. It is spreading in ST category families. In the SC family literacy is still in the developing phase.
2) The growth of SC students from 2018 to 2022 is significant in the institutions.
3) In the case of higher education
   a. Many SC, ST, and OBC people from all urban and rural backgrounds are looking forward to higher studies in college or university.
   b. Several SC, ST and OBC students want to carry higher education with jobs.
   c. Only a few SC, ST and OBC students do not want to take higher education.
4) In case of socio-economic condition
   a. A part of SC, ST and OBC students believe that socioeconomic condition impacts their literacy.
   b. But a significant number of SC, ST and OBC students believe that they are not impacted by the socio-economic situation.

VIII. CONCLUSION

All the studies that are reported in the paper have some limitations. Although the data represented a range of information, The data presents a complex picture of educational progress among SC, ST, and OBC communities. While literacy rates have shown significant improvement, especially among OBCs, disparities persist, particularly within the SC community. The increasing enrolment of SC students in higher education is encouraging, reflecting growing aspirations for upward mobility. The desire for higher education is prevalent across all socioeconomic backgrounds within these communities, indicating a strong motivation for personal and professional development. However, the influence of socioeconomic factors on literacy and educational attainment remains a nuanced issue, with varying perspectives among students. To fully harness the potential of these communities, targeted interventions are necessary to address the literacy gap within the SC community, support the higher education aspirations of all students, and mitigate the impact of socio-economic challenges on educational outcomes.

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