



## **TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN AND ITS IMPACT ON SCHEDULED TRIBES IN MALDA, WEST BENGAL**

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### **An Abstract**

[This paper is trying to focus on the major issues related to Total Literacy Campaign and its Impact on Scheduled Tribes in Malda, West Bengal. The Government of India has initiated several programmes for the benefit of the underprivileged, so as to ameliorate their status of living. Educating the masses is one such crucial activity. Of the various states in the country, West Bengal remains as one of the ten most backward areas. It has a population of about 35 million, of which 7 million are tribals, who form 70% of the population in the district of Raigada, Koraput and Malda. Again, of these three districts, Malda is considered the most underdeveloped. So, bringing about total literacy in this area is by no means an easy task. Focused on the primary and secondary sources of information related to the educational importance and as basic factors hindering the literacy among the tribes are examined.]

**Key words: Primary Education, Tribal Education, Literacy**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

According to the Indian constitution article shows how, with the help of the government, NGOs and various other support groups, Malda has set a model example for one and all, by improving the literacy rate of the scheduled tribes from 18.54% (1991 census) to 59.3% - external evaluation analysis of the Total Literacy Campaign of 1999. The article provides an in-depth view of this study. It is interesting to note that the scheduled tribes showed a lot of enthusiasm and actively participated in the literacy programme. The author, M Venkataramana who is working as Junior Faculty', Council for Social Development, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, was part of the External Evaluation Team for this study.

In a hierarchical classification of a developing country like India, education was considered as a major component. After independence, education was given importance in the Five Year Plans and in course of time, the National Adult Education Programme was formally inaugurated on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1978'. After a decade, the National Literacy Mission was launched in 1988 as one of the five technological missions, with an aim to impart functional literacy to 100 million people in the 15-35 age group by the end of 1997. In all the states and union territories under the Societies Registration Act, Zilla Saksharta Samities (ZSS) were established and Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) were started to literate the masses. In this process, all communities were covered. Irrespective of class caste discrimination.

In general, among the communities, scheduled tribes were considered as the most disadvantaged section because of their peculiar life style and as they contribute of the total population in India (194 census). During the year 1961, about 8 percent of the tribal population was literate and by the year 1991 it reached to 24 percent. The compared to general population and even to scheduled castes, the literacy rate of tribal's was very low. In 1991, the literacy rate was 24 percent as compared to

Total Literacy Campaign and its Impact on Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal SCs (30 percent) and general population (52 percent). So, there was need to study how far literacy programmes proved useful to scheduled tribes.

In view of the above background, an attempt has been made in this paper to examine the impact of the TLC in tribal areas, with particular reference to Malda district in West Bengal , which was considered as one of the most backward districts in India.

## **OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY**

The data required for this paper was taken from a major study. External Evaluation of TLC in Malda District - West Bengal , which was conducted in January 2011. The basic objectives were:

To measure the achievement levels of literacy of TLC learners. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. To suggest intervention measures to be taken up by ZSS to improve the situation in the future programme.

## **SAMPLE SIZE**

There were sixteen blocks and 195 gram Panchayats in Malda district. Fifty percent of the blocks (8) and fifty one percent of gram Panchayats (100 gram Panchayats) were selected for the present study. There were 2203 villages in the district out of which 6 percent of the villages i.e. 133 were selected for the present study. There were 1,48,000 current learners in thg district out of which 5 percent of learners i.e. 7404 were selected for testing purposes. Scheduled tribes constitute 25.9 percent out of 7404 learners. All the sampling was done according to NLM norms. The gram Panchayats, villages and learners were selected by using a proportionate sampling method.

## **CONSTRUCTION AND TEST ADMINISTRATION**

The achievement test adopted in this study was based on NLM norms. In terms of weight age, reading skills acquired 40 percent, writing skills 30 percent and numeracy too received 30 percent marks writing skills were developed by teaching.

2. District Statistical Handbook, 2015, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal. The leaner to write his/her name and the names of simple objects like fruits, etc. While reading habits were developed by providing a picture to the learner and asking him/her to describe it. In numeracy, the learners were made to solve sums ranging from single digit to 3 digit numbers. The questions were graded from simple to complex and marks were given according to the grade. The programme levels were classified into 5 categories in terms of those who have obtained, 0 - 34 percent, 35-49 percent, 50 - 59 percent, 60 - 69 percent, and 70 percent and above. Information regarding the programme was also collected from supervisors and community leaders. Statistical methods were followed to

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The total population of Malda district was 11,30,903 according to the 1991 census, of which men and women constitute 50 percent each. Out of the total population, 54 percent come under the general category, 17 percent under scheduled castes and 29 percent under scheduled tribes. Out of the total literates, 75 percent were males, sixty-one percent belonged to the general category, while scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were 18.3 percent and 20.6 percent respectively.

Coming to the number of learners enrolled under TLC, females were more as their literacy rate was low. Out of the total enrolled, 36 percent were scheduled tribes. This shows the efforts of the TLC to improve literacy among weaker sections, especially scheduled tribes. The above details are given in Table 1. Out of the total sample, around 26 percent were scheduled tribes.

According to the 1991 census, the literacy percentage of scheduled tribes in Malda district was 18.54%. The date of completion of the learning process under TLC was May 1995 according to ZSS, but the external evaluation was conducted in January 1999. Even then, results showed that 59.3 percent of the sample scheduled tribes were qualified according to NLM norms.

**This shows that TLC improved the literacy rate in scheduled tribes.**

When the three components, viz. reading, writing and arithmetic's were taken, the comparison shows that in writing, there was not much difference among scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and general category. In comparison, percentages were low in reading. Here, the performance of scheduled tribes was more than scheduled castes and general category. In doing

## **OPINIONS & OBSERVATIONS OF SUPERVISORS AND COMMUNITY**

### **LEADERS**

- Electricity was a problem in many villages. The scheduled tribes contributed equally with others to purchase kerosene.
- It was felt that women instructors were required for better participation of the women folk.
- Children acted as catalysts in improving the literacy of their parents.
- It was felt that encouragement to ST learners by providing incentives or diverting part of the funds used for developmental programmes would further improve literacy among scheduled tribes.

### **CONCLUSION**

The above discussion shows that TLC helped the scheduled tribes in improving their literacy. Caste leaders, educated people, especially from the schedule tribes were mainly responsible for the success of the programme. Some of the ZSS staff were artists, painters, singers, etc., and they put more effort in motivating the tribes by using their talents. The scheduled tribes contributed part of their grain to purchase kerosene as electricity, which was a major problem in the interior areas. Youth and NGOs contributed significantly in this programme while Mahila Mandals and Self Help Groups in the villages acted as catalysts in motivating women. The response in terms of attendance was good. In the beginning, women faced the problem of sitting and learning with men. So alternative arrangements were made for them by the community leaders. Women also felt that lady instructors should be more involved for their better participation.

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