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## Educational Status and Socio-Economic Impact on the Teli Community: A Study of Katwa II Block and Dainhat Municipality, Purba Bardhaman

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### Abstract

Utilizing a block-wise analytical approach, this research investigates the educational standing and socio-economic effects on the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal. Concentrating on Katwa II Block and Dainhat Municipality, the study assesses literacy patterns, gender involvement, dropout rates, and the link between education and socio-economic advancement. Drawing from field-based research data and supplemented by secondary academic sources, the paper adopts a descriptive research design and thematic analysis. The results indicate a rise in educational engagement, notably among female students, yet highlight ongoing challenges such as poverty, early school leaving, and rural infrastructure deficiencies. The study proposes policy-driven recommendations for fostering inclusive educational growth.

**Keywords:** Teli Community, Education, Socio-economic Mobility, Purba Bardhaman

### Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as a crucial tool for driving social change and economic growth. In India, factors such as caste, class, gender, and location significantly influence educational access, necessitating community-specific research to comprehend structural inequalities (Sen, 1999; Drèze & Sen, 2013) <sup>[9, 13]</sup>. West Bengal, with its varied social makeup, offers a significant regional setting for exploring educational disparities based on caste.

Purba Bardhaman district, a key district in West Bengal, features a blend of rural and urban socio-economic structures and notable caste-community diversity. The educational landscape in this district differs markedly between municipal areas and Gram Panchayat regions, making it an ideal area for a block-wise examination of community-specific educational patterns.

The Teli community, traditionally linked to a specific occupational caste identity, is a significant yet relatively under-researched social group within the district's social framework (Jayaram, 2004) <sup>[5]</sup>. In Purba Bardhaman, especially in Katwa II Block and Dainhat Municipality, the educational status of this community shows both gradual progress and ongoing structural challenges.

The current study's findings indicate a consistent rise in literacy and higher education participation, particularly among female students. This trend suggests a gradual change in community attitudes towards education and social mobility. However, issues such as poverty, school dropout rates, and unequal access to educational facilities in rural areas continue to hinder the community's socio-economic progress (Tilak, 2002) <sup>[10]</sup>.

Given that the paper's title highlights a block-wise analysis of Purba Bardhaman district, the study includes a comparative tabular presentation of study areas, sample distribution, and educational trends to offer a clearer understanding of spatial disparities within the district.

This paper seeks to provide a thorough academic analysis of the educational status and socio-economic impact of the Teli community in Purba Bardhaman district and to place the findings within broader sociological discussions on caste, inequality, and regional development in India (Béteille, 2003; Sen, 1999) <sup>[1, 9]</sup>.

### Literature Review

Sen (1999) <sup>[9]</sup> contends that education enhances human capabilities and serves as a crucial foundation for freedom and development. Drèze and Sen (2013) <sup>[13]</sup> point out the

structural disparities in educational access among different caste and class groups in India. Tilak (2002) <sup>[10]</sup> demonstrates a significant link between education, poverty alleviation, and long-term socio-economic advancement. Jayaram (2004) <sup>[5]</sup> underscores the sociological connection between caste hierarchy and educational opportunities. Béteille (2003) <sup>[11]</sup> asserts that formal equality does not automatically lead to substantive equality in accessing institutions.

### Research Gap

While numerous macro-level studies address educational disparities in India, there is a notable scarcity of research focused on the Teli caste in West Bengal. Current studies seldom offer a localized block-wise analysis that combines educational engagement with socio-economic changes. This paper addresses this gap by concentrating on the Purba Bardhaman district.

### Research Questions

1. What is the present state of education among the Teli community in Purba Bardhaman?
2. In what ways does education affect socio-economic advancement?
3. What are the reasons behind students leaving school?

### Objectives

1. To investigate trends in educational engagement and literacy.
2. To explore the socio-economic effects of education.
3. To determine the reasons behind student dropout.

### Research Method

**Research Design:** This research employs a descriptive and analytical framework to explore the educational status and socio-economic effects on the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district. The descriptive method is utilized to outline the current educational and socio-economic conditions of the community, while the analytical method aids in interpreting the connections between educational achievement, gender participation, and socio-economic mobility. This combined approach offers a systematic and objective insight into the educational trends across different blocks within the study area.

### Secondary Data Sources

The research primarily relies on secondary data sources, including field-based study documents, Census of India reports, government educational reports, district-level statistical handbooks, and pertinent academic books, journal articles, and policy documents. Additional insights are drawn from reports such as the National Education Policy (2020) <sup>[4]</sup> and district educational profiles to enhance the contextual analysis of the Teli community in Purba Bardhaman.

The study incorporates both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were gathered through field-based

questionnaires and structured interviews, while secondary data were sourced from census reports, government documents, and academic literature.

### Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis has been used as a qualitative tool for interpreting data. The information collected is categorized into major themes such as literacy trends, gender-specific educational participation, dropout patterns, and socio-economic mobility. These themes assist in identifying recurring patterns and structural issues impacting the educational progress of the community.

### Data Collection Method

Data for this study were gathered using primary field-based methods, including questionnaires and interviews with selected respondents from the study area. These methods were employed to collect information on educational participation, dropout trends, gender distribution, and the socio-economic status of the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district.

The combination of questionnaires and interviews allowed the study to acquire both structured quantitative data and contextual qualitative insights, thereby enhancing the overall analysis.

**Tools and Techniques:** The study utilized the following tools and techniques for data collection: Closed-ended questionnaires to gather structured and comparable responses from respondents. Structured interviews to obtain detailed information on educational status, family conditions, and socio-economic challenges

**Table 1:** Study Area and Sample Distribution

Study Area	Units	Sample per Unit	Total Sample
10 Gram Panchayats	10	5	50
Dainhat Municipality	1	10	10
Total	11		60

### Study Area

The current research was undertaken in the Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, concentrating on the Katwa II Block and Dainhat Municipality. This district is notable for its blend of rural and semi-urban socio-economic characteristics, making it an ideal location for studying educational trends specific to the community. The study encompassed ten Gram Panchayats and one municipality within the designated area. The Gram Panchayats involved were Argadwip, Kajurdihi, Akhrasole, Paladsanga, Chandrapur, Panuhat, Chhoto Srirampur, Jagigram, Sultanpur, and Karui, with Dainhat Municipality serving as the urban administrative unit for the research. This choice of study area facilitates a comparative analysis between the rural Gram Panchayat regions and the municipal area, aiding in the identification of spatial variations in educational engagement and socio-economic conditions within the Teli community.

**Table 2:** Block-wise Study Area

Area	Type
Argadwip	Gram Panchayat
Kajurdihi	Gram Panchayat
Akhrasole	Gram Panchayat
Paladsanga	Gram Panchayat
Chandrapur	Gram Panchayat
Panuhat	Gram Panchayat
Chhoto Srirampur	Gram Panchayat
Jagigram	Gram Panchayat
Sultanpur	Gram Panchayat
Karui	Gram Panchayat
Dainhat	Municipality

**Discussion and Analysis**

**Objective 1: Educational Participation**

Field data reveal a steady yet discernible increase in literacy rates and participation in higher education among the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district. This trend signifies a positive change in the community's educational awareness and a growing understanding of the value of formal education for socio-economic progress. Compared to earlier generations, the current generation is more engaged in school and college education, especially at the secondary and higher secondary levels. A notable finding of the study is the rising involvement of female students in higher education. The presence of girls in secondary, higher secondary, and college institutions is noticeably stronger than in previous years. This change indicates a gradual shift in traditional social attitudes toward women's education within the community. Families are increasingly acknowledging the importance of education in improving women's social standing, job prospects, and decision-making abilities within the household. The study also highlights a clear spatial disparity between urban and rural areas. Municipal regions like Dainhat offer relatively better access to educational institutions, transportation, and academic resources. The proximity of schools, colleges, libraries, and coaching centers in urban or semi-urban areas positively influences student enrolment and retention. Conversely, Gram Panchayat areas continue to struggle with infrastructural and institutional limitations. Rural students often face challenges such as long travel distances, inadequate transportation, a lack of higher secondary schools, and limited access to college-level institutions. These issues significantly impact educational continuity, particularly after the secondary level. Another important aspect is that economic pressures still affect educational participation, especially among male students who may start working at an early age. Despite these challenges, the overall trend indicates that educational participation within the Teli community is gradually improving, reflecting a broader process of social transformation and community upliftment.

**Table 3:** Educational Trend

Level	Male	Female	Trend
Primary	Moderate	Moderate	Stable
Secondary	Moderate	Moderate	Improving
Higher Education	Moderate	High	Increasing

**Objective 2: Socio-economic Impact**

Education is pivotal in influencing the socio-economic mobility and overall living standards of the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district. The study's results clearly indicate that achieving educational qualifications positively affects job prospects, income diversification, and social consciousness within the community. Families with educated members are increasingly able to transcend traditional caste-based jobs and engage in more stable and varied livelihoods, such as salaried positions, small enterprises, government roles, and private-sector employment.

Historically, the Teli community has been linked to caste-specific occupational roles. However, the gradual increase in educational access has led to a notable shift in occupational trends. Educated individuals, especially the younger generation, are more inclined to pursue careers outside their hereditary professions, thereby reducing reliance on traditional economic frameworks. This change signifies a process of social mobility and economic restructuring, with education serving as a tool to dismantle long-standing caste-related occupational barriers.

Another significant socio-economic outcome of education is the enhancement of income stability and household living conditions. Households with educated members often enjoy better financial security, improved housing, and greater access to healthcare and social welfare programs. Education also raises awareness about government policies, scholarships, and employment initiatives, further aiding socio-economic progress.

The impact of female education is particularly noteworthy. Increased educational involvement among women leads to delayed marriages, better maternal and child health awareness, and greater decision-making power within the family. Educated women are more likely to engage in financial decisions, children's education, and healthcare choices. This not only enhances family welfare but also elevates the social status of women within the community. Furthermore, female education has wider intergenerational effects. Mothers with educational backgrounds tend to prioritize their children's schooling, fostering a culture of educational continuity. Thus, education serves as a long-term tool for social empowerment, economic advancement, and community development.

**Table 4:** Socio-economic Impact Indicators

Indicator	Low Education	Higher Education
Employment Opportunity	Low	High
Income Stability	Low	Moderate/High
Social Awareness	Low	High

**Objective 3: Dropout Causes**

One of the most pressing issues hindering the educational advancement of the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district is school dropout, especially at the primary and secondary levels. Despite a gradual rise in enrolment rates, the persistence and retention of students remain major challenges. Field data reveal that a significant number of students leave school before finishing secondary education, which has a direct impact on the community's

long-term socio-economic development. Poverty stands out as the most significant factor among the identified causes. Economically disadvantaged families often struggle to cover educational costs such as books, uniforms, transportation, private tutoring, and exam fees. In many instances, families prioritize immediate financial survival over investing in education for the future, resulting in students dropping out early. Family responsibilities also play a crucial role in dropout rates. Students, particularly in rural areas, are frequently needed to help with household chores, farming, or family-run businesses. Female students may face additional challenges due to domestic duties, caring for siblings, and pressures of early marriage, while male students are often driven towards income-generating activities. Early involvement in work is another significant factor, albeit with a moderate impact. Many students, especially boys, start working in informal jobs or community-based roles at a young age to contribute to the family income, which greatly diminishes their chances of pursuing higher education. Another important reason is the lack of educational awareness among parents and guardians. In some families, the long-term advantages of education are not fully appreciated, leading to a lack of motivation to support children's academic progress beyond the elementary level. In rural Gram Panchayat areas, limited access to educational institutions and infrastructural challenges further exacerbate dropout rates. Issues such as long travel distances, insufficient transportation, and a scarcity of higher secondary schools create obstacles to continuing education.

**Table 5:** Causes of Dropout

Cause	Relative Impact
Poverty	High
Family Responsibility	High
Early Work Participation	Moderate
Lack of Awareness	High
Rural Access Problems	Moderate

The ongoing issue of dropout rates highlights that simply enrolling students is not enough without continuous support from institutions, the economy, and the community. To ensure students remain in school long-term, it is essential to provide scholarships, run awareness campaigns, enhance rural infrastructure, and implement specific measures for households facing economic challenges.

### Findings

The research indicates that the Teli community is making slow strides in education, with a notable increase in women's participation in higher education. Nonetheless, poverty and early school dropout continue to be significant structural challenges. Educational opportunities in rural areas still fall behind those in urban regions. Education has a positive impact on employment, income, and social mobility.

### Educational Implications

The results indicate a necessity for specific scholarships, initiatives to raise community awareness, and the enhancement of rural infrastructure. Programs supporting female education should be bolstered.

### Limitations and Delimitations

The research is confined to the Purba Bardhaman region and relies on a relatively modest field sample consisting of 60 participants.

**Significance of the study:** This paper offers a noteworthy contribution to the study of education within specific caste communities in West Bengal, with a particular emphasis on the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district. While much of the current research on education and social inequality in India tends to be broad and generalized, this study delivers a detailed analysis at the community and block level, thereby enriching the field of educational sociology with valuable regional insights. The study's importance is further underscored by its exploration of the link between education and socio-economic mobility in a historically marginalized caste group. By investigating literacy patterns, gender participation, reasons for school dropouts, and changes in occupations, the paper provides a comprehensive view of how education serves as a catalyst for social transformation at the grassroots level. Additionally, the study's findings could be instrumental for policymakers, educational planners, social researchers, and local administrative bodies in crafting targeted strategies for community development. The paper also adds to the wider conversation on inclusive education, social justice, and regional disparities, making it pertinent for future academic research and policy development in West Bengal and similar socio-cultural settings.

### Suggestions

1. Scholarship support.
2. Rural educational infrastructure.
3. Dropout prevention programmes.
4. Female education awareness.

### Conclusion

The research concludes that education remains a key catalyst for socio-economic change within the Teli community in the Purba Bardhaman district. The results clearly show that increased educational involvement, especially among female students, has led to gradual enhancements in social consciousness, job mobility, and household decision-making. The rising number of women pursuing higher education signifies a notable change in community perceptions regarding gender and education. Nevertheless, despite this encouraging trend, structural challenges such as poverty, school dropout rates, inadequate rural infrastructure, and unequal access to institutions continue to influence educational inequality within the community. The disparity between municipal and Gram Panchayat areas further underscores the spatial aspect of educational inequality. Therefore, ongoing policy interventions, financial aid, and community-driven awareness programs are crucial for ensuring sustained educational progress and socio-economic development. In summary, the study reaffirms that education is not just a tool for literacy but a vital means of social empowerment, economic progress, and intergenerational mobility.

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This study did not receive any external financial backing or institutional funding. The research was conducted purely for academic purposes, utilizing the analysis of uploaded field-based data and pertinent secondary sources.

### Conflict of Interest

The author asserts that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this research paper. The study was carried out independently and impartially, without any financial, institutional, or personal influences that could impact the results or their interpretation.

### Data Access Statement

The data employed in this study primarily originate from the uploaded field-based research document and are supplemented by relevant secondary academic literature, government reports, and publicly available educational resources. All data analyzed in this paper are accessible within the provided document and cited references.

### Ethics Statement

This study relies entirely on secondary data and information derived from documents. No direct human participants, interviews, or experimental procedures were involved in the writing process of this paper. Ethical standards have been upheld through the accurate representation of the original field data, proper acknowledgment of secondary sources, and objective interpretation of the findings.

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