Socio-economic Inequality and its Impact in Education of Mejhia C.D. Block, Bankura District

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Abstract

In India, the complex web of socio-cultural as well as economic and gender relation influence the disparity in accessing the educational opportunities from the time immemorial. Since independence, one of the India's development agenda is to remove the disparity in literacy attainment but unfortunately, it is a far reach from a major portion of Indian population till today. More over caste, class and gender relation have important roles to play for the spatial diversity in female literacy.

This study has been conducted to understand the temporal pattern of gender disparity in literacy in West Bengal, Bankura District as well as in Mejhia C. D. Block. This research attempt has been made to find out the scenario of gender inequality in educational attainment, drop-out among adolescent girls and incidents of early marriage in six selected mouzas of Ramchandrapur Grampanchayat of Mejhia C.D. Block. Finally, an attempt has been made to understand the influence of caste, class and gendered relation on spatial disparity in female literacy rate.

Key Words: *Disparity, Educational Opportunities, Literacy Attainment, Drop-out Rate and Early Marriage*

INTRODUCTION

Racial, gender and social class of any individual influence the position of the individual holds in the societal and educational system and the dynamics of that system (Ballantine, 1993). Education is considered as a useful investment for human capital. Thus its equitable distribution maximises the social welfare in terms of human development (Saldanha, 1999; Tilak, 1983). Literacy attainment and good quality education are fundamental to socio-economic development and progress of a country through the improvement of human resources or more specifically by raising

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'human capabilities'. The prevalence of 'endemic illiteracy' reflects the role of 'deep-rooted inequalities of economic and social powers' among different communities in restraining the 'freedom and well-being of the Indian masses' in general as well as 'relative deprivation of women in particular' (Sen, 1999). Existence of low literacy among scheduled castes compared to the non-scheduled castes has been a consistent feature of Indian society as a result of socially enforced deprivation (Raju, 1991; Chouhan, 2013). Women from all sections of population in general and specifically the counterpart in socially backward castes are found to present a perceptual low literacy profile than men (Stromquist, 1990). In the study of Dreze and Gazdar (1999) in Uttar Pradesh, it has been shown that the problem of low average literacy rates is compounded by large inequalities, reflected in appallingly low literacy rates for the most disadvantaged sections of the population. Mainly the scheduled caste women are under privileged throughout the district and in village level as well (McDougall, 2000). Complexities in socio-economic inequalities in terms of class, caste and gender; play a dominant role in access to education, particularly for girls (Raju, 1988 and Ramachandran, 2016). Girl's education contributes a lot on controlling family size, household decision making and thus positively influences overall economic and social development process (Murthi et.al, 1999). The perception of roles within the society has significant influence on girls' education (Desai and Krishnaraj, 1990). Sex segregated norms and gender role specification, prejudices and discrimination against girl child are common phenomena in the structured hierarchy of the Indian society (Bhadra, 1999). There has been a remarkable expansion of educational opportunities at all stages and avenues of specialisation for various segments of population. Yet access to utilization of every stage of education is far from equal and the most pervasive axes of inequalities are caste, gender and religion (Alam and Raju, 2007). In West Bengal, there exists a huge diversity of literacy rate in terms of caste and gender not only in district level but also in micro level (Som and Mishra, 2012). Poor economic condition, unpersuasive home environment, lack of self confidence as well as self esteem are the major barriers in formal education of girls (Croll, 2006). Intra-regional as well as micro level differences in educational attainment support the necessity of a localised approach to educational planning (McDougall, 2000).

LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA

Mejhia Community Development Block is an administrative division in Bankura Sadar subdivision of Bankura district. It is situated within the extension from 22˚29'30'' N to 23˚37'30'' N and 86˚01'30'' E to 87˚20'00'' E (Map No.1). This C.D. Block is surrounded by Saltora, Gangajalghati and Barjora C.D. Blocks of Bankura district; Durgapur Municipal Corporation, Raniganj and Andal C.D. Block of Bardhaman district. There are eight Gram Panchayats (G.P.) namely, Ardhagram, Mejhia,

Map No. 1: Location Map of the Study Area
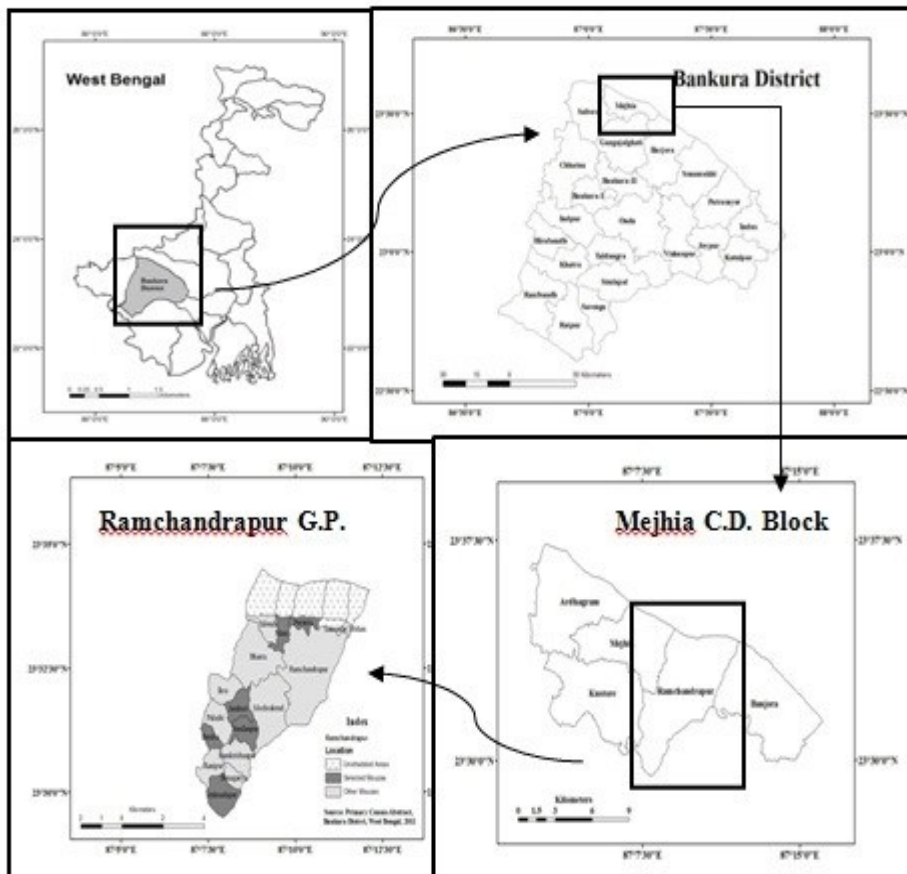
Map No. 1: Location Map of the Study Area

Ramchandrapur, Banjora and Kustore in the C.D. Block. For the detailed study, six mouzas (Mukundapur, Parulia, Jamkuri, Nandanpur, Purunia and Murra in Ramchandrapur Gram Panchayat of Mejhia C.D. Block of Bankura District) have been taken into consideration.

OBJECTIVES

Major objectives of the present study are

1. to understand the temporal pattern of male as well as female literacy rate and gender disparity in literacy,

2. to find out some empirical evidences of gender disparity in educational attainment at different levels, drop out among girls (10 to 25 years age group) and incidence of early marriages with particular reference to different castes, and to make out the influence of complex association of socio-economic and gender relation on spatial pattern of female literacy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Both primary and secondary data sources have been used in this study for the fulfilment of the research objectives. Census of India Reports (1981-2011) and District Statistical Handbook of Bankura District (2013) have been used as secondary sources. Primary data have been collected through (i) direct field observation; (ii) face to face interview and (iii) questionnaire survey with the cohort population (both married and unmarried girls from 10 to 25 years age group) at household level by using purposive stratified sampling in selected mouzas. Primary and secondary data have been analysed through some quantitative techniques along with some qualitative assessment. The statistical techniques which have been used for the quantitative analysis have been discussed in Table No. 1.

Table No. 1: Methods Applied for Analysis	
Parameters	**Method of Analysis**
Male and Female Literacy Rate	$$MLR = \frac{ML}{TPM} \times 1000 \quad \text{where,}$$ MLR= Male Literacy Rate ML= Literate Population (Male) TPM= Total Male Population (excluding 0 to 6 Years) $$FLR = \frac{FL}{TPF} \times 1000 \quad \text{where,}$$ FLR= Female Literacy Rate FL= Literate Population (Female) TPF= Total Female Population (excluding 0 to 6 Years) (Raju, 1988)
Gender Disparity in Literacy	$$GDL = Log\frac{X2}{X1} + Log\frac{(200\text{-}X1)}{(200\text{-}X2)} \quad \text{where,}$$ GDL= Gender Disparity in Litera... using (Sopher's Disparity Index, Modified by Kundu and R... X2= Male Literacy Rate X1= Female Literacy Rate and X2>=X1 (Raju, 1988)

Percentage of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) Population	$\% SC = \dfrac{TSC}{TP} \times 100$ where, % SC= Percentage of SC Population TSC= Total SC Population TP= Total Population $\% ST = \dfrac{TST}{TP} \times 100$ where, % ST= Percentage of SC Population TST= Total ST Population TP= Total Population (Dreze and Gazdar, 1999)
Ratio of Non-Worker and Worker Population (Male and Female)	$RNWWM = \dfrac{NWM}{WM}$ where, RNWWM= Ratio of Non-Worker and Worker (Male) NWM= Non Worker (Male) WM= Worker (Male) $RNWWF = \dfrac{NWF}{WF}$ where, RNWWF= Ratio of Non-Worker and Worker (Female) NWF= Non-Worker (Female) WF= Worker (Female)
Ratio of Marginal and Main Worker (Male and Female)	$RMMWM = \dfrac{MARWM}{MWM}$ where, RMMWM= Ratio of Main and Marginal Worker (Male) MARWM= Marginal Worker (Male) MWM= Main Worker (Male) $RMMWF = \dfrac{MARWF}{MWF}$ where, RMMWF= Ratio of Main and Marginal Worker (Female) MARWF= Marginal Worker (Female) MWF= Main Worker (Female)
Sex Ratio in Labour Force (Main and Marginal)	$SRLF\ (Main) = \dfrac{Main\ Worker\ (Female)}{Main\ Worker\ (Male)} \times 1000$ $SRLF\ (Marginal) = \dfrac{Marginal\ Worker\ (Female)}{Marginal\ Worker\ (Male)} \times 1000$
Dominant Factors of Spatial Disparity in Female Literacy	Principal Component Analysis (Mahmood, 2002, Kothari, 2004)

After analysis of the quantitative as well as qualitative information, the outcome has been represented through various statistical and cartographic techniques with the help of M.S. Excel, 07 and SPSS, 20. Maps have been development with the help of Arc GIS 10.2.1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Temporal Pattern of Literacy Rate and Gender Disparity in Literacy

After analysis of temporal change (1981-2011) in male as well as female literacy rate, it has been found that there is a continuous increase in both male and female literacy rate. In case of West Bengal, male literacy rate has been increased from to 50.5% to 81.69% but female literacy rate has been increased from 30.3% to 70.54% in the said period. Literacy rate for men has been increased from 49.4% to 80.05% in Bankura District where as from 46.38% to 77.88% in Mejhia C. D. Block. Female literacy has been increased from 23.10% to 60.05% and from 18.84% to 54.98% in Bankura and Mejhia respectively.
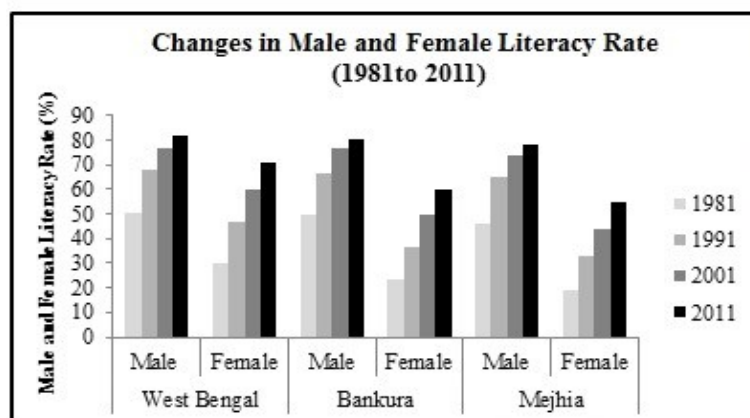

Fig. No. 1: Changes in Male and Female Literacy Rate (1981 to 2011)
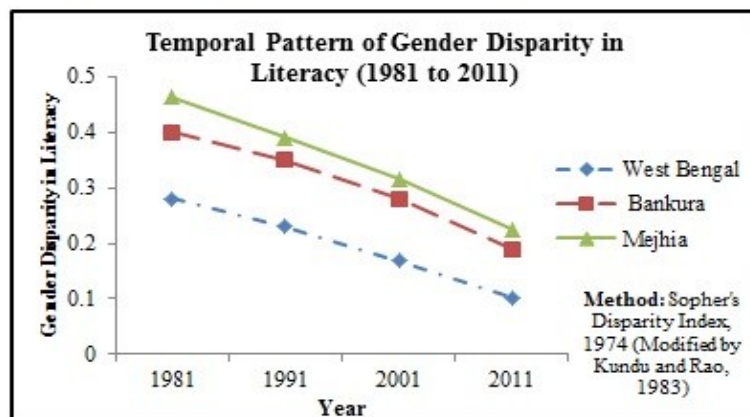

Fig. No. 2: Temporal Pattern of Gender disparity in Literacy (1981 to 2011)

Female literacy rate in Bankura District (60.05%) is below the state (70.54%) whereas Mejhia C.D. Block in Bankura District is characterised by lower female literacy rate (54.98%) than the district average. The female face of the society has lesser access to literacy attainment than the male counterparts in Bankura District in general and Mejhia C.D. Block in particular (Fig. No.1). This fact has also been well established through the temporal analysis (from 1981 to 2011) of gender disparity in literacy. Gender disparity in terms of literacy attainment, has shown a decreasing trend in West Bengal (from 0.28 to 0.1688), Bankura District (from 0.40 to 0.19) as well as in Mejhia C.D. Block (from 0.4629 to 0.225). Still, gender disparity in literacy is found to be higher in Mejhia C.D. Block than the district and the state (Fig. No.3). Since independence, different policies and programmes have been undertaken to eradicate illiteracy and to provide equal access to education for both men and women. But unfortunately, the scenario is far from equal and inequality is more prominent at regional level.

Status of Female Education with Respect to Gender and Caste Relation

Literacy attainment is the basic step for educational achievement. Disparity in attainment of literacy and discontinuation of study midway, are very common in rural areas of Bankura District. Gender disparity in terms of level of educational achievement is profound in every level of education among boys and girls belonging to 10-25 years of age group in the sample villages. Illiteracy is profound among Scheduled Castes (SC) and particularly among girls. Only 5.26% of the girls are studying in Higher Secondary level which is nearly half of the percentage of boys (10%) in this level of education. In case of graduation level, the scenario is same as higher secondary level.
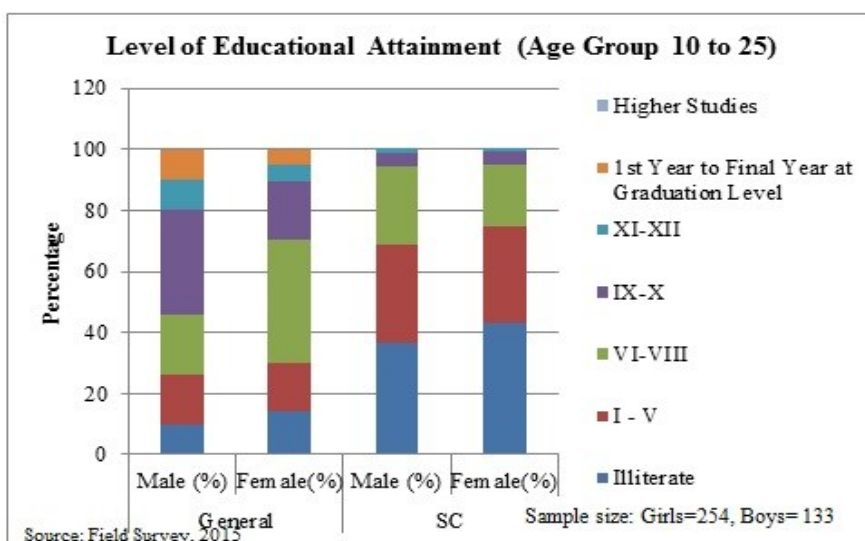

Fig. No. 3: Level of Educational Attainment (Age Group 10 to 25)

Remarkably, nobody from both the gender is involved in higher studies (Fig. No.3). Micro-spatial disparity in terms of continuation and non-continuation of education among girls in the age group of 10 to 25 years, have also been observed. In the age group of 10 to 13 years, no girl has been found to be drop out from school in all six villages. It shows a good sign of improvement in primary education now-a-days. Non-continuation of education or tendency of being drop out has been observed in all mouzas except Jamkuri and Nandanpur in 13 to 16 years of age group (Fig. No. 4).
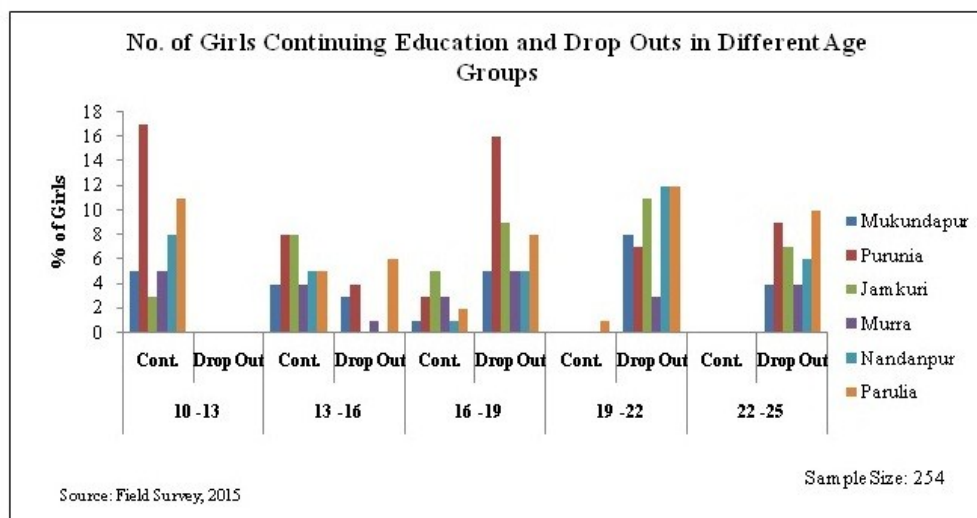

Fig. No. 4: No. of Girls Continuing Education and Drop Outs in Different Age Groups

Drop out cases are highest in Purunia (16%). Jamkuri, Parulia as well as Mukundapur, Murra and Nandanpur has 9%,8%,5%,5%,5% drop out girls respectively in the age group of 16 to 19 years. Scenario of discontinuation of study midway is found to be high in Nandanpur (12%) and Parulia (12%) followed by 11%, 8%, 7%, 3% girls in the age group of 19 to 22 years in Jamkuri, Mukundapur and Nandanpur. But it has also been observed that except one girl in Parulia, no girl in other five mouzas is continuing their education. Same picture is identifiable in the age group of 22 to 25 years also (Fig. No.4). In case of total drop out scenario among girls belonging to the age group of 10

Fig. No. 5: Status of Drop Out among Girls in the Age Group of 10 to 25

to 25 years, drop out tendency is higher (44%) among the girls of SC category than the General category (23.32%) (Fig. No. 5).
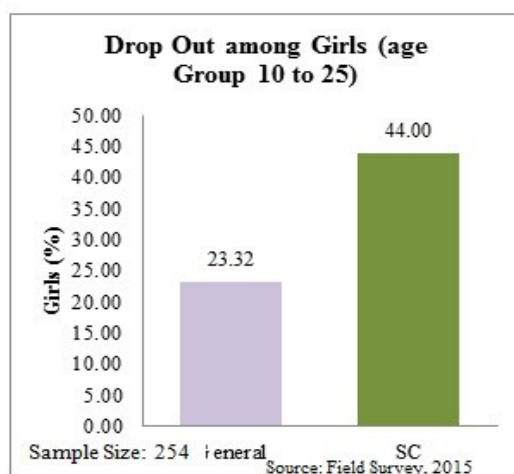
Cases of drop out among girls from general caste are found to be started after completing class VIII and to be highest after Madhyamik (final examination of Class X). On the other hand, Drop out among girls from Scheduled Castes is highest before completing class V (41.38%). 17.24% and 17.24% SC girls have left their school after completing class V and VIII respectively. Only 13.79% of SC girls have stoped study after being failed in Madhyamik because in fear of loss of money for the next attempt (Fig. No.6).
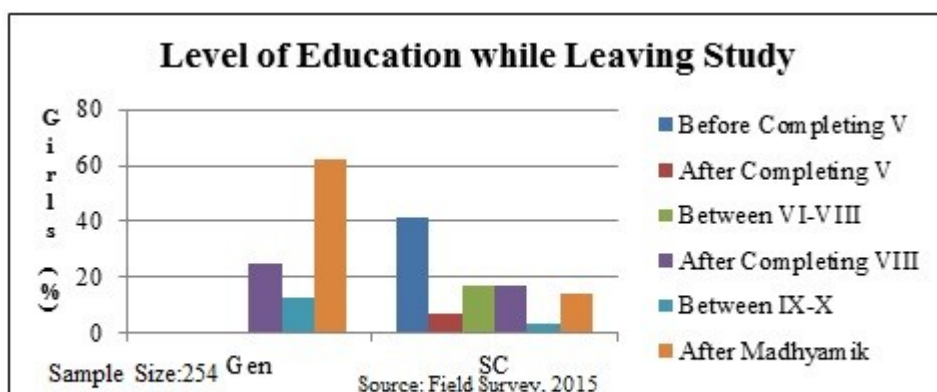

Fig. No. 6: Level of Education while Leaving Study

Girls' failure in examination and fear among family members for losing money to continue her education (after final examination of class X) is the most prominent reason for drop out of girls (50%) in general caste. Marriage and lack of motivation from family for further study equally contribute to the non-continuation of education of the girls of general category. In case of SC girls, unwillingness to study is the major cause behind the incidence of drop out of the girls. Along with this, monetary problem, household works, failure in examination and fear for loss of money as well as

Fig. No. 7: Reason for Drop Out among Girls

lack of motivation from family, fear of being beaten by the teacher and other problems like family and societal pressure and health problems have been identified as the various reason behind the drop out among SC girls.
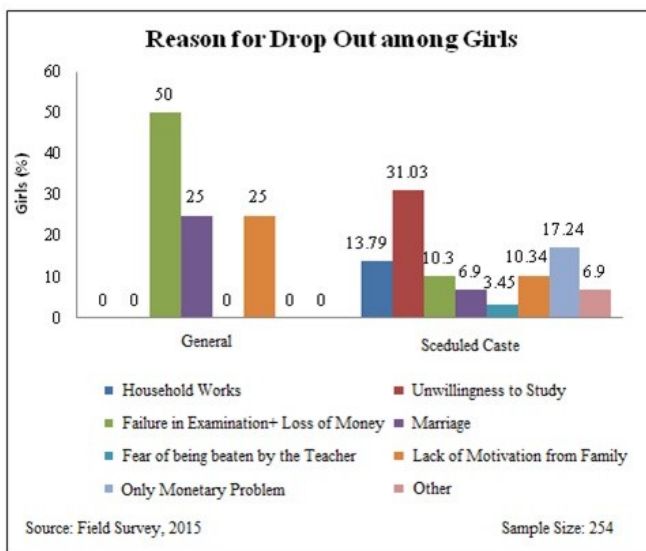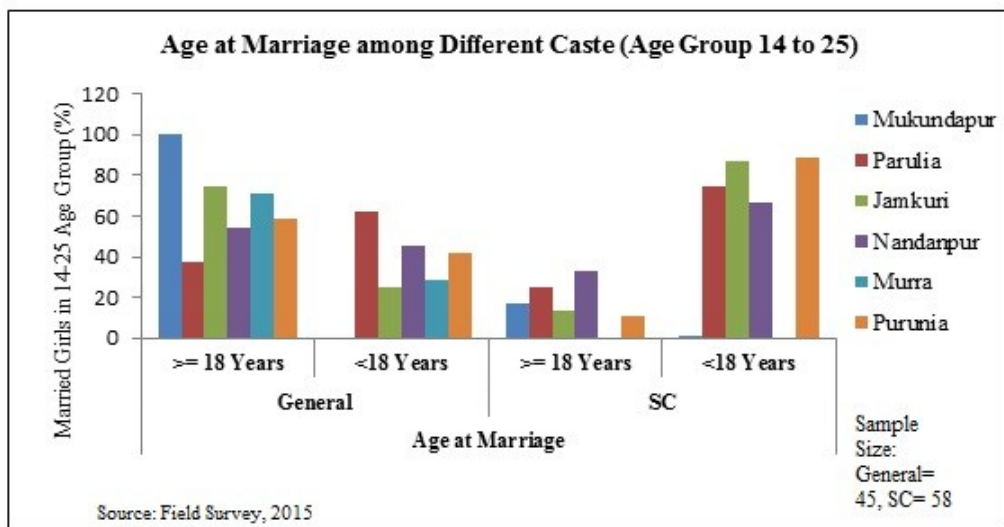
Fig. No. 8: Age at Marriage among Different Caste (Age Group 14 to 25)

Non-continuation of study midway has directed to the lowering of age at marriage. Again marriage is considered as one of the reasons of discontinuation of study among girls. Incidence of early marriage (below 18 years) is identifiable among both SC and general castes. Tendency of early marriage is higher in SC community than the general castes in all sample villages (Fig. No. 8).

Spatial Pattern of Literacy Rate and Gender Disparity in Mejhia C.D. Block

Spatial disparity has manifested the space to space variation or inequality in accessing resources. More micro- spatial disparity represents more uneven development. In all the Gram Panchayats (G.P.) of Mejhia C.D. Block male literacy is higher than the female literacy rate (Map No. 2). Spatial disparity is present for the attainment of literacy even among the women. Kustore and Ramchandrapur G.P.
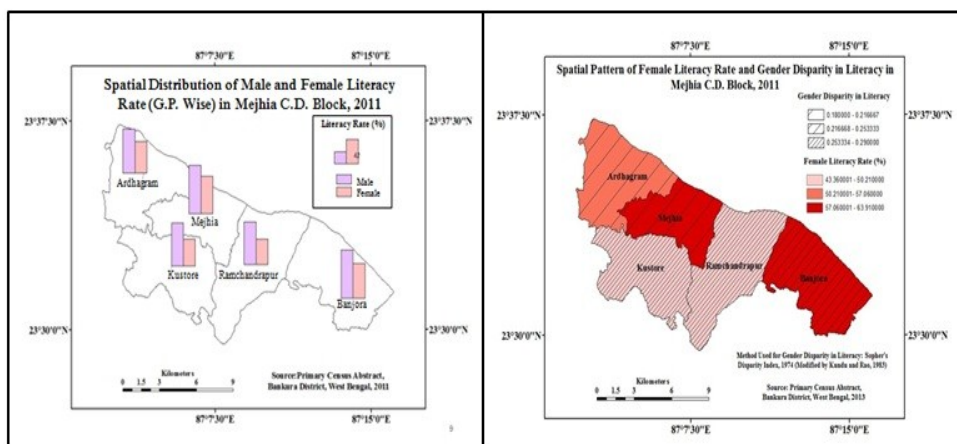
Map No.2: Spatial Distribution of Male and Female Literacy Rate (G.P. Wise) in Mejhia C.D. Block, 2011

Map No.3: Spatial Pattern of Female Literacy Rate and Gender Disparity in Literacy in Mejhia C.D. Block, 2011

have been found to come under low female literacy zone with high gender disparity in literacy. Mejhia and Banjora G.P. have high literacy rates as well as moderate and low gender disparity in literacy correspondingly (Map No. 3). Intra-regional inequality in literacy attainment among the women is a representation of a complicated socio-economic structure of the society. Various socio-economic parameters like- Male Literacy Rate, Gender Disparity in Literacy, Percentage of SC Population, Percentage of ST Population, Ratio of Non-worker and Worker (Male), Ratio of Non-worker and Worker (Female), Ratio of Marginal and Main Worker (Male), Ratio of Marginal and Main Worker (Female), Sex Ratio in Labour Force (Main) as well as Sex Ratio in Labour Force (Marginal) have been taken into consideration as the demonstrators of class, caste and gender relation. The complex association of these factors acts as a driving principle for the micro level female literacy rates. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been used to identify the dominant socio-economic factors (independent variables) operating behind the spatial disparity in female literacy rate (dependent variable). All the independent variables are interrelated with each other either positively or negatively as depicted in the correlation matrix (Table No. 2).

	MLR	GDL	% SC	% ST	RNWWM	RNWWF	RMMWM	RMMWF	SRLF (Main)	SRLF (Marginal)
MLR	1.000	-.703	-.749	-0.50	.543	.937	-.697	-.547	-.570	-.673
GDL	-.703	1.000	.931	-.400	-.788	-.906	.470	.466	.620	.920
% SC	-.749	.931	1.000	-.391	-.677	-.893	.724	.692	.380	.731
% ST	-.050	-.400	-.391	1.000	.732	.145	-.335	-.590	.285	-.288
RNWWM	.543	-.788	-.677	.732	1.000	.697	-.445	-.573	-.362	-.809
RNWWF	.937	-.906	-.893	.145	.697	1.000	-.624	-.528	-.663	-.856
RMMWM	-.697	.470	.724	-.335	-.445	-.624	1.000	.956	-.155	.214
RMMWF	-.547	.466	.692	-.590	-.573	-.528	.956	1.000	-.276	.212
SRLF (Main)	-.570	.620	.380	.285	-.362	-.663	-.155	-.276	1.000	.818
SRLF (Marginal)	-.673	.920	.731	-.288	-.809	-.856	.214	.212	.818	1.000

Table No. 2: Relationship between Socio-economic Variables (after Correlation Matrix)

MLR= Male Literacy Rate, GDL=Gender Disparity in Literacy, % SC= Percentage of SC Population, % ST= Percentage of ST Population, RNWWM= Ratio of Non-worker and Worker (Male), RNWWF= Ratio of Non-worker and Worker (Female), RMMWM= Ratio of Marginal and Main Worker (Male), RMMWF= Ratio of Marginal and Main Worker (Female), SRLF (Main) = Sex Ratio in Labour Force (Main), SRLF (Marginal)=Sex Ratio in Labour Force (Marginal)

RNWWF (-.959) and GDL (0.943) are the dominant factors in the first Principal Component with 62.04 % explanation. The influence of RNWWF is negative for the system, whereas the influence of the next prime factor (GDL) is positive. It indicates towards the negative association between the female working population and the enhancement of female literacy. Thus, by increasing percentage share of female non-working population will move the system towards a positive direction and same can be done by decreasing the GDL within the society. Moreover, the concentration of SC

population has also been found to have direct impact on the spatial disparity in the sector of literacy attainment among women (0.938). It signifies the relative deprivation of scheduled caste people or more specifically SC women than the Non-scheduled caste or general castes even than the Scheduled Tribes in the society.

Table No. 3: Identification of Dominant Socio-economic Factors [Component Matrix]	Component	
	1	2
RNWWF	-.959	-.210
GDL	.943	.171
% SC	.938	-.091
SRLF (Marginal)	.856	.432
MLR	-.848	-.164
RNWWM	-.842	.113
RMMWM	.686	-.573
SRLF (Main)	.510	.858
RMMWF	.670	-.717
% ST	-.419	.608
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis		

 In the next loading with 22.55%, explanation these two factors have become almost indifferent for directing the system, where SRLF (Main) (0.858) have emerged as a prime factor behind the spatial disparity and it signifies that very low involvement of women in labour force (main) works as a negative factor in terms of literacy attainment among female parts of the society. So, involvement in main work force should to be enhanced for the betterment and equality attainment in educational sector (Table No.2 and 3).

Suggestion and Conclusion

Level of educational attainment, specifically among women, is generally considered to have direct positive impact on the overall progress of the society and economy. Illiteracy or low level of education is a sin in a society and is reflected in various malaise forms. It increases possibility of non-continuation of study, early marriage, uncontrolled birth among the women which again enhances the family burden, lower level of self esteem and aspiration for academic involvement. It is, also, continued as a vicious cycle which hampers the progress of the girl child in next generation to come. Thus, increasing the level of alertness for education is needed and gender as well as class-caste conflict at micro level should be slacken off for the betterment of the society. For this purpose, mass door to door campaign to generate consciousness about the need of education in life through the demonstration of cost-benefit analysis about material as well as non-material profits of education in the long term can be taken into consideration. Moreover, starting of income generating

curriculum will be beneficial for the spread of education among girls. Awareness generation for the reduction of uncontrolled birth and practice of child rearing by the elder girl child as well as space specific, need specific and community specific literacy programme, mass campaign to reach the information about the scopes and ways to the desired facilities can be used as powerful instruments to cope up with the social barriers of girls' education at micro level.

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