Disparity in Education among the Scheduled Caste Population in West Bengal, 2011

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Article Info

Abstract

Scheduled Caste (SC) population of India undergoes social and historical discrimination. After the seven decades of independence, low literacy rates still reflect the impact of the discrimination. By the efforts of Dr. BhimraoAmbedkar, who fought for the rights of the 'Depressed Classes', the Scheduled Population have been benefited by the "Reservation Policy". But throughout the state of India there is some group of SC community who are still ahead of the rest of the community. In West Bengal Sunri, Namasudra, Dhoba, Poundra are the top in terms of educational achievement. In spite of the higher population share to total SCs population of the state,Bagdi, Bauri, Dom, Mal are still lagging behind. In this paper an attempt has been made to find out the privileged community among the 60 SCs community of West Bengal. The main objective of this paper is to compare the major SC community of West Bengal in terms of various aspects of literacy.

Introduction

Education is one of the most powerful and important instrument for the development of any community. This is so true in the case of weaker section of the society. To them education is an input for the socio-economic development which gives them self-confidence and enables to face the new and unforeseen challenges. Traditionally India has a caste based caste dominated society system. Scheduled Caste remains in the bottom of Indian caste hierarchy. According to Census of India (2011), 20.1 crore people are from SCs community which accounts 16.63 percent of the total population of India. Disparity in educational opportunity creates inequality in many strata of socio-economic life. After the seven decades of independence Scheduled Caste people are educationally lagging behind than other caste of India. Due to the discrimination and social exclusion, the representation of Scheduled Caste in the educational arena is very less. As a result the policy framers introduced a host of educational facilities for the community. The underlying spirit of all the educational safe guards is that SC shall be brought to the level of the rest of the advanced communities.

But in reality this educational opportunity enhances the educational inequality among the SC population.

Rationale of the Study

Each state of our country has certain number of caste or community among Scheduled Caste population. Apart from Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh all the state has certain number of Scheduled Caste population. There are many sub-caste communities among the Scheduled Caste such as - Karnataka has 101, in Tamil Nadu 76, Odisha93, Uttar Pradesh 66, and Uttarakhand 65. West Bengal is not the different, 60 castes has been specified among SC. The study of Indian Council of Social Science Research shows that that most of the state has preponderance of one or two or three caste among SCs (V.P.Shah, 1982). In Gujrat Mahyavanshi group of caste, Pulayans in Kerala, in Maharastra the Mahar, in Punjab it is AD-Dharmis in Tamil Nadu Adi-Dravidians, In Haryana Chamar is the predominant caste. West Bengal iterates the preponderance of certain caste among SCs with rest of other states. According to Census of India 2011 the total population of West Bengal is 91,276,115 and out of

which 21,463,270 i.e. 23.15% belongs to SCs. The dominant sub-caste community group such asR ajbanshi(17.71%), Namasudra (16.33%),Bagdi(14.25%),Poundra (11.42%), Bauri(5.72%), Chamar (4.84%), Jalia Kaibarta (2.65%), Hari(2.01%), Dhoba (1.80%) Dom (1.64%), Sunri(1.57%), Lohar (1.47%), Mal (1.43%),Malo (1.41%),Kaora (1.27%) and Tiyar (1.06%) has more than one percent of population to total SC population. These 16 community shares 85.5% of population to total SC population in West Bengal and rest of the 44 community shares 14.5% population. among the major 16 community Bagdi, Bauri, Chamar, Hari, Dom, Lohar, Mal still lags behind in terms of educational progress.

The Study Area

The fourth populated state of India, West Bengal is located in the eastern part shares borders with neighbor's countries Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and with an area of 88752 km². The Latitudinal and Longitudinal extension of the state are 21° 38́ N to 27° 10́ N and 58° 50́ E to 89° 50́E. Total population of West Bengal is 91,276,115 Persons according to 2011 Census.

Objectives

Major objectives of the study are:

i.   To find out the progress of literacy among various community of Scheduled Caste Population in West Bengal.
ii. To assess the educational inequality among various community of SCs of West Bengal.
iii. To compare various community among SCs in achieving the educational level.

Materials and Methods

This study is based on the secondary data which has been collected from various reports and document like Census of India, District Statistical Hand book, Bulletin Published by Cultural Research Institute and hand book on social welfare. To analyze the data various cartographic techniques and statistical techniques have been applied. For the measurement of Male-Female literacy disparity index and Rural-Urban literacy disparity index,Sopher's Disparity Index (1974) modified by Kundu and Rao (1983) has been applied, as :

$$Ds = \log (X_2 / X_1) + \log (100 X_1) / (100 X_2)]$$

Kundu and Rao's modified disparity index formula, as follows:

$$Ds = \log (X_2 / X_1) + \log (200 X_1) / (200 X_2)]$$

Where to calculate Male Female Literacy Disparity, X_1= Female literacy X_2= Male Literacy, Where to calculate Rural-Urban Literacy Disparity, X_1= Rural literacy rate X_2= Urban Literacy Rate has been taken.

Discussion and Results

There are 60 Scheduled Caste communities in West Bengal in 2011 Census. Among the 60 SC communities, there are 16 communities which shares more than 1 percent of population to total SC population of the state. These 16 communities are follows according to their share of percentage of population Rajbanshi, Namasudra, Bagdi, Poundra, Bauri, Chamar, JaliaKaibarta, Hari, Dhoba, Dom,Sunri, Lohar, Mal,

JaloMalo, Kaora and Tiyar,. These communities together shares 85.38 percent of SC population to total SC population of the state. In this paper, special emphasis has been given on these 16 major SC sub-caste communities during discussions.

Achieving Literacy Rate

As per the Census 1961, only 13.6 percent SC population were literate in West Bengal. During this period Namasudra (21.03%), Poundra (26.68%), Sunri (28.58%), Dabgar (29.17%),Halalkhor (24.59%) andJaliaKaibarta showed notable progress in terms of literacy rate. Contrary to that Bauri (5.47%),Bagdi (8.74%), Hari (8.75%),Dom (7.06%), Lohar (8.3%) and Mal (5.91%) showed dissatisfactory picture. But after the slow growth of literacy rate, of Scheduled Caste population has reached in 17.80% in 1971 Census in West Bengal. Among the 16 major SCs, Namasudra (26.86%),Poundra(27.31%) ,Dhoba(24.28%) ,Sunri (22.41%),JaliaKaibarta(20.47%) ,Tiyar(20.4%) and Jalo (19.18%) are well above the state's average SC literacy rate. Rest of the SC community is below the state's average SCs literacy rate. Increase in literacy during the period 1971-81 was quite high among Namasudra,Sunri,Dhoba,Poundra and JaliaKaibarta.

During the period of 1961 to 1971 decade, the literacy rate of Sunri population among the 11 major SC communities was tremendously declined. But in 1981census year, literacy rate of this community was highest among the major 16 SCs community.Dhoba, Namasudra,JaliaKaibarta, Jalo,Tiyar, Rajbanshi all are above the line of state's average SCs literacy rate (24.37). Bauri, Bagdi, Dom, Mal, Chamar, Hari were below the state's average SCs literacy rate. During the 1971-81 increase in literate is quite high among the Sunri, Dhoba, JaliaKaibarta, Poundra, Namasudra. On the other hand Bagdi,Chamar, Dom, Hari, Lohar, Mal were in the bottom among the 16 major SCs in achieving literacy rate. Bauri was the exception during this decade as this community registered decrease in literates.

The state of West Bengal average SCs literacy rate was 42.2% during 1991 Census. Sunri, Namasudra, Poundra, Kaora, Dom and Tiyar were the 6 SCs community among the 16 Major communities whose literacy rate was above the state's average SCs literacy rate. It is notable fact that, first time the literacy rate of Dom community was higher than the state average. In this decade JaliaKaibarta and Dhoba showed decrease in literacy rate. Again in the 2001 Census literacy rate was high than the state's average SCs literacy for Namasudra, Poundra, Dhoba, Sunri. BagdiBauri, Chamar,Hari, Dom,Lohar and Mal failed to touch even the state's average SC literacy rate. Though, during 1991-2001, Bagdi, Bauri, Chamar recorded decent increase in literates.

In 2011 Census the iteration of four decades in achieving literacy rate among the major 16 SCs community is seen. After the six decades of independence Bagdi, Bauri, Chamar, Hari, Dom, Lohar, Mal, Kaora subcaste community failed to cross the state's average SCs literacy rate. These community shares significant proportion of population to the total SC population of the state but still in achieving literacy rate they are still lagging behind than the other major community like Sunri, Namasudra, Poundra, Dhoba, JaliaKaibarta and Rajbanshi.

Rural-Urban Literacy Differentials

Urban literacy is high than the rural literacy due to good availability of educational infrastructure, in migration of

educated persons in the urban area and consciousness about education, among the 16 major SCs community Rural-Urban literacy gap is high for Mal (14.80%), Lohar (15.29%), Chamar (11.26%), Bauri(10.46%). These communities such as Mal, Lohar. Bauri, Chamar also shows higher Rural-Urban Disparity Index. ContrarilyTiyar (4.36%), Rajbanshi (4.42%) Poundra(4.92%) Dhoba (5.44%) JaloMalo (5.87%) Namasudra(6.46%) not also shows lower Rural Urban Literacy gap but also recorded lower Rural-Urban Literacy Disparity Index.

Apart from the 16 Major SCs community, among the rest of the SC community likeMushahar, Nat,Gonrhi, Ghasi, Koch,Beldar, Bind registered high Rural-Urban Literacy Disparity Index i.e.>0.15. Kotal,Kandra, Khatik,Bantar, Kadar, has low Rural-Urban Literacy Disparity Index i.e.<0.05.

Male-Female Literacy Gap

The most pronounced differentiation in educational opportunity in Indian society is probably 'sex' (Gore, 2004). This is because the Indian society is mainly characterized by male chauvinism; where the females are not only degraded but also deprived of the right of study (Romatara, 1988). Female literacy among SC community is said to be very worse. Among the 16 major SC communities, Sunri, Namasudra, Dhoba, Poundra shows worth nothing achievement in female literacy. These four community recorded not only more than 10 point higher than the state's average SC female literacy rate i.e. 61.23% but also are above the West Bengal's average general literacy rate i.e. 71.16%. Bagdi, Bauri, Chamar, Hari, Dom, Lohar, Mal, Kaora are lies in the bottom level in to achieve female literacy among the major SC community. These communities are far below than the state's average general female literacy rate and also failed to touch the state's average SC female literacy rate. In the case of Male literacy rate the repetition of the above statement is witnessed.

The gap between Male-Female literacy among the SC community is said to be very high. High Male-Female Literacy Gap and Male-Female Disparity Index is found among the Bauri, Lohar, Dom, Mal,Bagdi, Hari, Chamar. Among the Namasudra, Jalo,Malo, Dhoba and Sunri low Male-Female literacy Disparity Index has been witnessed. Among the rest of minor community,Ghasi, Musahar, Bantar, Bhogta, Beldar, Rajwar, Bhuiya, Chaupal, Turi, recorded >0.15 Male-Female Literacy Disparity Index. Low Male-Female Literacy Disparity Index i.e. below 0.10, found among Kanjar, Konwar, Bahelia, Baiti, Patni, Lalbegi, Bhuinmali, Gonrhi.

Literacy Rates among various Education Levels

Education enables empowerment which is also related to achievement of educational level. The article has discussed separately the level of education in various groups.

Primary Education.

From the figure I, it is found that among the 16 major SCs community,Bauri (76.67%), Bagdi (75.28%),Kaora (75.04%), Dom (73.85%), Mal (73.50%), Chamar (72.18%), Hari (71.90%), Lohar (71.60%) has over 70 percent of literate population within the primary level. It is well imaginable fact that if the 70 percent of the total literate population are in the primary level how they will get government and high paying jobs? Due to this, the above said communities are failed to grab the opportunity introduced by the government to uplift the standard of life. As a result they are compelled to engage themselves as daily laborer and other low paying activities. Sunri has only 37.79 percent literate population with primary education. Dhoba, Namasudra, Poundra constitutes half of the literate population with primary education.

High Percentage of literate population with primary education is found among Musahar(81.80%), Khaira(79.26%), Turi(77.09%), and Bind (76.42%).But in case of community of Konwar(37.13%), Gonrhi(50.13%), Damai(52.64%), Kami(52.74%), Khatik(53.07%) , Dabgar(53.37%), and Pasi(54.40%) shares decent percentage of literate population in primary education level.

Secondary and Higher Secondary Level

Bagdi (21.85), Bauri (22.84), Kaora (23.04), Dom (24.22) and Mal (24.37) shares lower percentage of literate populationwith educational level upto Higher Secondary. From the figure II, it is found that Sunri (50.45), Dhoba (41.33), Namasudra (39.20) Poundra (37.14), Jalo (34.76) has the higher percentage of literate population with education level up to higher secondary. It is evident that the community which has the lower percentage of literate population with primary education has the higher percentage of literates with higher secondary level and vice-versa.

Graduates

Literate population with graduate degree gives us an instant picture of advanced community people. Figure III reveals that among the 16 major communities Sunri (11.04) shares the highest percentage of literate population with graduate degree. In this regard the notable communities are Poundra (5.50), Namasudra (5.34), Dhoba (5.27). Bagdi ,Bauri, Hari, Chamar shares significant percentage of population to total SC population of the state but lower percentage of literate population with graduate is seen among these communities. Now a day in majority of the government higher post jobs minimum educational qualification is graduate degree. So more number of graduates from the above mentioned community will certainly have the opportunity to grab the facilities like reservation of seats in higher education institution and government jobs. It is clear from the above discussion that as Sunri, Dhoba, Namasudra, Poundra has the higher percentage of graduates than the Bauri, Bagdi, Chamar, Dom, Mal community. Due to the higher percentage of graduates these communities have able to produce a good number of economically sound middle class population who grabbed the government initiatives like reservation of seats in government jobs.

Conclusion

According to Rabindranath Tagore if you left somebody back, he will pull you back. Now it is clear that some communities like Sunri, Poundra, Dhoba, Namasudra are well ahead in all respect of educational level with rest of the SC communities. One of the major cause of backwardness of Bagdi, Bauri, Chamar, Dom, Mal is that higher shares of literate population with primary level. With this low educational level they failed to get a job and they are bound to work in traditional occupation. As a result their income generation is very low and economic condition is also remains poor. This poor educational level of parents also adversely affects their children education. This is like a cycle which is more effective on communities with low educational level. The Constitution

of India gives various safe guards for these weaker communities to uplift the standard of life and minimize the disparity with rest of the privileged population. The study reveals that after the seventy years of independence, the reservation policy is still needed to proper development of the backward class people of our country. But as now 'Reservation Policy' is working and shaping so many lives of the SC community. If government's intention to uplift all the communities which are in the bottom, should look after the issue of the participation to higher education and Government jobs from all the communities at proportional rate. Otherwise the main spirit of introduction of 'Reservation Policy' will go in vain.

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Table – 1: Literacy rate of individual SC Community of West Bengal 1961-2011

SL. No	SC Community	Percentage to total S.C Population of state, 2011	Percentage of Literates					
			1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Rajbanshi	17.71	14.8	17.56	24.65	40.7	60.14	70.66
2	Namasudra	16.33	21.03	26.86	35.87	56.2	71.93	79.53
3	Bagdi, Duley	14.25	8.74	10.79	13.963	30	47.72	61.41
4	Pod, Poundra	11.42	26.68	27.31	36.49	56.1	72.1	79.75
5	Bauri	5.72	5.47	10.11	9.42	24.2	37.47	50.50
6	Chamar	4.84	8.34	12	14.42	35.9	46.99	60.04
7	Jalia Kaibartta	2.65	17.95	20.47	30.18	26.6	64.86	73.00
8	Hari	2.01	8.75	11.95	15.28	37.4	49.45	62.37
9	Dhoba, Dhobi	1.80	18.9	24.28	38.79	28.1	73.88	80.67
10	Dom, Dhangad	1.64	7.06	9.88	12.58	52.9	46.02	58.96
11	Sunri (Excluding Saha)	1.57	28.58	22.41	54.95	66	82.46	86.33
12	Lohar	1.47	8.3	12.37	15.09	29.7	46.51	59.08
13	Mal	1.43	5.91	9.58	12.16	26.6	39.64	54.41
14	Jhalo Malo, Malo	1.41	14.5	19.18	25.51	37.9	60.33	71.51
15	Kaora	1.27	9.65	17.3	17.81	55.4	52.99	66.21
16	Tiyar	1.06	8.06	20.4	25.33	45.2	62.12	71.90
17	Bhuiya	0.65	7.07	9.95	14.22	21.5	42.09	54.86
18	Khaira	0.60	5.33	9.17	10.98	32.3	42.28	55.19
19	Konai	0.58	7.4	9.06	15.91	30.6	49.66	63.01
20	Rajwar	0.52	9.17	11.36	16.63	38.7	46.41	59.68
21	Kandra	0.52	15.11	24.02	31.49	49.3	72.16	81.80
22	Paliya	0.49	11.63	20.88	18.46	31	50.31	64.29
23	Keot, Keyot	0.41	13.81	16.57	23.21	32.5	58.8	68.94
24	Bhuimali	0.40	11.3	17.41	21.22	35.2	57.13	68.28
25	Bind	0.33	6.57	10.86	12.7	31.9	35.01	48.64

26	Dosadh	0.30	12.9	16.67	23.67	52.4	59.56	69.36
27	Nuniya	0.28	11.02	15.85	20.75	39.4	54.2	65.74
28	Kami (Nepali)	0.24	18.05	27.91	34.7	42.1	68.79	79.05
29	Mallah	0.23	14.06	15.41	23.8	37.7	53.86	65.79
30	Karenga, Koranga	0.17	9.48	12.33	18.39	49.5	54.81	67.59
31	Turi	0.16	7.48	12.95	14.25	27.6	40.6	53.65
32	Mahar	0.16	11.79	13.55	19.85	40.3	52.6	63.19
33	Patni	0.15	16.19	18.93	25.44	49.4	64.5	73.86
34	Pasi	0.14	15.61	7.89	26.79	46.3	64.12	72.64
35	Pan, Sawasi	0.13	16.91	16.37	27.25	54.9	61	72.33
36	Kotal	0.12	12.48	14.44	21.75	45.4	59.7	69.98
37	Kadar	0.11	12.16	22.81	25.5	51.5	69.74	78.13
38	Musahar	0.10	3.16	8.28	5.3	15.8	15.25	24.40
39	Damai (Nepali)	0.09	21.07	37.25	37.46	20.8	69.83	78.26
40	Bhogta	0.09	3.14	33.33	18.03	28.7	47.9	58.72
41	Ghasi	0.08	5.8	10.19	9.01	37.1	30.46	40.03
42	Baiti	0.06	12.72	17.99	32.92	51.9	68.84	76.81
43	Sarki (Nepali)	0.06	14.35	26.02	27.32	49.3	62.48	72.61
44	Kaur	0.06	12.33	14.47	16.46	60.1	52.15	65.44
45	Koch	0.06	8.57	16.13	15.19	38.7	42.97	52.54
46	Gonrhi	0.05	5.64	18.61	25.21	29.1	56.05	67.71
47	Doai	0.04	6.2	17.32	22.55	28.5	60.09	65.71
48	Khatik	0.04	25.33	17.96	30.01	35.7	68.95	74.37
49	Chaupal	0.03	3.25	16.34	20.76	39.6	43.16	53.03
50	Bahelia	0.03	11.56	14.39	22.53	39.2	59.61	70.35
51	Beldar	0.02	9.64	20.21	18.7	42.1	39.79	58.01
52	Konwar	0.02	15.66	24.5	45.69	58.4	82.96	82.87
53	Halalkhor	0.01	24.54	10.43	29.9	44.2	68.7	80.75
54	Nat	0.01	4.45	39.19	31.25	49.7	59.26	64.78
55	Kurariar	0.00	5.4	21.95	25.14	42.2	56.73	64.23
56	Lalbegi	0.00	18.11	21.53	25.87	51.8	67.15	85.61
57	Kanjar	0.00	16.16	8.18	16.03	42.5	65.35	71.99
58	Dabgar	0.00	29.17	20.43	22.39	33.9	34.51	71.81
59	Bantar	0.00	15.4	18.05	17.73	41.8	33.11	72.36
60	Chain	1.51	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	62.12
All Scheduled Castes of West Bengal			13.6	17.8	24.37	42.2	59.04	69.43

Source: Census of India, 1961, 1971, 1981,1991,2001,2011.

Table – 2: Rural Urban Literacy Disparity of 16 Major SC Community of West Bengal,

| SC Community | Percentage of literates, 2011 | | Disparity Index |
	Rural	Urban	
Mal	53.13	67.93	0.12
Lohar	57.31	72.59	0.12
Bauri	48.40	58.86	0.10
Chamar	57.33	68.59	0.09
JaliaKaibartta	70.05	80.85	0.08
Hari	60.08	68.44	0.07
Kaora	64.10	71.25	0.06
Bagdi, Duley	60.74	67.21	0.06
Sunri (Excluding Saha)	84.38	92.17	0.06
Dom, Dhangad	57.78	63.08	0.05
Namasudra	77.48	83.94	0.05
JhaloMalo, Malo	69.50	75.37	0.05
Dhoba, Dhobi	78.73	84.18	0.05
Pod, Poundra	78.84	83.76	0.04
Rajbanshi	70.12	74.54	0.04
Tiyar	71.45	75.81	0.04

Source: Census of India, 201 and computed by author.

Table – 3: Male-Female Literacy Disparity of 16 Major SC Community of West Bengal, 2011

| SC Community	Female Literacy Rate	Male Literacy Rate	Male-Female Disparity Index
Bauri	38.77	62.10	0.22
Lohar	48.16	69.65	0.18
Mal	45.18	63.35	0.16
Dom, Dhangad	49.15	68.49	0.16
Bagdi, Duley	52.33	70.29	0.14
Chamar	51.35	68.20	0.14
Hari	53.51	70.97	0.14
Kaora	58.17	73.93	0.12
Rajbanshi	62.52	78.32	0.12
Tiyar	63.97	79.35	0.11
Pod, Poundra	71.90	87.10	0.10
JaliaKaibartta	66.10	79.48	0.10
Sunri (Excluding Saha)	78.62	93.50	0.09
Dhoba, Dhobi	73.69	87.20	0.09
JhaloMalo	65.91	76.70	0.08
Namasudra	73.59	85.08	0.08

Source: Census of India, 201 and computed by author
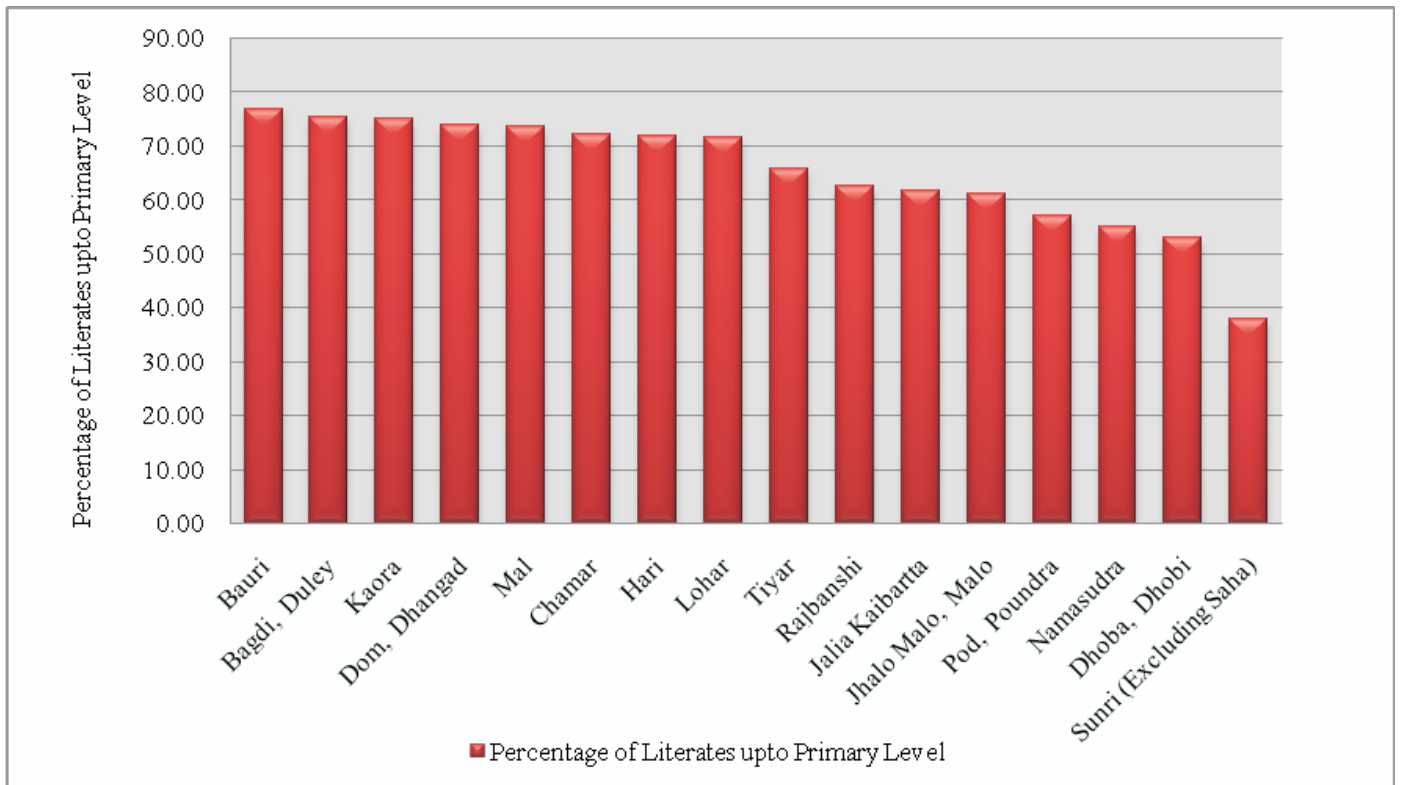
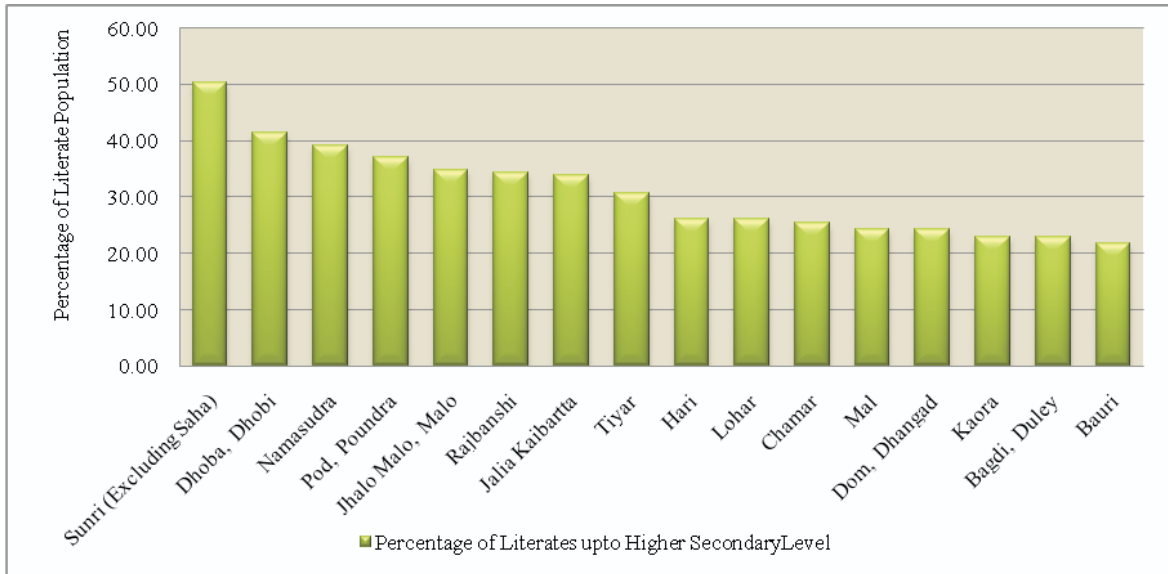Fig. 1: Percentage of Literate Population up to Primary Level (Data Source: Census of India, 2011)

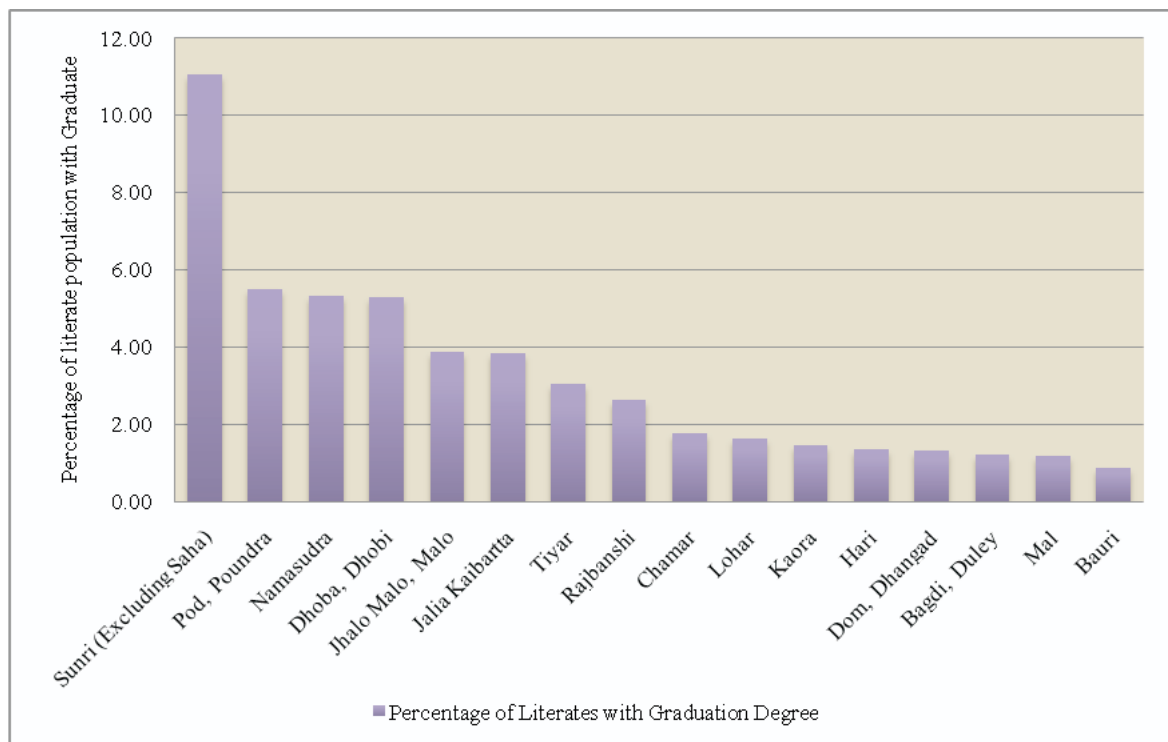Fig. 2:Percentage of Literate Population up to Higher Secondary Level (Data Source: Census of India, 2011)

Fig. 3:Percentage of Literate Population with Graduation (Data Source: Census of India, 2011)

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