A Study on Literacy Pattern among the Scheduled Caste Population in Goalpara District, Assam

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Abstract- Literacy is a determinant of Social, economic, cultural and political development of an area. Literacy eradicates poverty and unemployment, generates employment, economic growth, international relationship, improves social status and standard of living among the social groups. Among the social groups scheduled caste population is considered as most backward group of society prior to the British era. Literacy rates and standard of living of scheduled caste population is very low compare to the other social groups. Goalpara district is not exceptional to this. Literacy rate of scheduled caste population in Goalpara district is quite lower compare to other caste. The main objective of this paper to study the literacy pattern of scheduled caste population of Goalpara district. This study is based on secondary data and comparative statistical method. An attempt has been made in this paper to study the variation of literacy pattern among scheduled caste population of Goalpara district.

Index Terms- Literacy, Pattern, Scheduled Caste and Goalpara District.

I. Introduction

India is a land of diverse race, religions, cultures, and social groups. In Indian caste system, scheduled castes are considered as untouchable and impure. It occupies the lower strata of Indian caste system. Scheduled castes are reasonably backward then the other social groups in educational, socio-economically and politico-culturally. They are also deprived from the employment opportunities.

Literacy is a determinant of social, economic, cultural and political development of a region. Literacy determines the standard of living, levels of income, fertility and mortality, social status, economic growth etc. In Goalpara district scheduled caste population are also backward like other parts of India. Literacy rates of scheduled caste population are lower than the other castes. Risely (1891), Shah (1982), Sunderaj (2000), Chattejee (2000), Goswami (2003), Chouhan (2012), Goswami Barooah (2013) and Khatoon (2013) were studied on scheduled castes population and its literacy and educational attainment.
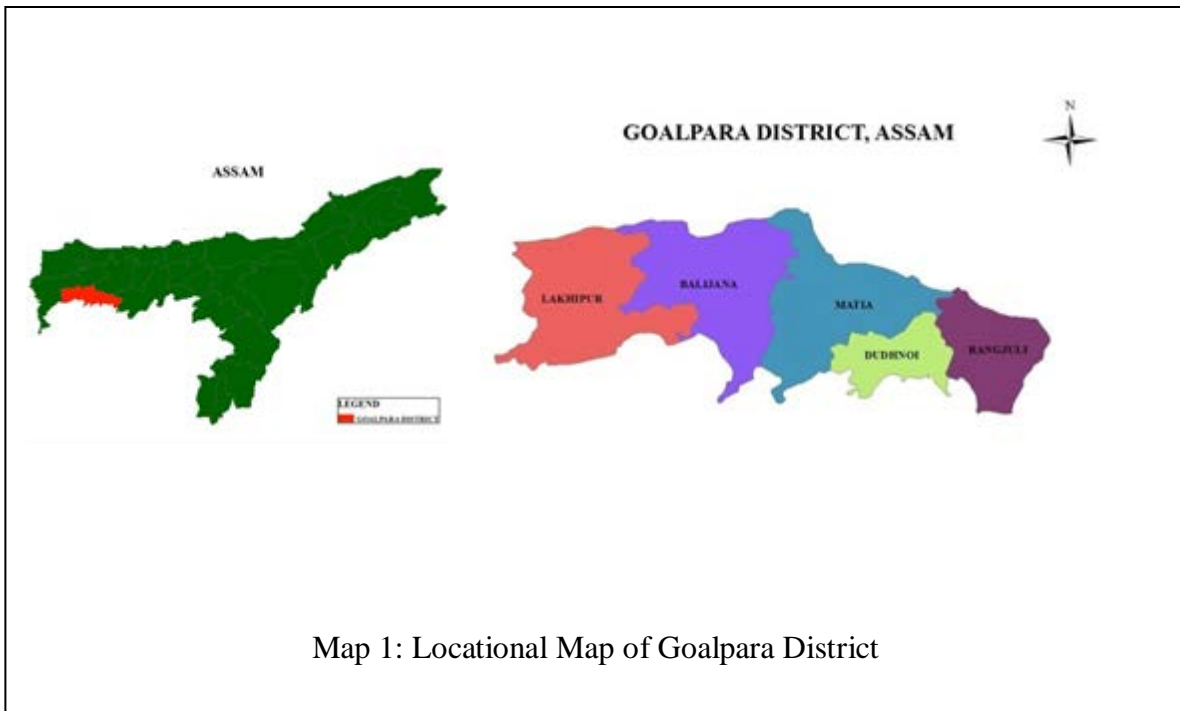
II. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are to study literacy pattern of scheduled caste population and to study the circlewise variation of scheduled caste population in Goalpara district.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data and simple comparative method has been used to analysis the data with bar diagrams.

IV. STUDY AREA

The study area of Goalpara district is an elongated area of foothills and plains along the Assam-Meghalaya border on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra. The district is bounded by the river Brahmaputra on the north and to the south by the Garo hills districts of Meghalaya, to the east by the Kamrup district of Assam and in the west Hat-Singimari sub-Division of Dhubri district of Assam. Geographically, the area is confined within the 26°08′ N to 25°55′ N latitude and 91°15′ E to 90° E. Longitude, covering a total area of 1824 km². The boundary line has an orientation from east to west in this portion. Goalpara District is comprise of five revenue circle namely Lakhipur, Balijana, Rangjuli, Dudhnoi and Matia circle and eight blocks i.e. Jaleswar, Lakhipur, Kharmuja, Balijana, Krishnai, Matia, Kushdhawa and Dudhnoi with total population 755133 persons in 2011. Out of the four Forest Ranges of the Goalpara Forest Division, three Forest Ranges are attached to the Assam-Meghalaya border, they are Lakhipur range, Krishnai central range and Rongjuli range, a major portion of the area falls in the foothill region of Garo Hills. The Goalpara Forest Range is located on the north-west corner of the district bordering the river Brahmaputra. The area is not only important in the field of Geo-environment but also highly sensitive in the field of geo-political point of view (Map.1).

Map 1: Locational Map of Goalpara District

V.   DISCUSSION

Table No. 1 showing the trend of literacy in Goalpara district during the study period of 1991-2011. Table clearly indicates that the literacy rates of scheduled caste population are lower than that total population. The trend of literacy rate is increasing among the total population but in case of scheduled caste population it showing decreasing trend throughout the study period.

Table -1: Goalpara District Literacy Pattern			
Category/Year	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	43.79	47.47	55.43
SC Population	8.87	10.11	9.18

Source: Director of Economics and Statistic, Goalpara.

Literacy rates are not only determined by social, economic, cultural and political factors they are determined by physiographical, environmental, meteorological factors. Based on the literacy rates the study region is categories into three i.e. high, moderate and low categories as it is difficult to consider all the factors.

Table-2: Circlewise Literacy of SC Population			
Circles/Years	1991	2001	2011
Balijana	8.73	12.83	16.12
Lakhipur	7.57	4.03	2.34
Matia	17.74	11.6	8.42
Dudhnai	6.74	5.34	5.93
Rangjuli	18.76	22.57	10.93

Source: Director of Economics and Statistics, Goalpara.

Table No. 2 showing the spatial pattern of literacy of scheduled caste population of Goalpara district. In 1991, Rangjuli block recorded highest literacy rate with 18.76%. In 2001 and 2011, Rangjuli and Balijana block recorded highest literacy rates with 22.57% and 16.12% respectively. Lowest literacy was recorded in Dudhnai (6.74%), Lakhipur (4.03%) and Lakhipur (2.34%) in 1991, 2001 and 2011 respectively. Balijana block is showing positive growth of SC population literacy and on the other than Lakhipur block is showing negative trend of literacy rate since 1991 to 2011.

Table No. 3 is showing the circlewise male-female disparity in Goalpara district. Male-female literacy rates in Goalpara district showing a reverse picture. Female literacy rate in Goalpara district is high compare to the male literacy rates. Matia block recorded highest female literacy with 17.74% as against 14.82% of male literacy in 1991. Rongjuli block recorded 25.14% of female literacy as against 20.49% of male literacy and Balijana block

Table-3: Circlewise Disparity in Male-Female Literacy of SC Population						
Circles/Years	1991		2001		2011	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Balijana	7.26	8.43	10.73	16.12	15.31	17.03
Lakhipur	5.89	7.54	3.72	4.44	5.79	3.17
Matia	14.82	17.74	10.26	13.45	7.72	8.55
Dudhnai	6.14	6.73	5.03	5.71	5.79	6.09
Rangjuli	11.73	15.53	20.49	25.14	16.69	14.34

Source: Director of Economics and Statistics, Goalpara.

recorded 17.03% of female literacy as against 15.31% of male literacy in 2001 and 2011 respectively. Balijana block is showing increasing trend of both male-female literacy and Lakhipur block is showing decreasing trend of male-female literacy in Goalpara district since 1991 to 2011.

VI.   CONCLUSION

The analysis of data clearly indicates that percentage of literacy rates among the scheduled caste population is lower than the total population. Scheduled caste population are distributed in remote areas of the district and difficult for communication. So, they are always deprived from education.   In Goalpara district, female literacy is higher than the male literacy. The reason is rate of drop out among the male scheduled caste population is high compare to female. Government has initiated different literacy program for the scheduled caste illiterate female.

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