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## **A study on the problems of first-generation girl learners of ST and SC group at the secondary schools in the district of Birbhum, West Bengal**

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### ***Abstract***

*According to John Dewey, "Life is education". It is in Indian constitution that free and compulsory education must be universalised for all children up to 14 years age. It is questionable enough that whether India has become successful or not to spray this mission to each and every section of our Indian society. First generation girl's learner of scheduled caste & scheduled tribe of Birbhum district (W.B, India) have been found to face various problems in secondary educational level. That's why they are lagging hundred steps behind the average level. Here a step has been taken to focus light on those problems in order to find out solutions of those problems through different educational plans.*

**Keywords:** 1.First generation girl learner, 2.scheduled caste, 3.scheduled tribe, 4.secondary education, 5.educational achievement, 6.home environment, 7.educational problem, 8.socio-economic problem.

### **Introduction**

In India population have been divided into three groups on the basis of caste, viz: General Caste, Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST). The ward 'caste' has originated from the Spanish ward 'casta' applied to mixed breed between Europeans, Indians, Americans and Negroes. So people of Scheduled Caste (SC) are referred to those who have a descent as mixing of Indians and foreigners. On the other hand people of Scheduled Tribe are referred purely to the Indian tribe without any mixing. So, to say clearly, this division is on the basis of period of living in India (because we know that India had experienced immigration of a number of people group in historical time of thousands of years) as well as biological descent-based mixing. People of General Caste are newest and people of Scheduled Tribe are oldest form of them. The development from all view-point in them is in descending order starting from General Caste to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.

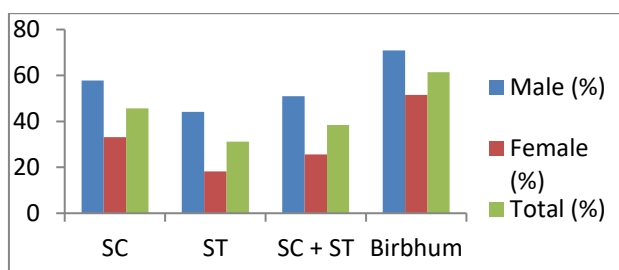
First generation learner is one, who is attending the school from the illiterate family, i.e., no one of the family members is literate when the child is enrolled in the school. In other words, the child who is coming to the school for education and whose parents, guardians or elders are unable to read and write is considered as first generation learners (FGLs) in this study. Recently (after 1970) in India Secondary education (from class vi-x) is provided after Primary education (from class i-v) and before Higher secondary education (from class xi-xii). Government of India have provided quota to ST and SC group of people to provide them all privilege. In spite of them they are lagging behind.

At Birbhum percentage of SC (29.50 %) and ST (6.70 %) to the total population is 36.2 % (almost one-third). Only 38.45 % (Table: 1 & Figure: 1) of them are literate. So, the total illiterate is 67.65 %. Among the children of all these illiterate persons who go to school, girl learners are facing immense problems in all level of education, especially in secondary level education. Now under these circumstances, what will be the progress of first generation girl learners of ST and SC group? Socio-economic problem, educational problem and problems associated with their home environment are so much that, receiving of education has become a larger challenge to them. Intensity of all these problems is in target to discuss here.

**Table 1: percentage of literacy.**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
<b>SC</b>	57.80	33.10	45.70
<b>ST</b>	44.20	18.20	31.20
<b>SC + ST</b>	51.00	25.65	38.45
<b>Birbhum</b>	70.89	51.56	61.48

**Figure 1: percentage of literacy.**



Source: Census 2001.

**Methodology**

Methodology of this research is very important and interesting also. 10 out of 204 secondary schools (Sarva Siksha Mission and Office of DM, Birbhum) have been chosen; from each of 10 schools 10 SC & ST first generation girl learners have been taken under study combinedly on justified, convenience and random sampling basis.

**Statistical techniques:**

Raw data after being collected through field survey have finally been processed into necessary secondary data with the help of following statistical formulas-

i) Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) =  $\frac{\sum X}{N}$

ii) Standard Deviation( $\delta$ ) =  $\sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N}}$

iii) Critical ratio test (t) =  $\frac{M_1 - M_2}{SED}$     iv) Standard error of difference(SED) =  $SD_c \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}$

v)  $SD_c = \sqrt{\frac{SD_1^2(N_1 - 1) + SD_2^2(N_2 - 1)}{N_1 + N_2 - 2}}$

vi) Relative weightage in terms of percentage (RW) =  $\frac{\text{Average}}{\text{Total no of items}} \times 100$

$M_1$ & $M_2$ = Mean of two groups. SED = Standard error of difference between two means. $SD_c$ = Standard Deviation (common). $SD_1$ = SD of Group 1	$SD_2$ = SD of Group 2 $N^1$ = Number of sample of Group 1 $N_2$ = Number of sample of Group 2 X = Value in a data set. N = Total no. of observations.
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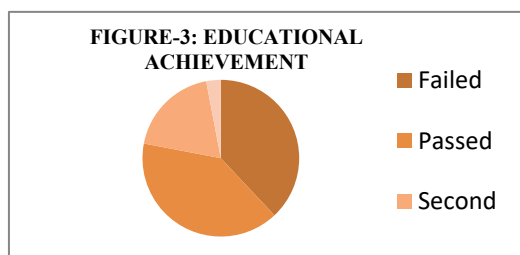
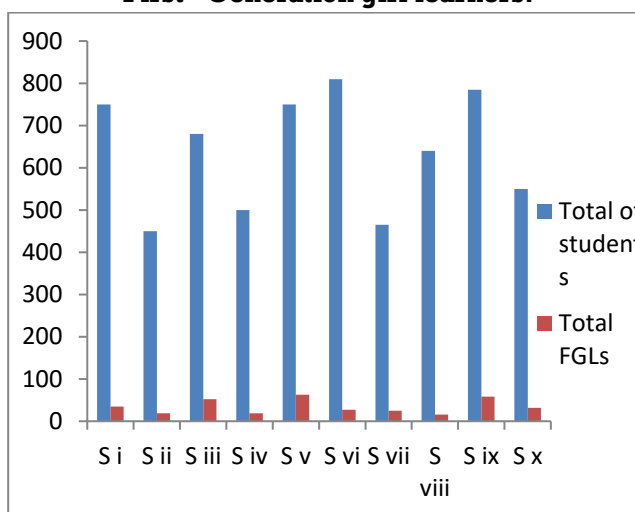
**Results and discussions**

Schools have been symbolised as Si, Sii,.....and so on. School wise proportion of ST & SC first-generation girl learners varies from 2.50 % to 8.40 %. On an average 5.35 % of total learners are first-generation ST & SC girl learners (Table: 2). So it can be said that their proportion is too low.

**Table 2: School wise proportion of st First-generation girl learners.**

School	Total no. of students	Total FGLs	% of FGLs
S i	750	35	5.00
S ii	450	19	4.22
S iii	680	52	7.65
S iv	500	19	3.80
S v	750	63	8.40
S vi	810	27	3.33
S vii	465	25	5.38
S viii	640	16	2.50
S ix	785	58	7.39
S x	550	32	5.82
<b>Average</b>	6380	346	5.35

**Figure 2: School wise proportion of ST & SC & SC First- Generation girl learners.**



Data collected from school record of concerning school shows that, excepting Si, Siii, Svi, Svii, no other school has become able to achieve first class marks in annual examination at the secondary level (Table: 3, Figure: 3), though their total and average percentage is only 30 & 3 respectively (Table: 3). It means only 3 % ST & SC first-generation girl learners have got first class. Six schools out of ten have no such students who have got first class. More than one-third (38 %) of total ST & SC first-generation girl learners get failed. Less than one-fifth (19 %) get second class. Two-fifth (40 %) passes only. So, 78% (38 + 40) have got below 45 % marks. In recent generation, when tough competition to achieve the higher rank is going on, then such type of achievement of ST & SC first-generation girl learners does not hold a good impression for them. Though a quota system has been forwarded to save them, but that can't be all about the development of human resource for them.

What they actually need is not only the quota but also the development of their educational, socio-economic and home environment. Thus we have to focus on the actual condition of aforesaid factors (educational, socio-economic and home environment) which are dragging them far behind of educational development.

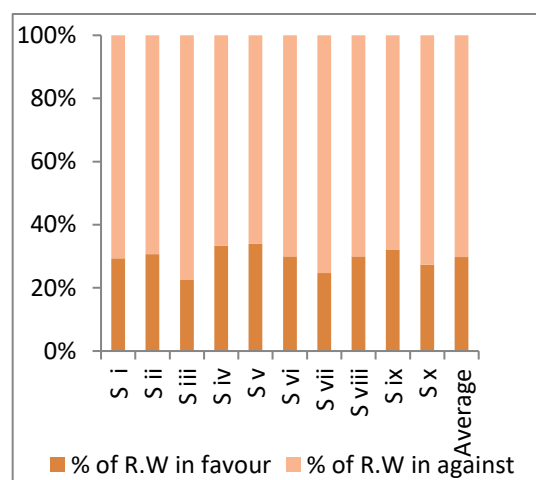
**Table 3: Percentage OF ST & SC First-Generation girl learners on the basis of obtained educational achievement scores in annual examination at the secondary school.**

Category of results	Range of % of aggregate marks	S i	S ii	S iii	S iv	S v	S vi	S vii	S viii	S ix	S x	Average (%)
Failed	<30 %	45	40	25	20	40	30	40	50	50	40	38
Passed	30-45	35	35	35	45	50	55	30	45	30	40	40
Second	45-60	10	25	30	35	10	10	25	05	20	20	19
First class	>60	10	00	10	00	00	05	05	00	00	00	3

**Table 4: Relative weightage (RW) of Home environment problems of ST & SC Fgl.s.**

School	N	ΣX	M	% of R.W in against	% of R.W in favour
S i	10	106	10.6	70.67	29.33
S ii	10	104	10.4	69.33	30.67
S iii	10	116	11.6	77.33	22.67
S iv	10	100	10.0	66.67	33.33
S v	10	99	9.9	66.00	34.00
S vi	10	105	10.5	70.00	30.00
S vii	10	113	11.3	75.34	24.66
S viii	10	105	10.5	70.00	30.00
S ix	10	102	10.2	68.00	32.00
S x	10	109	10.9	72.67	27.33
Average	10	105.9	10.59	70.60	29.40

**Figure 4: Relative weightage (RW) of home-Environment problems OF ST & SC First-Generation girl learners.**



The mean of home environmental problem, suffered by them ranges from 9.9 to 11.6 per head (Table: 4, Figure: 4), which is an absolute figure. If we see the relative figure then the explanation will be more prominent. It is being observed for all school that, % of R.W against them is too much, ranging from 66.00 to 77.33% (Table: 4 and please also see the factors associated with the home environment in the methodology section provided below). That’s why almost four-fifth (78 % or 38 + 40) of total SC & ST FGLs is living below 45 % aggregate marks (Table: 3). On an average only 29.40 % home environmental factors are in favour of them (Table: 4). Their father generally never say to study, generally ask to do some work or order to helper in parents work (e.g. food carrying of parents in the field of work), taking care of the junior brother or sister at home. Beside these, electricity facility is not provided to them by their parents. First generation girl learners do not understand how they are being victimised day by day by their parents.

**Home environmental factors**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Question asked</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	Do you study in the morning everyday?	Yes/No
2	Do your parents ask to do any work at home during your study time?	Yes/No
3	Do you not get any time for study as you take care of your brother and sister at home?	Yes/No
4	Do you neglect your study for carrying foods for your parents who work in the field?	Yes/No
5	Do your parents tell you to work with them?	Yes/No
6	Do your parents give you pencils and notebook at right time?	Yes/No
7	Do you go to school without taking any food?	Yes/No
8	Do your parents discharge you for study so that you can take care of goats and cows?	Yes/No
9	Do your parents provide your school uniform in right time?	Yes/No
10	Do you have a separate study room in your home?	Yes/No
11	Do you have electric light in your village?	Yes/No
12	Do you have electric light in your home?	Yes/No
13	Do you study at home in every evening?	Yes/No
14	Do your parents arrange light for your study in evening?	Yes/No
15	Do your parents tell you to sleep offer taking food in evening?	Yes/No

Beside the problems associated with the home environment, they are also facing educational problems. On an average 38.80 % (Table: 5, Figure: 5) educational factors are in favour of them and 61.20 % are in against them. School iv is comparatively in better position and School ii is in vulnerable condition in this regard. However, the range of home environment problem is 11.33 %, where as that of educational problem is 13.50 %. Thus it can be said that range of highest and lowest is much more in case of educational problem than the home environment problem. But average % of R.W in against, for home environment problem (Table: 4), is more than educational problem (Table: 5). So, it is inferred from here that home environment problem is leading one than later one. Book related answer asked have been found negative in most cases. On, the other hand parents' contribution as supporter in education has not been found positive. On the other hand factors related to school have been found mostly positive, for example, method of class teaching, infrastructural facilities like bench etc. (please see list of educational factors given below). It has been found that they want to study in mother language.

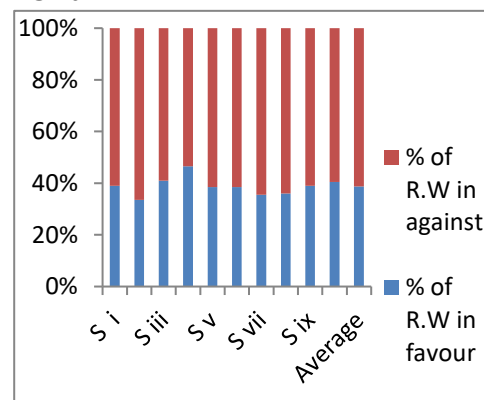
**Educational factors-**

Sl. No.	Question asked	Response
1	Do you have all the text books of your home?	Yes/No
2	If you do not have school book, do you borrow it from your friends?	Yes/No
3	Do your parents purchase school books?	Yes/No
4	Do you have any problem in understanding the language used by the teacher in the classroom?	Yes/No
5	Do you have any problem in understanding the subject taught in the classroom?	Yes/No
6	Do your parents ever enquiry about your study in school?	Yes/No
7	Do you read any book other than the books prescribed for your school?	Yes/No
8	Do your parents purchase any book along with the books prescribed for your school?	Yes/No
9	Do you read any book from any other library?	Yes/No
10	Do you ever borrow any book other than the school books from your friends and read them?	Yes/No
11	Do you take private tuition in any school subject?	Yes/No
12	Would you go anywhere for study?	Yes/No
13	Do your elder brother or sister helps you in your study?	Yes/No
14	Do you have any problem in understanding the method of teaching used by the teacher in the classroom?	Yes/No
15	Do you consult with your teachers outside the classroom?	Yes/No
16	Do you understand the classroom teaching of the teachers?	Yes/No
17	Do you clarify your doubts in the classroom?	Yes/No
18	Whether class teachers teach in Bengali language?	Yes/No
19	Do you want to be taught in your mother tongue?	Yes/No
20	Do you have sufficient number of benches?	Yes/No

**Table 5: Relative weightage (rw) of educational Problems of st & sc fgl.**

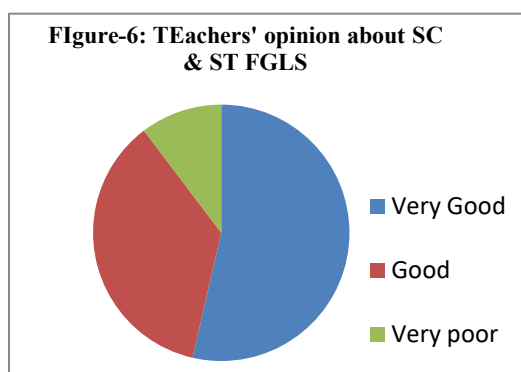
School	N	$\sum X$	M	% of R.W in against	% of R.W in favour
S i	10	122	12.2	61.00	39.00
S ii	10	133	13.3	66.50	33.50
S iii	10	118	11.8	59.00	41.00
S iv	10	107	10.7	53.50	46.50
S v	10	123	12.3	61.50	38.50
S vi	10	123	12.3	61.50	38.50
S vii	10	129	12.9	64.50	35.50
S viii	10	128	12.8	64.00	36.00
S ix	10	122	12.2	61.00	39.00
S x	10	119	11.9	59.50	40.50
<b>Average</b>	10	122.4	12.24	61.20	38.80

**Figure-5: Relative weightage (RW) of educational problems OF SC & ST FGLS.**



**Table-6: Teachers’ opinion about Students of st & sc first-generation girl learners.**

Perception		S i	S ii	S iii	S iv	S v	S vi	S vii	S viii	S ix	S x	Average
Very Good	N	8	5	3	5	4	3	6	6	6	6	5.2
	%	80	50	30	50	40	30	60	60	60	60	52 %
Good	N	2	5	3	4	6	4	2	4	2	3	3.5
	%	20	50	30	40	60	40	20	40	20	30	35 %
Very Poor	N	00	00	4	1	0	3	2	00	2	1	1.3
	%	00	00	40	10	00	30	20	00	20	10	13 %



Teachers’ opinion regarding educational behaviour of those students do not hold poor for most. On an average only a meagre percentage i.e. 13 % (Table: 6, Figure: 6) educational behaviours of them are thought to be very poor. Otherwise 52% behaviours have been noted to be very good. 35% are good. So it can be inferred from this, that, educational behaviours of ST & SC first-generation girl learners can not be said as the barrier in the way of receiving the education in the class. Seven schools (i, ii, iv, vii, viii, ix, x) show 50 % or more behaviours as very good. School i shows good position in

this regard. Four schools (i, ii, v, viii) show no behaviour as very poor. So, educational behaviour is not a problem in front of their education because they have positive response in terms of desire.

**Teachers’ Opinion about the ST & SC First-Generation girl learners.**

Sl. No.	Question asked	Response
1	Rate of attendance in the class.	Very good/Good /Poor
2	Attention in the classroom.	Very good/Good /Poor
3	Interest in the study.	Very good/Good /Poor
4	Their participation during teaching learning process.	Very good/Good /Poor
5	Completion of homework given by teachers in the class.	Very good/Good /Poor
6	Students’ responses to the teachers’ questions.	Very good/Good /Poor
7	Attitude towards the classroom teaching.	Very good/Good /Poor
8	Their understanding of teachers’ teaching.	Very good/Good /Poor
9	Their understanding of teachers’ language.	Very good/Good /Poor
10	Involvement in small group academic activities.	Very good/Good /Poor
11	Participation in school and other co-curricular activities.	Very good/Good /Poor

In India socio-economic condition has always become a problem in front of any development. Similarly here also socio-economic condition is an important influencing factor of educational development. Table: 7 shows that there is very a little difference among ST & SC first-generation girl learners. But there is a large degree of difference in socio-economic condition between the ST & SC first-generation girl learners and upper cast rich students, normally as we know, which have become a reason for educational lagging. As the difference between highest and lowest mean is very small



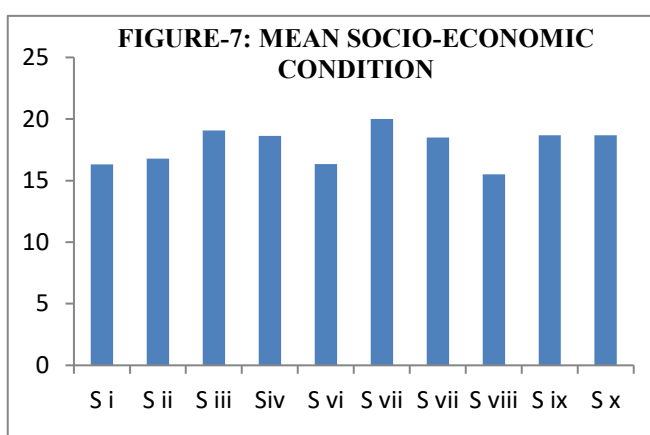
thus the result is insignificant, proved successfully by Critical ratio test ('t', Table: 8). It may be concluded from the result that the socio-economic conditions of the selected groups do not differ significantly.

**Socio-Economic status scale.**

Sl. No.	Question asked	Sl. No.	Question asked
1	Family member	5	Income per month
2	Educational qualification	6	Land
3	Occupation	7	House
4	Source of income	8	Household articles

**Table 7: Socio-Economic conditions OF ST & SC FGLS.**

School	N	ΣX	M	SD
S i	10	163.20	16.32	3.66
S ii	10	167.90	16.79	5.31
S iii	10	190.70	19.07	5.82
S iv	10	186.30	18.63	2.69
S vi	10	163.50	16.35	4.18
S vii	10	200.00	20.00	5.31
S vii	10	185.10	18.51	3.50
S viii	10	155.10	15.51	3.66
S ix	10	186.80	18.68	4.45
S x	10	186.90	18.69	3.87



**Table-8: 'T' Test between lowest and highest average scores of socio-Economic condition of ST & SC First-Generation girl learners.**

Between	Mean	SD	t	Level of significance
S i	16.32	3.66	-	Not significance
S ii	20.00	5.31	1.65	

**Policy measures and Action programme**

Following programmes can be initiated for them by the Government-

i) Problems related to home environment are most intolerable which ST & SC first-generation girl learners face. To eradicate this problem hostel facility to them must be provided atleast upto secondary level education if possible more. Through hostel life they may come in contact with educational discipline. Job opportunities through compassing must be provided.

ii) The quota is provided to ST and SC candidates. Of total quota atleast 50 % must be provided to the ST & SC first-generation girl learners so to increase interest in them can be.

iii) The books, pen, pencil, bag and uniform must be provided to them. Money should not be provided because in experience it has been seen that there are very less tendency among the guardians to spend the scholarship money for educational purpose.

## Conclusion

The preamble to the constitution of India, as amended under the 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act reads as “we the people of India have solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic”. So, recently in India the free and universal education has been promised to provide to all children of 14 years age. The age from 14 to 16 years after this is for secondary education. Thus it is questionable generally for all students that who will take responsibility after this age. Though many schemes have been launched for SC and ST students as to render the educational barriers, but there is no such scheme for FGLs. Second policy provided as suggestion under heading of policy measures and action programme can be solution for this, because, the elite candidates of this category are clever to receive most of privileges provided for their category. The illiterate guardian of SC and ST FLGs are generally unfamiliar about the privileges provided. Thus information regarding those privileges must be provided along with a prospectus during admission of their children in school. Then those illiterate guardians of SC and ST FLGs will intentionally send their children to school.

So, problems regarding education of SC and ST FGLs are very much sensitive to study. Such type of study can also be conducted for FGLs of some other categories separately and/or combindly to get comparative study. Then chalking of educational plans and programmes can be more easier in different plan periods.

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