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Research Article

THE STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL GAPS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF COOCH BEHAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The quality of life, well being and human development are significantly controlled by the level of educational attainment of an area. An attempt has been made in this study to evaluate the spatial variation in educational infrastructure and educational attainment in the district of Cooch Behar, West Bengal, India. To conduct this study, selective variables, both primary and secondary data have been used and suitable statistical technique like Composite Index (CI) has been applied to get the result. Obtained results clearly show significant developmental gaps with spatial variation in the field of education in the area under study.

Key Words:

Quality of Life, Human Development,
Educational Attainment, Educational
Infrastructure.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the backbone of societal development (Otiyato, 2009). It plays a pivotal role for human resource development like human talent, knowledge, skill etc. Similarly, educational development always indicates the regional development through social transformation and generates inspiration to know unknown facts (Wals, 2007). Being a country of immense socio-cultural diversities, India has always put emphasis in promoting regional languages of its own. Consequently, there is significant educational gap as all the regional languages are not nationwide accepted. In addition, the gender disparity has also widened the developmental gap in terms of education. The study area i.e. Cooch Behar district has been experiencing female literacy (65.50) and male literacy is (81.14) where as the National average is 74.04. Therefore, It is clear that female literacy was lower than the National average. The male female educational disparity is more prominent among the SC and ST population in the study area. Education system of India comes under the concurrent list of Indian Constitution and as a result, both central and state Government have taken various initiatives for the development of education (Rao, 2001). Such initiatives of both Governments have also geared educational disparities from top to bottom level of

Education system. The study area i.e. Cooch Behar district has been facing significant educational gap from various perspectives like, rural and urban literacy, Gender disparities in education, educational infrastructure, educational attainment etc.

Objectives

1. To study the pattern of literacy in the study area.
2. To know the educational facilities and to measure the level of educational development.
3. To find out the gaps in the educational development.
4. To suggest few proposal to minimise the developmental gaps in education.

Study area

Cooch Behar district is located in the north eastern part of the state of West Bengal between 26°32'46" N latitude to 25°57'6" N latitude and 89°52' E to 88°45'02" E longitude. The district is surrounded by Alipurduar district in north, Bangladesh in south, Assam in the east and Jalpaiguri district in the west. The total area of the district is 3386 km² having 28,227,80 population with a population density of 833 per km² as per census report, 2011. The district consists of twelve blocks and five Sub-divisions.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on secondary data sources like District Census Handbook, 1991 and 2011; District Statistical Handbooks; District Information System for Education (DISE) and Department of Family and Welfare, Government of West Bengal. For easy interpretation, few statistical methods e.g. Composite index, Urban Rural differential Index (URDI), urban rural Literacy rate etc have been applied. To know the temporal variation of education, difference Value (d) has been calculated.

The Composite Index of Development of Education has been calculated by using following formula –

Composite Index (CI) = Total Literacy / (Male-Female differentials + Urban-Rural differentials).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Spatial variation of Literacy

Ability of read and write is known as literacy (Alvermann, 2001). It is one of the important indicators for societal development. The literacy rate of the district of Cooch Behar is 74.13 according to census report 2011. The rate of literacy of the district of Cooch Behar is more or less similar to the National average (74.04). Due to the educational development programme like, Sarba Sikha Mission the literacy rate has been increased from 38.24 in the years 1991 to 74.13 in the year 2011. The present study area i.e. Cooch Behar district has been facing wide of gap of educational development. The highest literacy found at Cooch Behar Sadar is 80.48 and lowest literacy found at Mekhliganj Sub-division is 70.25. But the remaining sub-divisions have been representing moderate rate of literacy viz. Dinhata (72.27), Mathabhanga (72.30) and Tufanganj (75.38).

The district of Cooch Behar represents the gender inequality in education. The literacy rate of female (67.80%) in the district of Cooch Behar is lower than state average (71.16%). According to census report 1991, the male literacy was 47.89% and female literacy was 27.8% respectively in the district. As per the report of Census, 2011 male literacy was 81.65% and female literacy was 67.80% which highlighted remarkable increase in this field. The trend of female literacy has been increased but not satisfactory (Kabeer, 2005). It is found that there is spatial variation in terms of educational developmental gaps across the district though the inter subdivision variation is not quite high. The difference ranges from 10.41 i.e. the minimum for Cooch Behar Sadar to 13.96 i.e. the maximum to Mekhliganj subdivision.

Literacy among Rural and Urban Population

There is wide range of educational gaps between rural and urban population in different sub-divisions of Cooch Behar district (Sharma, 2014). From table-3, it is found that Cooch Behar Sadar is representing minimum gap of education between rural and urban population literacy i.e. 0.14 and maximum gap of education i.e. 0.27 is found in Dinhata sub-division.

Educational Infrastructure

The present scenario in the district of Cooch Behar represents 1826 primary schools, 101 middle schools, 94 High Schools, 159 Higher Secondary Schools, 43 Professional and technical schools and 14 Colleges and only one University as found in the Census report, 2011. Some selected performance indicators of education of Cooch Behar district have been mentioned below.

Table 1 Changing Pattern of Total, Male and Female literacy in Cooch Behar district (1991 to 2011)

Name of the Sub-Division	Male-Female literacy rate of Cooch Behar district 1991			Male-Female literacy rate of Cooch Behar district 2011			Changing scenario of Literacy(1991-2011)		
	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Total Literacy	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Total Literacy	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Total Literacy
Cooch Behar	75.22	50.02	63.05	85.51	75.1	80.48	10.29	25.08	17.43
Dinhata	43.11	24.52	34.08	77.89	66.29	72.27	34.78	41.77	38.19
Mathabhanga	31.93	15.68	24.12	79.08	65.16	72.3	47.15	49.48	48.18
Tufanganj	47.07	26.58	37.12	81.44	68.93	75.38	34.37	42.35	38.26
Mekhliganj	43.44	21.39	32.87	77.07	63.11	70.25	33.63	41.72	37.38

Source: calculated by the Author

Table 2 Male-female educational disparities of Cooch Behar district (1991-2011)

Name of the Sub-Division	Male and Female literacy 1991			Male and Female literacy 2011		
	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Male and Female difference 1991	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Male and Female difference 2011
Cooch Behar	75.22	50.02	25.2	85.51	75.1	10.41
Dinhata	43.11	24.52	18.59	77.89	66.29	11.6
Mathabhanga	31.93	15.68	16.25	79.08	65.16	13.92
Tufanganj	47.07	26.58	20.49	81.44	68.93	12.51
Mekhliganj	43.44	21.39	22.05	77.07	63.11	13.96

Source: District Census report in different year.

Gender Disparities of Education

The disparity between male and female education is one of the burning social issues in India (Chatterjee, 1989). Female literacy is found always lower than that of male literacy in West Bengal due to poverty, ignorance to females, orthodox thoughts, prejudice etc.

Pupil Teacher Ratio

The total number of enrolment in primary education in 2011 of Cooch Behar district is 366103. The higher secondary level, the student enrolment is 231365 and 21160 in College and University level.

Table 3 Rural Urban Literacy Difference in Cooch Behar district, 2011

Name of the Sub-Division	District total	Rural Literacy 2011			Urban Literacy 2011			Difference		Mean	
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Total	Male		Female
Cooch Behar	80.48	83.64	71.78	77.69	92.26	85.9	89.12	11.43	8.62	14.12	0.14
Dinhata	72.27	76.83	64.84	71.02	93.94	87.67	90.85	19.83	17.11	22.83	0.27
Mathabhanga	72.3	78.52	64.29	71.59	93.4	86.7	90.09	18.5	14.88	22.41	0.26
Tufanganj	75.38	80.69	67.8	74.46	92.71	85.73	89.28	14.82	12.02	17.93	0.20
Mekhliganj	70.25	76.2	61.65	69.11	84.78	77.75	80.32	11.21	8.58	16.1	0.16

Table 4 Performance Indicators of Cooch Behar District

Performance Indicators	Primary Only	Primary and Upper Primary	Upper Primary	Upper Primary and Secondary	All School
% Single classroom schools	22.1	52.5	1.5	0	20.3
% Single teachers schools	5.9	0	0	0	4.5
% Enrolment in Govt. schools	88.9	0	97	98.5	91
% Govt. schools providing mid-day meal	99.1	0	43.5	26.5	90.6
% Govt. schools with kitchen-shed	88.3	0	18.7	20.1	78.9
% Schools with electricity	28.4	81.3	26.9	92.1	32.3
% Schools with playground	38.1	73.7	38.6	77	40.2
% Schools with drinking water facility	100	100	99.1	100	99.9
% Schools with boundary wall	26.7	78.3	64.6	65	31.1
% Schools with girls toilets	98.7	93.9	94	98.8	98.9
% Schools with boys toilets	97	96.5	94.5	98.2	96.8

Source: District Elementary Education Report Card 2011

It is clear that there is inverse relation between number of enrolment of the students and higher ducation. The huge percentage of student drop out from higher educational facilities is due to the poverty (Mendez & Knoff 2003). In the district, the Pupil Teachers ratio also is not adequate. The pupil teacher ratio of the district is 98 that is enough higher than the national average (40). From the table-4, it is found that in the school level, pupil teacher ratio is very high but in the college and university level, the ratio of pupil teacher is comparatively lower. The pupil teacher ratio of Mekhliganj and Cooch Behar Sub-division is 67.70 and 73.71 that are closer to the state average that is 40. But Dinhata, Mathabhanga and Tufanganj represent the maximum ratio of pupil teacher; 121.71, 141.42 and 85.71 respectively.

From table -5, it is found that the students load in institution is highest in Dinhata and Mathabhanga sub-division (1565.4 and 1567.4). The Institution pupil ratio is found also low in Cooch Behar Sadar (841.57), Mekhliganj (890.71) and Tufanganj (886.42).

The Level of Educational Development

The level of educational development in different Sub-divisions of Cooch Behar district has been calculated on the basis of some selected parameters like Male literacy (X₁), Female literacy (X₂), Male and Female literacy difference (X₃), Rural male literacy difference (X₄), Rural female literacy difference (X₅), Urban male literacy difference (X₆), Urban

Table 5 Pupil Teacher Enrolment Ratio in Cooch Behar District 2011

Name of the Sub-Division	Primary School	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary School	College and University	Professional and Technical Education	Special and Non- Formal Education	Mean
Cooch Behar	113	66	108	82	85	16	46	73.71
Dinhata	149	121	182	195	93	21	91	121.7
Mathabhanga	139	107	183	263	166	32	100	141.4
Tufanganj	89	68	134	117	113	18	61	85.71
Mekhliganj	72	71	85	91	86	28	41	67.71

Source: Calculated by Author

Table 6 Institution Pupil Ratio in Cooch Behar District, 2011

Name of the Sub-Division	Primary school	Middle school	High School	H.S School	College and University	professional and technical education	Special and Non- formal education	Mean
Cooch Behar	384	429	1292	1676	1853	176	81	841.57
Dinhata	475	645	2094	4166	3352	78	148	1565.4
Mathabhanga	421	578	2714	4045	2953	121	154	1569.4
Tufanganj	265	249	1496	2331	1710	55	99	886.42
Mekhliganj	245	432	938	2126	2336	92	66	890.71

There is wide range of disparities on the basis of number of students per institutions across the district of Cooch Behar. The Institution pupil ratio is good in primary school and middle school level but in the higher secondary level, the condition of institution pupil ratio is not desirable. The higher educational sector has been representing rather good condition.

From table 6; it is clear that the level of educational development is high in Mathabhanga and Cooch Behar sub-division (2.27 and 1.75) Dinhata and Tufanganj are show moderate level of educational development (0.66 and 0.92). The low level of educational development is found in Mekhliganj Sub-division with composite index value is -8.11.

Table 7 The Level of Educational Development in Cooch Behar District 2011

Sub-division	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇	X ₈	X ₉	X ₁₀	ΣX
Cooch Behar	1.56	1.68	-1.64	1.48	1.48	0.23	0.29	-0.94	-0.76	-1.62	1.75
Dinhata	-0.68	-0.5	0.21	-0.77	-0.32	0.67	0.73	1.18	0.74	-0.61	0.66
Mathabhanga	-0.33	-0.78	1.1	-0.21	-0.46	0.53	0.49	0.84	1.35	-0.26	2.27
Tufanganj	0.37	0.15	0.21	0.48	0.45	0.34	0.25	-0.09	-0.39	-0.86	0.92
Mekhliganj	-0.92	-0.54	0.13	-0.98	-1.14	-1.76	-1.75	-1	-0.95	0.8	-8.11

Source: Calculated by the Author

CONCLUSION

The overall scenario of the education status of Cooch Behar district is not satisfactory. Specially, the female literacy (68.2%) and rural literacy (72.84) status of the district of Cooch Behar is below the national average (74.04). But the male literacy and urban literacy status are high than national average (Visaria, Gumber & Visaria 1993). The pupil teacher enrolment ratio at school level is not well. At university and college level, the ratio of pupil teacher is comparatively better than school level. The Educational development in the district of Cooch Behar is very noticeable during last decade from 2001 to 2011. It is remarkable that the male and female educational gap is gradually decreasing in each sub-division of the district. The female literacy and rural literacy status are low in the district because poverty is one of important barrier for attainment of education. The literacy programme cannot be fruitful without poverty eradication programme (Veron Corbridge & Srivastava 2006). In this regard, the policy implementation of Govt. of West Bengal is satisfactory. Recently the "Kannyasri" project is highly successful to reduce drop out of females from the schools. But, it should not be the task of government only but each and every section of the society should be involved in such programmes.

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