

## Chapter VI

### **Educational Status of Scheduled Caste women of Koch Bihar District**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

One of the essential inputs for development is education; education passes on the social and cultural knowhow of one generation to the next. Literacy enables to achieve a greater social status with economic development through the social mobility process (Eric & Ludger, 2012; Beller et. al. 2006; Biblarz et. al. 1996 & Wankhede, 1999). The knowledge, norms, values, beliefs and morals that adult member think young member should learn, are transmitted through education (C.R. Reddy, 2010). Higher rate of literacy offers a better social status, cultural growth as well as economic development of an individual (Benjamin, 1991). UNESCO has defined literacy as the ability to recognize, understand, perceive, construct, communicate and compute using printed and written materials linked to different contexts. Literacy involves a learning process that helps a person to achieve his or her goals; to build his or her knowledge and potential; and to participate fully in the wider society. Being one of the most significant factors in socio-economic transformation, the study of the literacy trend and its variation on the gender of a region is very important (Barman & Chouhan, 2018).

The scheduled caste in India had been disadvantaged section in terms of education. The scheduled castes since the past have suffered not only economic dispossession and geographical segregation, but also have been denied access to social infrastructure: the most important one being education. The close system of stratification received religious sanction and social inequality was accepted as a religious value (Srinivas, 1962 & Chouhan, 1967). In the line with the factors of religion and values, education too in traditional India towards perpetuation of the close system of stratification in which Brahmins were trained to be a priests and scholars, Kshatriyas are rulers and warriors, Vysyas as business man. Under the pretext of the services to the above castes the Sudra presently dalits or Scheduled Castes were denied to education (Reddy, 2010). Early attempts to educate the untouchables are generally connected to British rule and the social reformers' efforts in India. (Geetha, 2002). Under British rule, the implementation of Western education opened new perspectives only to those castes that had access to education for various forms of mobility. Even the new education did not alleviate the scheduled castes from poor education and backwardness. The upper caste can only

monopolized Western education, while the scheduled castes were exempt from Western education until the first decade of the 12th century. (Beteille, 1977). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the help of social reformer like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Raja Rammohon Roy, Debendra Nath Thakur the education became accessible to the lower class people but it was mostly concentrated in Bengal. Vidyasagar also gave special emphasis on the improvement of the girls' education. He was established various girl's school in Bengal at that time. Post reforms in the educational inclusion of the lower class people, during the British period that started in Bengal. B.R. Ambedkar played an important role in the education of Dalits or Scheduled Caste people. He has also paved the way to help attain the overall development for the Untouchable or Dalits. In 1928 he established "Depressed class Educational Society" to organize school education (Keer, 1971). After the Independence the scheduled caste and other backward class of India got the opportunity to education under the constitutional rights of article 15 which prohibits any discrimination on the ground of Religion, Sex, Caste, Race and place of birth or any of them. Chapter VI is mainly focuses on the educational status of SC women of the Koch Bihar District and how the education is helping empower the women.

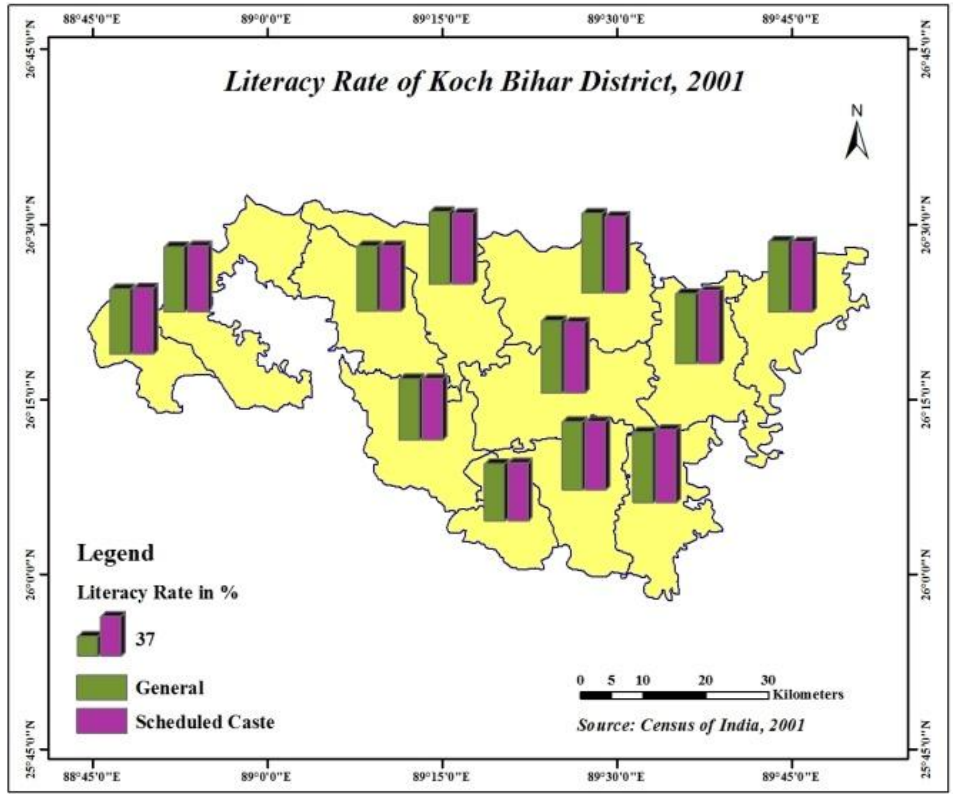
## **6.2 Block wise literacy rate of Koch Bihar District**

To understand the educational status of any region the literacy rate and level of literacy is one of the most important elements which gives an immediate educational over view about the study area. Literacy is a significant measure of any region's human development. The primary aim of education is to achieve the complete growth and fulfillment of individual human beings (UNESCO, 2013). Literacy builds a nation's cultural and socio-economic infrastructure. It declines the ethnic division. Literacy plays a significant role in abolishing poverty, in building up human resource and key to socialization. Literacy generates patriotic air among the mass. Literacy offers an ability to give oneself its own identity that subsequently creates good society. In case of the SC population, they have faced ill-treatment in schools and loss of self-worth and dignity, which result in drop outs or poor performance in examinations, thereby undermining their chances of advancing to higher levels of education. This has also created an obstacle in the job carrier and a feeling of alienation from their communities (Sedwal and Kamat, 2008). Literacy allows individuals to establish a good relationship in society. It also improves the capacity of an individual. Literacy is also a strong predictor of development in terms of backwardness or forwardness. (Roy and Mondal, 2015).Where literacy rate is high it indicates that this

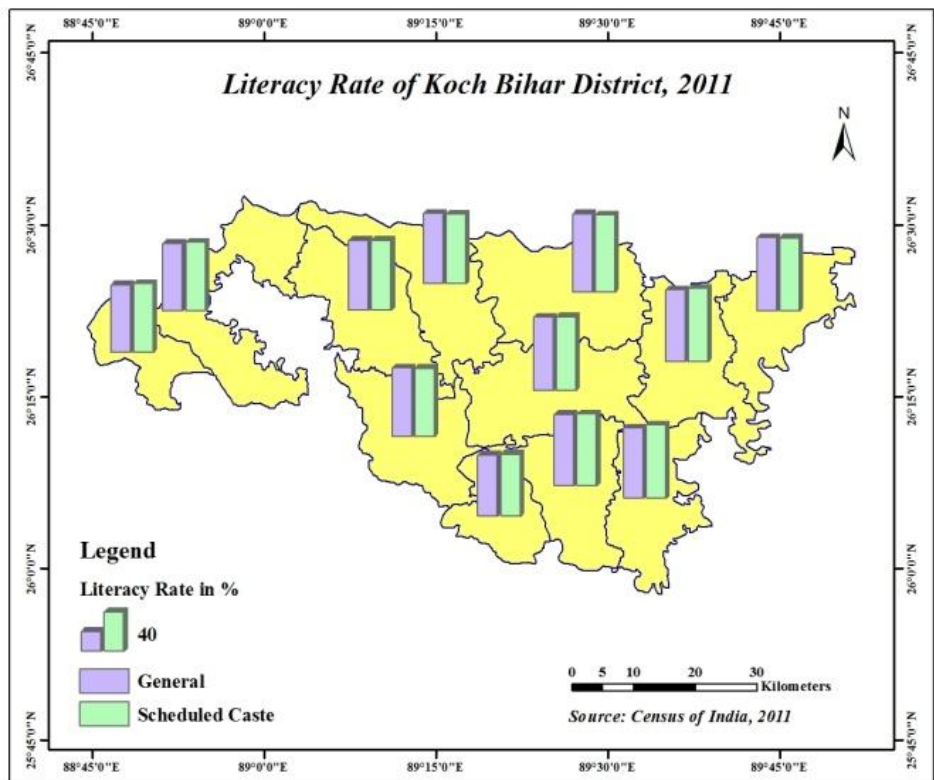
region is developed and where the literacy rate is low it indicates that the region is underdeveloped. So, the rate of literacy is used as a positive indicator or measurement of urban or rural development. Literacy is often considered as one of the sensitive indicators of social development. This is because literacy helps a social group to achieve a higher social position through the social mobility process. Thus, studies regarding the literacy pattern of a country seem to be relevant enough in today's society (Dutta and L Sivaramakrishnan, 2013). Literacy refers to the capability of a person to read and write with understanding in at least one language. According to the Census of India, 'a person who can read and write with understanding in any language is considered as literate.' The person may or may not have received any formal education. All children below the age of 6 years have been treated as illiterate (Census of India, 2011).

Female literacy is also very important because male and female are the two pillars of our society. But from the beginning women are deprived from literacy. At present after 70 years of independence the gender gap in literacy is huge. Mahatma Gandhi stated that education is also needed for women as it is for men. He believed that education is important for women to be able to claim their natural rights, to exercise them wisely, and to work for their development. He thought that women's low levels of literacy had deprived them of socio-political strength and the power of knowledge as well. He advocated for proper education to the women because, as it helps to the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected (Jain et. al, 2003).

Another aspect of the society is backwardness of backward classes. After independence the Government started the policy of reservation which was and remains politically motivated in favors of the backward classes like scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. Special attempts have been made for educational advancement of SCs and STs by offering economic and social facilities to students belonging to these backward groups to improve their economic and social status; and to reduce poverty and social discrimination in society but even today scheduled caste/scheduled tribe population is lagging behind in all aspects in India and so is the scenario, observed in Koch Bihar district.



Map 6.1 Literacy rate of Koch Bihar District, 2001.



Map 6.2 Literacy rate of Koch Bihar District, 2011.

Map 6.1 and 6.2 shows the block wise SC and general population of Koch Bihar District in the census year 2001 and 2011. In both the census years, the literacy rate of the SC and

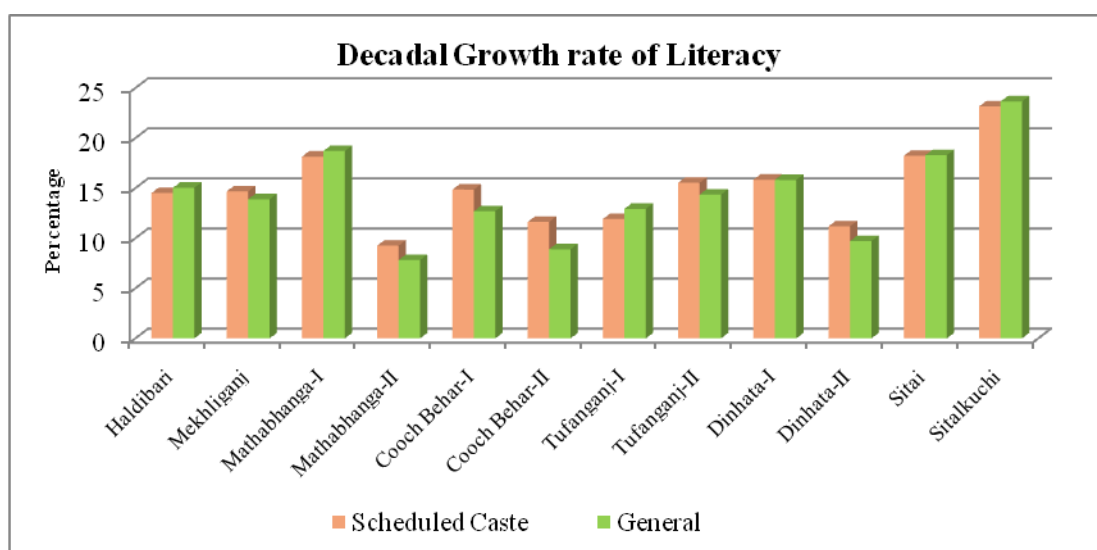
general caste is higher in Cooch Behar II Block than the others blocks. The reason of high literacy in the aforesaid block is because the area is more urbanized and industrially developed than the other blocks. So the literate people of the nearby block migrate to this Cooch Behar II for job opportunity and educational purpose, which has the highest number of Schools, colleges and some reputed educational institute. However, in other blocks some changes have taken place during last census year. According to the 2001 census, Mathabhanga II block was in 2<sup>nd</sup> position in General literacy rate followed by Cooch Behar I, Tufanganj II and Tufanganj I. But in 2011 census Tufanganj II block has taken the 2<sup>nd</sup> position in general literacy rate followed by Cooch Behar I and Tufanganj I. Sitai block is in the lowest position in accordance to the general literacy rate in both the census years. In terms of SC literacy in 2001 census Dinhata II was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> position followed by Tufanganj I and Mathabhanga II but in the 2011 census 2<sup>nd</sup> position is taken by Tufanganj I followed by Cooch Behar I and Dinhata II. Here also the lowest position is taken by Sitai block.

Table 6.1 Decadal Growth Rate of Literacy.

Blocks	Scheduled Caste Literacy Rate		Decadal Growth Rate of Literacy	General Literacy Rate		Decadal Growth Rate of Literacy
	2001	2011		2001	2011	
Haldibari	61.41	70.32	14.51	60.17	69.22	15.04
Mekhliganj	61.17	70.15	14.68	60.61	69.03	13.89
Mathabhanga-I	60.45	71.42	18.15	60.24	71.51	18.71
Mathabhanga-II	65.87	71.97	<b>9.26</b>	67.4	72.68	<b>7.83</b>
Cooch Behar-I	65.81	75.59	14.86	66.94	75.44	12.70
Cooch Behar-II	70.93	79.18	11.63	73.9	80.48	8.90
Tufanganj-I	67.61	75.67	11.92	65.21	73.64	12.93
Tufanganj-II	65.01	75.11	15.54	66.07	75.56	14.36
Dinhata-I	63.49	73.55	15.85	63.07	73.05	15.82
Dinhata-II	67.8	75.39	11.19	65.92	72.33	9.72
Sitai	53.81	63.62	18.23	53.08	62.79	18.29
Sitalkuchi	56.92	70.1	<b>23.16</b>	56.88	70.34	<b>23.66</b>

Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2001 & 2011

The decadal growth rate of literacy is highest in Sitalkuchi block for both SC (23.16) and General (23.66). The growth rate in Sitalkuchi block is high because of some newly established high school, upgradation of some upper primary school to high school and most important is the establishment of Sitalkuchi College. Mathabhanga II on the other hand is seen to have low decadal literacy rate, where both general (7.83) and Scheduled Caste (9.26) have lowest rate of growth among the twelve blocks. The other blocks that follow are Dinhata II for SC (11.19) and Cooch Behar II for General (8.90). The reason behind the low decadal growth rate is migration for education. The students move from the village school to the nearby towns, where infrastructural facilities in the educational institutes are better than that of the native village schools. The people mostly tend to send their children in good schools, so in the study area it is seen that if they live in and around Cooch Behar town they prefer Jenkin's School and Suniti Academy for their wards; if they live nearer to the Tufanganj town they prefer N.N.M High school and Iladevi and if they live nearer to the Dinhata town then they prefer Gopalnagar High School and Dinhata High School etc.



Data Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2001 & 2011

Figure 6.1: Growth Rate of Literacy.

After comparing both the decadal literacy rate of SC and General it is observed that in five blocks namely Haldibari, Mathabhanga II, Dinhata I, Sitai and Sitalkuchi the growth rate are almost similar and in six blocks Mekhliganj, Mathabhanga II, Cooch Behar I, Cooch Behar II, Tufanganj II and Dinhata II the growth rate of literacy among SCs are higher than the General. Only in Tufanganj I block the growth rate of literacy of General population is high which indicates that the literacy rate is increased among the SC

population than the general population. In next census rate of literacy of SC may cross the general literacy rate in all the blocks which is a clear indication of backward class development.

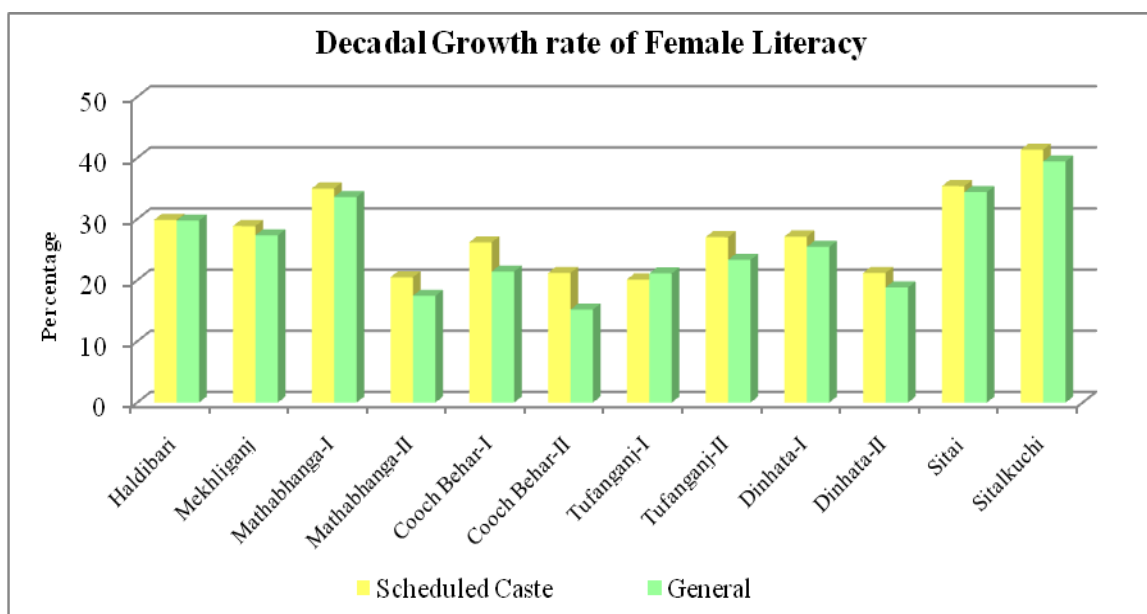
Table 6.2 Decadal Growth Rate of Female Literacy.

Blocks	Scheduled Caste Female Literacy			General Female Literacy		
	2001	2011	Decadal Growth	2001	2011	Decadal Growth
Haldibari	48.07	62.43	29.87	48.2	62.54	29.75
Mekhliganj	47.69	61.45	28.85	47.92	61.02	27.34
Mathabhanga-I	46.34	62.56	35.00	47.68	63.71	33.62
Mathabhanga-II	53.11	63.99	20.49	55.81	65.55	17.45
Cooch Behar-I	53.68	67.74	26.19	56.92	69.11	21.42
Cooch Behar-II	59.55	72.17	21.19	64.67	74.5	<b>15.20</b>
Tufanganj-I	56.89	68.33	<b>20.11</b>	55.42	67.12	21.11
Tufanganj-II	53.36	67.79	27.04	55.73	68.72	23.31
Dinhata-I	52.44	66.67	27.14	53.5	67.12	25.46
Dinhata-II	56.7	68.72	21.20	55.62	66.1	18.84
Sitai	41.65	56.39	35.39	41.82	56.21	34.41
Sitalkuchi	43.94	62.11	<b>41.35</b>	45.48	63.41	<b>39.42</b>

Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District 2001 & 2011.

The table 6.2 shows growth rate of the female literacy for Scheduled Caste and General population from 2001 to 2011. Highest growth rate of female literacy is observed in Sitalkuchi block for both Scheduled Caste (41.35) and General (39.42) population and lowest decadal growth is observed in Tufanganj I (20.11) for SC and Cooch Behar II (15.20) for General population. There is a huge gap existing between this two-class group which indicates the female literacy is improving among the SC at a faster rate than the General population compared to the last decade.

From the figure 6.2 it is clearly observed that except Tufanganj I block the decadal growth rate of the SC females are higher than the General females in every blocks of the district. In Haldibari and Sitai, decadal growth rate of literacy among the General female is almost equal to the decadal growth rate of literacy for scheduled caste female. Figure 6.2 mention that the female literacy growth rate is increasing rapidly in the district because of the new establishment of school in the blocks and various scholarships schemes which inspire the girls for education.



*Data Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2001&2011*

**Figure 6.2: Decadal Growth Rate of Female Literacy**

**Table 6.3: Literacy rate of the sample village of Koch Bihar District.**

Sl. No	Name of the sample Village	SC Female Literacy Rate	SC Male Literacy Rate	Sl. No	Name of the sample Village	SC Female Literacy Rate	SC Male Literacy Rate
1	Debottar	43.44	56.56	31	Chaudanga	44.85	55.15
2	Bakshiganj	45.18	54.82	32	Sakunibala	43.48	56.52
3	Hudumdanga	44.64	55.36	33	Jatrapur	46.31	53.69
4	Nijtaraf	44.05	55.95	34	GhogarKuthiDwitiaKhanda	42.97	57.03
5	Mekliganj	41.5	58.5	35	Deocharai	43.62	56.38
6	Jamaldaha	46.73	53.27	36	Sikdarekhata	41.48	58.52
7	Jamal Dahahat	41.28	58.72	37	Maradanga	45.17	54.83
8	DwarikamariKhasbas	40.4	59.6	38	Bara Kodali	44.32	55.68
9	BajejamaKuchlibari	44.84	55.16	39	Mansai	45.21	54.79
10	Bara Nijtaraf	43.3	56.7	40	Takoamari	43.13	56.87
11	Uttar Kharkharia	42.34	57.66	41	Bara Atiabari	44.94	55.06
12	ChengarKhata	43.62	56.38	42	PrathamKhanda	43.71	56.29
13	Dhandhania	42.55	57.45	43	Sakdal	45.78	54.22
14	Mahishcharu	45.2	54.8	44	ChhotoAtiabari	42.2	57.8
15	Baisguri	45.93	54.07	45	Binani	45.55	54.45
16	Bara DolaGadalerkuthi	39.45	60.55	46	Alokjhari	45.52	54.48
17	Bherbheri	40.91	59.09	47	Putimari	45.55	54.45
18	Lafabari	45.55	54.45	48	Lauchapra	44.97	55.03
19	ChakiarChhara	44.08	55.92	49	JaygirBalabari	41.4	58.6
	Kodalksheti				Chanderkuthi		

20	Khatimari	44.52	55.48	50	MansabSeoraguri	45.52	54.48
21	Chandamari	44.2	55.8	51	MeghNarayanerKuthi	42.34	57.66
22	Talliguri	45.6	54.4	52	ShukarurKuthi	43.13	56.87
23	Dauaguri	46.3	53.7	53	Uttar Singimari	41.24	58.76
24	Baghmara	41.93	58.07	54	Balapukhari	43.2	56.8
25	CharakerKuthi	45.82	54.18	55	Panikhawa	42.74	57.26
26	KharimalaKha grabari	42.44	57.56	56	Satimari	43.9	56.1
27	Simulguri	45.25	54.75	57	Bara Dhaperchatra	42.66	57.34
28	Hatiduba	45.09	54.91	58	Jatamari	44.39	55.61
29	Chapaguri	44.72	55.28				
30	Sonari	41.43	58.57				

*Source: Census of India, 2011*

For finding the literacy difference between men and women in the district, Mann Whitney U-test has been done as the data is not normal. The total 58 sample villages of the district have been included in the test. The U-test reveals that there is a significant difference exists between male and female literacy rate as the p value is (0.00) less than 0.05 which is significant and reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between the variable. The mean rank of male literacy rate is 87.50, mean rank for female literacy rate is 29.50, total number of observation is 116, and p value is 0.00. So the research hypothesis “**literacy rate among scheduled caste women are low than the scheduled caste men**” is significant.

Table 6.4 is showing male female literacy gap of population in the District of the census year 2011 for General and SC population. From the table it is observed although the female literacy rate is increasing but there is a huge gap that exists in rural area. There is an inverse relation between gender gap in literacy and women education, where low gap means high women education. Highest male female literacy gap (17.16) is found in Mathabhanga I blocks for SC population followed by Mekhliganj (16.85), Sitalkuchi (15.73) and Mathabhanga II (15.53) and lowest male female gap is found in Dinhata II (12.78) block followed by Dinhata I (13.32) and Cooch Behar II (13.47) which means this three blocks are better in terms of female education then the other blocks. Whereas for General population highest gap is observed in Mekhliganj (15.53) block followed by Mathabhanga I (15.12), Mathabhanga II (13.85) and Sitalkuchi (13.62) and lowest male female gap is found in Cooch Behar II (11.36) block followed by Dinhata I (11.50) and

Dinhata II (11.99). From the table it is clear that in terms of literacy rate gender gap is higher among the SC than the General population.

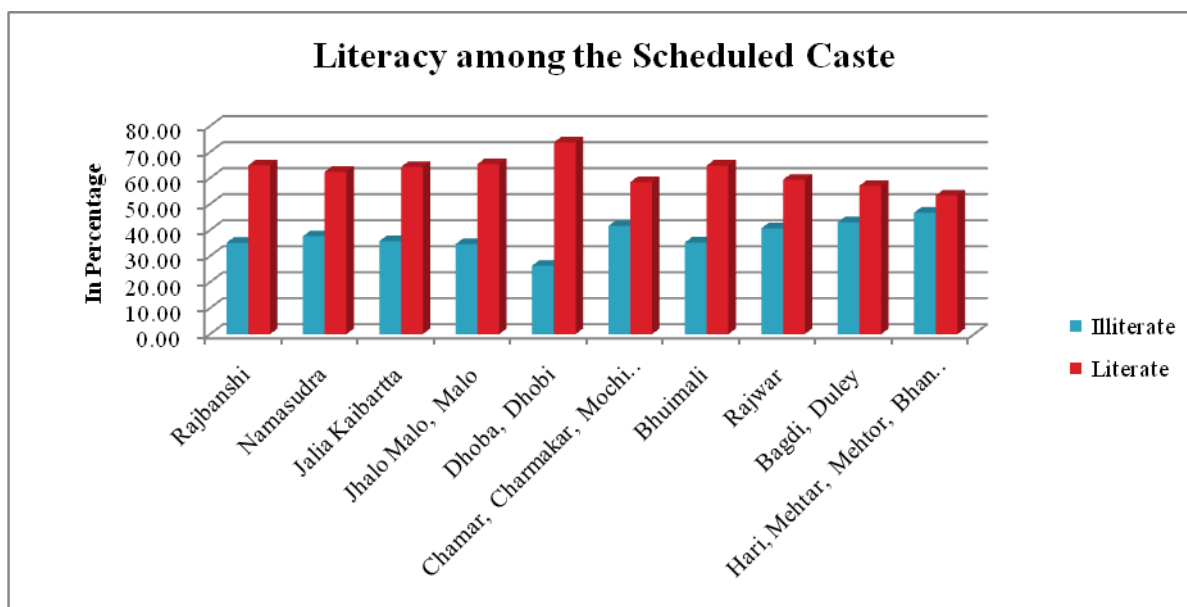
Table 6.4 Gender Gap in Literacy Rate of Scheduled Caste and General Population of Koch Bihar District.

Blocks	Scheduled Caste Literacy rate			General Literacy rate		
	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Male	Female	Gender Gap
Haldibari	77.89	62.43	15.46	75.69	62.54	13.15
Mekhliganj	78.3	61.45	16.85	76.55	61.02	<b>15.53</b>
Mathabhanga-I	79.72	62.56	<b>17.16</b>	78.83	63.71	15.12
Mathabhanga-II	79.52	63.99	15.53	79.4	65.55	13.85
Cooch Behar-I	82.88	67.74	15.14	81.38	69.11	12.27
Cooch Behar-II	85.64	72.17	13.47	85.86	74.5	<b>11.36</b>
Tufanganj-I	82.53	68.33	14.2	79.74	67.12	12.62
Tufanganj-II	82.02	67.79	14.23	81.97	68.72	13.25
Dinhata-I	79.99	66.67	13.32	78.62	67.12	11.5
Dinhata-II	81.5	68.72	<b>12.78</b>	78.09	66.1	11.99
Sitai	70.65	56.39	14.26	69.17	56.21	12.96
Sitalkuchi	77.84	62.11	15.73	77.03	63.41	13.62

Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District 2011.

The figure 6.3 reveals that literacy rate among ten most dominated SCs of the study area. From the figure it is clear literacy rate is very high among Dhoba or Dhobi i.e. 73.70 percent followed by the Jhalomalo or Malo (65.37) and Rajbanshi (64.89) community. Rajbanshi is the most dominant scheduled caste community of the district which comprises nearly 70 percent of the total SC population of the district. The literacy rate is very low among the Hari, Methar, Bhanghi and Balmiki communities which comprise the lowest literacy rate of 53.31 percent followed Bagdi or Duley(57.01) and Chamar, Charmakar, Mochi, Rabidas, Ruidas, Rishi communities which is only 58.41 percent. The average literacy rate of the district is 74.78 which are slightly more over than the national average but the average literacy rate of the SC literacy rate is 73.15 which are below the national average and the state average, which is 77.07 percent.

### 6.3 Sub Caste wise literacy rate



Data Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2011

Figure 6.3: Literacy Rate among the Scheduled Caste.

Table 6.5 Gender Gap in literacy rate among the Scheduled Caste.

Sl. No	Sub Caste	Literacy Rate in percent		
		Male	Female	Gap
1	Rajbanshi	71.58	58.19	13.39
2	Namasudra	68.36	56.39	11.97
3	Jaliakaibartta	69.78	58.79	10.98
4	JhaloMalo, Malo	69.93	60.80	9.13
5	Dhoba, Dhobi	78.50	68.91	9.60
6	Chamar, Charmakar, Mochi, Muchi, Rabidas, Ruidas, Rishi	63.77	53.05	10.72
7	Bhuimali	70.68	58.90	11.78
8	Rajwar	65.09	53.61	11.49
9	Bagdi, Duley	61.62	52.40	9.22
10	Hari, Mehtar, Mehtor, Bhangi, Balmiki	59.00	47.61	11.39
	District Average Literacy Rate	80.37	65.45	14.92

Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2011

The table 6.5 shows that the male and female literacy rate and gender gap in literacy among the major SC communities of Koch Bihar district. Here highest male literacy is observed among the Dhoba or Dhobi (78.50) followed by Rajbanshi (71.58) and Bhuimali (70.68). The literacy rates of the males as have been found in the study are lower than the district average, which is 80.37 percent. The lowest value of male literacy is observed among the Hari, Methar, Bhangi and Balmiki community which is only 59.00 percent. In case of female literacy Dhoba or Dhobi (68.91) takes first position and Hari, Methar, Bhangi, Balmiki (47.61) occupy the lowest position. The district average SC female literacy rate is 65.45 percent. Except Dhoba all the scheduled castes female literacy rate is below the district average. Gender gap in literacy is high among the Rajbanshi community

despite the high literacy rate, which indicates the inequality among male and female in education and educational facility in their family.

Table 6.6 Education Level of the various Sub Castes of Scheduled Caste population in Koch Bihar district.

Sl. No	Sub Caste	Below Primary		Primary		Upper Primary		Secondary		of Higher Secondary		Graduate and above	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Rajbanshi	21.27	18.76	20.99	17.51	15.88	13.41	5.23	3.85	5.44	3.34	2.47	1.10
2	Namasudra	21.91	19.11	21.12	18.56	14.05	11.96	4.20	3.09	4.61	2.66	2.19	0.80
3	Jalia Kaibartta	22.38	20.51	20.80	18.21	13.53	12.05	4.43	3.25	5.45	3.28	2.81	1.27
4	Jhalo Malo, M	24.19	22.20	22.98	20.34	12.30	11.48	3.91	2.89	4.40	2.83	1.97	0.83
5	Dhoba, Dhobi	17.28	18.41	21.42	19.50	18.73	17.79	7.39	5.47	9.07	5.71	4.31	1.75
6	Chamar, Charn	22.07	20.66	20.71	18.18	12.14	9.42	3.57	1.87	3.51	1.98	1.52	0.70
7	Bhuimali	23.67	22.09	21.02	19.67	13.84	11.10	4.12	2.60	5.65	2.49	2.01	0.62
8	Rajwar	27.72	23.31	20.64	17.48	10.88	8.60	2.09	1.90	2.25	1.50	0.86	0.40
9	Bagdi, Duley	24.96	23.75	17.44	13.10	9.74	10.08	2.99	3.20	4.19	1.32	1.54	0.57
10	Hari, Mehtar, I	21.61	20.99	19.67	13.50	11.54	8.15	2.49	2.25	2.49	2.53	1.11	0.19

Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2011

The table 6.6 shows the educational level of the various sub-castes in the district of Koch Bihar. Among the scheduled caste most of the people are literate upto below primary level. The males of Rajwar community has the highest attainment below primary level which is 27.72 percent out of the total male (in the district or the SC's not clear) and in case of females Bagdi community occupy the highest place with 23.75 percent have attained below primary level education.. The literacy rate is slightly decreasing from the below primary level to graduation level. In the primary level is the rate of attainment is highest among the JhaloMalo or Malo community for both Male (22.98) and female and lowest value is found among the Bagdis, Duley for both male (17.44) and female (13.10). In the educational level like Upper Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and Graduation level the Dhoba, Dhobi community has consistently taken highest position among all the community but the percentage of literate population is gradually decreased for both male and female category for male 18.73 percent in upper primary to 4.31 percent in graduation and incase of female 17.79 percent from upper primary to only 1.75 percent in graduation and above category. This indicates female participation in higher education is very low. Also, it is seen that out of the ten sub caste, seven sub-castes have less the 1 percent literacy rate in graduation and above category.

Table 6.7 Gender Gap in educational level of the various Sub Castes of Scheduled Caste population in Koch Bihar district.

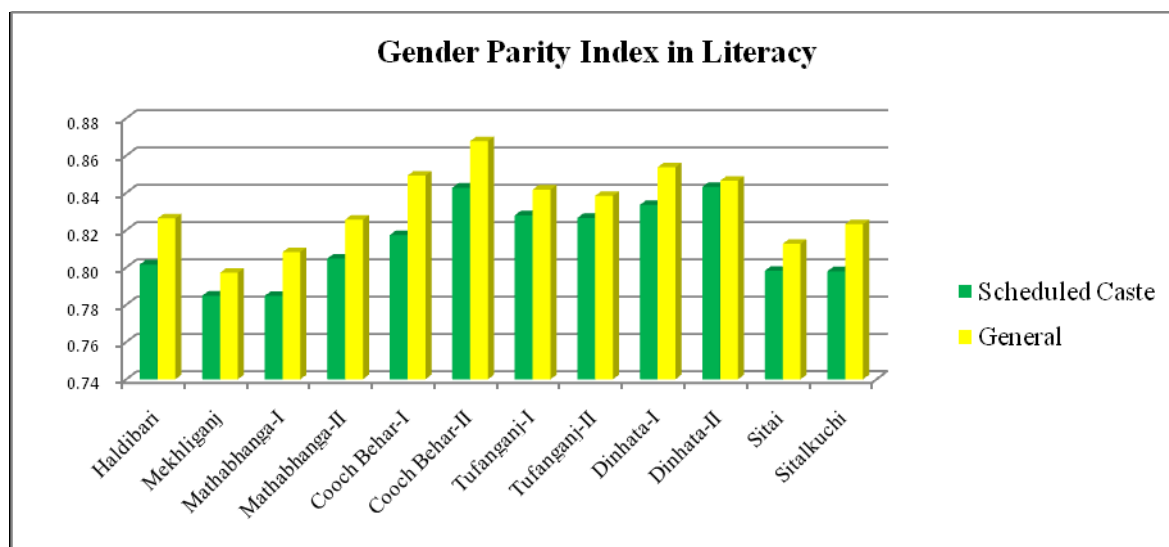
Sl. No	Sub Caste	Below Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduate and above
1	Rajbanshi	2.52	3.49	2.48	1.38	2.10	1.37
2	Namasudra	2.80	2.56	2.09	1.12	1.95	1.38
3	JaliaKaibartta	1.87	2.59	1.48	1.19	2.18	1.55
4	JhaloMalo, Malo	1.98	2.64	0.82	1.02	1.58	1.13
5	Dhoba, Dhobi Chamar, Charmakar, Mochi, Muchi, Rabidas, Ruidas,	-1.13	1.92	0.94	1.92	3.36	2.56
6	Rishi	1.41	2.53	2.71	1.70	1.53	0.82
7	Bhuimali	1.59	1.35	2.74	1.51	3.16	1.38
8	Rajwar	4.41	3.16	2.29	0.19	0.75	0.45
9	Bagdi, Duley Hari, Mehtar, Mehtar, Bhangi,	1.21	4.34	-0.34	-0.21	2.87	0.97
10	Balmiki	0.61	6.17	3.39	0.24	-0.04	0.92
Total		17.26	30.73	18.60	10.05	19.44	12.55

Negative    
 Lowest    
 Highest

*Source: District Census Handbook 2011*

Literacy rate has increased rapidly in the last decade in Koch Bihar District but the gender gap is still prevalent. Only in few cases educational level the female is more than the male. The table shows the gender gap in educational level of the various sub castes of scheduled caste population in Koch Bihar. Here yellow represents negative, light green color represents lowest and light pink color represents highest. The high gap means more inequality between male and female education and low gap indicate the females' are in a better position and negative gap means the number of females are more than male in terms of educational attainment at various levels. Negative gap has been observed in four educational levels below primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. In below primary level Dhoba, Dhobi sub caste has the negative gap of -1.13 percent. Negative growth has also found among the Bagdi, Duley community in upper primary and secondary level. In Higher Secondary level Hari, Methar, Bhangi, Balmiki has the negative gap which indicates female are more literate than male. Highest gender gap in literacy is observed in primary level i.e. 30.73 percent and lowest gender gap is found in secondary level. Hari, Methar, Bhangi, Balmiki has the highest gender gap in primary and upper primary and Dhobi, Dhopa has the heights Gander gap in secondary to Graduation and above.

## 6.4 Gender Parity in literacy

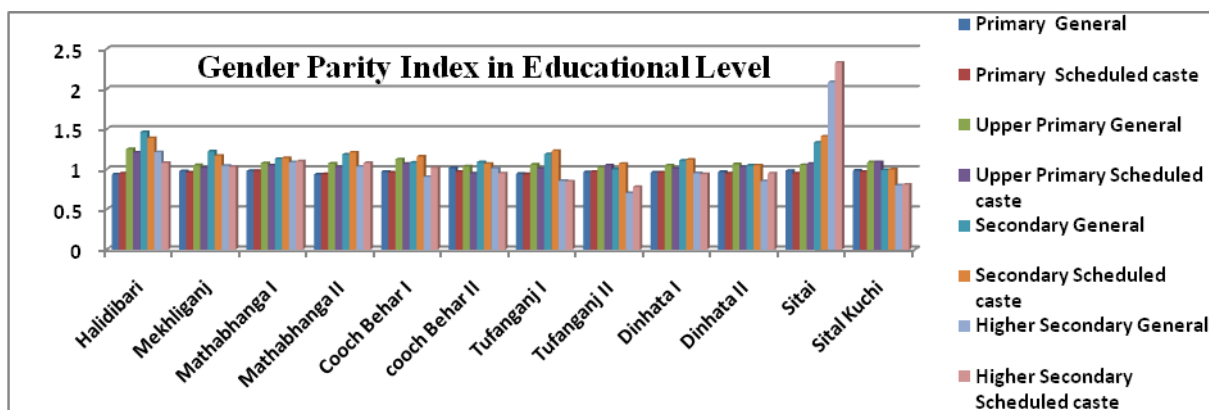


*Data Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2011*

Figure 6.4: Gender parity Index in literacy rate block wise of Koch Bihar District.

Gender parity means the female outnumber male. Here gender parity index in literacy means the female literacy over male literacy. If the parity index value lies below 1 it indicates female literacy level is lower than the male. If the male and female literacy are same it shows exactly 1 and if the index value is more than 1 it indicates female literacy level is more than male. Figure 6.4 indicates the gender parity index of the twelve blocks of Koch Bihar district for both general population and SC population. In every block gender parity index of general population is higher than the scheduled caste population which indicates the female education is quiet better among general population. Of the twelve blocks in the study area, Cooch Behar II block has the highest gender parity index followed by Cooch Behar I and Dinhata I. For the general population the lowest gender parity is observed in Mekhliganj block for general population. In case of SC population highest gender parity index is found in Cooch Behar II and Dinhata II and lowest is in Mekhliganj block.

Educational level wise gender parity index is clearly understood by the figure 6.5. In every block gender parity index in primary level is less than one which indicates that the female attainment/enrolment of education is lower than male in primary level for both scheduled caste and general.



Data Source: District Census Handbook of Koch Bihar District, 2011

Figure 6.5: Gender Parity Index in various educational level of Scheduled Caste and General population of Koch Bihar district.

In the upper primary level except Cooch Behar II block all the other block have gender parity index that is more than one for both general and SC population, which shows that the females representation is more than male in upper primary level. Gender Parity index in secondary level is quiet better and except Cooch Behar II and Sitalkuchi block other ten blocks have the index value more than one which indicates the females are more than male in secondary level. But within the ten blocks Haldibari and Sitai are in the better position as the index value is better among the ten blocks. In higher secondary level the scenario is slightly different, here Haldibari, Mekhliganj, Mathabhanga-I, Mathabhanga II and Sitai these five blocks have the index value more than one but within the five blocks Sitai has the highest index value which is more than two for both general and SC population which indicates the Sitai has a tremendous growth in higher secondary level for both scheduled caste and general population because of the new development of school and various scholarship scheme by the Government mainly for female students like Kanyashree and another reason is the establishment of new school and college and rest seven blocks have index value less than one.

In the block wise data almost in every block the gender parity index in education is near or more than one but within the scheduled caste community the results is different. Here in primary level out of the ten sub castes Dhoba, Dhobi has the index value more than one and rest of the sub castes are less than one. In primary level the index value is less than one in every sub caste except Bagdi and Duley which have more than one index value for both upper primary and secondary educational level. Hari, Mehtar, Mehtor, Bhangi, Balmiki have index value more than one in higher secondary level. In Graduation and above level of education the index values are very low which indicates the SC females are

numerically less in the higher education as compared to male. The main reason behind this under representation is the marriage of the girls' at a young age and it also depends on their economic condition.

Table 6.8 Gender Parity Index among the various scheduled caste.

Sub Caste	Gender Parity Index					
	Below Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation and Above
Rajbanshi	0.88	0.83	0.84	0.74	0.61	0.44
Namasudra	0.87	0.88	0.85	0.73	0.58	0.37
JaliaKaibartta	0.92	0.88	0.89	0.73	0.60	0.45
JhaloMalo, Malo	0.92	0.89	0.93	0.74	0.64	0.42
Dhoba, Dhobi	1.07	0.91	0.95	0.74	0.63	0.41
Chamar, Charmakar, Mochi, Muchi, Rabidas, Ruidas, Rishi	0.94	0.88	0.78	0.52	0.56	0.46
Bhuimali	0.93	0.94	0.80	0.63	0.44	0.31
Rajwar	0.84	0.85	0.79	0.91	0.67	0.47
Bagdi, Duley	0.95	0.75	1.04	1.07	0.32	0.37
Hari, Mehtar, Mehtor, Bhangi, Balmiki	0.97	0.69	0.71	0.90	1.01	0.17

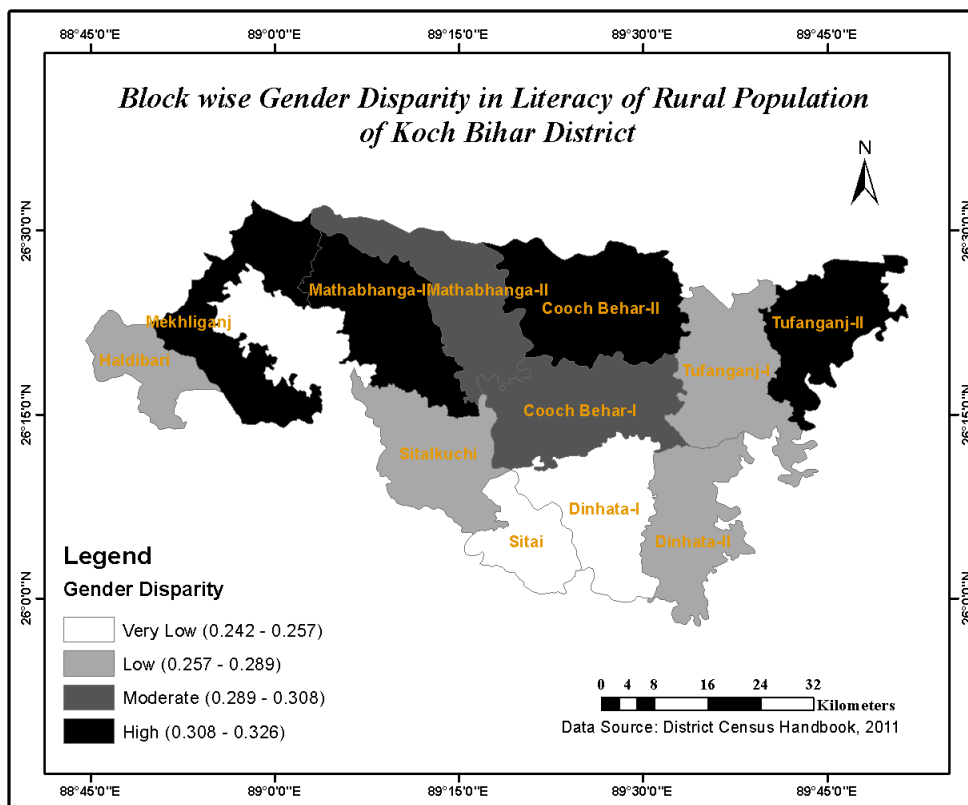
Source: District Census Handbook 2011

### 6.5 Gender Disparity in literacy

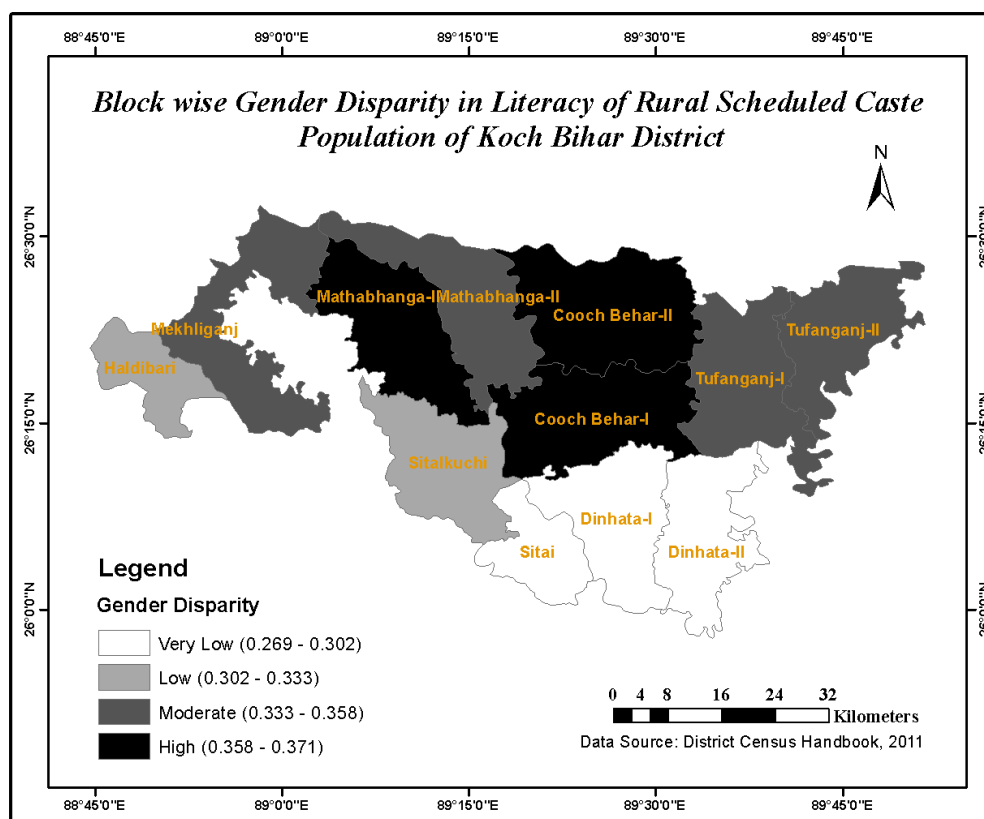
The disparity in male female literacy has been grouped into four categories i.e. High, Moderate, Low and Very Low. Most of the Indian society, caste and communities are male centric, so the females are deprived from their educational right. Therefore huge disparity occurs between male and female literacy. The maps 6.3 and 6.4 are show the General and Scheduled Caste gender disparity of the twelve blocks of Koch Bihar District. The district has been divided in four categories on the basis of gender disparity. These are high, moderate, low and very low category.

#### *High Disparity:*

From the map 6.3 and 6.4 it is observed that the gender disparity is high (>.308) in four blocks namely Mekhliganj, Mathabhanga I, Cooch Behar II and Tufanganj II for the general population and on the other hand for scheduled caste population gender disparity in literacy is high (>0.358) in Mathabhanga I, Cooch Behar I and Cooch Behar II block. Although the literacy rate is similar among the general and scheduled caste population but rate of disparity is very high among SC population.



Map 6.3 Block wise gender disparity in literacy of rural population of Koch Bihar district.



Map 6.4 Block wise gender disparity in literacy of rural Scheduled Caste population of Koch Bihar district.

*Moderate Disparity:*

Moderate gender disparity (0.289-0.308) in literacy for general population has been found in two blocks such as Cooch Behar I and Mathabhanga I and for SC population Mekhiganj, Mathabhanga II, Tufanganj I and Tufanganj II block has been found under moderate disparity (0.333-0.358).

*Low Disparity:*

General Low gender disparity of literacy (0.257-0.289) is observed in four blocks, such as Tufanganj I and Dinhata II, Haldibari and Sitalkuchi for SC population the low gender disparity of literacy (0.302-0.333) is found only Haldibari.

*Very Low Disparity:*

Very low disparity of literacy (<0.257) is observed in Dinhata I and Sitai blocks for general population and Dinhata I and Dinhata II and Sitai for SC population(<0.302).

Table 6.9 Gender Disparity in literacy among the Scheduled Caste.

Sl. No	Sub Caste	Male	Female	Gender Disparity
1	Rajbanshi	71.58	58.19	0.258
2	Namasudra	68.36	56.39	0.223
3	Jaliakaibartta	69.78	58.79	0.209
4	Jhalomalo, Malo	69.93	60.80	0.176
5	Dhoba, Dhobi	78.50	68.91	0.217
6	Chamar, Charmakar, Mochi, Muchi, Rabidas, Ruidas, Rishi	63.77	53.05	0.192
7	Bhuimali	70.68	58.90	0.226
8	Rajwar	65.09	53.61	0.208
9	Bagdi, Duley	61.62	52.40	0.164
10	Hari, Mehtar, Mehtor, Bhangi, Balmiki	59.00	47.61	0.200

Source: District Census Handbook 2011

Table 6.9 shows the gender disparity in literacy of the ten major scheduled castes of Koch Bihar district. The gender disparity Index always varies from 0 to 1. Here 0 means no disparity and 1 means very high disparity between male and female. From the table it is observed that disparity is very high among Rajbanshi (0.258) community followed by Bhuimali (0.226), Namasudra (0.223) and Dhoba (0.217) and low disparity rate is observed among Hari, Methar, Bhangi, balmiki which consists only 0.164 index value followed by Jhalomalo, Malo and Chamar, Charmaker, Mochi, Ruidas, Rabidas which indicates the position of female education is better in these community than rest of the other sub castes because the of these communities start working their traditional work like

shoe making from a very young age with their parents so they involve themselves in the business and they become less interested in their study. The low disparity rate does not indicate the female literacy is high. It indicates male and female both the literacy rate are low in these communities.

### 6.6 Enrolment of Scheduled Caste population in various educational levels

Figure 6.6 to figure 6.9 shows the block wise Enrolment rate of the SC populations in the various educational level of the educational institution of Koch Bihar district. In primary level the Enrolment of boys is higher than girls in every blocks of the district. The highest boys Enrolment in primary level is observed in Tufanganj I block and lowest is found in Mathabhanga I block and highest girls Enrolment in primary level is observed in Mathabhanga I and lowest in Tufanganj I. The Boys and girls Enrolment in upper primary level are almost same in every blocks and boys Enrolment rate is little higher than the girls Enrolment rate except Cooch Behar II block, only in this block girls Enrolment is little higher than the boys Enrolment rate (figure 6.7). Girls' Enrolment in secondary level is higher than the boys' Enrolment in every block. Again in the higher secondary level the boys' Enrolment is higher than the girls' Enrolment rate in all the blocks in the district. The main reason behind the low Enrolment rate in the higher secondary level is marriage, although the child marriage is illegal in India but still child marriage is occurred in the in the rural India and Koch Bihar is not the exceptional.

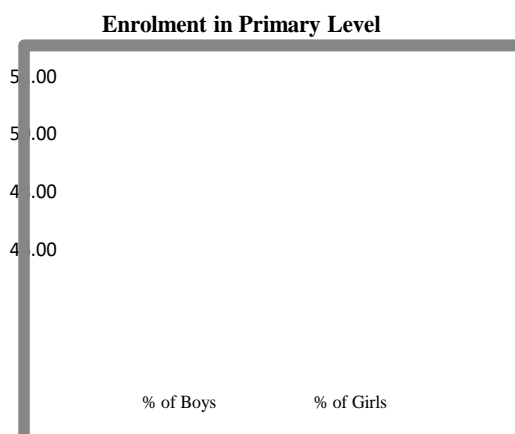


Figure 6.6: Enrolment in Primary Level

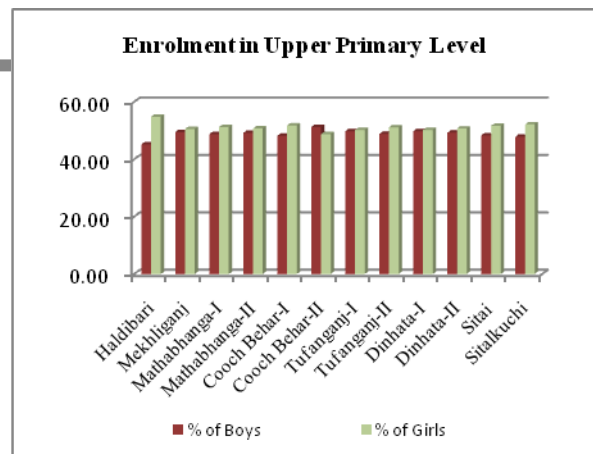


Figure 6.7: Enrolment in Upper Primary Level

Data Source: Department of Education, Govt. of W.B, 2016-2017

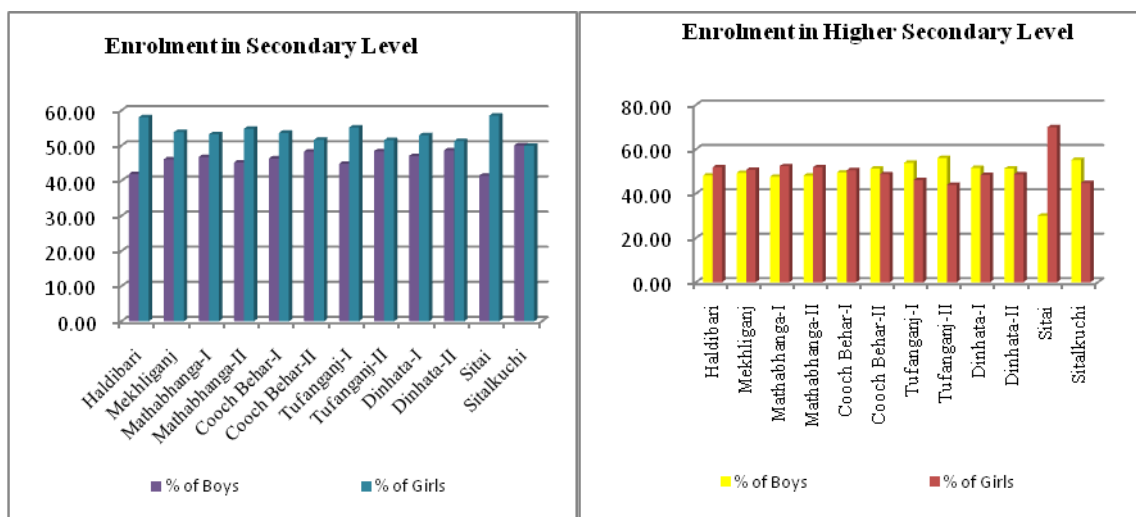


Figure 6.8: Enrolment in Secondary level      Figure 6.9: Enrolment in Higher Secondary level

Data Source: Department of Education, Govt. of W.B, 2016-2017

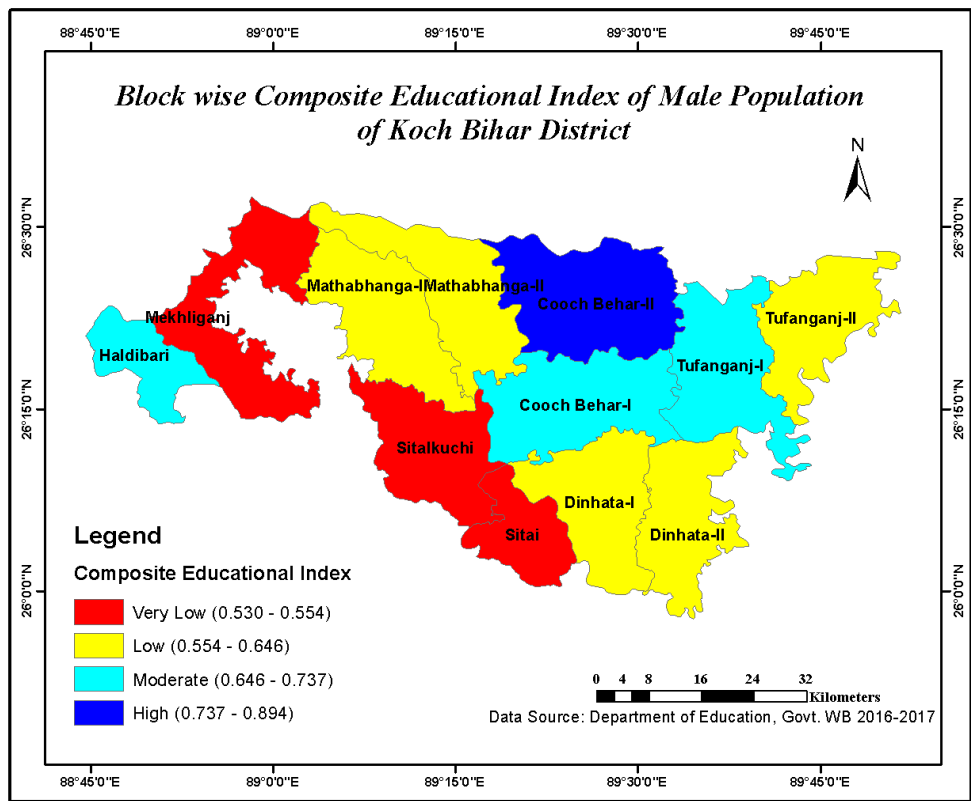
Although the various Central and state Governmental schemes launched in the recent years reduced the child marriage and encourage the girls child in the higher education. Kanyashree is one of the most successful schemes of the West Bengal government for reduction of child marriage and encourage the higher education as per the Sen and Dutta (2018) dropout rate and marriage before 18 years is reduced due to the Kanyashree and 43.48 percent of the respondents use their money for higher education. Another most important step is the female job reservation.

### 6.7 Composite Educational Index

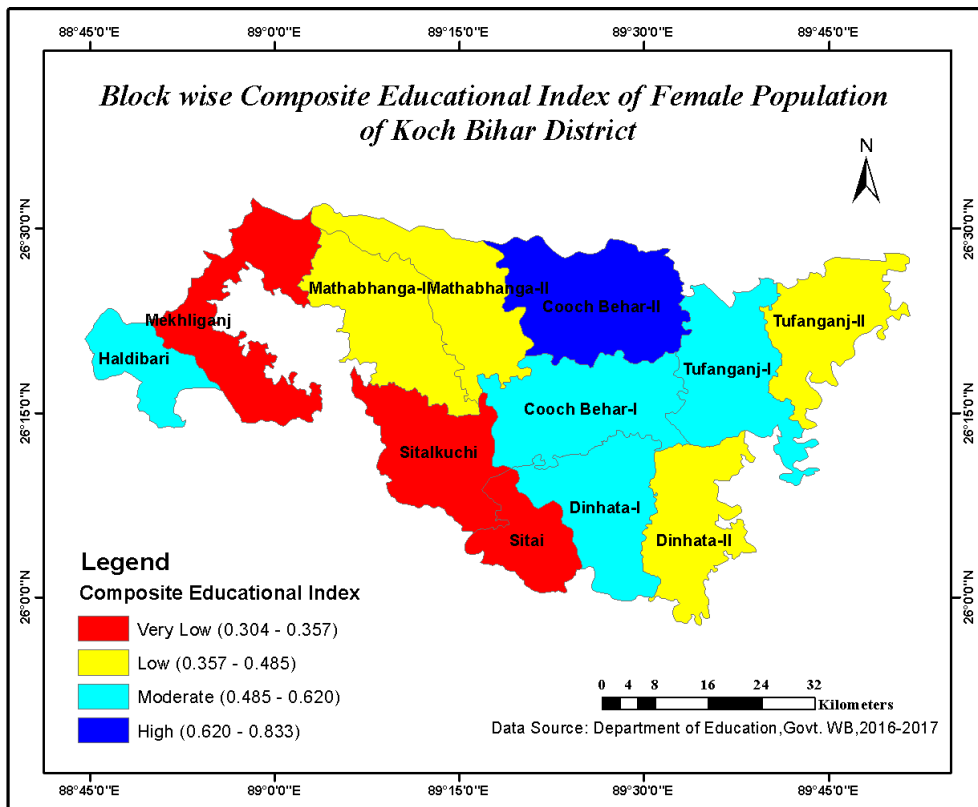
Table 6.10 Composite Educational Index of the Scheduled Caste.

Blocks	% Enrolment in School		Gross Enrolment Index		% of Literacy Rate		Educational Attainment Index		Composite Educational Index	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Haldibari	47.33	52.67	1.00	0.00	75.69	62.54	0.39	0.35	0.26	0.56
Mekhliganj	49.02	50.98	0.54	0.46	76.55	61.02	0.44	0.26	0.45	0.35
Mathabhanga I	49.06	50.94	0.53	0.47	78.83	63.71	0.58	0.41	0.54	0.45
Mathabhanga II	49.50	50.50	0.41	0.59	79.4	65.55	0.61	0.51	0.61	0.48
Cooch Behar I	49.39	50.61	0.44	0.56	81.38	69.11	0.73	0.71	0.68	0.62
Cooch Behar II	49.15	50.85	0.50	0.50	85.86	74.5	1.00	1.00	0.83	0.83
Tufanganj I	49.85	50.15	0.31	0.69	79.74	67.12	0.63	0.60	0.65	0.50
Tufanganj II	50.99	49.01	0.00	1.00	81.97	68.72	0.77	0.68	0.84	0.46
Dinhata I	50.02	49.98	0.26	0.74	78.62	67.12	0.57	0.60	0.62	0.49
Dinhata II	50.15	49.85	0.23	0.77	78.09	66.1	0.53	0.54	0.61	0.44
Sitai	47.65	52.35	0.91	0.09	69.17	56.21	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.30
Sitalkuchi	50.04	49.96	0.26	0.74	77.03	63.41	0.47	0.39	0.56	0.35

Source: Department of Education, Govt. of W.B, 2016-2017

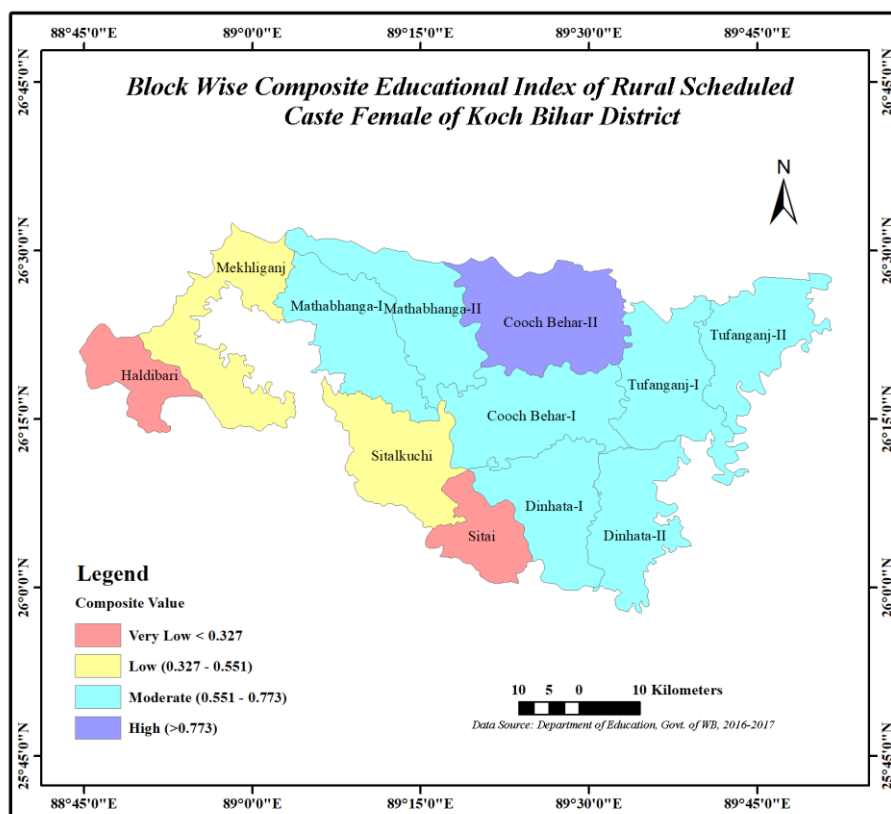


Map 6.5 Block wise Composite Educational Index of general male of Koch Bihar district

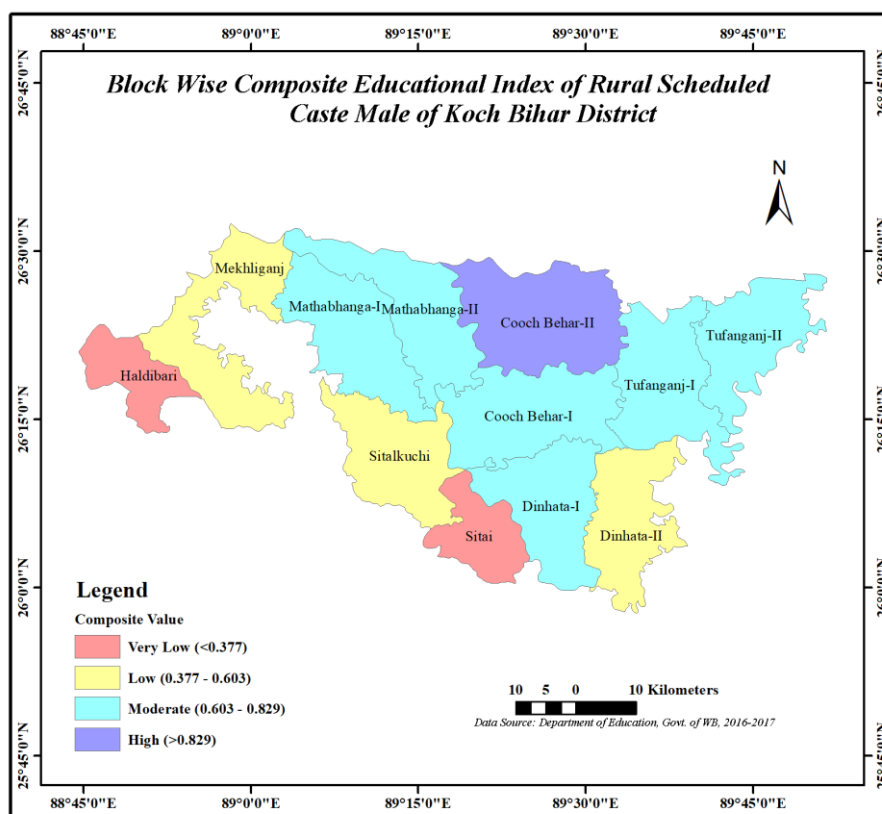


Map 6.6 Block wise Composite educational index of general female of Koch Bihar district.

The map 6.5 and 6.6 is representing the Composite Educational Index of Koch Bihar district for male and female population respectively. In both the map the all the blocks are categorized in four categories on the basis of the composite educational value. These are High, Moderate, Low and Very Low. The high Educational Index indicates the block are better in terms of education and low educational Index value represent the backwards blocks of the district in terms of educational perspective. In both the case, Male and Female the index value almost similar and categories also similar which indicates there is no such variation exist in between male and female in term of Educational Index in the District. Cooch Behar II block is the highest in educational index for both male and female population. In case of the moderate and low category the male and female population have little variation in the educational index. Haldibari, Cooch Behar I and Cooch Behar II blocks are fall under the moderate category of Male population and In case of Female only Dinhata I is added with the three blocks. Mathabhanga I, Mathabhanga II, Tufanganj II, Dinhata I and Dinhata II there four blocks are fall under low category of low for male.



Map 6.7 Block wise Composite educational index of scheduled caste female of Koch Bihar district.



Map 6.8 Block wise Composite educational index of scheduled caste male of Koch Bihar district.

Except Dinhat I all the four blocks fall under low category for male population. Mekhliganj, Sitai and Sitalkuchi these three blocks are comes under very low category for both male and female population which indicates that these blocks are backward in terms of education.

The above two map 6.7 & map 6.8 represents block wise the Composite Educational Index of SC female and male population of Koch Bihar district. The index value ranges from 0 to 1 and 0 indicates no educational development and 1 indicates the maximum educational development. From the map it is observed for both male and female the education index more or less same in both the case. Cooch Behar II block has the highest educational index value. But in moderate educational index female has 7 blocks but male has 6 blocks which shows that female is in better position than the male in the moderate category. Dinhat II, Sitalkuchi and Mekhliganj blocks fall under the low educational index for male and Sitalkuchi and Mekhliganj these two blocks are fall under this category for SC female. In very low educational index category Haldibari and Sitai blocks represent both the SC male and female. It indicates the lowest educational development although the literacy growth

rate and gross enrolment is high in both the block. It indicates the educational development is not upto the mark compared to the other blocks of the district.

## 6.8 Level of Educational Development

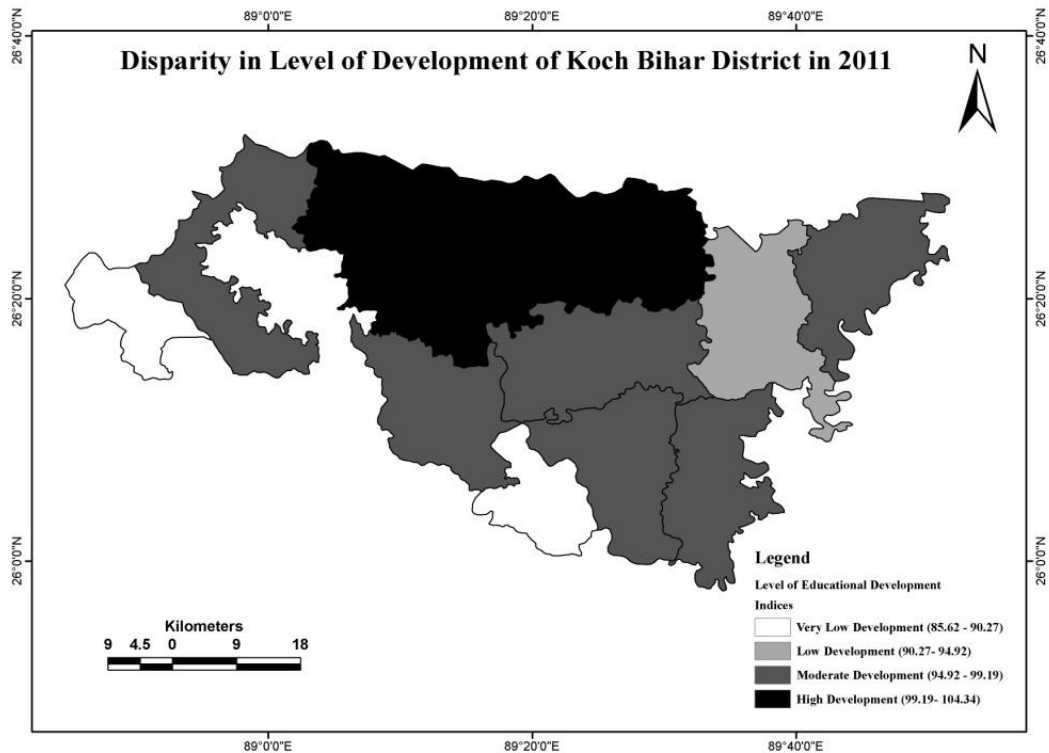
Table 6.11 Level Educational Development of Koch Bihar District.

Category	Indices	No. of Blocks	% of Area	% of Population	% of SC Population	Name of the Blocks
Very Low Developed	85.62-90.27	2	9.31	8.13	9.9	Haldibari, Sitai
Low Developed	90.27-94.92	1	9.43	9.43	8.34	Tufanganj-I
Moderate Developed	94.92-99.19	6	51.09	52.50	48.95	Mekhliganj, Cooch Behar-I, Tufanganj-II, Dinhata-I, Dinhata-II, Sitalkuchi
High Developed	99.19-104.34	3	30.17	29.94	32.81	Mathabhanga-I, Mathabhanga-II, Cooch Behar-II

*Source: Calculated by researcher based on census of India, 2011*

Literacy rate, Male Literacy, Female Literacy, Gender Gap in Literacy , Number of schools, Student teacher ratio etc. are the important indicator for educational development of a region. An average composite index of the district is 97.09. Composite index of seven blocks namely Mathabhanga I, Mathabhanga II, Cooch Behar I, Cooch Behar II, Tufanganj I, Tufanganj II, and Sitai out of twelve blocks are above the district average. On the basis of the indicators composite index is computed and a map has prepared for showing the regional disparity in educational development. Based on the composite score of the 12 Blocks of the district the educational development region has been identified. Here the entire district divided into four categories on the basis of the basis of the composite indices values these are as follows

*Very Low Educational Developed Region:* This region comprises two blocks out of twelve blocks namely Haldibari and Sitai of the district. This region covers 9.31% of the total area and 8.13% of the total population of the districts of Koch Bihar and 9.9% of the Scheduled caste population also lived in this region.



Map 6.9 Level of Educational development of Koch Bihar district.

*Low Educational Developed Region:* Only Tufanganj-I Block fall under this category. Here percentage share of area and percentage share of population is exactly same i.e. 9.43% out of the district area and population. In this region percentage share SC population is 8.34%.

*Moderate Educational Developed Region:* This region consist of six blocks namely Mekhliganj, Cooch Behar-I, Tufanganj-II, Dinhata-I, Dinhata-II and Sitalkuchi. This region covers half of the district in terms of area and population i.e. 51.09% area and 52.50% population. Percentage share of SC population of the region is 48.95% out of 100%.

*High Educational Developed Region:* This zone comprises three blocks of the district namely Mathabhanga-I, Mathabhanga-II and Cooch Behar-II. This region covers 30.17% of the total area and 29.94% of the population and percentage share of SC population is 32.81% of the district. This region is considering the highest composite indices (99.19-104.34) because literacy rate, number of school and student teacher ratio are higher in this region.

## 6.9 Educational attainment of the respondent

Table 6.12 Educational Level of the Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women).

Education	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Illiterate	34	6.30	6.30
Primary	181	33.50	39.80
Upper Primary	148	27.40	67.20
Secondary	89	16.50	83.70
Higher Secondary	50	9.30	93.00
Graduation and Above	38	7.00	100
Total	540	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019

The table 6.12 reveals that educational level of the respondents of the study area. From the table it is found that out of the total respondents 6.30 percent are illiterate and rest 93.70 percent are literate. Out of the total respondents 33.50 percent and 27.40 percent respondents are studied upto primary level and upper primary level in the study area in combined with these two educational level it is more than 60 percent. 16.50% of the surveyed rural SC women have completed their secondary level of education and 9.30% have completed their higher secondary. Only 7.00% of the surveyed rural SC women have completed their Graduation and above educational degree which is not good but is more than the illiterate which gives some satisfaction and showing the improvement of the educational level of the study area.

Table 6.13 Block wise Educational Level of the Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women)

Blocks	Level of Education in Percentage					
	Illiterate	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation and Above
Haldibari	3.30	20.00	36.70	30.00	3.30	6.70
Mekhliganj	3.30	33.30	31.70	20.00	5.00	6.70
Mathabhanga-I	11.90	23.80	42.90	14.30	2.40	4.80
Mathabhanga-II	2.00	46.00	30.00	14.00	4.00	4.00
Cooch Behar-I	1.60	29.00	32.30	21.00	8.10	8.10
Cooch Behar-II	8.00	32.00	26.00	16.00	8.00	10.00
Tufanganj-I	9.80	41.50	22.00	14.60	2.40	9.80
Tufanganj-II	5.60	36.10	19.40	25.00	11.10	2.80
Dinhata-I	17.90	25.00	25.00	7.10	14.30	10.70
Dinhata-II	0.00	43.10	7.80	15.70	23.50	9.80
Sitai	6.90	58.60	13.80	6.90	6.90	6.90
Sitalkuchi	6.10	15.20	42.40	15.20	21.20	0.00
Total	6.30	33.50	27.40	16.50	9.30	7.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019

The table 6.13 shows the block wise level of educational attainment of the surveyed women. From the table we get a clear idea that the maximum respondents of the different blocks have attained their education up to primary level (33.50 percent) followed by upper primary which accounts for 27.4% of the total respondents. Sitai block leads in terms of primary education with 58.60% of total respondents which is followed by Mathabhanga- II (46.00 percent). Out of total rural SC women of different blocks, 6.30 % are illiterate and merely 7 percent of them have done graduation or post graduation. Dinhata-I block has the highest percentage of graduates and above with 10.7% and slightly behind is Cooch Behar-II block with 10.00%. The given table reveals that the respondent of Sitalkuchi block has attained their education only up to Higher Secondary. Dinhata-I block with 17.90 percent accounts for the highest percentage of illiterate respondents whereas, there was no illiterate respondents in Dinhata-II block (0.00 percent).

Table 6.14 Sub Caste Wise Educational Level of the Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women).

Sub Caste	Level of Education in Percentage					
	Illiterate	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation and Above
Rajbanshi	6.40	33.80	28.30	15.00	10.00	6.60
Namasudra	7.80	29.60	25.20	23.50	5.20	8.70
Jaliakaibartta	2.10	35.40	27.10	14.60	12.50	8.30
Dhopa	16.70	33.30	33.30	0.00	16.70	0.00
Rabidas	0.00	60.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
Jhalomalo	0.00	60.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	0.00
Total	6.30	33.50	27.40	16.50	9.30	7.00

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

The table 6.14 shows the educational level of the respondents based on their sub caste of the Koch Bihar district. The table reveals that the most predominant caste is Rajbanshi followed by Namasudra and Jaliakaibartta. Within the Rajbanshi community 33.80% of the rural SC women are educated up to primary level which is maximum, followed by upper primary (28.30 percent) and secondary (15.00 percent). Only 6.60 percent of the respondents of the Rajbanshi community have completed their Graduation and Post Graduation. Namasudra the second largest scheduled caste community of the district has the maximum percentage (8.70 percent) of the graduate respondents. The Namasudra community is also high in terms of the secondary level of education among all the community. Among the Jaliakaibartta community 35.40% of rural SC women have studied up to primary level and only 8.30 percent of the respondents of Jaliakaibartta community

have completed their graduation on the other hand illiteracy is also low (2.10 percent) in this community. Within the Dhopa community maximum illiterate (16.70 percent) respondents have found and no respondents have found with the educational level of graduation and above. Rabidas and Jhalomalo are the small community of the district, within these two communities no respondents have found illiterate and graduate. In case of higher secondary and graduation and above Jaliakaibartta is in the better position than the other castes followed by Namasudra.

Table 6.15 Age Group wise Educational Level of the Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women).

Age Group	Level of Education in Percentage					
	Illiterate	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation and Above
<19	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
19-24	0.00	18.20	18.20	36.40	27.30	0.00
25-29	0.00	6.50	29.00	30.60	16.10	17.70
30-34	0.00	21.50	34.40	24.70	9.70	9.70
35-39	2.80	29.60	38.00	12.00	12.00	5.60
40-44	2.00	43.40	29.30	13.10	7.10	5.10
45-49	14.00	57.90	9.30	11.20	3.70	3.70
50-54	54.50	36.40	4.50	4.50	0.00	0.00
55-59	33.30	0.00	33.30	0.00	0.00	33.30
Total	6.30	33.50	27.40	16.50	9.30	7.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019

The Table 6.15 shows the age group wise educational level of the respondent of the study area. The age group of the respondents ranges from 18 to 58 years. The age group has been categorized based on the census of India. Total 34 illiterate respondents are found in the study which comprises 6.30 percent of the total respondents. After a close look on the data it is observed that no respondents has found illiterate till the age group 30-34 years which shows that the young people are literate in the study area which is a good sign for the progressive rural India and Koch Bihar is also in the same trend which is satisfactory and most of the illiterate respondents are belongs to the age group of 45-49 years almost half (44.12 percent) of the illiterate respondents followed by 50-54 years age group which covers 35.29 percent of the entire illiterate respondents and together this two age groups 79.41 percent. In 19-24 years age group maximum (36.40 percent) respondents have completed secondary level followed by higher secondary level (27.30 percent) in combined it is 63.70 percent. In the age group 25-29 years 17.70% of the rural SC women have completed their graduation and above which is the maximum among all the age groups of the respondents of the study area.

It indicates that young women of Koch Bihar district are not only literate but they also achieved the higher level of educational qualification. In the age groups of 30-34 year and 35-39 year most of the respondents literate up to upper primary level. In rest of the age groups primary level is high. The data is clearly shows that there is declining trend of the literacy level after secondary level among the young women of the study area. It is mainly because of their marriage as per the study 67.36 percent (appendix 6.5) of the respondent says that they left their study due to marriage but the condition is improving in the present years due to the various government initiatives like Kanyashree and Sabuj Sathi (cycle giving scheme) of the West Bengal Government and Beti Bachao Beti Padao by the Central Government.

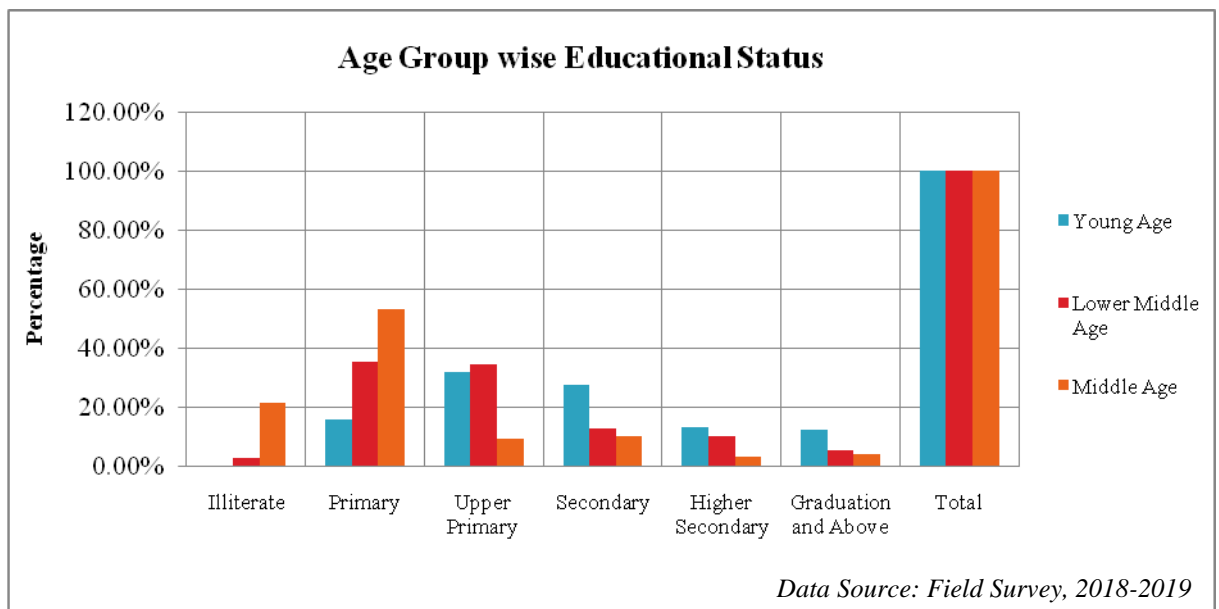


Figure 6.10: Age group wise educational level of the Rural Scheduled Caste Women.

The figure helps in the better understanding about the age group wise educational level of Koch Bihar district. The entire class group has been classified in to three broad classes based on the National Youth Policy (2014) and classified as Young Age (15-34 years), Lower Middle Age (35-44 years) and Middle Age group (45-59 years). No respondent has been found in the old age category (>60 years). From the graph it is clearly observed that there is no illiterate in young age group and maximum illiteracy has been found among the middle age women along with primary level. The upper primary level is maximum within the lower middle age group women and in secondary level is high among the lower age group women. In the young age group there is a clear upward trend in the educational level which is slightly decreased in the secondary level and after that a huge down ward trend is

observed in higher secondary and graduation level which indicate the dropout after secondary level (Table 6.16) in young age group.

The table 6.16 shows the level of education of the surveyed population of the district. In the table the literacy level of above seven years age population has been considered. Total surveyed population means the family member of the respondents. From the table it is observed that female illiterate (7.30 percent) is more than the male illiterate (3.00 percent). In primary level the females (36.20 percent) are more than the male (29.30 percent) and similarly in the upper primary level the females (21.60 percent) are more than males (18.20 percent). It is mainly because of the free and compulsory education for every one till class eight. But after the secondary level the number of female is reducing with increasing the level of education.

6.16 Educational level of the surveyed population (above 7 years age)

Sex	Level of Education in Percentage					
	Illiterate	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation & Above
Male	3.00	29.30	18.20	21.60	14.30	13.60
Female	7.30	36.20	21.60	18.40	9.10	7.40
Total	5.00	32.60	19.80	20.10	11.90	10.70

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

In secondary level male is 21.60 percent and female is 18.40 percent which is reduced almost 50.00 percent in the higher secondary level (9.10 percent) where as male shows the 14.30 percent although the numbers of male also reduced. In the graduation level the percentage of female (7.40 percent) is almost half of the male percentage (13.60 percent). The main dominating factor for reducing the number female is marriage and for male the reason is poverty or less interest. P value of Pearson Chi-square test of the table is 0.00 which is less than 0.05 ( $X^2=47.740$ ,  $df=5$ ), so it reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. So from the statistical test it could be said that there is a significant association between male and female level of education which prove the research hypothesis “**Level of education among the scheduled caste female is low than the scheduled caste male**” is significant and the role of gender influence the educational level by 17.30 percent (Cramer’s  $V=0.173$ ).

### 6.10 Dropouts and reason of dropout among the scheduled caste community

The block wise dropout in the respondents' family has been shown in the table 6.17 from which it is clearly observed that maximum dropout has been found in Dinhata I block among them 70.59 percent male and 29.41 percent female followed by Mekhliganj and Mathabhanga I block. In Mekhliganj block again male dropout (60.00 percent) is higher than female dropout (40.00 percent) and in Mathabhanga I block the trend also same. The lowest dropout has been observed in Sitalkuchi block followed by Haldibari and Cooch Behar II and Dinhata II. In Sitalkuchi all the dropout are male that is 100 percent on the other hand in Haldibari block 50.00 male and 50.00 female. In Tufanganj I block the female dropout is maximum i.e. 66.67 percent.

Table 6.17 Block wise Dropout in the Respondents' family.

Blocks	No. of Dropout	Male Dropout	Female Dropout	% Male dropout	%Female dropout
Haldibari	6	3	3	50.00	50.00
Mekhliganj	15	9	6	60.00	40.00
Mathabhanga I	14	8	6	57.14	42.86
Mathabhanga II	12	9	3	75.00	25.00
Cooch Behar I	10	7	3	70.00	30.00
Cooch Behar II	9	5	4	55.56	44.44
Tufanganj I	12	4	8	33.33	66.67
Tufanganj II	11	7	4	63.64	36.36
Dinhata I	17	12	5	70.59	29.41
Dinhata II	9	7	2	77.78	22.22
Sitai	13	8	5	61.54	38.46
Sitalkuchi	5	5	0	100	0.00
Total	133	84	49	63.16	36.84

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

The Table 6.18 shows that the sub caste wise dropout and rate of dropout of the study area. From the table it is clear that maximum dropout has been found among the Rajbanshi community as this is the predominant community of the district and maximum number of the respondent also belongs to this community. Followed by Namasudra and Jaliakaibartta the other two dominant scheduled caste communities of the district but in case of dropout rate Rabidas scheduled caste community has taken the highest position. The dropout rate of the community is around 60.00 percent followed by Dhopa (33.33 percent) and Jaliakaibartta (27.08 percent). The lowest dropout rate has been observed among Jhalomalo community (20.00 percent) and the overall dropout rate of the district from the field survey is 24.63 percent.

Table 6.18 Sub caste wise dropout in the study area.

Sub Caste	Dropout	% of Dropout	Respondent	Dropout Rate
Rajbanshi	85	63.91	361	23.55
Namasudra	29	21.80	115	25.22
Jaliakaibartta	13	9.77	48	27.08
Dhopa	2	1.50	6	33.33
Rabidas	3	2.26	5	60.00
Jhalomalo	1	0.75	5	20.00
Total	133	100	540	24.63

Source: Field survey, 2018-2019.

Table 6.19 Age Group, Reason of Dropout and Educational level during dropout (in Percentage).

Age Group	<15 Year	15-19 Year	20-24 Year
Male	15.48	65.48	19.05
Female	8.16	73.47	18.37

Reason for Dropout	Financial Problem	Marriage	Not interested
Male	41.67	2.38	55.95
Female	28.57	53.06	18.37

Dropout Level	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
Male	21.43	51.19	20.24	7.14
Female	10.2	30.61	42.86	16.33

Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019

The table 6.19 shows age group wise dropout, most common reasons of dropout and level of dropout all together. The table clearly shows that the dropout is high among the 15-19 years age group of people for both male (65.48 percent) and female (73.47 percent). The table also reveals the reason for the dropout which indicates most of the male (55.95 percent) has left their study as they are not interested in study on the other hand most of the female (53.06 percent) left their study due to their marriage. 41.67 percent male and 28.57 percent female left their study due to the financial problem in their family. Most of the people left their study in the upper primary and secondary level. In case of upper primary level 51.19 percent male and 30.61 percent female left their study on the other hand 42.86 percent female and 20.24 percent male left their study after secondary level of education.

### 6.11 Educational Mobility of Scheduled Caste women

Educational mobility of the women in the study area has been shown in the table 6.20. The table shows the generation wise educational level of the respondents of the study area based on the knowledge and responds by the respondents. On the basis of the responds of the respondents about their grandmother's educational level it is observed that 523 was illiterate out of 540 which is 96.85 percent and only 3.15 percent are literate and among them only 0.19 percent had attained in the secondary level of education. Among the Mothers of the respondents 72.41 percent are illiterate and 27.59 percent are literate among them 21.85 percent studied up to primary level which is highest and only 0.37 percent had completed their graduation.

Table 6.20 Educational mobility of the scheduled caste women in the study area.

	Level of Education in Percentage					
	Illiterate	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation & Above
Grand Mother	96.85	2.41	0.56	0.19	0	0
Mother	72.41	21.85	4.44	0.74	0.19	0.37
Respondent	6.3	33.52	27.41	16.48	9.26	7.04
Elder Daughter	0	14.63	20.96	26.42	19.87	18.12

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

Among the respondents 6.30 percent are illiterate and rest 93.70 percent are literate among them 33.52 percent are studied up to primary level which is maximum and only 7.04 percent completed their graduation but in case of the daughter of the respondents there is no illiteracy at all and most of them (26.42 percent) have completed their secondary level and 18.12 percent of the daughters of the respondents' have completed their graduation and studying Post Graduation or completed. So it is clear from the study that rural scheduled caste women of the Koch Bihar district are moving towards better education generation after generation which is good sign for the society. Although the literacy rate increased from 3.15 percent to 93.70 percent in the district within the four generation which is a huge change but in case of higher education it is only increased by 7.04 percent within the four generation which is not satisfactory.

## 6.12 Impact of Education on Income Level

The table 6.21 shows the education and level of income of the respondents in the study area. The table reveals that the illiterate respondent's are mostly (55.90) have no income. Although few of them are earning but most of them (32.40 percent) earn below Rs. 6000 for a month. On the other hand the respondents who have high educational qualification earn more but the number of high earning respondents are few, like 36.80 percent of the respondents who has degree graduation and above level they are earning more than Rs.12000 per month. Although the number of no income group people decreasing with increasing level of education but the increasing rate is slow and it is not satisfactory in respect to over all respondents but the trend of graduate and level of income is increasing rapidly.

Table 6.21 Educational qualification and level of Income of the Rural Scheduled Caste Women.

Level of Education	Monthly Income of the Respondents in Percentage				
	No income	Rs.1- Rs.3000	Rs. 3001 - Rs. 6000	Rs. 6001- Rs. 12000	More than Rs. 12000
Illiterate	55.90	11.80	32.40	0.00	0.00
Primary	67.20	6.60	23.00	3.30	0.00
Upper Primary	74.70	5.50	14.40	5.50	0.00
Secondary	67.80	4.40	10.00	10.00	7.80
Higher Secondary	53.10	0.00	6.10	28.60	12.20
Graduation and Above	50.00	2.60	7.90	2.60	36.80
Total	66.10	5.40	16.50	7.00	5.00

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

## 6.13 Respondent's views towards girls' Education and Equality

To understand the perception about girls' education and discrimination some questions have been asked to the respondents which has been shown in the table 6.22. The discrimination among boys and girls were started from their home at the very beginning of the birth of a girl. The perception about girls' education helps to understand whether the discrimination is exists among the scheduled caste community in our study area. The first question was asked to the respondent was do you support your daughter education? In responds to the question 508 respondents said yes out of the 540 i.e. 94.07% of the rural SC women and rest (5.93 percent) are not supported their daughter education. In responds to the next question 88.70 percent of the respondents said that they support their daughter to have job. 30.18% of rural SC women thought that the boys and girls could do the same

work and rest (69.82 percent) of the respondent thought that girls could not do the same work as boys. The next question which was asked whether they think that invest in girls education is waste of money? In responds of the question 89.26% of rural SC women said no and only 10.74% rural SC women is still believed that invest in girls education is actually waste of money. 7.59% of the rural SC women still thought that marriage is more important than education which gives clear views about the perception on girls' education.

Table 6.22 Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) perception on Girls Education.

Question	Yes	No
Do you support your Daughter Education?	94.07	5.93
Do you support your daughter do a job?	88.7	11.3
Do you think girls and boys can do same work?	30.18	69.82
Do you think invest in girls' education is waste of money?	10.74	89.26
Do you think Marriage is important than education for a girl?	7.59	92.41
Do you think equal opportunity should be given to girls?	91.11	8.89
Do you think your girls get equal opportunity in home?	44.07	55.93
Do you awareness about Kanyashree and other Government Scheme for girls' education?	76.48	23.52

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

In responds to the next question whether the equal opportunity should be given to girls, 91.11% of rural SC women said yes and 8.89 percent said no which means they are not supported equal opportunity of girls. 55.93% of rural SC women honestly said that the girls did not get the equal opportunity in the home. The next question was asked whether they are aware about Kanyashree and other Government schemes for girls' education. In responds of this 76.48% of rural SC women said they are aware about Kanyashree and rest 23.52 percent was not aware about Kanyashree and any other scheme related girls education.

Table 6.23 Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) preference of school for their children.

	Son only	Daughter only	Both
Government School	6.89	4.53	88.58
Private School	48.68	21.05	30.26
Total	12.78	6.85	80.37

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

The table 6.23 shows the respondents preference for selection of school for their children. It also helps to understand the over view on discrimination among boys and girls in their early educational level in the study area. In the study area 76 respondents prefer private

school for their children which is 14.07% of rural SC women, among them 37 respondents prefer private school only for their son which is 48.68 percent out of the total respondents who prefer private school and 21.05% of rural SC women prefer private school only for their girl child and rest 30.26 percent prefer private school for both girls and boys. 464 respondents out of the 540 have preferred Government school for their children which occupies maximum i.e. 85.93 percent of the total respondents. The main reason behind selection of the Government school is the economic condition of the respondents which is observed during field survey that most of the respondent who has the high economic status prefer private school for their children education as the education is positively associated with the educational status (Table 6.23).

Table 6.24 Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) expectation on the maximum educational level to be attained by their children.

	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation & Above	As they like
Son	8.89	4.81	32.04	54.26
Daughter	4.63	12.96	20.93	61.48

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

Respondents' expectation on the maximum educational level to be attained by their children has been shown in the table 6.24 which indicates that 173 respondents out of the 540 expected that their son attains graduation and above educational level which in 32.04 percent of the total respondents but at the same time 20.93% of rural SC women expected that their girl attains graduation and above level of educational level which clearly show the difference between the expectation from son and daughter which is linked with the discrimination among boys and girls in home and in the society. It is also observed from the data that 61.48% of rural SC women give liberty to their daughter to choose their educational level but in case of son it is 54.26 percent which also shows that the respondents are more concern about the son's education than the daughter's education.

Table 6.25 Best profession preferred by the Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) for their children.

	Teacher	Lawyer	Doctor	Engineer	Business	As they like
Son	42.04	6.11	3.52	7.59	4.07	36.67
Daughter	54.63	10.56	3.89	2.41	1.67	26.85

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

The table shows that the best profession preferred by the respondents for their children. As similar to the expectation in educational level in case of job preference there is clear cut discrimination has been observed among the study area. Most of the respondents (54.63

percent) preferred teaching as the best job for their daughter as profession the main reasons behind choosing this profession is that teaching is that they can do the job as nearer to their house (table 6.25) and there is no night shift work so this job is more suitable for the girls on the other hand 42.04% of rural SC women choose teaching as a profession for their sons but in case of choosing technical fields as a profession by the respondents sons (7.59 percent) are more preferred than daughter (2.41 percent).

Table 6.26 The maximum extend of the respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) to support their daughter for their jobs.

Maximum extend to Support daughter job	Within Village	Within District	Within State	Within Country	Total
Count	107	231	124	17	479
%	22.34	48.23	25.89	3.55	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2018-2019*

The respondents who support their daughter job among them what is the maximum extend in terms of distance to support their daughters to have job is shown in the table 6.26. From the table it is observed that 48.23% of rural SC women support their daughter up to the district level. It means they support their job if they get job within the district only. 25.89 percent support till if they get a job within state and only 3.55% of rural SC women support to their daughter job outside the state but no one is allowed their daughter do a job outside country.

### 6.14 Education and Women Empowerment

The education and women empowerment has be understand in the study in two different perspective one is the **Educational Empowerment of the women** and another is the **Empowerment of the women through education** these two think are not same. Before discussing the educational empowerment of women it is necessary to understand the educational empowerment first. Educational empowerment is basically an interactive process by which the people acquires knowledge and control the learning process based on sense of belonging, independence and generosity towards others. Educational empowerment women means that the women have better access to education like better schools better colleges and universities, better educational infrastructure, other opportunities in the field of education like free education and financial support during education, various professional courses for their livelihood then only educational empowerment of women could be possible. In Koch Bihar district the girls have access to

the educational institutes, a huge number of school and colleges and two universities along with six professional colleges including poly technique and one ITI colleges for skilled development. The state and Central Government provides lot of scholarship and fellowship scheme for the women from primary to university level for encouraging the women for higher education even government gives job reservation to the women in the state Government jobs which also shows in the ground. From the Enrolment data of the scheduled caste females shows that the women of the district is going closer towards the educational empowerment. For better understanding of the educational empowerment the composite educational index (map 6.6, 6.7) and the educationally develop region (map 6.9) has been identified from the index and development region which shows the educational empowerment of the women has positively increased in Koch Bihar district mainly among the SC (figure 6.6 – figure 6.9).

Education is one of the most prominent tools for the empowerment of women, it reduce the discrimination and inequality. Education gives the women ability to become independent and increase their capabilities which increase new opportunities for them. Education increases them-self confidence and power for any kind of decision making. The decision making is the process of making choices by identifying decision. The decision making is the most important tools for the measuring the women empowerment. So in the study the researcher has tried to find out the relation between decision making process and level of education and up to what extends the educational level can change the decision making which is directly related to the women empowerment. In the study the researcher firstly identified some parameters for the decision making process and all the parameters has been divided in two categories. One is the Short Run Decision (SRD) and another is the Long Run Decision of a household. The Short Run Decision means those decisions whose impact will be remain for a short period of time like preparing every day meal, making monthly budget, purchase clothes for the family members, expenditure in food items etc. and the Long Run Decision means those decisions whose impact will be remain for a longer period of time like investment in real estate, buying and sallying any kind of property or livestock's, decision about child marriage, decision about child education etc. After that again all the parameters have been categorized as overall decision and economic decision and the parameters have been compared with the educational level of the respondents which helps to find out the present scenario in terms of educational empowerment of the rural SC women of Koch Bihar district.

Table 6.27 Short run decision taken by the Rural Scheduled Caste Men and Women

Variables	Short Run Decision (SRD) in Percentage		
	Men	Women	Both
Making monthly budget	45.37	17.96	36.67
Purchase of clothes	31.3	46.3	22.41
Expenditure in entertainment	49.26	16.11	34.63
Expenditure in child education	39.26	11.67	49.07
Selection of crop	59.26	4.81	35.93
Fertilizer used in Field	83.52	4.26	12.22
Making every day meal	29.07	19.63	51.3
Expenditure in food	62.78	6.11	31.11
Total	49.98	15.86	34.17

*Source: Field survey, 2018-2019*

The above table shows the short run decision which has been taken in the respondent's family by them or by their family member in day to day life. This short run decision helps to understand the position of the women in their family and their participation in household decision making processes as the decision making is the best measures of empowerment of women. The table 6.27 reveals that only 17.96 percent women take decision alone on making monthly budget on the other hand 45.37 percent men take decision by themselves on making monthly budget without the women concern within the household and in 36.67 percent cases the men and women together they take decision on making monthly budget. After considering the women and both combined it is 54.63 percent which is greater than the decision take by the male member of the respondent's family. So it indicates that in case of making monthly budget women's position is better than men within the household likewise after considering all the short run decisions it is observed that only 15.86 percent of the decision is taken by the respondent's or by the female member of the respondent's family and 49.98 percent of the decision has been taken by the men. After adding the two i.e. women's decision and 'both' decision it is 50.02 percent which is more than the men's decision. So it clearly shows that women's participation is more than men in terms of short run decision making process.

The table 6.28 shows the long run decision which has been taken by the respondent and their family member. The long run decision means those decisions whose impact is for a longer period of time. From the table it is observed that in most of the long run decisions are taken by the male member of the family. Like the decision about child marriage 25.56 percent of the men taken the decision by alone and only 1.11 percent of the women taken

decision by their own which shows that the women can't take decision about the marriage of their child by their own without consulting their husband or the male member of their family.

Table 6.28 Long run decision taken by the Scheduled Caste Men and Women

Variables	Long Run Decision (LRD) in Percentage		
	Men	Women	Both
Decision about Child marriage	25.56	1.11	73.33
Debt and Repayment	63.89	1.11	35
Regarding Vote cast	68.33	1.11	30.56
Invest in real estate	59.81	1.3	38.89
Saving	47.96	1.11	50.93
Selection of School for child	32.59	2.04	65.37
Selection of occupation for child	39.26	1.48	59.26
Crop storage	65.56	1.48	32.96
Buying and Selling Livestock	62.41	1.48	36.11
Total	51.71	1.36	46.93

*Source: Field survey, 2018-2019*

But in 73.33 percent it is observed that the decision is taken by the both male and female member of the family which means that in most of the case the male member also consult with the female member which is satisfactory. Similarly in every long run decisions only 1.36 percent women take decision by their own which is negligible and very low as compare to the short run decision (15.86 percent) on the other hand the 51.71 percent of the men take decision by their own in case of long run decision in their family without female concern and 46.93 percent cases the man and woman together they take decision about any kind of long run decision in their family and in most of the cases the decision making process also depend on the educational qualification, age and working status of the female member in the family.

The table 6.29 shows that the economic decision making and the level of education of the respondents. Among all the parameters of short run and long run decision making only those parameters have been taken in consideration which is related to the economic decision of the family like investment in real estate or buying agricultural land, saving in bank, buying any insurance, buying or selling live stocks etc. Similar to the overall decision making here also the illiterate respondents (67.60 percent) and the respondents who studied up to primary level (47.00 percent) have very low participation in the economic decision making.

Table 6.29 Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) Educational level and Participation in Economic Decision making process

Level of Education		Participation in Economic Decision Making				Total
		Very Low Participation	Low Participation	Moderate Participation	High Participation	
Illiterate	Count	23	4	3	4	34
	%	67.6%	11.8%	8.8%	11.8%	100%
Primary	Count	86	46	47	4	183
	%	47.0%	25.1%	25.7%	2.2%	100%
Upper Primary	Count	22	52	64	8	146
	%	15.1%	35.6%	43.8%	5.5%	100%
Secondary	Count	4	16	51	19	90
	%	4.4%	17.8%	56.7%	21.1%	100.0%
Higher Secondary	Count	0	0	23	26	49
	%	0.0%	0.0%	46.9%	53.1%	100%
Graduation and Above	Count	0	1	4	33	38
	%	0.0%	2.6%	10.5%	86.8%	100%
Total	Count	135	119	192	94	540
	%	25.0%	22.0%	35.6%	17.4%	100%

Source: Field survey, 2018-2019

The respondents who have completed graduation they have high participation (86.80 percent) in economic decision making but it less than the overall decision making (92.10 percent) by the graduated respondent's which shows that lower level of education means low rate of participation in economic decision making and vice versa. Significant value of Pearson Chi-Square test is 0.00 which is less than 0.05 ( $X^2= 348.621$ ,  $df=15$ , Cramer's  $V= 0.464$ .) for the data table which shows the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. The economic decision making means the economic empowerment as all the decision is on the ground of economic prospective and the decision making power is depend on the economic independence of self-confidence and educational level which increased the employment opportunity and income level and more over increase the access and control over resources. Therefore it could be said that the research hypothesis **“Level of Education is positively associated with the Economic Empowerment of the Scheduled Caste Women”** is significant.

The table 6.30 shows that the educational level and participation on the decision making. Education is one of the most important factors which helps the women to take part in the decision making process in the family as well as in the society which also helps in the empowerment of women. Until and unless the women take active participation in the decision making process not only in family and society but also in the politics and policy making the women empowerment is not possible because no one can empower the women

from the outside it is totally depends on the women the outside world could give only some opportunities to the women if they take these opportunities and if these opportunities give build enough confidence among the women then only the women empowerment possible in a true sense.

Table 6.30 Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) Educational level and Participation in Overall Decision making process

		Participation in Overall Decision Making				
Level of Education		Very Low Participation	Low Participation	Moderate Participation	High Participation	Total
Illiterate	Count	19	9	3	3	34
	%	55.9%	26.5%	8.8%	8.8%	100.0%
Primary	Count	70	72	38	3	183
	%	38.3%	39.3%	20.8%	1.6%	100.0%
Upper Primary	Count	11	71	50	14	146
	%	7.5%	48.6%	34.2%	9.6%	100.0%
Secondary	Count	2	14	47	27	90
	%	2.2%	15.6%	52.2%	30.0%	100.0%
Higher Secondary	Count	0	1	19	29	49
	%	0.0%	2.0%	38.8%	59.2%	100.0%
Graduation and Above	Count	0	0	3	35	38
	%	0.0%	0.0%	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	102	167	160	111	540
	%	18.9%	30.9%	29.6%	20.6%	100.0%

Source: Field survey, 2018-2019

The table shows whether the decision making process is depend on the educational level of the respondents. After taking a close look into the data it is observed that 55.90 percent of the illiterate respondents have very low participation in the decision making process. The respondents who studied up to only primary level, they have very low and low participation i.e. 38.30 percent and 39.30 percent respectively in the decision making process on the other hand it is observed that 59.20 percent of the respondents have high participation in decision making who have completed their higher secondary and the high participation (92.10 percent) has been observed among the respondents who have the educational qualification of graduation and above. The shows that education and decision making process has a significant association which is statically proved (Chi-square value 362.250, p-value 0.000) and the association is so strong that education may change decision making of the women up to 47.30 percent (Cramer's V 0.473).

The table 6.31 represents the level of education and level of women empowerment. From the table it is observed that 52.90 percent illiterate have low and 32.40 percent

illiterate respondents have very low level of empowerment, altogether it is 85.30 percent of the respondents who have very low to low level of empowerment and it is same in primary level also. From the upper primary level the empowerment of women start changing. In upper primary level the moderate empowerment has been observed 23.40 percent which is increased twice (46.70 percent) in the secondary level similarly the level of empowerment of the respondents are increased in the higher secondary to graduation level.

Table 6.31 Educational level and Level of Empowerment of Respondents (Rural Scheduled Caste Women) of Koch Bihar District.

Level of Education		Level of Empowerment				Total
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	
Illiterate	Count	11	18	3	2	34
	%	32.40%	52.90%	8.80%	5.90%	100%
Primary	Count	42	116	22	3	183
	%	23.00%	63.40%	12.00%	1.60%	100%
Upper Primary	Count	15	94	34	3	146
	%	10.30%	64.40%	23.30%	2.10%	100%
Secondary	Count	4	29	42	15	90
	%	4.40%	32.20%	46.70%	16.70%	100%
Higher Secondary	Count	0	4	14	31	49
	%	0.00%	8.20%	28.60%	63.30%	100%
Graduation and Above	Count	0	0	0	38	38
	%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	100%
Total	Count	72	261	115	92	540
	%	13.30%	48.30%	21.30%	17.00%	100%

Source: Field survey, 2018-2019

In higher secondary level the high level of empowerment has been observed among 63.30 percent which is increased in the graduation level and in graduation level 100 percent of the respondents have high level of women empowerment. So from the table it is clear that the level of empowerment of the scheduled caste women is increased with increasing the level of education.

### 6.15 Major Findings

- The highest scheduled caste literacy rate is observed in Cooch Behar II block (79.18 percent) which is higher than the national average (74.04 percent) state average (76.26 percent) and district average (74.78 percent) and lowest scheduled caste literacy rate is observed in Sitai block (64.62 percent) which is lower than the national, state and district average.

- The decadal growth rate of literacy of scheduled caste population is high in Sitalkuchi block (23.16 percent) and lowest in Mathabhanga II block (9.26 percent).
- The female scheduled caste literacy rate is high in Cooch Behar II (72.17 percent) and low in Sitai (56.39 percent). Out of the 12 blocks 6 blocks namely Cooch Behar I, Cooch Behar II, Tufanganj I, Tufanganj II, Dinhata I and Dinhata II are above the national average literacy rate of female (65.5 percent) and rest 6 are blocks below the national average. In case of state average female literacy rate (70.54 percent) only Cooch Behar II (72.17) comes above the state average.
- Decadal growth rate of the scheduled caste female literacy is highest in Sitalkuchi block with 41.35 percent and lowest decadal growth rate is found in Tufanganj block with 20.11 percent.
- The gender gap of literacy rate of scheduled caste population is highest in Mathabhanga I block (17.16 percent) and lowest in Cooch Behar II block (11.36 percent).
- Among the scheduled caste community Dhoba has the highest literacy rate i.e. 73.70 percent although lower than the national and state average and lowest literacy rate has been found among the hari, methar and balmiki (53.31 percent) and the gender gap among the scheduled caste community is highest among the Rajbanshi community and lowest gender gap is found in Jhalomalo community.
- Highest gender parity in terms of scheduled caste literacy rate has been found very low in Mekhliganj and Mathabhanga I block and very high in Cooch Behar II block. In the higher secondary level the parity index is very high in Sitai block. On the other hand the gender parity is high in the lower level of the education and it decreased with the increasing the level of the education among the scheduled caste community.
- The scheduled caste gender disparity in literacy is high in Cooch Behar I, Cooch Behar II and Mathabhanga I and very low in the Sitai, Dinhata I and Dinhata II block of the district. Gender disparity of scheduled caste is very high among the Rajbanshi community and very low among the Bagdi, Duley community out of the top ten dominated scheduled caste community of the district.
- Enrolment ratio of scheduled caste boys is high in the primary level than the girls but in the upper primary level boys and girls Enrolment are almost same. In the

secondary level the girl's Enrolment is higher than the boys but again in the higher secondary level the number of girls reducing and number of boys is increasing.

- The composite educational index is very high in the Cooch Behar II block and very low in Sitai and Haldibari block for both male and female scheduled caste population of the district.
- Out of the 12 blocks Mathabhanga I, Mathabhanga II, and Cooch Behar II these three blocks are fall under the high educational develop region and Sitai and Haldibari these two block is fall under the very low educational development region.
- In the study 33.50 percent of the respondents are studied upto primary level and only 7.00 percent of the respondents completed their graduation and above level of educational qualification. The maximum percentage of illiterate respondents and maximum percentage of the graduate and above respondents both are found in the Dinhata I block, 17.90 percent and 10.70 percent respectively out of the 12 blocks of the district. But it is very unfortunate that the illiterate is more than the graduate respondents.
- Percentage of illiterate is maximum among the Dhopa (16.70) community and minimum among the Rabidas and Jhalomalo community (0.00) on the other hand graduation and above is highest among the Namasudra community (8.7 percent) and minimum among the Dhopa, Rabidas and Jhalomalo community (0.00 percent).
- Dropout is maximum in Dinhata I block (12.78 percent) and minimum is in Sitalkuchi block (3.75 percent). Male dropout is maximum in the Sitalkuchi block (100 percent) and lowest in Tufanganj I block (33.33 percent). The female dropout is maximum in Tufanganj block and minimum in Sitalkuchi and overall the female dropout is minimum than the male dropout as per the surveyed data. Dropout is high among the Rabidas community (60.00) out of the six sub caste community of Koch Bihar district.
- Most (68.42 percent) of the dropout people left their study in the age group of 15-19 years. The main reason of the dropout is different among male and female, 55.95 percent male left the study as they are not interested and 53.06 percent of the female left their study due to marriage. Male dropout is maximum (51.19 percent) in upper primary level but female dropout is maximum (42.86 percent) in secondary level.

- The study show that most of the (38.20 percent) illiterate are belongs to very low economic status and maximum (94.70 percent) number of graduate respondents have high economic status which shows that economic status has a positive relation with the level of education.
- 94.07 percent women support their daughter education which shows that the perception has changing towards girl's education. Although still 10.74 percent women think that invest in girl's education is waste of money.
- 44.07 percent women admitted that their girls did not get equal opportunity in the home and 76.48 percent of the respondents are aware about the various government schemes for the girl's education.
- The study shows that the decision making process depends on the educational qualification, although women participation is high in short run decision than the long run decision.

## **6.16 Conclusion**

Education is the most powerful tool for exchanging ideas and gathering knowledge and added values in the human life. It is also an important element for the development of human being. In India providing education to the entire citizen is a constitutional commitment. But still after the Independence the girls education is not reached up to the mark mainly in the rural area the level of education among the girls are low than men. The Koch Bihar district is also not exceptional. In this chapter the educational status of the scheduled caste women of the district has been studied. The district average literacy rate is 74.78 percent which slight higher than the national average (74.04 percent). For the female literacy rate the district average is 68.49 percent which is quit higher than the national level (65.46 percent) but the gender gap is huge. After the close observation and analysis of the literacy rate and level of education of the district among the block as well as among the various scheduled caste communities it is observed that literacy rate and level of education is low among the scheduled caste women than scheduled caste men in terms of gender gap, gender disparity, gender parity and Enrolment ratio in the every educational level the women are low then men although the decadal growth rate of the female literacy level has increased by the year but the gender gap is still there and its increasing. The intergeneration educational mobility is increasing among the scheduled caste women of the district but it is not satisfactory in case of higher education the main reason is the huge

dropout after the upper primary and secondary level. After in-depth study of the age structure of the female dropouts, it is observed that most of them fall under 15-19 years age group and the main reason behind the dropout is the marriage. Most of them could not even complete their secondary education as they are being forced by their parents to get married. After the detail study on the educational pattern of the district two other most important reasons have been found for the low educational development of the female in this region, one is the low economic status and another one is the discrimination within the family and society which has been found during the study but in the recent year the level of education among the female is increased due to the various scholarship and fellowship scheme provided by the Government. Due to the Kanyashree scheme the dropout rate has decreased among the girl child and it increased the age of marriage. Education also helps in the decision making process of the women and put them in the right path to economic and social empowerment. The level of empowerment of the district is very low and only education gives them the lights of empowerment which shown in the study that highly educated women are more empower than less educated women although the result is not satisfactory. The educational empowerment of the women is only possible through the awareness about the various governmental scheme and facilities which has been provided for the women education and promotes various skill development and short term professional courses and aware the people to reduced discrimination against women then only the education empowerment would be possible in true senses.

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