

Present Educational Scenario of the Namasudra Community in Karkha and Gerul village of Dakshin Dinajpur District, West Bengal, India: A Critical Synthesis

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ABSTRACT

The present work attempts to look into the present educational condition of the members of Namasudra community in Karkha and Gerul village of Banshihari block under Dakshin Dinajpur District of the Indian state of West Bengal. The study is basically based on primary data although some books, journals, research articles, research reports have been used as a source of secondary data. The primary data has been collected by interview technique with the help of standard questionnaires and participant observation technique in the year 2018. For this purpose multi-stage stratified random sampling have been applied. The collected data first be tabulated, processed and then presented and interpreted using different cartographic techniques and diagrams. The analysis reveals that there is a significant variation in terms of male female literate and illiterate percentage, educational attainment, dropout rate of the children, and rate of enrolment, Preference of School for Primary Education of Children in the Karkha and Gerul village. The result show that the Namasudra community in Karkha village is to some extent forward in the field of education in comparison to the Gerul village almost in all level of education. An attempt has been made in this present work to make some sort of recommendations for equitable participation and educational development of the Namasudra community in the field of education in respect with the study area and also for regional and national levels.

Key words : Educational Scenario, Namasudra Community, Equitable Participation, Critical Synthesis, Development.

INTRODUCTION

As a welfare state, India is committed to growth with social justice. The most important objectives of India's economic planning are to eliminate poverty and raise the standard of living of its people including the weaker sections of its population. A section of such weaker section of

India's population has been constitutionally categorized under the category called Scheduled castes; vide Government of India Act 1935. Before the Act of 1935, these categories of marginalized people were called "Depressed Class". One such community of Depressed Class or Scheduled Caste is known as the 'Namasudra' in the state of Bengal .This work attempts to look

into the present educational condition of the members of Namasudra community in Karkha and Gerul village of Banshihari block under Dakshin Dinajpur District of the Indian state of West Bengal.

In our Indian constitution, peoples of Namasudra community are recognized as socio economically backward and belong to schedule caste group mainly found in Assam, West Bengal, Orissa, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh of India and the six eastern districts of Faridpur, Dacca, Mymensingh, Jessore and Khulna of Bangladesh. These communities have a great history of emergence or evolution and they are very poor in comparison to the other caste. James Wise and Herbert Risely- two prominent ethnologists believed that the word "Namasudra" was derived either from the Sanskrit word 'namas' or 'adoration' which means the people who were bound to show obeisance even to the Shudras or the Bengali word 'namate' i.e. below or underneath which means a lower grade of Shudras. According to Sashi Kumar Badoi Biswas the word "Namasudra" represents two things: first-namaskar or paying obeisance i.e. the people who paid obeisance to the Shudras (Shudrang namati) and second-to be avoided that means avoided by Shudras (Namah Shudrena). Another Namasudra commentator, Naresh Chandra Das, claimed that the word "Namasudra" means the Shudras who were paid obeisance to an explanation which seems to be the most plausible of all. 'Naman' means respected and shudra is a classified section of people who holds the lower strata in the caste society. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay in his study entitled "Caste, Protest and Identity in Colonial India: The Namasudras of Bengal, 1872-1947" claimed that 'The Namasudra community was earlier known as Chandala or Chandals, who mostly inhabited the district of East Bengal (at present Bangladesh), were forced to migrate to West Bengal during the partition of India in 1947 The different synonymous of the Namasudras are Chan-

dal, Charal, Namasud and Namah(Singh, K. S, 1995)..

Now a days, education is a fundamental human need and it is considered as the most powerful instrument to achieve one's goals in life and also socio-economic change and development. Educated people are more active, sufficient and healthier comparing to uneducated people. The Namasudras, the second largest Hindu caste (after Rajbanshi) in the province of Bengal, has a great history of their emergence, consolidation and move-ments for social and political recognition. At the beginning of twenty-first century the Namasudras in West Bengal had made an important educational and social improvement, notwithstanding politically they remained marginalized.

In the context of social science research, review of literature and pre-assessment of studies is very important as it provides not only the information about subject and sub-topics of the research but also smooth management procedure. It is well established fact that each social problem has the relation with the country, time and situation and from this point of view old studies are not only significant but essential too.

A study entitled, "The Problem of Non-Attendance in Schools of the Children (6-14 years) of Scheduled Castes in Haryana" was made by Pimpley, (1981). The author highlights that the spread of education among females was considerably lower than among males and among employers, most of the children were attenders. Among those engaged in small business all were non-attenders. The level of education of the head of the household seemed to have a positive bearing upon the school attendance of children. Awareness of reservation policy and attendance of students are positively co-related to each other. Dana Dunn (1993) in her paper "Gender Inequality in Education and Employment in the Scheduled Castes and Tribes of India" highlights the descriptive profile of the status of women in the scheduled castes and tribes

in India on the basis of ethnographic and statistical view point. She also points out that the Scheduled Caste people are more far from the educational and employment opportunity comparing to General Caste.

In the book entitled, "Dalit society and Challenge of Development" (1996) by Om Prakash Sangwan described the Socio-economic scenario of depressed classes, social structure, evolution of classes, politics of reservations and the educational development of scheduled castes and their struggle for liberation.

Mishra (1997) analyzed the level of literacy among dalit population in Atarra teshil of Uttar Pradesh and emphasized that Dalit populations are back warded in terms of literacy compared to non-Dalit populations mainly due to – (a). Literacy does not take place any significant role in their daily chores. (b). they considered their child as an essential tool of the family's day to day activities than sending him/her to school. (c). the physical distance between their habited area and school.

Chatterjee's (2000) book 'Educational Development of Scheduled Castes Looking Ahead' highlights educational development with social integration, educational inequalities, enrolment ratio, disparities in educational attainments, effect of education on marriage and constitutional provisions related to education of the Scheduled Caste population. N. B Biswas, (2004) in his pioneer work entitled "Emergence of Namasudra as a sub-caste: an Ethnological view" had attempted to work on the ethnological view of the emergence of Namasudra community as a sub scheduled caste, consolidation and move-ments for social and political recognition. He also highlights their social and economic position in the society and how they are exploited by the upper caste Brahmin.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (2005) in his article "For Dignity of Human life" highlights that education is the most powerful element for growth and prosperity of a nation. India is in the process of transforming itself into a developed

nation by 2020. Yet we have 350 million people, who need literacy and many more that have to acquire employable skills to suit the emerging modern India and the globe. Children who belong to weaker section of our society are malnourished and undernourished, and only a small percentage of them manage to complete eight years of satisfactory education (Based on President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's address, to the nation on the eve of Independence Day, 04).

Anand and Yadav (2006) in their study "The Inclusion of SC Girls in Education: A Long Path Ahead" describe the issue related to education of the Scheduled Caste particularly educational status of SC girls. A large number of SC girls do not have access to successive stages of education. The authors describe not only the drop-out rate of the Scheduled Caste Girls, factors responsible for the low female literacy and non-participation of SC girls in education but also makes an attempt to improve the situation with the help of suggests strategies and under the different governmental schemes.

Singh and, Parveen (2006) in their pioneer work entitled "Educational Empowerment of Scheduled Castes: A Study on the Working Patterns of Training Schemes" describes the statistics of scheduled caste educational attainment in schools, colleges and universities in India. The study also reveals that there has been tremendous discrimination in the field of education although there is an increasing trend in the enrolment of scheduled castes children in higher education.

Ghosh (2007) in his research paper entitled "The Gender Gap in Literacy and Education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal" discussed the gender gap in literacy and education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal with the help of gender disparity index. The study reveals that female literacy rates of Ho, Mahali, Lodha tribe in Jharkhand and West Bengal are low, compared with other tribes and gender disparities increase at the higher level of school ed-

ucation. The author also highlights the enrolment ratios, dropouts of female children, and discusses the issues related to tribal education.

Wankhede (2008) in his paper “Accessing Higher Education: Affirmative Action and Structured Inequality – The Indian Experience”, opined that education is considered one of the significant means of development of weaker sections like the Scheduled Castes in the contemporary period of globalization. The accessibility, performance and sustenance in education are hampered mainly due to their traditional socio-economic status. Although government committed itself to compensate their deprivations through various measures but there are several weaknesses in implementing the scheme. The author suggested that the scheme needs to be revamped in a big way.

Chandrashekar and S.B Akash (2011) in their paper “Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Scheduled Caste College Students: An Empirical Study” highlighted that the education plays an important role in transformation of socio-economic situation of the people of society. The authors conducted the study with the help of questionnaire covering 225 students belonged to the scheduled caste community studying in different Degree College of Raichur district. The study clearly depicts that the career aspirations of most of the scheduled caste students are want to become teachers and lecturers rather than KAS or IAS officers. This may be due to their backward economic conditions.

Shailaja Paik’s (2014) book entitled “Dalit Women’s Education in Modern India Double Discrimination” emphasis the everyday experience of ordinary Dalit women in western India at the center of her analysis of Dalit access to education in the twentieth century. Shailaja Pail gives us a very clear look at education, what it means, how Dalits enter in to it, and how negotiable their attitude about education is. She has given us a Multi-Faceted study of discrimination in terms of the field of education. Shailaja Pail highlighted in her study that Dalit wom-

en suffered from dual discrimination since they were neither welcome in the public schools – though these institutions were supposed to be for all children –nor necessarily sent to them by their parents.

The major objectives of the present study are:

1. To make a comparative analysis of educational status of the Namasudra community in Karkha and Gerul village under Banshihari Development Block of Dakshin Dinajpur District of the Indian state of West Bengal.
2. To find out the causes of educational backwardness and problemes regard to education of the Namasudra people in the study area.
3. To make some sort of recommendations for equitable participation in education of Nanasudra caste within the scheduled communities in respect of the study area and also for regional and national levels.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Study area

Dakshin Dinajpur District, is a part of Jalpaiguri division of West Bengal State, came into existence from 01-04-1992 when the erstwhile district west Dinajpur was bifurcated to form two separate districts; Utter Dinajpur with its headquarters at Raiganj and Dakshin Dinajpur with its headquarters at Balurghat. Karkha and Gerul village under Banshihari Development Block of Dakshin Dinajpur District of the Indian state of West Bengal has been selected for in deep study on present educational status of Namasudra Community. Karkha village is located under Shibpur Gram panchayet of Banshihari Tehsil of Dakshin Dinajpur District .The Karkha village covering a total geographical area of 138.36 hectares and it is bounded by Sayestabad village on the East: Amai village on the south west and Kail village on the North West. The village bears a total population of 1256 with an

average population density of 896 persons per square km, population growth rate 11.50% and sex ratio 967 females for every 1000 males according to the census of India 2011. Gerul village with population 443 is Bansihari sub districts, the 56th least populous village, located in Bansihari sub district of Dakshin Dinajpou district in the state of west Bengal in India. The

total geographical area of Gerul village is 0.49 km² surrounded by Anilas village on the west; Mirahati village on the east and south east and Deogaon village on the south respectively. The density of population is 904 per km²; population growth rate 12.2% and sex ratio 1014 females for every 1000 males according to the census of India 2011. (Figure 1.)

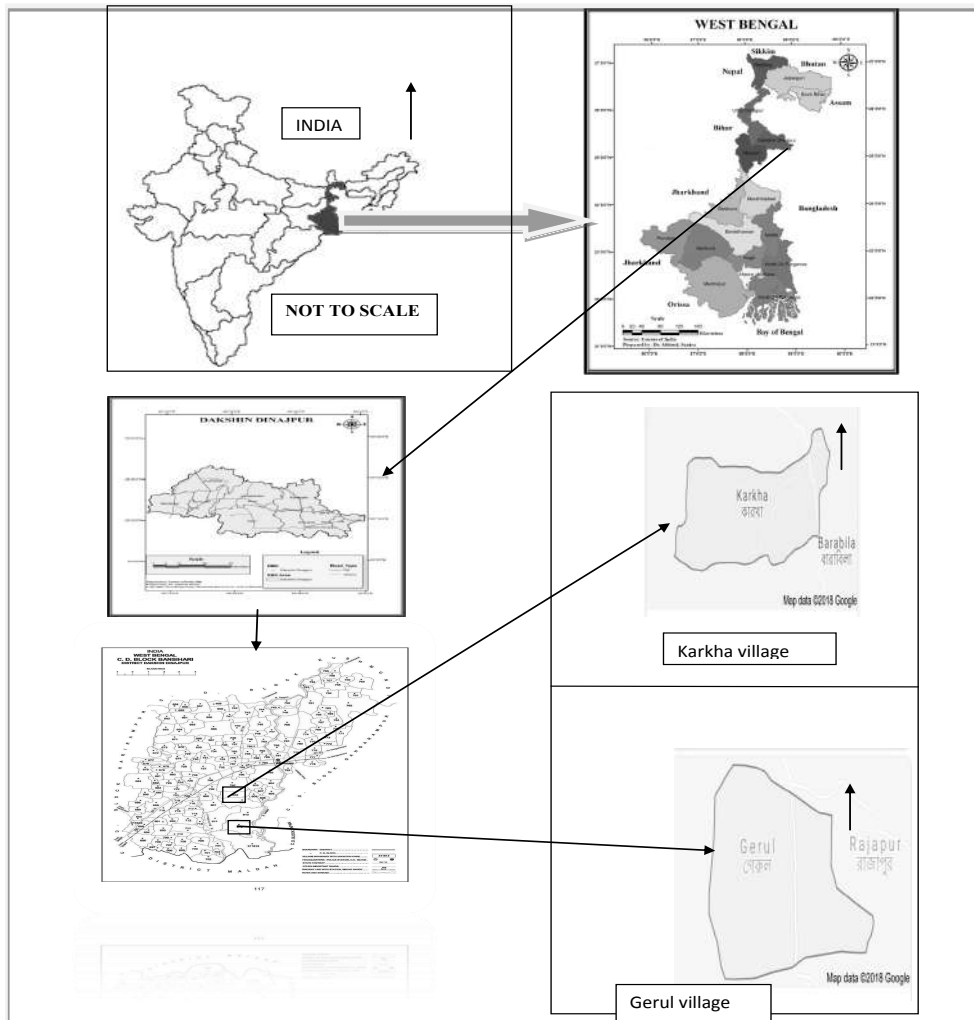


Figure 1. Location Map of the Study Area

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Primary data as well as Secondary data sources have been used in the present study to depict and analyze the present educational scenario of Namasudra Community in Karkha and Gerul village of Dakshin Dinajpur District. The primary data has been collected by interview technique with the help of standard questionnaires which have been collected from the field (study region) i.e. Karkha and Gerul village by using the multistage stratified random sampling method. And also, participant observation technique is conducted directly having participation with the respondents. Secondary sources of data are gathered from different published and unpublished materials such as books, journals, re-

search article, research report, Ph.D thesis, Dissertation etc. The obtained data were presented and interpreted using different cartographic techniques and diagrams.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study highlights the Present Educational Scenario of the Namasudra Community in Karkha and Gerul village of Dakshin Dinajpur District of West Bengal. Here the author tries to describe the comparative analysis of male female literate and illiterate percentage, educational attainment, dropout rate of the children, rate of enrolment, Preference of School for Primary Education of Children and Number of Educational Institutions with in the study area.

Table 1. Literate and Illiterate population

Name of the village	Category	Frequency			Percentage		
		Total	male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Gerul	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Literate	132	82	50	57.39	59.42	54.35
	Illiterate	98	56	42	42.61	40.58	45.65
	Grand Total	230	138	92	100.00	100.00	100.00
karkha	Literate	196	114	82	82.00	80.85	83.67
	Illiterate	43	27	16	17.99	19.15	16.33
	Grand Total	239	141	98	100	100	100

Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field Study- 2018.

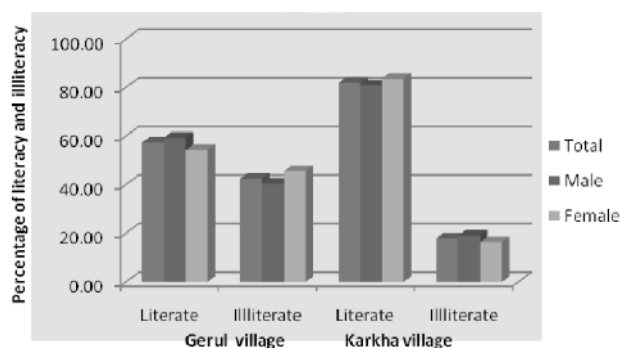


Figure 2. Literate and Illiterate population of Gerul and Karkha village

Figure 2. Literate and Illiterate Population

A person who is more than 7 years old and able to read and write with understanding in any language is recorded as literate. Education is considered to be one of the most important instruments through which a society socializes all members and it helps for nations building. In Gerul village 59.42% male and 54.35% female are literate while 40.58% male and 45.65% female are illiterate. The literacy rate in Karkha village is very high (80.85% male and 83.67% female are literate) in comparing to Gerul village. Therefore the gap between male and fe-

male literates in Karkha village is about 2.82%. In comparison to the Gerul village the male female literates and illiterates gap is 5.07 % and 5.07 % respectively. The major factor behind the difference of literate and illiterate rates in Karkha and Gerul Village are lack of educational facilities, lack of awareness dependency on child labour, untouchability practices, location of the village, economic status of the population etc. It is necessary to create awareness among the Namasudra community and effective planning for the upliftment of female population at this point of time. (Table 1 and Figure 2)

Table 2. Dropout Levels of Namasudra Respondents in Karkha and Gerul Village
Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field Study-2018.

Name of the Village	Primary(I-IV)		Upper Primary(V-VIII)		Maddhyamik and Higher secondary	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Karkha	17.25	13.70	23.35	28.93	10.65	6.09
Gerul	16.54	13.66	23.02	34.53	9.35	2.87

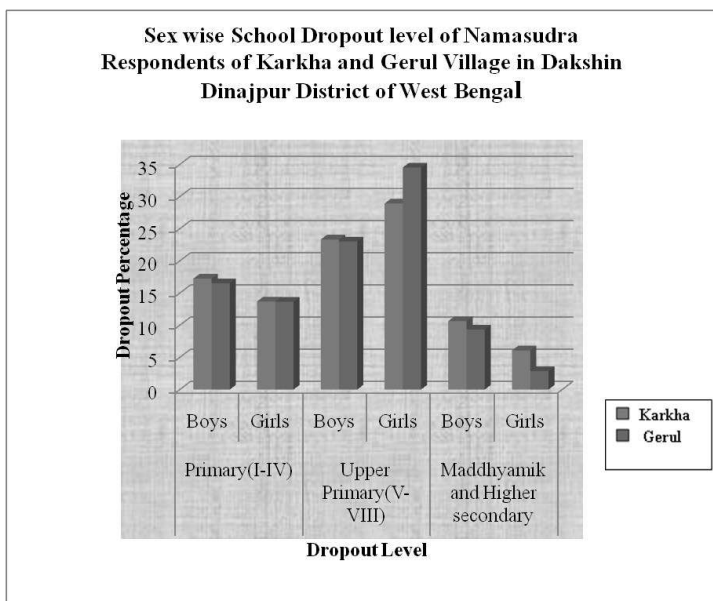


Figure 2. Sex wise School Dropout Level of Namasudra Children’s in Karkha and Gerul village.

The school dropout scenario of Namasudra children of Karkha and Gerul village in Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal is not so good. Although, during the last few decades, the school enrolment rate of Namasudra children have increased ,particularly at primary level, but the dropout rates among these children continue to be very high. The dropout rate (both boys and girls) in Karkha and Gerul village is high at Upper-Primary (V-VIII) level comparing to Primary (I-IV) and Maddhyamik and Higher secondary level. Out of total 197 dropout students in Karkha village majority (23.35% boys,28.93% girls) are of Upper primary level and remaining

15.47% and 8.78% children are of primary and higher secondary level. In case of Gerul village, out of total 139 dropout students majority (23.02% boys, 34.53% girls) are of Upper primary level and remaining 15.01% and 6.11% children are of primary and higher secondary level. The major factor behind these type of dropout of children are illiteracy of families, Poor economic condition Early Marriage of daughters, lack of awareness, children are considered labour force to supplement meager family income etc.

(Table 2 and Figure 3)

Table 3. Rate of enrolment of Namasudra children in school

Name of the village	Response	Frequency of response		Percentage of response	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Gerul	Enrolled	146	121	80.22	84.62
	Not enrolled	36	22	19.78	15.38
	Total	182	143	100	100
Karkha	Enrolled	157	149	88.20	90.30
	Not enrolled	21	16	11.80	9.70
	Total	178	165	100	100

Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field Study-2018

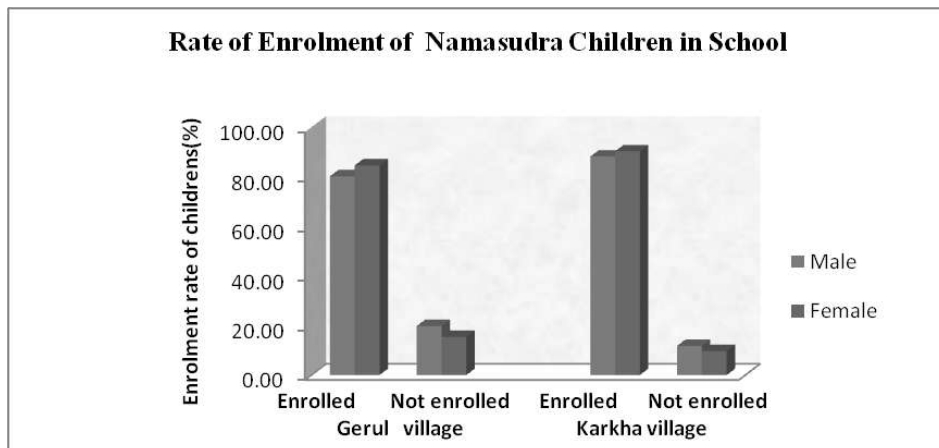


Figure 3. Rate of Enrolment in Namasudra Children in School

Most of the School dropout Children (boys and girls) are engaged in paid work activities inside homes at Gerul and Deuria village of Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal and work for 8-10 hours a day. Analysis of 1993-94 National Sample Survey data found that the proportion of child labour was two to three times higher among the Dalits and Adivasi than the rest of the population (Throat, 1999). Relative exclusion and inequality among Namasudra (Dalits) boys and girls is higher than the general and

scheduled caste population in terms of universalisation of elementary education. As a result, their overall educational environment remains lower. In Gerul village the rate of enrolment of Namasudra children in School is 80.22% male and 84.62 % female where as in Karkha village the school enrolment of Boys and girls are 88.20% and 90.30% respectively. It is also noted that the girl's enrolment rate in both villages is quite higher comparing to male enrolment rate. (Table 3 and Figure 4).

Table 4. Educational attainment of Namasudra Community of Karkha and Gerul village

Name of the village Category	Gerul			Karkha		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Primary(I-IV)	58.93	55.99	63.05	47.39	45.42	47.86
Upper primary(V-VIII)	26.90	25.00	29.56	21.98	20.77	22.50
M.P	8.62	11.97	3.94	16.04	15.49	19.29
H.S	3.08	3.87	1.97	7.57	8.45	6.43
Graduate	1.44	1.76	0.99	3.78	5.28	2.14
Post-Graduate	0.62	0.70	0.49	1.98	2.82	1.07
Others	0.41	0.70	0.00	1.26	1.76	0.71
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field Study-2018

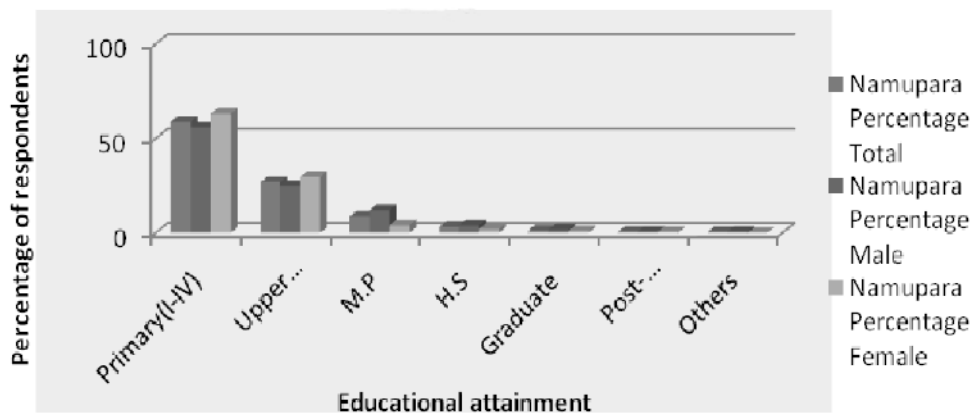


Figure 4. Educational attainment of Namasudra Community of Gerul village

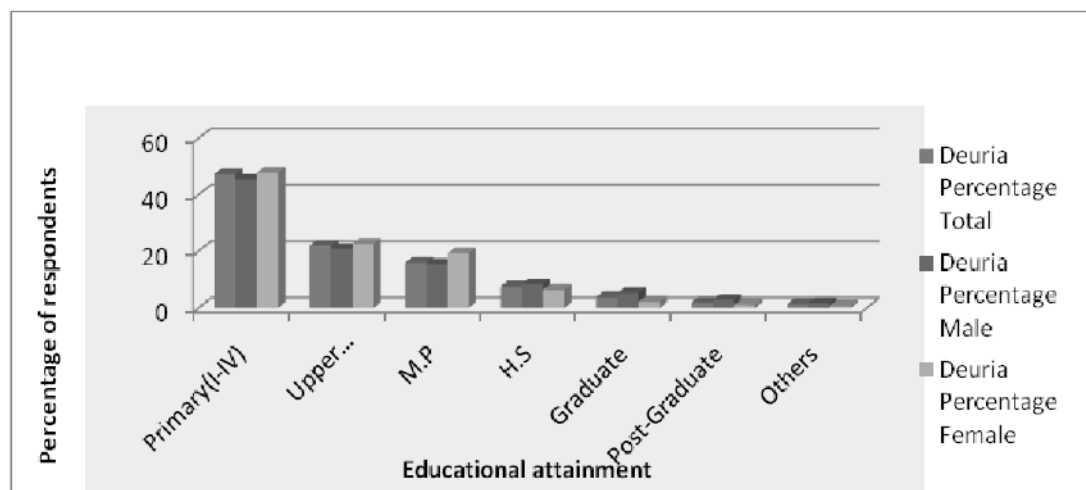


Figure 4. Educational Attainment of Namasudra Community in Karkha and Gerul village

Educational attainment means the percentage distribution of different levels of educational attainment in the literate population of an area or a region. The study of educational attainment of male and female population is a significant instrument for the analysis of population characteristic of a particular community or a group. The scenario of educational attainment of the members of Namasudra community in Karkha and Gerul village reveals that there is a significant variation for the attainment of higher education. Regarding educational level among the Namasudra people (Table-04) shows that 55.99% of the literate males and 63.05% of the literate females of Gerul village are of the primary level (iv standard) while in Karkha village 45.42% of the literate males and 47.86% of the literate females are of the primary level (iv standard). The percentage of educational attainment of M.P and H.S level in Gerul village are 8.62%(11.97 % male and 3.94% female) and

3.08%(3.87% male and 1.97% female) respectively where as in Karkha this scenario are more than double. Disparity also observed in terms of educational attainment in Graduation, Post-graduation and Others level in male and female of Karkha and Gerul village of Dakshin Dinajpur district. Only 1.76% male and 0.99% female of Gerul village are graduates whereas 5.28 % of male and 2.14% of female of Karkha village are graduates. The status of post-graduate (2.82% male and 1.0% female) and Others (1.76% male and 0.71% female) level of education in Karkha village is quite higher comparing to the Gerul village. The gap in post-graduation level between Karkha and Gerul village is 2.12% for male and 0.58% for female. Therefore it may be concluded that the participation at higher education (graduation, post-graduation and above) of the members of Namasudra community in both villages is very poor. . (Table 4 and Figure 5)

Table 5. Preference of School for Primary Education of Children and Number of Educational Institutions

Name of the village	Category	Frequency	Percentage	No of Educational Institution
Karkha	Private Nursery School	142	67.3	4
	Government School including ICDS	79	37.44	2
	Total	211	100	6
Gerul	Private Nursery School	62	34.25	0
	Government School including ICDS	119	65.75	1
	Total	181	100	1

Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field Study-2018

Out of total 211 respondents in Karkha village 142(67.3%) preferred private nursery school and 79 (37.44%) prefer government schools for their children .Whereas in Gerul village out of total 181respondents'62(34.24%) have preferred private nursery school and 119(65.75%) prefer government schools for their children. It is also observed that only one ICDS are found in Gerul village where as 2 government school including one ICDS and 4 private nursery schools are located in the Karkha vil-lage. (Table 5 and Figure 6)

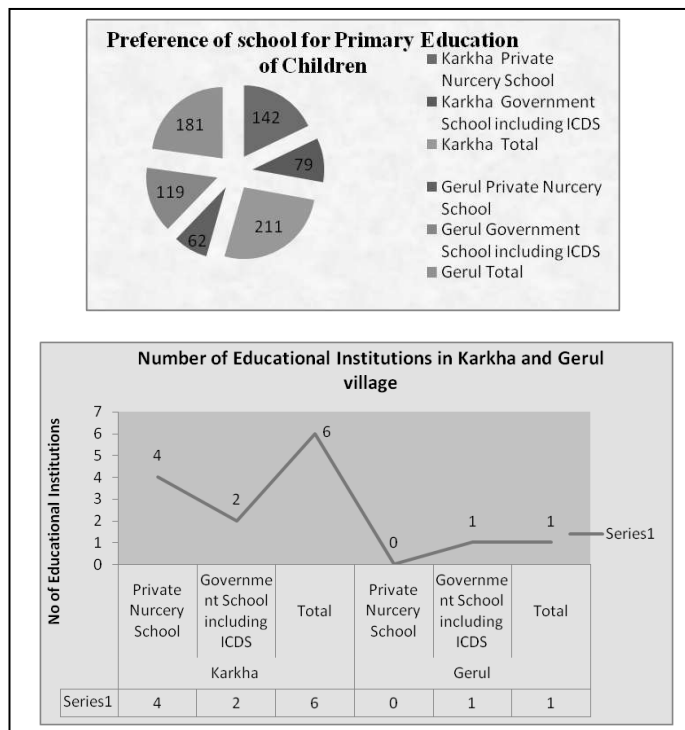
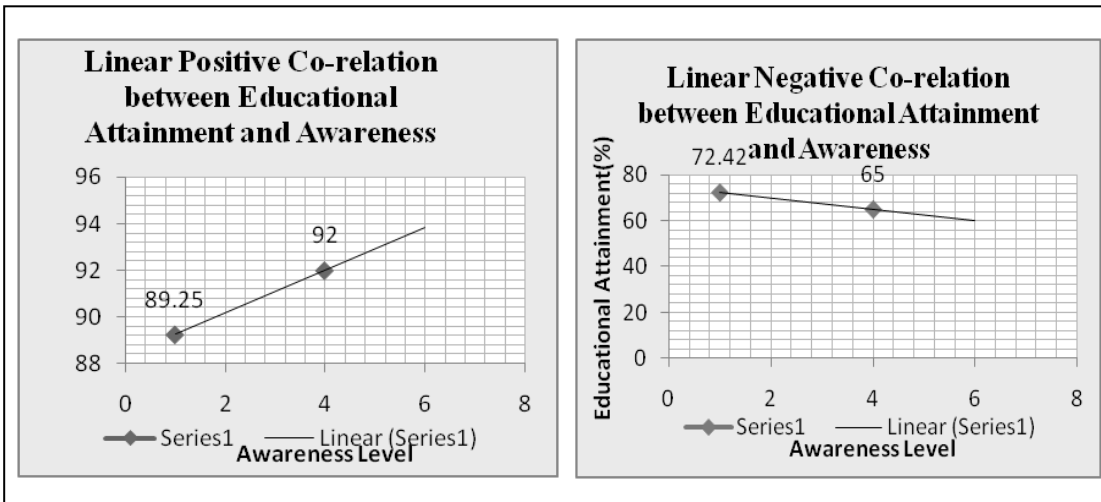


Figure 6. Preference of School for Primary Education and Educational institutions.

Table 6. Co-relation between Level of Educational Attainment and Awareness about Education

Name of the village	Level of educational attainment	Awareness related to education
Karkha	89.25	92
Gerul	72.42	65

Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field Study-2018

**Figure 6.** Relationship between Educational Attainment and Awareness

While analyzing the relationship between level of educational attainment and awareness of the members of Namasudra community the results show that (Table 6) increasing the awareness about education decreasing the dropout rates in the Karkha village, i.e. there exists a positive relationship between the level of educational attainment and awareness. But in case of Gerul village the relationship between the level of educational attainment and awareness are negative. The guardians of Karkha village are very much aware about the quality education of their children comparing to the guardians of Gerul village.

(Table 6 and Figure 7)

The major findings of the present study are-

1. It is observed that the percentage of literate population among the Namasudra community in Karkha village is higher(82.00%) than the Gerul village(57.39%).The male –female illiterate percentage in Karkha village are 19.15% and 16.33% respectively where as in Gerul village it is 40.58% and 45.65% respectively. Therefore, Karkha village is quite higher in the field of education comparing to Gerul village.
2. Most of the Namasudra children in both villages drop their school education in upper primary level. Due to poor economic conditions most of the boys are engaged as a la-

bour force to supplement meager family income. Large numbers of girls work as a bidi binding in home and they drop their education for their early marriage, lack of awareness and illiteracy of family.

3. The educational attainment of the Namasudra children in all classes in Karkha village is found higher than the Gerul village, except from class I-IV and class V-VIII.
4. The rate of enrollment of Namasudra children in school is higher in Karkha village comparing to Gerul village mainly due to educational awareness, availability of educational institutions, stability of economy etc.
5. The guardians of Karkha village are very much aware about the education of their children and they are sending their children to private school and are willing to spend more money for quality education. Their opinion is that the govt. primary schools are presently suffering by the lack of teachers and they are busy to maintain mid-day meal Scheme. But in Gerul village parent's preference is government school for the free education and free Mid-day meal from the government mainly due to their lower economic income.

CONCLUSION

Form the present study it is reveal that the Namasudra community in Karkha village are to some extend forward in the field of education in comparison to the Gerul village almost in all level of education. The literacy percentage and their participation level or trends in education of Karkha village the Namasudras are found in better position than the Gerul village. Further, the Namasudra students of Gerul village are facing more problems in the field of schooling process than the Karkha village. As financial problem is the main factor for perusing education by the members of Namasudra community therefore it is necessary to improve the economic condition of Namasudra people families in both villages for the active participation in the field

of education. It is urgent to make the guardian appreciate about the significance of education, enrolment and continuation of study, at any cost by their children. For the proper development of education establishment of linkages between schools and the community is necessary. Improvement of parents-teacher association; Close collaboration among concerned entities like schools; government and non govt, agencies, parents and teachers; teachers and community plays a vital role for the overall educational development. In the planning of any educational programme of an area or region, involvement of teachers, head of the institution and community members is important. Some sort of guidance and counseling may be arranged for the Namasudra parents to make them aware about the importance of education in life, so that they can understand their responsibilities of provide all arrangement for their child's education. Extra coaching classes and extra care should be organized free of cost for the deficient students during week-ends and holidays. Create more awareness about the harmful effects of the Child labour is necessary. Government may introduce the facility to provide dress, Books and other materials such as pen, paper, pencil and slate should be given free to the scheduled caste (Namasudra community) students up to secondary level of education. Residential type of education, Practical programmes in education, like sanitations, health education, and cottage industry should be adopted in the institutions for them. Central and State Government effort is not sufficient for the development of the scheduled caste (Namasudra) welfare programmes, projects and schemes rather than, public involvement is indispensable.

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