



## **POVERTY OBSTRUCTING DEVELOPMENT OF BACKWARD CLASS STUDENTS IN MURSHIDABAD, WEST BENGAL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Backward class students and people are looked down upon. In a situation, where society has progressed much, this is something which does not fit in. It is a wastage of modern progressive thinking, which needs to be improved through schemes, initiatives, laws, equalizing labor and education for all, irrespective of their culture and background. Mere improvements is not enough. Administrative staffs in schools are to ensure that the improvements reach the students properly, and their parents are made aware of the modern schemes. If the parents are aware, then they can plan better for their children. This will ensure the best for the children in terms of their academic establishment.

Key words: poverty, development, backward class students, Murshidabad, west Bengal.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is considered as the backbone of social and economic development, for backward class students in Murshidabad, West Bengal. Its significant for uplifting standards of marginalized and backward communities. This upliftment is aimed by providing equal opportunities for growth and employment to the people, especially the students. However, poverty is still seen as an obstacle in educational and overall development of backward class students in many regions of India. Murshidabad district of West Bengal consists of economic hardships, social backwardness, and educational inequalities (Mandal & Saha, 2026). All of these are closely connected with each other. Despite having historic significance, the district remains educationally and economically underdeveloped, as compared to several other districts of West Bengal. Evidence of this lies in the consideration of backward class students, including Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and economically weaker minority communities, face numerous obstacles in pursuing education and achieving social mobility.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Economic Condition of Murshidabad**

Murshidabad achieves accolades and glory as a rural district with staple occupations of agriculture, bidi-making, small-scale trade, and daily wage labor for survival. Most families hail from backward classes, and experience unstable incomes. Due to financial insecurity, parents often struggle to fulfil developmental needs of the children. Cag.gov.in (2013) revealed that low family income increases inability of the parents to purchase books, school uniforms, digital devices, transportation facilities, and private tuition support. Many students are exposed to unfavorable environments, in which students from backward classes cannot adjust properly. They feel inferiority complex, as they lack proper educational resources. As a result of this lack, their learning outcomes are adversely affected.

### **2.2 Poverty and Educational Deprivation**

Poverty is an obstruction for the educational development of backward class students in Murshidabad. Financial hardships force many children to withdraw from schools at an early stage. Some students

remain absent from school because they have to assist their parents in works, instead of studying, so supplement the family income. Moreover, parents are also unskilled and illiterate which contributes to low enrolment and irregular attendance. Sarkar, (2026) is of the view that parents who are illiterate often fail to understand the initiatives undertaken by the schools. As a result, immediate economic survival is preferred than schooling. In many cases, children from backward communities are admitted to hospitals and care homes with complaints of malnutrition, poor health, and inadequate living conditions. As a result of this, they cannot concentrate on studies. The immediate impact of this is reduced grades of performance in schools.

### **2.3 Child Labor and School Dropout**

One of the most serious consequences which students from low-income group families face is child labor. In Murshidabad, many children are involved in bidi industries, agricultural labor, domestic work, and informal occupations. Parents involve the children as they need support for becoming financially strong. According to Mandal, Das, and Kar, (2018), this practice detaches them from regular schooling, ultimately leading to permanent dropout. This leaves a mark on the reputation of the family, which degrades their position within the other social constructs. The dropout rate among backward class students is high. This is especially found in the students studying in secondary and higher secondary levels. Economic pressure compels these students to prioritize earning over education, which deprives them of the aspects leading to academic establishment. Girls are particularly vulnerable in this case, as most of them are withdrawn from the schools, to be married off to grooms who are double their age or be involved in domestic duties.

### **2.4 Gender Inequality and Girls' Education**

Poverty makes girls more victim than boys, especially the ones from backward communities. This is because in many families, it is seen that poor families hesitate to invest in girls' education. Das, and Dutta, B. (2025) stated that they keep a share for their marriage, so they do not like to many additional expenses for their development. This emerges from traditional social attitudes and financial limitations. In these notions, concerns related to safety, transportation, and marriage further arise,

discouraging families to think about letting girls continue higher education. There are many relatives, possessing traditional orthodox views, mould the parents into their philosophies, due to which, girls' fate receives an ombre shade in terms of educational goal accomplishment. Here, it is striking to note that female literacy and educational participation are comparatively low in several rural areas of Murshidabad. Chakraborty, (2025) detected that early marriage and domestic responsibilities interrupt the educational journey of many girls, constraining their future opportunities and empowerment.

### **2.5 Inadequate Educational Infrastructure**

Educational infrastructure in many parts of Murshidabad is insufficient, which makes the development of students from backward classes poor. Rural schools as portrayed in the records, often lack proper classrooms, libraries, laboratories, toilets, and drinking water facilities. All of these shortages add to difficulties for the students to gain basic and elementary education. On top of this, absence of skilled and qualified teachers, makes studies irregular. Consistency in this aspect further weaken the quality of education for the students from backward communities, and with low income. Here, Islam and Alam, (2022) were of the view that role of government is also important. Unaffordability of the students from backward communities, towards fees and resources is the main focus of government. Government institution reliance increases in this circumstance. The immediate impact is seen in low quality of educational facilities offered by these schools. Utilisation of these facilities widens the gaps between rich and poor students. This gap is also seen in the digitalisation, which these students are not aware of. It was during Covid 19, which compelled the students to rope in modern machines for attending online classes (Ray, 1961). Although most of the students became detached from education during the pandemic, as the schools were shut down, for controlling virus spread.

### **2.6 Psychological and Social Impact**

Poverty also affects the psyche of the students, as they experience stress on not being able to gain the basic and elementary education, as others. Symptoms are feelings of inferiority, social exclusion, and lack of confidence among the students from backward classes. Tendency is also to compare themselves with financially stronger peers, affecting concentration in studies. Many backward class

students lose motivation, in this process, affecting their performance. Major drive behind this is repeated economic struggles and social discrimination. Without proper guidance and encouragement, they cannot realize their potential, and fall into the trap of wrong company (Dey, Ray & Majumder, 2024). They also remain trapped in the cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, which makes the dream of educational achievement, a mere distant dream.

### **2.7 Government Initiatives**

Several initiatives have been undertaken by government of West Bengal for catering to students from economically backward students and their families. Evidence of this lies in schemes like scholarships, Mid-Day Meal programs, free textbooks, uniforms, and reservation policies for backward classes. Various educational welfare schemes have also been developed with the aim of reducing dropout rates and increasing enrolment among disadvantaged communities. Some improvements have been seen through these schemes. But not all the community is aware of these schemes, as there are biases in channelizing the initiatives. As a result of this, some sections of the community are deprived of the educational schemes and programs (Biswas & Sharma, 2022). Consistency in the issues of corruption, lack of awareness, insufficient implementation, and administrative negligence limit students' effective educational achievement in the threshold of rural Murshidabad, west Bengal.

### **2.8 Need of the hour**

The story cannot be the same, as it will push the life of students from backward classes of Murshidabad, west Bengal into darkness. Measures are needed for overcoming poverty, especially in case of the students. Increasing financial assistance and scholarships for poor students is important for supplementing their income. This assistance will suffice fulfilment of basic needs of their family members, and themselves in terms of education. Improving rural educational infrastructure and digital connectivity is equally important for aligning them into the current situation, where most of the educational activities are online. Awareness campaigns can be organized for making the parents aware about the value of education, especially for girls. These camps can include short skits, dramas, films

on harmful effects of child labour, early marriage among others (Hdr.undp.org, 2004). Government needs to be strict with labour laws, and make child labour a punishable act. For girls, merit-based scholarships can be organized, so that they can gain motivation to study hard, and move ahead in life. Students from backward classes and communities can also be exposed to vocational and skill-based education, which will prepare them for employment opportunities, comprising of modern education and skills. School staffs need to ensure that government welfare schemes are properly implemented, and monitored. This monitoring will detect the areas where news of the schemes has not reached and the students who are deprived from the benefits (Pathak & Bharadwaj, 2015). Along with this, skilled and qualified teachers are to be recruited, so that teaching quality in government schools improve, and students get the proper guidance on utilizing the lessons.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research has been conducted through primary quantitative method, where surveys are done on 50 students belonging to backward classes in Murshidabad, West Bengal. These survey responses provide practical insights into the quality of education available at their schools. Survey questionnaires are prepared, which are sent to the samples through Google Forms. This platform is effective as it helps the researcher to reach out to large number of samples at one go. The collected responses are analyzed through tables, charts, graphs, which alarms the audience about the current educational qualities experienced by the backward students of Murshidabad, West Bengal. Explorative research design is used along with deductive approach for deducing relevant aspects, facts, ideas, theories and concepts.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

From the literature reviewed, it has been deduced that poverty is one of the biggest obstacles in the path of development for backward class students in Murshidabad, West Bengal. Economic deprivation, child labor, gender inequality, poor infrastructure, and low educational awareness are the reasons why these students face issues in achieving educational and social progress. Although government programs and welfare policies have been devised, sustained efforts are still long behind for ensuring equality in ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students. These efforts are

aimed at ensuring progress of Murshidabad on a broader context, in terms of social justice and inclusive development in India. Eliminating poverty and strengthening educational access are primary aspects to focus for uplifting the standards of marginalized communities and providing them a respectable position within the society.

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