

Gender Inequality in West Bengal, With Special Reference to The Salanpur CD Block, Paschim Bardhaman

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Abstract- For this study, there is a significant gender inequality problem in many areas, particularly in Salanpur CD Block, Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal. From the Asansol Sub-Division, the researchers have chosen the Salanpur block for this study. The researchers used participant observation, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews to gather primary data. There are four sections: socio-demographic data, family data, interviews with an informal discussion with the girl, who was essentially denied formal education due to large family size, financial problems, semi- and uneducated parents, early child marriage, and so on, and final data obtained from teachers. Most Santhal women from the older generation (62.5 per cent) are illiterate, while only 31.0 per cent of men from this generation are illiterate. The younger generation of Santhal women has a 16 per cent illiteracy rate, compared to a 6.5 per cent illiteracy rate for men in this generation. The primary education situation within the Santhal tribe was investigated in this study. The findings of the study revealed numerous challenges to the advancement of tribal children's education, particularly girls' education. The current study is an effort to look at various aspects of the problem of gender inequality in education among the Santhal tribes. It is based on fieldwork in various villages in Salanpur block in Paschim Bardhaman district in West Bengal.

Keywords- Gender Inequality, Education, The Santhal Tribe, Salanpur Block, Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women in every country are a reflection of its culture (Mostafiz & Jamil, 2022). They are the most valuable members of society (A. Ghosh, 2015). The position of women in society serves as a barometer of social structure (Diva Dhar, Tarun Jain, & Jayachandran, 2018). Unless the situation of women improves, there is little hope for the world's welfare. In reality, when there is no respect for women and they live in sorrow, the status of the family or the country has not improved (Roy et al., 2022). However, in almost all countries around the world, women's social, economic, and political status is lower than men's; while some societies have a better position than others, women's overall position is lower than men's in terms of education, employment, political participation, health status, and so on (M. K. Ghosh et al., 2020). The Indian constitution not only guarantees equal rights and benefits for men and women but also makes specific provisions for women (Bhawan, 2021). Various social laws have been passed to improve the status of women in the country. Following independence, various five-year plans have consistently focused on providing basic health services integrated with family welfare and nutrition for women and children, as well as accelerating women's education, increasing their labour force participation, and providing welfare services for women in need (Kumar Sarkar & Singha, 2019). Different efforts have been made to enhance women's living conditions and give them more power over monetary and social resources. Special efforts have been made to remove legal, social, and other obstacles, allowing them to take advantage of the new rights and opportunities that have become accessible to them. Women currently engage in all areas of life in India, including "education, politics, the media, art and culture, the service sector, science and technology," and so on. Despite all of these development initiatives and fundamental legal protections, women continue to fall behind men in virtually every field (Coates et al., 2011).

The Scheduled Tribes of India, as defined by the Indian Constitution, account for 8.6% of the country's total population of more than 104 million people ("Population Finder | Government of India," 2022). There are 573 distinct tribal groups in India, most of which live in the country's remote mountainous and forest regions. Their separate language, which numbers almost 273 speakers, is extremely distinct from the rest of the community (UNDP and MoTA, 2020). However, India's Schedule Tribes have long been excluded from the development process, and their involvement in education is still at a low level, even after seven decades of independence (National Coalition for Education in India, 2018). As one of the most disadvantaged and neglected groups in terms of education, Scheduled Tribes need particular attention while delivering basic education (Gutta et al., 2019). The lack of tribal socio-economic and cultural understanding among

educational planners causes them to lag far behind mainstream Hindus and scheduled caste groups in education, which has a negative impact on gender equality in many areas, especially in education.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study conducted by Karim et al. (2021) looked at the gender differences in MV (marital violence) among the patrilineal mainstream Bengali communities in rural Bangladesh, the patrilineal ethnic minority Santhal, and the matrilineal ethnic minority Garo. According to the data, women were more frequently exposed to various forms of MV than men were. On the other hand, Sumanjeet (2016) studied the state of gender inequality in India. He explained that a lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation. Akan et al. carried out an ethnographic study of the land and way of life of the Santal community in Bangladesh's Barind Tract in 2015. This essay looks into the Santhal community's way of life as one of Bangladesh's largest tribal groups. Despite their best efforts to abide by the laws and customs of their society, social issues like overt inequality, resource scarcity, illiteracy, and maladjustment are more serious. An investigation into gender equality among Santhals was conducted by Ghosh & Malik (n.d.). To determine how gender roles among adult Santhals have changed over time in their educational system, the educational status of older and younger generations is examined. The study's findings revealed that Santhal men have higher levels of education than Santhal women. A study on gender inequality in India was done by Tisdell (2002) using data from a survey in rural West Bengal. Examining gender inequality involves summarising the results of a survey of wives in the Midnapore district of West Bengal. The outcomes are then used to examine several quality-related issues involving sons and daughters, to evaluate how much wives affect their children's welfare, and to compare wives' and husbands' socioeconomic standing. On the other hand, a study on gender disparities in employment and education in India's Scheduled Castes and Tribes was done in 1993 by Ohno and Löttgenberger. Gender inequality in the scheduled castes and tribes was to be measured in this study. This study has emphasised the need to conceptualise gender equality for India's scheduled groups as an essential component of the development process. In addition, the other studies which are directly and indirectly related to the topic of gender inequality are

Amartya Sen's "*Pratichi Trust*" has extensively researched West Bengal's educational scenario. They have conducted considerable qualitative research on various topics concerning children's education, with a particular emphasis on underserved communities (Rana, 2010). The educational levels of men in the Santhal community are lower than those of women in the different tribal communities. The study found that illiteracy rates among ST and SC populations are substantially higher than among OBC and other groups. Among Santhal communities, primary education is prioritised above secondary education (K. Ramesh, 2013).

Dasen, P.R., Akkari (2008), S. Ramesh and Setram (2020), and Leeson (2015) have identified many factors that affect tribal education, such as other students' attitudes, socioeconomic factors, a lack of motivation, a lack of facilities, the environment, and so forth (pp. 245-250). They recommended that educational and economic systems give priority to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. It examines the many issues that tribal females confront when it comes to gaining access to and completing education. He focused on poverty and hunger, parents' indifference, a lack of qualified instructors, infrastructure, language and communication issues, school scheduling, government apathy, and so on. (Maji, 2016). It has discovered a wide range of factors that affect Arunachal Pradesh's educational exclusion. The study focuses on "education, violence and abuse, curriculum, environment, language and communication, and primary and fragmented human resource development" (Ranjan Padhi, 2016, pp. 256-261).

Despite numerous laws, plans, facilities, and regulations, according to Bhatla et al. (2017), inequalities continue in all spheres of social life, including education. He stated that the most likely causes of not being able to access an education were a combination of historical oppression and "lack of access to a local, high-quality education system." The study suggests that India should test out various incentives to achieve national social equality. Singh (2019) listed several initiatives that have been taken to combat illiteracy, such as the "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan," the "National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)," and the "Kasturba Gandhi BAL Vidyalaya (KGBV)". For each Educationally Backward Block (EEB) in Punjab, there is an operational model school. However, the results were still below what was anticipated. They suggested balancing qualitative and quantitative growth. Parents, teachers, and psychologists are blamed for the high dropout rate among the underprivileged Santhal community in Paschim Medinipur District (Patra, Subhandu, and Panigrahi, 2018). They suggested recruiting teachers who understand tribal culture and behaviour, either from tribal or non-tribal backgrounds. They stressed the use of Santhali as a medium of instruction and raising peasants' awareness of the need for education.

Lack of interest, financial constraints, involvement in economic and family responsibilities, community tradition, marriage, and other factors prevent scheduled caste children aged 5 to 29 from attending school (Acharya & Sahoo, 2019). Compared to 78 per cent for the district and 77.08 per cent for the state, the literacy rate for tribal people in Paschim Medinipur District is only 59.51 per cent. The study identified many factors that contribute to educational lag, including language barriers, social and political factors, environmental and geographical factors, and traditional and cultural factors (Chakraborty, 2019).

III. EXPANSION OF EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN WEST BENGAL

A population's educational level is regarded as a key driver of its quality of life, and the literacy rate is widely considered one of the most important measures of progress (Zainal et al., 2012). Of course, education is linked to other aspects of human growth. For example, universal education, with a focus on women's education, is critical to enhancing community health (Bhat, 2015). To achieve meaningful and successful decentralisation, universal education is needed, especially in the following phase when panchayats will be given more responsibility for various tasks (Devendra, 2021). West Bengal has traditionally had a higher literacy rate than the national average and now ranks sixth among the main states (Kanti Chattoraj & Chand, 2015). But the state's literacy rate has only slowly increased, particularly among women. Apart from conventional schooling, the state government has been making focused efforts in the last decade via different special programmes such as "total literacy campaigns," "non-formal education," and other initiatives to accomplish the objective of "education for all" as soon as feasible. According to the Census, West Bengal's literacy rate rose from 48.6% in 1981 to 57.7% in 1991 and 69.2% in 2001. Rural literacy is lower than urban literacy, although it has risen faster in recent years (Biswas, 2017).

It's heartening that the most significant reductions in gender inequality, especially in the realm of education, have occurred in some of the most "backward" areas, especially among females, during the last decade (Economies et al., n.d.). In the years 1991–2001, the female literacy rate in the Salanpur block of Asansol Sub-Division and the Pandabeswar block of Asansol Sub-Division in Paschim Bardhaman (West Bengal) increased dramatically (Directorate of Census Operations, 2001). So, in recent years, there has been a significant reduction in gender inequality, especially in female education.

IV. THE SANTHAL TRIBE IN PASCHIM BARDHAMAN (WEST BENGAL)

The Santals are West Bengal's most populous tribal tribe. The other significant tribes are Mahali, Munda, Lodha, Bhumij, and Oraon (Narayan, 2001). Small or marginal farmers and landless agricultural workers make up the majority of the tribal population (Inclusive et al., n.d.). According to the 2001 Census, tribal people made up 5.5 per cent of West Bengal's total population. In West Bengal, the ST male and female literacy rates were 57.4 per cent and 29.2 per cent, with a 28.2 per cent gender difference (Census of India, 2011).

In rural West Bengal, tenancy reform has improved agricultural production and income for SCs and STs (GoI, 2019). Affecting literacy seems to be little. ST households have a lower literacy rate than the broader population. The tribal infrastructure is inadequate, and vital public services, such as education, are especially deficient for rural women (Bonus & Employees, 2020). According to Guha (Diagnosis et al., n.d.; Mathematics, 2016), the Santals are proto-Australoids. They are the largest tribe still speaking Santali, an *Austriac language* related to Mundari, and the minor languages Ho, Korcu, Savara, and Gadaba from the Austro-Asiatic subfamily (Culshaw, 1949, p. xx).

The Santals have lived in western and southern West Bengal for at least 500 years (Soren & Jamir, 2021). Some of the Santhal settlements in the Bankura district are thought to be older than 300 years old, according to research. They live in a humid, hot climate (Zamadar, 2023). Most of their towns are tucked between hills and forests, with streams and springs in between. There may be low hills in some places, while abrupt conical hills may rise from the gently undulating plains in other places. Sal woodland covers the majority of the area, enhancing the locals' quality of life. Lack of water availability is a characteristic of the lateritic, reddish soil of the plains (Barnett & Baker, 1991). The Santals' primary occupation is agriculture, though food gathering and hunting are important auxiliary pursuits (Maharana & Patel, 2018). They can barely make a living without knowledge of animal husbandry. Santals are expert hunters who explore the nearby woods in search of a variety of wildlife (*Unit 1 Tribes and the Forest*, n.d.). In ponds, rivers, and other bodies of water, they fish using nets, traps, bows, and arrows. They also use poisonous plants in their fishing (Van Anandel, 2000). Monogamy is the most typical type of marriage among Santals, but polygynous unions are also occasionally seen (Chandrakantha, 2014). The seven types of weddings or baplas that are generally accepted are "Kring Bahu Bapla, Ghardi Jawae Bapla, Itut Bapla, Sanga Bapla, Kiring Jawae Bapla, Tunki Dipil Bapla, and Nirbolok Bapla" (*Marriage and Fertility Among Santals.Pdf*, n.d.).

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What stance does West Bengal take on the rise of female literacy in India?
- What is the current state of female education among the Paschim Bardhaman Santhal Tribe?
- In the Santhal Tribe of Paschim Bardhaman, what is the gender gap in women's educational attainment?
- What has changed in Paschim Bardhaman's gender inequality over time in terms of the Santhal Tribe's access to education?

VI. MATERIALS AND METHODS

6.1 Population and Sample

A community development block known as Salanpur serves as an administrative division in the Paschim Bardhaman district of the Indian state of West Bengal's Asansol subdivision. At ⁱ23°49'05"N 86°53'20"Eⁱⁱⁱ, you can find the gram panchayat of Rupnarainpur in Salanpur CD Block. A total of 135.05 km² (52.14 sq. mi) is covered by the Salanpur CD Block. It has ^{iv}69 inhabited villages, ^v74 mouzas, ^{vi}11-gram panchayats, 96-gram sansads, and 1 panchayat samity^{vii}. ^{viii}Gram panchayats in Salanpur block/panchayat samiti^{ix} include Achhra, Alladi, Basudevpur-Jemari, Dendua, Ethora, Fulberia-Bolkunda, Jitpur-Uttarrampur, Kallya, Rupnarayanpur, Salanpur, and Samdi. According to the ^x2011 Indian Census, Salanpur CD Block had a total population of 160 357, of which 101 360 lived in rural areas and 61 697 in urban areas. There were 79,261 females and 83,796 males, or 51 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively. There were 17,118 people under the age of six. There were ^{xi}17,084 scheduled tribes (10.48 per cent). According to data from the 2011 census, the census towns in the Salanpur CD Block are ^{xii}Chittaranjan (population: 39,098) and ^{xiii}Hindusthan Cables Town (population: 22,599). The Salanpur CD Block includes the following large villages (each with 4,000+ residents): Salanpur (4,739), Jemari (4,321), Ethora (4,547), and Kalya (703)^{xiv}. Salanpur CD Block includes the villages of Alladi (2,384), Dendua (2,297), Rupnarayanpur (2,242), Uttarrampur (1,331), Jitpur (1,532), Achhra (2,584), Phulberya (1,918), Bolkunda (1,351), Shyamdi (3,265), and Basudebpur (3,098). The researcher has selected the predetermined villages of Salanpur, Alladi, Dendua, Achhra, Bolkunda, and Basudebpur for this study because the Santhal population is higher than that of any other region within the Salanpur block. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. 200 males and 200 females older than 10 years were chosen from a final sample of 200 families by the researcher. This was accomplished with the help of local friends and coworkers.

6.2 Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

Data were gathered using a descriptive survey method with a mixed research approach (both quantitative and qualitative). Primary data is typically regarded as the most trustworthy and authentic. Due to this, the researchers conducted informal (semi-structured) interviews, group discussions, and participant observation to gather primary data. To gather trustworthy information about the local politics and culture before visiting the field site, we enlisted the help of five Santhal friends. The COVID-19 pandemic situation in 2021–2022 required the researchers to adopt a safe and methodical approach while carefully adhering to official directives. The family head provided sociodemographic information, but in some cases, because the family head was not present, the most senior and responsible adult member provided the same information. The researchers, on the other hand, have gathered secondary data from local Panchayat Pradhans, administrators, online journals, books, newspapers, articles, and recently released state government reports to gather information regarding the population and demographic maps of the study areas. Semi-qualitative data analysis was used in the current study.

6.3 Method for data collection

To understand how gender has changed among adult Santhals in their educational system, it is necessary to look at the educational status of Santhals over generations. There were men aged 25 to 60 years, with a mean of 46, and women aged 25 to 60 years, with a mean of 43. There were also men aged 11 to 24 years, with a mean age of 16, while women aged 11 to 24 years, with a mean age of 18, were selected. We asked the participants for their birth dates. With the help of the Decimal Age Calendar, the decimal age of each subject was determined by deducting the subject's birthdate from the date of data collection (Marshall & Tanner, 1970).

VII. Results and Discussion

To determine how gender inequality has changed over time in the Santhal educational system, it is stated that the educational status of Santhals is examined in both older and younger generations.

Table 1: Education Disparities Among the Older Santhal Generation

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Not educated at all (illiterate)	62	31.0	125	62.5	187	46.75
Can read-only (no formal education)	19	9.5	35	17.5	54	13.5
Completed Primary education (till 5 th Standard)	37	18.5	15	7.5	52	13.0
Completed Lower Secondary education (till 8 th Standard)	35	17.5	14	7.0	49	12.25
Completed Secondary education (till 10 th Standard)	33	16.5	7	3.5	40	10.0

Completed Higher Secondary education (till 12 th Standard)	12	6.0	4	2.0	16	4.0
Completed Graduation	2	1.0	0	0.0	2	0.5
Completed Post Graduation / Professional Education	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	200	100.0	200	100.0	400	100.0

Source: The authors (data collected from the fieldwork, 2021-22).

Table 1 summarises the educational status of the older generation of Santhals. Less than half of Santhal men from this generation—31.0 per cent—are illiterate, compared to 62.5 per cent of the women, who make up the majority of the older generation. The majority of men in this generation have received formal education and have finished their elementary education (up to the fifth standard), accounting for 18.5 per cent, followed by lower secondary education (till the 8th standard) at 17.5 per cent, secondary education (till the 10th standard) at 16.5 per cent, and 6 per cent of the males completed their higher education (till the 12th standard), and only 1 per cent completed their graduations. There is also 9.5 per cent of males who can only read without formal education. There are no males in this category who have completed their postgraduate or professional education.

In contrast, 62.5 per cent of women have no formal education at all, followed by those who have completed their primary education (through the fifth standard) at 7.5 per cent, secondary education (through the tenth standard) at 7.0 per cent, and secondary education (through the tenth standard) at 3.5 per cent. Only 2 per cent of females have completed their higher education (through the twelve standards). There is also 1 per cent of females who can only read and have no formal education. No women hold graduate, professional, or undergraduate degrees in this field.

Table 2: Education Disparities Among the Younger Santhal Generation

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Not educated at all (illiterate)	13	6.5	32	16.0	45	11.25
Can read-only (no formal education)	5	2.5	15	7.5	20	5.0
Completed Primary education (till 5 th Standard)	24	12.0	41	20.5	65	16.25
Completed Lower Secondary education (till 8 th Standard)	47	23.5	52	26.0	99	24.75
Completed Secondary education (till 10 th Standard)	52	26.0	29	14.5	81	20.25
Completed Higher Secondary education (till 12 th Standard)	43	21.5	23	11.5	66	16.5
Completed Graduation	13	6.5	7	3.5	20	5.0
Completed Post Graduation / Professional Education	3	1.5	1	0.5	4	1.0
Total	200	100.0	200	100.0	400	100.0

Source: The authors (data collected from the fieldwork, 2021-22).

Table 2 summarises the educational status of the younger generation of Santhals. 13 per cent of Santhal male students in the younger generation are illiterate, whereas less than half, or 6.5 per cent, of men in this generation are illiterate. 12 per cent of men in this generation have finished their elementary education (till the 5th standard), 23.5 per cent have completed their lower secondary education (till the 8th standard), and 12.5 per cent have completed their secondary education (till the 10th standard). 26percent and 21.5percent of the males completed their higher education (till the 12th standard), and only 6.5percent completed their graduation. There is 1.5 per cent of males in this category have completed their postgraduate or professional education (including 1 engineer and 1 doctor). There is also 2.5 per cent of males who can only read without formal education.

On the other hand, 16percent of the Santhal female students are not educated at all, followed by those who completed their primary education (till the 5th standard) (20.5percent), lower secondary education (till the 8th standard) (26.0percent), and those who have completed secondary education (till the 10th standard) (14.5percent). 11.5 per cent of females completed their higher education (till the 12th standard), and only 3.5 per cent of females completed their

graduation. There is one female doctor or engineer who also belongs to this category. There is also 7.5 per cent of females who can only read but do not have formal education.

The researcher discovered that the majority of tribal families traditionally rely on forest-based livelihoods while conducting the current study. School-aged male children are the first generation to have gone to school. Parents are hesitant to enrol their girl children in village schools due to a lack of financial resources. Many tribal parents discontinue their girl children's education after finishing primary school because they feel that higher education is unaffordable. When extra help is needed, tribal families want their kids to be reliable sources of it. A father of a female student claimed, "Right now, the government only provides our children with occasional meals, but if my children go with me to collect forest products, we can earn much more together. What should we do with higher education in addition to that? I can't afford to pay for their education with the money I have. In the end, our means of subsistence will be physical labour. As a result, education seems to be an extravagance for our kids. The education of tribal children is significantly harmed by parental unwillingness and additional household responsibilities.

VIII. Findings of The Study

- 31 per cent of males are illiterate between the ages of 25 and 60.
- More than 60 per cent of women in the age range of 25 to 60 are illiterate.
- The study found a higher percentage of males whose educational qualifications were limited to primary education.
- Very few men in the study had completed postgraduate or professional education, but in the case of females, no one had completed postgraduate or professional education.
- More than 60 per cent of women between the ages of 25 and 60 have no formal education.
- Only 1 per cent of women can speak Bengali and Santali despite never having attended school or received any formal education.
- Along with 16 per cent of female students, 13 per cent of young male students between the ages of 11 and 24 are illiterate.
- 6.5 per cent of male students completed their graduation, while 3.5 per cent of female students completed their graduation.
- 1.5 per cent of male students of this generation have completed their post-graduate or professional education, while no female students of this generation have completed their post-graduate or professional education.
- Of the 200 households in the study, more than 80 per cent are in poor condition. It demonstrates how strong their economy is right now.
- The daily wage, or marginal labour, is the primary monthly income source for more than 70 per cent of households.
- More than 85 per cent of households do not have a toilet. Therefore, they have decided to urinate in a wide-open field.
- The Santhal families in the study areas face many serious challenges, including a lack of stable family income and an inadequate educational environment. The Santhal families experience severe financial hardship, and female children still experience social hardships, lack of access to education, etc. Female children are involved in domestic tasks like washing the dishes, cleaning the house, etc. due to their traditional upbringing or lack of education, which is one of the main causes of gender inequality.

IX. Recommendation

- Residential schools for women should be set up immediately at every village and panchayat level for the educational upliftment of tribal Santhal women.
- At the village and panchayat levels, adult education programmes for parents should begin right away.
- The West Bengali government should provide all necessary resources for the construction of housing for all Santal families as soon as possible under the "Nij Griha and Nij Bhoomi" programme.
- All elected local representatives at the block and panchayat levels should take immediate developmental steps to educate Santhal female students.
- In addition to formal education, more and more Santhal women are involved in technical education and other vocational education through the intervention of the central and state governments.
- All officials at the administrative level of the Tribal Development Department under the Government of West Bengal should immediately liaise with all local elected representatives at the district, block, and panchayat levels to ascertain the causes of gender disparity and make arrangements for speedy resolution.
- To make it easier for female students to enrol in educational institutions, new schools, such as residential tribal women's schools, should be established at the block and panchayat levels.
- The female child of a low-income Santal family will be denied access to services like education and healthcare in addition to facing gender discrimination if the block and panchayat levels of government do not address their financial problems.

- Instead of inflating literacy rates on websites or in various research papers, the local or state government should look into the legitimate demands of low-income Santal families at the grassroots level and the reasons they are deprived of government benefits.
- All state government officials should immediately take appropriate steps to ensure that every family gets the benefits currently allotted to the Scheduled Tribes under the education schemes of the state or central government without any bias.

X. CONCLUSION

The current study took a micro perspective to look at the primary education situation within the Santal tribe. The in-depth findings of the study revealed numerous challenges to the advancement of tribal children's education. Even though these figures show that the Santal Tribe of Paschim Bardhaman has a gender gap in education, females in this society now have more opportunities and are less far behind men in obtaining their formal education, despite Santal males having higher levels of education than females. As a result of the fact that the literacy rate of Santhals is significantly higher than that of other tribes like the Jaunsari, Raji, Oraon, or Bhattara, Santal women also perform better academically than women from other Indian tribal groups. They believe in giving their offspring of any gender equal opportunities, and they do not discriminate between men and women when it comes to completing formal education. The current study demonstrates that Santhals are not even against women going on to higher education.

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END NOTE

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