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**POVERTY: A BANE FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT OF  
BACKWARD CLASS STUDENTS IN MURSHIDABAD, WEST BENGAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

Poverty is really a bane for the backward class students in Murshidabad, west Bengal. Main causes for this are low income, shabby living conditions, unaffordability, financial hardships among others. Due to these constraints, parents cannot ensure basic educational resources for the students, like books, devices, systems and machines. Infrastructure of schools is not supportive for the students, who belong to backward classes. In this way, their dreams of achieving education gets affected. Need is increasing the schemes and initiatives, through which they can gain the basic and elementary education. Stereotypical notions on gender roles and inequality are to be changed, so that society can be aligned with postmodernism, from all means.

**Key words:** Poverty, bane, education, establishment, backward class students, Murshidabad

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is important for social mobility and economic development of all people including women. Time has progressed much from the stereotypical notions that women will manage the household chores, and look after the wellbeing of family members. However, still in some areas, these notions prevail, which deprives women from outside exposure. One of the causes of this is poverty, which obstructs educational progress among especially among backward class people. This paper narrows down the search to students in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The district has been found to possess economic deprivation, social backwardness, and educational underdevelopment, which are deeply interconnected (Hossain & Das, 2023). Despite possessing a rich historical and cultural heritage, these issues decline the cultural heritage and glory of Murshidabad, tagging it as one of the educationally backward districts of West Bengal. Poor infrastructure, unemployment, illiteracy, child labour, and lack of awareness aggravate the issues, pushing the academic establishment of the students into darkness. Most affected ones are the students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), minority communities, and other economically weaker sections.

According to the official district demographic reports, Murshidabad's literacy rate is merely 63.88%, out of which female literacy is significantly lower than male literacy. The district is mostly rural, with over 80% of the population living in villages. These conditions affirm inequal distribution of wealth and access to educational services difficult for backward class students (Majhi, 2022).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Poverty and Educational Backwardness**

Poverty is one of the primary curses, aggravating educational backwardness in Murshidabad. Many families' staple occupations are agriculture, bidi-making, daily wage labour, hawking, and others. All of these are low-income occupations, which does not sustain the household expenses and needs of the family. According to [Castcertificatewb.gov.in](http://Castcertificatewb.gov.in) (2024), several backward

communities in Murshidabad belong to low-income groups, with children suffering from high dropout rates at the primary level itself. Due to financial hardships, parents fail to buy books, uniforms for children, and bear tuition fees, transportation, and digital learning facilities for their children. As a result, many students are compelled to discontinue education at an early age, and are engaged in income-generating activities to supplement income.

## **2.2 High Dropout Rate and Child Labor**

Dropout rates among backward class students in Murshidabad is alarming. Economic necessities push children into child labour. Evidence of this lies in children working in bidi industries, agricultural work, and informal labour sectors. Primary researches reveal people suffering from lack of affordability, awareness, and uneven access. This contributes significantly to dropout rates, depriving students from basic and elementary education. According to Mollick, (2024), many parents think that education is less important than economic survival. Consequently, children, especially boys, are directed towards labour markets, and girls are often withdrawn from schools and instructed to manage household responsibilities, as they are to marry early. Such is the perception possessed by the society carers, who claim to be educated and experienced, but are not really so. This is because they do not know the actual meaning of freedom, which comes by leveraging equality among the social classes, and not by being biased to privileged classes.

## **2.3 Gender Disparity in Education**

Poverty is the burden, which snatched the dreams of girls to become educated. More severely they are affected as compared to boys, as girls are low in terms of literacy. When search is on Murshidabad, calculation remains considerably low, as educational participation among girls, from backward communities, is really pathetic. Dasgupta et al., (2022) stated that social conservatism, financial constraints, and safety concerns make the parents concerned about girls' safety. As a result of this, they do not send girls to distant schools or colleges. Studies have revealed that many families do not allow girls to pursue higher education in distant places, as there are economic and social limitations. Early marriage also interrupts the educational continuity of many girls.

## **2.4 Lack of Educational Infrastructure**

Educational infrastructure in Murshidabad is inadequate, as more developed districts of West Bengal have students studying in schools with poor classroom facilities, shortage of teachers, and

lack of libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities. Regional disparities in educational development are highly visible within the district. Alig, (2026) was of the view that tensions, concerns and worries of parents are justified as in many villages, schools are located faraway from residential areas. As a result of this, access to transportation becomes difficult for the students who lack affordability. Digital infrastructure is also weak, which makes them misfit in the current digitalization age.

### **2.5 Quality of Education and Parallel Education System**

Another major issue is reducing standards of government school education. Because of poor teaching standards and lack of academic support, wealthier families tend to get their children admitted in private schools, having private tuition systems. Researches direct towards emergence of “parallel education system” in Murshidabad, which functions on the basis of coaching, paving the way of educational success. However, Majumdar and Mukhopadhyay, (2022) argued that backward class students from poor families cannot afford expensive tuition or private institutions. As a result of this, they face inequal distribution of wealth and access to lucrative educational opportunities. Here, gap between economically privileged and disadvantaged students, widen.

### **2.6 Government Initiatives and Welfare Measures**

Both the Central and State Governments in west Bengal have introduced several schemes for uplifting education standards for students, irrespective of their cultural orientation and backgrounds. Evidence of this lies in scholarships like Mid-Day Meals, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, and welfare schemes which have seemed perspective for backward classes. Reference can be cited of institutions such as Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, which takes initiatives for providing quality residential education for students in rural areas (Navodaya.gov.in, 2022). These students are served, based on their merits, and no charge is taken from them. However, the journey is not smooth with these initiatives, as lack of awareness, corruption, inadequate monitoring, and social inequality impedes the efficiency and education for these students.

### **2.6 Suggestions for Improvement**

Government in partnership with the schools, are planning for measures so that the backward students can also experience success in their academic goals. Some of the measures have been

undertaken, but due to lack of proper channelization and awareness measures, most of the people are not aware about them. One of the means could be increasing financial assistance and scholarships for poor students. These scholarships could provide education to the aspiring students at cheaper rates and also suffice the balance to be maintained in the household expenses. Hossain and Das, (2023) opined that rural school infrastructure and digital facilities are also to be improved, so that students get the much needed supported to study according to the modern educational standards. Skits, dramas, stage shows will be effective for creating awareness among parents about the importance of education especially for girls. Statutory bodies are to be more proactive towards improving laws protecting children and reducing child labour. More programs and schemes are needed for promoting girls' education through hostels, transportation, and safety measures. Along with this, qualified teachers are to be recruited for improving learning of students, who lack basic affordability. If these students are exposed to vocational and skill-based education programs, then their personalities could be improved through educational development. Majhi, (2022) was of the view that Ministry of education is to be proactive towards proper implementation of government welfare schemes and it's reaching out to the proper and accurate target audience.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research is conducted through exploratory research design for exploring the unexplored realms of education and its quality in Murshidabad district. This design is effective for critically reviewing the scholarly arguments proposed in the previous researches. Supporting the exploration, case study analysis is done for gaining practical insights into the life of students from backward classes in Murshidabad, West Bengal. For this, case studies on these students, published and gathered recently, are considered. In collecting these cases, researcher maintains honesty and integrity, acknowledging every source. This action prevents plagiarism and collusion.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

After reviewing the aspects, it can be concluded that poverty is a major obstacle in educational establishment of backward class students in Murshidabad, West Bengal. Major drives behind this are economic deprivation, gender inequality, child labour, poor infrastructure, and low educational awareness. These issues, collectively, hinder academic progress of the students, depriving them from their dream of achieving success in life. Although government schemes and welfare measures are there, but most of the students and their parents lack proper information about their functions

and implementations. They are also not aware about the improvements, which the schemes and programs have brought. Therefore, much more needs to be done to induce inclusive and equitable education for all, irrespective of their backgrounds and cultural orientation. Eliminating poverty and strengthening educational opportunities are prime actions for the government and schools, for improvising social and economic development of students in Murshidabad belonging to backward communities.

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