

# Trends in Literacy Rates and Schooling among the Scheduled Tribe Women in India

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of the paper is to highlight the differences in literacy and schooling attainment among the Scheduled Tribe women in India.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper uses data from the Census of India, Department of Education in India, and National Human Development Report prepared by the Government of India.

**Findings** – The high status of women among the tribal groups in the northeastern states has important effects on the literacy rates, enrollment ratios and dropout rates of girls in that region. High poverty rates pose to be significant obstacles in attaining literacy and education among tribal women in India. However, large differences in literacy rates in the various states in India show that social and cultural norms, proximity to the mainstream Hindu culture, and the role of women are also important determinants in achieving literacy among tribal women.

**Originality/value of paper** – Literacy is considered to be an important tool for improving the status of women among the Scheduled Tribes. Aggregate statistics often paint a dismal picture of the low literacy rates and schooling among the Scheduled Tribe women. This paper shows that such statistics fail to capture the different trends in literacy rates and value placed in schooling among the various tribal groups in India. Differences in economic, social, and cultural backgrounds among the various tribes need to be emphasized in order to understand the differential nature of investments in literacy rates and schooling among tribal women in India.

**Article Type:** Research paper

**Keyword(s):** Schedule Tribes, Literacy and Gender Development, Gender discrimination.

## **I. Introduction**

The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. Although Scheduled Tribes are a minority, they constitute about 8.2 % of the total population in India (Census of India, 2001), or 85 million people in absolute number. The Scheduled Tribes are not discriminated against in the same way by the mainstream Hindu population as the Scheduled Caste population in India. While the latter group belongs to the lowest hierarchy of social order and is often considered impure or unclean, the Scheduled Tribes have, for the most part, been socially distanced and living outside the mainstream Hindu society. The areas inhabited by the tribal population constitute a significant part of the underdeveloped areas of the country. About 93% of the tribal people live in rural areas (Census of India, 1981) and are engaged in agricultural pursuits.

There are more than 400 tribal groups among the scheduled tribe population, each with their distinct cultures, social practices, religions, dialects, and occupations. Thus, the different tribal groups are highly heterogeneous, and their differences are a function of the environment in which they live, the degree of exposure to the mainstream Hindu population, government involvement in their daily lives, their economic status, and past history. The tribes are scattered in all States and Union Territories in India except for the states of Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, and Chandigarh. The tribes are heavily concentrated in the northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland although they constitute a small percentage of the total tribal population in India.

Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups in India. During the British rule there was no organized method to educate the tribal communities except for the work undertaken by Christian missionary organizations in some regions in India. Currently, the tribes lag behind not only the general population but also the Scheduled Caste population in literacy and educational attainment. This disparity is even more marked among Scheduled Tribe women, who have the lowest literacy rates in the country (Maharatna, 2005). The male-female gap in literacy and educational attainment among the scheduled tribes is significant although this is a common trend among both the Scheduled Castes and the general population. This trend reflects the social and cultural trends and degrees of gender inequality in India.

This study attempts to describe the literacy and educational attainment of tribal women by focusing on factors such as literacy rates, gross enrollment ratio, and drop out rates of tribal women. While the overall literacy rates and educational attainment of tribal women are significantly lower than the national average, this study will show that there are vast differences in human capital attainment among tribal women in the different regions of India. The tribal literacy rate among women is significantly higher in the northeastern states such as Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland, where tribal groups constitute a large percent of the general population. On the other hand, tribal literacy rates are much lower in the states of Rajasthan, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh. In these states the tribal population constitutes a small percent of the total population although they represent a very large proportion of the total tribal population. Thus, general statistics that portray the dismal state of education and literacy among tribal groups

ignore important demographic, social, cultural, and economic differences among the various tribal groups. Such differences are crucial in understanding the differential literacy rates and human capital attainment of tribal women in India and should form the basis for appropriate policymaking.

In the following section we will incorporate a brief background of the tribal population in India. In section III, we will discuss some factors contributing to the generally low literacy rates and educational attainment of tribal women. In section IV, we will incorporate some current statistics showing the literacy rates, gross enrollment ratios, and drop out rates of the tribal population. We will supplement the statistics with some discussions of the social and cultural trends among the tribal groups in order to understand the differential nature of literacy and educational attainment among tribal women. Finally, section V contains our conclusions and policy implications.

## **II. Who are the Scheduled Tribes?**

Scheduled Tribes in India are generally considered to be ‘Adivasis,’ meaning indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country. The tribes have been confined to low status and are often physically and socially isolated instead of being absorbed in the mainstream Hindu population. Psychologically, the Scheduled Tribes often experience passive indifference that may take the form of exclusion from educational opportunities, social participation, and access to their own land. All tribal communities are not alike. They are products of different historical and social conditions. They belong to different racial stocks and religious backgrounds and speak different dialects. As a result of being distanced by the Hindu population, many tribes have retained their social,

religious, and cultural practices, as well as their distinctive languages. Discrimination against women, occupational differentiation, and emphasis on status and hierarchical social ordering that characterize the predominant Hindu culture are generally absent among the tribal groups. Though there was trade between the Adivasis and the mainstream society, any form of social intercourse between the two groups was discouraged by the Hindus. Adivasis are not as a general rule regarded as unclean or polluted in the same way as the Scheduled Caste population is perceived by the mainstream Hindus. However, the mainstream Hindu population considers the general tribal population as primitive, technologically backward, and illiterate. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the tribes have been perceived as sub-humans who live under primitive conditions (Xaxa, 2005). They have often been portrayed as “daityas,” “rakshasas” (demons), and “vanaras” (monkeys) in Indian epics.

The tribal population constitutes a majority in the northeastern states of Mizoram (94.5%), Meghalaya (85.9%), and Nagaland (89.1%). Tribal men and women in Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland are isolated from the mainstream Hindu population and their cultures and practices. Although tribes comprise a large proportion of the total population in the northeastern states, they account for a small (12%) percent of the tribal population in India. Numerically, the tribal population is very high in the central state of Madhya Pradesh and the western states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. Together the four states account for about 50% of the total tribal population in India. However, in these states tribes constitute a small percent of the total Hindu population (Census of India, 2001).

Due to the lack of exposure to the mainstream Hindu population, the tribes in northeastern India have not been influenced or pressured to adopt Hindu social and cultural practices and have maintained their heritage and social practices. On the other hand, many tribes in central and western India who are in close proximity to the mainstream population have adopted many Hindu practices in order to be accepted by the higher caste population. Differences in tribal religions also affect their educational attainment and attitudes towards female literacy. The vast majority of the tribal population in Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland are Christians. Christian missionaries encouraged the tribal population in these states to pursue education and emphasized the importance of becoming literate. On the other hand, the literacy rates among the Hindu and Muslim population in India are relatively lower. The vast majority of the tribes in central and western India are Hindus.

### **III. Literacy Trends among Tribal Women**

Literacy is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. Among women in general, high literacy rates lead to lower infant mortality rates (Kingdon, 1999; World Bank, 1997), reduce the number of pregnancies and enhance the status of women both in domestic life and society. Additionally, the mother's literacy status and educational attainment have significantly positive effects on the child's human capital attainment (Sengupta and Guha, 2002; Colclough, 1982).

During the post-Independence period, the Indian government implemented legislation and allocated funds to facilitate access to enrollment in primary education (grades I-V) in India. As a result, both literacy rates and gross enrollment ratios of boys

and girls across the general population have increased substantially during the past 50 years. The tribal population, in general, lags behind the Hindus and the Scheduled Caste population both in literacy and educational attainment. This discrepancy in human capital attainment between the mainstream population and the tribes is particularly marked among tribal women. However, the literacy rates for scheduled tribes in India have also improved substantially from 1961 (8.54%) to 1991 (29.60%) for both males (13.83% to 40.65%) and females (3.16% to 18.19%) respectively as shown in Table I.

“take in Table I”

### **Factors contributing to the low literacy rates among tribal women in India**

Socio-economic factors contribute significantly to disparities in literacy and educational attainment among women in rural and urban areas. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population have been discriminated against and confined to the lowest rungs of social and economic hierarchies. As Dreze pointed out, “educational disparities, which contribute a great deal to the persistence of massive inequalities in Indian society, also largely derive from more fundamental inequalities such as those of class, caste and gender,” (Dreze, 2003: 982). High poverty rates and dependence on agriculture call for increasing rates of child labor force participation among many of the tribes in India. The tribal dropout rate is extremely high relative to the mainstream population. Children often enroll in primary education and then drop out of school in order to help the family. This applies more to females than males both among the mainstream Hindu population and the tribal groups because girls are expected to help out with domestic chores more than boys at a very early age (Nambissan, 2000; Vasavi 2002; Jha and Jhingran, 2002).

Traditionally, the Hindu society has demonstrated its preference for sons and has treated boys and girls differently based on social and cultural norms. Parents often allocate their scarce resources towards the schooling of their sons. For the poorer sections of the population, it is worthwhile investing in the son's education, as that would generate income for the family in the future. Daughters are expected to get married early, and parents have to save money for dowry payments. Further, parents do not want to invest in their daughters' schooling because the latter have limited labor market opportunities and earning potential (Sathar and Lloyd, 1994). For the poorer sections of the Indian community, education for girls is often considered to be a consumption good rather than an investment good. This perception is partly justified in light of the poor labor market prospects for women in many states and especially in rural areas. This leads to a significant gender gap in investment in education in India although recent trends show that wealthy and educated families in urban areas are allocating resources equally between their sons and daughters.

The tribal society in general is characterized by lack of discrimination against women, and tribal women participate in all spheres of economic and social lives. This is particularly true among the matrilineal tribal groups in the northeastern states of Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya. Unlike Hindus, most tribal societies value girls, as shown by the high female sex ratio (females per 1000 males) among the vast majority of tribes in India (Census of India, 2001). The negative relationship between poverty and literacy attainment can often be overcome if women are considered to be an important part of society and if the social and cultural norms are in favor of women's human capital attainment.

Some unique obstacles faced by tribal women in addition to the high poverty rates are insufficient numbers of schools in many tribal areas, lack of resources in tribal schools, significant language barriers in schools where the teachers are not fluent in tribal languages (Srivastava, 1997), and the problems in social adjustment faced by many tribal boys and girls who are often discriminated against by upper-caste children.

#### **IV. Literacy Attainment of Tribal Women by Different States in India**

Table II shows the literacy rates among the Scheduled Tribe men and women for selected states in India for 2001. The literacy rates among the tribes are shown separately for rural and urban males and females. Table II demonstrates that the literacy rate among the scheduled tribes in India varies significantly by different regions and states. These variations are a function of the differences in economic, social, cultural, religious, and demographic characteristics of the different tribes and their exposure to the forces of modernization, urbanization, and industrialization.

“take in Table II”

Among the Scheduled Tribe population, the literacy rate is highest in the state of Mizoram in northeastern India (86.95%), and the disparity in literacy between males and females is about 4%. The female literacy rate is lowest in the states of Bihar (15.54%), followed by Orissa (23.37%) in eastern India, Rajasthan (26.16%) in northern India, Uttar Pradesh (20.70%) in northern India, and Andhra Pradesh (26.11%) in south India.

The tribes in the northeastern state of Mizoram had the highest overall literacy rates for both males (91.71%) and females (86.95%) whereas the state of Bihar in eastern

India had the lowest literacy rates for males (39.76%) and females (15.54%). The literacy rates among urban females was the highest in Mizoram (96.01%) followed by Nagaland (85.60%). It was the lowest in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh (39.54%). Among the rural population, the female literacy rate was the highest in Mizoram (77.71%) and lowest in the eastern state of Bihar (13.30%).

In rural areas, the demand for education among the poorer sections of the population is much lower than it is in urban areas. Poor women in rural areas have to work in order to cope with their daily living and do not place a high value on education unless it is linked to vocational training. Additionally, in remote rural areas where a good infrastructure is lacking, tribal women find it difficult to have access to schools. Many are not even aware of the existence of schools in their areas due to lack of communications and networks. The northeastern states of Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya show high literacy rates even among women in rural areas, along with Himachal Pradesh in north India and Kerala in south India. The rural literacy rate is highest (77.71%) in Mizoram.

All the states listed in table II show significant gender gaps in literacy rates except for the state of Mizoram where tribal women in urban areas have higher literacy rates than men. The literacy rates among tribal women in the states of Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya far surpass the average literacy rates among all Scheduled Tribes in India. The literacy rate among tribal women in urban areas in Mizoram is the highest in the country and even surpasses the literacy rates of tribal urban women in Kerala, which is considered to be a model state in literacy rates of women in the country. Some contend

that since the northeastern states are isolated and not exposed to the social and cultural norms of the Hindu population, the former do not follow the common trend of downplaying the importance of literacy attainment among girls. Thus the “convergence effect” of following (Dreze and Sen, 2002: 244) the mainstream norm of encouraging gender inequality in education is absent among the tribal women in some of the northeastern states of India. The influence of Christianity in the northeastern states also played a significant role in encouraging high literacy rates among tribal women.

Conversely, in the central state of Madhya Pradesh and the western states of Gujarat and Rajasthan, as well as the eastern states of Bihar, Orissa, and West Bengal, female literacy rate is significantly lower than in the northeastern states. Unlike the northeastern states, the tribal population in the central, eastern, and western states constitutes a minority as a percentage of the total Hindu population. In these states, tribal groups are regularly exposed to the social and cultural practices of the mainstream Hindus and their discriminatory practices against women. Many scheduled tribes imitate the practices and traditions of Hindus in order to gain acceptance in larger society.

Next to the northeastern states, the state of Kerala shows relatively high literacy rates among tribal women in urban areas. Kerala ranks the highest in the country in terms of women’s literacy rates and gender development index. Although the tribal population is very small in Kerala, their exposure to the general trend of high female literacy rates in the state and the high status of women in Kerala may have partially contributed to the high literacy rates among tribal women.

## **Gross Enrollment Ratio and Drop-out Rates for Scheduled Tribes in India**

Gross enrollment ratio (GER) is the number of students enrolled in different levels of education (whether or not they belong in the relevant age group for that level), as a percentage of the population in the relevant age group for that level.

“take in Table III”

Table III shows the gross enrollment ratio for the Scheduled Tribe population for grades I-V and VI-VIII for 2002-2003. In general, we find that as the level of education increases, the GER decreases for both boys and girls. This clearly demonstrates that poverty is a significant deterrent to enrollment as both boys and girls are needed in household and family work, and families cannot afford to send their children to schools because these families do not have the economic resources. It is also interesting to note that the GER of boys and girls are comparable in classes I-IV but the gender gap increases significantly with higher levels of education. This may be indicative of the conservative social fabric of the Hindu society, where girls are expected to get married early and boys are given preference over girls in a family’s decision to allocate resources for their children’s education.

We find that the northeastern states show a different trend in GER of girls and boys than some of the other states in India. In the northeastern state of Meghalaya, the GER of girls is higher than boys in both levels of schooling. In Mizoram, the GER of girls is higher than boys in classes I-V and comparable in grades VI-VIII. In Nagaland, more girls than boys are enrolled in classes VI-VIII. The GER for tribal girls in Mizoram in both classes I-V and VI-VIII far surpasses the GER for girls in the general population in both categories.

In contrast to the northeastern states, the eastern state of Bihar shows a dismal picture. Here, the enrollment ratio for girls in higher levels of education is only 8.53% for the tribal population and 18.77% for the general population. Orissa and West Bengal also show a low GER for girls in classes VI-VIII among tribal women.

The state of Kerala in South India shows a very high GER for girls in higher classes both among tribal women and the general population. Kerala is an outlier in India in terms of its literacy and educational attainment of women, and clearly this has a spillover effect among other groups of population.

In general, table III shows that there are vast differences in the enrollment patterns of tribal women across the different states in India. Some of the differences can be attributed to poverty and lack of resources among various tribal groups; however other factors such as the social and cultural fabric of the society and the status of women among various tribal groups also account for the differentials in the enrollment patterns of women in some states.

### **C. Drop out Rates among Scheduled Tribe Women**

Table IV shows the dropout rates for the tribal population for 2002-2003. The dropout rates for both boys and girls increase sharply as their educational level increases. Among the general population, the drop out rate in classes I-V during 2002-2003 was 35.85% among boys, while it was 33.72% among girls. Among all tribal groups, the dropout rate in classes I-V was 41.13% among boys and 41.91% among girls. At lower levels of education when the children are relatively young, there is no significant gender discrepancy in the dropout rates among all groups. However, as the level of education increases, the gender gap becomes much more pronounced among the tribal groups. The

dropout rate among tribal boys in classes 1-VIII is 66.86% while it is 71.17% among girls. The dropout rate among boys in the general population is 50.82%, while it is 52.10% among girls.

“take in Table IV”

The high costs of providing education and the need for children to work contribute to the high dropout rates in higher levels of education. This is particularly true for girls as poor families with limited resources would rather invest money in their son’s education rather than in their daughter’s education for reasons discussed earlier. While education at the lower level is free, there are other costs, including books and learning materials, which impose a significant financial burden on low-income tribal families (Ramachandran 2003). Thus, the supply of human capital is constrained by poverty, lack of resources, shortage of schools, inadequate infrastructure, and low emphasis on education, especially in rural areas. The demand side of the labor market also has a feedback effect on the investment decisions of tribal groups in education. The vast majority of Scheduled Tribes rely on agriculture and forestry for their livelihood, and few are employed in skilled jobs.

Table IV demonstrates a great deal of variation in the tribal dropout rates in the different states in India. The gender discrepancy in the dropout rate is relatively lower in the northeastern states of Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya. The dropout rate among tribal girls in classes I-VIII is the lowest in the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in northern India, followed by Kerala in south India and Nagaland in northeastern India. Interestingly enough, the dropout rates among tribal girls in the above

states are far below the national average among the general population in this category (53.45%).

### **Poverty and Human Capital Attainment among Tribal Women**

Poverty is an important factor contributing to the low literacy rates, low GER, and high dropout rates among the Scheduled Tribe population in general. Table V shows the human poverty index and the poverty rates among the tribal groups in rural and urban areas for all the states in India for 1991. The human poverty index is constructed by taking a composite of variables that reflect the economic, educational, and health aspects of human development (see table). From the table we can see (column 2) that Bihar ranks very high in the poverty index, followed by Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. On the other hand, some of the relatively affluent states are Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. The northeastern states of Meghalaya and Nagaland exhibit a fairly high level of poverty while Mizoram falls somewhere in between. Yet, the literacy rate among tribal women is highest in the state of Mizoram, and the literacy rates among tribal women in Meghalaya and Nagaland are comparable to those of Kerala and Himachal Pradesh.

“take in Table V”

If we attempt to correlate poverty with the dropout rates, we find that (tableV) both Himachal Pradesh and Kerala rank very low in the human poverty index (8 and 4 respectively); however Uttar Pradesh and Nagaland rank relatively high in the poverty index (26 and 22 respectively). Yet the dropout rate among girls in those two states is much lower than some of the other states that are not so poor. The dropout rate among

both boys and girls in grades I-VIII is highest in the states of Andhra Pradesh in south India, followed by Bihar in eastern India and Meghalaya in northeastern India. The poverty indices for the above three states are 19, 32 (highest), and 28 respectively.

Although economic constraints hinder tribal girls from getting educated, cultural, social, and family structures also contribute to the tremendous variations in the dropout rates among different tribal groups. The northeastern states have maintained their identity and culture and are shielded from the practices and norms of Hindu culture. Many of the tribal groups in the Northeast are characterized by a matriarchal family structure, and women play an important role in social and economic decisions. Girls are valued in such societies and the relatively higher literacy rate, higher GER, and lower dropout rate among the northeastern groups in general can be partly attributed to such factors. Apart from the northeastern states, tribal literacy rate is high in the state of Kerala in south India. The state of Kerala ranks the highest in India in the gender development index and educational attainment of women and is considered to be a model state. Although Scheduled Tribe women are disadvantaged economically in that state, they are provided with the opportunities that are available to the general population.

## **V. Conclusion**

Education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribe women. This study shows that generalizations regarding the educational and literacy attainment of tribal women fail to capture the differential human capital attainment of and obstacles to schooling faced by the various tribes in India. Thus, a broad study encompassing the social, culture, and economic

conditions of the tribes along with their proximity and exposure to the mainstream Hindu culture would, to a large degree, provide policymakers with a better understanding of the heterogeneity among the tribes. This, in turn, would help in formulating appropriate policies in different states and regions in India in order to facilitate higher learning among the tribes.

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<b>Table 1: Literacy Trends for Scheduled Tribes in India (1961 to 1991)</b>			
(Figures in Percent)			
Year	Scheduled Tribes		
	Male	Female	Total
1961	13.83	3.16	8.54
1971	17.63	4.85	11.39
1981	24.52	8.05	16.35
1991	40.65	18.19	29.60
2001	59.17	34.76	47.10

Source: National Commission for SCs & STs, Fifth Report

**Table II: Urban & Rural Literacy rates of Scheduled Tribes by gender (2001)**

<b>State</b>	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Rural		Urban		Total	
<b>North-East</b>						
Mizoram	86.11	77.71	87.55	96.01	91.71	86.95
Nagaland	67.09	57.72	91.63	85.60	70.26	61.35
Meghalaya	58.72	53.97	88.95	84.58	63.49	59.20
<b>East</b>						
Bihar	37.57	13.30	74.18	55.28	39.76	15.54
Orissa	50.35	22.07	69.80	45.77	51.48	23.37
West Bengal	56.60	27.88	68.57	48.20	57.38	29.15
<b>Central</b>						
Madhya Pradesh	52.51	27.24	67.47	45.89	53.55	28.44
<b>West</b>						
Gujarat	58.06	34.60	71.01	51.78	59.18	36.02
Maharashtra	64.52	39.88	82.98	64.70	67.02	43.08
Rajasthan	61.23	25.22	75.74	42.97	62.10	26.16
<b>North</b>						
Uttar Pradesh	46.71	18.34	60.61	39.54	48.45	20.70
Himachal Pradesh	77.18	52.50	92.03	81.15	77.71	53.32
<b>South</b>						
Andhra Pradesh	46.09	24.48	66.16	45.99	47.66	26.11
Kerala	70.20	57.28	84.96	77.70	70.78	58.11
Tamil Nadu	47.19	29.48	66.56	50.68	50.15	32.78
<b>India</b>	57.39	32.44	77.77	59.87	59.17	34.76

Source: Annual Report. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

**Table III: Gross Enrollment Ratio for the Scheduled Tribe Population by Gender (2002-2003)**

States	Gross Enrollment Ratio			
	Classes I-V (6-11 years)		Classes VI-VIII (11-14 years)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<b>North East</b>				
Meghalaya	90.20	92.97	41.57	51.25
Mizoram	119.27	122.69	78.25	77.97
Nagaland	72.93	70.90	38.03	38.28
<b>East</b>				
Bihar	59.60	32.54	18.56	8.53
Orissa	103.38	87.33	38.37	26.59
West Bengal	108.07	94.55	60.48	29.76
<b>Central</b>				
Madhya Pradesh	91.93	71.77	41.65	24.57
<b>West</b>				
Gujarat	111.59	107.87	67.82	58.18
Maharashtra	116.62	106.40	72.92	63.75
Rajasthan	18.72	106.39	64.80	31.79
<b>North</b>				
Uttar Pradesh	130.36	124.59	108.57	99.26
Himachal Pradesh	126.51	122.14	100.62	75.92
<b>South</b>				
Andhra Pradesh	118.11	113.56	54.33	38.53
Kerala	112.94	107.71	84.62	80.77
Tamil Nadu	105.69	113.21	85.55	99.17
<b>India</b>	104.80	92.25	55.03	40.78

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03 (as on 30th September, 2002), Dept. of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

**Table IV: Drop out rates for Scheduled Tribes in India (2002-2003)**

States	Drop out rates			
	Classes I-V		Classes I-VIII	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<b>Northeast</b>				
Meghalaya	61.42	59.29	81.11	80.30
Mizoram	55.90	54.90	59.89	56.34
Nagaland	37.38	37.01	42.81	44.19
<b>East</b>				
Bihar	66.60	65.39	82.43	85.57
Orissa	58.03	53.50	77.45	79.12
West Bengal	53.70	59.26	60.73	42.42
<b>Central</b>				
Madhya Pradesh	51.90	50.51	65.56	70.16
<b>West</b>				
Gujarat	36.13	43.10	58.26	67.04
Maharashtra	28.79	40.23	61.03	66.43
Rajasthan	50.61	59.87	52.58	73.17
<b>North</b>				
Uttar Pradesh	31.19	30.02	36.97	36.45
Himachal Pradesh	16.23	21.70	26.79	37.43
<b>South</b>				
Andhra Pradesh	63.29	68.71	78.59	84.34
Kerala	2.20	5.96	33.63	40.03
Tamil Nadu	27.24	21.01	56.98	54.36
<b>India</b>	50.82	52.10	66.86	71.17

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03 (as on 30th September, 2002), Dept. of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

<b>Table V: State-wise Human Poverty Index (Comparable with 1981, 1991)</b>		
<b>State</b>	<b>Combined for rural and urban areas</b>	
	<b>Value</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>North East</b>		
Mizoram	32.2	14
Nagaland	42.07	22
Meghalaya	49.19	28
<b>East</b>		
Bihar	52.34	32
Orissa	49.85	31
West Bengal	40.48	20
<b>Central</b>		
Madhya Pradesh	43.47	23
<b>West</b>		
Gujarat	29.46	13
Maharashtra	29.25	11
Rajasthan	46.67	25
<b>North</b>		
Uttar Pradesh	48.27	26
Himachal Pradesh	26.21	8
<b>South</b>		
Andhra Pradesh	39.78	19
Kerala	19.93	4
Tamil Nadu	29.28	12
<b>India</b>	39.36	-

Note: 1. The Human Poverty Index is a composite of variables capturing deprivation in three dimensions of human development viz, economic, educational and health. These have been captured by proportion of population below poverty line, proportion of population without access to safe drinking water/ sanitation electricity, medical attention at birth/vaccination and proportion living in Kutch houses; proportion of illiterate population and children not enrolled in schools; and proportion of population not accepted to survive beyond age 40.

Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, Govt. of India.