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STATUS OF EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY IN LOHAR CASTE: A CASE STUDY OF DHUPGURI BLOCK OF JALPAIGURI DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

Lohars are one of the scheduled caste communities of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The population under study has been recorded with a poor literacy rate of 46.37 per cent and only 4 per cent of them could reach up to secondary level of education. The present study seeks to analyse the educational attainment and mobility across the generations of the Lohar caste in Dhupguri Block of Jalpaiguri district. A field survey has been the core of the present study and data are collected through household survey and personal interviews. It has been found that educational mobility across the three generations of the Lohar population remains quite insignificant. The study reveals that more than one-third proportion of the respondents (37.50 per cent) compared to their fathers of the older generation and about one-fourth proportion of the sons (22.50 per cent) of the respondents of the younger generation compared to respondent's generation has remained educationally immobile. Lohar females continue to lag behind the males in terms of both literacy rate and level of education. The socially sanctioned discrimination, prejudice, economic marginalization, relative neglect to education, lack of social awareness and dynamism are the main reasons behind such a poor response in education by the Lohar caste in Dhupguri Block.

Introduction

The society of India has been suffering from inequalities in education, employment and income based on caste, ethnicity and religious lines from pre-colonial times (Wankhede, 2001; Thorat, 2006; Khan, 2018). Though India has witnessed a significant educational expansion in the last few decades, yet social stratification in Indian society hinders the equal development in education particularly across the caste, religion, and ethnic boundaries (Dreze and Sen, 1995; Anitha, 2000). Soon after the independence in 1947, the country has declared itself to be a

welfare state with the principle of equality and justice and committed itself by the constitution to the welfare of weaker sections of the society namely scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs) and women (Wankhede, 2001). Special incentives have been provided mainly in three sectors namely education, employment and political representation by the constitution to these weaker sections of the society. Despite of the many affirmative actions employed for the development of these sections, it is quite heartening to note that, still scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities lie at the bottom of educational pyramid (Rao, 2002). Further,

there has been a considerable inconsistency within the scheduled caste communities themselves as they do not form a monolithic social group (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). They have their own social and cultural identity with a social hierarchy, values and practice of untouchability among themselves (Aikara, 1996; Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). Although education is serving as a positive contributor to the process of strategic change, yet it has always been restricted to particular castes, gender, regions and urban areas (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008; Wankhede, 2016). To be more precise, particular castes from within the scheduled caste communities are dominating in the acquisition of educational as well as socio-economic opportunities. It has been established by many empirical studies that particular scheduled castes like Mahars of Maharashtra, Addharmis of Punjab, Jatavas of Uttar Pradesh, Pulayyas of Kerala, Malas and Madigas of Andhra Pradesh have been dominating in the acquisition of educational opportunities meant for the backward communities (Wankhede, 2001; Rao, 2002). On the other hand, many scheduled caste communities still remain least benefited as they could not access those affirmative schemes efficiently on account of their intense backwardness and absence of effective leadership and movement (Chitnis, 1975; Wankhede, 2001; Rao, 2002; Jayasheela, 2007). This phenomenon of deprivation within the scheduled caste community lacks scholarly attention. Since education is prime mover of development, therefore the issue of enrolment, sustenance and educational attainment of the deprived scheduled caste communities needs a fresh look when one talks about equality in educational opportunities among the castes. It requires a thorough empirical probe to know the factors that are responsible for such a condition. Thus, the present study is devoted to probe the educational situation among the

Lohars, a scheduled caste community of the Dhupguri block of Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the present study are:

- to study the gender gap in literacy and levels of educational attainment among Lohar caste of Dhupguri block.
- to study the pattern of educational mobility across three generations of Lohar caste in the block.

Study Area

Dhupguri block is located between the latitudes of 26° 30' 30" N to 26° 54' 00" N and longitudes of 88° 52' 30" E to 89° 08' 00" E, occupying 535.27 km² of area (Fig.1). The block has recorded 69.57 per cent rate of literacy against the district average of 73.25 per cent. However, male-female literacy rate in the block is 77.55 per cent and 61.35 per cent, respectively. Dhupguri block has a substantial proportion of scheduled caste population (46 per cent). The scheduled caste population in Dhupguri block has been predominantly rural in character as 97.52 per cent of it lives in rural areas. The block has fertile agricultural land, hence, it is rich in agriculture. Participation in higher education among the Lohars of Jalpaiguri district is quite insignificant as only 3.39 per cent of them have attained higher secondary or above level of education as per Census, 2011.

Lohar the Community under Study

Lohar, one of the numerically low scheduled caste communities is among the most educationally and economically backward castes of West Bengal. The community accounts for 1.52 per cent to total scheduled caste population in the state of West Bengal. The word Lohar is derived from the

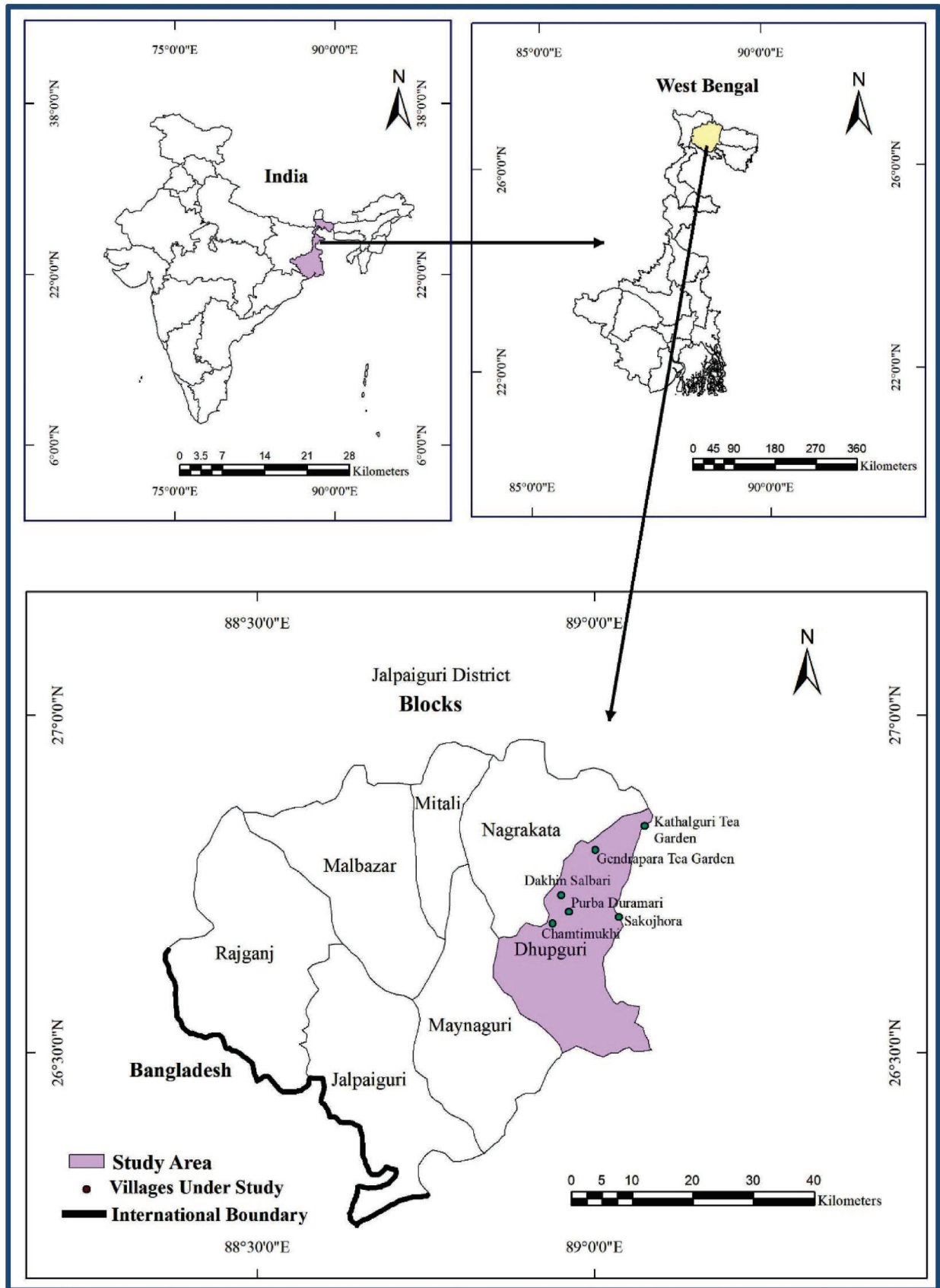


Fig. 1

Sanskrit word *Lauha-kara*, meaning a worker in iron. In West Bengal, they are often called as Nar. They are also known as *Gaduliya* (denoting to those open carts in which they usually live and travel), *Shilpkar* and *Vishwakarma* in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, respectively. They speak the languages of respective states where they live in, but some of them often also speak Hindi. Thus, Lohars are an occupational caste of traditional travelling blacksmiths along with a subsidiary occupation of agriculture. They are skilled in making and repairing necessary agricultural implements like spade, axe, hoe and plough, as well as buckets, pans, knives, scissors, grills and cages. Due to their quite intense backwardness they may practice share cropping and work as daily wage-earners.

Database and Methodology

The present study is based on both the primary and secondary sources of data. Data about total population, literate Lohars population and educational attainment among them for district level are collected from special tables available for individual scheduled caste population, Census of India, 2011. Primary data from 120 households have been collected during February-April, 2019, by selecting 20 households from each village namely Purba Duramari, Dakhin Salbari, Chamtimukhi, Kathalguri Tea Garden, Sakojhora and Gendrapara Tea Garden of Dhupguri block (Fig.1). A simple random sampling without replacement technique is employed to select the sample households of the study. Information is collected from the head of the households and in case of his/her absence, the next important member of the family has been consulted. A pre-designed, comprehensive semi-structured interview schedule is employed in the household surveys. In the present study, the person in the age group of 7 years and above

who can read and write a language with understanding is considered as a literate person. A total of 385 persons of the Lohar caste community have been surveyed from the selected six villages to find out village-wise literacy rate and of the block on the whole. Personal interviews with 72 respondents (12 from each village) have also been conducted to learn about the poor educational attainment among Lohars. Respondents have been drawn from the community leaders and prominent elders from within the community, teachers working at different level and government officials in the age group of 40 and above. Purposive snowball sampling technique has been employed to select the respondents. The unstructured interviews aided by an open-ended questionnaire have been carried out. The opinions of the respondents have been documented with their consent.

To measure the gender gap in literacy rate among the Lohars, the modified version of Sopher's Disparity Index (1974) proposed by Kundu and Rao (1986) has been employed as under:

$$DI = \left[\left(\frac{\log X_2}{X_1} \right) + \left\{ \frac{\log(200 - X_1)}{(200 - X_2)} \right\} \right]$$

where, DI is the disparity index, X_1 is the literacy rate of deprived group (Female), X_2 is the literacy rate of dominant group (Male). If the value of DI is equal to zero then it indicates perfect equality. Thus, greater the value of DI, higher is the extent of disparity between two groups of variables and vice versa.

The present study also seeks to examine the educational mobility among the three generations of the Lohar caste in Dhupguri block. A total of 40 sampled middle-aged married men between the age group of 25 to 40 have been selected for interview in order to have necessary information about all the considered three generations which include

their fathers of old generations and their sons of the younger generations, apart from themselves encompassing a total of 120 men from all the three generations, numbering 40 from each generation. Furthermore, to understand the inter-generational progress in acquisition of education, the mobility matrix approach suggested by Motiram and Singh (2012) and Naidu (2004) has been employed to highlight the levels of educational mobility across three generations of Lohars. The mobility matrix table consists of the same number of rows and columns with the different educational attainment of two generations of people, to be compared with. Where the frequency of row indicates the educational attainment of one generation and frequencies of the column indicates the educational attainment of another generation. Inter-generational differences in educational mobility have been calculated as under:

Educationally Mobile and Immobile Population

Per cent of the educationally mobile population of Lohars in the younger generation as compared to their fathers of the older generation has been calculated by summing up all the frequencies lying in the off-diagonal cells of the mobility matrix table. Similarly, per cent of educationally immobile population has been calculated by summing up all the frequencies which lie in the diagonal cells of the mobility matrix tables. This summation value is then divided by the total frequencies and multiplied by 100 in both the cases.

Upward and Downward Mobility

Upward and downward mobility refers to the improvement or decline in the level of educational attainment by the new generation (son) with respect to previous generation (father). To calculate upward mobility the

number of levels, the son/sons has/have moved upward in the attainment of higher education as compared to their father is/are multiplied with absolute frequencies of the sons. For example, in case of upwardly mobile sons of illiterate fathers it will be: $1 \times 9 = 9$, $2 \times 6 = 12$, and $3 \times 1 = 3$. Similarly values of upward steps taken by sons in all the levels of education in respect to their father mentioned in the matrix table have been calculated. Likewise, to calculate downward mobility the number of levels, the son/sons has/have moved downward in the attainment of educational level as compared to their father and then is multiplied with absolute frequencies of the sons. These results are then summed up and divided by the total number of frequencies of upwardly/downwardly mobile sons of the same mobility matrix table to arrive at the average upward/downward mobility of those sons who have moved upward or downward as compared to the educational attainment of their fathers.

Net Mobility

Net mobility has been calculated by subtracting the total number of negative or downward steps taken by the negatively or downwardly mobile population in a mobility matrix table from the total number of positive steps taken by the positively mobile population of the same table. The results are then divided by the total frequencies of the sons in the matrix table to arrive at the net upward movement of a generation.

Results and Discussion

Level of Literacy among Lohars

Village-wise distribution of literacy rate among Lohars in Dhupguri block has been shown in Table 1. The study reveals that more than half (53.63 per cent) of the population in the block is illiterate. Out of the six villages under study, Kathalguri Tea Garden and Purba

Table 1
Dhuppuri Block: Literacy Rate and Gender Gap in Literacy Rate by Sex among Lohars

Name of the Village	Total Literacy Rate (Per cent)	Male Literacy Rate (Per cent)	Female Literacy Rate (Per cent)	Disparity Index
Purba Duramari	50.00	55.56	44.12	0.13
Chamtimukhi	38.46	48.72	28.21	0.29
Dakhin Salbari	48.15	53.57	42.31	0.13
Kathalguri Tea	51.67	58.06	44.83	0.15
Sakojhora	45.31	50.00	40.00	0.12
Gendrapara Tea	46.67	51.61	41.38	0.12
Dhuppuri Block	46.37	52.76	39.57	0.16

Source: Compiled by Authors

Table 2
Dhuppuri Block: Monthly Median Household Income among Lohars

Name of the Village	Income (Rs.)
Chamtimukhi	3018
Sakojhora	4364
Gendrapara Tea Garden	4455
Dakhin Salbari	4735
Purba Duramari	5215
Kathalguri Tea Garden	6153
Dhuppuri Block	4656

Source: Compiled by Authors

Duramari villages have recorded comparatively high literacy rate of 51.67 and 50.00 per cent, respectively. The high rate of literacy in these villages is attributed to the relatively high monthly household income compared to other selected villages of the present study (Table 2). The residents of these villages are in position to send their children to schools; therefore the rate of literacy is high. Four villages namely Chamtimukhi, Sakojhora, Gendrapara Tea Garden and Dakhin Salbari have been found with literacy rate of below 50 per cent. The low literacy rate of these villages may be attributed to their relatively low monthly household income with less affordability to send their children to schools. Among these villages, Chamtimukhi village has recorded lowest literacy rate of 38.46 per cent and also lowest monthly household income (Table 2). While interacting with the villagers at Chamtimukhi village, it has been observed that due to their intense poverty, they do not realise the importance of education and feel more

concerned about their survival than sending their children to schools. Under the conditions of intense poverty the children are considered as helping hands to earn livelihood, hence rate of literacy is generally low among such households.

Disparity in Literacy Level by Sex among Lohars

In this study, Sopher's disparity index has been employed to highlight disparities in the rate of literacy between males and females. The results show that inequalities by sex remain evident by a quite extent of 0.16 point on an average in the Lohar population of Dhuppuri block (Table 1). Again, Chamtimukhi village is found with the highest disparity index of 0.29 points among all the sampled villages and it is the only village which accounts for a disparity index greater than the block average. This is due to very low female literacy rate at Chamtimukhi village which accounts a gap of 20.51 percentage points in literacy rate as

compared to their male counterparts, although the male rate of literacy is also lowest among all the villages under study. Low female literacy rate in Chamtimukhi village may be due to relatively disadvantaged position of females as compared to males. The family as well as social environment of the village often do not prioritise the females to get them enrolled in school in the same village along with boys. It may be because of intense poverty and lack of education among Lohars. Looking at the ground scenario, the education of the scheduled caste girls seems to be a serious issue as they are often doubly disadvantaged, on account of their social status and their gender (Sutradhar, 2015).

Chamtimukhi village is being followed by Kathalguri Tea Garden village by recording disparity index of 0.15, which is further followed by Purba Duramari and Dakhin Salbari villages by recording disparity index of 0.13 between males and females (Table 1). Thus, the study suggests that in these villages females are not being treated at par with the males in educational matters. Conversely, Sakojhora and Gendrapara Tea Garden villages have been found with the lowest disparity index of 0.12 points each among the selected villages. In these villages females are also getting enrolled in educational institutions quite proportionately to their male counterparts, though literacy rate among both the gender group is quite low due to less household income.

Educational Attainment among Lohars

Village-wise, educational attainment among Lohar caste in Dhupguri block has been shown in Table 3. In case of distribution of uneducated people in the villages under study it has been found that leaving aside Purba Duramari village with 5.71 per cent uneducated people, all other sampled villages, have recorded percentage of uneducated people

close to the block average of 3.91 per cent. While taking into consideration the below primary level, the data illustrate a moderate variation throughout the selected villages (Table 3). Out of the six villages covered, four villages namely Chamtimukhi, Dakhin Salbari, Kathalguri Tea Garden and Purba Duramari have recorded higher percentage of population with below primary education more than the block average of 41.90 per cent. But, the remaining two villages, Gendrapara Tea Garden and Sakojhora have witnessed lower percentage of population in this level of education than the block average. When compared among all the six villages under study, Chamtimukhi is found with the highest percentage of population (56.67 per cent) with below primary level of education. This very low level of educational attainment in Chamtimukhi village is due to intense poverty, traditional caste-based occupation, which hardly needs any educational qualification and relative neglect to education as reported by 83.33 per cent of respondents (Table 4).

While analysing primary level of education, it is found that Gendrapara Tea Garden village has recorded highest percentage (42.86 per cent) of population with primary level of education. This could be attributed to poverty and traditional caste-based occupation and relative neglect of education, restricting people from attaining higher level of education. It is followed by Sakojhora village with 34.48 per cent population having primary level of education. However, in Chamtimukhi, Purba Duramari and Kathalguri Tea Garden the percentage of population with primary level education is lower than the Block average of 30.73 per cent.

On account of middle level education, Gendrapara Tea Garden village has recorded highest percentage (21.43 per cent) of population in this category of level of education

Table 3
Dhuppuri Block: Level of Educational Attainment among Lohars

Name of the Village	Uneducated	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Technical Diploma	Non-technical Diploma	Graduation and Above
Purba Duramari	5.71	42.86	25.71	14.29	5.71	2.86	0.00	0.00	2.86
Chamtimukhi	3.33	56.67	30.00	6.67	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dakhin Salbari	3.85	46.15	30.77	15.38	3.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kathalguri Tea Garden	3.23	45.16	22.58	16.13	6.45	0.00	0.00	3.23	3.23
Sakojhora	3.45	34.48	34.48	17.24	3.45	6.90	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gendrapara Tea Garden	3.57	25.00	42.86	21.43	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.57	3.57
Dhuppuri Block	3.91	41.90	30.73	15.08	3.91	1.68	0.00	1.12	1.68

Source: Compiled by Authors

Table 4
Dhuppuri Block: Village-wise, Opinions of the Respondents Regarding Reasons for Poor Educational Attainment among Lohars

Reasons	Purba Duramari	Chamtimukhi	Dakhin Salbari	Kathalguri Tea Garden	Sakojhora	Gendrapara Tea Garden
Poverty	33.33	41.66	25.00	25.00	33.33	33.33
Traditional Occupation	25.00	25.00	33.33	8.33	16.67	33.33
Inadequate Social Awareness	16.67	8.33	16.67	33.33	8.33	8.33
Relative Neglect to Education	8.33	16.67	8.33	16.67	25.00	16.67
Lack of Social Dynamism	8.33	0.00	8.33	0.00	8.33	0.00
Travelling Nature of the Lohars	0.00	0.00	8.33	8.33	0.00	8.33
Poor Treatment in School	8.33	8.33	0.00	8.33	8.33	0.00

Source: Compiled by Authors

among all the villages under study. While, Chamtimukhi village has witnessed lowest position by recording 6.67 per cent people with middle class educational qualifications. Further, leaving aside Purba Duramari village (14.29 per cent), in the remaining three villages the percentage of population with middle level education is slightly above the block average (15.08 per cent, Table 3).

Table 3 reveals that only 3.91 per cent of the literate population of the block has attained secondary level of education. It has been observed that the percentage of population with secondary level of education in Kathalguri Tea Garden and Purba Duramari villages is more than the block average of 3.91 per cent. However, in Chamtimukhi, Dakhin Salbari and Sakojhora villages, percentage of such population is less than the block average. Surprisingly, Gendrapara Tea Garden having highest percentage of population with primary and middle level has not recorded any person with secondary level of education. The quite intense poverty and engagement of the people with traditional caste-based occupation is reported by 66.66 per cent of respondents from Gendrapara Tea Garden village as reasons for restricting them from attaining secondary level of education (Table 4). On account of higher secondary level of education, out of the six villages under study, only two villages namely Sakojhora and Purba Duramari, respectively have registered 6.90 and 2.86 per cent of their population with educational attainment of higher secondary level.

Higher education is often highly expensive and inaccessible therefore performance of the backward castes in higher education is generally poor (Ahmad, 1978; Wankhede, 2001; Khan, 2018). The study reveals that the people of the study area have no interest in technical education as not even a single person has attained any diploma in

technical education. Likewise, only three villages namely Gendrapara Tea Garden, Kathalguri Tea Garden and Purba Duramari have been respectively found with 3.57, 3.23 and 2.86 per cent of their literate population having graduation and post-graduation level of education (Table 3). It is because of relatively better economic and social environment of these villages apart from the proximity of Birpara College (located at Birpara town, West Bengal) from these villages, facilitating the attainment of higher education among Lohars.

On the whole, this study reveals that 41.90 per cent of the literate population of the study area could not cross primary level of education. While only 30.73 per cent could reach up to primary level. By clubbing the educational attainment up to middle level it is found that 91.62 per cent of the literate population of Dhupguri block have middle or less than middle level of education. Thus, Lohar population of the study area continues to be lagging behind in terms of the quality of education. It is due to the prevalence of intense poverty, economic marginalization, inadequate social awareness and dynamism, relative neglect to education, prejudice and socially sanctioned discrimination among Lohars.

Educational Attainment across Generations among Lohars

Table 5 shows the educational attainment of three generations of Lohar caste, which reveals that the educational attainment of the respondent's father generation (older generation) is very low. Most of the fathers of the respondents (67.50 per cent) are illiterate with zero years of formal education or has educational attainment of below primary level (17.50 per cent). Although, a few of them have completed their primary (7.50 per cent), middle (5.00 per cent) and secondary (2.50 per cent) level of education, yet none of them has

Table 5
Dhugguri Block: Educational Attainment among Three Generations of Lohars

Educational Attainment	Respondent's Father	Respondent	Respondent's Son
	Percentage of Respondents		
Illiterate	67.50	35.00	15.00
Below Primary	17.50	30.00	20.00
Primary	7.50	20.00	22.50
Middle	5.00	7.50	15.00
Secondary	2.50	5.00	17.50
Higher Secondary	0.00	2.50	7.50
Graduation and Above	0.00	0.00	2.50
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Compiled by Authors

recorded attainment of higher secondary or further higher level of education. Poor socio-economic condition has been the main reason for such low level of educational attainment among the fathers of the respondents.

The educational attainment among respondent's generation (middle generation) has also been found to be quite low although much improved as compared to their fathers. Rate of illiteracy has come down to 35 per cent (middle generation) from 67.50 per cent (father's generation) thus accounting for a decrease by 32.50 percentage points. Similarly, in below primary and primary level, respondents have moved upward by 12.50 percentage points in each level as compared to their fathers. Likewise, in case of middle and secondary level of education, respondents have also moved upward by 2.50 percentage points in each level as compared to their fathers. Similarly, 2.50 per cent of the respondents have been found with higher secondary level of education while none of their fathers could attain such level of education.

Level of educational attainment among the sons of the respondents (third generation) is higher as compared to their fathers and grandfathers. Rate of illiteracy has come down to 15 per cent as compared to 35 per cent and 67.50 per cent of their fathers and grandfathers, respectively. It is because of their increasing

awareness about the importance of education and relative improvement in economic position, as a result the Lohar community has started sending their children to the schools. Similarly, among the considered three generations, the sons of the respondents recorded highest percentage (22.50) in the attainment of primary education. Likewise, in middle class level of education, the performance of their sons is also better (15.00 per cent) as compared to their forefathers. A significant number (17.50 per cent) of the sons of the respondents completed secondary level of education as compared to earlier generations. The study reveals that 2.50 per cent sons of the respondents have attained graduation or above level of education which their previous generations could not attain.

Educational Mobility between the Respondent's Father and Respondent Generation

Mobility generally refers to the process by which individuals, families, households or other categories of people move within or between social strata in a society. Likewise, the term educational mobility denotes a process where individuals and groups move from one educational level to another in a society (Lillard and Wills, 2015). Progress in education both in quantitative and qualitative terms is considered

as the most important channel to social mobility (upward/downward) for any individual or group of people especially for the backward communities like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (Benjamin, 1991; Azam and Bhatt, 2012). Therefore, educational progress among the backward castes holds an immense significance as it is the only way that can improve the socio-economic profile of these castes.

Educational mobility between the respondent's father and respondent generation has been shown in Table 6. It has been observed that 50 per cent of the respondents have enriched themselves with higher educational attainment as compared to their fathers. However, 37.50 per cent of respondents have been found with same level of educational attainment as of their fathers, while 12.50 per cent have remained at lower level of education than their fathers. It has been observed that the fathers who have been illiterate could not provide any formal education to their sons. While another 33.33 per cent of sons have moved upward by one step by attaining below primary level of education as compared to the educational attainment of their fathers. However, only 3.70 per cent of the sons of illiterate fathers could move upward by three steps and have attained middle level of education.

Furthermore, this study reveals that the fathers who have below primary education, 28.57 per cent of their sons are illiterate hence, have recorded downward educational mobility. While another 28.57 per cent are in the same educational level as of their father. However, 14.28 per cent sons of such fathers have moved upward by three steps and attained secondary education. Contrarily, the fathers who have primary education, 66.66 per cent sons of such fathers could not attain education at par with their fathers, therefore have moved downward

in terms of educational mobility, whereas the remaining 33.33 per cent of sons are on the same level of education as of their fathers. While, the fathers who have middle level of education, 50 per cent of their sons have moved downward by one step and has attained primary education and other 50 per cent has moved upward by two steps by attaining higher secondary education. Amongst the fathers who have attained secondary education, their sons have also been found with secondary education hence, there is neither upward nor downward educational mobility. Apart from this, the study reveals that an increase in educational attainment has mostly been taking place among the sons of illiterate fathers (59.25 per cent) as compared to the sons of the educated fathers. It has also been observed that immobility between respondent's father and respondent generation is quite high (37.50 per cent). Additionally, it has been found that respondents, whose fathers have a comparatively high level of education, are also likely to remain in the same educational level as of their fathers or have a tendency to go downward. It may be due to poor socio-economic conditions of the fathers where they could not support their sons for higher education.

Educational Mobility between the Respondent and his Son's Generation

Table 7 exhibits educational mobility between the respondents belonging to middle generation and his sons as third generation. Relatively high upward mobility is shown by the sons (70.00 per cent) of the respondents as they have enriched themselves with higher educational attainment as compared to their fathers (Table 7). While, 22.50 per cent of the sons have remained in the same educational level as of their fathers and the remaining 7.50 per cent sons could not reach up to the educational level of their fathers. The study

Table 6
Dhuppuri Block: Mobility Matrix Showing Educational Attainment between Respondent's Father and Respondent among Lohars

Respondent's Father's Educational Attainment	Respondent's Educational Attainment						Total Frequencies (Respondents Fathers)	
	Graduation and Above	Higher Secondary	Secondary	Middle	Primary	Below Primary		Illiterate
Graduation and Above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	00
Higher Secondary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	00
Secondary	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	01
Middle	-	01	-	-	01	-	-	02
Primary	-	-	-	-	01	01	01	03
Below Primary	-	-	01	02	-	02	02	07
Illiterate	-	-	-	01	06	09	11	27
Total Frequencies (Respondents)	00	01	02	03	08	12	14	40

Source: Compiled by Authors

Note: Green Colour indicates Upward Mobility, Red Colour indicates Downward Mobility and Yellow Colour indicates No Mobility

Table 7
Dhuppuri Block: Mobility Matrix Showing Educational Attainment between Respondent and Son among Lohars

Respondent's Educational Attainment	Respondent's Son's Educational Attainment						Total Frequencies (Respondents)	
	Graduation and Above	Higher Secondary	Secondary	Middle	Primary	Below Primary		Illiterate
Graduation and Above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	00
Higher Secondary	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	01
Secondary	01	-	01	-	-	-	-	02
Middle	-	-	02	01	-	-	-	03
Primary	-	01	02	02	02	-	01	08
Below Primary	-	01	02	02	04	01	02	12
Illiterate	-	-	-	01	03	07	03	14
Total Frequencies of Respondents Sons	01	03	07	06	09	08	06	40

Source: Compiled by Authors

Note: Green Colour indicates Upward Mobility, Red Colour indicates Downward Mobility and Yellow Colour indicates No Mobility

further reveals that the respondents who are illiterate, 21.43 per cent of their sons also could not attain any formal education. While, half of their sons (50 per cent) have moved upward by one step and attained below primary level of education. Similarly, 21.43 per cent and 7.14 per cent of their sons have recorded upward educational mobility by attaining primary and middle level of education, respectively (Table 7).

In case of respondents who have below primary level of education, it has been found that 16.67 per cent of their sons have moved downward by one step as they have remained illiterate. However, immobility in this case is found to be quite low as only one son (8.33 per cent) has remained in below primary level of education. Taking into consideration the sons who have moved upward in terms of levels of education it has been found that most of them have achieved primary education (33.33 per cent) and 16.67 per cent each have attained middle and secondary level of education, respectively. Only 8.33 per cent sons of such respondents could attain higher secondary level of education. In case of the respondents who have primary level of education, 62.50 per cent of their sons have shown upward mobility by attaining middle, secondary and higher secondary levels of education as compared to their fathers. Besides, 25.00 per cent of sons have remained educationally immobile in respect of their fathers while 12.50 per cent have witnessed downward mobility by remaining illiterate (Table 7).

In comparison to this, the fathers who have middle level of education, none of their sons have moved downward in terms of educational attainment. Although, 33.33 per cent of the sons have recorded immobility, yet a greater part of them (66.66 per cent) have moved upward by one step and achieved secondary level of education. Similarly, the

fathers having secondary level of education, about 50 per cent of their sons have remained in the same educational level as of their fathers, while the remaining 50.00 per cent achieved graduation. Likewise, a father who has higher secondary education, his only son could also achieve educational level at par with their father, hence, has recorded immobility in level of education with respect to his father.

From the above discussion, it has been found that an increase in educational attainment has largely taken place among those sons where respondents (their fathers) are illiterate (78.57 per cent) or has education of below primary level (75.00 per cent). There is no evidence of downward mobility among the sons where their fathers have an education level of middle or above. It indicates that awareness about the importance of education has grown among the respondents and they are prioritising their children's education. The existence of high immobility among the sons in higher secondary (100 per cent) and secondary level (50 per cent) indicates that still the socio-economic condition of the Lohar caste is not at the level that they could afford the expense of higher education of their children.

Inter-generational Differences in Educational Mobility

Mobility among Lohars in Education

If a son is found with different educational attainment (either higher or lower) as compared to his father, is called as an educationally mobile person. Therefore, in the mobility matrix (Table 6 and 7), the frequencies lying in the off-diagonal cell, signify educational mobility. The study reveals that 62.50 per cent of the respondents (middle generation) has recorded either above or below the level of educational attainment as compared to their fathers (older generation) (Table 8). Similarly, 77.50 per cent of the sons of the

Table 8
Dhugguri Block: Educational Mobility between Respondent's Father and Respondent among Lohars

Type of Mobility	Respondent's Father and Respondent	
	Mobility	Frequencies
Per cent Mobile	62.50	25
Per cent Immobile	37.50	15
Upward Mobility	1.65	20
Downward Mobility	1.20	05
Net Mobility	0.68	15

Source: Compiled by Authors

Table 9
Dhugguri Block: Educational Mobility between Respondent and Sons of Respondent among Lohars

Type of Mobility	Respondent and Sons of Respondent	
	Mobility	Frequencies
Per cent Mobile	77.50	31
Per cent Immobile	22.50	09
Upward Mobility	1.68	28
Downward Mobility	1.33	03
Net Mobility	1.07	25

Source: Compiled by Authors

respondents belonging to third generation have witnessed different level of educational attainment as compared to their fathers (Table 9). This comparatively higher educational mobility among the sons of the respondents as compared to the respondent and their fathers suggests that awareness about the importance of education has been increasing among Lohar caste and they are prioritising their children's education.

Immobility among Lohars in Education

If a son is found with the same educational attainment as of his fathers, he is called as an educationally immobile person. Since the educational attainment for the concerned two generations is arranged in the same order of rows and columns in the mobility matrix table (Table 6, 7), therefore, the diagonal line indicates the degree of immobility or the horizontal mobility. It means that no change in educational attainment has taken place between two generations being compared. The results show that 37.50 per cent of the respondents

have remained educationally immobile as compared to their fathers (Table 8). Whereas, in the case of sons (third generation) of the respondent, the immobility accounts for 22.50 per cent (Table 9). Thus, the study reveals that immobility has decreased by 15 percentage points between second and third generation of Lohars in the study area.

Upward Mobility among Lohars in Education

If a son records educational attainment higher than his father, it is called upward mobility. The study reveals that the respondents who have attained higher educational attainment as compared to the educational attainment of their father have moved upward by 1.65 steps on an average (Table 8). Whereas, in case of the sons of the respondents (third generation) the corresponding value of upward mobility is 1.68 steps (Table 9). This marginal upward mobility of 0.03 steps of education between second and third generations indicates that improvement in educational attainment is

very low among Lohars due to their poor economic conditions.

Downward Mobility among Lohars in Education

The downward mobility is just the opposite case of upward mobility, in which a son has lower level of educational attainment than his father. The respondents who have moved downward as compared to the educational attainment of their fathers moved downward by 1.20 steps on an average (Table 8). Whereas, in case of the sons of the respondents (third generation) the corresponding value of downward mobility is 1.33 steps (Table 9). Thus, the downward mobility is high in case of third generation in comparison with second generation. While analysing downward mobility among the sons of the respondents it is found that most of their fathers (respondents) have educational attainment of below primary and primary level (Table 7). Therefore, the study suggests that the respondents, who have a low level of education, could not provide higher education to their sons either due to economic reasons or having indifferent attitude towards higher education.

Net Mobility among Lohars in Education

How an entire younger generation have enriched themselves (if any) in terms of attaining educational level as compared to the educational attainment of their fathers can be measured through net mobility. The results show that respondents belonging to second generation moved upward by 0.68 net steps on an average as compared to their fathers (Table 8). While the sons (third generation) of the respondents have witnessed a net upward movement of 1.07 steps as compared to their fathers (Table 9). This high net mobility of the third generation in comparison with the second generation indicates that educational attain-

ment among Lohar caste has been increasing over time though the rate of increase is very low as is indicated by upward mobility of third generation.

Conclusions

Major findings of the present study are:

- The study reveals that the rate of literacy among Lohar caste is very low (46.37 per cent). Out of the six sampled villages, Kathalguri Tea Garden and Purba Duramari have recorded comparatively high literacy rate of 51.67 per cent and 50.00 per cent, respectively. While, Chamtimukhi village has witnessed the lowest rate of literacy (38.46 per cent). Due to intense poverty the children are considered as helping hands to earn a livelihood, hence, the literacy rate among Lohars is very low in the study area.
- The results of the Sopher's disparity index show that Lohar females lag behind the males in rate of literacy by 0.16 point in Dhupguri block. Again, Chamtimukhi village has been found with the highest male-female disparity of 0.29 point. Thus, the results suggest that Lohar females are not being treated at par with the males in educational matters in the study area in general and in Chamtimukhi village in particular.
- The study reveals that 41.90 per cent of the literate population could not cross the primary level of education. Furthermore, 91.62 per cent of the literate population of Dhupguri block has middle or less than the middle level of education. It has been found that the people of the study area have no interest in technical education as not even a single person has attained any diploma in technical education. Likewise, only

1.68 per cent of them attained graduation and above education. Therefore, the Lohar population of the study area is still lagging behind in terms of quality of education.

- The study also highlights that acquisition of educational level across generations of Lohar caste has been improving. Rate of illiteracy has come down to 15 per cent among the Lohars belonging to third-generation against 35 per cent and 67.50 per cent among Lohars belonging to middle and old generations, respectively. Sons of the respondent (2.50 per cent) belonging to the third generation have also attained graduation or above level of education which their previous generation could not attain.
- Immobility, in attainment of educational level in respect of sons as compared to their fathers, is quite pronounced among both the middle (37.50 per cent) and third-generation (22.50 per cent) of the Lohars. The Lohars belonging to the second and third generation who have attained a higher educational level as compared to their fathers have moved upward by 1.65 and 1.68 steps, respectively, suggesting marginal upward mobility of 0.03 steps. It may be due to their poor economic conditions. However, the net upward movement of 1.07 steps of the third generation against the net upward movement of 0.68 steps of the second generation indicates that the educational attainment among Lohar caste has been increasing over time.
- Progress in attainment of education has mostly been taken place among the sons belonging to the second and third generations where their fathers are

either illiterate or has education of below primary level. It has also been found that the fathers who have a comparatively high level of education, their sons are also likely to remain in the same educational level. Therefore, the study indicates that still, the socio-economic conditions of the Lohar caste have not reached the stage where they could have afforded the cost of higher education. Hence, the study suggests that Lohar community needs greater attention by way of incentives and facilities with an individual caste-based approach.

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