

An evaluation of Socio-Economic Profile Tribal Population in Dungarpur District of Rajasthan

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Abstract

The indigenous tribes in India, much like those across the globe, are recognized for their distinctive lifestyles and specific cultures, contributing to a unique national identity. These communities often lead lives characterized by unique customs, basic traditional technologies, and a preference for dwelling in private and isolated settings, away from the mainstream national life. The Dungarpur district in Rajasthan, marked by its forested areas, is predominantly inhabited by scheduled tribes. This study focuses on providing insights into the socio-economic profile of these tribes in the region, specifically the Garasiya and Bhils tribes. The research reveals that a substantial proportion, seventy percent, of the sampled tribal population is illiterate, with over 90 percent being engaged in agriculture. The primary sector significantly contributes to the income of most families, with 48 percent of tribal leaders earning between 5,000.00 to 10,000.00. Currently, there is an increased focus from both the government and non-governmental organizations on improving health and education for these tribal communities.

Keyword – *Socio-Economic, Scheduled Tribes, Government, NGOs.*

Introduction

The socio-economic profile of the tribal population in Dungarpur District, Rajasthan, presents an nuanced picture of diverse communities facing unique challenges and opportunities. Despite constituting a numerical minority, the tribal population in India encompasses a diverse array of groups. These groups vary in language and linguistic characteristics, inhabit different ecological settings, exhibit distinct physical features, and differ in population size, acculturation levels, predominant livelihood strategies, and degrees of social stratification. Geographically, they are scattered across the country, with a notably uneven distribution. The majority of the Scheduled Tribe population concentrates in the eastern, central, and western regions, spanning nine states: Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal. Approximately 12 percent of the tribal population resides in the Northeastern region, while around five percent and three percent are situated in the Southern and Northern States, respectively.

In the era of British colonial rule, certain groups and communities were officially recognized and classified as tribes. This categorization underwent a transformation following the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950. Article 342 of the Constitution specifically outlined the inclusion of these groups in the Schedule, enabling the provision of targeted administrative and political concessions for their welfare. Consequently, a notable distinction emerged between the concept of a tribe as a social and cultural entity and a tribe as a politico-administrative category. Remarkably, instances arose where groups and communities sharing linguistic, social, and cultural ties found themselves listed in certain states of the Indian Union but not in neighboring ones, leading to a significant disparity. Similarly, within a particular state, the same community might be listed in certain regions but not in others, further highlighting the intricate complexities and variations in the categorization of tribes within the administrative framework. Despite the existence of special provisions, tribal communities remain one of the most economically disadvantaged and marginalized segments of Indian society. Despite constituting only around 8.6 percent of the population, they bear a disproportionate burden of poverty, illiteracy, and severe physical health challenges. For instance, during the 1993-94 period, while 45.7 percent of the entire population lived below the poverty line, a significantly higher percentage, 63.7 percent, of tribal people experienced poverty, indicating an almost 20 percent difference compared to the national average.

Similarly, during the 2004-05 period, the poverty rates were 37.7 percent for the general population and notably higher at 60.0 percent for tribes. This trend is reflected in education and health indicators, as evidenced by the literacy rate for tribes in 2001, which stood at 47 percent, in contrast to the 69 percent literacy rate for the general population. Moreover, data from the National Family Health Survey in 2005-06 brought to light an Infant Mortality rate of 62.1 per 1000 live births among tribes, accompanied by a significant Under-five Mortality rate of 95.7 per 1000 live births. These statistics underscore the enduringly challenging socio-economic conditions confronted by tribal communities in India.

Historically, Rajasthan has been categorized as a state with limited progress in human development. Even in the current context, a significant portion of the population lacks access to essential facilities, particularly in education. Literacy, a fundamental element of development, is crucial not only for securing employment but also for attaining higher social status. Despite notable improvements in literacy rates and the establishment of numerous hospitals and educational institutions, a considerable segment of the population in Rajasthan continues to be deprived of these essential resources. Dungarpur, characterized by a tribal majority, experiences disparities in various aspects of social and economic development, including differences between genders and between rural and urban areas.

The most vulnerable segment of India's population comprises tribal people, scheduled tribes, and castes. Rajasthan, one of the largest states in the country, occupies nearly 11 percent of the total land area and is home to 12.44 percent of the tribal population. According to B.L. Nagda (2009), Rajasthan's tribal population has been documented at 12.44 percent, and the growth rate of this tribal population (34.46%) surpasses the overall state growth rate (28.44%). The prevalence of small land holdings per family often results in chronic unemployment, prompting migration to neighboring Rajasthan for employment opportunities. Agriculture, the primary occupation, is frequently hampered by recurrent droughts and limited access to irrigation facilities.

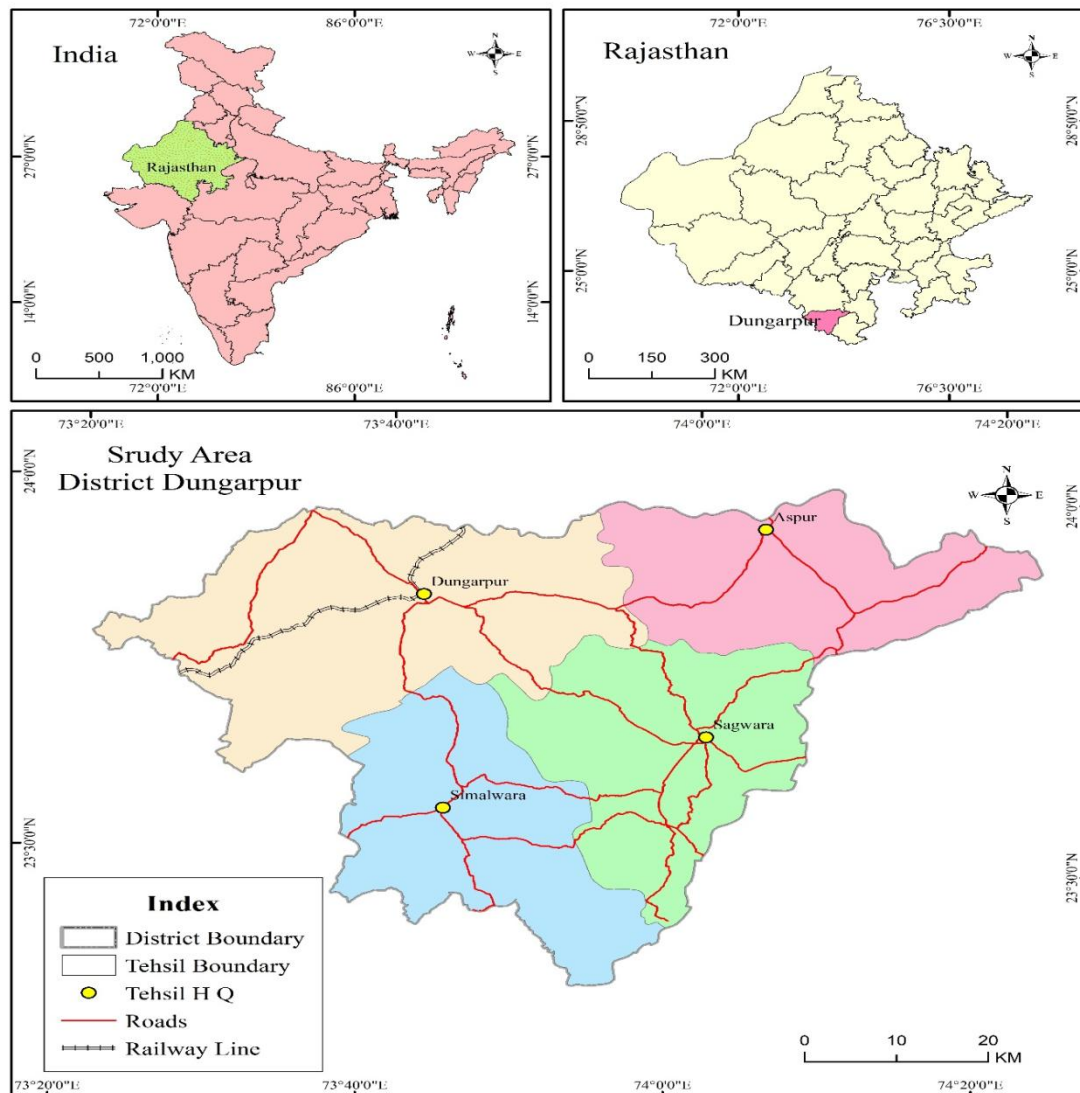
The Human Development Update of Rajasthan for the year 2008 positions Dungarpur at the lowest rank among districts, arranged in descending order based on the composite index of human development. With a human development index of 0.36, Dungarpur records the lowest value, while Ganganagar attains the highest at 0.76. Among the 32 districts in the state, Dungarpur is positioned at the bottom in terms of educational development but ranks third from the bottom in health and income indicators. The primary sources of livelihood in Dungarpur district are agriculture, forestry, and construction. The district heavily relies on the primary sector, particularly agro-based products, contributing the majority of its revenue. Agriculture plays a pivotal role in enhancing the socio-economic conditions of the region, with nearly 90 percent of the tribal population depending on it during the monsoon season. The key Kharif crops include paddy and maize, while Rabi crops comprise wheat, gram, groundnut, and soybean during the summer. Additionally, horticulture and floriculture are practiced in the region.

Historically, tribal communities have predominantly depended on agriculture, animal husbandry, and forests as their primary sources of sustenance. However, the agricultural output from their own farms typically only fulfils consumption needs for about three months annually on average. The degradation of forests and communal lands has resulted in an insecure livelihood, compelling individuals from these communities to seek wage labor through out-migration. The occurrence of migration tends to intensify during periods of drought, a natural phenomenon. While migration for improved living conditions is always embraced and has been a recurring practice, it is noteworthy that many of these individuals, now engaged as casual wage laborers, have acquired skills related to construction activities on the job (such as carpentry, shuttering, wall plastering, masonry, and house painting). Additionally, some have found employment in the restaurant sector, including tasks like cooking. This paper aims to present a concise profile of the tribal population in the southern part of Rajasthan, specifically focusing on dungarpur district. It delves into various aspects, including demographic challenges, socio-cultural attributes, economic conditions, and the livelihoods of the scheduled tribes residing in the district.

Methodology and Data Sources

The main focus of this study involves employing tabulation analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature and challenges faced by the tribal population. Various quantitative measures such as sample percentage, ratio, and average have been utilized to provide numerical support for assessing the socio-economic conditions of the tribes residing in the Dungarpur district of Rajasthan. The data used in this analysis is sourced from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is gathered directly from tribal households, employing a precisely designed questionnaire that covers diverse parameters of socio-economic status. Additionally, secondary data is acquired from sources such as the Ministry of Tribal Development Department in the Rajasthan Office, Population Census, 2011, Population Census, 2001 as well as from various books and journals. The study specifically focuses on 50 households as respondents from the Dungarpur district Rajasthan.

Map 1- Study Area, Dungarpur District



Source: - Census Report, Year 2011, Dungarpur District

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

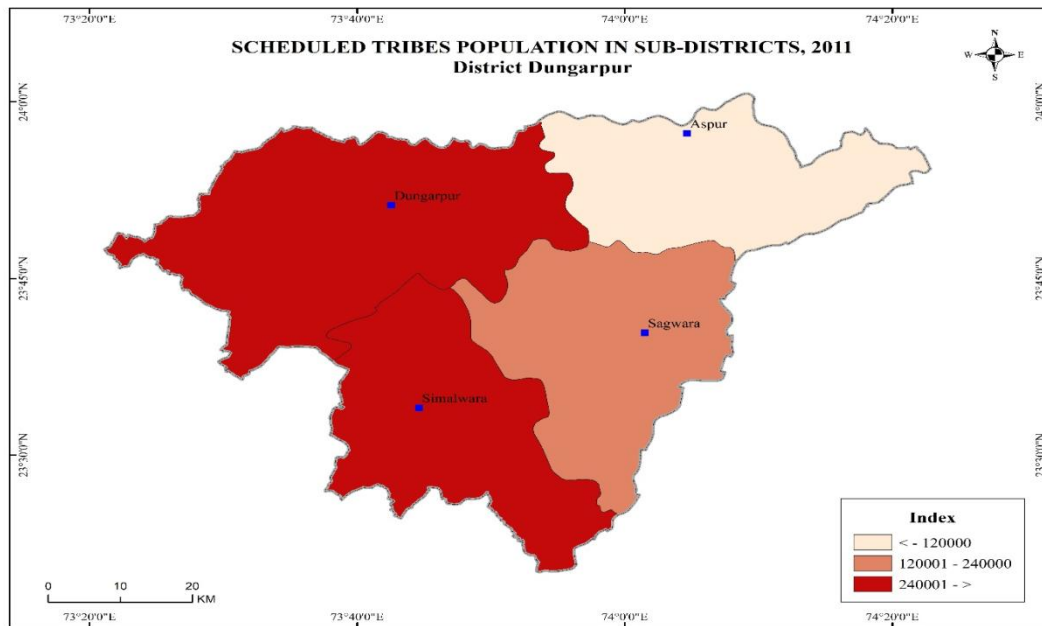
The outcomes derived from the information pertaining to individual attributes such as family type, family size, age, gender, education level, assets and income level of the survey participants are detailed in the subsequent tables. In 2011, the population of Dungarpur totaled 1,388,552, with 696,532 males and 692,020 females. In the 2001 census, the population was 1,107,643, comprising 547,791 males and 559,852 females. This represented a 25.36 percent increase in population compared to the figures from 2001. The 2001 census also indicated a growth of 22.46 percent in dungarpur District's population compared to the 1991 census.

Table 1: Distribution of Population in Dungarpur

Description	2011	2001
Population	13.89 Lakhs	11.08 Lakhs
Actual Population	1,388,552	1,107,643
Male	696,532	547,791
Female	692,020	559,852
Population Growth	25.36%	22.46%
Area Sq. Km	3,770	3,771
Density/km ²	368	294
Proportion to Rajasthan Population	2.03%	1.96%
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	994	1022
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	922	955
Average Literacy	59.46	48.57
Male Literacy	72.88	66.04
Female Literacy	46.16	31.77
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	242,239	231,647
Child Proportion (0-6 Age)	17.45%	20.91%

Sources: Population Census, 2011

The average literacy rate in Dungarpur in 2011 remained consistent at 59.46 compared to the 2001 figure of 48.57. When analyzed by gender, the literacy rates for males and females were 72.88 and 46.16, respectively, in 2011, while the corresponding rates in the 2001 census were 66.04 and 31.77 for Dungarpur District. The total number of literate individuals in Dungarpur District in 2011 was 681,591, with 415,820 males and 265,771 females. In 2001, the district had a total of 425,440 literate individuals. Regarding the Sex Ratio in Dungarpur, it was documented at 994 females per 1000 males in the 2011 census, marking a decline from the 2001 figure of 1022. In comparison, the average national sex ratio in India, as per the latest reports from the Census 2011 Directorate, stands at 940. Additionally, the 2011 census reported a Child Sex Ratio in Dungarpur of 922 girls per 1000 boys, reflecting a decrease from the 2001 census data, which indicated 955 girls per 1000 boys.



During the census enumeration, information on children aged 0-6 was collected for all districts, including Dungarpur. The total number of children in the 0-6 age group was 242,239, an increase from the 2001 census figure of 231,647. Out of this total, 126,008 were male, and 116,231 were female. The Child Sex Ratio in the 2011 census was 922, showing a decrease from the 2001 figure of 955. In 2011, children under the age of 0-6 constituted 17.45 percent of the population in Dungarpur District, in contrast to the 20.91 percent reported in the 2001 census. This represented a net change of -3.46 percent compared to the previous census of India.

Family Size and Composition:

The Bhil, Domer, and Garasiya tribes stand as the most populous scheduled tribal communities in southern Rajasthan, with the highest concentration residing in Dungarpur district. These tribes are characterized by (i) cultural and geographical isolation, (ii) a relatively non-hierarchical and non-differentiated social structure, and (iii) a low level of technology and development.

The family size and composition play a significant role in shaping various aspects of individuals' lives and the overall structure of societies. Understanding the socioeconomic implications of family size and composition is essential for addressing challenges and creating policies that promote equitable access to resources and opportunities within a society. It underscores the interconnectedness of family dynamics with broader economic and social structures.

Table-2 Distribution of Tribal Households by Types of Family			
Sr.No	Types of family	Number of households	Per cent
1	Joint	12	24
2	Nuclear	38	76
3	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary Survey, 2023

In essence, the tribal households in Dungarpur district can be categorized into two primary types: nuclear and joint families. Nuclear families comprise parents along with two or three children, while joint families encompass parents, grandparents, children, and others. The

distribution of tribal households based on family type is detailed in Table 2, as indicated by the household survey conducted. Among the sampled households, the research reveals that 10 families (20 percent) prefer a joint family arrangement, while a larger proportion, constituting 40 families (80 percent) express a preference for the nuclear family setup.

The family size is a pivotal determinant of the well-being of each tribal individual. The distribution of tribal households according to family size is outlined in the subsequent table. During the survey, it was observed that a significant number of surveyed tribal individuals belonged to middle-aged couples, and many in this group did not contemplate reducing birth rates. Interestingly, newlywed couples exhibited awareness of the importance of birth rate reduction. This discrepancy in awareness was notable during the survey.

Table-3 Distribution of Tribal Households by the Family Size			
Sr.No	Family size	No. of households	Percent of households
1	2 – 4	14	28
2	4 – 6	17	34
3	6 – 8	9	18
4	8 to above	10	20
5	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary Survey, 2023

Income status of the Tribal Households

The economic well-being of tribal households exhibits significant variation, influenced by factors including geographical location, educational and healthcare accessibility, economic prospects, and governmental policies. Many tribal communities confront economic hurdles rooted in historical marginalization, restricted access to resources, and discriminatory practices. It is crucial to recognize the diverse economic circumstances within tribal households, prompting continuous endeavors from both the government and non-governmental organizations to bolster livelihoods, advance education, and foster sustainable development in tribal regions.

Traditionally, the tribal people earn their livelihood through agriculture. A new source of income besides land is employment in government and private sectors. Very few tribes are technically educated and only a limited number hold good jobs. It was observed that, income of the family depends on size of family. However, the income of the households is spent on necessity goods only.

Table -5 Distribution of Family Income			
Sr.No	Income	No. of households	Percent
1	20000 - 50000	10	16.67
2	50001 -10,0000	22	36.67
3	10,0001 -15,0000	9	15.00
4	15,0001-200000	12	20.00
5	200001 and Above	7	11.67
6	Total	60	100

Sources: Primary Survey, 2023

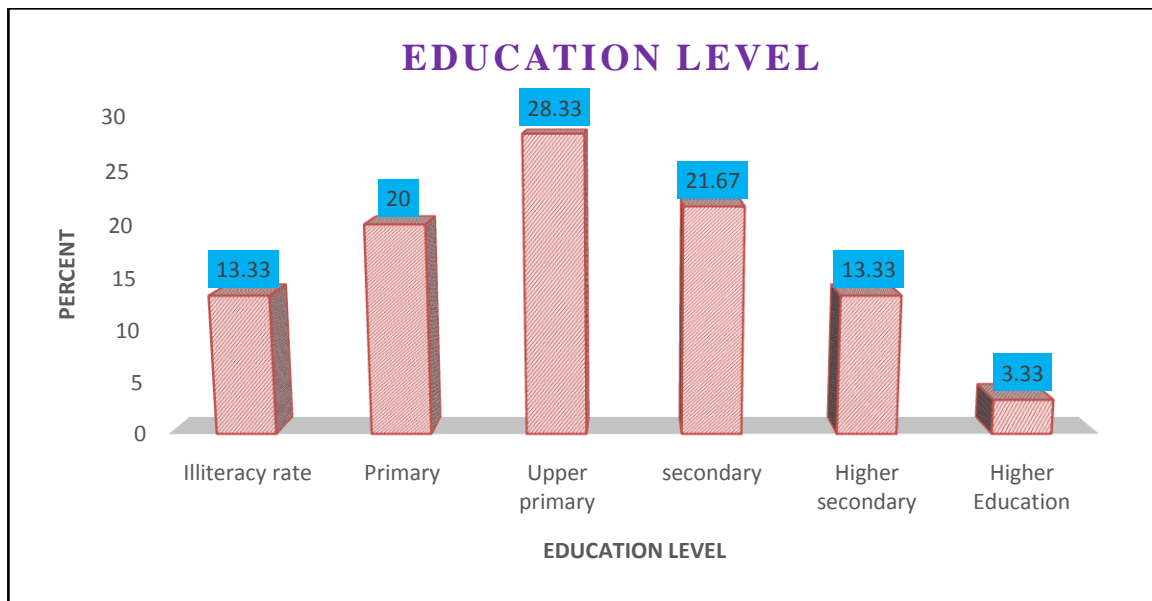
The table provides information on the distribution of family income within a specified group, presumably households. The income column indicates the income ranges that are being considered for the households. The ranges are divided into different categories. Number of household's column shows the number of households falling within each income range. The Percent column displays the percentage of households in each income category, calculated in relation to the total number of households. Out of the total 16 per cent households falls in the income ranging between Rs 20000 to 50000. Whereas about 11 per cent sample household earning income ranges above Rs 200000

and above. Out of 100 sample household 36 per cent households belongs to income ranging between 50001 to 100000. The table also shows that 20 per cent sample household having income between Rs 150001 to Rs 200000. Only 15 percent sample household have the income range between 100000 to Rs 150000 income.

Education Status of Tribal Household

Education is a key determinant of the overall well-being, economic stability, and harmonious functioning of households. It equips individuals with the tools they need to face life's challenges, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and lead fulfilling lives.

Figure 1: Education Profile of Scheduled Tribes



Sources: Primary Survey, 2023

The overall educational status of respondents in the Durgapur district of Rajasthan was notably deficient. Approximately 13.33 percent of households were found to be illiterate. Among the tribal population, the percentage of those with higher education was a mere 3 percent, a factor considered as the fundamental cause of their socio-economic backwardness. In Dungarpur district, over three-fourths of respondents had education up to the primary level, with only one person having attained a college-level education. Predominantly, the majority of respondents had education up to the upper primary level (28.33%), followed by secondary education (21.67%). Merely 13 percent had education up to the higher secondary level. The prevailing low educational levels among respondents signify diminished aspirations and reflect a prevailing value system regarding education. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Bhatia et al. (2005), Tanwar et al. (2008), Mishra et al. (2012), and Koli and Koli (2016).

Availability of Basic Amenities

Ensuring the availability of essential amenities holds paramount importance for the well-being and advancement of the tribal population in India. Often residing in remote and economically disadvantaged regions, tribes depend on the provision of crucial amenities to make strides in social, economic, and health-related aspects. While a residence equipped with basic amenities is essential for a healthy lifestyle, the housing conditions of tribal communities are notably inadequate. Indicators of economic well-being, such as the possession of items like televisions, refrigerators, and vehicles, vary based on the income levels of tribal families.

Table-6 Availability of Basic Amenities

Sr.No	Amenities	Number of HH	Percent
1	Electricity	30	50.00
2	TV	11	18.33
3	Toilet	52	86.00
4	Bicycle	12	20.00
5	Bike	5	8.33
6	Fan	8	13.33
	Total	60	100

Sources: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 6 illustrates the presence of fundamental amenities in the sampled households. It was observed that only 18 percent of households own a television, even though half of the tribal families have access to electricity. Notably, 86 percent of households have toilet facilities.

Conclusion

The scheduled tribes of Dungarpur have a longstanding history of struggle, with agriculture and forests serving as the primary sources of livelihood in the region. However, no single activity ensures sufficient income for their livelihoods due to the small size of tribal land holdings and low productivity, leading to diversified occupations. Agriculture in the area relies heavily on rain-fed and mono-cropped practices, with a significant number of tribal farmers regularly engaging in double cropping (Kharif and Rabi), and some even cultivating a third crop where irrigation facilities permit. About 65 percent of female workers are actively involved in agricultural, allied activities, and forest-based economies, playing a crucial role in sustaining their families.

Despite positive impacts from government and NGO policies on agricultural, horticultural, and floricultural activities, awareness about higher education and medical facilities remains low among tribal communities. Approximately 13.33 percent of household heads are found to be illiterate, and the female literacy rate is notably lower than the male literacy rate. The income levels of tribal households fall short of meeting basic livelihood needs. Notably, only 18 percent of households have a television, despite 50 percent of tribal families having access to electricity. On a positive note, 86 percent of households have toilet facilities. Issues persist with inadequate drinking water facilities, contributing to common diseases among the scheduled tribes. Government and NGO interventions in education and healthcare have not fully improved the education and health status of tribal people. While various schemes and programs are underway, some NGOs are conducting research, training, and innovative initiatives in education, health, microfinance, and income and employment generation. These efforts are instrumental in addressing socio-economic challenges in the region, with a focus on culturally appropriate approaches to enhance education and health-seeking behaviour among scheduled tribes. Gradually, these endeavours are making a positive impact on the education and health status of the tribal population in many parts of the dungarpur district.

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