SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF THE MUNDA TRIBAL COMMUNITY: A MICRO-LEVEL STUDY FROM THE SUNDARBAN REGION OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

Prosenjit Mahato[1], Dr. Nizamuddin Ahmed[2]
[1]*Assistant Teacher, Nabapalli Jagadish Chandra Sinha High School (H.S.), Kandi, Murshidabad, West Bengal, India*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Haldia Govt. College, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra26612
DOI No: 10.36713/epra26612

ABSTRACT

The present study examines the socio-economic and demographic conditions of the Munda tribal community residing in Basanti Block of South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, India. Based on a survey of 40 households across four villages, covering a total population of 127 individuals, the study employs qualitative analysis using data collected through a self-structured household interview schedule during January–February 2026. The findings reveal a predominantly young population structure with noticeable gender disparity, low levels of educational attainment, and early marriage and childbirth practices, particularly among females. Occupational patterns indicate a heavy reliance on informal and daily wage labour, contributing to low household income and economic vulnerability. Although a significant proportion of households have access to banking facilities, gaps persist in effective utilization and financial literacy. Furthermore, a considerable section of the population lacks essential documentation such as ST certificates, limiting access to government welfare schemes. The study highlights the interconnected nature of socio-cultural practices and economic constraints, which collectively hinder overall development. It emphasizes the need for targeted, community-specific interventions focusing on education, livelihood diversification, social awareness, and institutional accessibility to ensure sustainable and inclusive development of the Munda tribal community.

KEYWORDS: *Munda Tribe, Socio-economic Conditions, Rural Development, Sundarban Region*

INTRODUCTION

India is home to a large and diverse population of Scheduled Tribes (STs), who constitute about 8.6% of the total population and represent a wide range of socio-cultural, linguistic, and ethnic groups (Singh & Negi, 2019). Traditionally, tribal communities have lived in geographically isolated and ecologically fragile regions, often dependent on forest-based livelihoods and subsistence economies. Despite constitutional safeguards and numerous development initiatives, these communities continue to experience persistent socio-economic marginalization, reflected in lower levels of education, income, health, and overall human development compared to the general population (Sedwal & Kamat, 2008; Kijima, 2006).

A substantial body of literature highlights that structural inequalities and historical exclusion have limited the access of tribal populations to basic services such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities (Subramanian et al., 2006; Mohindra & Labonté, 2010). Educational attainment among Scheduled Tribes remains significantly lower, with high dropout rates and limited access to higher education, primarily due to poverty, early involvement in economic activities, and inadequate infrastructure (Rashmi & Paul, 2022; Sujatha, 2002). Similarly, tribal communities face pronounced health disparities, including poor maternal and child health outcomes and inadequate utilization of healthcare services (Manna et al., 2022; Maity, 2017).

Socio-economic vulnerabilities among tribal populations are further compounded by early marriage, low-income levels, and dependence on informal occupations, which reinforce intergenerational cycles of poverty and underdevelopment (Velusamy, 2021; Nayak, 2025). Although recent policy interventions have improved certain indicators such as financial inclusion and welfare coverage, the gap between tribal and non-tribal populations remains substantial, particularly in rural and remote areas (Neethi Mohan et al., 2024).

In this context, the present study focuses on the Munda tribal community of Basanti Block in Sundarban region of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, India, a region characterized by ecological vulnerability and socio-economic challenges. By examining key aspects such as demographic structure, education, occupation, income, and social practices, the study aims to provide a micro-level understanding of the living conditions and developmental constraints of the community. Such localized studies are crucial for designing context-specific policies and interventions that address the unique needs of tribal populations and promote inclusive development.

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the socio-demographic characteristics of the Munda tribal population, including age structure, sex composition, and marital status.
2. To analyze the educational attainment and social practices, particularly age at marriage and age at first childbirth among males and females.
3. To assess the occupational pattern and economic condition of the households, with special reference to income levels and livelihood sources.
4. To evaluate access to institutional and welfare facilities, such as bank account ownership and possession of ST certificates.
5. To identify key socio-economic challenges and suggest measures for improving the overall living conditions of the community.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a survey-based research design to examine the socio-economic conditions of the Munda tribal community. All participants included in the study belong exclusively to the Munda tribe, ensuring community-specific insights. Primary data were collected using a self-constructed household interview schedule, designed to capture detailed information on demographic, social, and economic aspects. The study was conducted in Basanti Block under the Sundarban region of South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, India covering four villages namely, 1 No. Char Bidyarabad, 2 No. Char Bidyarabad, 3 No. Char Bidyarabad, and 5 No. Char Bidyarabad. A total of 40 households were surveyed, distributed as 6 households each from the first three villages and 22 households from the fourth village, encompassing a total population of 127 individuals. The data collection was carried out during the period of January to February 2026. The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative approach, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic realities, behavioural patterns, and lived experiences of the community.

FINDINGS

Sex Composition of the Study Population

The analysis of the sex composition of the study population reveals a female-dominated structure, with females constituting 55.91% and males 44.09% of the total population. This imbalance suggests the influence of socio-economic factors such as male out-migration for livelihood, a phenomenon commonly observed in rural and tribal areas of India, where men often move in search of work, leaving behind female-dominated households (Mosse et al., 2002; Datta & Mishra, 2011). The findings indicate that women play a central role in household management and subsistence activities, often bearing both economic and domestic responsibilities. This demographic pattern reflects broader structural realities of tribal communities, where gender roles are shaped by livelihood constraints and migration dynamics, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive development interventions in such regions.

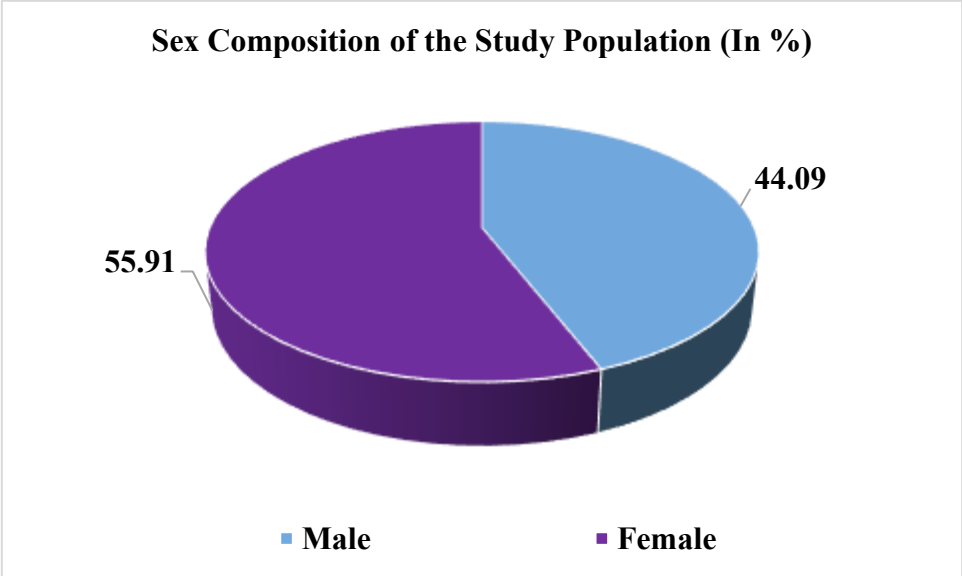


Figure 1: Sex Composition of the Study Population

Age-wise Distribution of the Study Population

The age-wise distribution of the study population indicates a predominantly young and economically active demographic structure. The highest proportion is observed in the 26–35 years age group (23.62%), followed closely by the 15–25 years group (22.05%), highlighting a concentration of population within the working-age category. The middle-aged groups, 36–45 years (16.54%) and 46–60 years (14.96%), also constitute a significant share, while the proportions of children (0–6 years: 7.87%; 7–14 years: 10.24%) and elderly population (above 60 years: less than 5% combined) remain comparatively lower. This pattern reflects a youth-

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

dominated population structure, which is typical of rural and tribal communities in India, often influenced by migration of working-age individuals and demographic transition trends (Sharma, 2007; Maharatna & Chikte, 2004). The dominance of the productive age group suggests potential for labour contribution, while the relatively smaller elderly population indicates limited ageing within the community.

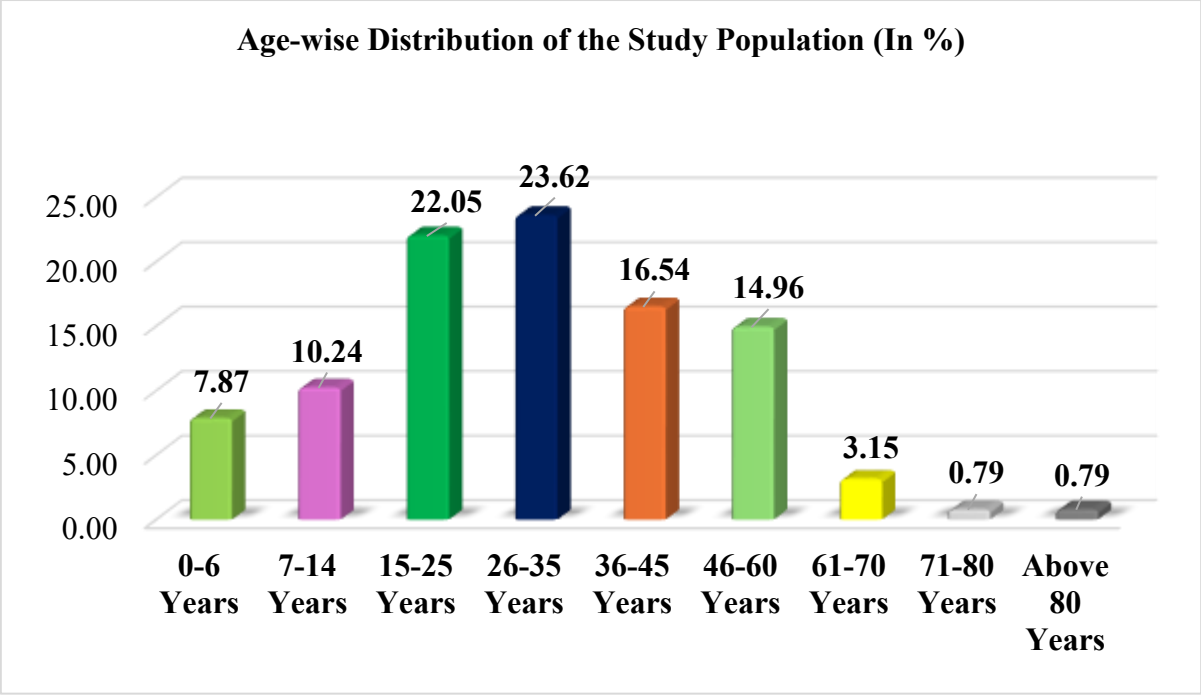


Figure 2: Age-wise Distribution of the Study Population

Marital Status of the Study Population

The marital status distribution of the study population reveals that a majority of individuals are married (53.54%), followed by a substantial proportion of unmarried individuals (44.09%), while widowed individuals constitute a very small share (2.36%), and no cases of divorce were reported (0%). This pattern reflects the predominance of marital union within the community, which is a characteristic feature of rural and tribal societies in India where marriage is nearly universal and socially institutionalized (Niranjan et al., 2005; Chakravorty et al., 2021). The relatively high proportion of unmarried individuals may be attributed to the youth-dominated age structure observed in the study, while the negligible proportion of widowed and absence of divorced individuals suggest low marital dissolution and strong social cohesion within the Munda tribal community.

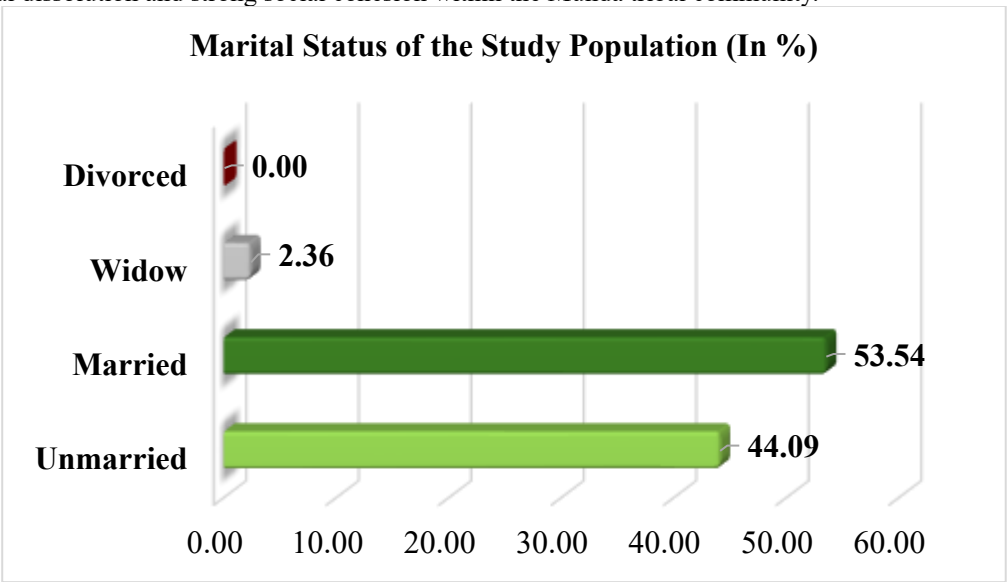


Figure 3: Marital Status of the Study Population

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Age at First Marriage among Male Population

The analysis of age at first marriage among males indicates that a significant majority (76.47%) entered into marriage at the legally accepted age of 21 years or above, while 23.53% were married before the age of 21 years. This suggests a relatively high adherence to legal norms and increasing awareness regarding appropriate marriage age within the community. However, the presence of early marriages among nearly one-fourth of the male population points to the continued influence of traditional practices and socio-economic factors in shaping marital behaviour. Such patterns are commonly observed in rural and tribal contexts in India, where the transition toward delayed marriage is gradual and uneven (Sekher, 2011; Sharma, 2007).

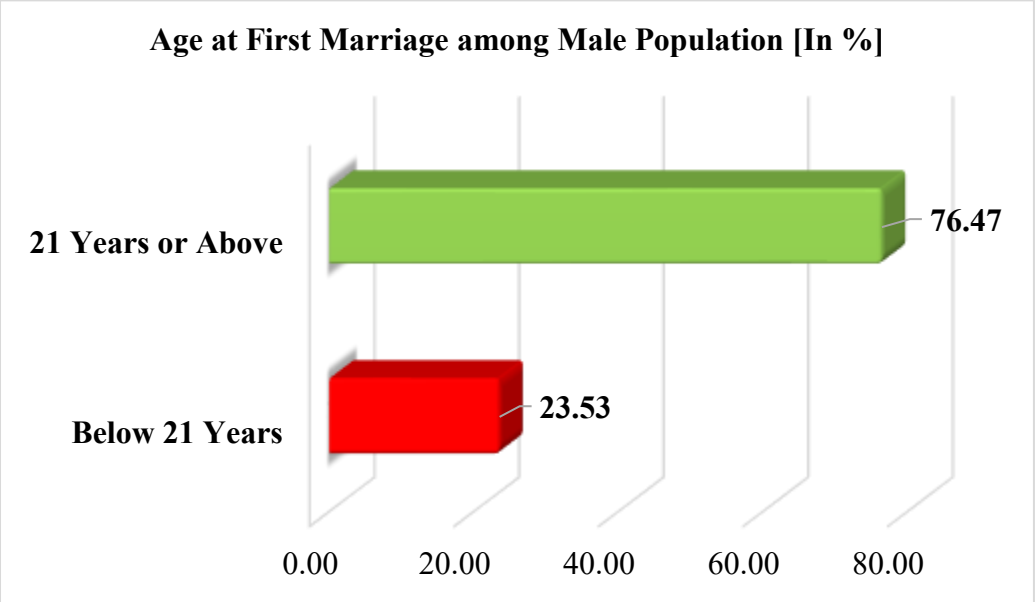


Figure 4: Age at First Marriage among Male Population

Age at First Marriage among Female Population

The age at first marriage among females shows that a majority (70.27%) were married at the legally prescribed age of 18 years or above, while a considerable proportion (29.73%) experienced early marriage below 18 years. This indicates a partial shift toward compliance with legal marriage age, reflecting growing awareness and social change within the community. However, the persistence of early marriage among nearly one-third of the female population highlights the continued influence of traditional norms, socio-economic constraints, and limited educational opportunities, which are widely documented in rural and tribal settings in India (Sekher, 2011; Chakravorty et al., 2021).

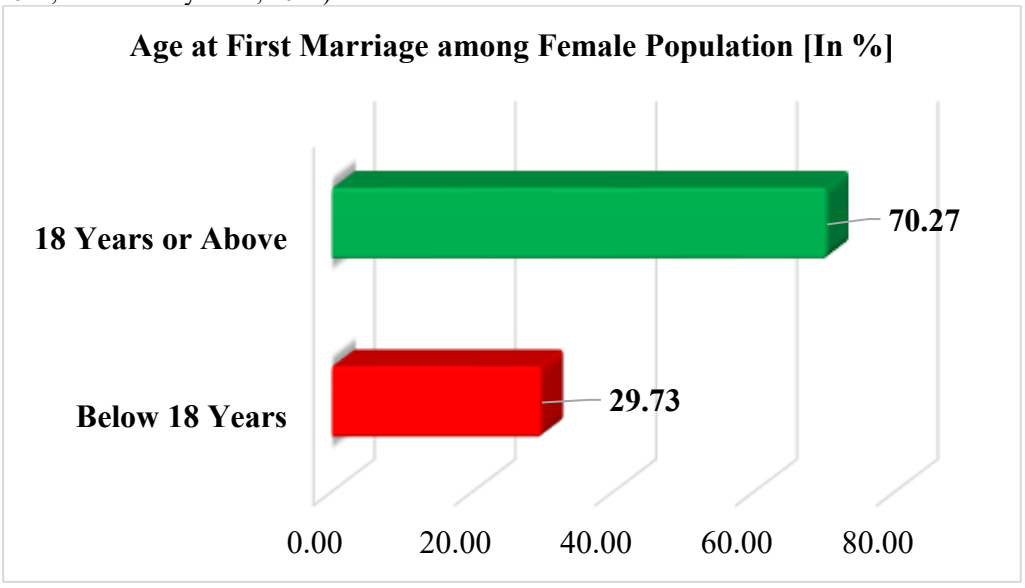


Figure 5: Age at First Marriage among Female Population

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Comparative Analysis of Age at First Marriage: Male vs. Female

The comparative analysis of age at first marriage reveals notable gender differences within the study population. A higher proportion of males (76.47%) enter marriage at 21 years or above, compared to 70.27% of females marrying at 18 years or above, indicating relatively better adherence to legal marriage age among males. Conversely, early marriage is more prevalent among females (29.73%) than males (23.53%), reflecting persistent gender disparities in marital practices. This pattern suggests that despite gradual social change, females remain more vulnerable to early marriage due to traditional norms, lower educational attainment, and socio-economic pressures. Such gendered differences are widely observed in rural and tribal India, where the transition toward delayed marriage tends to be slower for females than males (Mosse et al., 2002; Sekher, 2011).

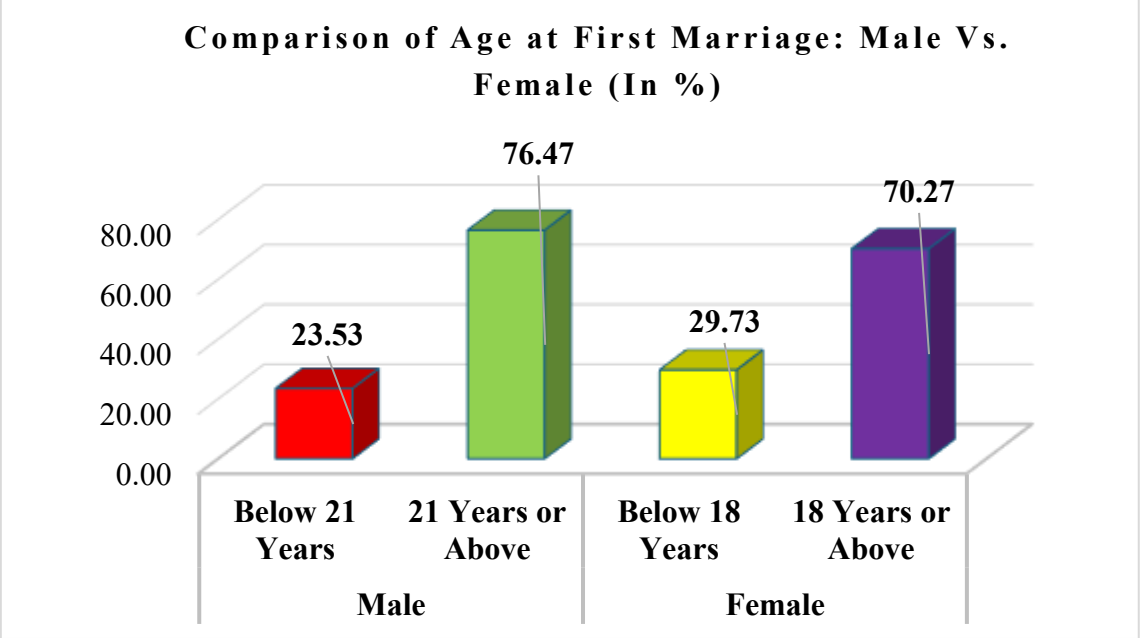


Figure 6: Comparative Analysis of Age at First Marriage: Male vs. Female

Maternal Age at First Childbirth

The analysis of maternal age at first childbirth indicates that a majority of women (66.67%) had their first child at the age of 19 years or above, while a significant proportion (33.33%) experienced childbirth before the age of 19 years. This reflects a moderate level of adherence to recommended maternal age norms, yet also highlights the persistence of early childbearing within the community. The occurrence of early motherhood among one-third of the female population may be closely associated with early marriage practices, limited access to education, and socio-economic constraints, which are common in rural and tribal settings in India (Sekher, 2011; Chakravorty et al., 2021). These findings underscore the need for improved awareness and reproductive health interventions to delay the age of first childbirth and enhance maternal and child health outcomes.

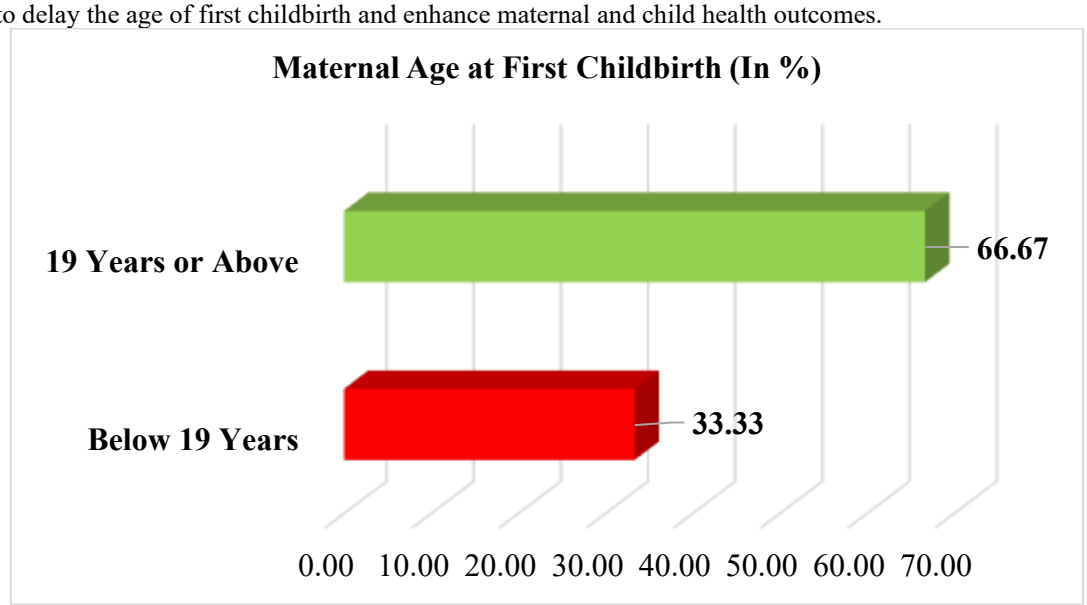


Figure 7: Maternal Age at First Childbirth

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Educational Attainment of the Study Population

The distribution of educational attainment among the study population reveals a generally low level of educational achievement, with a notable concentration in the lower and middle levels of schooling. The largest proportion of individuals have completed Class VIII (24.41%), followed by a significant share of illiterate individuals (22.05%), indicating persistent educational deprivation within the community. Those who have completed secondary education (18.90%) and primary education (14.17%) form a moderate segment, while attainment declines sharply at higher levels, with only 7.87% completing higher secondary, 8.66% undergraduate, and a minimal 3.94% reaching postgraduate level. This pattern highlights a high dropout rate beyond basic education and limited access to higher education, which is characteristic of many rural and tribal populations in India due to socio-economic constraints, inadequate educational infrastructure, and livelihood pressures (Pati & Jagatdeb, 1991; Chakravorty et al., 2021).

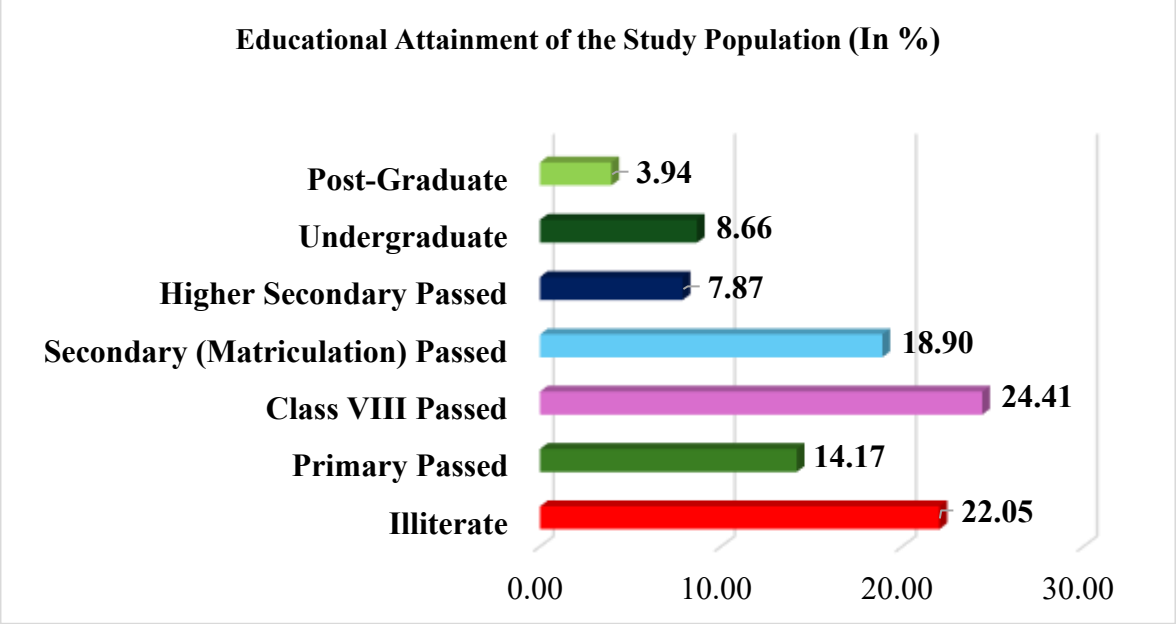


Figure 8: Educational Attainment of the Study Population

Occupational Engagement of the Study Population

The occupational structure of the study population reflects a predominance of informal and low-income livelihood activities, with the highest proportion engaged as housewives (37.65%), indicating a significant share of economically inactive or unpaid domestic roles primarily among women. Among income-generating activities, daily wage labour (28.24%) constitutes the largest segment, highlighting the community's dependence on casual and unskilled labour for livelihood. This is followed by cultivation (12.94%), suggesting limited engagement in agriculture, likely due to land constraints and environmental factors. A smaller proportion is employed in government services (10.59%) and toto (e-rickshaw) driving (9.41%), while private sector employment remains minimal (1.18%). This distribution underscores a lack of stable employment opportunities and heavy reliance on informal sectors, which is a common feature of rural and tribal economies in India, shaped by limited access to education, skills, and formal job markets (Dubey et al., 2006; Mosse et al., 2002).

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

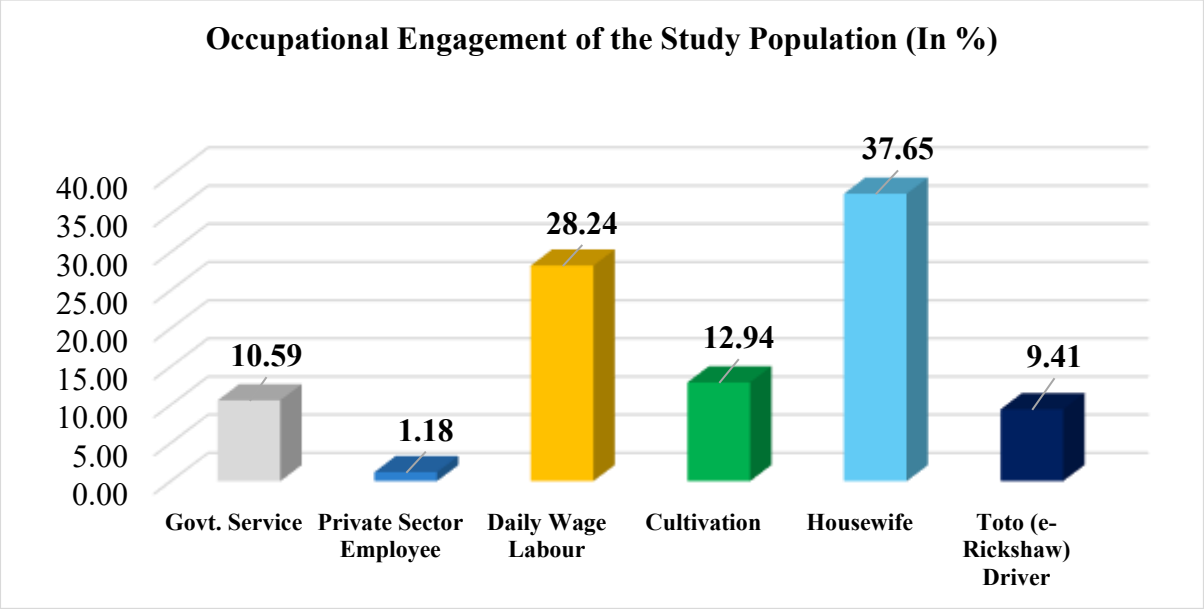


Figure 9: Occupational Engagement of the Study Population

Bank Account Ownership of the Study Population

The analysis of bank account ownership reveals that a substantial majority of the study population (84.25%) possess bank accounts, while a relatively small proportion (15.75%) remain unbanked. This indicates a high level of financial inclusion within the community, likely influenced by government initiatives promoting universal banking access, such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. However, the existence of a segment without bank accounts highlights persistent gaps in financial accessibility and awareness, particularly among marginalized groups. These findings suggest that while significant progress has been made in integrating the tribal population into formal financial systems, targeted efforts are still required to achieve complete financial inclusion (Sekher, 2011; Chakravorty et al., 2021).

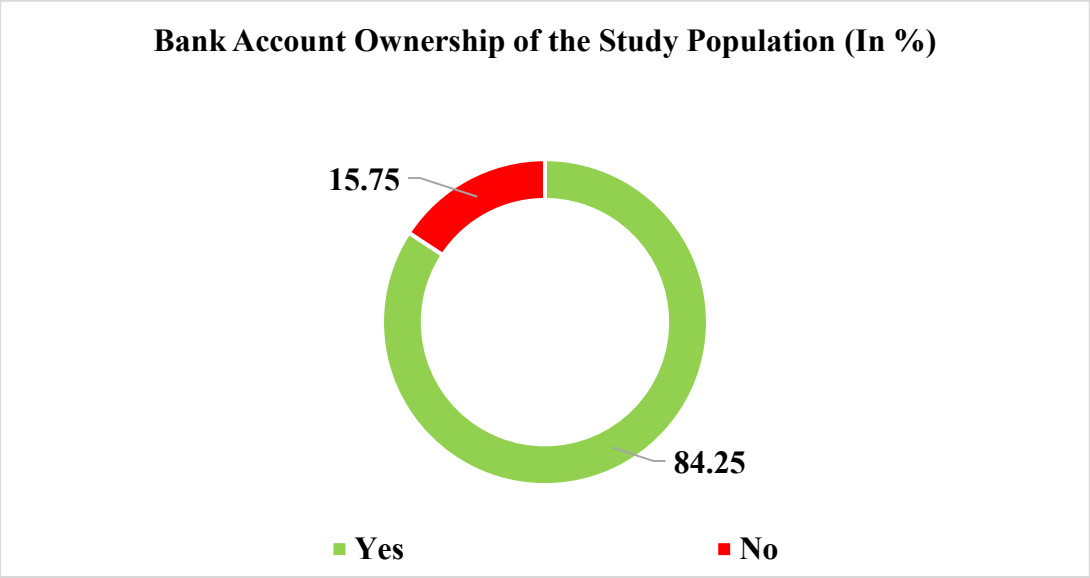


Figure 10: Bank Account Ownership of the Study Population

Scheduled Tribe (ST) Certificate Ownership

The distribution of Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificate ownership shows that a majority of the respondents (59.06%) possess valid ST certificates, while a substantial proportion (40.94%) do not have such documentation. This indicates a moderate level of access to official identity and entitlement recognition within the community. The absence of ST certificates among a significant segment may lead to exclusion from government welfare schemes, reservation benefits, and social security provisions, which are specifically designed for tribal populations. These findings highlight the presence of administrative, informational, or accessibility barriers in obtaining official certification, a challenge frequently observed in rural and marginalized tribal communities in India (Pati & Jagatdeb, 1991; Sekher, 2011).

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

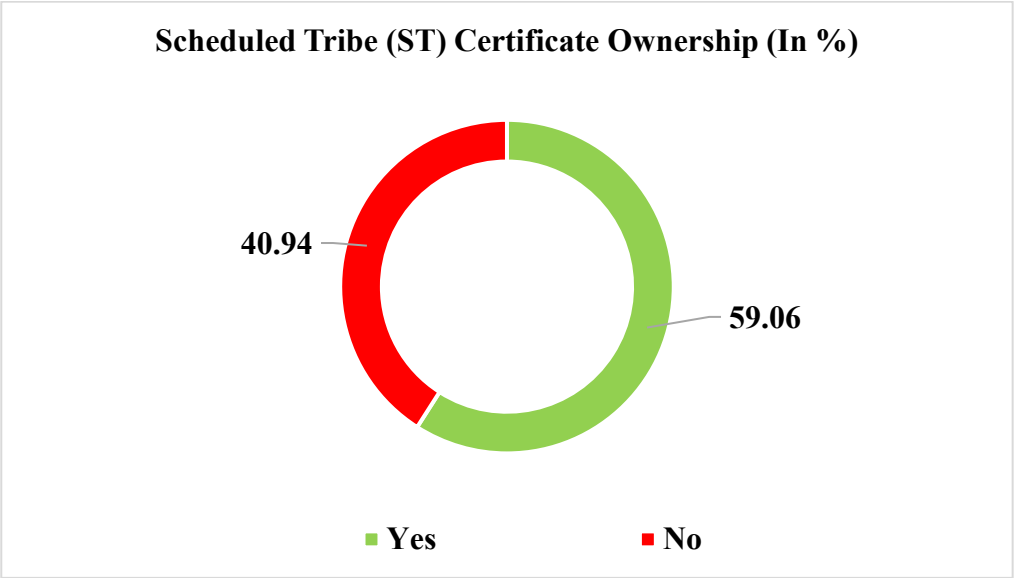


Figure 11: Scheduled Tribe (ST) Certificate Ownership

Gross Monthly Income of the Study Population

The distribution of gross monthly family income reveals a predominantly low-income economic structure among the study population. A significant majority (62.50%) of households earn within INR 10,000, indicating widespread economic vulnerability and dependence on low-paying occupations. This is followed by 17.50% of households earning between INR 10,001–20,000, and 12.50% within the INR 20,001–30,000 range. Only a small fraction of households fall into higher income categories, with 2.50% earning INR 30,001–40,000, none in the INR 40,001–50,000 bracket, and just 5.00% earning above INR 50,000. This skewed distribution highlights limited upward economic mobility and a heavy concentration in subsistence-level income groups, a pattern commonly observed in rural and tribal communities due to restricted access to stable employment, education, and productive resources (Dubey et al., 2006; Mosse et al., 2002).

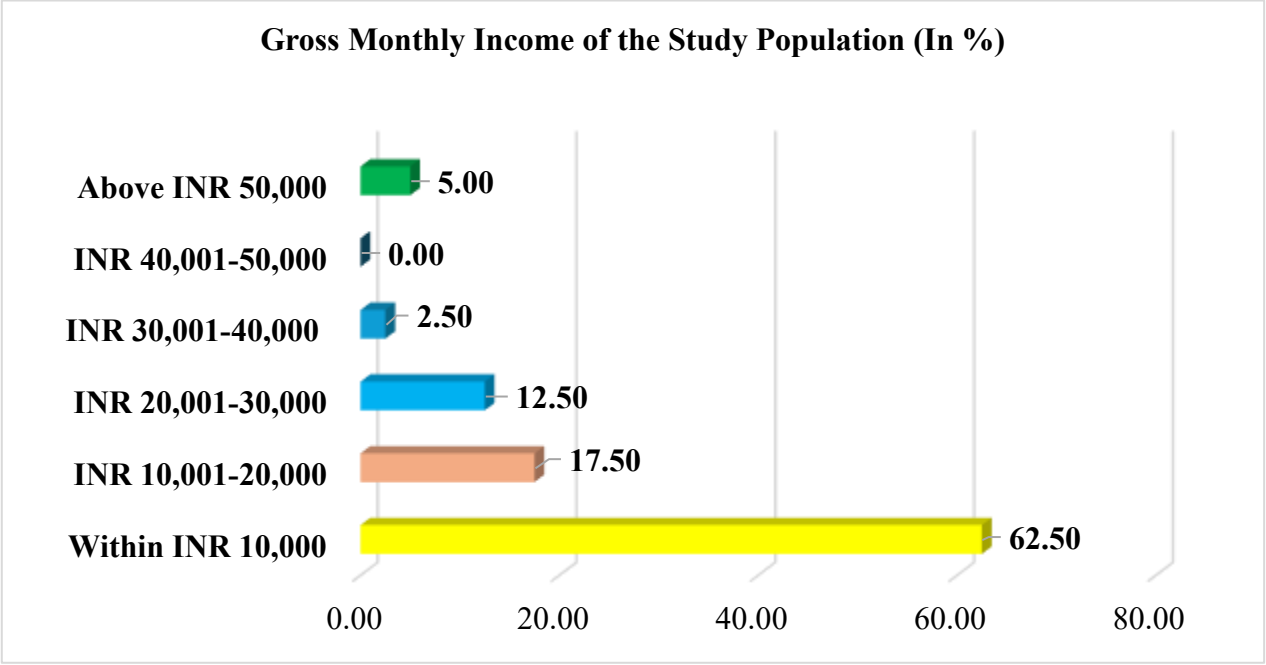


Figure 12: Gross Monthly Income of the Study Population

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide important insights into the socio-economic and demographic conditions of the Munda tribal community and align closely with broader patterns observed among tribal populations in India. The female-dominated population structure observed in this study may reflect male out-migration for employment, a trend widely reported in rural and tribal regions where limited local livelihood opportunities push males toward urban labour markets (Kijima, 2006).

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

The persistence of early marriage and early childbirth, particularly among females, remains a critical concern. Although a majority adhere to legal age norms, a substantial proportion still marry and bear children early. This finding is consistent with earlier studies which show that socio-economic disadvantage, low education, and traditional norms strongly influence early marriage practices among tribal communities (Chauhan et al., 2020; Goli et al., 2015). Research further indicates that early marriage is closely linked with poor maternal and child health outcomes and reduced educational attainment, reinforcing cycles of poverty and vulnerability (Prakash et al., 2011; Mehra et al., 2018).

The low level of educational attainment observed in the study, with high illiteracy and concentration in lower schooling levels, reflects structural barriers such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, and socio-cultural constraints. Similar trends have been documented in multiple studies, which highlight that tribal populations lag behind in education due to early economic responsibilities and limited access to quality schooling (Rashmi & Paul, 2022; Sedwal & Kamat, 2008). The sharp decline in higher education attainment in the present study further supports the argument of high dropout rates beyond primary and secondary levels.

The occupational pattern dominated by daily wage labor and informal employment underscores the economic marginalization of the community. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that tribal populations are largely confined to low-paying, unskilled, and insecure jobs, with minimal participation in formal sectors due to limited education and skill development (Majumder, 2010; Mitra, 2008). The high proportion of housewives also reflects gendered division of labour, where women's contributions remain largely unpaid and unrecognized.

The income distribution, heavily skewed toward lower income categories, further confirms the condition of economic vulnerability and limited upward mobility. Studies on tribal economies consistently show that low income is closely associated with dependence on informal labour, lack of land ownership, and inadequate access to productive resources (Kijima, 2006; Mondal, 2021). This economic constraint also influences other social indicators such as education, health, and marriage practices.

Despite economic challenges, the study shows relatively high financial inclusion in terms of bank account ownership, which reflects the impact of government initiatives. However, the gap between account ownership and effective utilization remains a concern, as highlighted in previous research on tribal financial behaviour (Minz, 2020). Similarly, the lack of ST certificates among a significant proportion of respondents indicates institutional barriers, which can lead to exclusion from welfare schemes and development programs.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Munda tribal community is undergoing gradual socio-economic transition, yet remains constrained by structural inequalities, traditional practices, and limited access to opportunities. These results are consistent with the broader discourse on tribal development in India, which emphasizes that education, livelihood diversification, and institutional access are key determinants of socio-economic progress (Priyadarshini & Abhilash, 2019; Naik & Panda, 2023).

Major Findings of the Study

The present study on the Munda tribal community of Basanti Block, South 24 Parganas, reveals several important socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

The study population exhibits a female-dominated structure (55.91%), with males constituting 44.09%, suggesting possible male out-migration and a greater role of women in household responsibilities. The age composition is largely youth-centric, with the majority concentrated in the economically active age groups of 15–35 years, indicating potential labour availability but also dependency on limited livelihood opportunities.

In terms of marital status, more than half of the population (53.54%) is married, and marriage remains a universal social institution with negligible cases of divorce. Although a majority of males (76.47%) and females (70.27%) marry at legally prescribed ages, early marriage persists, particularly among females (29.73%), reflecting the influence of traditional norms and socio-economic constraints. Similarly, early childbirth remains prevalent, with 33.33% of women having their first child before 19 years of age.

The educational status is relatively low, with a high proportion of individuals either illiterate (22.05%) or educated only up to middle level (Class VIII: 24.41%). Higher education attainment is minimal, indicating limited access to advanced educational opportunities and high dropout rates.

The occupational structure is dominated by informal activities, with a large share of individuals engaged as housewives (37.65%) and daily wage labourers (28.24%). Formal employment opportunities are scarce, and dependence on low-income and unstable sources of livelihood is evident. This is further reflected in the income distribution, where 62.50% of households earn below INR 10,000 per month, highlighting widespread economic vulnerability.

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

In terms of financial inclusion, a significant majority (84.25%) possess bank accounts, indicating progress in access to formal financial systems. However, access to institutional recognition remains uneven, as only 59.06% of respondents possess ST certificates, leaving a substantial section deprived of welfare benefits.

Overall, the findings indicate that the community is characterized by low educational attainment, economic insecurity, early marriage and childbirth practices, and partial access to institutional support systems, underscoring the need for targeted policy interventions to improve their socio-economic conditions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and supported by existing research on tribal development, a set of targeted recommendations is proposed to improve the socio-economic condition of the Munda tribal community.

Firstly, there is a need to strengthen educational opportunities, particularly at secondary and higher levels, by improving school infrastructure, providing scholarships, and promoting awareness to reduce dropout rates. Special emphasis should be given to female education, which has a direct impact on delaying early marriage and improving overall community well-being (Priyadarshini & Abhilash, 2019; Meher, 2007).

Secondly, livelihood diversification and skill development programs should be introduced to reduce dependence on daily wage labour. Training in vocational skills, promotion of small-scale enterprises, and support for traditional occupations can enhance income stability and economic resilience (Das, 2024; Kakati, 2025).

Thirdly, efforts should be made to reduce early marriage and early childbirth practices through awareness campaigns, community engagement, and strict implementation of legal provisions. Improving access to reproductive health services and counselling is essential, especially for women (Anil, 2025; Mohindra & Labonté, 2010).

Fourthly, although financial inclusion is relatively high, initiatives should focus on enhancing effective utilization of banking services, including financial literacy, access to credit, and linkage with self-help groups to promote savings and entrepreneurship (Minz, 2020; Kumar et al., 2021).

Fifthly, the government should ensure universal access to ST certificates by simplifying administrative procedures and increasing awareness, as lack of documentation restricts access to welfare schemes and reservation benefits (Ballabh & Batra, 2015; Balkrishna et al., 2025).

Finally, there is a need for integrated development interventions, including improvements in healthcare, nutrition, infrastructure, and social security. A community-based and participatory approach should be adopted to ensure that development programs are culturally appropriate and effectively implemented (Katherasala & Chinthakindi, 2025; Naik & Panda, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The present study provides a micro-level understanding of the socio-economic and demographic conditions of the Munda tribal community in Basanti Block, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. The findings clearly indicate that, despite gradual integration into mainstream development processes, the community continues to experience multiple layers of socio-economic disadvantage, including low educational attainment, dependence on informal occupations, low-income levels, and persistence of traditional practices such as early marriage and early childbirth.

The study reveals that while certain positive changes are visible—particularly in terms of financial inclusion and partial access to institutional frameworks—these improvements remain uneven and insufficient to bring about substantial transformation in overall living conditions. Similar studies across India have also concluded that development interventions have often had limited impact due to structural barriers, inadequate implementation, and lack of context-specific approaches (Ballabh & Batra, 2015; Veimy, 2025). The persistence of inequalities in education, health, and livelihood opportunities suggests that tribal communities continue to remain on the margins of socio-economic progress (Subramanian et al., 2006; Rashmi & Paul, 2022).

Moreover, the study highlights that social norms and economic constraints are deeply interconnected, reinforcing cycles of poverty and vulnerability. Without addressing these underlying factors, policy interventions are unlikely to achieve long-term sustainability. Existing literature emphasizes that inclusive and participatory development strategies, combined with investments in education, health, and livelihood diversification, are essential for improving the quality of life among tribal populations (Priyadarshini & Abhilash, 2019; Bagavandas, 2021).

In conclusion, the study underscores the urgent need for targeted, community-specific, and holistic development initiatives that go beyond mere policy formulation to ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level. Strengthening institutional access,

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

promoting education and skill development, and addressing socio-cultural barriers are critical for enabling the Munda tribal community to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on tribal development by offering empirical evidence that can inform policy planning and future research in similar socio-economic contexts.

REFERENCES

1. *Bagavandas, M. (2021). Quality of life among tribal populations in India. BMC Public Health. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-021-10338-2*
2. *Ballabh, V., & Batra, P. (2015). Socio-economic transformations of the tribals in central India. https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/230059*
3. *Bhagavatheeswaran, L., Nair, S., Stone, H., & Isac, S. (2016). Education barriers among tribal girls. International Journal of Educational Development. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059316300414*
4. *Chacko, E. (2001). Rural health and household survey methods. Health & Place. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829201000090*
5. *Chauhan, S., Sekher, T. V., Kumar, P., & Srivastava, S. (2020). Prevalence and determinants of early marriage in India. Children and Youth Services Review. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740920308690*
6. *Contractor, S. Q., Das, A., & Dasgupta, J. (2018). Tribal maternal health experiences. International Journal for Equity in Health. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0850-9*
7. *Dinda, M. (2026). A socio–legal study on reproductive & child health among Santhal tribal community: With special reference to West Burdwan in West Bengal. Anusandhanvallari. https://psvmkendra.com/index.php/journal/article/view/1108*
8. *Goli, S., Rammohan, A., & Singh, D. (2015). The effect of early marriage on women's health: Evidence from India. Maternal and Child Health Journal. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-015-1700-7*
9. *Kijima, Y. (2006). Caste and tribe inequality: Evidence from India, 1983–1999. Economic Development and Cultural Change, 54(2), 369–404. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/497008*
10. *Kshatri, J. S., Mansingh, A., & Kavitha, A. (2023). Tribal health survey methods. Frontiers in Public Health. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1157241*
11. *Kumar, S., Sharma, M., & Chandel, S. (2021). Socio-economic impact of developmental schemes in tribal areas. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378129449*
12. *Lakhanpaul, M., Roy, S., Benton, L., et al. (2022). Tribal child nutrition challenges. BMJ Open. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-051558*
13. *Lal, B. S. (2019). Tribal development in India: Some observations. https://www.academia.edu/download/60114869*
14. *Madankar, M., Kakade, N., & Basa, L. (2024). Maternal health in tribal India. Global Journal of Health Science. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10793648/*
15. *Maity, B. (2017). Health outcomes among Scheduled Tribes in India. World Development. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X15310044*
16. *Majumder, R. (2010). Occupational mobility among social groups in India. Journal of Applied Economic Research, 4(4), 421–444. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/097380101000400404*
17. *Manna, S., Gupta, V., & Sanchaya, S. (2022). Inequities in maternal and child health among tribal populations in India. Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care. https://journals.lww.com/jfmpc/fulltext/2022/11000*
18. *Mehra, D., Sarkar, A., Sreenath, P., Behera, J., & Mehra, S. (2018). Effectiveness of a community-based intervention to delay early marriage. BMC Public Health. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-018-5586-3*
19. *Minz, S. K. (2020). Tribal development policies in India: Issues and challenges. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343541858*
20. *Mitra, A. (2008). The status of women among Scheduled Tribes in India. Journal of Socio-Economics, 37(3), 1202–1217. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1053535707001254*
21. *Mohindra, K. S., & Labonté, R. (2010). A systematic review of population health interventions for Scheduled Tribes in India. BMC Public Health, 10, 438. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/1471-2458-10-438*
22. *Mondal, N. (2021). Reproductive health and socio-economic conditions among tribal women. Online Journal of Health and Allied Sciences. https://www.ojhas.org/issue79/2021-3-2.html*
23. *Naik, B., & Panda, S. (2023). Tribal empowerment and entrepreneurship development in India. https://www.academia.edu/download/117805669*
24. *Nayak, D. K. (2025). Gender inequality in tribal education in India. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org*
25. *Neethi Mohan, V., Vaidyanathan, G., & Dash, U. (2024). Inequalities in health and education among Scheduled Tribes in India. BMC Public Health. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-024-18857-4*
26. *Nerkar, S. S., Tamhankar, A. J., & Johansson, E. (2013). Qualitative rural research methods. BMC International Health. https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-698X-13-42*
27. *Prakash, R., Singh, A., & Pathak, P. K. (2011). Early marriage, poor reproductive health status of mother and child well-being in India. BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health, 37(3), 136–145. https://srh.bmj.com/content/37/3/136*
28. *Priyadarshini, P., & Abhilash, P. C. (2019). Promoting tribal communities and rural development. Environmental Development, 32, 100459. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211464519301320*
29. *Rashmi, R., & Paul, R. (2022). Educational inequality among tribal children in India. Scientific Reports, 12, 13889. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-13889-5*
30. *Routray, P., Schmidt, W. P., Boisson, S., & Clasen, T. (2015). Socio-cultural factors in rural sanitation. BMC Public Health. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-2206-3*
31. *Sedwal, M., & Kamat, S. (2008). Education and social equity with special focus on Scheduled Tribes.*

SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.863| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 11 | Issue: 3 | March 2026 - Peer Reviewed Journal

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508745.pdf

32. *Shirisha, P. (2019). Nutritional status among tribal children. PLoS ONE. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0225119*
33. *Singh, M. M., & Negi, D. P. (2019). Health status of tribal communities in India. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332013264*
34. *Subramanian, S. V., Smith, G. D., & Subramanyam, M. (2006). Indigenous health and socioeconomic status in India. PLoS Medicine, 3(10), e421. https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.0030421*
35. *Sujatha, K. (2002). Education among Scheduled Tribes in India. https://www.academia.edu/download/53945926*
36. *Sundararajan, R., Kalkonde, Y., & Gokhale, C. (2013). Barriers to healthcare in tribal communities. PLoS ONE. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0081966*
37. *Velusamy, V. R. (2021). Tribal education and socio-economic development in India. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED629434.pdf*
38. *Vollmer, N., Singh, M., Harshe, N., & Valadez, J. J. (2021). Does interviewer gender influence responses in household surveys? PLoS ONE. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252120*