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Problems of Elementary Education in the Forest Fringe Area of Jalpaiguri District

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Abstract

According to the RTE Act 2009 expressed that to provide free and compulsory education for every child in India. Article 45 points out that to provision of free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) highlighted that to Universal Elementary Education. The main aim is to provide useful and relevant elementary education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group. The central Government and State Government jointly gave more emphasis to provide free and compulsory elementary education, but the government partially implemented it. The Government identifies some difficulties in providing elementary education. This paper's main aim is to address the problem of elementary education in the forest fringe area in Jalpaiguri District. The study is conducted by a descriptive survey method. The data was collected by a researcher with the help of a questionnaire and an interview. The researcher has collected data and applied Principal of Component Analysis (PCA). The present study stated that some difficulties were identified in the forest fringe area of Jalpaiguri District.

Keywords: RTE Act, SSA, Animal Attack, Economics problems, Principal of Component Analysis (PCA)

1. Introduction

According to the RTE Act 2009, it is expressed that to provide free and compulsory education for every child in India. Article 45 points out that to provision of free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years (Mishra, A, 2018) [17]. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) highlighted that to Universal Elementary Education. The main aim is to provide useful and relevant elementary education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2004). Some problems of elementary education in west Bengal, these are teachers' accountability, inadequacy of TLMs, problem of teachers appointment and transfer, Mid-Day Meal administration, unsatisfactory physical infrastructure, teaching and training, diversion of funds, absence of school inspection at regular intervals, spread of private tuitions and lack of transparent Governance (Mishra, P, K. 2017) [8]. The central Government and State Government jointly gave more emphasis to provide free and compulsory elementary education, but the government partially implemented it. The Government identifies some difficulties in providing elementary education.

2. Literature Review

Bhakta, U, K. (2024) [1] studied on Classes I–VIII of rural primary education in West Bengal, India. This article highlighted on some examples of the indicators, these are school enrollment and dropout rates, students reading proficiency, primary school types and tutoring school observation, RTE standards and norms, and school performance level.

Dawn, S (2023) [2] the author points out that analysis of the progress of Elementary Education in West Bengal. The author has also highlighted that to draw the facts and analysis of the existing status of the elementary education facilities in West Bengal. His article also highlighted the Educational Development Index (EDI).

Mishra, P, K. (2017) [8] the author expressed that the rural

elementary education (Class-I-VIII) in West Bengal in India. The author highlighted problems of elementary education. These problems are Teachers' Accountability, Inadequacy of TLMs, Problem of Teachers Appointment and Transfer, Mid-Day Meal Administration, Unsatisfactory Physical Infrastructure, Teaching and Training, Diversion of Funds, Absence of School Inspection at regular intervals, Spread of Private Tuitions and Lack of Transparent Governance. The author also expressed some solution, these are Implementation of RTE Act, 2009 with a prepared Road Map, Implementation of the revised framework of SSA, To enhance functional literacy with emphasis on Adult Literacy, To increase the Enrolment and Retention in Rural Schools, Improving the School Infrastructure with stress on ICT based Infrastructure, Special Measures for Elementary Education in the Educationally Backward Blocks, Proper implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Promoting Girls' Education for the Backward Communities through KGBV, Establishment of Primary Schools in the remote areas of Rural Population.

Nath, S. (2014) [3] the author discussed that the Problems of School Education in Rural Areas of West Bengal. The author has also highlighted problems of school education in rural area, these are School Management Committees, Governance and Legal Matters and Language and Communication Problems.

3. Location Map of the Study Area

The study area is located in the northern part of West Bengal in India. The Latitudinal extension from 26^0 15'47''North to $26^059'34''$ North Longitudinal extension $88^023'2''$East to $89^07'30''$East. (Jalpaiguri District, Government of West Bengal). Jalpaiguri district consists of seven blocks are Jalpaiguri block, Rajganj Block, Maynaguri Block, Dhupguri block (Dhupguri block divided into two blocks, Dhupguri and Banarhat), Nagrakata block, Mal block (Mal Block divided into two blocks, Mal block and Kranti block) and Matiali block. The Lataguri Range Office is located under the Mal and Matiali blocks of Jalpaiguri district. The researchers has selected Jalpaiguri Forest Division. The Jalpaiguri Forest Division consist of seven Forest Range, these are Moraghat Forest Range, Lataguri Forest Range, Chalsa Forest Range, Dalgaon Forest Range, Ramsai Forest Range, Banarhat Forest Range, Daina Forest Range and Nathua Forest Range. The Lataguri Forest Range consist of three Beat Offices, these are Lataguri Beat Office, Borodighi Beat Office and Central Beat Office.
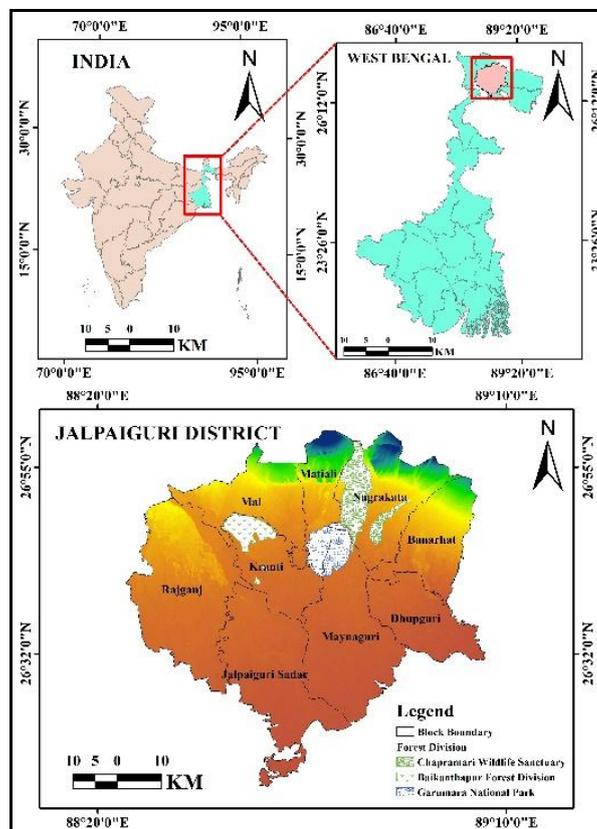

Fig 1: Source: Compiled by the Researcher

4. Objectives: To study the problems of elementary education in the forest fringe area.

5. Data Base & Methodology
The database is very relevant to complete the research work. The researcher has collected the data of primary as well as secondary data and it is very significant of the entire research work. The primary data has been collected during the field survey in the selected study area. Secondary data collected from previous journals, articles and various secondary data highlighted the importance of forest resource in forest fringe area. The government scheme and policy-related information have been collected from secondary data of the Forest Department, DFO Office, Range Office, District Census Hand Book 2011 and Forest Survey of India.
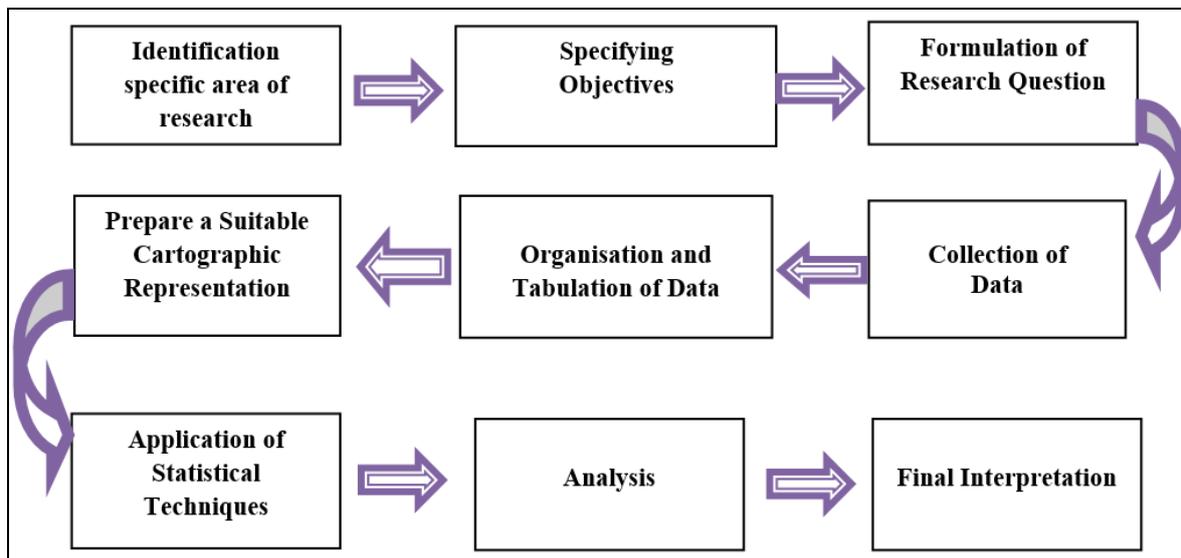
Fig 2: Flow Chart of the Methodology

5.1 Sampling Techniques: The researcher has used random sampling.
5.2 Sample Size

Table 1: Lataguri Forest Range Office

Range Office	Beat Office	Name of FPC	Total Members	Sample
Lataguri	Lataguri Beat Office	Jharmatiali	253	20
		Purba Lataguri	279	20
	Borodighi Beat Office	Chhaoaphali	99	20
		1064 Kumarpara	254	20
	Central Beat Office	Paschim Lataguri	452	20
		Nishandoba	75	20
Total			1412	120 (8.49%)

Source: Lataguri Forest Range Office, 2025

5.3 Tools and Techniques
The following Self-made tools have been prepared by the researcher to conduct this study.

**5.4 Questionnaire for Village people**
The researcher has prepared a close-ended and open ended questionnaire and used it for collecting data from forest fringe area.

6. Data Analysis & Interpretation
The figure **(3)** represents the Literacy Rate of the Mal and Matiali block in Mal Subdivision. The Total Literacy rate of Mal block is 66.31%. It is very much significant that in the Mal block percentage of male literacy is 74.23% followed by 58.17% of female literacy, whereas in the Matiali block total literacy rate is 66.98%. In the Matiali block, 76.76% of males are literate and 56.71% of females are literate. Above the discussion, it is found that the Mal and Matiali block both are indicates that female literacy is less to compare male literacy.
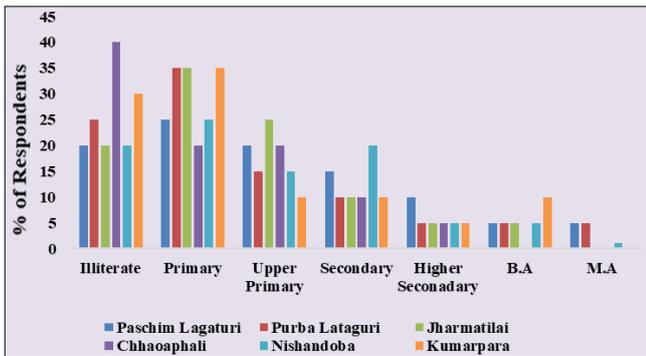The figure **(4)** interpreted the education status of the forest fringe area of Mal and Matiali block. It is very much significant that the average illiterate percentage is 25.83%. In the study area, 29.16% of people have achieved primary education. Another part of the upper primary education percentage is 17.5%. The secondary education percentage is

12.5% and the higher secondary percentage is 5.3%. Graduation and post-graduation percentage is very less, the percentage is graduation is 5% and for post-graduation is 3.3%. It is clear that in the selected study area primary education highest. Illiterate percentage is 25.83%. It is very much significant that from primary education to higher education decreasing. It is also important that the graduation and post-graduation respondents are very low. In the forest fringe area, different problems were identified like wild animal attack, poor economic condition, poverty, transport and communication, and distance from home to school.
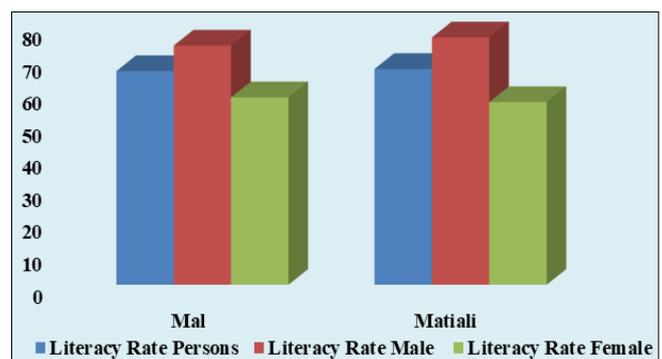
Source: Primary Data, 2025

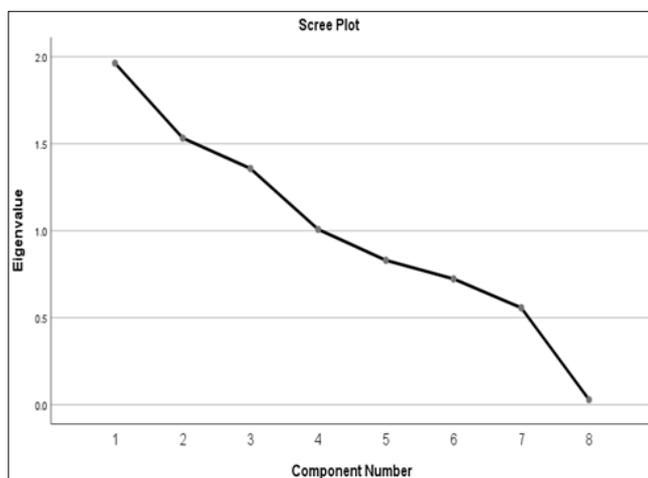**Fig 3:** Literacy Rate Mal & Matiali Blocks

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 4: Education Status of the Study Area

6.1 Factor Analysis

Fig 5: Rotated Component Matrix

Source: Compiled by the Researcher, Data Extracted from Factor Analysis

Fig 6: Relationship Between Component Number and Eigenvalue

Here in this study, exploratory factor analysis is applied using the PCA extraction method with varimax rotation. Scree plot (Figure: 6) revealed two factors, Eigen value 1 and also suggests a clear break after the second factor. The rotated component matrix table (Figure: 5) indicates strongly the item loaded on three latent factors. The Animal attacked; Dropout students, poor implementation of

Government policy are strongly loaded on factor 1; economic problems, lack of teachers are loaded on factor 2; Gender bias, distance from home to school are loaded on factor 3; Transport and communication is loaded on factor 4. Thus, it can be said that those items that loaded on factor 1 are the prominent factors for influencing the problems of elementary education in the selected study area.

7. Findings
▪ In the study area average Illiterate population is 25.3%, Primary education 29.16%, Upper Primary 17.5%, Secondary 12.5%, Higher education 5.3%, B.A 5% and M.A 3.3%.
▪ In the study area researcher identified socio-economic barriers to the development of elementary education. Like Animal attacks, Dropout students and poor implementation of Government policies, economic problems, gender bias, distance from home to school and transport and communication.
▪ The Factor Analysis indicates that the first components are Animal attacked, Dropout students and poor implementation of Government policies. The Second components are economic problems and the lack of teachers' issues. The third components are gender bias and distance from home to school. The last component is transport and communication.
▪ Dropout students are identified in the selected study area, because in the forest fringe area, most people are below the poverty level. The main problem is the economic condition. Then they are engaged in daily work.
▪ Government policy is very little implemented in the proper way. Another is Negligence of women's education and the Transport problem in the selected study area.

8. Conclusion
The forest fringe village people faced different socio-economic problems in the Jalpaiguri district. In this study area, need to properly implement the RTE Act 2009, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and other Government schemes. In the forest fringe, people face different problems, like wild animal attacked, poor economic condition, poor implementation of Government policy, lack of skill teachers, Drop out students, Distance from home to school and transport and communication. Both the Central Government and State Government have been given special provision for forest fringe people for achieving elementary education. In the forest fringe area need to develop transportation and communication facilities. Also increasing enrolment and retention in school, develop of school infrastructure with ICT facilities, provide special education for the backward class people, proper awareness about Mid-Day Meal, promoting girls education and establish primary school in the remote areas of Jalpaiguri district.

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