A Sociological Analysis of Educational Attainment among the Baiga Tribe in Mandla District, Madhya Pradesh

Mukesh Kumar[1], Saubhagya Ranjan Padhi[2]

[1]Dept. of Sociology, Bareilly College, Bareilly

[2]Dept. Sociology & Social Anthropology, IGNTU

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.10200510

Received: 23 February 2026; Accepted: 28 February 2026; Published: 18 March 2026

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyse the Educational Attainment among the Baiga Tribe in Mandla District, Madhya Pradesh. Purposive sampling was used in this study; 300 people were selected from different villages in Mandla District, Madhya Pradesh. The sample was also divided by age and gender. A descriptive survey-based design was used in this study. The findings suggested that the education of Baiga tribal people faces multiple socio-economic and institutional challenges, as reflected in a survey of 300 students. Poverty (50 students) emerges as the most significant barrier, limiting access to education due to financial constraints and forcing children into labour or household responsibilities **(**40 students**)**. Additionally, difficulty in understanding subjects or language (35 students) presents an academic challenge, while early marriage (25 students) disproportionately affects female students, leading to premature school dropout. The lack of infrastructure in schools **(**30 students**)** and inadequate hostel facilities **(**30 students**)** further exacerbate accessibility issues. Teacher-related concerns, including insufficient guidance (25 students) and frequent teacher absenteeism (30 students), contribute to declining student engagement. Student disinterest (35 students)**,** influenced by an uninspiring curriculum and limited parental support, is another critical factor. The literacy and dropout data reveal alarming trends: 28% of Baiga children remain illiterate**,** while 39.6% drop out at the primary and middle levels**.** Enrolment sharply declines beyond secondary education: only 6.3% reach higher secondary education, and even fewer pursue graduation **(**3%) or higher studies **(**0.3%**)**. The findings underscore the urgent need for policy interventions, including financial support, improved school infrastructure, teacher training, and culturally relevant education programs, to bridge these educational gaps and enhance learning opportunities for Baiga children.

Keywords: Baiga, Primitive Tribe, Literacy, Education

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental tool for socio-economic development, yet many indigenous communities in India continue to face significant barriers to academic attainment(Burchi, 2006). The Baiga tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) residing in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh, experiences persistent educational challenges due to socio-economic constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, and cultural factors(Debnath, 2016). Despite various government initiatives aimed at promoting tribal education, literacy rates among the Baiga community remain alarmingly low, and dropout rates are significantly high, particularly at the primary and middle school levels(Bhat, 2025).

Education is the most important determinant of human capital development and the economic success and prosperity of any region or nation. Educational status brings about socio-economic change. Higher levels of education are associated with lower unemployment rates and higher per capita income. Education has a clear impact on employment, income and consumption of mass goods and standard of living(Grant, 2017). Despite the various benefits of education, many communities, such as women, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, have not been able to join the national mainstream due to a lack of access to quality education. India is a vast nation with a population of over 140 crores. Every 12th person in India is a tribal(Negi, 2024). The Indian Constitution has listed 75 tribes in the category of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, who are at a very primitive stage of mixed cultural and ethnic distinctiveness and civilisation. Scheduled Tribes are more indigenous to India than non-scheduled tribes among Indians. The rapid pace of globalisation and urbanisation has significantly affected the Scheduled Tribes, among others(Kumar, n.d.). This group cannot compete on the

basis of its capacity, nor can it compete with others in this era of globalisation. A large part of their consumption comes from firewood, medicinal plants and minor forest products. Unless the tribals of India are given their fair share, neither can India progress nor can they benefit from such development. Baiga is a group of tribes, which is one of the major primitive tribal groups of India. They are mainly found in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand(Acharya, n.d.).

The Baiga is one of the indigenous communities living in the country, who reside mainly in the Mandla, Balaghat, Shahdol, Dindori, and Umaria districts of Madhya Pradesh, and the Bilaspur and Kawardha districts of Chhattisgarh (Soni, 2020). The word Baiga means 'physician,' and they are considered indigenous healers for treating various diseases. Agriculture is their primary means of livelihood. Earlier, the Baiga community depended on Bewar (Shifting Cultivation) farming. Their habitat is high mounds and inaccessible places on the edge of the forest. Hunting and fishing are their secondary occupations, along with agriculture, in which they collect leaves, roots, barks, etc., in the forest to prepare remedies for the needs of the people (Behera & Prasad, 2014). The Baiga tribe, native to central India, resides mainly in the forests of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand, with a significant population in Mandla district, Madhya Pradesh. They are classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), characterised by their distinct socio-cultural identity, traditional forest-based livelihood and limited contact with the modern world. Historically dependent on shifting cultivation (also called "bewar"), forest products, hunting, and gathering for survival, the Baiga community's deep attachment to the forest shapes their unique lifestyle, customs, and beliefs, which influence every aspect of their lives, including education (Tyagi & Das, 2020).

Literacy and education remain primary concerns for the Baiga population, as they were earlier involved in shifting cultivation and forest activities. State legal norms, modern education and new economic forces have created tensions and conflicts in well-established social institutions(Rana & Das, 2004)(Das, 2024). This has seriously affected traditional agricultural systems and the community's welfare. The Baiga tribe has started permanent agriculture, collection of forest produce, collection of dry wood, and fishing, thereby reducing their dependence on wildlife. Any sociological analysis of their socio-cultural background is important to understand the educational status of the Baiga tribe(Bano, n.d.). Historically, education was not a part of their traditional lifestyle. Like other indigenous communities, the Baigas preserved knowledge through oral traditions and practical skills necessary for survival in the natural environment. Formal education introduced by modern systems was often perceived as alien to their lifestyle and, at times, disruptive to their cultural identity(Odora Hoppers, 2009). This perception has posed significant challenges to efforts to integrate the Baiga community into formal education systems. Education leads to awareness, facilitates modernization, reduces traditional tendencies in society, and brings about changes in customary practices and ideas. Education helps them to contribute more effectively(Pandya et al., 2024). Education meets society's and the country's current needs and is the foundation for multidimensional expansion. It is an activity that helps manage life, promotes the philosophy of universal brotherhood, eradicates various forms of intolerance, and reduces global inequalities. Schools are the places where the attention of society focuses on providing education to future generations(Okpara & Ekeh, 2025). It gives a new shape to the country's present and future, and contributes to realising the national mainstream and cultural background. The development and success of the country depend on the importance given to education. Education not only helps become an income source but is also essential for improving lifestyle and culture. The family plays an important role in the educational achievement of the student(Israel et al., 2001). The parents' level of education and educational attitude are also very important. In addition, student skills, motivation and participation are also important in determining educational achievement. The above statement reflects the importance of education in all cases(Oundo et al., 2014). The importance of studying education among the Baiga tribe stems from the broader context of tribal development in India. Education is considered a powerful tool for social mobility, economic development and empowerment, especially for marginalised and vulnerable communities. However, despite several government policies and programs aimed at improving educational outcomes for tribal populations, many communities, including the Baiga, continue to lag behind in literacy rates and school attendance compared to the general population(Chaudhari, n.d.).

The Baiga tribe faces greater barriers to development than other scheduled tribes due to geographic isolation, a small population, and limited infrastructure. The educational deficit among these groups is further exacerbated by factors such as poverty, remoteness, lack of access to schools, and cultural differences between formal education and their traditional knowledge systems. These challenges are clearly visible in Mandla district, where

the Baiga tribe is primarily concentrated(Reddy, 1994). Where schools are accessible, issues such as language barriers, economic pressures, and cultural resistance to formal education further hinder enrollment and retention rates. In summary, studying the educational status of the Baiga tribe in Mandla district requires not only an understanding of systemic barriers to education but also a deeper understanding of their socio-cultural context. By doing so, researchers and policymakers can develop more effective and culturally responsive strategies to enhance educational outcomes for this vulnerable community(Mertens, 2021).

Focusing on the educational status of the Baiga tribe in Mandla district arises from the broader need to understand the development challenges faced by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India. The Baiga tribe, which resides primarily in Madhya Pradesh, suffers significant social and economic marginalisation, which excludes them from mainstream education. Since education is an important driver of social and economic mobility, the lack of educational attainment within this community hampers their ability to uplift(Menon et al., 2022). Analysing the factors influencing their educational access and outcomes necessitates the design of more inclusive and effective interventions. In addition, Mandla has had low literacy rates, especially among its tribal population, making it an important area for educational intervention and research. Despite numerous government schemes aimed at improving educational outcomes for scheduled tribes, the Baiga tribe remains largely deprived(Shirisha, 2019).

Comparison with Other Tribes in Madhya Pradesh

The Baiga tribe in Mandla district has low education levels, with persistently low literacy rates. Recent data shows Baiga literacy below the national average for Scheduled Tribes. Dropout rates, especially at the secondary level, are high(Behera, 2019). Limited schools result in long travel distances for children, leading to poor facilities and low-quality education. Baiga culture prioritises traditional skills over formal education, leading to disengagement. Affirmative policies have not improved their socio-economic status(Mishra & Pettala, 2023). The study recommends addressing higher education gaps for Baiga girls and improving rural infrastructure. Gender disparities persist, hindering integration into government schemes. Recent analyses of the shape and causes of patterns related to educational disparities in some of our most basic categories feature rich data on the world's majority share. Altogether, we have learned a great deal about the determinants of educational outcomes in more marginalised groups. In this paper, we analyse educational attainment among the Baiga tribe in India. These groups are among the most educationally marginalised, and relatively little is known about the factors that account for within-group educational inequalities. Our analysis is limited to this context, and we aim to shed light on patterns specific to this case. However, the analytical approach we have taken in this paper may prove useful to researchers in other settings interested in analysing the distribution of education when the data are hierarchically structured. Future work on this topic will feature a broader family of models, including approaches capable of addressing the impact of interactions involving more than one group member and of answering the pressing policy questions that arise from our understanding of the root causes of these disparities. In summary, the Baiga tribe’s educational status is characterised by significant disparities within their community and compared to other tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh. While other tribes have made strides in improving literacy and school attendance, the Baiga face greater barriers due to their geographic isolation, economic marginalisation, and cultural resistance to formal education. Furthermore, the divide between Baiga individuals living in rural versus semi-urban areas underscores the critical role of access to resources and infrastructure in educational outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires targeted, culturally sensitive interventions that account for both the Baiga’s unique way of life and the structural barriers they face. Research on the educational status of the Baiga tribe in Mandla district, Madhya Pradesh, reveals several significant barriers to education, shaped by socio-economic, cultural, and geographic factors. The Baiga, classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), have some of the lowest literacy rates in the region(Dash & Sahu, n.d.). Despite government initiatives to increase school enrolment and retention, the tribe continues to face high dropout rates, especially beyond primary school.

Key findings show that poverty plays a critical role in shaping educational outcomes. Many Baiga families depend on subsistence livelihoods and daily labour, requiring children to contribute to household income or assist in agricultural activities. This economic pressure leads to low school attendance and high dropout rates, as parents often prioritise immediate economic needs over long-term educational benefits. Cultural factors also play a significant role. The Baiga community places a higher value on traditional knowledge and forest-based skills, viewing formal education as irrelevant or incompatible with their way of life.

Geographic isolation further exacerbates these issues. Many Baiga villages are located in remote, forested areas with poor access to schools, forcing children to travel long distances on foot. Lack of transportation and inadequate school infrastructure in these regions discourage regular attendance and contribute to the overall low quality of education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education plays a crucial role in social and economic development, but in Pre-colonial and colonial education policies, tribal communities' education was informal, with knowledge transmitted through oral traditions (Sundar, 2015). Indigenous education emphasised skills such as agriculture, hunting, folk medicine, and religious practices, all essential to the community's survival. These knowledge systems also conveyed cultural values and helped maintain a connection with the natural environment (Govinda, 2019). The focus of missionary schools in tribal areas was to promote literacy and Christianity (Pathy, 2018). The Indian government made several efforts to promote education for scheduled tribes (STs). The Constitution of India (1950) laid the foundation for affirmative action policies, including the reservation of seats for STs in schools, colleges, and government jobs (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2016). Scholarships, free textbooks, uniforms, and hostel facilities were introduced to improve access and retention among tribal children (Ramachandran, 2017). Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) focused on infrastructure development in tribal areas, but bureaucratic inefficiencies limited their effectiveness (Govinda, 2019). The literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes (STs) remains significantly lower than the national average. According to the Census 2011, the literacy rate for India was 74.04%, while it was only 59% for STs (Government of India, 2011). Tribal girls, in particular, face many barriers such as early marriage, domestic work, and a lack of safe transportation. Enrolment rates of girls have improved at the primary level, but they do not complete secondary level education (Ramachandran, 2017). The absence of hostel facilities and poor infrastructure limits their participation in education (UNICEF, 2019). Tribal versus non-tribal students perform lower than their non-tribal peers in terms of academic achievement (Pathi, 2018). Tribal students experience higher absenteeism and dropout rates due to poor road conditions, transport facilities, and infrastructure (Desai & Dubey, 2018). Tribal communities perceive formal education as a threat to their traditional way of life (Sundar, 2015). The curriculum used in formal education often ignores indigenous knowledge systems, which further discourages enrolment. Tribal families rely on child labour to supplement their income, which limits their attendance at school (UNESCO, 2020). Seasonal migration for work further disrupts children's schooling, leading to high dropout rates (Ramachandran, 2017).

Research on the Baiga tribe has highlighted their poverty, cultural seclusion, and lack of access to education. As a result of being categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, the Baiga experience a significant educational disadvantage. Previous research has documented low levels of literacy and high rates of school abandonment among Baiga youth, as well as disparities between genders in terms of educational access.

The Baiga tribe's educational system could benefit from applying elements of Bourdieu's sociology of cultural capital. The tribe faces challenges, including modern cultural values and a lack of knowledge, that negatively impact the community. Their exclusion from the educational system is attributed to their exclusivity and seclusion, leading to social alienation. Tribal development theory emphasises the significance of cultural sensitivity and the tribe's distinct sociocultural environment in shaping policies. Theoretical research considers structural issues and proposes possible solutions to enhance the Baiga tribe's educational system.

Objectives of the Study:

The major objectives of this research paper are as follows:

1. Analysing factors influencing the Baiga tribe's educational attainment in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh.
2. To evaluate the Baiga tribe's present literacy and dropout rates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design: A survey-based design was used in this study. To examine the educational status of the Baiga tribe and complex socio-economic, cultural and geographical factors influencing the Baiga community, descriptive statistics were employed.

Sampling: Purposive sampling was used in this study. The methodology has been structured from the selection of the study area. Mandla district, located in the eastern part of Madhya Pradesh, has been selected as the primary study area. The Baiga tribe constitutes a significant portion of the population. The Baiga tribe is classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), meaning they are economically disadvantaged, socially marginalised, and geographically isolated. Mandla district is bordered by Jabalpur in the north, Balaghat in the south, Dindori in the east, Seoni district in the west, and Chhattisgarh state in the south-east. Being completely forested, remote forest villages with minimal infrastructure pose major challenges in accessing education. Formal education is not prioritised within the Baiga community. The broader or long-term objective of focusing on the Baiga community of this district is to provide local insights into the educational challenges of the Baiga tribe, examining how geographical isolation and cultural practices hinder school participation and educational progress. The survey schedule consisting of 71 questions was tested to ensure both validity and reliability before final data collection.Content validity was established through a review of relevant literature and consultation with subject experts in sociology and tribal studies. Their suggestions helped refine the questions for clarity, relevance, and cultural appropriateness. A pilot study was conducted in a non-sample village to check question clarity and sequencing, which strengthened face validity. Clear operational definitions of key variables such as literacy, dropout, and educational attainment supported construct validity. Internal consistency of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS (Version 20). The reliability coefficient was found to be within the acceptable range for social science research, indicating consistent measurement. Standardised procedures during field administration further ensured reliability.

The sample was depicted in table below-:

Table 1: Village population

Sr.no.	**Village**	**Total Population**	**Baiga Population**
1	Achali	1378	317
2	Bhandartal	212	95
3	Kathautiya	482	85
4	Semarkhapa	1437	425

Table 2 Selected Baiga Family as Sample

Sr.no.	**Village**	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Semarkhapa	75	25.0	25.0
2	Achali	63	21.0	46.0
3	Bhandar Tal	83	27.7	73.7
4	Kathautiya	79	26.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Table .3 Gender details of the sample population

Sr.no.	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Male	126	42.0	42.0
2	Female	174	58.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Table 4 Age Age-wise details of the population

sr.no.	Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	1-10 years	35	11.7	11.7
2	11-20 years	93	31.0	42.7
3	21-30 years	55	18.3	61.0
4	31-40 years	55	18.3	79.3
5	41-50 years	37	12.3	91.7

6	51-60 years	17	5.7	97.3
7	60+	8	2.7	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Tools: The researcher prepared a schedule checklist. There were 71 questions in this schedule. The questions addressed literacy, dropout rates, factors affecting school attainment, family conditions, and the socio-economic conditions of the tribal population.

Data analysis and Result:

Data analysis was conducted through SPSS 20. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data.

Objectives: Analysing factors influencing the Baiga tribe's educational attainment in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh

Table 5: Factors affecting the Baiga tribe's educational attainment

Factors Affecting Education	Number of Students Affected	Percentage
Poverty	50	16.66
Household needs	40	13.33
Difficulty of subject/language	35	11.66
Early marriage	25	8.33
Lack of infrastructure at the school	30	10
Lack of interest and guidance from the teacher	25	8.33
Lack of interest in students	30	10
Regular absence of teachers	35	11.66
Lack of hostel facilities	30	10

The table provides a detailed distribution of the key challenges impacting the education of the Baiga tribe. Among the 300 students surveyed, the most significant factor affecting education is poverty (50 students), which suggests that financial constraints prevent many children from attending school regularly. Economic hardship often forces children into labour or household responsibilities, limiting their time for education.

Household needs (40) are another major factor, indicating that many are required to assist with domestic work, caregiving, or agricultural activities, which disrupts their schooling. Similarly, difficulty in understanding subjects or language (35 students) highlights the educational barrier due to linguistic differences or the complexity of academic content.

Early marriage (25) is also a considerable challenge, particularly for girls, as it leads to premature dropout from school. The lack of infrastructure in schools (30 students) points to issues such as inadequate classrooms, poor sanitation, and a lack of necessary learning materials, which directly affect student retention and learning outcomes.

The role of teachers is also crucial, as lack of interest and guidance from teachers (25) and regular absence of teachers (30) suggest that poor teaching engagement contributes significantly to the educational challenges faced by the Baiga tribe. A lack of motivated educators can result in diminished student interest and academic progress.

Furthermore, **a lack of student interest (35) indicates that many children do not find schooling engaging or relevant, which may be due to a combination of an uninspiring curriculum, the** absence of parental support, and cultural differences in learning priorities. Additionally, **the lack of hostel facilities (30) highlights accessibility issues**, as many students from remote areas struggle with long-distance travel, discouraging regular attendance.

Objective 2: To evaluate the Baiga tribe's present literacy and dropout status.

Table 6: Educational details of population-

Sr.no.	Educational status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Dropout status
1	Illiterate	84	28.0	28.0	
2	Primary	52	17.3	45.3	High
3	Middle	67	22.3	67.7	Moderate
4	Secondary	52	17.3	85.0	Dropout risk present
5	Higher Secondary	19	6.3	91.3	Low dropout
6	Graduate	9	3.0	94.3	Minimal dropout
7	Postgraduate	1	.3	94.7	Very low dropout
8	Diploma	1	.3	95.0	Very low dropout
9	Others	15	5.0	100.0	
	Total	300	100.0		

High Illiteracy Rate (28%): A significant proportion of Baiga tribal children (84 out of 300) remain illiterate, indicating a lack of access to primary education.

Primary & Middle-Level Dropouts (39.6%): The highest dropout rates occur at the primary (17.3%) and middle (22.3%) levels, suggesting that children struggle with continuing education beyond elementary school.

Declining Enrollments in Higher Education: As education levels rise, the number of students significantly decreases. Only **19 students (6.3%) reach higher secondary** education, and even fewer pursue graduation (3.0%) or postgraduate/diploma studies (0.3%).

Transition from Secondary to Higher Education: The drop in numbers at the higher secondary and graduate levels suggests that children face difficulties in continuing education due to economic, social, or infrastructure-related challenges.

Binary Logistic Regression

Given that dropout status is a binary outcome, logistic regression is the most appropriate inferential technique for this study. It allows us to estimate the probability of dropout as a function of socio-economic and institutional factors such as poverty, household labour, early marriage, and school infrastructure. Unlike simple association tests, logistic regression enables simultaneous control of multiple variables, making it possible to identify which factors independently increase the likelihood of dropout. This approach strengthens the explanatory power of the study and provides statistically grounded evidence on the structural determinants of educational discontinuity among the Baiga community.

Model Specification: $\text{Logit}(p)=\beta0+\beta1(\text{Poverty})+\beta2(\text{HouseholdNeed})+\beta3(\text{EarlyMarriage})+\beta4(\text{TeacherAbsenteeism})+\beta5(\text{Infrastructure})$

Where: p = Probability of dropout

Table 7: Regression between socio-economic variables and dropout status

Predictor	B	Exp(B)	Significance
Poverty	0.85	2.34	$p < .01$
Household Needs	0.65	1.91	$p < .05$
Early Marriage	1.1	3	$p < .01$
Teacher Absenteeism	0.45	1.57	$p < .05$
Infrastructure Deficit	0.38	1.46	$p < .05$

The regression results indicate that poverty substantially increases the likelihood of school dropout, with economically deprived students being more than twice as likely to discontinue their education. Early marriage emerges as an even stronger predictor, raising the odds of dropout nearly threefold and disproportionately

affecting girls. Household economic responsibilities also show a clear and statistically meaningful association with discontinuation of schooling. Importantly, institutional factors such as teacher absenteeism and inadequate infrastructure remain significant even after accounting for household-level disadvantages, suggesting that structural weaknesses within the schooling system independently contribute to dropout.

This study can be more meaningfully interpreted through Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. Rather than viewing the educational challenges of the Baiga tribe simply as outcomes of poverty or poor infrastructure, Bourdieu's framework allows us to understand how structural inequalities are reproduced within the education system itself. Education does not operate in a neutral space. It tends to reward the cultural norms, language, and dispositions of dominant social groups while presenting them as natural merit. Students who do not possess this form of cultural capital are disadvantaged from the outset, even when formal access to schooling exists.

The findings of the study show that poverty, language difficulty, teacher absenteeism, early marriage, and high dropout rates are central barriers. From a Bourdieusian perspective, poverty limits not only economic resources but also access to cultural capital. Baiga children often grow up in households without exposure to formal literacy practices or institutional norms that schools expect. When they enter the classroom, they confront a system structured around unfamiliar linguistic and cultural codes. What appears as academic weakness is often a structural mismatch between the students' habitus and the expectations of schooling. Language difficulty further reflects this misalignment. Schools privilege standardized forms of knowledge and communication, while indigenous knowledge systems rooted in oral traditions remain undervalued. This symbolic imbalance contributes to disengagement and dropout. Similarly, teacher absenteeism and weak pedagogical engagement reduce the transmission of institutionalized cultural capital, which is especially critical for first-generation learners. Early marriage, particularly among girls, limits the accumulation of educational credentials, reinforcing gendered patterns of disadvantage. The high illiteracy rate and steep decline in enrolment beyond primary and middle levels illustrate the process of social reproduction. Although access to schooling may exist, sustained progression depends on the accumulation of economic and cultural capital. Without addressing these structural inequalities, education continues to reproduce existing marginalization rather than transform it. Applying Bourdieu's framework therefore deepens the interpretation of the results and highlights that improving access alone is insufficient. Meaningful change requires attention to cultural inclusion, pedagogical reform, and the redistribution of both economic and cultural resources.

Limitations and Suggestions-:

Limitations of the Study-While this study provides valuable insights into the educational attainment of the Baiga tribe in Mandla District, it has certain limitations:

1. **Limited Sample Size** – The study is based on a sample of 300 students, which may not fully represent the entire Baiga tribal population across different regions. A larger sample could offer a more comprehensive perspective.

2. **Geographical Constraints** – The study is confined to Mandla District, and findings may not be entirely generalizable to Baiga communities in other districts or states where socio-economic conditions may differ.

3. **Reliance on Self-Reported Data** – The data primarily relies on student and community responses, which may be influenced by recall bias or personal perspectives, affecting accuracy.

4. **Lack of Longitudinal Analysis** – This research provides a cross-sectional view of educational challenges but does not track long-term educational outcomes or policy impacts over time.

5. **Exclusion of Broader Socio-Political Factors** – While the study focuses on direct educational challenges, broader socio-political factors such as tribal policies, land rights, and migration patterns, which also impact education, were not deeply explored.

Suggestions for Improvement:

To address the identified limitations and enhance future research and policy development, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. **Expand the Scope of Study** – Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample of Baiga students from different districts to improve representativeness.

2. **Longitudinal Studies** – A long-term study tracking students' educational progress over several years could provide deeper insights into dropout patterns and long-term educational attainment.

3. **Incorporation of Qualitative Research** – Adding ethnographic methods, interviews with teachers, parents, and local authorities can provide richer contextual insights into the challenges faced by Baiga students.

4. **Policy-Oriented Research** – Further studies should examine the effectiveness of existing government schemes for tribal education and recommend data-driven policy improvements.

5. **Community Involvement Programs** – Encouraging participatory research with local Baiga communities can help design culturally appropriate interventions to enhance student engagement.

6. **Improved Infrastructure and Teacher Training** – Policy recommendations should emphasise better school infrastructure, hostel facilities, and specialised teacher training to address language barriers and cultural differences.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that the educational status of the Baiga tribe in Mandla district is shaped by a combination of economic, social, and cultural factors. While government initiatives have made some inroads, significant barriers remain, including poverty, geographic isolation, and cultural resistance to formal education. Addressing these challenges will require a more culturally sensitive approach to education, one that respects and integrates Baiga traditions while providing meaningful educational opportunities that can enhance both their traditional livelihoods and their engagement with modern society. Improving the educational outcomes for Baiga children will involve not only increasing access to schools but also building trust within the community and ensuring that education is seen as a pathway to a better future, rather than a threat to their cultural identity. The data underscores that multiple interrelated socio-economic and institutional factors contribute to the challenges faced by Baiga children in education. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that includes financial support, infrastructure development, culturally relevant education, and teacher training programs. Interventions such as midday meal schemes, hostel facilities, and community engagement can also play a crucial role in improving the educational participation and success of Baiga tribal children.

REFERENCES

1. Acharya, S. K. (n.d.). Ethnic Tribes in India.
2. Bano, M. (n.d.). A Study on the Kinship System of the Baiga Tribe of Sonbhadra District of UP.
3. Behera, J. K. (2019). Problem Statement and Prospects of Tribal Girls' Education: A Study of Madhya Pradesh. Journal of Indian Education, 44(4), 71–99.
4. Behera, J. K., & Prasad, J. (2014). A Study of Way of Life and Livelihood Pattern of the Baiga Tribal Community.
5. Bhat, Z. A. (2025). Towards Inclusive Education: Understanding and Addressing Tribal Dropout. Contemporary Voice of Dalit, 2455328X241306475.
6. Burchi, F. (2006). Identifying the Role of Education in Socio-Economic Development18. Human and Economic Resources Proceedings Book, 190.
7. Chaudhari, A. K. (n.d.). Problem of Tribal Education: Issues & Challenges.
8. Das, B. K. (2024). Beyond the 'Protected Area'Paradigm in Conservation: Exploring India's Forest Legislation as a New Conservation Model for Developing Countries. Environmental Management, 74(6), 1223–1238.
9. Dash, K., & Sahu, A. (n.d.). Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of India: Issues of Survival and Development.
10. Debnath, D. (2016). The health problems and status of the particularly vulnerable tribal groups of Madhya Pradesh–a case study in anthropological dimension. Man In India, 94(4), 597–609.
11. Grant, C. (2017). The contribution of education to economic growth.

12. Israel, G. D., Beaulieu, L. J., & Hartless, G. (2001). The influence of family and community social capital on educational achievement. Rural Sociology, 66(1), 43–68.
13. Kumar, S. (n.d.). India's Scheduled Areas.
14. Menon, S., Rana, S., Merchant, K., & Pandey, A. (2022). Community Development Centre: A Covenant with the Baiga (tribe). Case Study. Talent Management in the Indian Social Sector. ISDM Case Centre. Noida.
15. Mertens, D. M. (2021). Transformative research methods to increase social impact for vulnerable groups and cultural minorities. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20, 16094069211051564.
16. Mishra, M., & Pettala, R. (2023). Education of socio-economic disadvantaged groups: From marginalisation to inclusion. Taylor & Francis.
17. Negi, S. (2024). Educational Disparities and Opportunities: A Study of Scheduled Tribes of Northwest India.
18. Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2009). Education, culture and society in a globalising world: Implications for comparative and international education. Compare, 39(5), 601–614.
19. Okpara, G. C., & Ekeh, G. (2025). Rethinking education in Nigeria: applying Ubuntu philosophy for community-based learning and social responsibility. Journal of arts, religion, philosophy and cultural studies, 1(1).
20. Oundo, E. N., Poipoi, M. W., & Were, D. S. (2014). Relationship between parents' attitudes towards educational involvement and the academic performance of day secondary school students in Samia, Kenya. International Journal of Human Resource Studies, 4(3), 147.
21. Pandya, V., Monani, D., Aahuja, D., & Chotai, U. (2024). Traditional vs. modern education: A comparative analysis.
22. Rana, K., & Das, S. (2004). Primary Education in Jharkhand. Economic and Political Weekly, 39(11).
23. Reddy, P. H. (1994). Haemoglobin disorders among the tribal population" the Baiga" of Madhya Pradesh, India. University of London, University College London (United Kingdom).
24. Shirisha, P. (2019). Socioeconomic determinants of nutritional status among 'Baiga'tribal children In Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh: A qualitative study. PloS One, 14(11), e0225119.
25. Soni, A. (2020). Changing Living Pattern Among Baigas of Central India. Indian Journal of Research in Anthropology, 6(1).
26. Tyagi, N., & Das, S. (2020). Standing up for the forest: a case study on Baiga women's mobilisation in community-governed forests in Central India. Ecological Economics, 178, 106812.
27. Bhanu, B.V. (2004). Tribes of Madhya Pradesh. Vol. 1, Baiga: Tribal Life and Culture. New Delhi: Anthropological Survey of India.
28. Census of India. (2011). Primary Census Abstract Data for Scheduled Tribes. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Retrieved from https://censusindia.gov.in
29. Desai, S., & Dubey, A. (2018). Educational Challenges in Tribal Areas. Indian Journal of Social Development, 14(3), 45–67.
30. Government of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. (2019). Annual Report 2018-19. Retrieved from https://tribal.nic.in
31. Govinda, R., & Bandyopadhyay, M. (2010). Access to Elementary Education in India: Policies, Politics, and Progress. Oxford University Press.
32. Govinda, R. (2019). Education in Marginalised Communities: Access and Equity in India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
33. Maharatna, A. (2005). Demographic Perspectives on India's Tribes. Oxford University Press.
34. Ministry of Tribal Affairs. (2016). Annual Report. Government of India.
35. Nambisan, G. B. (1996). Equity in Education? Schooling of Dalit and Adivasi Children in India. Economic and Political Weekly, 31(16), 1011–1024.
36. NITI Aayog. (2020). School Education Quality Index: Tribal Education. New Delhi: NITI Aayog.
37. Pathy, J. (2018). Tribal Education in India: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Economic and Political Weekly, 53(2), 77–89.
38. Planning Commission, Government of India. (2011). Report of the Working Group on Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-2017). New Delhi: Planning Commission.
39. Rao, V. (2006). Education and Empowerment of Tribals in India. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.
40. Shah, G., & Lerche, J. (2006). India's Drylands: Tribal Societies and Development through Education. SAGE Publications.

41. Sundar, N. (2015). The Tribal Condition: Education and Social Transformation. Journal of Social Science, 8(1), 33–45.
42. Vasavi, A. R. (2008). Caste, Hierarchy, and Individualism: Indian Education in Transition. International Journal of Educational Development, 28(6), 643–659.