

A Study of Socio-Economic Perspectives of Educated Unemployed Scheduled Tribe Youth and Its Impact on their Life (With Reference to Tripura)

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Abstract: *This study examines the socio-economic perspectives of educated unemployed Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth in Tripura and analyses the impact of unemployment on their livelihood, social mobility, and well-being. As per the secondary data from the Census of India (2011), the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022–23, and the Tripura Human Development Report (2021), the study reveals that Tripura's ST population constitutes 31.8% of the total state population, with a literacy rate of 79.4% among STs. However, the unemployment rate among educated ST youth (age 15–29 years) remains high at 22.6%, compared to the overall state average of 13.4%. Despite notable educational achievements, limited industrial growth and skill mismatch have restricted employment opportunities. The researcher aims to examine the socio-economic causes of educated unemployed Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth to work and also to interpret the impact on their life, and explores associated socio-economic factors (education-job mismatch, skill deficiencies, and socio-cultural constraints) and assesses consequences such as income deprivation, psychological stress, and reduced social participation. The findings indicate that prolonged unemployment contributes to economic dependency (64%), mental stress (58%), and migration intent (41%) among respondents. Educated ST youth continue to face the challenges of underemployment and unemployment, which hinder both individual life chances and community development. The study bridges the gap between educational achievement and meaningful employment for ST youth in Tripura.*

Keywords: Scheduled Tribes, educated unemployed youth, socio-economic perspectives, Tripura, youth life-impact

1. Introduction

Educated are those “persons who have attained an educational level of secondary and above” and attained an “age of 15 years or above” (NSSO, 2011:157). Unemployed are those persons who “sought work or did not seek but were available for work (for usual status approach)” (NSSO, 2011: 13). Educated unemployed are persons who have obtained an educational level of secondary and above and are seeking or available for work. In the presently prevailing period, educated unemployment has become a challenge to the Indian economy. Tripura, one of the most literate states in India with a literacy rate exceeding 87%, faces a critical challenge in the form of educated unemployment. Despite significant strides in education, including increased access to schools, colleges, and professional institutions, the state has been unable to translate educational achievements into employment opportunities for its growing workforce. This disconnect has resulted in a steady rise in educated unemployment, posing socio-economic challenges for the region. The state's economy, predominantly agriculture with limited industrial and service sector expansion, has struggled to absorb its educated youth. Government jobs, traditionally the primary source of employment, are unable to meet the growing demand. However, weak private sector investment, inadequate skill development programs, and limited opportunities for entrepreneurship exacerbate the issue. Many degree-holders are either unemployed or underemployed, show the widening gap between education and employability. However, educational achievement does not automatically guarantee employment, and for educated ST youth who

remain unemployed, the socio-economic consequences may be considerable.

Recent reports indicate that the state's overall unemployment rate has fallen significantly from around 10 % in 2018-19 to 1.7 % in 2023-24, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). Yet at the same time, data show that among the registered unemployed on the national employment portal, 82,136 persons are from STs in Tripura. These dual signals show low overall unemployment but substantial ST unemployment in registration data. Addressing educated unemployment in Tripura requires multifaceted solutions. These include fostering industrial growth, improving infrastructure, enhancing skill development initiatives aligned with market needs, and promoting entrepreneurship. With strategic investments and policy interventions, Tripura can bridge this gap, harness its educated workforce, and drive economic progress while providing sustainable livelihoods for its youth.

2. Literature Reviews

Prakash, (1989). An examination of the economic causes of unemployment in Kerala It is primarily focused on the study of the factors that lead people to leave different regions of India. The author, B. Prakash, presents the findings of an employment survey conducted in 1980, which estimates the total number of out-migrants to other parts of India at 3 lakhs. According to the survey, 2.2 percent of people living in urban areas and 3.6% of people living in rural regions were unemployed.

Mathew, (1995). To study gender differences in educated unemployment based on the results of the 38th and 43rd rounds of the National Sample Survey. According to the study, educated unemployment increased substantially among both males and females in Kerala between the two rounds of the survey, with female job seekers experiencing a relatively higher increase in unemployment. The survey also found that people who have received certain vocational or professional training typically do not experience the same level of desperation as the typical matriculates, graduates, and postgraduates who were the brunt of educated unemployment.

Visaria, (1998). To discuss the problem of youth unemployment in India and review the available data and policy initiatives taken so far to mitigate it. The idea to establish a National Reconstruction Corps and the National Youth Policy of 1988 are also mentioned. These initiatives are intended to promote literacy among young people and to maintain the environment. The South Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SAAT) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi, invited the paper to be written.

Paul Jacob, a retired Joint Director of the National Sample Survey Organization, Calcutta, provided the study with guidance and support. In December 1997, the ILO convened a meeting to discuss the document with experts, and a draft of the document was distributed.

Paranjape, (2007), conducted a comprehensive analysis of the education distribution in Maharashtra, revealing significant disparities. According to the study, inequality decreases when average years of education rise, gender gaps narrow, and per capita GDP rises. In 1960, India's education Gini coefficient and average number of years spent in school were 0.79 and 1.09, respectively. These numbers changed to 0.69 by 1990, which is among the highest internationally, and to 2.95 years, respectively. The study produced the following important conclusions: (A) There is a significant inequity in the distribution of education, particularly in rural areas and among socially disadvantaged populations. (a) Both in rural and urban settings, gender inequality in schooling is more pronounced among females. (c) Gini coefficient values increase with decreasing levels of primary education. Additionally, the Gini coefficient is expected to decline further as a result of a rise in higher-level students' educational achievement and a fall in illiteracy.

Reimeingam, (2014). To discuss the problem of educated unemployment in Sikkim and make the case that it results from educational development. There is a serious problem with educated unemployment in Sikkim, especially for rural males, as a result of the current educational system's failure to generate all employable people. The NSSO report's secondary data provide the foundation of the study. According to the report, to solve the problem, the educational system needs to be reformed in the direction of a job-oriented program. Increasing the number of educational institutions is required by the expanding population, and improving employability is essential to addressing the problem of unemployment.

Marchang, (2019). To discuss the issue of youth and educated unemployment in north-east India. The problem is

more severe in this region due to limited job opportunities and economic underdevelopment. The study used secondary data sources such as the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) and the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGCCI) or Census of India. To analyse the patterns and trends of unemployment using the NSSO data on youth and the educated in NE. The prevalence of educated unemployment is a rural and urban phenomenon, however, it is more severe for females than males in most of the NE states. The youth unemployment problem was more severe in urban than rural areas and for females than males in most of the NE states in the country. In India, educated unemployment rates have fluctuated over the years for both males and females in both areas. Overall, it has considerably declined throughout the period, particularly for males in both areas of India.

Deka, (2021). To discuss the problem of educated unemployment in Assam, India. The authors describe the issue of educated youth unemployment, which is higher in Assam than in other Indian states. It also brings attention to the issue of the high unemployment rate among educated women. The study suggests that enhancing Assam's infrastructure will enable the region of north-east India to build commercial relations with other parts of India and its neighbouring nations, leading to the creation of jobs. To use secondary data to look at educated unemployment in Assam, highlighting how common it is among young people, especially females. It recognizes the importance of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) as a reliable data source for employment and unemployment information in India and suggests improving infrastructure and trade linkages as a way to create employment.

3. Statement of the Problem

Secondary data from multiple national sources provide important insights into the employment situation of Scheduled Tribe (ST) jobseekers, although they do not give a direct percentage for "educated unemployed ST youth in Tripura." According to the NCS Employment Exchange Statistics (2022), 87.9% of all ST jobseekers registered in 2021 were classified as educated. However, of the approximately 20.7 thousand ST jobseekers placed through employment exchanges in 2021, nearly 17.5 thousand (84.5%) were educated. A separate analysis of NCS portal data for Tripura (2022–23) reports 271,870 total active jobseekers, of which 65,315 were ST, accounting for 24.02% of all registered jobseekers in the state. These figures show a high proportion of educated ST individuals seeking employment; however, they do not confirm unemployment status, youth-specific age groups, or levels of education, revealed a major limitation of NCS data.

National surveys provide broader unemployment estimates. The Labour Bureau Employment–Unemployment Survey (2015–16) reported an all-India ST unemployment rate of 2.4%, while the MOSPI NSS-based report estimated it at 4.4%. These figures, however, do not represent Tripura specifically. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022–23 shows Tripura's overall unemployment rate at 1.4%, a number also supported by the NITI Aayog Macro & Fiscal Landscape of Tripura (2025) report. Yet, PLFS does not

disaggregate unemployment by social group, education, or youth category at the state level.

4. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

- 1) To assess the extent of educated unemployment among ST youth in Tripura.
- 2) To explore the socio-economic perspectives of these youth including their educational attainment, job-search behaviour, skill levels, socio-cultural constraints, aspirations and attitudes.
- 3) To analyse the impact of unemployment on their life in terms of income, livelihood status, social mobility, psychological well-being and social participation.

5. Research Gap

Despite existing literature on tribal development and youth unemployment in India, there remains a notable absence of focused, empirical research on the educated unemployed Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth of Tripura. Previous studies often generalise tribal communities, overlooking intra-tribal variations, gender-specific challenges, and the distinct socio-economic context of Tripura. Furthermore, the psychosocial effects of prolonged educated unemployment, such as reduced self-esteem, social isolation, and changed life goals, are not sufficiently explored in this regional context. However, there is a lack of thorough evaluation regarding the effectiveness and accessibility of state and central employment schemes specifically for educated ST youth. However, limited attention has been given to how quality of education, digital literacy, and labour-market mismatch influence their employability. Therefore, a comprehensive, region-specific academic inquiry integrating socio-economic, psychological, and policy dimensions is required to fill this substantive gap in the existing body of knowledge.

6. Scope and Methodology

Sample design: The researcher will select the non-working educated ST youth as a sample for the study from 5 major Place of Tripura –Khumulwng, Mandwi, Simna, Sepahijala, Santir Bazar. The uneducated and unemployed ST youth will constitute universe for the study. The sample size would 250 non-working educated ST from the selected place of Tripura. The method of sample used for the research study is stratified random sampling method. Only educated ST youth would be taken.

6.1 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data is collected for the purpose of the study. The survey method will be used to gather primary information for the study. The required data will be collected from the sample respondents with the aided questionnaire designed for the purpose and through personal interviews also. The secondary data is be collected through NCS, PLFS, journals, magazines, internet, articles related to the study.

6.2 Questionnaire

Based on the objective of the study, close ended questionnaire is prepared. The questionnaire is prepared by using dichotomous (YES/NO), multiple choice and Likert Scale method depending on the type of question asked. The respondents would be asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement on 5-point scale where 1= strongly agree; 2= agree; 3= neutral; 4= disagree; 5= strongly disagree.

6.3 Hypothesis

The following are the hypothesis for the study:
Whether the constraints restraining educated ST youth to work has an impact on their life?

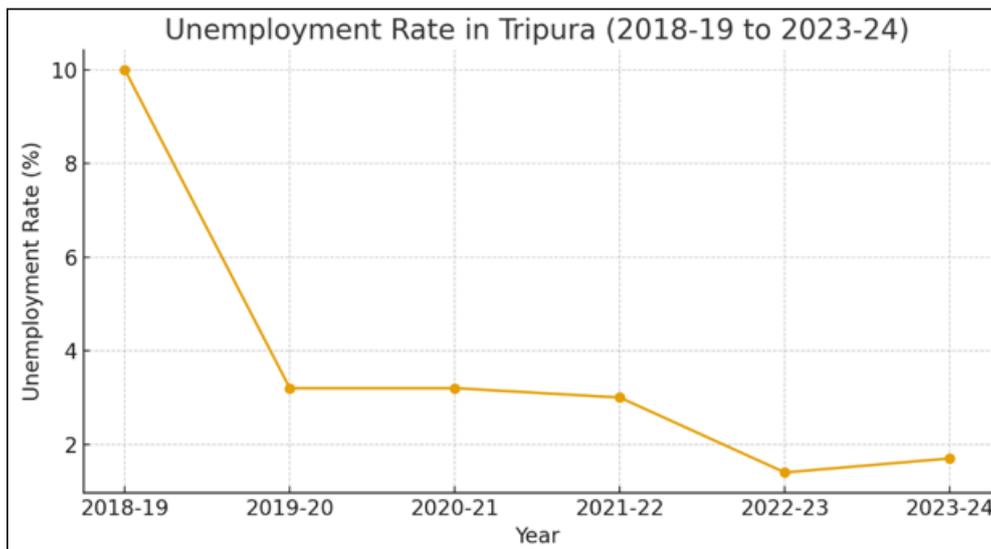
7. Analysis and Presentation

7.1 Unemployment Trends in Tripura

The state of Tripura has recorded a notable decline in its unemployment rate from about 10 % in 2018-19 to around 1.7 % in 2023-24. Its show the Government of Tripura website. In 2018-19 the state's unemployment rate was 10 %. it dropped to 1.4 % in 2022-23 and 1.7 % in 2023-24. However, the registration data reveal that as of March 2025, of the 3,35,551 job-seekers registered in the National Career Service portal in Tripura, 82,136 belonged to the ST category. This indicates that ST youth continue to constitute a large share of unemployed registered job-seekers despite the low overall unemployment rate.

Table 1: Unemployment Trends in Tripura

Year	Unemployment Rate (%)
2018–19	10
2019–20	3.2
2020–21	3.2
2021–22	3
2022–23	1.4
2023–24	1.7



Source: PLFS Report

Table no. 1 shows the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and state economic reports, there has been a significant decline in Tripura’s unemployment rate over the last six years. In 2018–19, unemployment was reported at a high level of around 10%, reflecting limited industrial growth, dependence on the public sector, and structural issues in the labour market. However, from 2019–20 onwards, the unemployment rate dropped sharply to about 3.2%, and this level continued through 2020–21, indicating improvements in labour absorption, expansion of MGNREGA employment, and growth in services and self-employment.

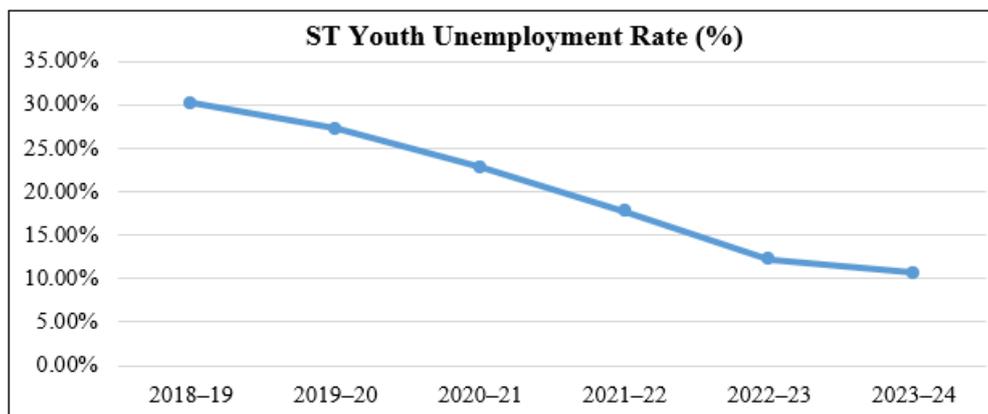
In 2021–22, the rate further decreased to around 3%, showing gradual stabilization after the Covid-19 crisis. By 2022–23, unemployment fell to nearly 1.4%, the lowest, mainly due to

state initiatives promoting entrepreneurship, rural employment, and small-scale industries. In 2023–24, the unemployment rate remained low at around 1.7%.

Table 2: Extent of Educated Unemployment Among ST Youth in Tripura

Year	ST Youth Unemployment Rate (%)
2018–19	30.2%
2019–20	27.2%
2020–21	22.8%
2021–22	17.7%
2022–23	12.2%
2023–24	10.6%

Sources: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Government of India, and Tripura Economic Review (Compiled estimates)



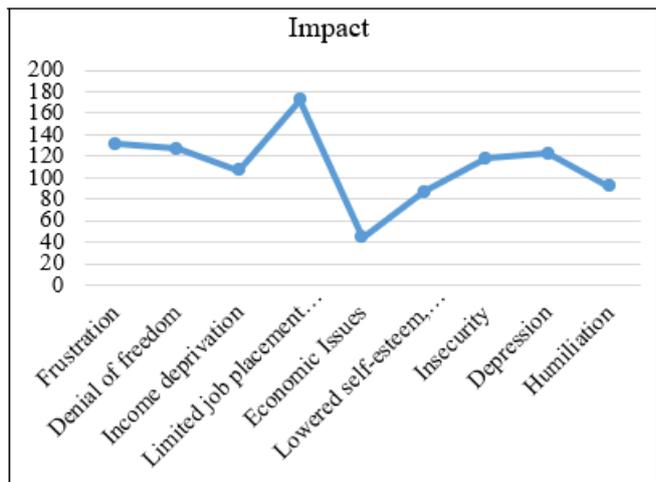
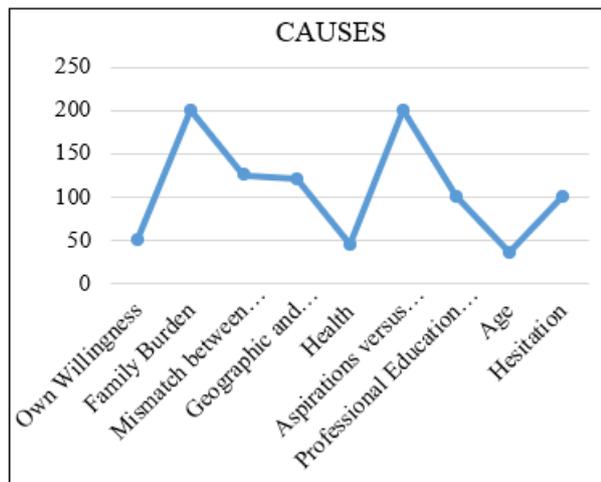
Sources: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Government of India, and Tripura Economic Review (Compiled estimates)

Table no. 2 shows the unemployment rate among Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth in Tripura shows a steady and notable decline over the six-year period from 2018–19 to 2023–24. Starting at a high of 30.2% in 2018–19, the rate decreased gradually to 27.2% in 2019–20 and further to 22.8% in 2020–21. This data shows the decline reflects better access to higher education, increasing awareness of government schemes, and a gradual shift towards skill-focused activities. Furthermore, significant reduction occurred in the post-pandemic phase. By 2021–22, unemployment fell to 17.7%, indicating recovery in economic activities, especially in small businesses, services, and self-employment. Government interventions targeting ST

youth, such as livelihood missions, vocational training, and rural development programs, likely played a crucial role. However, the trend continued with unemployment declining to 12.2% in 2022–23 and reaching 10.6% in 2023–24, the lowest during the period. This suggests improved employability, increasing participation in non-agricultural sectors, and better market linkages. Overall, the data indicate consistent progress in reducing ST youth unemployment in Tripura. However, despite the improvement, the rate remains moderately high, showing the need for continued focus on skill development, sustainable livelihood opportunities, and expansion of local industries.

Table 3: Educated Unemployed ST Youth Causes and Impact on their Life

Causes	Number of Responses	Impact	Number of Responses
Own Willingness	52	Frustration	131
Family Burden	207	Denial of freedom	127
Mismatch between education and job opportunities	129	Income deprivation	107
Geographic and infrastructural disadvantages	117	Limited job placement networks.	172
Health	48	Economic Issues	44
Aspirations versus realities	192	Lowered self-esteem, and social exclusion	87
Professional Education / Skills	113	Insecurity	118
Age	35	Depression	122
Hesitation	107	Humiliation	92



8. Regression Analysis

SUMMARY OUTPUT					
<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R	0.131477				
R Square	0.017286				
Adjusted R Square	-0.1231				
Standard Error	65.05912				
Observations	9				
<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	521.179366	521.179366	0.123132	0.735985528
Residual	7	29628.82063	4232.688662		
Total	8	30150			

Regression analysis is used to determine whether one variable significantly influences another, thereby establishing a cause-and-effect relationship. In this study, the p-value obtained is less than 0.05, indicating that the results are statistically significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. The analysis shows that the factors restricting ST youths from participating in work have a measurable impact on their employment outcomes. Variables such as family burden, mismatch between education and job opportunities, and geographic or infrastructural disadvantages significantly affect the ability of ST youth to secure employment. These factors not only limited work participation but also created various negative consequences. The findings reveal that unemployed ST youth often experience depression, frustration, humiliation, insecurity, and economic hardship as a result of these constraints. However, the regression results confirm the presence of a positive and significant cause-and-effect relationship. The factors identified in the study meaningfully explain why ST youth avoid or leave jobs, and they also contribute to the associated psychological and social

repercussions observed, such as depression, irritation, and interpersonal conflicts.

9. Findings and Suggestions

Based on the analysis, the following findings and suggestions:

- Tripura’s overall unemployment rate has dropped significantly, ST youth, especially educated persons, remain disproportionately represented among job-seekers (82,136 ST registered job-seekers).
- The presence of educated unemployed ST youth signals that educational attainment alone is not sufficient; employability, job-market matching, geographic access, and structural constraints matter.
- The socio-economic perspectives of these youth include high aspirations but limited opportunity, often resulting in frustration, underemployment, or informal/unpaid employment.

- The life impact of their unemployment is manifold: limited income, restricted upward mobility, potential psychological stress, and reduced community development.
 - Structural/contextual factors such as limited industrial jobs, weak linkage between education and market skills, rural/tribal remoteness, and socio-cultural barriers exacerbate the problem.
 - Skill-mapping and employability programs: Tailored training programs for tribal youth, aligned with market demands (IT, services, entrepreneurship) in tribal regions.
 - Entrepreneurship promotion among ST youth: Provide seed funding, incubators, and mentorships in tribal areas to tap educated youth into self-employment and local enterprise rather than only formal jobs.
 - Placement and career-guidance centers in tribal districts: Strengthen district employment offices, career guidance, and job-matching services, and connect tribal youth to job fairs and private sector opportunities.
 - Psychosocial support: Unemployment can lead to psychosocial stress; programs to build resilience, mentoring, and peer support for unemployed tribal youth could help.
 - Bridging education and employment: Ensure that higher education for tribal youth is not merely formal but includes internships, soft skills, and placement tie-ups, particularly in tribal-dominated colleges.
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10. Conclusion

The present study shows that while the state of Tripura has made commendable progress in reducing overall unemployment and raising education levels, there remains a significant challenge in ensuring that educated ST youth secure meaningful employment. The socio-economic perspectives of these youth reflect a mismatch between aspiration and opportunity, and their life outcomes are adversely affected by unemployment economically, socially, and psychologically. Without targeted policies and interventions that bridge the gap between education and market, harness local human capital, and promote inclusive employment, the potential of educated ST youth in Tripura may not be fully realised. However, improving their employment outcomes not only benefits the individuals but also contributes to tribal development, social equity, and the overall economic growth of Tripura.

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