# Digital Tools for Educational Awareness of Backward Class with Special reference to Namasudra

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## Abstract

In the present day, digital equipment plays a crucial role in the field of education. India is a vast country with diverse regions, religions, castes, creeds, and social classes. Among these, backward communities remain one of the major sections still lagging behind in accessing educational opportunities. However, digital aids such as television, radio, mobile phones, computers, laptops, and the internet help minimize barriers by providing affordable and accessible education. The Namasudra community, belonging to the Scheduled Castes, continues to face social, economic, and educational disadvantages in India. This paper highlights the current educational status of backward classes, particularly the Namasudra community, and examines the contribution of digital tools in enhancing educational access, participation, and awareness.

**Keyword:** Digital tools, Education, Backward class, Namasudra

## Introduction

The concept of backward classes in India can be understood only by first examining the fundamental structure of Indian society, which is composed of numerous closed status groups. The term backward class does not denote a single, homogeneous category but rather encompasses a wide range of social groups positioned at different levels of the socio-economic hierarchy. Historically, these groups have faced systemic disadvantages and discrimination, deeply rooted in the caste system. Low social status, poverty, and illiteracy remain persistent challenges for them, primarily as a consequence of their birth into lower castes or tribal communities.

Backward classes constitute a large and diverse segment of the Indian population, comprising nearly one-third of the country's total population. This broad category includes: (i) Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis), (ii) Scheduled Castes (Harijans), and (iii) Other Backward Classes (OBCs). While the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are constitutionally recognized and clearly defined, the category of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) lacks a uniform definition and is not formally listed in the same manner. Consequently, the issues faced by these groups are highly varied and complex, shaped by social, economic, and regional factors.

## Review of Literature

**Pushpendu & Jain (2019)** investigated a paper on 'Critical Challenges Faced by Students Belonging from Rural Backward Classes in Digitalisation of Education' this paper was highlighted that Over the past few decades, civilization has advanced rapidly. The emergence of information technology and the subsequent transition to the fifth technological revolution

in the early 1960s marked a significant shift. While digitization offers many benefits, it also presents certain challenges, particularly for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. This study focuses on children's use of digital tools and the need to protect them from the risks associated with online communication. Acquiring digital skills is essential, as it enhances their ability to work effectively in interactive environments, fosters creativity, and supports educational engagement through non-traditional methods.

**Biswas & Mahto (2022)** conducted a study on 'The Sequential Educational Development of Namasudra in West Bengal: Problems and Prospects.' From this study, it is revealed that The Namasudra community has made some progress in the field of education, with literacy rates higher than those of other Scheduled Castes in West Bengal. However, they continue to face challenges related to settlement, social status, economic conditions, language, and employment. Despite these obstacles, the community is steadily advancing. Since financial stability, proper settlement, occupational opportunities, and social recognition are key factors influencing educational attainment among the Namasudras, it is essential to improve their economic conditions and address other basic needs to encourage their active participation in education. With access to these opportunities, the Namasudra community can achieve greater educational development. It is the responsibility of the government and political leaders to ensure that all schemes and benefits reach the Namasudra and other marginalized communities, enabling their progress in education, economic empowerment, and professional advancement.

**Verghese & Saravankumar (2024)** conducted a study on 'Enhancing Education Empowering Kerala's Tribal Students Through Digital Learning.' Digital learning is the sound of today. Digital learning has the potential to empower education among tribal students in Kerala. By integrating digital tools into the education system, dropout rates in tribal schools can be significantly reduced. The government is expected to introduce new policies aimed at improving tribal education. The concept of digital learning gained global prominence during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, due to limited access to technology, poor internet infrastructure, and the high costs associated with digital education, it became extremely challenging almost a nightmare for tribal students to continue their studies.

**Objective:**

Objective of the present study is

1.  to find out the problems of backward class to access education

2.  to find out the role of Digital tools to increase educational awareness among backward class and Namasudra students.

**Digital Tools**

Digital learning refers to any form of education that integrates technology with instructional practices to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It encompasses a wide range of approaches, including blended learning, virtual learning, and technology-assisted classroom instruction. Although often confused with online learning or e-learning, digital learning is broader in scope, as it involves the use of any technological method that enhances

the overall learning experience. Common digital aids employed in the education sector include television, radio, mobile phones, computers, laptops, and the internet.

## Advantages of Digital Learning

Digital learning enables teachers to deliver interactive and engaging content through the use of multimedia resources, which create dynamic learning experiences and make complex concepts easier for students to grasp. It also supports adaptive instruction, allowing for systematic and personalized learning tailored to individual needs. By connecting learners across the globe, digital learning fosters collaboration, cultural exchange, and peer-to-peer learning.

A key advantage of digital learning lies in its provision of instant assessments and feedback, enabling students to identify and address gaps in understanding in real time, thereby improving learning outcomes. Unlike online learning or e-learning, which are often narrowly defined, digital learning broadly encompasses any instructional practice that effectively integrates technology to enhance the student learning experience. It provides learners with direct, hands-on engagement with content, supports self-paced study, and accommodates diverse schedules and learning styles. Furthermore, with internet access, students can learn from virtually anywhere, reducing reliance on traditional classroom materials and lowering educational costs.

## Backward class and Namasudra

The Indian Constitution does not explicitly define the term backward classes. However, various constitutional provisions outline the characteristics of backwardness and establish safeguards for disadvantaged groups. Article 15(4) refers to social and educational backwardness, while Article 16(4) highlights inadequate representation of backward classes in public services. Article 23 prohibits forced labour, and Article 46 directs the state to promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections, particularly Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Beyond identifying different forms of backwardness, the Constitution also provides for their upliftment. Article 17 abolished untouchability and guaranteed equal legal rights to Scheduled Castes, a principle reinforced by the Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955, which introduced penalties for its violation. The introduction of adult franchise further extended political empowerment to these communities. However, while legal measures have reduced formal disabilities, the deeper challenge lies in eradicating entrenched social discrimination. To address this, Article 46 obligates the state to actively promote the educational and economic development of weaker sections and protect them from social injustice and exploitation. Additionally, Article 340 empowers the state to investigate the conditions of backward classes and recommend measures for their advancement. With this constitutional framework as a foundation, it is essential to examine the broader social background of backward classes to fully understand the nature of their challenges.

The Namasudra community, classified as a Scheduled Caste under the Indian Constitution, forms part of the broader category of backward classes. Historically, the Namasudras

inhabited the eastern region of undivided Bengal. However, the Partition of India in 1947 divided Bengal into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Bengal (India), leading to widespread displacement. Many members of the community remained in what became Bangladesh, while a significant number migrated to India, either voluntarily or under compulsion. At present, the Namasudras are primarily concentrated in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. Despite their continued struggles with settlement, social marginalization, economic hardship, language barriers, employment challenges, and limited access to education, the community has made gradual progress. Since financial stability, secure settlement, occupational opportunities, and social recognition are critical factors shaping educational advancement, it is imperative to strengthen the economic foundation of the Namasudras. Ensuring their basic needs and improving their socio-economic conditions will create an environment that fosters active and meaningful participation in education.

**Problems faced by the backward class students to access education**

Parental unemployment and limited access to disposable income are significantly hindering digital education in tribal areas. Several key challenges contribute to this issue:

1. Inadequate electricity supply in backward class regions.

2. Poor internet connectivity and digital infrastructure.

3. Lack of awareness among students about digital learning methods and tools.

4. Absence of a well-structured and effective action plan to facilitate smooth digital education for  backward class ribal students.

5. Shortage of smart classrooms and digital learning facilities in backward class and Namasudra areas.

6. Insufficient number of teachers trained in digital education methods.

**Problems faced by the Namasudra students to access education**

The majority of the Namasudra community resides in rural areas, where agriculture and daily wage labor remain the primary sources of livelihood. Securing basic necessities such as food continues to be their foremost concern, and under such conditions, many families report being unable to send their children to school, despite the government's provision of free and compulsory education for all, irrespective of caste, creed, community, gender, race, or language. Consequently, the Namasudra community continues to lag behind in educational participation, a gap that has become even more pronounced in the present digital era.

**Measures to empowering backward class students through digital tools**

The following are the major solutions to empowering backward class students through digital learning.

To uplift the backward classes, it is crucial to address the root causes of poverty and unemployment that continue to hinder their development. Infrastructure development should

be prioritized by ensuring the provision of electricity in all regions predominantly inhabited by backward class populations. Equally important is the establishment of reliable internet connectivity in remote and underdeveloped areas, which would create a foundation for digital learning. Awareness programs should be organized specifically for students from backward classes, including the Namasudra community, to familiarize them with the opportunities and benefits of digital education. The government must introduce digital learning packages designed to meet the unique needs of these students. Furthermore, targeted financial allocations should be made for the digitalization of schools where Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) constitute the majority of the student population. In addition, digital training programs for teachers are essential to ensure they acquire the necessary skills to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Active promotion of computer-assisted instruction in schools will further enhance the educational experience of SC, ST, and OBC students, enabling them to participate more meaningfully in the digital learning era..

## Conclusion

Digital learning is the need of the hour, with the potential to significantly strengthen educational opportunities for tribal students in Kerala. The integration of digital tools into the learning process can play a vital role in reducing dropout rates in tribal schools. Recognizing this, the government is expected to introduce new policies aimed at enhancing access to education within tribal communities. The concept of digital learning gained global prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for many tribal students, it became an enormous challenge—almost a nightmare—due to limited access to technology, poor internet infrastructure, and the high costs associated with digital education. These barriers severely restricted their ability to continue learning and highlighted the urgent need for inclusive digital strategies.

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