Progress across social groups in West Bengal has been uneven. The state’s Scheduled Tribes, in particular, record very high levels of poverty, and the pace of poverty reduction among them has been slow. In addition, more of their people work for casual wages than others. What’s more, levels of educational attainment and open defecation vary starkly between social groups. While most households in the state have poor access to drinking water, the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are particularly worse off than others.

### High poverty and slow poverty reduction for the Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Households by Social Group, 2012 (%)</th>
<th>All India</th>
<th>West Bengal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Tribe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Caste</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Backward Caste</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population below poverty line, (%)

- **2012**: Scheduled Tribe: 49, Scheduled Caste: 21, Other Backward Caste: 18, General: 18

Pace of poverty reduction
- Scheduled Tribe: -8% per year
- Scheduled Caste: -6% per year
- Other Backward Caste: -8% per year

### Poverty among the Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal is higher than in many other states

**ST population below the poverty line, 2012 (%)**

- **WB (West Bengal)**: 49

Low Income States are highlighted in orange, AI is All India.
Schooling levels vary between social groups in West Bengal

Education attainment, 2012 (% adults)

- Scheduled Tribe
  - Illiterate: 45
  - Literate or primary school completed: 31
  - Middle school completed: 10
  - Secondary school or higher completed: 14
- Scheduled Caste
  - Illiterate: 34
  - Literate or primary school completed: 34
  - Middle school completed: 17
  - Secondary school or higher completed: 15
- Other Backward Caste
  - Illiterate: 21
  - Literate or primary school completed: 32
  - Middle school completed: 22
  - Secondary school or higher completed: 24
- General
  - Illiterate: 25
  - Literate or primary school completed: 28
  - Middle school completed: 17
  - Secondary school or higher completed: 30

More casual wage jobs for the Scheduled Tribes than other groups in West Bengal

Share of employed, 2012 (%)

- Scheduled Tribe
  - Casual Wage: 62
  - Salaried: 25
  - Self-employed: 13
- Scheduled Caste
  - Casual Wage: 46
  - Salaried: 40
  - Self-employed: 13
- Other Backward Caste
  - Casual Wage: 39
  - Salaried: 44
  - Self-employed: 16
- General
  - Casual Wage: 30
  - Salaried: 52
  - Self-employed: 19
While open defecation is low on average in West Bengal, it is high among some social groups

Households practicing open defecation, 2012 (%)

Access to drinking water is poor in West Bengal, especially among the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes

Households with drinking water on premises, 2012 (%)