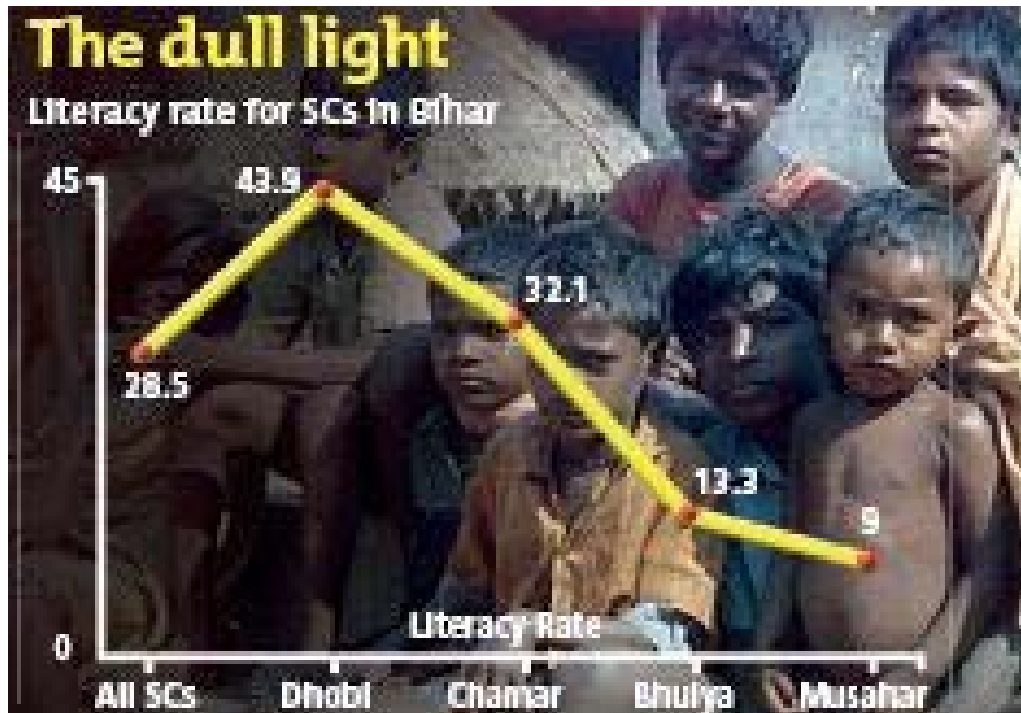


Mahadalits & Dalits of Bihar



Dalits constitute nearly 15 percent of Bihar's population of 83 million. The poorest Dalits were declared Maha Dalits in Bihar. A government commission has identified 21 of the 22 Dalit sub castes, including Musahar, Bhuiyan, Dom, and Nat as Maha Dalits. They constitute 31 percent of the Dalit population in the state.

The commission has not included four Dalit castes - Paswan, Pasi, Dhobi and Chamar - in the Maha Dalit category. These four constitute 69 percent of the Dalit population in the state.

A few months ago Nitish Kumar announced a special package of Rs.3 billion (\$76million) for the socio-economic development of the poorest among Dalits. He set up a commission in August last year for the welfare of certain Dalit castes that are socially and educationally more backward than others.

Bihar is the first state to constitute a commission to study the status of the neglected subcastes among Dalits and suggest ways to uplift them. The commission in its first interim report to the government a few months ago painted a bleak picture of the Dalit sub-castes. The report said there were no high school teachers or senior officials from these castes in the state despite reservations in government jobs for them.

21 Mahadalits -Bantar, Bauri, Bhogta, Bhuiyan, Chaupal, Dabgar, Dom, Ghasi, Halalkhor, Hadi, Kanjar, Kuraria, Lalbegi, Mushar, Nat, Pan, Rajwar and Turi. Dhobi and Chamar, Pasi

1 Dalit castes - Paswan

No of Lok Shakti Sangathan Participant in the Dalit Watch TOT

