

*IIMK/WPS/61/ECO/2009/17*

**DEMAND FOR EDUCATION: IS CULTURE A MAJOR DETERMINANT?**

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Some communities are regarded as backward in India and the government of India provides special incentive for persons belonging to these communities in educational institutions and public sector jobs since independence. The gap of educational attainment between these disadvantaged communities has not been bridged despite these measures. We investigate into the demand for education from these communities. The data is from rural West Bengal, a state in eastern India. In this state, private tuition is an integral part of the educational expenditure for families. Using this variable as a proxy, we find households belonging to the Scheduled Castes, a backward community, spend significantly lesser compared to the general population for children's educational attainment. This is an indication of cultural roles in shaping educational attainment.

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