



Education for Tribal Women empowerment and their literacy Status in Andhra Pradesh

Dr. B. Prabhakara Rao, Academic Consultant, Dept. of Political Science and Public Administration, Vikrama Simhapuri University, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Abstract: Empowering the marginalized Tribal women through education will contribute a lot to national development. Stepping into empowerment is a far distant dream for the Tribal women. The educational status of Tribal women is very low compared to their male counterparts. Education of women is conceived as one of the most powerful weapons in the development of a nation. Empowerment of tribal women is challenging issue in the present scenario. Without empowerment of tribal women, meaningful inclusive growth of the country is not possible. Empowerment of tribal women can be measured through the power they have over economic resources to earn income and their per capita income, access to education, access and availability of professional opportunities and participation in economic decision making and their access to political opportunities. Education is a mean to secure empowerment among the marginalized tribal women. 35 Tribal communities are residing in Andhra Pradesh with different socio-economic background. Finally, the paper concludes by arguing for an educational policy to adequately respond to essential education in Andhra Pradesh.

Keywords: Tribal women, Empowerment, profession

Introduction

Women education in India plays a key role in the social and economic development of the country. Educating a woman uplifts her life as well as the quality of her life and her entire family. It is a fact that any educated woman will definitely support the education of her children especially a girl child and provide a better guidance to her children. An educated woman will easily imbibe an independent and progressive outlook in her children. More importantly, an educated woman in a society like India will assist in reducing the infant mortality rate and control the blossoming of the population. The main objectives of the study are: to study opportunities associated the education of the tribal women, to find out the status of tribal women education and to assess the challenges and change.

Importance of Education

There is a saying that "if you educate a boy, you only educate an individual; if you educate a girl you are educating the whole family". Education imparts knowledge, and knowledge of self identity and human environment will infuse a sense of confidence, courage and ability among the weaker sections of the society to know and overcome their problems associated with exploitation and deprivation, and avail socio-economic and political opportunities extended to them. On November 28, 2001 the Government enacted the 93rd Amendment of the constitution making the Right to Education a Fundamental Right. There are number of studies exposed the educational development of tribal women by quantitative indicators in the form of enrolment, literacy rate and educational facilities. Though the governments have



taken several steps in the development of tribal education projects and schemes much need to be exercised.

The social welfare programmes have been ineffective due to deficiency in the administrative scheme, lack of sore trained management, lack of general preparedness for large investments, lack of accounting systems, procedural delays and insufficient of proper monitoring and evaluation. The constitutional directive to allow for free and mandatory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years has not yet been fulfilled. Experts from the educational field acknowledge that this lack of success is mainly due to the slow progress of education among girls, SC and STs. It is observed that the literacy among the tribal women has falling behind all other section. The low educational condition of the tribal women is excogitated in their lower literacy rate, lower enrolment rate and higher dropouts in the school. When women want to deal with issues like wages, savings, accessing government schemes, skills up gradation, interacting with socio-political structures the literacy have to be propelled. The dropout rate for tribals at the secondary level is as high as 87 percent and for the girls it is almost ninety percent. There are various factors responsible for the slow advance of the educational development of tribal women. The factors like poverty, unbiased attitude of the parents, irrational and bias, problem of suitable teacher, language and communication, inadequate infrastructure facilities in education institution, high loss and stagnation.

Need of education to the tribes

First and foremost indicator is poor economic status is a great deterrent to successful education of the tribal children

especially for female children. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial and women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. The tribal community think that if the child is taken away from his normal economic work to attend school, the family deprives of the little income, which she brings. As a consequence, the parents have to feed the child out of their earning and resulted economic marginalisation of the household. In these circumstances, education, the basic necessity of life, is a matter of luxury for the tribal family. A huge section of tribal parents avoid sending their children to school to grab the costless educational opportunities offered to them. However tribal and non-tribal teachers feel hard to convert the tribal parents to send their youngsters to school. The tribal community feels that there is no need for the girls to go to school and waste their time. Psychological and social factors like illiteracy of the parents and their indifference to education, lack of encouragement by the community, motivation and "insecurity" of future for being educated. Other factors like low social interaction between students and teachers, and between teachers and parents, suspicion over the sincerity of the non-tribal teachers and in many cases shortage of tribal teachers also discourage parents to send their children to school. Irrational and bias acts a damaging role in contributing education in the tribal areas. The tribals thinks after becoming educated and earning jobs, their children may alienate from them and cut off their links with their families and villages. Some tribal groups trust that their almighty shall be furious



if they send their children to schools run by outsiders. The non tribal teachers in many cases treat themselves „civilized“ and tribals as “uncivilized” and “savage”. The relationship between teachers and children is poor. In a tribal group, a positive thinking teacher, has a special power in the village setting for which tribals are afraid of him. Most of the teachers unwilling to stay near the school or in the village, where as teachers stay in nearby towns. Most of the tribal area schools do not have sufficient teachers and the schools are depending on stop-gap arrangement teachers. Deficiency of communication becomes a problem between student and teachers.

To assess the challenges and Change:

Tribals are still devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water health care, ample transportation, etc. problems associated with education of tribal women needs immediate attention and early resolution. Tribal women need to face lots of challenges in the society. Skills training, increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular for the informal sector are linked with poverty re-education. The first and foremost challenge to the tribal is that they are still not much exposed to the outside world and are confined to their community only. If we closely analyze functioning of educated tribal’s, we notice two traits of transformation. One group of educated tribal argues that tribals should reform themselves with the mainstream society. The other group of tribals wants to maintain its tribal identity. Most of the primitive tribes still live in hills, dense forest with difficult terrain and many a times, it is difficult to reach them because of lack of road and transport facilities. It is a challenge to

provide education to tribals and setting up school and institutions in small, scattered and remote tribal habitations. High school drop-out rate among tribals is another reason for their lagging behind in education. The issues and challenges in tribal education can be categorized as external, internal, socio-economic and psychological. The external constraints are related to issues at levels of policy, planning, and implementation while internal constraints are with respect to education system, content, curriculum, pedagogy, and medium of instruction, etc. The third set of problems relates to social, economic, and cultural background of tribals and psychological aspects of first generation learners. It is important to address the problems of low literacy among tribal women severely at national level and resolve the peril through confident and effectual means.

Empowerment of tribal women is a challenging issue in the present scenario. Without empowering tribal women, meaningful inclusive growth of the country is not possible. Empowerment of tribal women can be measured through the power they have over economic resources to earn income and their per capita income, access to education, access and availability of professional opportunities and participation in economic decision making and their access to political opportunities. Access to education is the key for economic, social and political empowerment of tribal women. Tribal women empowerment through education is a possible means for inclusive growth. It has direct impact on various aspects of tribal development. Educational attainment increases women’s understanding on the present socio-political structure and the existing hurdles on their development.



Empowering the marginalized tribal women through education will contribute a lot to national development. The educational status of tribal women is very low compared their counterparts in other communities. Education is a powerful tool for national development. It has the power to raise the status of tribal women. Education is a means to empower the marginalized tribal women. 35 Tribal communities are residing in Andhra Pradesh with different socio-economic background. The present topic makes an attempt to analyse the current educational status of tribal women in Andhra Pradesh and the role of education in empowering the tribal women in Andhra Pradesh.

Education is often used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated advantages of the past, there will be a well conceived edge in favour of women. The national education system will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators.

Tribal Women Education and Empowerment

Empowering women is to increase their control over the decisions that affect their lives both within and outside the household. Women are a major force behind people's participation, in the life of society today, not only do they comprise the majority of those excluded from participation but they play a leading role in the emergence of groups, organizations and movement, worldwide and are becoming increasingly active in their communities, governments and the

international arena (Karl, 1995). Women gain greater share of control over many resources such as knowledge, information, ideas including financial resources that involved access to money and control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation through empowerment (Kulshreshtha, 2010). Empowerment in the context of women's development is a way of challenging and overcoming barriers in a women's life through which she enhances her ability to shape her life and environment. It is an active, multidimensional process, which enables women to realize her full identity and power in all spheres of life. Mahatma Gandhi rightly commented that "when a man is educated, an individual is educated; when women is educated, a family and a country are educated"

Education is central to the process of empowerment, since consciousness raising essentially a process of education. Education, in the context of empowerment is a weapon of great potency, as it provides exposure and access to new ideas and way of thinking, and triggered a demand for change. In the absence of education that is relevant to existing knowledge and real needs, women are unable to get access to formal sector jobs, make career advancement, participate in decision making at all levels, and be represented in government and gain political influence. Data around the world shows that increased educational attainment is associated with the empowerment of women (UN, 2004). Educated women become more affective at improving their own well-being and their family's welfare. They are better equipped to extract the most benefit from available services and existing opportunities, and to generate alternative



opportunities, roles and support structures. These empowering effects of women's education are manifested in a variety of ways, including increased income earning potential, ability to bargain for resources within the household, decision making autonomy, control over their own sexuality, and participation in public life (Jose and Thampy, 2006).

Scheduled Tribes of Andhra Pradesh

The 2011 census reveals that the total tribal population of Andhra Pradesh is 59, 18,073. Traditionally the Chenchus in the Nallamalais are food gatherers and hunters. The Lambadas are traditionally the cattle breeders. While a majority of tribal groups inhabiting the Scheduled Areas are agriculturists, the Khonds, Konda Reddis and Savaras are largely shifting cultivators. The Yeruulas pursue a variety of occupations ranging from basket making to sooth saying, while the Yanadis living in the countryside are engaged in fishing, snake catching, crop

watching etc. The tribes of Andhra Pradesh can be classified into different groups on the basis of their geoethnic milieu. The tribal female literacy rate is very low but with the effect of modernization and urbanization and due to the efforts of various missionaries and social workers. Education is being spread over tribal area through constant motivation. Tribal women are now obtaining education and educated tribal women are also providing education to other students and their family members. The educated tribal women also encourage the female education among them for the upliftment of their society. A large percentage of tribal women are illiterate but both the literate and illiterate tribal women are contributing in the development of education as by sending their children to school and college by obtaining education of different levels and by providing education to other members of the society.

Table I: Demographic status of Tribal Women Andhra Pradesh

Sl. No.	Year	General Women	Tribal Women
1	1961	12.03	1.48
2	1971	15.75	2.12
3	1981	20.39	3.46
4	1991	32.72	8.68
5	2001	50.43	26.11
6	2011	59.74	40.09

Another element of social exclusion of tribal women from elementary education is the extent to which discrimination is practiced by teachers. Teachers in India

are predominantly upper caste and bring their own understandings of the legitimacy of caste relations into the classroom. Higher rates of teacher



absenteeism were reported when women were mainly from tribal communities. On the other hand, as the tribal's are lagging behind culturally and no scope for mingling with other societies the parents of tribal students are unable to cope up with the upcoming trend in the society. The linguistic problem is the major problem faced by the teachers who were working in tribal schools. This shows a significance difference of teachers"

adjustment in their classroom teaching. In spite of the Christian missionaries' invaluable services, tribal education remained very miserable until the period of independence. It is a natural that in the tribal areas, all students do not proceed to the higher classes due to their poverty and social backwardness and they drop before reaching a particular stage in to their educational career.

Table-2: Literacy status of Tribal Women in Andhra Pradesh

District Name	Male	Female	Total (%)
Anantapur	65.4	44.2	55.40
Chittoor	59.4	46.0	52.70
East Godavari	59.8	48.7	54.25
Guntur	55.3	37.5	46.40
Kadapa	57.4	39.9	48.65
Krishna	61.1	46.2	53.65
Kurnool	65.2	44.6	54.90
Nellore	46.1	39.3	42.70
Prakasam	53.7	40.4	47.05
Srikakulam	63.5	43.7	53.60
Visakapatnam	55.6	34.7	45.15
Vizianagaram	55.2	38.4	46.80
West Godavari	61.2	53.1	57.15
Total	74.8	60.0	67.40

Suggestions:

- Government and civil societies should create awareness among the tribal people about the government programmes, needs and advantages of the education among tribal women.
- Skill training programmes have to be designed and organised for school dropout women.
- Create awareness that education only should make the tribal women economically independent, solution to



their life problems and make their life better.

- The tribal teachers who understand the tribal language and culture must be posted in tribal schools.
- In order to motivate the girls, their families about the value of the education the tribal teachers should be given incentives.
- Establishment of tribal residential schools for girl students.
- Establishment of schools and colleges in tribal areas especially the tribal dominated blacks.
- Supporting the tribal students with special scholarships, fellowships, hostel facilities, remedial coaching and other measures and particularly for the girl students.
- Along with the state government, NGOs, voluntary organization should frame genuine programmes and policies for the educational development of tribal women.
- Support the institutions located in border, hilly, remote areas and educationally backward areas.
- Teachers in the rural areas should be appointed for conducting awareness campaigns among the parents about the importance of women education.

Conclusion

Tribal women empowered are a challenging issue in the present scenario. Scheduled Tribes of Andhra Pradesh are economically, socially and educationally backward when compared to the mainstream society. The overall backwardness in turn isolates,

marginalizes, and discriminates them from the entire social participation. The literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribal's is very low compared to the general population. In the case of tribal women literacy the situation is not satisfactory. There exist a wide gap in the rate of literacy between the tribal men and women. For the educationally marginalized tribal women of Andhra Pradesh, there is a need to mobilize their social position through education. Education is a powerful generator of social mobility. Education itself is a capability that can assure inclusive growth. In order to bring them within the ambit of inclusive growth the government, NGOs, and voluntary organization must frame genuine policies and provide means to improve their social position, especially through education. Access to education widens social participation of tribal women. It also provides access to many other. Once they are educationally better off they are a part of an inclusive growth.

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