

Education and Socio-Economic Development of Tribal Women: A Study

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Abstract

Education is one of the essential means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence, which is necessary to participate fully in the extension process. It begins to higher productivity, efficiency and better socio-economic development of the individual as well as society Education is a mean to secure empowerment among the marginalized tribal women Education of women is conceived as one of the most powerful weapons in the development of a nation. Economic Empowerment of Tribal women through education will contribute a lot to national development. Educational development is a far distant dream for Tribal women. The educational state of Tribal women is very low related to their male counterparts. Development of Literacy among tribal women is a challenging issue in the present scenario. Without education of tribal women, meaningful, inclusive growth of the country is not possible. Education and economic empowerment of tribal women can be measured through the power they have over financial 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. Finally, the paper concludes by arguing for an educational policy to adequately respond to essential education in Andhra Pradesh for tribal women community.

Keywords: Scheduled Tribe, Empowerment, Education, Employment, Literacy, Economic Development

Introduction

Empowerment of tribal women is a challenging problem 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 sources to earn income and their per capita income, access to education, access and availability of professional opportunities and participation in financial decision making and their access to political opportunities. Access to education is the key for economic, social and political empowerment of tribal women.

The empowerment of Tribal Women through education is a possible means for inclusive growth. It has a direct impact on various aspects of tribal development. The individual, as well as empowering the marginalised tribal women through education, will contribute a lot to national development. The educational state of tribal women is deficient compared to their counterparts in other communities.

It has the power to raise the socio-economic status of tribal women. About 35 Tribal communities are residing in Andhra Pradesh with a different socio-economic background. The present topic attempts to analyze the educational situation of tribal women in Andhra Pradesh and the role of education in empowering the tribal women in Andhra Pradesh.

Man and Woman are two distinctive terms representing two identifiable human forms, based on biological differences. Nature created these differences in the progression of our society. Both the sex was made complementary to have a progeny and thus made equally responsible for carrying our nature's command. But somewhere down the stream of history, we forgot nature's design of conceiving complementarity of sexes and started attributing a lower status of women. Overhead the years, sociologists and other scholars have tried to assess the problems faced by women and to study changes in their situation around the globe in common and in Indian society in critical.

We find that man and woman have been proved as the two wheels of a chariot. Gradually, a majority of women also imbibed the male notion of woman's unimportance and started keeping a low profile. The identity and individuality were bulldozered by men and suppressed by women themselves. However, some philosophers, thinkers, reformers and law-givers those who were aware of this injustice towards women, sowed hope in the defeated minds. India, with a woman Prime Minister at the helm of affairs in the 1970s and early 1980s, was even more eager to understand the problems of women and improved their lot.

Status of Women in Vedic and Post-Vedic Period

The state of women in India has been fluctuating from Vedic period. It has gone through many changes as various historical stages. Historically speaking, women in India have given through two phases of their life, i.e., the period of subjugation and the period of liberation. At times, she has been oppressed and suppressed, and at times, she is regarded as the deity of the home. From the Vedic age to till today, her status and position have been changing with time. Hence, it is necessary to analyse the status of women in the various generations to assess her real situation today.

The Rig-Vedic society was free. The Aryans preferred male child to a female child. However, female were as free as their male counterparts. Education was equally open for boys and girls. Girls studied the Veda and fine arts. Women never observed purdah in the Vedic period. They enjoyed freedom in selecting their mates. But divorce was not permissible to them. In the family, they enjoyed complete freedom and were treated as Ardhanginis.

In domestic life, women were considered to be supreme and enjoyed freedom. The home was the place of production. Spinning and weaving of clothes were done at home. Women maintained their husbands in agricultural pursuits also. Husband used to discuss his wife on financial matters. The woman was seen as having an equally significant share in the social and religious life because a man without a woman was considered as an inadequate person. She regularly participated in religious ceremonies with her husband. During the Vedic period, the status of women was not uneven to that of men. Women got education similarly to men and engaged in philosophical debates.

Status of Women in the Epics

Epic age, in the history of female freedom, may be viewed as a golden age. Women had been accorded an honourable status in society. Most of the female characters of Ramayana and Mahabharata were well educated. The Ramayana represents the Hindu ideal women of India. In Mahabharata, we find instances where women gave counsel and advice to men on social and religious issues. Women had an active role in the social and political life of the then society. A general survey of the Puranas exhibits that the position of women declined in the corresponding age.

Status of Women in the Smritis

Manu says that women must always be honoured and respected by the father, brother, husband and brother-in-law who desire their welfare and where women are accepted, there the very Gods are pleased, but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite even could yield rewards. He advises every household to treat his daughter as the highest object of tenderness and honour mother as the most venerable person in

the world. According to Manusmruhi, women are deprived of the Upanayana ceremony and thereby of education. Manu relegates her to an entirely subordinate position. He preaches self-negation as the most important ideal of a wife. She is asked to serve and worship her husband even if he is not a person of all virtue and character. For service and worship of the husband are the primary duties of a wife, by so working, she can hope to attain heaven.

Manu deprives women of her economic rights also. He says that a wife, a son and a slave, these three are declared to have no property, the wealth which they earn is for him to whom they belong. It looks that Manu had a very poor opinion about women. According to him, women should be guarded against their evil inclinations. Otherwise, she will bring sorrow to both families. He also observes that if a woman is chaste, it is because she has not obtained a proper man, place and opportunity. He, therefore, calls her a Pramada, a temptress. So, he wants a woman to be under the surveillance of her father in her childhood, her husband in her youth and her sons after the death of her husband. He states in unequivocal terms that no woman deserves independence.

Status of Women in Buddhist Period

Many evil social practices, like the practice of pre-puberty marriages, denial of the right of women to education and also to the male selection, etc., were imposed on women during the periods of Puranas and Brahmans. In the Buddhist period, the position of women improved to some extent. In the religious field, women came to occupy a clearly superior place. They had their Sangha called Bhikshuni Sangha, which provided avenues of cultural activities and social services. They got ample possibilities in public life. However, their economic status remained unchanged.

Status of Women in Medieval Period

According to ancient Hindu, texts and tradition, until about 500 B.C., women in India enjoyed considerable freedom. But during the next thousand years, women's position gradually deteriorated. Educational and religious parity was denied to them, and widow remarriage was forbidden. The status of

women caused degenerating in the post-Vedic age because of the conception of purity and pollution and restrictions of inter-caste marriages. Child marriage had started in the Smriti age. During this period, a woman's husband was regarded as God. During the middle ages, the position of women in Hindu society further degenerated. Several problems arose for Hindu women in the Mughal period. Education of women in whatever form came to be closed. Child marriage was started. As this period, the inhuman practise of 'Sati Pratha' was in vogue. Sati Pratha, Purdah Pratha, child marriage, polygamy, girl killing, etc., were the main social evils of this period.

But, during the fifteenth century, the situation underwent some change. The Bhakti movement organised by Ramanujacharya as this period included new trends in the social and religious life of Indian women. The saints like Nanak, Kabir, Meera, Chaitanya, Ramdas and Tulsi stood for the right of women to religious worship. Hence, this movement, at least, provided religious freedom to women. As a result of this freedom, they acquired certain social independence also. The saints encouraged women to read religious books and to educate themselves. Although the Bhakti movement provided a new life to women, this movement did not bring any substantial change in the economic status of women. Hence, women continued to hold a low status in society.

Women and Education

Women's education has assumed a special significance in the context of the country's planned development as women constitute nearly half of the nation's population. Education enables the women to acquire basic skills and abilities and fosters a value system which is conducive to raising their status in society. Recognizing the fact, great emphasis has been laid on women's education in five-year plans. There was a large scale expansion of facilities for education up to the fourth plan. But still, cast disparities existed in the relative utilization of available facilities for boys and girls at various stages of education. To promote women's education enrolment and retention in schools in backward areas and among underprivileged sections of the population, in addition to the incentives like free

distribution of Text Books, Uniforms, Mid-Day Meals etc.,

To expedite education among the girls of SC and ST, additional facilities are being provided under the Development of Backward Classes sector. The Adult Education Program aims at increasing adult literacy. The IRDP, NREP, TRYSEM and other such programs are also to have a component of functional literacy for Tribal women beneficiaries. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) which aims at eradication of illiteracy in 15 to 35 years of age group by 1995, emphasizes the importance of imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norm etc., It further states that the focus of NLM would be on rural areas, particularly SC and STs.

Distribution of Tribes in India

The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs and the number of individual ethnic groups

etc. reported as Scheduled Tribes is 705. The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. About 89.97% of them live in rural areas, and 10.03% in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribals from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against 17.69% of the entire population. The sex ratio for the overall population is 940 females per 1000 males also that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males.

The trend in the ST population since Census 1961 is presented in table 1. It is observed that from 30.1 million in 1961, the ST population increased to 104.3 million in 2011. Table 1 shows a similar picture of the people of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and All Categories for Male, Female and Total for Census Years 2001 and 2011. As per 2011 Census Scheduled Caste population in the country is nearly double of the Scheduled Tribe population.

Table 1 Trends in the Proportion of Scheduled Tribe Population in India

Census Year	Total Population (in Millions)	Scheduled Tribes Population (in millions)	Proportion of STs population
1961	439.2	30.1	6.9
1971	547.9	38.0	6.9
1981	665.3	51.6	7.8
1991	838.6	67.8	8.1
2001	1028.6	84.3	8.2
2011	1210.8	104.3	8.6

Source: Government of India, Census Report, 2011

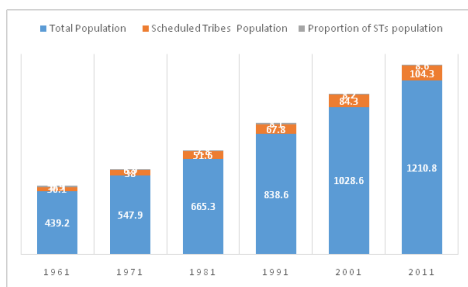


Diagram 1 Trends in Proportion of Scheduled Tribe Population

Educational Levels in Tribal Areas

Education, conceived as organized instruction is a part of the development process. Theoretically, culture must evolve persons to acquire knowledge

and necessary skills. This knowledge and skill should further enable them to compete for and acquire better occupational status or higher social status in life. Thus, education should lead to social mobility and economic productivity of the individual and as a result of the society. These are some of the basic assumption about education in a modern, open and competitive society. The National Commission has in recent times published three study reports on tribal women on education, health and employment respectively.

The commission claims a fair degree of understanding of the acute hardships faced by tribals, of course, the degree of hardship varying from tribal region to region and tribal community to community.

Based on this familiarity, anybody can be convinced that the priority should be to education favoured by health and employment. The educational contests for tribal communities should be related uniquely. Education of tribals has not received the impetus. It was expected to receive consequent to Tribal sub-plan, National policy on Education and subsequent Program of Action.

Education Development of Tribals

The educational level of the tribal population is low and formal education has made very little impression on tribal groups. The level of literacy with the tribals in the greatest states of India is very low. Reservation policy of the Government has made any changes in the educational status of the tribal community. One of the main reasons for the low level of literacy is their assigning relatively smaller importance on formal schooling. The school curriculum and education system do not create much excitement in them; rather, a much more practical based curriculum would be helpful for them. Moreover, since the tribe lives in poverty, they do not like to send their children to schools as they are considered to be extra helping hands for generating family income.

Chowdhuri (1988) attempted to examine the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled tribe women in West Bengal in a comparative setting with scheduled caste and non-scheduled women. The main findings were that only 5.01 per cent of Scheduled Tribe females were regarded as educated in comparison to Scheduled Caste women who were 13.70 per cent and the non-scheduled population was 37.43 per cent. This level was quite low as related to the overall rate of females who are literate. Various reasons have been attributed to the low level of literacy among the scheduled tribe girls. The work participation rate among scheduled tribe women was higher in percentage as compared to others. The poor economic condition has a direct bearing on the degree of work participation.

Scheduled tribe workers are engaged in the agricultural sector and non-gainful occupations. Regarding the education, economic and health of the tribal women, their positions were not at all satisfactory. Thus, in every society, a woman's status

can be compared to a moving equilibrium at various times. This fact will be borne out if we review some known facts about a tribal woman's life in her particular community. Today women, known to be the most pampered tribal women, get a very kind treatment from male-members and are never made a target of social contempt.

Literacy Levels among Tribal Women

As indicated by the census report is 16.35 per cent of tribals in India are literates. The percentage of literacy for male was 24.52, while the female literacy rate among the tribal women was 8.04 per cent compared to India's total literacy percentage. Thus, the literacy rate of tribal women is only one-third of the literacy rate of women in India as a whole. The Central and State Governments have positive efforts to spread education among the tribals. Most of the tribes from North-eastern states, Union Territories of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and in Chhota Nagpur Plateau came under the influence of Christian Missionaries before Independence. Consequently, women of these tribes had better access to formal education.

As per the Ministry of HRD statistical data, the enrolment ratio of Scheduled Tribe girls at primary education level and upper Primary level education is 16.87 and 3.6 per cent respectively. While for females, all over India took as a whole; it is 48.26 and 14.31 per cent respectively. The middle stage level enrolment ratio of Scheduled Tribes girls is very low in the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Maharashtra. It is observed that the scenario of education amongst tribal women is quite disappearing. There is no denying the fact that the literacy rate of tribal women as a whole is also very low, but that does not undermine the importance of educating tribal women.

Status of Education among Scheduled Tribes

Education forms an essential component in the overall development of individuals, enabling them to greater awareness, a better comprehension of their social, political and cultural environment and also facilitating in the improvement of their socio-economic conditions. These hold in the case

of the Scheduled Tribes in India. The present and comparative literacy and level of education of the Scheduled Tribes in India is presented in the following lines.

Literacy Rate of Total and ST Population during 1961-2011

Literacy Rate (LR) is defined as the percentage of literates among the population aged seven years and above. Although literacy levels of STs have developed, the gap in literacy levels, both for tribal men and women has not declined significantly. The gap in the literacy levels was increased between 1971 to 1991 and falling after that to a little above the 1971 level. Table 2 reveals a comparison between the literacy rates of the total population and the STs from Census 1961 to Census 2011. For the Scheduled Tribe population in India, the Literacy Rate increased from 8.53 per cent in 1961 to 58.96 per cent in 2011 for STs, while the corresponding

increase of the total population was from 28.30 per cent in 1961 to 72.99 per cent in 2011 as shown in table 2 and diagram 2.

The Literacy Rate increased by 11.86 percentage points from 2001 to 2011 for STs and 8.15 percentage points for the whole population during the same period. LR has, however, all along been lower both for males and females STs as compared to SCs and total population. The male-female gap in literacy rate decreased from 24.41 percentage points in 2001 to 19.18 percentage points in 2011 for STs and the total population; it declined from 21.59 percentage points in 2001 to 16.25 percentage points in 2011. For SCs, this gap decreased from 24.74 in 2001 to 18.71 in 2011. Table 3 gives the State/UT wise low Literacy Rates of Scheduled Tribes as per Census 2011. It shows the following ten states/UTs have less than the country's average regarding ST literacy rates. The same is presented diagrammatically in diagram 3 below.

Table 2 Comparative Literacy Rates of STs and Total Population (in per cent)

Category / Census Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99
Scheduled Tribes	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96
Gap	19.77	18.15	19.88	22.61	18.28	14.03

Source: Government of India, Census Report, 2011

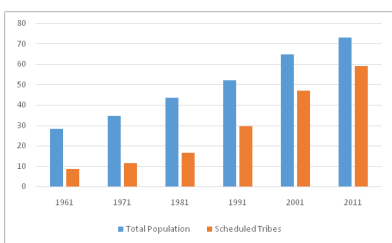


Diagram 2 Comparative Literacy Rates of STs and Total Population (in per cent)

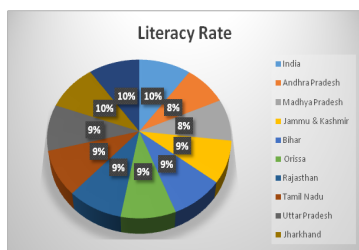


Diagram 3 States Having ST Literacy Rates Less than the Country's Average for STs

Table 3 States Having ST Literacy Rates Less than Country's Average for STs

S. No.	State/UT	Literacy Rate
	India	58.96
1	Andhra Pradesh	49.2
2	Madhya Pradesh	50.6
3	Jammu & Kashmir	50.6
4	Bihar	51.1
5	Orissa	52.2
6	Rajasthan	52.8
7	Tamil Nadu	54.3
8	Uttar Pradesh	55.7
9	Jharkhand	57.1
10	West Bengal	57.9

Source: Government of India, Census Report, 2011

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for any stage for different Classes is defined as the percentage of the enrolment in that stage to the estimated child population in the respective age group. Table 4 shows the GER for STs at the Elementary stage (I-VIII) from 1990-91 to 2010-11. The data in table 4 shows that the GER for STs in the elementary stage has improved considerably from 1990-91 to 2010-11. The GER for ST girls improved from 60.2 in 1990-91 to 119.8 to 118.7 in 2010-11 overall the GER of STs was more pronounced as compared to other social groups. The GER has increased from 80.4 in 1990-91 to 119.7 in 2010-11 for the STs and from 78.6 in 1990-91 to 86.5 in 2010-11, for the total population. From 2003-04 to 2010-11, the GER was higher for STs than the SCs and the total population, both for male and female. The GER of ST children as compared to the all categories Children at different stages of education as per Statistics of School Education 2010-11 is diagrammatically presented in diagram 4.

Table 4 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for ST and Total Population

Classes	ST	All Categories
Classes I – V (6-10 Years)	137	116
Classes VI - VIII (11 - 13 Years)	88.9	85.5
Classes I - VIII (6 - 13 Years)	119.7	104.3
Classes IX - X (14 - 15 Years)	53.3	65
Classes I - X (6 - 15 Years)	106.8	96.2
Classes XI - XII (16 - 17 Years)	28.8	39.3
Classes IX - XII (14 - 17 Years)	41.5	52.1
Classes I - XII (6 - 17 Years)	94.8	86.5

Source: Government of India, Statistics of School Education 2010-2011.

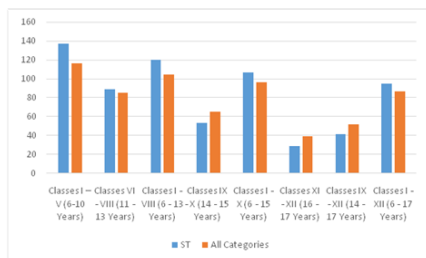


Diagram 4 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for ST and Total Population

At 119.7, the GER for ST children at the elementary level (class I-VIII) compares favourably with the All India level (104.30), but it falls drastically at the secondary level (53.3) with a gap of almost 12 as compared to the All India level, and the GER at the post matric level falls further to 28.8, 10.5 points lower than the All India level. Quite clearly, the reasons for high dropout of ST children after class VIII and then again after class X have to be addressed if their educational status is to be enhanced to enable them to take advantage of the overall growth of the economy. Moreover, the position of GER at the elementary level also varies considerably from State to State as well as across tribal groups and tribal areas within states, thus underscoring the need for differentiated, focused strategies to address the educational shortfall.

Gender Ratio among STs

According to the Statistics of School Education 2010-11, MoHRD, the identification of several Scheduled Tribe girls per 100 ST boys reveal that there are 94 girls in Classes I-V, 91 girls in Classes VI-VIII, 81 girls in Classes IX-X and 72 girls per 100 boys in Classes IX-XII (Table 5). Among the states, Sikkim has the highest ratio of the girls in all classes per 100 boys. There are 102 girls in Classes I-V, 127 girls in Classes VI-VIII, 108 girls in classes I-VIII, 128 girls in classes IX-X and 125 ST girls in classes IX-XII per 100 boys. Sikkim is followed by the State of Meghalaya where per 100 ST boys, there are 100 girls in Classes I-V, 113 girls in Classes VI-VIII, 103 girls in classes I-VIII, 111 girls in classes IX-X and 113 ST girls in classes IX-XII. The least number of girls per 100 boys in the classes are in the state of Bihar, where per 100 ST boys, there are 68 girls in Classes I-V, 71 girls in Classes VI-VIII, 69 girls in classes I-VIII, 59 girls in classes IX-X and 56 ST girls in classes IX-XII.

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is a socio-economic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females. In its most simplistic form, it is calculated as the quotient of the number of females by the number of males enrolled in a given stage of education (primary,

secondary, etc.) Gender Parity Index (GPI) for STs is seen to be highest in the Classes I–V and lowest in Classes XI–XII. The steady increase in Gender parity for ST students at the Elementary (I–VIII) from 1990–91 to 2010–11 is shown in table 5 and diagram 5 below:

Table 5 Gender Parity Index (GPI)

	Scheduled Tribe	All Categories
Classes I - V1	1.00	1.01
Classes VI - VIII	0.96	0.95
Classes I - VIII	0.99	0.99
Classes IX - X	0.86	0.88
Classes I - X	0.97	0.97
Classes XI - XII	0.76	0.86
Classes IX - XII	0.82	0.87
Classes I - XII	0.96	0.96

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010–2011.

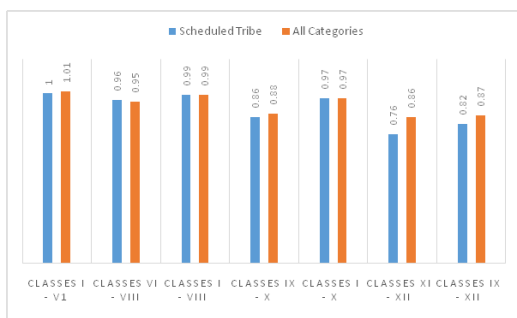


Diagram 5 Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Tribal Education in Andhra Pradesh

The state of Andhra Pradesh, in the interest of the development of ST Community in terms of education, Government has been giving full support in implementing several educational development programs for Tribal community in particular. The Indian Constitution through Article 46 envisaged special provisions in the post-Independence period for the promotion of education of Scheduled castes and scheduled Tribal, and this was special responsibilities of central and State Government.

The need for providing education as well as bringing these sections of the population into the mainstream of the development process was seen by social reformers and political leaders,

inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s Ideas of Education. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has been implementing several educational programs for the development of tribes in Andhra Pradesh. The important schemes included in the programs for the expansion of education facilities among scheduled Tribes are the opening of various types of schools, the award of scholarships, providing hostel facilities, stipends, stationery grants, boarding grants, mid-day meals etc.

Schemes Implementing for Education Development of Scheduled Tribes

Central assistance is given to States/UTs/ Universities for construction of new hostel buildings and extension of existing hostels.

A Scheme of strengthening education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts with 100% assistance is given for running and maintenance of educational complexes for ST girls.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) are set up with a capacity of 480 students per school under grants in aid under Article 275(1) of the Constitution to States, to provide quality middle and high-level education to ST students. This Ministry also presents the Post-Matric Scholarship for ST Students and Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST students studying in classes IX & X.

Being per Ministry of Tribal Affairs’ Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan (SCA to TSP) Guidelines, and Guidelines for Article 275 (1) of the Constitution, in intra-State (sectoral activities, community, area-wise) prioritization and allocation, 40% to 50% of funds must be allocated for education in States / UTs. Funds are presented for recurring expenses for Residential Schools and Non-Residential Schools to Voluntary Agencies.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs has published advisories to States for a series of measures to address issues of dropout, and for continuing education of tribal children including: development of Bilingual Primers including text both in regional and tribal language, school vacation to be in synchronization with major tribal festivals, school management to engage teachers to overcome shortage, 100% screening of children for Sickle Cell Anemia/Trait, 100% physical enrolment of children.

Apart from these, Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) is executing various schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meals, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), presents for free and compulsory elementary education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, including ST children. One hundred nine special focus districts have been identified based on the indicators like out of school children, high gender gap, low retention rate and infrastructure gap as well concentration of Scheduled Tribes population. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) plan provides for residential schools for girls at upper primary level; a minimum of 75% seats are for minority, SC, ST and OBC girls. KGBVs cover 69% ST girls in ST Special Focus Districts.

Economic Status of Tribal Women

There is no denying fact that tribal women contribute to their economic development in a more substantial way than that of tribal men. It is noteworthy that the tribal women who constitute 5.81 per cent of the total female population of India contribute 28.34 per cent to the female working population. According to the Report of the working group on the development of STs during the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), the percentage of main workers amongst tribal women increased from 26.76 per cent in 1971 to 32.83 per cent in 1981.

Social and Economic Status of Tribal Women in India

The situation of a person or a group in a society is determined mainly by the health status, employment status educational status, and decision-making ability. All these factors are almost related to one another. The higher level of education will generate employment opportunities, health awareness, and decision-making ability among these groups. In the Indian social context, there is a predominance of the patriarchal family structure where males predominate in all settings and social contexts.

However, among many tribal communities, the predominance of matriarchal families could be found. Contrary to patriarchal societies, the status of women is found to be higher in matriarchal families. It is

found that the Garo and Khasi tribes of North East India assign a relatively higher position to women due to the system of matrilineal descent, matrilocal residence and inheritance of property through the female line. Though other tribal communities which follow patriarchal norms, the status of women is not as high as it is in matriarchal societies.

For some other tribes, such as Gond, Ho, the husband does not ever enjoy a dominant role. A Gond woman enjoys equal status with their male counterparts in various regards to their social life. A study on the Naga women by Hutton (1921) showed that they have substantial freedom and higher social status. This indicates that the condition of tribal women is not the same in all places; rather, they vary according to the tribal group and the social structure. However, in tribal societies, tribal women are extra important than women in any other social groups because tribal women are very hardworking and in almost all the tribal communities they participate in economic activities almost equally with men or works harder than men, and the family economy and income also depends on women.

Their reduction of ability to participate in the industrial economic activities of modern societies has deteriorated their living conditions. The tribals are regularly engaged in occupations which do not generate much income such as hunting, crafts making, agriculture. Industrialisation and urbanisation have brought about a change in the life and living of the tribals by uprooting them from their day to day activities and making them dependent on the vagaries of non-tribals.

Problems and Prospect of Education among Tribal Women

Education is required for tribal women to be able to participate and benefit from the development process. Knowledge can help women to enhance their literacy skills, better hygiene, caring for family health, utilization of their leisure time to develop their vocational skills for their economic enhancement, to fight against exploitation which they suffer for and that is indeed the more significant and foremost empowerment, when women are educated their trust automatically disappears or at least decreases. Education increases women's awareness and leads to

their overall development, thereby helping the nation to prosper. The tribal female literacy rate is very low, but with the effect of modernisation and urbanization and due to the efforts of various missionaries and social workers, education is being spread over the tribal area through constant motivation. Tribal women are now obtaining an education, and educated tribal women are providing education to other children and their family members. The educated tribal women also encourage female education among them for the upliftment of their society. A large percentage of tribal women in India in general and in Andhra Pradesh, in particular, are illiterate but both the literate and illiterate tribal women are contributing in the development of education by sending their children to school and college. As per 2011 census, the literacy rate in India has been reported as 74.04% with a 14% increase to that in 2001, whereas the hike is maximum for rural women at 26% in the last decade, which may be attributed to literacy mission of Government of India.

Impact of Education Among Tribal Women

Recently many of the tribal families are sending their girl children for school education as well as higher education and professional education. Nowadays, many of the tribal girls are completing PG courses, medicine as well as engineering courses. Some are sending their girl children abroad for further higher studies. Many of the ST girl children are getting good government jobs and settled in professional fields.

Due to education development among tribal women, they are encouraging next-generation ST girl children for higher education and settling in employment. The early marriages among ST girls are reduced, and dropout rates also declined in recent years. Due to their economic empowerment through education, they are spending money on children's' education, construction of houses in urban areas. The purchasing power and consumption levels among ST households have been increased in recent years, due to an increase in the educational levels of tribal women, where there by they are getting employment opportunities. The ST households in rural areas are purchasing agricultural lands and improving agricultural production by adopting new technology

in agriculture. This happened due to improvement in education among tribals in general and tribal women in particular.

Conclusions

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. The empowerment of Tribal Women through education is a possible means for inclusive growth. It has a direct impact on various aspects of tribal development.

The educational status of tribal women is very low compared to their counterparts in other communities. The situation of women in India has been fluctuating from Vedic period. It has gone through many changes during various historical stages. Education, conceived as organized instruction is a part of the development process. Theoretically, education must evolve persons to acquire knowledge and necessary skills. This knowledge and expertise should further enable them to compete for and acquire better occupational status or higher social status in life. Thus, education should lead to social mobility and economic productivity of the individual and as a result of the society.

The educational level of the tribal population is low and formal education has made so few impact on tribal groups. The level of literacy among the tribals in most states of India is very low. The percentage of literacy for male was 24.52, while the female literacy rate among the tribal women was 8.04 per cent compared to India's total literacy percentage. Thus, the literacy rate of tribal women is only one-third of the literacy rate of women in India as a whole.

As per the Ministry of HRD statistical data, the enrolment ratio of Scheduled Tribe girls at primary education level and upper Primary level education is 16.87 and 3.6 per cent respectively. While for females, all over India took as a whole; it is 48.26 and 14.31 per cent respectively. The male-female gap in literacy rate decreased from 24.41 percentage points in 2001 to 19.18 percentage points in 2011 for

STs and the total population; it declined from 21.59 percentage points in 2001 to 16.25 percentage points in 2011. For SCs, this gap decreased from 24.74 in 2001 to 18.71 in 2011.

At 119.7, the GER for ST children at the elementary level (class I-VIII) compares favourably with the All India level (104.30), but it falls drastically at the secondary level (53.3) with a gap of almost 12 as compared to the All India level, and the GER at the post-matric level falls further to 28.8, 10.5 points lower than the All India level. According to the Statistics of School Education 2010-11, MHRD, the comparison of several Scheduled Tribe girls per 100 ST boys reveal that there are 94 girls in Classes I-V, 91 girls in Classes VI-VIII, 81 girls in Classes IX-X and 72 girls per 100 boys in Classes IX-XII.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has been performing several educational programs for the development of tribes in Andhra Pradesh. The important schemes included in the programs for the expansion of education facilities among scheduled Tribes are the opening of various types of schools, the award of scholarships, providing hostel facilities, stipends, stationery grants, boarding grants, mid-day meals etc. There is no denying fact that tribal women contribute to their economic development in a more substantial way than that of tribal men. It is noteworthy that the tribal women who constitute 5.81 per cent of the total female population of India contribute 28.34 per cent to the female working population

The tribal female literacy rate is very low, but with the effect of modernisation and urbanisation and due to the efforts of various missionaries and social workers, education is being spread over the tribal area through constant motivation. Tribal women are now obtaining an education, and educated tribal women are providing education to other children and their family members. The educated tribal women also encourage female education among them for

the upliftment of their society. A large percentage of tribal women in India in general and in Andhra Pradesh, in particular, are illiterate but both the literate and illiterate tribal women are contributing in the development of education by sending their children to school and college.

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