

TRIBAL WOMEN IN EDUCATION: ROLE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION

Abstract

There is a saying “educating a girl child is educating a generation” which indicates woman’s role in building a better society. If we provide quality and indiscriminate education to a girl child, it helps to build an extremely civilized society. Lack of awareness among the people is leading for existing discrimination, based on gender in education. This affects girls’ education and leads to remain them as dropouts.

We can witness a number of evidences regarding discrimination in the advanced society. But the question arises here is that is, if the woman from advanced and civilized society is facing discrimination, we can imagine the condition of a woman from tribal community, where they lack awareness regarding education and its importance. This paper aims to discuss the major factors that affected on tribal women to stop educating.

Therefore it is the responsibility of the researchers to know the factors that affect women to pursue their education and reasons to remain dropouts. This paper tries to study and find the role of socio-economical factors on women education in tribal areas of Telangana. The researcher’s interaction with women from tribal community explores reasons to become dropouts. The findings of the studies will be discussed in detail with statistical analysis and provides some suggestions to overcome the problem.

Keywords: Tribal women, education, socio- economical condition, dropouts, discrimination.

Author

Dr. G. Veerya Nayak

Department of Humanities and Science Kamala
Institute of Technology and Science

Huzurabad, India.

veerunayakg@gmail.com

I. INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment is impossible without education. Education provides opportunity for an individual to perceive knowledge from various sources. Due to various reasons tribal women left as dropouts from the school education or uneducated. As we witness that, even the main stream society woman is facing inequality and discrimination. We can imagine the status of a woman from the tribal and other subaltern communities of India. India is a country with rich culture and diverse communities. The tribal community is one of the nomadic communities in India. Our country and its culture gives top priority to a woman and treats her equal to goddess. But the problem with the society is that, when it comes to education the importance or priority changes in terms of providing or educating a child. This has been experiencing and practicing in the society irrespective of community. To empower women in all fields the government of India initiates many women empowerment schemes like, Beti Bachai Beti Padoos and other schemes Etc.... As we all know that woman plays important role in building any nation. We cannot ignore the importance of a woman. We know the importance of educating women by the famous slogan like “educating a woman is educating a generation”.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Women’s position in Indian society is still low as it has been isolated within homes and neglected in social, religious and political and economic area. The low status of women in India leads to lack control over material and social resources of community (Bhasin, 2007). Child marriages found to missing among tribe since India got the independence. But, over the period of time child marriages are taking place due to assimilation of dominant culture (Arpita Mitra). With the process of Sanskritisation tribes are opting for early marriage as a matter of prestige and discouraging widow remarriage as well as divorce and separation (Roy Burman 1988). K. Mhan also makes similar observation about Bhill women where freedom of Bhill women in the sphere of pre-marital sex, marriage, is gradually shortened. Naga women is known for the freedom in personal affairs as she is never forced to marry against her will and she is important decision maker in home (Hunters et al., 2016). But there is also a shift from bride price to dowry among educated and salaried class (kishwar). Even in states where the development indicators consider higher human development as in Kerala and acting as model for other states in the form literacy, health but marginalization of tribal population is worst in Kerala. But still woman in Kerala is better than in any other states of India.

If we think of educating a tribal woman, it is completely different from educating women from any other community. The tribal woman has to overcome many struggles and problem to get educated. There are certain things to force a tribal woman to eliminate from getting educated. In this chapter discuss the socio and economic problems stand as barriers and influence tribal women to remain dropouts.

Problems Experienced by Tribal Women in Acquisition of Education

The tribal women possess either less education or no education at all (Challenge, 2021). In their lives, they are engaged in various types of tasks and activities that give rise to barriers within the course of acquisition of education. When they are participating in these tasks and activities, they experience number of problems and challenges, which lead to occurrence of

impediments within the course of learning, generating information and sustaining their living conditions in a suitable manner. In tribal communities, the system of education is not in a well-developed state. There are number of areas, in terms of which there are occurrence of limitations. When the system of education will not be in a well-developed state, it is apparently understood, the girls and women will not be able to acquire an efficient understanding of academic subjects and lesson plans. Furthermore, they will not be able to put into practice the academic activities in an appropriate and satisfactory manner. There are number of problems experienced by tribal women in acquisition of education. These are stated as follows:

- 1. Education and Tribal Women:** The tribal women may have less education or remained with no education. They are assigned with different kinds of tasks and activities those stand as barriers to get educated. Education and the system of education in tribal areas are not up to the mark, comparing to non tribal areas. The kind of curriculum and the social economical status of the tribal community force the women to remain uneducated or being dropouts. If the education system does not be in a well-developed condition, it is understood that the girls and women will not be able to acquire an effective and quality education to acquire knowledge in the concerned subject and expected level. Therefore women may not pursue education as outcomes expected by the course designers. There are numbers of problems related to social and economical experienced by tribal women in education.

Majority of tribal schools are without infrastructural facilities (Sujatha, 1994). Besides the fact majority of tribal children especially girl children are important earners of family and due to migration from place to place keeps absenteeism high and high dropout ratio. (Ranvi– M 2000) observed in her study that due to language barriers tribal children are unable to establish contact with teacher which makes them to drop the school at some point or the other. The main cause low educational attainment of scheduled tribe women is dual system of educational administration; ministry of tribal affairs at national level and state education department at state level which cause lack of coordination among these two departments. Schools schedules are decided by state education department which hardly takes into consideration specific condition and circumstances of tribal children.

On health matter due to their extreme poverty tribal women have very poor health condition. Nutritional anemia is acute problem among tribes in India and in tribal belts and anemia adversely affects the psychological and social lives of tribal women.

2. Social Issues

- **Household Work:** If we look at the life of a tribal woman her early childhood starts from various household work responsibilities. They are trained to carry out the works like cleaning, washing, preparation of meals, fetching water, taking care of the needs and requirements of family. Once, getting married most of the tribal women may not be allowed to get education. This kind of attitude of family members makes them dropouts. They are only encouraged to look after household work at in-laws. The in-laws family members do not encourage them to pursue their education. Instead, they are prepared to do household work, field works and giving birth to kids. Therefore,

household responsibilities can be one of the problem faced tribal women to continue their education.

- **Early Marriages (Child Marriage System):** As per the 1929 Act, marriage of girls below the age of 14 years and boys below the age of 18 years was prohibited. This Act was amended in 1978 to increase the minimum age to 18 years for females, and 21 years for men (prevention of child marriage act 1929, India). Tribal communities in country like India perform girl's marriage below the suggested age. Most of the women from the tribal area get married between the ages of 11 to 16 years. The reason for getting tribal women married before the age prescribed by the government could be the financial conditions of the tribal families. Tribal communities have less awareness about the marriage age. Social and cultural practices followed by their ancestors influence the next generation. Lack of awareness in adapting advance civilization is also one of the reasons for lacking in education. The tribal communities cannot accept the massive change in their life what we call civilization. It is understood that early marriage can be curse to the tribal women to get educated.
- **Gender Inequality:** Discrimination is there in every society based on gender, caste, and religion. The tribal communities also have discrimination based on gender like any other civilized communities. There is male domination in the tribal community. The male dominates women in all aspects. Parents from tribal community also discriminate women in providing education and other needed necessities. This leads to have less confidence among the women in any fields to take part their active role. Getting birth of male child is treated as assert for the family, whereas female child is treated as burden to them. This kind of attitude you can see in all societies and communities. Male child is provided with quality education. Discrimination on girl child to provide education is one of the reasons to lack women empowerment and development in tribal communities.
- **Lack of Awareness:** The tribal communities lack in knowing the value of education as they live in isolated areas. They stay far away from the main stream and civilized community. They cannot mingle or mix with the civilized community, which makes them to be called uncivilized. Due to less interaction with the other communities they stand behind getting awareness regarding importance of girl's education. Even though, the government of India is trying to uplift the tribal communities with various development programmes, they do not reach to the tribes properly. They stay away from the developed communication system. The world has become small hub due to internet and technological developments but the tribes remain unaware about the advanced technology. This could be one of the reasons behind lacking women in education. If the opportunities provided they can prove themselves in terms of exhibiting their talent with the advanced society. Therefore bringing awareness among tribal communities will help them to cope with the most civilized communities.
- **Social Practices:** Tribal communities' culture, tradition and customs are different than any other communities in the world their beliefs and the practices they follow make them to lack in many issues. The male domination in the society is seen in this society. Tribal communities believe in superstitions and all other social evil practices.

The persons who practice this kind of social evil make tribes to obey his decisions. They completely believe this kind of people and being cheated by them. This could be the main reason for not having contact with the advanced technology.

- **Role of Community:** The community plays major role in development of the nation along with their community development. The role of the society is crucial in preparing human being. The tribal community people have different kind of mindset that the women should not be getting educated. Once they reach the age of 14 years they think of getting married to her. If a girl child gets married they do not accept them in the society and force her to get married and they do manipulate her parents to get their daughter married at early age. Most of the women in the tribal community get marriage before the age of puberty. At his age giving birth to a baby is not suitable but it happens in this community. The researcher had several personal experiences about early marriage system and the role of the society in keeping women away from education.

3. Economical Issues

- **Financial Status of Tribes:** The financial status of any community makes people to live their comfortable life. The financial status of tribal communities in India is in vulnerable condition, as that they cannot afford their livelihood. The financial planning system like other communities they never think of any financial planning to have better life style. The major source of income for them is collecting and selling various products of jungle. The marketing system to sell their collected products is not proper. If a community is poor in its financial status we can imagine the problem that the community faces. So, the tribal communities face lots of financial and social problems which are the barrier to get educated in the society.
- **Dowry System:** There was no dowry system in tribal communities but it has been introduced by the so called developed communities and being adapted by the tribal communities. The dowry system has been followed in the tribal communities to exhibit their status. The parents of a girl child may not afford to pay dowry to the groom, if they see the groom who is well educated. They also think that if they educate girl child they may need to pay more dowry. This dowry system has become biggest barrier to educate girl child in any community.
- **Lack of Awareness about Various Scholarships:** To uplift the tribal communities the central and state governments introduced various scholarships to educate girl child. The people from tribal community do not have awareness about different scholarships provided by the governments. There is Rajiv Gandhi National fellowship for the SC and STs to get higher education where government provides financial assistance to pursue their education at university level. There are separate fellowships and scholarships for girls, just they need to get aware about them and should get benefited.
- **Suggestions to Overcome the Problems:** Trough the observations and review of related literature, we can provide some suggestions to overcome the problems being faced by the tribal women in getting educated. The suggestions can be given to the

government, the community, society, individual women who are being victims and the main stream civilized society in helping tribal women to pursue their higher education.

- **Role of the Government to Provide Education to Tribal Women:** The government of India is taking all the necessary action and initiation to empower tribal women by providing various welfare schemes and scholarships for higher education. The questions arises here is that even though the government taking all actions why tribal women remain dropouts and uneducated. So, we must think the roots of the problem to get complete knowledge. We can understand that the government schemes and projects which mean for tribal women development may not reach to them as government expects. Therefore the government must create awareness among the people to utilize the opportunities provided by it. It is also duty of the government to have proper monitoring system to study on implementation of welfare programmes and to check at what extent the beneficiaries are utilizing it. The government should advertise the schemes to reach the remote tribal areas of India.
- **Community Role:** As we discussed in this chapter the community plays important or vital role in any person's development. The community must think in advance competing with the civilized community. As we know that an individual learns many things by observing or imitating. The community people must encourage girls to go for higher education. If they educate a girl in their family their generation will get educated. The community must educate their girl child to know the different development programmes introduced for the development of their community girls. They must have communication with the main stream society to get awareness. Most of the tribal areas are located in remote areas, having communication with the main stream society will help in the growth of the tribal community along with women empowerment.
- **Role of Civilized Society in Educating Tribal Women:** The role of the civilized and main stream society is very much needed in developing or empowering tribal women. As we depend on each other to survive we need mutual cooperation in building India as developed country. The tribal women lack in education and empowerment along with health issues. The main stream society needs to play its role effectively in terms of bringing awareness among tribal women. They can be taught several issues like education and health related awareness.
- **The Responsibility of Tribal Women to Empower Themselves:** Tribal women must utilize the empowerment and development programs initiated by the government of India to exhibit and excel their talents in different fields. They must come out from the notion that they are made for household responsibilities. They must fight against child marriages and other social evils which stands barriers for their personal and society development. The women those who already have good position in the society must spare their time to bring awareness among the tribal women by interacting and conducting several meeting. This kind of contribution from the women may motivate them to pursue their life in a good position.

III. CONCLUSION

The development of tribal women can be possible if the above mentioned agencies take and play their role effectively in bringing change in the society. Women empowerment can be a question without putting effective role from all aspects. The government must study the reasons for tribal women remaining uneducated and dropouts. The main stream and tribal societies must play their effective role in tribal women empowerment. Tribes must think in advance to adapt the changing dimensions like culture, custom etc... in the society. Understanding changes will help an individual to change their life style and cope with any kind of people in the world.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bhasin, V. (2007). Status of Tribal Women in India. *Studies on Home and Community Science*, 1(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09737189.2007.11885234>
- [2] Hunters, T. D., Author, C. Y., Source, D. F. T., Britain, G., & Url, I. S. (2016). Source : *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* , Vol . 64. 64(1), 237–263.
- [3] Sujatha, K. (1994). *Education Among Scheduled Tribes*. India Education Report: A Profile of Basic Education.
- [4] <https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-prohibition-of-child-marriage-amendment-bill-2021#:~:text=As%20per%20the%201929%20Act,and%2021%20years%20for%20men.>
- [5] <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4394188>