

Empowerment of Tribal Women Through Education In Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract--- "Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process." It leads to higher productivity, efficiency and better socio-economic development. Participatory democracy and economic independence are the central elements of empowerment. 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--- Tribe, Women empowerment, Education, Economic.

I. INTRODUCTION

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.

Women 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 and Empowerment

The opening up of the economy by the forces of liberalization has resulted in a world order where 'survival of fittest' has become the norm of the day, even for the marginalized. In the post liberalization economy where survival is more significant than existence, this part enquires whether the education given to women in Andhra Pradesh has empowered women in all spheres of society so as to survive in the market oriented new world order. The impact of the forces of liberalization had diverse patterns in various sectors and regions of the Indian economy.

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 scenario in the tribal areas has been fast changing in the wake of culture contact on unprecedented scale with the development of communications and transport in the tribal areas. While the process of acculturation is paving way of socio-cultural integration of tribal's with larger groups of the society, there is also a danger of obliterating the rich cultural heritage and institutions of positive value. The dynamics of acculturation may result in group maladjustment and disorganization. The rich cultural heritage of various tribal groups may soon become a thing of the past. Since the process of acculturation cannot be halted it is considered imperative to study and record various facets of socio-cultural life of all the tribal groups of the state.

Review of literature

Empowerment is a word that has been used so often and so widely that its definition has become blurred. Activist groups use the term to rally behind different issues, while academic circles frequently cite the word in scholarly articles. But what do they mean when they say "empowerment" and whom do they want to "empower?" I will discuss these questions by first starting with a brief history of the term.

In academic literature, the word empowerment first came onto the scene with regards to civil rights. One of the first articles was written in 1975 and called “Toward Black Political Empowerment – Can the System Be Transformed.”

Hira and Mugenda (2000) found difference in the ways men and women view money matters, and that women were likely than men to be dissatisfied with their current circumstances and their spending habits. Barber and Odean (2001) indicated that men were more confident than women in making investment decisions; this made men to be overconfident, and leading them to trade more often than women. Derichs – Kunstmann (2006), Philbin, Meier, Huffman and Boverie (1995), suggests that there is an appreciable difference in the way that women and men learn and apply their learning.

II. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

- To find out the status of tribal women education.
- To discuss educated tribal women how to communicate others.
- To find out the process of women empowerment.
- To find out tribal women involvement in their community development.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tribal women and education

Education is essential for tribal women to be able to participate and benefit from the development process. Education 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 and to conquer the disadvantage and discrimination which they suffer from and that is indeed the greater and foremost empowerment, when women are educated their dependence automatically disappears or at least decreases. Education increases women’s awareness and lead to their overall development, thereby helping the nation to prosper.

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
LITERACY RATE OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN 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	NA

Source: Census of India, 2011

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 tribals 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 II
DISTRICT-WISE ST LITERATES AND LITERACY RATES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

District Name	Male	Female	Total (%)
Adilabad	52.32	26.88	39.68
Anantapur	57.22	30.89	44.52
Chittoor	52.78	35.83	44.44
East Godavari	50.36	38.91	44.6
Guntur	46.59	27.59	37.28

Hyderabad	64.52	45.67	55.38
Kadapa	51.7	30.1	41.2
Karimnagar	46.04	22.14	34.23
Khammam	47.97	27.57	37.85
Krishna	51.3	35.78	43.75
Kurnool	55.75	28.7	42.73
Mahabubnagar	37.58	13.33	25.76
Medak	41.06	14.26	28.08
Nalgonda	29.12	20.13	35.22
Nellore	41.9	32.77	37.42
Nizamabad	44.99	16.47	30.71
Prakasam	46.87	28.96	38.15
Rangareddy	46.3	22.09	34.53
Srikakulam	52.32	30.61	41.92
Visakapatnam	45.98	22.67	34.34
Vizianagaram	44.6	26.21	35.28
Warangal	47.97	27.57	37.85
West Godavari	55.87	45.96	50.86
Total	47.66	26.11	37.04

Source: A.P. DISE Data 2011-12 (as on 30th sep, 2011)

IV SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPOWERING THE TRIBAL WOMEN

The role of Tribal women is important but their socio-economic development is poor, more needs to be done. The problems of tribal women and tribal's are largely common. Suggestions and recommendations to strengthen and empower tribals as well as tribal women are:

- 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.

V. 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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