
EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract: Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the various walks of life like education, employment, good health and economic empowerment etc. Empowering may be understood as enabling weaker sections like poor women, especially tribal women to acquire and to possess power and resources. Organizing capacity and leadership quality are the main obstacles to the economic empowerment of tribal women. Empowerment is an active and multidimensional process, which enables women to realize their identity and power in all aspects of life. The needs for empowerment of tribal's women hardly need justification. Their primitive way of life, economic and social backwardness, low level of literacy, out dated system of production, absence of value systems, sparse physical infrastructure in backward tribal areas and demographic quality of tribal areas make the development of tribals and tribal areas essential. Government of India launched a lot of programme for development of tribal area, viz. Tribal Sub-Plan strategy, Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, State/UT Minor Forest Produce Act, 2005 including other Development and Employment Programme etc. Self Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme of the government of India is designed to alleviate poverty and empower women of the country. The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society.

Keywords: Economic, Education, Empowerment, Tribal Women.

Introduction: Education has been regarded both as an end in itself and a means of realizing other desirable ends. It develops the personality and rationality of individuals, qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status. It has been recognized as a major instrument which societies can use to direct the process of change and development towards desired goals. It provides for vertical mobility and can thereby help to equalize status between individuals coming from different social strata. As a result the movement for improving women's status all over the world has always emphasized education as the most significant instrument for changing women's subjugated position in the society. In fact every human child in every country receives the earliest social training from its mother. There is a popular saying that „if you educate a boy, you only educate an individual; if you educate a girl you are educating the whole family“. Therefore, a mother is not only the first teacher but also the mentor of children until they are able to think and act on their own.

In fact the word 'empowerment' is used in different context and by many organizations. For example, literature about empowerment is found in the fields of education, social work, and psychology and community development groups in the North and South as well as in the work of feminist and development organizations. There is a variety of understanding of the term empowerment due to its widespread usage. Empowerment refers broadly to

the expansion of freedom of choice and action. For poor people, that freedom is severely curtailed by their voicelessness and powerlessness in relation particularly to the state and markets. Thus, empowerment is the expansion of assets & capabilities of poor people to participate in negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.

Many studies have revealed the educational development of tribal women by quantitative indicators like enrolment, literacy rate and educational facilities. When literacy has been recognized as an important tool of empowerment, the tribal society has been greatly disadvantaged and the tribal woman is enormously handicapped. Though the governments have taken several steps in the development of tribal education projects and schemes, much remains to be done. The progress achieved in this field is far from satisfactory. Superstitions, blind beliefs and prejudices play negative role in imparting education in the tribal areas. Even today in most parts of the country, the tribal women remains steeped in superstitions and ignorance with main presiding over their destiny (Rani, Rajani and Neeraja 2011). Except tribal communities in north-eastern region, there is widespread feeling in the tribal community that education makes their children defiant and insolent and alienates from the rest of their society. They think that after becoming educated and getting jobs, their children may alienate from them and cut off their links with their families and villages.

The term Scheduled Tribes first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defines Scheduled Tribes as such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution". Article 342 prescribes the procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of Scheduled Tribes. Empowered by Clause (1) of Article 342 the President may with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor thereof notifies tribes or tribal communities or parts of these as Scheduled Tribes. This confers on the tribe or part of it a Constitutional status invoking the safeguards provided for in the Constitution to these communities in their respective States/UTs. Clause (2) of the Article empowers the Parliament to pass a law to include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes any tribe or tribal community or parts of these. Thus, the first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/ Union Territory is by a notified order of the President, after consultation with the State Governments concerned. These orders can be modified subsequently only through an Act of Parliament.

The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society.

In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are most important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them.

A lot of evaluation studies and impact studies were made in respect to micro finance through SHG linkage and claimed that SHGs promotes empowerment in general and women in particular. But there is no uniformity about the concept of the term-its issues and dimensions. Further, the issue of empowerment also relies on different methodological issues & identifies different indicators for measuring empowerment. Researchers also claimed that empowerment as a concept was first brought at the International Women's Conference in 1985 at Nairobi. The conference concluded that empowerment is a redistribute of power and control of resources in favour of women through positive intervention. Further, empowerment and gender equality recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. It is one of the eight millennium goal to which world leaders agreed at the Millennium Summit held at New York in 2000.

There are more than 400 tribal groups among the scheduled tribe population, each with their distinct cultures, social practices, religions, dialects, and occupations. Thus, the different tribal groups are highly heterogeneous, and their differences are a function of the environment in which they live, the degree of exposure to the mainstream Hindu population, government involvement in their daily lives, their economic status, and past history.

Scheduled Tribe Population in Andhra Pradesh			
State	Total population	ST population	% of STs in the state total population
Andhra Pradesh (2001 census)	76210007	5024104	6.60
Andhra Pradesh (2011 census)	84580777	5918073	7.0

Source: census of India, 2001 and 2011.

Important Tribes in Andhra Pradesh				
Sno	Tribes	District	Population	Literacy rate
1	Andh	Adilabad	9735	40.48
2	Bagata	Visakhapatnam	1, 33, 434	40.80
3	Bhil	Andhra pradesh	421	55.78

4	Chenchu	Kurnool, prakasham, guntur, mahaboobnagar and nalgonda	49,232	32.28
5	Gadaba	Srikakulam,vizianagaram and viskhaptnm	36,078	36.63
6	Gond, naikpod	Andhra pradesh	2, 52, 038	36.39
7	Goudu	Srikakulamvizianagaram and visakhapatnam	7749	26.14
8	Hillredy	Khammam	77	58.82
9	Jatapus	Srikakulamvizianagram	1,18,613	38.90
10	Kammara	Srikakulamvizianagar visakhapatnam, east Godavari west godavari	45010	39.68
11	Kattunayakan	Migrated from southern india especially from tamilnadu	161	59.29
12	Kolam, mannervarlu	Adilabad	45671	24.51
13	Konda dora	Srikakulamvizianagaram, visakhapatnam and east and west godavari	2, 06,381	35.09
14	Konda kapu			
15	Konda reddy	East and west godavari khammam	83,096	41.06
16	Khonds	Srikakulamvizianagaram and visakhapatnam	85,324	17.81
17	Kotia	Visakhapatnam	48,408	40.95
18	Koya	West godavari, east godavari, khammam warangal	5,68,019	41.85
19	kulia	Visakhaptnam	368	41.44
20	mali	Visakhapatnam, vizianagaram and srikakulam	2513	26.48
21	Manne dora	Visakhapatnam, srikakulam and east godavari	13,579	38.72
22	Mukha dora	Visakhaptnam, srikakulam and east godavari	37,983	28.02
23	Nayak	West godavari and khammam	14,222	38.91
24	Pardhan	Adilabad	23,724	60.15
25	Porja	Visakhapatnam	32,669	26.55
26	Reddi dora	Visakhapatnam	1721	17.32
27	Rona	Visakhapatnam and vizianagaram	200	25.88
28	savara	Srikakulam vizianagaram	1, 22, 979	34.50
29	Lambada	Throughout andhra pradesh	20,77, 947	34.33
30	Thoti	Adilabad, karimnagar nizamabad	2,074	55.14
31	Valmiki	Agency tracts of andhra pradesh	66,814	58.22
32	Yanadi	Major scheduled tribes of A.P.	4, 62, 167	35.35
33	Yerukala	Throughout andhra pradesh	4, 37, 459	45.36

Source: Census of India, 2001

Literacy is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. Among women in general, high literacy rates lead to lower infant mortality rates reduce the number of pregnancies and enhance the status of women both in domestic life and society.

Additionally, the mother's literacy status and educational attainment have significantly positive effects on the child's human capital attainment. This study attempts to describe the literacy and educational attainment of tribal women by focusing

on factors such as literacy rates, gross enrollment ratio, and dropout rates of tribal women. While the overall literacy rates and educational attainment of tribal women are significantly lower than the national average, this study will show that there are vast differences in human capital attainment among tribal women in the different regions of Andhra Pradesh.

To supplement the efforts of the Department of Education, the nodal Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, also implemented a few exclusive programmes for the educational betterment of STs. They include PMS, Hostels for ST Boys & Girls; Ashram Schools, Residential Schools, Book Banks, Merit Scholarships, Coaching Centres etc. The nation-wide scheme of Post-Matric Scholarships (PMS) for Scheduled Tribe students was revised in 1997-98 to extend its scope besides increasing the amount of scholarship and the ceiling of income limits of parents. The present coverage under this scheme is as high as 20 lakhs ST students. Recently, it came to the notice that as the State Governments are unable to meet the huge committed liability, therefore, the scheme of Post-Matric Scholarships is getting adversely affected by leaving the students to face hardships due to non-payment of scholarships under these schemes. Also the line Ministries of Rural Areas and Employment and Urban Affairs and Employment implement a few nation-wide poverty alleviation programmes viz - Swarna Jayanti Swa-Rozgar Yojana and Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana to generate both wage and self-employment and income generation opportunities for the benefit of the socially and economically disadvantaged Groups. The impact of various poverty alleviation programmes put into action during the last two developmental decades has brought down the incidence of poverty from 63.14 in 1983-84 to 51.14 in 1993-94 in respect of STs as against 44.48 to 35.97 in respect of general category for the same period. The declining trend in the poverty rate amongst STs has been quite encouraging as the percentage decline of STs stood at 12.00, while it was 8.51 for the general category.

However, the incidence of poverty amongst not only the disadvantaged groups lived in social and

economic backwardness but they were also subjected to the persistent social discrimination, crimes and atrocities and exploitation. Areas that are endemic and have a dubious distinction of such crime/atrocities lie in States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, there is an urgent need for effective enforcement of special legislations of PCR Act and POA Act and provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) with more stringent measures. Also, a definite plan of action ensuring investigative, preventive and rehabilitative measures needs to be taken up in those areas/districts where the incidence of crimes/atrocities/violence is high against the weaker sections. Despite the setting up of Special Courts and Mobile Courts to expedite the pending backlog of cases, there still exist numbers of cases in the courts of law. States/UTs should review the existing arrangements to administer the protective legislations and strengthen/revamp them effectively to check the trend of crimes and atrocities and ensure speedy disposal of the pending cases. In this Endeavour, NGOs should also be involved.

Conclusion: The tribal women are not empowered economically as well as socially. The socio-economic empowerment of tribal women could be kept as a long term development goal in India. A tribal woman plays a major role in the co-management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock production etc but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstition and many other social and cultural factors. The participatory role of tribal's in improving their living conditions by fully exploring natural endowments and alternative uses must find an appropriate place in the strategic approach. Education of the tribal women is not a mere learning process rather; it should be a means for creativity and occupation as per the necessities and requirements of the tribal community. Government allocates a large chunk of money to promote education among the tribal girls, yet, there are delays in the process of implementation and in some cases, and corruption paralyses the programmes and objectives.

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