



Empowerment of Indian Tribal Women through Education

Dr. Bhushan Waykar¹ & Dr. Manisha Pandit Gunjal²

¹Hutatma Rajguru College, Rajgurunagar

²Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Economics A.S.C.College, Rahuri, Ahilyanagar (MS)

Corresponding Author – Dr. Bhushan Waykar

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to examine India's tribal education system in terms of its literacy rate, Gender Parity Index, gross enrolment ratio, and dropout rates. The goal of education is to better prepare students for the demands of a dynamic, ever-changing world. By providing appropriate acknowledgment to the degree that an individual is able to pursue or acquire a skill, the educational system's improvements should also help to close social gaps. Across India, the tribal population has experienced a range of forms of hardship, including being cut off from their land and resources. In particular, tribal women are excluded from the mainstream of national life, yet this does not shield them from the effects of socioeconomic shifts that affect society as a whole. The tribal woman is compelled to follow certain standards during this period of transformation, which may even rob her of her freedom, authority over the conventional production system, home, family, and even her own life. It is still the case that many tribal women have dropped out of school at various points, and in order to empower them, chances must be given for them to take on leadership roles in areas such as economic independence and even social change. It is frequently said that these ladies are content with who they are and what they have, and that they do not have high aspirations. It frequently applies not just to women but to everybody who feels dissatisfied and powerless. However, sufficient educational opportunities must be offered in order to enhance their level of desire and develop their motivation to engage in, support, and eventually start their own development programs. Thus, an analysis of the current state of the educational resources available to tribal women and girls has been attempted in this work. It is also advised to offer tribal women residing in rural areas skill and vocational training programs.

Introduction:

One of the concepts used most frequently in development these days is empowerment. However, when it comes to how to measure or monitor it, it is one of the least known. The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus defines empowerment as “giving power” or “authorizing.” The Cambridge International Dictionary defines “empowerment” as giving someone the formal legal right or freedom to do a certain action. Every community, state, and country has a number of segments that are robbed of their fundamental rights; yet, these

segments are not aware of their rights. Women would be at the top of this list if we include such members of society. Women are, in actuality, the most vital component of every community. Because they play a larger role in income and home duties than women do in other social groups, women are highly valued in tribal societies. Women's significance is limited to the domestic sphere and does not transcend into other domains such as the political, social, educational, or economic spheres. Women make up nearly half of all people on the planet. The 2011 census indicates that 48.27% of women

live in India. The most depressing aspect of the nation is that, despite having a high proportion of women in the population, women's status and empowerment are still lacking. The condition is worse among the tribal or primitive communities, which make up about 8.9% of the 104.30 million people living in the nation. In terms of education, tribes rank among the most disadvantaged, exploited, and backward populations. ST's literacy rate is still significantly lower than that of the overall population, with 58.96% as opposed to 74%. In 1961, only 8.54% of tribal members were literate; by 2011, that number had risen to 52.96%. However, the literacy rate for women in these tribes is only 49.50%, whereas it is 68.50% for men. There has been a growing awareness of the need to empower women since the propensity to undervalue them has forced them to hold a secondary place in society and to be deprived of their basic rights. Their ability to solve problems and express themselves through their opinions is enhanced by education. India is ranked 135 out of 187 countries on Gender Inequality Index as per the 2014 Global Human Development Report.

Empowerment of Women:

Giving women more influence over the choices that impact their lives both within and outside the home is the definition of empowerment. In today's society, women are a major force behind participation. Not only do they make up the majority of those excluded from participation, but they also play a leading role in the emergence of global movements, groups, and organizations, and they are becoming more and more active in local communities, governments, and the international arena (Karl, 1995). Through empowerment, women obtain a larger share of control over a variety of resources, including knowledge, information, and

ideas as well as financial resources, which include access to money and the ability to make decisions in the family, community, society, and country (Kulshreshtha, 2010). In the context of women's development, empowerment refers to a strategy for confronting and removing obstacles so that a woman can improve her capacity to influence her surroundings and her own life. It is a multifaceted, dynamic process that empowers women to fully embrace their identities and abilities in all aspects of life. As Mahatma Gandhi correctly observed, "when a woman is educated, a family and a country are educated; when a man is educated, an individual is educated." Women Empowerment itself elaborates that Social Rights, Political Rights, Economic stability, judicial strength and all other rights should be also equal to women. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, said "when women move forward the family moves, the villages move, and the nation move."

Education and Empowerment:

The international order that emerged from the liberalization forces' opening up of the economy is one in which survival of the fittest, even for the disadvantaged, has become the new normal. This section asks whether the education provided to women in Andhra Pradesh has enabled women in all aspects of society so as to live in the market-oriented new world order, in a post-liberalization economy where survival is more important than existence. Different industries and areas of the Indian economy experienced different effects as a result of the liberalization process. Since raising consciousness is essentially an educational activity, education plays a major role in the process of empowerment. Education is a very powerful tool when it comes to empowerment because it gives people access to and exposure to new ideas and ways of thinking, which in turn creates a demand for change. Women are unable to access formal sector positions, grow in their

careers, participate in decision-making at all levels, be represented in government, and acquire political influence in the lack of education that is pertinent to current knowledge and demands.

Education of Indian Tribal Women:

India is the world's second most populous country With 6.77 crore tribal people, The majority of tribal people live in remote forests and hilly regions and are impoverished, ignorant, and repressed. When compared to other segments of the population, they are behind in every aspect of life. The Indian government has introduced several programs aimed at advancing welfare and education among the tribes in general, as well as other fresh endeavors specifically targeted at the female population. Despite these initiatives, there has been little improvement in the literacy rate. It is extremely low among women and extremely poor in the case of the primitive cultures. Any part or region's socioeconomic development depends on literacy, which is why India's tribal population has endured many sorts of deprivation, including being cut off from their land and other resources. Particularly, tribal women are excluded from the mainstream of national life, but this does not shield them from the effects of socioeconomic shifts that affect society as a whole. Literacy and level of education are two basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a group/society. Female literacy rate of 26.1 percent among the ST population is a matter of concern as almost one fourth of ST females are illiterate in the state.

The Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women:

One of the most important measures of both social and cultural progress is education. Education has the potential to be a tool for empowerment. Education is the means by which

one learns what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. While education is crucial for all individuals, it holds particular significance for women and girls. Women's educational success can have a significant and long-lasting impact on families as well as future generations. The phrase "empowerment" is very dynamic and broad, covering all forms of empowerment, including legal, social, political, economic, psychological, and cultural empowerment of women. Education plays a crucial role in the process of empowering women since it fosters independence, confidence, and awareness while also assisting in the pursuit of equality with men or, at the very least, a significant reduction in the gender gap. Tribal women who receive education will be able to fill certain societal roles that they are unable to fill without it.

The fundamental goals of education for women's empowerment are:

1. Educate women and end illiteracy;
2. Help them become independent and confident;
3. Raise awareness about their bodies and sexuality;
4. Empower capable women to negotiate and make their own decisions;
5. Increase awareness of women's constitutional rights;
6. Equip them with the necessary skills and training to generate income; and
7. Prepare them to be good role models for women and to participate in social activities more and more.

Problems of Tribal Education:

- **Medium of language** – Language is one of the important constraints of tribal children which prevents them access to education.
- **The Location of the Village** – The physical barriers creates a hindrance for the children

of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighboring village.

- **Economic Condition** – The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.
- **Attitude of the parents** – As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- **Teacher Related Problems** – In the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon and this affects largely the quality of education.
- **Lack of Proper monitoring**– Proper monitoring is hindered by poor coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and School Education Department.

Measures to be implemented in Promoting Education among Tribal Women:

In order to acquire good-quality education, the tribal women need to obtain support and assistance from their family members in natal as well as marital homes. Girls need support of their parents and when they are married, they need support of their husbands and in-laws. When education is provided free of cost, and then too expenses need to be met in terms of uniforms, bags, stationary, transportation, and so forth. Hence, financial resources are regarded to be of utmost significance in meeting all the educational needs and requirements and goals and objectives. Apart from financial resources, there are other measures as well, which need to be put into practice within the course of acquisition of education. These are improving communication skills; alleviating conditions of poverty and backwardness; generating information among girls regarding significance

of education; providing equal rights and opportunities to girls; inculcating the traits of diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness and managing stress and anger.

These are stated as follows:

- **Improving Communication Skills:**

The tribal women need to focus upon honing of communication skills. The communication skills are regarded as the key in acquiring education, achieving personal and professional goals and bringing about improvements in one's overall quality of lives. When the tribal women are focusing upon honing communication skills, there are various aspects that need to be taken into account, i.e. making use of polite language and decent words, treating others with respect and courtesy, providing accurate information and implementing the traits of morality and ethics. When the individuals possess good communication skills, they are able to do well in their lives. These skills render a significant contribution in enriching the overall quality of lives of the tribal individuals. Hence, the tribal individuals need to learn to integrate with the mainstream society. Therefore, one is able to acknowledge on a wide scale that honing communication skills is regarded as one of the fundamental measures to be implemented in promoting education among tribal women.

- **Generating information among Girls regarding Significance of Education:**

In tribal communities, it is of utmost significance for the individuals to generate information among girls regarding significance of education. In this case, emphasis is put upon making provision of information among girls, regarding how education will prove to be efficacious and worthwhile to them. When the tribal women will recognize the meaning and significance of education, they aspire to acquire good-quality education, promote better livelihoods opportunities and enhance their

overall personality traits. Furthermore, they will be able to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate. Through acquisition of education, the women will be able to provide solutions to the problems and challenges within the course of achievement of goals and objectives, sustaining their living conditions in an adequate manner and bringing about improvements in their overall quality of lives. Therefore, one is able to identify well that generating information among girls regarding significance of education is regarded as one of the essential measures to be implemented in promoting education among tribal women.

- **Providing Equal Rights and Opportunities to Girls:**

The girls need to be provided with equal rights and opportunities. They should be encouraged towards acquisition of education and participation in other tasks and activities. The tribal individuals need to bring about changes in their viewpoints in terms of girls and women. They need to understand that girls can also render a significant contribution in promoting well-being of their families and communities. When the girls are enrolled in educational institutions to hone their educational skills, in such cases, they need to be provided with the opportunities to make use of their educational qualifications, skills and abilities. The girls should not be discriminated against and should be provided with equal rights and opportunities as compared to their male counterparts. This needs to be applied within households as well as educational institutions. Therefore, one is able to acknowledge well that providing equal rights and opportunities to girls is regarded as one of the essential measures to be implemented in promoting education among tribal women.

- **Schemes for Promotion of Tribal Education:**

Free Education, Free Learning Materials, Free Mid-day meals, Free Uniforms, Stipends,

Ekalavya Model Schools: These schools offer quality middle and high-level education to Scheduled Tribe students in remote areas, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities. Vocational Training Centers: These centers are established in tribal areas to enhance skill development and employment prospects.

Suggestions:

- **Literacy campaign** – Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness about the importance of education. Extensive literacy campaign in the tribal dominated districts may be undertaken on a priority basis to literate the tribal.
- **Attitude of the tribal parents** – The attitude of the tribal parents toward education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.
- **Relevant study materials in local languages** – All study materials should be supplied in local languages of tribes.
- **Appointment of Local teachers and female teachers** – It is suggested to appoint more tribal teachers and female teachers in the tribal areas. The ecological, cultural, psychological characteristics of tribal children should be considered carefully by the teachers in tribal areas.
- **Stipends and various scholarships** – Since higher education among the tribes is less, special ST scholarships should be provided to the tribal students perusing higher education, particularly in medical, engineering, and other vocational streams.
- **Residential schools** – More residential schools should be established in each states and districts and extended up to PG level in tribal areas.

- **Social security-** Social security of students, especially of adolescent girls is of great concern in residential schools.
- **Proper Monitoring** – Higher level officials should check the functioning of schools frequently relating to the teaching methods, working hours, and attendance registers.

Conclusion:

In the present existence, the tribal women have recognized the meaning and significance of education. They aspire to acquire good-quality education, promote better livelihoods opportunities and enhance their overall personality traits. The rate of education among tribal women is low. They experience number of problems and challenges. In tribal communities, there is a need to formulate measures and programs that are necessary in bringing about improvements in the system of education. Furthermore, girls should be encouraged towards acquisition of education. Problems experienced by tribal women in acquisition of education are, implementation of household responsibilities, early marriage, discriminatory treatment, conditions of poverty, inadequate instructional strategies, inadequate teaching-learning materials, shortage of teachers, lack of infrastructure, amenities and facilities, inappropriate assessment strategies and lack of

academic activities. Measures to be implemented in promoting education among tribal women are, honing communication skills; alleviating conditions of poverty and backwardness; generating information among girls regarding significance of education; providing equal rights and opportunities to girls; inculcating the traits of diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness and managing stress and anger. Finally, it can be stated, when tribal women are encouraged towards acquisition of education, they are able to achieve personal and professional goals and bring about improvements in their overall quality of lives.

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