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**STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN EDUCATION IN
TELANGANA STATE : A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

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Introduction

India is the second populous country in the world with 8.2% of the ST population. Most of the ST people are poor, illiterate and inhabited in inaccessible forests and hilly areas. They lag in all spheres of life in comparison with other sections of the population. Out of the total ST population, ST women add up to almost half. Like all other communities, the development of the status of ST communities also to a large extent depends on the upliftment of the status of ST women

The Government of India has launched several schemes for the promotion of education and welfare among the tribes in general and different new initiatives for the women section in particular. Despite these efforts, the rate of literacy has not improved. In the case of the primitive tribes, it is very poor and among women, it is very low. Literacy is the key for the socio-economic development of any section or region, and this is the reason that the ST community all over India has been subjected to various forms of deprivation such as alienation from land and other resources. Especially, the ST women though they are away from the mainstream of national life, they are not kept away from the impact of socio-economic changes affecting society in general.

Importance of Women Education

Education forms an important component in the overall development of individuals, enabling them to greater awareness, better comprehension of their social,

political and cultural environment and also facilitating the improvement of their socio-economic conditions. The importance of education in the process of economic, political and social change has been widely recognized and well documented all over the world. Education is now considered one of the crucial inputs to human capital formation.

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 India, women are discriminated against due to several historical, religious and other reasons. A girl child is suppressed from the moment she is born in terms of personal development. She is made to undergo the feelings of being inferior and feeble. She is denied the prospects for personal expression.

Education is a powerful agent of social change today. It unlocks the door to modernization. It also paves a sure road to economic modernization and progress. The framers of the Constitution took note of the fact that certain communities in the country were suffering from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the age-old practice of untouchability and certain others on account of this primitive agricultural practices, lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation, and who need special consideration for safeguarding their interests and for their accelerated socio-economic development.

Status of Women Education in India

Women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government had taken up various measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result, women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has been higher than that of the male literacy rate. The constitution of India guarantees the Right to Equality to all Indian women without discrimination. While in 1961 only 15.3% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2011 65.46% of females were literate.

Research Methodology

The Constitution of India provides as directive principles of state policy that the state should promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the STs and should protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Thus, the government is making efforts on various counts for accelerating literacy among STs. Efforts are made to enrol more and more children of STs, including the ST language for curriculum, provision of special allowances and other facilities of teachers working in ST areas, free supply of educational materials, clothing, mid-day meals, etc.

Investment has been made to strengthen the educational programs and thus make them accessible to the STs. Elaborate programs of scholarships, reservation of

seats in schools and colleges along with various other ancillary facilities are in operation. The Central and State Governments have provided to the students belonging to STs with many facilities, incentives including freeship, scholarships, reservations of seats in educational institutions and Government departments and establishment of separate hostels, ashram schools, etc. It can be easily inferred that an adequate spread of literacy among STs is likely to enable them to compete with the other sections of the society on equal footing in the long run. Provisions of educational facilities within the habitations are considered as an important factor positively contributing to the increase in the level of education among the tribes. The broad objectives of these programs have been to develop these traditional communities in the direction of modernity to enable them to secure for themselves an equitable and rightful place in the national system.

Tribal women owed her relatively low status because of her economic contribution to the family, which was in turn mainly dependent on the abundance of resources. However, the infiltration of plainsmen has brought downward changes in the status of ST women. Due to land alienation and control of minerals and other resources by outsiders, they lost the foundation of their status. On the one hand, she lost access to the land and forests that provided her with economic opportunities on the other hand she could not get even unskilled jobs because of illiteracy.

Secondly, as they got exposed to the wider world and to the communities considered to be less developed and so-called civilized, they started imbibing or aping the values of the 'upper class's communities to be accepted by them which has resulted in the deterioration of the status of ST women in all spheres of life.

With the state initiatives and with the efforts from various social service agencies and, of course, with their involvement, things are relatively changing over time. With the increase in the literacy rate and level of education, the importance of educated women's role and status in the ST society has completely changed during the past few decades. It is no longer a question of what women are capable of doing physically and mentally. Marriage and work for educated women are of great social interest and importance in present-day societies. The changes in the institution of family and marriage have been set in motion by educated women. The pattern of social relationships within the family is changing. These changes in turn contribute to the changes in social structure. The emergence of educated women is an indication of the significant socio-economic changes taking place in the ST society. The views and opinions of the educated employed women may reflect significant changes in their role perception. Women's roles and status have been changing due to the educational opportunities provided to them. How far their educational attainment influences their status is the issue, which is the key research question of this study.

Need for the Study

The earlier studies reveals that there is a fairly long tradition of study and research of the ST of India embodied in a very wide range of disciplines including

ethnology, anthropology, sociology, economics, history, geography, demography and others. Mostly the social researchers had tried to focus upon the socio-economic problems and other government plans for the upliftment and betterment of ST communities in different parts of India.

It is observed that studies are scarce, which aim at studying the impact of education on various aspects of lives of STs in general and ST women in particular. Systematic researches are necessary to understand the impact of education among the STs and make suggestions, which will accelerate the extension of education in the ST communities. Therefore, intensive studies of the individual ST groups are necessary to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of the problems and prospects of ST education.

Keeping in view the above facts, the study has been attempted in 8 villages of 8 Tahsils of 4 districts which are highly concentrated Mulugu, Mahabubabad, Jangaon and Warangal Rural with tribal population districts in Telangana State to generate a database on this issue for utilization by planners, policy-makers, scientists, extension functionaries and other governmental and non-governmental organizations in the formulation of plans and chalking out sound and appropriate research, teaching and extension programs. The belief is that by putting the findings of this study into a wider spectrum, the field study gives a larger view to understanding the direction of impact of education on ST women in particular and the ST society as a whole.

Objectives of the Study

In the light of the above discussion, the objectives of the study may be stated as follows:

1. To study the Status of Tribal Women Education.
2. To study the Programs of the Government for the upliftment of tribal women education.
3. To examine the socio-economic and educational status of tribal women in the study area.
4. To trace out the problems or issues of tribal women in accessing education.
5. To examine the impact of education on tribal women.
6. To provide suitable suggestions for the upliftment of the tribal women's education.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant association between attitude towards education of tribal children and socio-economic characteristics of households.

2. The enrolment of tribal students is significantly associated with the education level of the head of the family, size of the family, the income of the family and size of land ownership.
3. The size of the family, income, landholdings, monthly consumption expenditure, family property and distance to school/college has a significant impact on dropout.

Area of Study

The present study is conducted in 8 villages of 8 tahsils of 4 districts in the State of Telangana. The villages are selected based on Census 2011. The details have given in table 1.

Table 1: Sample Study Area and Sample Size

SI. No	Name of Village	Name of the Tahsil	Name of the District	Percentage of ST Population	Sample
1	Malakpet	Narmetta	Jangaon	76 and above	35
2	Mailaram	Palakurthy	Jangaon	76 and above	35
3	Bhupathipuram	Eturunagaram	Mulug	76 and above	35
4	Bandarugudem	Mangapet	Mulug	76 and above	35
5	Jagannadhapalle	Rayaparthi	Warangal Rural	76 and above	35
6	Bolikonda	Nekkonda	Warangal Rural	76 and above	35
7	Bavurugonda	Kothagudem	Mahabubabad	76 and above	35
8	Neelavancha	Gudur	Mahabubabad	76 and above	35
Total	8	8	4		280

Source: *District Census Handbook: Warangal*

Sampling

A sample, as the name implies, is a smaller representation of a larger whole. For this study, the following sampling procedure was adopted.

Selection of the Districts

The sample of four districts has the maximum population of Tribes. Thus, it is selected for conducting the present study keeping in view that the Government machinery should have operationalized their schemes in this area

Selection of Tehsil

Since the tribe is mainly concentrated in the 8 Tehsils, it was selected for the present study based on the purposive method of selection.

Selection of the Villages

As a result of a pilot study of the area, the investigator decided to select 76% and above of the total number of villages located in the district. The list of villages was obtained from the official websites and Census 2011 of the erstwhile Warangal district. Sample villages were selected from these categories keeping in mind that the village contains a sizeable tribal population and a female literacy rate.

Selection of the respondents

The final stage of sampling was the selection of the respondents from each of the selected villages and compiled a tentative list of tribal households with the help of Tehsildar and Village Sarpanches. Out of these lists, a total sample size of 280 women respondents was selected with the help of a purposive random sampling method. But only one respondent was selected from a household.

Research Tools and Techniques

The studies is an empirical one. For data gathering, I used field study and survey methods. Both primary and secondary data about several aspects of tribal education and socio-economic status were collected.

The data relating to the educational attainments were collected from the census handbooks, records of the Tribal Welfare Department, Education Department, and the Educational Institutions. The social background of the sample Tribes and the government initiatives in the field of education were collected through secondary sources.

Primary data were collected with the help of the structured questionnaire. The questions were structured in simple language both in Telugu and English languages. In the case of illiterate respondents, the questionnaire was used as an Interview Schedule and was filled in personally in the presence of the respondent's family/community member. The general information on the tribal community was gathered through observation and informal discussions with the community members, officials and non-officials in the area. The tabulation and processing of data were got done mechanically.

Methods of Data Analysis

The facts of the above objectives and their Issues are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The facts of the above objectives and the responses of 280 respondents of tribal women have been analyzed with the help of statistical methods giving an interpretation of data.

Limitation of the Study

The sample for the study comprised 280 respondents. This sample is only a very small proportion of the entire students studying in the different educational institutions.

Therefore, the research studies with a much larger sample size would be required to ensure an appropriate generalization of the findings of the study. Due to lack of time constraints the researcher has confined to stick to these particular respondents for conducting the study.

Major Findings

Personal Information

1. More of the (55%) sample tribal women are studied/studying in Government educational institutions.
2. A large number of sample tribal women (39% & 35%) belong to the age group of 18 to 30 and 31 to 40.
3. Around half of the sample, tribal women (60%) belong to rural areas.
4. The majority of the sample tribal women (50% & 36%) belong to Koya and Lamabada Tribes.
5. About 22.5% of sample tribal women are unmarried.
6. Nearly 66% of the sample tribal women are Telugu medium students.
7. Around 61% of sample tribal women are Science Faculty.
8. Around 42% of the sample tribal women use English words.
9. A huge majority (98%) of sample tribal women are physically fit.
10. Around 52% of sample tribal women families belong to joint families and 36% belongs to nuclear families.
11. Around 95% of sample tribal women have male members in their family.
12. Nearly 50% of sample tribal women have up to 4 and 43% have 5 to 8 family members.
13. Regarding boys' and girls' family members, 55% have girls.
14. Around 54% of sample tribal women have 5 to 8 family members.
15. Around 96% of sample tribal women are living in male-headed families.
16. More than 95% of sample tribal women have male working members and 92% have one to three working members.
17. Around 36% of sample tribal women reside in pucca houses and 64% are in semi pucca houses.
18. About 75% of sample tribal women families have their own houses.
19. More than 39% of sample tribal women are housewives and also engaged in farming activities, more than 30% are working in the private sector and 22.5% are pursuing their education.

20. More than half 63% of the sample tribal women fathers are engaged in agriculture activities and very few are employed in government-employed (3%).
21. The majority of 61% of the sample tribal women mothers are involved in agricultural activities and only 0.37% of the mothers are involved as government-employed.
22. Around 36% of sample tribal women husbands are engaging in agricultural activities and only 1.5% are working as government employees.
23. Around 23% of the sample tribal women brothers are engaged in agricultural activities and 23% are working as employees in private organizations, and only 4.5% are working as government employees.
24. Among the sisters of the sample tribal women families, 29% are involved in agricultural activities, 24% are engaging as an employee in a private organization.
25. Around 70% of the sample tribal women families have their agricultural land.
26. About 50.2% of employees owned wetland and 49.7% are dry land.
27. Around 55% of sample tribal women families have small holdings (less than 2.5 acres).
28. Concerning the income of the sample women families, around 69% have up to Rs. 1,00,000 as annual income.

Educational Status

1. About 20% of the sample tribal women are illiterates.
2. Around 25% of the sample tribal women have stopped their education due to various reasons.
3. Around 22.5% of the sample tribal women pursuing moderately and higher education.
4. Around 28% of sample tribal women fathers' education is under-graduate.
5. About 20% of sample tribal women mothers are illiterates.
6. Almost 16% of spouses are undergraduate.
7. About 46% of sample tribal women first brothers have undergraduate.
8. For 33% of sample tribal women, their second brother's education is under-graduate.
9. For 36% of the sample tribal women third brother's education is under-graduate.
10. Around 41% of the sample tribal women first sister's education is under-graduate.

11. For 37% of the sample tribal women second sister's education is under-graduate.
12. For 12% of the sample tribal women third sister's education is under-graduate.
13. Nearly 45% of the sample tribal women have been motivated by their family members and followed by their father (28%).

Educational Status of the Sample Tribal Women who are continuing their Education

1. Out of the total sample, tribal women 52% are studying intermediate, 32% are under-graduation and 16% are post-graduation.
2. Among the intermediate category, it is observed that 23% have opted for science, 40% have opted for science in under-graduation and 40% have opted for science in post-graduation.

Reasons, expectations and plan for opting the Moderate (Intermediate) and Higher Education (Under Graduation and Post-Graduation)

1. A large number of sample tribal women (43%) have chosen higher education for better career prospects followed by 35% opting accidentally joined.
2. A greater majority (62%) parents fulfil their educational needs of the sample tribal women followed by husbands (27%)
3. Around 27% of the sample tribal women are supporting their spouses.
4. More than 94% of the sample tribal women supported by the scholarship.
5. The overall sample tribal women have opted for increasing the status, and to get employment, 65% opted for name & fame, 55% have opted to increase knowledge and more than 48% have to bring equality.
6. Around 98% of sample tribal deemed the education will increase the economic empowerment, 87% endeavoured to lead to greater mental ability and improve helping nature (77%), and 80% expecting education will develop the personality.
7. Among the sample tribal women who are continuing their education, 63% of the plan is to get a job.

Staying

1. Out of the total 63 sample tribal women, 48% stayed at their home and 27% at government hostels.

Facing/Faced Problems related Education

1. Out of the total sample, tribal women (155), who are either completed or pursuing their education (intermediate. Under-graduation and Post-Graduation) 71% are faced various problems related the education.

2. More than 28% are faced economic problems, 26% transportation and 20% are teaching problems.

Impact of Education on Sample Tribal Women

1. It has been noticed that among various categories of educational level the awareness about various schemes of government on tribal education is very high among Highly Literate group. Similarly, the Highly Literate group is more in favour of educational programs and felt the need for more infrastructures for the spread of education. The necessity of girls' education was strongly felt among all the groups whereas coeducation was highly supported by the Highly Literate Group followed by Moderately Literates.
2. Among different educational groups, it is seen that a good number of Highly Literate sample tribal women possess a bank account and also reported freedom in spending money earned or possessed by them whereas the number is less among Moderately Literate and Illiterate category. Similarly, the right over sale or purchase of property and insisting on registering property in their name is again more among the Highly Literate group in comparison to Moderately Literates and Illiterates. Though the majority of the sample tribal women from all the three categories responded positively, it was more strongly felt by the sample tribal women among the Highly Literate category that education helps in the economic independence of women, which enhances their status.
3. On the issues of decision-making, in family matters and financial matters, a very smaller number of Illiterate category sample tribal women reported being consulted, whereas the number is considerably high among Moderately Literates and Highly Literates. The viewpoint/decision of a majority of Highly Literate group is reported to be acceptable whereas in the case of Moderately Literate and Illiterate it is comparatively low. The insistence to accept their views/decisions is very high among Highly Literates followed by Moderately Literate and Illiterate sample tribal women. Acceptance or rejection of the decision by the head of the family is based on the educational level of the female member is felt mostly by the Illiterate and Moderately Literate categories. Across all the categories an overwhelming number of sample tribal women opined that the educational level raises the overall status of women.
4. Views of different educational categories show that keeping hygienic conditions at home was preferred by the majority of the sample tribal women from all the categories but more sample tribal women from the Highly Literate category reported maintaining hygienic conditions at home. As for consulting a doctor at the initial stage of illness and accepting immunization for children, a higher number from the Highly Literate category reported so. When asked about whether they use/used any of the family planning measures, none

among the Illiterate group favoured this, however, an overwhelming number among the Highly Literate segment and a good number among the Moderately Literates said yes.

5. In various educational categories, mainly the Illiterate category sample tribal women have reported that they are doing a job under pressing circumstances. However, the majority of the Highly Literate work willingly. As for appreciation for employment is concerned, the Highly Literate group told that their husband or family is appreciative of their working in comparison to Moderately Literate or Illiterate group sample tribal women. About leaving job on the improvement of economic conditions, none among the Highly Literate category was in favour whereas a majority of the sample tribal women from the Illiterate group said yes. The majority of the Highly Literate category and Moderately Literate category do not want to continue in their family occupation.
6. Among educational categories, mainly sample tribal women among the Highly Literate category reported that they do have affiliation with a political party or social organizations engaged in women affairs. Moderately literate and illiterate categories reported less inclination. When it comes to participation in Village Panchayat activities, the Highly Literate category participation is more participative compared to Moderately Literate and Illiterate categories. Freedom to cast their vote is reported by the majority of the sample tribal women from the Highly Literate category and Moderately Literate category. Inclination towards contesting elections themselves was moderate among all the groups. It was reported by the majority of the sample tribal women from all three categories that education helps them in safeguarding their interests - at home, in society and elsewhere.
7. Among various educational categories, Highly Literate and Moderately Literate sample tribal women love to use English words in their day-to-day life more. Among the highly literate category, a good number of sample tribal women have modern household/personal equipment like TV, fridge, mobile phone, camera, etc. which is higher than the other two categories. As for the question of knowing their usage also Highly Literate group know much better than other categories. Western dresses and western food are the likings of the Highly Literate category and a good number of sample tribal women among Moderately Literate also showed interest. However, there is very little interest shown by the Illiterate category. There is a growing tendency among Highly Literate Tribal women for either driving a scooter/car or are interested in learning it followed by Moderately Literate and Illiterate category sample tribal women. The majority of the Highly Literate category use modern cosmetics at home and go to beauty parlours too. It is a little low among the Moderately Literate category whereas the Illiterate group is not in the habit of using such items or going to the beauty parlour.

Suggestions

The study finds that education has not only been working as a tool for sample tribal women to regain their lost ground but simultaneously helping them in moving towards modernity of the mainstream society. The tribal women's increasing interest in education is undoubtedly an encouraging sign, more so, because children and women are being included in the process of education. It is mainly due to the spread of education that the sample tribal women are trying to emancipate themselves from superstitions and orthodoxy. Thus, the present study suggests that keeping in view the positive impact of education in all spheres of life of tribal women, educational programs for tribal women should be strengthened by removing bottlenecks so that this trend continues and flourish.

1. Increase in the proportion of women teachers/lectures.
2. Bank loan facilities for tribal women students.
3. Education policy needs to be revised to facilitate girls/women participation in higher education.
4. Girls/women should be encouraged to enter professional courses because of tough competition and useful if not in government jobs.
5. Government should formulate and implement policies for stopping drop out of girl/women students in secondary schools and colleges.
6. Hostel and residential community schools/colleges for girls/women at the primary, middle, high school and collegiate stages and available scholarships should be given for tribal girl/women students for encouraging the girls/women of tribal communities to school/colleges.
7. Improvement in medical and engineering women college in sample districts.
8. Improvement in transportation facilities for women students and offering of stipends to girls/women residing in hostels.
9. In this tribal area, the school/college schedule must be prepared as per local requirements rather than following a directive from the State. School/college calendars in tribal areas appropriate to local requirements and festivals.
10. Introduce stipends, scholarships and fellowships for girls/women studying in school/higher educational institutions.
11. Launch special education initiatives in this low female literacy tribal pocket. Proper care should be given for the development of women education in such rural areas.
12. Opportunities should be ensured for all the girls/women for accessing school/higher education.
13. Teach tribal girl children in their mother tongue. Prepare textbooks in tribal languages. Give preferences to local and tribal teachers from local Panchayats.

- The arrangement of special training for non-tribal teachers to work in this tribal area, including knowledge of tribal culture and dialect.
14. The establishment of higher educational institutions in rural and tribal areas.
 15. The establishment of more female educational institutions and free education for girls/women.
 16. The government must be provided with an incentive for female education in the backward regions.
 17. The government should provide more working women's hostels in all sample districts.
 18. The main stress should be given to creating awareness and to inbuilt self-reliance among tribal females. Priority must be given to continuous monitoring of the improvement in their status condition.
 19. There is a need to create a good environment and atmosphere for pursuing higher education for women/girls.
 20. There is a need to open professional and technical colleges for women in rural and semi-urban areas.
 21. There is a need to take measures to promote awareness among the tribal community about the importance of education.
 22. There should be an increase in women colleges and special hostels for girls with required facilities in rural and semi-urban areas.
 23. There should be attractive scholarships for both financially poor students and meritorious students to encourage women/girls' students in school/higher education.
 24. Utmost importance should be given to the education of women. Proper care should be given to tribal girls/women to get enrolled in school/colleges. Guardian, teachers, NGO officials and Government will have to take strong steps for empowerment of women in general and tribal women in particular.
 25. Women of these areas should be trained up in different vocational courses like tribal-ornament designing, tribal art such as drawing, sculpture making, handloom and textile, poultry farms, fish farming, dairy farm, etc.
 26. Ensure that their education sector plans include initiatives on women's and girls' education, such as stipends and scholarships, provision of sanitary facilities, and uniform grants
 27. Make school/college curricula gender-sensitive and ensure that teachers are trained and supported to deliver these
 28. Make schools/colleges safe for girls/women, and agree on appropriate sanctions to tackle harassment of girls/women in schools/colleges by teachers/lecturers, fellow pupils and others

29. Invest 3% of their education budgets in literacy provision, with special emphasis on women's literacy programs
30. Ensure that such items are adequately budgeted for, within an overall education budget of 20% of the total.

Conclusion

The tribal community has been giving equal opportunity for women in education and religious activities. Tribal women school/higher education institutions help for socio-economic empowerment of tribal women and education is solving the problems thereby helping tribal women to move upward in their life. Educated women are capable of changing the status of their families. Today every mother understands the importance of education because the majority of the sample tribal women do not have mothers who have pursued higher education. The sample tribal women have claimed that education is the only source through which there will be an upliftment not only in their economic status but also in their socio-economic status. Presently, the mantra for tribal women is 'work is worship and the study shows that they have been actively participating in agriculture, self-employment opportunities, government sector, business, politics and all other fields.

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