



Status of Tribal Women In India with Special Reference to the Socio-Economic and Educational Condition

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Received: 11.07.2019

Accepted: 07.10.2019

Published: 25.12.2019

Abstract

The objective of this paper, to examines the social, economic, and educational Status of Tribal Women throughout the country of India. The research is based on secondary data from the Census of India, which was conducted in 2011. The Scheduled Tribes make up a small part of the total population of the country, and they are mostly excluded from mainstream society in a variety of ways, including education and employment. Their status has shifted as a result of the provisions included in the Constitution, but they continue to face a lot of obstacles to overcome. Indian tribal women labour harder than tribal males and make considerable contributions to their families' income, yet they have limited opportunities for earning a living. In order to make ends meet, they must employ additional people, which makes it difficult for them to enrol their children in formal education. Furthermore, because of the general low level of education, their awareness level is generally low, and as a result, they have a tendency to neglect the most fundamental health concerns. The status of tribal women in terms of education, work, and health is poor, not just when compared to the status of tribal males, but also when compared to the status of women from the general public. The tribal women, like any other social group, account for around half of the overall population. For the most part, tribal communities consider gender to be complementary and equitable, with one role clearly defined but complementary to the other. Due to the integration and assimilation attempts of dominant culture, capitalistic systems, and the principle of private ownership, indigenous women, in particular, have less possibilities to use their natural resources and lands than other people in the community. Women's roles in tribal society have evolved as a result of this shift in gender relations. In 1961, only 8.54 percent of tribes were literate, a figure that has now risen to 63.1 percent percent in the year 2011.

Keywords: Tribal Women, Socio-economic Status, Population, Labour, Education etc.

Introduction

When compared to non-tribal counterparts, the gender relations in tribal societies appear to be rather egalitarian, with women enjoying a comparatively high social standing and Received:

economic value in comparison to men. Female participation in economic activities is crucial, but her participation in non-economic activities is as significant. The women of the tribe labour extremely hard, in some cases even harder than the males.

The indigenous women have the ability to express themselves and exercise their freedom. Economic changes are occurring as a result of the implementation of development programmes, and they affect men and women in different ways. This inequality resulting from the development process necessitates a thorough investigation because it has resulted in inequity not just between tribals and nontribals, but also among tribals on the basis of gender. The patriarchal nature of tribal communities prevails in the vast majority of them. Women are not equal to men in the traditional sense, but they have a greater social status when compared to non-tribal women. Both their relatively high social standing and the raising of their children were dependent on an abundance of riches and a limited amount of control over their lives. To put it another way, tribal women owed their comparatively high social position to a combination of abundant resources and a clear distinction in their society between the household and the social arena. The man represented the family in society, and the woman served as the primary decision-maker in the family's economy, production, and social interactions, with the man as the primary decision-maker. When it comes to resource control, tribal women have a higher social status than non-tribal women. Their active participation and decision-making in land utilisation, agriculture, and the control of cash flow in a tribal economy are ensured as a result of this arrangement.

Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are –

1. To identify and find out the social- economic and educational status of tribal women in India.
2. To analyze the challenges faced by tribal women.
3. To suggest some strategies for handling the challenges faced by tribal women in India.

Methodology

A theoretical study work in which secondary information compiled by various writers and researchers has been used is presented. The researcher has conducted extensive study into a variety of books, journals, and websites in order to get the essential knowledge, which has been documented in the references section.

Social and economic status of tribal women in India

Social and economic status of tribal women in India: A position in a social structure, according to R.Linton (1936), has been defined as "status." The concept of status is intimately associated with the concept of role. It refers to the behaviour that is expected of persons who hold a particular position. The educational level, health state, work status, and decision-making abilities of an individual or group in a society are the primary factors that determine their social standing. Every one of these factors is interconnected with the others. Health awareness, employment prospects, and decisionmaking capacity will all improve as a result of increasing levels of education among these groups. The position of women in a society is heavily influenced by the social structure and the sort of society in which they live. Males predominate in all settings and social circumstances in the Indian social environment, which is characterised by a patriarchal family structure that is prevalent throughout the country.

Problems faced by tribal women

Problems faced by tribal women: The researcher wishes to explore the challenges that tribal women, in particular, encounter in this section. Absence of any stable source of income: Various studies in the literature have revealed that, while tribal women are more likely than scheduled caste and general population women to participate in the labour force, their livelihoods are neither stable nor fixed. The majority of them do not have a stable source of income and live at or below the federal poverty level. Tribal people who live in rural areas engage in a variety of low-level activities in order to meet their basic requirements and supplement their income. The majority of them are involved in agricultural operations of some kind. Besides this, many of them work in agriculture, handicrafts, and even as industrial labourers on rare occasions. Tribal women are not typically engaged in any form of continuous labour and, like their male counterparts, are most often seen to be employed in agricultural activities. Only a small proportion of tribal men and women are employed in government-related positions. Households' economic circumstances are intertwined with various aspects of their daily lives.

Status of Tribal Population in India:

Mizoram & Lakshadweep (94.4 per cent), Meghalaya (86.1per cent), and Nagaland (86.1per cent) are among the northern states where the tribal population predominates (86.5per cent). Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi, and Pondicherry are the only states in India that do not have any Scheduled Tribes. According to the 2011 census, India has a total tribal population of 10.43 crores (Table-1), accounting for 8.6 percent (Table-2) of the country's total population.

Table-1 Scheduled Tribe population and decadal change by residence in 2011

	Scheduled Tribe population2011			Decadal change2001-2011		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
India	104,281,034	93,819,162	10,461,872	23.7	21.3	49.7

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Source - Census of India, 2011

During 2001 and 2011, the decadal change in the scheduled tribe urban population is 23.7 per cent where as it is 49.7 per cent in urban area and 21.3 per cent in rural area.

The urban India has only 2.8 per cent ST population but Rural India has 11.3 per cent ST population. (Table2)

Table-2 Percentage of Scheduled Tribes to total population in India: 2001-2011

	Percentage of Scheduled Tribes 2001			Percentage of Scheduled Tribes 2011		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
India	8.2	10.4	2.4	8.6	11.3	2.8

Source - Census of India, 2011

Literacy Trends of tribes in India:

Literacy is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. The trend of literacy of tribes in India from 1961 to 2011 is shown in table – 3. The percentage of literacy of tribes was only 8.54 per cent in 1961 which has increased to 63.1 per cent in 2011. But female literacy of tribes is only 54.4 per cent compared to male literacy of 71.7 per cent. During the post-Independence period, the Indian government implemented legislation and allocated funds to facilitate access to enrollment in primary education (grades I-V) in India. As a result, both literacy rates and gross enrollment ratios of boys and girls across the general population have increased substantially during the past 50 years.

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The literacy rate among ST boys is 71.7 per cent and among girls is 63.1 per cent. So there is significant improvement in ST literacy from 1961 (8.54 per cent) to 2011 (63.1 per cent).

Enrolment Ratio of ST students:

Gross enrolment ratio of ST boys is more than ST girls in all classes. The gross enrolment ratio is higher in class I to V which is 137.2 for ST boys and 136.7 for ST girls but it is only 90.7 and 87 in class VI to VIII. It implies that the tribal enrolment declines significantly in higher class.

Table-4 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Classes		ST (Boys)	ST (Girls)
Classes I – V	(6 - 10 Years)	137.2	136.7
Classes VI - VIII	(11 - 13 Years)	90.7	87
Classes IX – X	(14 - 15 Years)	57.1	49.1
Classes XI – XII	(16 - 17 Years)	32.7	24.8
Classes I - XII	(6 - 17 Years)	96.8	92.8

Source-Statistics of School Children, 2010-2011

Gender Parity Index reflects the enrolment of girls in school in comparison to boys. The index for ST children is almost same as all categories of children except for class XI to XII. (Table-5)

Table-5 Gender Parity Index in Education

Class	ST	All
Classes I - V	1.00	1.01
Classes VI - VIII	0.96	0.95
Classes IX - X	0.86	0.88
Classes XI - XII	0.76	0.86
Classes IX - XII	0.82	0.87
Classes I - XII	0.96	0.96

Source- Statistics of School Children, 2010-2011

The dropout rate of ST children is higher as compared to all children in India.

Table-6 Dropout rate among ST boys and girls

Class	ST(Boys)	All (Boys)	ST(Girls)	All(Girls)
Classes I - V	37.2	28.7	33.9	25.1
Classes I - VIII	54.7	40.3	55.4	41.0
Classes I - X	70.6	50.4	71.3	47.9

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011

Problems of Tribal Education:

There are many critical issues and problems in the field of tribal education. They are as follows: 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.

Suggestions

Some suggestions for improvement of tribal education are as follows:

Literacy campaign - It is necessary to establish an effective awareness campaign to raise public understanding about the importance of education. An extensive literacy campaign in tribal-dominated districts may be launched as a matter of priority in order to literate the tribal population.

Attitude of the tribal parents -It is feasible to influence the attitudes of tribal parents toward educational endeavours by providing them with appropriate counselling and coaching.

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 recommended that more indigenous teachers, particularly female instructors, be appointed in tribal communities. Teachers working in tribal communities should take into account the ecological, cultural, and psychological features of tribal children while planning lessons.

Stipends and various scholarships -Because tribal students are underrepresented in higher education, tribal students pursuing higher education, particularly in medical, engineering, and other vocational fields, should be provided with special ST scholarships to help them succeed.

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 conduct regular inspections of schools to ensure that teaching techniques, working hours, and attendance registers are being followed correctly.

Conclusion:

It is a harsh reality that tribal women continue to lag behind in many areas, despite the existence of various constitutional provisions and policies for tribals. They also face a number of challenges. The findings of the study underscored the importance of tribal development in India. They are critical in the establishment of a systematic process of tribal development because of their low level of economic activity, social backwardness, low level of literacy, and poor health conditions. They work really hard and make a considerable contribution to the family's economic well-being, yet they remain impoverished mostly as a result of the lack of appropriate efforts directed towards their needs. Various programmes for the development of the Scheduled Tribe population are implemented during the plan periods, and while much progress has already been made, there is still much more that has to be done. Families must have a substantial amount of income in order to be able to get above the poverty line. Because one's economic situation influences many other elements of one's life, including one's living situations, one's economic situation is extremely important. The empowerment of tribal women through education is a critical component of development. Education is a critical tool in bringing about a shift in tribal women's cultural norms and life patterns, as well as in changing their viewpoint and enabling them to become economically independent. It would assist people in organising themselves, analysing their positions and living conditions, and becoming more aware of their rights and obligations as a result of the programme. Education will enable them to obtain employment, which will allow them to improve their financial circumstances. The educational attainment of the scheduled tribe has a significant impact on the social and economic position of the tribe. Women who have received an education will be more prepared to deal with the society of today than women who have not had an education. In the current environment, no one can remain fully insulated from the rest of society, and everyone is influenced by the development of

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modern civilization and culture. The federal government provides substantial financial assistance and grants to tribal students pursuing higher education. This will contribute to an increase in the literacy rate, as well as putting the country on the correct path to growth. The health state of the tribals is investigated in order to determine their level of awareness about their own health. They may be deficient in some nutrients at times. Numerous diseases affect them as a result of a general lack of health and hygiene awareness among the population. In order to bring about a shift in the status of tribal women in India and to successfully deal with the difficulties ahead, improving the literacy rate and offering possibilities for gainful employment for tribal women will be critical.

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