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TRIBAL WOMEN STUDENTS & AWARENESS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY IN THE AGENCY AREAS OF PADERU DIVISION OF ALLURI SITARAMARAJU DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment can be attained among tribal young women students by adopting the programmes which create awareness about skill and personality development and providing the facilities which help them to acquire knowledge to compete with other students of plain areas .The present study made an attempt to assess the awareness levels of women students' community studying under graduation in Government Degree colleges located in scheduled areas of Paderu division in Alluri Sitaramaraju district erstwhile Visakhapatnam District about women empowerment and the existing or required inputs for their empowerment. Majority of the respondents expecting that the Government should provide them free government coaching Centres, Skill development Centres, and Computer Centres with internet facility ,student's library in local areas for the preparation of competitive examinations which help them to reach their goals.

1. Introduction

Empowering the tribal women is a big challenge to the Government because of the geographical conditions which keep them in isolation and keep them away from the privileges and entitlements of empowerment. Women Empowerment ensure the tribal young women to get equal opportunity for education and employment without any bias and lead their life with a sense of self respect and dignity. In order to bring the tribals into the mainstream of development the Government has been established a good number of Government Junior and Degree Colleges in scheduled areas along with hostel facilities which encourage the tribal youth especially the young tribal women to pursue higher education which help them to acquire the necessary inputs for their empowerment.



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2. Education & Women Empowerment – A Review

Women equality and empowerment has always remained a priority area and has been taken utmost care by stake holders to achieve Sustainable development Goal -5 of the United Nations. (*Seema Singh, 2020*). Access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment. (*Rajeswari, 2015*). Women of India are relatively disempowered and Gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment. (*Purusottam Nayak, 2009*). There is urgent need of reassessing India's affirmative actions, giving fresh impetus on empowering girls and women not only through conventional education but also hand holding for skill acquisition and providing them with equitable economic opportunity (*Seema Singh 2020*). Women problems relating education, health care, and livelihood have a great concern. It is a need of hour to empower this gender to get social, economic justice. Empowerment is itself a mechanism to enable strength. The role of teachers in creating awareness about women empowerment and the impact of women empowerment activities on the enrolment of women in educational institutions may be studied. (*Dwivedi , 2012*) Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The increasing change in women education, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. (*Rouf Ahmad Bhat, 2015*). Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc by leaving all the social and family limitations. Active participation of women in economic activities and decisions, would contribute towards overall economic development (*Rashmi Rani Agnihotri H.R 2015*). Empowerment of women would mean encouraging women to be self-reliant, economically independent, have positive self-esteem, generate confidence to face any difficult situation and incite active participation in various social-political development endeavors. Education is a key factor for women empowerment prosperity, development and welfare. Education has been recognized as an essential agent of social change and development in any society and country and is an essential means of empowering women with the knowledge, skill and self-confidence necessary to fully participate in the development process. Education of women is helpful in eradicating many social evils such as dowry problem, unemployment problems etc. Women education is essential for women empowerment. To develop a country woman should be empowered from all directions. For this the women should be provided more scopes and advantages. (*Banashri Mandal ,2018*). The students and teachers play a significant role



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in building a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, politics and economy. It is the awareness of the individual, which enhance self-confidence and self-extreme enhance self-confidence. (*Dwivedi, Seema Dixit, 2015*). Eliminating gender differences in access to education and educational attainment are key elements on the path to attaining gender equality and reducing the disempowerment of women. The study concludes that education, particularly higher education of women, is a key enabler of demographic change, family welfare, and better health and nutrition of women and their families. Special measures should be taken to create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrollment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/ vocation/ technical skills by women. (*Dr. T. Rama Devi, 2017*). Access to education is considered as an important determinants of women's decision making. Education plays an important role and influences decision making of women which is an important indicator of empowerment of women, and also facilitate social and economic progress. With access to education, women get more exposure towards media, awareness of their rights, and more access to resources, better communication skills, at the same time economic empowerment increases their negotiation power in the family decisions and more say in money related decisions. Women's increased education is positively associated with autonomy in their decision making. Education, no doubt wideness the mental horizons and releases from the ignorance and superstitions, it makes a person aware about rights and improve decision making capacity. Women's increased education is positively associated with autonomy of decision making in different activities. (*Shikha Khare, 2021*). Higher Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence. It brings a reduction in inequalities and helps in improving their status within the family. Higher educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. There are many policies and programmes for the betterment of women. Moreover there should be proper implementations of Govt. policies and different programmes of government of India regarding women empowerment and higher education. (*Monika Panchan, 2017*). International Convention in all forms of Discrimination against Women (ICDAW) in 1993 mentioned that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with knowledge, skills and self-confidence, necessary to participate fully in the development process. The privilege of access to higher education is referenced in various universal human rights instruments. Higher Education facilitates organized knowledge and



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practical skills that help to solve the theoretical and practical problems by a given type of training, developing and creatively evolving the modern achievements of science, technology, and culture. Role of higher education in Empowerment of Women Universities should play a keen part in order to achieve the goal of cent per cent literacy in women population. It is especially more concern when talks in the sense of women from marginalized section of society, their empowerment, status, position in the society and the role of education in the higher and other strata of educational fields. (Singh, Shweta, Sinha, 2018)

To conclude, majority of the research studies discussed the role of education in achieving women empowerment of young women. There are a few studies which examined the necessary inputs for empowerment in addition to education. Hence the present study focused in this direction to know the requirements of the tribal women students to develop their skill and personality development and what they are expecting form the government to reach their goals.

3.1 Need for the Study

Women empowerment can be attained by adopting the programmes which create awareness among women on leadership skills, educating women on rights, protective legislative measures, and provisions for women's empowerment. There is a need to assess the awareness levels of women students in order to examine the requisites for their empowerment. For this purpose the present study made an attempt to assess the awareness of women students studying in Government Degree colleges located in scheduled areas of Paderu division in Alluri Sitaramaraju district erstwhile Visakhapatnam District about the provisions available for their empowerment like skill development and personality development.

3.2 Aim

The Study aims at assessing the awareness levels of women students' community pursuing under graduation in scheduled areas about women empowerment and also to assess the existing or required inputs for their empowerment.

3.3. Objectives

The specific objectives of the present study are as follows.

- 1) To understand the socio-economic status of women students studying in agency areas.
- 2) To assess the awareness levels of tribal women students about women empowerment.
- 3) To examine the Government Intervention for promoting Women's education in agency areas.



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- 4) To identify the gaps between availability and requirement of inputs for the empowerment of women students
- 5) To make recommendations to the Government to bridge the gap by providing the necessary inputs for the empowerment of tribal young women.

3.4 Focus area of the Study

- 1) The present study will consider the adolescent' girls aged in between 17-19 and young women of 20 years, who are studying graduation and aspirants for higher education and seeking for job opportunities
- 2) The study highlights the necessary inputs for personality and skill development of women students which are the essential ingredients for empowerment.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design consists of universe of study, geographical study area, sources and tools of data collection, data processing and analysis, and limitations of the study. The present study was based on survey and it was purely quantitative in nature. The present study aimed at assessing the existing resources for empowering women students and finding out the gaps in implementing the policies and programmes for women empowerment.

4.2 Universe of Study

The present study aimed to assess the awareness of tribal young women about women empowerment. Hence the selected respondents are college going women students studying in the degree colleges located in the agency areas of Paderu division in Alluri Sitaramaraju district erstwhile Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh.

4.3 Selection of Sampling

The present study is based on Multi-Stage Random Sampling Method.

The First Stage consists of selection of region, the Second Stage consists of selection of districts and the Third Stage consists of selection of mandals and the Fourth Stage consists of selection of degree colleges and the Fifth Stage consists of the respondents who are pursuing under graduate courses.

Stage– I: Selection of Region

There are 26 newly organized districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh spread across three regions viz. 1) Uttarandhra 2) Coastal Andhra and 3) Rayalaseema. Out of these three regions, Uttarandhra region has been selected for the purpose of the present study .



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Stage-II: Selection of District

Uttarandhra region consists of 7 districts. viz. Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvateepuram, Manyam, Alluri Sitarama Raju, Visakhapatnam and Ankapalli districts. Out of these 7 districts Alluri Sitarama Raju district which is covered with largest agency area of erstwhile East Godavari and erstwhile Visakhapatnam districts.

Stage- III ; Selection of Mandals

Among 11 mandals of Paderu region erstwhile Visakhapatnam district, 2 mandals viz Araku valley and Paderu are selected for the purpose of the present study.

Stage-IV; Selection of Degree Colleges

Five Government Degree colleges are selected for the purpose of the present study. They are Mairipalem Government Degree College for Women (Tribal) located in Koyyuru mandal of Paderu division, Government Degree College in Paderu, Government Degree College in Chintapalle, Government Degree College (co-education) in Arak Valley and Government Degree College for Women in Araku Valley.

Stage - V ; Selection of Respondents

Women students belong to agency areas of Paderu division and studying various courses in Five Government Degree colleges are selected for the purpose of the study. The respondents are natives of the nearby remote tribal villages located in the agency mandals of Paderu, Chintapalli, Araku Valley, Koyyuru, Pedabayalu, G, Madugula, G.K.Veedhi, Munching put, Hukum peta, Dumbriguda, Dorakonda.

Sample Size

Since the study was based on simple random sampling method, data has been collected from 447 respondents.

Methods and Tools of Data Collection

The study has been collected the data from both primary and secondary sources. The methods and techniques of data collection for the present study includes

4.4 Sources of Data

i. Primary Sources of Data

The data from primary source has been collected from a well-designed questionnaire through interaction with the respondents.



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ii. Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data has been collected through the articles in journals, Newspapers and reports

4.5 Tools and Techniques

Data Processing and Analysis:

For the purpose of the present study different statistical tools are employed for analyzing the data. The data are coded, tabulated and analyzed in percentages and averages by using the excel sheets.

4.6 Limitations

The present study has its own limitations

1. The number of degree colleges located in agency area of Paderu division is limited to four mandals only. Hence the data has been collected from the women students studying in the degree colleges located in four mandals.
2. As the study was based on random sampling method, the data has been collected from the selected women students. Hence the findings of the study become limited.

5.1 Assessment of the Awareness levels of Women Empowerment

The present study made an attempt to assess the awareness levels of the respondents about Women empowerment. The data reveals that out of 447 respondents , only 57% of the respondents are aware of the concept of women empowerment and a considerable percent of them are not known about the meaning of women empowerment (43%) . From the data it can be understood that though the young women are studying in colleges they are unable to define the concept of women empowerment. Interestingly majority of the respondents (90%) have the knowledge about the essential inputs for women empowerment. They recognized the inputs like education, awareness, literacy, training etc. are the most essential ingredients for women empowerment.

5.2 Assessment of Government Intervention for promoting Women’s education in agency areas

Since education is the most important inputs for women empowerment, the government has been initiating a number of schemes in order to encourage women’s education such as fee reimbursement , providing government hostels at free of cost etc. In this context, an attempt was made to assess the Government intervention for the promotion of women’s education.Out of 447 respondents, majority of the respondents have been availing the hostel facilities (87%) and



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benefiting from fee reimbursement (72%). It was found that a considerable percentage of them are not benefiting the fee reimbursement (28%) it may be due to their irregularities in attending the college or absence to provide the necessary documents for getting the benefit. Because all most all the respondents are belong to scheduled Tribes with low income levels and are eligible to get fee reimbursement.

5.3 Assessment of Provisions for Personality Development

An attempt was made to assess the provisions for personality development in Government degree colleges located in the agency areas. The data reveals that out of 447 respondents, above fifty percent of the respondents do not have the provisions for English lab which help them to improve their communication skills .(55%). A significant percentage of the respondents are not having computer lab (34%) and the provision for self-defense (36%) , sports & games (25%) life skills (23%). From the above data it can be understood that a considerable percentage of the respondents are not having the provisions for skill and personality development which is most essential for empowerment. Noteworthy point was majority of the respondents are participating in the Extracurricular activities such as quiz (85%), essay writing competitions (84%), cultural activities (78%) , group discussions (74%) and elocution and debates (71%) . From the data it can be understood that majority of the respondents are active in participating the extracurricular activities which help them to improve their talents.

5.4 Expectations from the Government

An attempt was made to know the expectations of the respondents from the Government to reach their goals .It was found that in majority of the places they do not have the coaching centres and skill development centres (70%) for preparing competitive exams.. It can be understood that there is a need for establishment of coaching centres for the students who wish to prepare for the competitive examinations. Since coaching help the youth living in agency areas and help them to prepare well and compete with the others who are living in Plain areas. As well as skill development centres for improving their soft and communication skills which are the essential ingredients for personality development. Interestingly it was found that majority of the respondents expecting that the Government should provide free government coaching Centre, skill development Centre, computer Centre with internet facility, student’s library in local areas for preparation of competitive exams (86%).which help them to reach their goals.



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6.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To sum up, the data reveals that though the women students are belong to the remote areas of agency areas, majority of the respondents have chosen science and Commerce subjects which shows the interest of the respondents towards education. Majority of the respondents are availing the government hostel facilities .The data reveals that majority of the parents of the respondents both father and mother are agricultural labourers From the data it can be clearly understood that majority of the respondents are belong to the lower economic strata of the population. It is mainly because of the Government policy of providing free education to the marginalized population, the young women residing in the remote areas of the agency areas are able to study till graduation. From the data it can be understood that though majority of the parents of the respondents are illiterates and not even completed high school education, the respondents are very much interested in higher education and they are studying with the zeal of gaining employment. Majority of young generation both boys and girls though they are living in the agency areas are aware of the importance of education and going to schools and colleges and continuing their education .It is obviously because of the Government initiatives towards education to all by providing free Government hostels, uniforms and books and the provision of mid-day meals which encourage the tribal children and youth to continue their education. Majority of the respondents who are doing graduation in Government Degree colleges located in the agency areas are very much interested to go for higher education in Universities. From the data it can be understood that a considerable percentage of the respondents are not having the provisions for skill and personality development which is most essential for empowerment. Majority of the respondents are active in participating the extracurricular activities which help them to improve their talents.

6.2. Recommendations

- It can be understood that there is a need for establishment of coaching centres in the mandal headquarters of the agency areas for the students who wish to prepare for the competitive examinations. Since coaching help the youth living in agency areas and help them to prepare well and compete with the others who are living in Plain areas.
- As well as skill development centres for improving soft and communication skills of the tribal students which are the essential ingredients for personality development.
- On the whole , majority of the respondents expecting that the Government should provide free government coaching Centre, skill development Centre, computer Centre with internet



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facility, student's library in local areas for preparation of competitive exams which help them to reach their goals.

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