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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TRIBAL WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.

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Abstract

This article discusses the meaning of Educationally the tribal population is at different levels of development but overall the formal education has very little impact on tribal groups. Earlier government had no direct programme for their education, but in the subsequent years the reservation policy has made some changes. There are many reason for low level of education among the tribal people: formal education is not considered necessary to discharge their social obligations. Superstitions and myths play an important role in rejecting education. Most tribes live in abject poverty. it is not easy for them to send their children to schools. As they are considered extra helping hands. The formal schools do not hold any special interest for the children. Most of the tribes are located in interior and remote areas where teachers would not like to go from outside.

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Introduction:-

In west Bengal, in the decades of fifties, sixties and mid-seventies the question emerged gradually was why women should join the mahila mandal or attend the functional literacy session. Almost three decades later, concrete and tangible achievements have paved the path of women's participation, giving them their right to association and opportunity to exercise their choice due to expansion of education in west Bengal. The articulate presentations by women on their real life experiences representatives in Panchayat and other local bodies or forums are really encouraging. In the light of education the shyness of a women grandly disappears and there is a tendency of pervasive boldness and enthusiasm in 'queuing up' to speak from the podium. The directness of communication is astounding. It is equally amazing that the spontaneous interventions from the floor from women without distinction of class, location, religion, caste or literacy.

In the rural Bengal a women is able to identify the levels and locus of her needs and objectives. She clearly explains why girls schools should have lavatories. Is that not women empowerment? The women representatives plead for direct dispensation of funds to the gram panchayat without intermediaries. Is that not a visible milestone for devolution of power? Due to the gradual expansion of basic or primary education, women representatives express their desired role in rural development planning and agree to assume responsibility for pure water facilities, set up village school and the anganwadi. So there is no scope of disillusionment about the capacity of rural women to assert their rights for equal participation in local governance. When and how did this changes happen? The women's political activism the strength of their intellectual analysis and discourse, their boldness to break barriers of male dominated institutions and the solidarity of their network made irreversible dents in the policy and administrative fabric of the state.¹ The openness of the few but influential male allies to join the struggle and steer the change from within the system is a major support and cannot go unrecognized. The facilitating factors have been the increasing

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participation of women in public and private spheres, the equalizing of salary for equal work, targeted credit and economic assistance and incentive linked girls education.

Violence Against Women and Legal Provisions:-

Violence against women remains a constant practice across societies. Crawling under the umbrella of violence is an array of horrifying acts-female foeticide, trafficking, workplace harassment, domestic torture and rape. When women defy social norms and prejudices to report criminal action they are confronted by unequal laws that refuse to give them redressal. The UN says that violence against women is a major cause of death and disability for women 16 to 44 years of ages.

Crimes against women are committed with impunity in the absence of any meaningful punishment or deterrent for their perpetrators legal luminaries and citizens groups engage in lofty debates on the merits of current punishment patterns. Yet verdicts that may qualify as justice done are few and far between. Whether it is female foeticide or trafficking of girl children, domestic rape or harassment at workplace, there seems to be an unhappy acceptance that these 'wrong' will continued. Little progress can made if the roles of such violence are not needed out. Expression of violence against women reflect a society's values, law and order responses act only as deterrents.² Yet the scale of the challenge should not deter us from pressing on in this battle, on all fronts-community education, better law enforcement and deterrent punishment.

The Problem of Tribal Education:-

The vulnerability of tribal populations to exploitation by minor government officials, as well as moneylenders, landlords, and other agents of vested interest, can largely be traced to their illiteracy and general ignorance of the world outside the narrow confines of their traditional environment. Their inability to cope with the many novel forces impinging nowadays on tribal villages and on an economy which had remained virtually unchanged for centuries is by no means due to any innate lack of intelligence.

As long as they operate within their familiar atmosphere, tribals evince as much perspicacity, skill, and even true wisdom as any other populations, but as soon as they are faced by social attitudes rooted in a different system they become insecure and often behave in a manner detrimental to their own interests, brought up a system in which all communications are by word of mouth, and hence used to trusting verbal statements, they get confused by constant reference to documents and written rules, which increasingly determine all aspect of rural life. Unable to read even the receipt given by an official and obliged to put their thumb impression on documents which they cannot understand, they are easy victim of any fraud or misrepresentation which more educated exploiters likely to devise.³

It is obvious, therefore, that a modicum of literacy is indispensable as a first step towards enabling tribes to operate within the orbit of the of the advance. Communities dominating the economic and political scene. The disadvantages under which illiterate tribes labour are multiples in the case of those who do not even speak and understand the language of the dominate population, and hence cannot communicate with officials except through better-educated fellow tribesmen acting as interpreters.

Among the teachers working in tribal schools at present of not-tribal origin generally have higher educational qualifications than their tribal colleagues. Nevertheless, their efficiency as teachers is not necessarily higher than of tribal teachers. Their appointment to schools in a tribal area is usually purely accidental. Few of them have expressed any preference for such a posting, and they are given no orientation or training for work among tribal children. Their difficulties begin with their inability to speak and understand Gondi, the only language most of the younger children know, moreover, they are total strangers to tribal culture and the values of the society within which they have to operate. Those who persevere in tribal schools usually pick up a working knowledge of Gondi, but their own culture background stands in the way of an understanding and appreciation of tribal culture and traditions. As quarters are not provided by government and rented accommodation is usually unobtainable, most non-tribal teachers are separated from their wives and children, with the inevitable result that they take every opportunity of leaving posts and visiting their families. The majority of these teachers try to obtain posts outside the tribal area as soon as possible.

As a result of the shortage of efficient teachers, as well as of the inadequate facilities in most schools, few tribal boys and girls long before. The reasons for this wastage are many. At the age of ten to twelve, boys and girls are useful for work on their parents farms, and many Gonds are unwilling to spare their children, particularly if they see

that the schools are not well run and the teachers frequent absences condemn the children on many days to virtual idleness. Perhaps more important is the realization among parents, as well as the older pupils, that school education is of limited usefulness. While those who have passed the tenth standard are eligible for minor jobs in government service, by no means all have obtained such jobs, and there is, moreover, the large category popularly described as "tenth failed". Boys who have read up to the tenth standard but failed to pass the final examination have few chances of employment in government service, and as nearly all commercial activities down to small village shops are in the hands of non-tribes who employ on principle only members of their own caste or community, there are no other openings for such youths.⁴ Yet ten more years at school have given them the ambition to find an occupation other than the ordinary farm work for which they are no better qualified than their illiterate contemporaries.

In the tribal societies of northeast India. Superior educational institutions allow many young people to obtain good academic qualifications which enable them to compete even outside their own sphere on equal terms with men and women of other communities. There many tribals have appointed to gazette government posts, and others have proved successful in the professions and in commerce. Hence education has so high a prestige that a few failures do not mar its image. But the Gonds see hardly any for their fellow tribesmen elevated to respected and lucrative positions, and numerous school-leavers are without any jobs. Their disillusionment with school education is therefore understandable. The advantage of having some literate persons in the village does not weigh heavily with the individual family which for years has forgone a son's help on the farm without enjoying any financial reward for the time he spent at school.

Opportunities and Challenges of Tribal Women Education:-

An education system should provide a new culture of work ethos and an array of young talented, skilled and well equipped target group who will be able to shoulder the developmental responsibilities. It should make an individual better suited to the needs of the ever changing dynamic world. The status of any social group is determined by its levels of literacy, education, standard of living and health nutrition. The tribal women constitute like any other social group, about half of the total population, tribal women work harder and family economy and management depend on them. It has been reported that illiteracy, in tribal as well as non-tribal population, is positively correlated health. As women in all social group, they are more illiterate than men. In general, their lower literacy rate, lower enrolment rate and their presence in the school. United Nations has defined the status of women as the "conjunction of position a woman occupies as a worker, student, wife, mother⁵..... of the power and prestige attached to these positions, and of the right and duties she is expected to exercise". Education gives them decision making, economic status and empowerment always go hand in hand. To days tribal women society wishes that their future would be good. They do not want their children to suffer as they have suffered.

They demand good educational and job facilities for their children. Slowly educational status of women and their children, accessibility to all kinds of infrastructural activities improved decision making capacity in all important aspects is appreciable in states like Gujarat. Article of the constitution of India lays down that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled tribal and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. A large number of tribal women have missed education at different stages and in order to empower them there is a great need of providing opportunities so as to enable them to assume leadership qualities for economic self-reliance and even social transformation.

Conclusions:-

Due to various issues tribal women are lagging behind in the education level than non-tribal women. The problem linked to the female children in general and tribal girl in India are perplexed, multiplied and interlinked. The above reasons causes major hitch in the process of spread of education among tribal women. The main aim of education is to change the culture norms and patterns of life of tribal women to make them economically independent, to organize themselves to form solid groups so as to analyse their situations and condition of living, understand their right and responsibilities and to enable them to participate and contribute to the development of women and the entire society.

Reference:-

1. Suresh manjhi, “status and empowerment of tribal women”, CRESCENT publishing corporation-2015., pp-248.Ibid-249.
2. Suresh manjhi, “status and empowerment of tribal women”, CRESCENT publishing corporation-2015., pp-254
3. Ibid-259.
4. Suresh manjhi, “status and empowerment of tribal women”, CRESCENT publishing corporation-2015., pp-271.