

Scheduled Caste's Women in Higher Education

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Abstract

This article tries to explore the experiences of Scheduled caste women pursuing higher education. Thus, social background of the scheduled caste women needs to understand because they are mostly marginable section of the society. They have been facing difficulties during the educational journey not only because as a girl, but also belongs to a lower caste. They are considered as 'Dalit women' who are stigmatized with the untouchability.

Present study was conducted in Punyashok Ahilyabai Holkar Solapur University. 80 respondents from both graduate and post graduate student was selected in the study. This study explore to the Scheduled caste women's triply marginalization in terms of caste, class, and gender. They face humiliation and discrimination from male and women from an upper caste. They are struggling for their dignity and respect instead of having safeguarded and provisions of affirmative actions and scholarship in education and employment. This paper is an analysis of their struggle and experiences as Scheduled caste women during their educational journey and the paper concluded with need to understand the views and experiences of scheduled caste women to increase their participation and representation in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Caste, Higher Education, Scheduled Caste Women, Punyashok Ahilyabai Holkar Solapur University.

Introduction:

Women have been oppressed by society. In terms of gender, there is a huge gender disparity in education by religion, caste, class, and region. (Government of India Report HRD, 1974). The constitution of India has made some special provisions for the education of marginalized groups, including women. For instance, women are less participation in higher education than men (**Chanana, 2001**)

“Women belongs to the backward community have been facing several difficulties in the all spheres of the life and experience multiplies levels of violence due to caste, gender, and class (**UNESCO, 1998**). The scheduled woman is most marginalized and having less participation in higher education as compared to the women from the upper caste community and Scheduled Castes male. Apart from this, the Scheduled Caste woman's are very few got support from their family and society for higher education and can complete their higher education.

The human resource department report(2008) reveals that most Scheduled Caste Women are still uneducated or are not familiar with higher education. For instance, “urban upper-caste Women may be ‘caught up’ with their male counterparts as far as gross enrollments in higher education are concerned, but on the other hand, there are substantial gender gaps for rural women, OBC women, SC/ST women, and Muslim women” (**UGC Report,**

2008) Thus the focus of this paper needs of the study of the scheduled castes women's social background pursuing higher education.

The present study conducted in Social Background of Scheduled Caste women's pursuing higher education in the Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University of Maharashtra. From the field experiences, in this paper researcher tried to explore their experience in the point of view of Dalit feminism.

Once seen by the reference to the Scheduled Caste women, Caste and Gender cannot be separated. Like many of the time, these women can refer as Dalit women. They are inferior status in the society than the upper caste women. As daylight feminist, Sharmila Rege noted that Dalit women's struggle with both the muscularity of 'patriarchy' and 'brhminachal' of chastises society (Rege, 2006). This paper tries to look at the social background of the Scheduled Caste women and their struggle for life as a vulnerable group within Indian society. Scheduled caste women are the most marginalized in society. In the view of historical valuation both as Dalit movements and women movements are not referred to as the issue of scheduled caste women as caste issue. Dalit movement always dominated by the male and Dalit women are exclusively excluded as part of decision making and women movement also never facilitate to the issue regarding the caste along with gender in terms of scheduled caste (Dalit women). Therefore the aim of this paper to explore the Dalit feminism perspectives while accessing the higher education facilities to scheduled caste women through their experiences and views.

Struggle for Dignity of Scheduled Caste's Women

Scheduled caste's women have been struggling with their own family to society too for their dignity and equality in life (Jain, 1997). In spite of the well-educated person, one respondent experienced a huge level of humiliation by her father. As he always discouraged to get an education and his nature was much dominated. She ever experienced humiliation during her schooling life. Her mother also agreed and justified that they both are till getting scared that time because if her father comes to know the truth, her education would be stopped and she will never get the opportunity to come up to the master stage of her education. Now her mother is proud of the progress of her daughter, but bit concern about the future of her daughter because of the dominated nature of her husband.

This narrative was revealing the struggle of Dalit women as she has been facing multiplies discrimination and oppressive life, even though she has achieved success in her life, but their life is full of struggle (Jain, P.C, Bhatnagar, S. K. & Jain, Sakshi. (Ed), 1997) Struggle for their existence, they don't have their own space or existence, but in spite of this all they have been to confer to the situation in the all possible ways. They have learned to live with rejection from the birth, in the peak of poverty, burden of family responsibility, as an elder sibling having the extra responsibility of the family, maintain the security of the family members while men's are outside of the work they have to become a strong (Kamble, 2008)

During the interview, her father was intermediated between the researcher and his daughter. Finally, she introduced the researcher to her real life. She is being witnessed to a kind of discouragement in the field of Higher Education, and that might be the reason where she lacks fluency in English. She even lost her self confidence to do something substantial in her future. Amidst all odds, she is trying to complete her further education.

She stated that parents have a huge role in promoting children's education, especially girls at every stage. As per her statements, some persons from the scheduled Caste fail to give sincere attention to the education of the girl child; patriarchal dominance and social customs may be the reasons to inhibit the overall performance of girl child. Many SC parents expect their male child to get educated faster and earn money to support their family. And girl child is treated as a burden, so they don't spend much on their daughter's education. Mothers, whether educated or uneducated, support their child in all their affairs because any mother who is deprived of education or certain things will desire to give all the things she missed to her child irrespective of gender. Now a day Scheduled caste women are more aware of the importance of education, and they have been struggling for their children's education without bothering their family background and opposition from society.

Another experience of the Scheduled Caste women is, how she got the lowest score in the professional course due to her caste based evaluation in practical examination also. When she was revealing the truth about her journey of till master degree education, she told how upper caste teacher make her uncomfortable and tried to abuse physically and how they get mentally torched in class and observation room also. Because of this, she gets afraid and irritated in continuing her education.

Institutional experiences and Reservation as Stigma

In the initial stage of discussion about the social background of Scheduled Caste women who were pursuing higher education, their responses were positive. Upper caste person's perception has so many perjuries. Therefore, they supposed as reserved category and less talent. They are not capable of merit and in fewer fees so what they need not to more than it? They have reservation including the services, why they are need of more extra benefit or facilities? Those who come with reservation or quota they are not intellectually able to better perform or not, deserve the admission for the course that they have selected. Discrimination is at all levels of society. SC students shared their experiences that their friends from other community have been passing the comments on their dressing style like "Blue is representative of yours (SC's) color so our family didn't like this color or you are also from Ambedkar? Why you worried you would get easily and without any efforts in frees of cost". Scheduled Caste women have been facing multiple disadvantages in terms of education like the preference of course choice, selecting the college, commuting to the college e students less opportunity to particle-based performance or presenting the other academic, they are considered as inferior or lower. It's happened so many times in the journey of the SC women students.

This part of the paper talks about the experience of the respondents in their daily life as women belong to the Dalit community. One of the respondents faced discrimination at

her friend's house on the occasion of her friend's birthday as she was treated as untouchable and as friends mother asked about her caste and commented that she was not looking like belongs to that (Mahar) community caste.

Another respondent was humiliated by her community. She was doing a job out of the city and also doing her MA. She has been supposed to let to return the home. Her society members opposed beaten her and her family member for not sending daughters outside the city for job and education as it is a question of the dignity of the society. The village member of society has been threatening to her father as no one will get married to his daughter, and their family will be boycotted by the society. This community assumes that more education will get more freedom to the girls, and they will lose their character, and it will be spoiled to the reputation of the community.

IV. Conclusion

There was variation in support of family members to girls' education. In some family, the mother is so supportive and get inspiration to complete the degree, and many of them told because of the mother support we are here. As they wanted for her daughter should become independents like as Boys, and for that, she makes the efforts to convince their spouse to support to daughter's education and very few parents both father and mother wanted to become her daughter as confident a dependent in her life. Even though parents are not even high school level education, but they are supported in the education of girls and make financial support for education (Trivedi H. , 1997) Most of the parents are aspiring about completing higher education of their daughters and want to become economically independent.

A second observation was that most of them feel that Marriage is the main obstacle to complete higher education. They might be a strong possibility of finding difficulties to find out a suitable groom for daughters within their caste. Its reflects that having a lack higher educated men's also and still there is no change in their mind of status caste or inter cast-marriage.

When we look at the point of philosophy, it has assumed that the girls should not be educated more because if they get educated, they will prevail over societal rituals and customs. So norms and customs made by the very few haves who wanted to make others slaves. They want to safe their status by showing inferior to others and trying to prove superior to themselves (Kamble, 2008)

Above paper talks about the uniqueness of the experience of SC women. In patriarchy considered as within men tries to control over the women and efforts to make inferior to women. But Dalit women would never be found the followed their men, but even though they are also oppressed under both caste and gender them always ready to protect themselves independently while their men's are not able to do that. All the time, they have to spend their life economically and socially deprived. Apart from this, as a woman belongs to SC community, they have to fight with all household resistibility, economical barriers and face various problems.

Who is working on the Dalit and caste, women issue they should take up the lead itself. The question of socially backward people and their background can be explored,

analyzed, and understood in social sciences research. At the conclusion, this article up to the need of the explorative study of a social issue of scheduled caste women in terms of higher education. But this study should be done with the holistic approach of understanding. This paper tries to attempt the relevance of the post-modern approach to explore and analyze the social background of the 'Scheduled Caste women.' At the end of the paper, I would like to conclude by giving reference to Hon. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that I measure the development of the Country on the number of educated women in that country.

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