

Education for Emancipation: An Emerging Identity of Dalit Women in the Globalized World.

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ABSTRACT: Education was assigned a revolutionary role in Ambedkar's conception of social progress and in his vision of a just and equal society. It was identified as a key instrument of Emancipation from the oppressive structure of Hindu Caste Patriarchy as well as of reconstruction of a new social order. The Dalit Women who are at the lowest rung of the hierarchal ladder are the victims of centuries long, Social, Religious and Cultural practices which have threatened their dignity and violated their human rights. Alongside the Dalit women have also been kept in ignorance and denied access to education and had thus become the victims of yet another injustice. Because of unchanging social norms and behavior, incentives to pursue education were minimal for the Dalit women who are still physically and emotionally harassed. But the hope lies in the fact that the changing Global Scenario and resulting new world have brought out many opportunities for the Dalit women who are slowly attempting to come to grips with their invisibility in the discourse and are beginning not just to speak out, but also to theorize and build wider solidarities so as to earn the position denied in the society through education. Increasing effort to eliminate caste discrimination combined with additional attempts to increase the accessibility and appeal to education has contributed to the slow progression of the emancipation among Dalit women. This Empirical paper tries to explore the consciousness of Dalit women in Karnataka towards the need, importance and role of Education and its relationship to Emancipation among them in the Globalized world. The study found that most of the Dalit women especially from the backward districts of Karnataka had not even completed middle school education while some had not been to school at all. However, Dalit women's thoughts on need and importance of education and educating their girlchildren proved to be very supportive and appreciative.

KEY WORDS: Dalit Women, Globalization, Education, Empowerment, Emancipation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is measured as a tool of cultivating social welfare through economic resources. The past century has been branded by a global development of education. Alongside this growth in education has also been an intensification in the gap between different social strata (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008). Education can be a means to increase the incomes of disadvantaged people. Education helps to ensure that benefits of progress are experienced by all. According to Erik Frazer (2010), Economic viewpoints see education as a means to make people more prolific in the workplace and at home. It can also be seen as a means of empowering socially and economically disadvantaged groups into seeking political reform. By using any of these reasons as inspiration to pursue educational development, governments are endeavoring to create some form of social or economic equality for the population. A big factor impacted by education is that human beings often base their life goals and everyday actions on what they observe to be possible (Simon Wigley & Akkoyunlu-Wigley, 2006). Education inflates the knowledge of likelihood to poor individuals, and is often a required factor in providing encouragement to escape poverty and social oppression. The progress of a community is depended upon the educational realization that a community make, which start from the literacy level to higher educational attainment(Ajmal Khan, 2012).

Power is a social end rather than only a means, that it works persistently across both material and immaterial levels of social life, and that it determinedly act against human beings in concealing and injuring them and Emancipation means identifying these beings and upholding their integrity and survival against power which infers a deliberation of the field of being in relation to Education(Noah De Lissovoy, 2010).Through Education, a new ground for Emancipation is possible where in the Humans are effectively as beings against power, rather than on the existential amplification of the subject that is rumored in familiar conceptions of development. Such a purpose should be confirmed as the situations of any larger educational and social struggle. Education also detects the crucial core of the idea and experience of Emancipation that can truly allow a Liberatory approach and such a perspective believes in the presence of the human, and its integrity, in spite of and against the assault of power.

The Dalits and Indian Education system : The Indian society is based on the multifaceted social stratification of individuals known as the caste system. It is a division of society traditionally based on occupation and family lineage. The Dalits are the one being so low as to not deserve being placed in a caste. Historically Dalits or the scheduled castes are one of the most marginalized group in India in all walks of life, that still persist in many sectors even today. Often referred to in Indian culture as the untouchables, these were the people who have the harshest and most unjust restrictions imposed upon them (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008). Discrimination against Dalits in the educational system is a widespread problem in caste affected countries like India. The Dalits, also known as the scheduled caste or untouchables, have experienced consistent denial to access to education since the 1850s and has remained a greatest challenge for the Indian government. Today, the Dalit population represents 16% of the country's population and still struggles to achieve social equality. Despite efforts to decrease caste discrimination and increase national social programs, the Dalits of India continue to experience low enrolment rates and lack of access to education in comparison to the rest of India (Samson, 2015).

Dalit Women and Education : The Dalit women are one of the largest socially segregated groups and make up 2percent of the world population and India is a home to as many as 100 Million Dalit Women as per the calculation based on provisional figures on Dalits from national census 2011. Dalit women are vulnerably positioned at the bottom of India's caste, class and gender hierarchies. They are also subjugated by patriarchal structures both in the general community and within their own family. As a result of this the Dalit women are subjected to inhumane living conditions, discrimination and violence which has systematically denied them from opportunities, choices and freedom in all (Jogdand, 1995). When it comes to educational status there is a large disparity in the literacy rate due to wide spread prejudice based on Casteism and patriarchy against Women in general and Dalit women in particular. Dalit women education in modern India is a social and cultural history that challenges the triumphant narratives of modern secular education to analyze the constellation of social, economic, political and historical circumstances that both opened and closed opportunities to many of them (Seenaraine, 2004).

However, the changing Global scenario and the resulting new world have brought out many challenges and opportunities for the Dalit women. They have been making sincere attempt to meet these challenges in their own unique way through education and emancipation. Dalit women are slowly attempting to come to grips with their invisibility in the discourse, and are beginning not just to speak out, but also to theorize and build wider solidarities so as to earn the position denied, in the society by means of liberatory approach. Today, Education has developed an original understanding of Emancipation as the discovery and affirmation of the persistent integrity and survival of the dalit women in struggle. Emancipation exposes, names and celebrates that instant, the reminder of its truth is the starting point for a more consistent and organized project of struggle for them.

Bhimrao Ambedkar's struggle for Education : Education was assigned a revolutionary role in Ambedkar's conception of social progress and in his vision of a just and equal society aspects of life, and let alone the full enjoyment of their human rights. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, an organic Dalit intellectual, a Political Activist and the chief architect of India's constitution dedicated a significant portion of his life to improving the quality of life and social status of Dalit Indians (Chalam, 2007). Questioning caste that acts as an impediment for the education and empowerment of the Dalits, he provided a radical slogan such as *Educate, Agitate and Organize* for the upliftment of Dalits. He established the People's Education Society in 1945 which believed that increasing access to education to the Dalits would increase their empowerment. He thought that a higher level of education would cause the Dalits to realize their position so that they would aspire to the highest of Hindu positions, and that they would consequently use political power and influence as the means to an end to their oppression. The Dalit women were integral to this visionary egalitarianism and were consciously mobilized as political actors in the Dalit Liberation Movement led by Ambedkar in the early decade of the twentieth century. In this context the study tries to explore the consciousness of Dalit women in Karnataka towards the need, importance and role of Education and its relationship to Emancipation among them in the Globalized world. The central question addressed was whether Gender Caste and Class attributes determined the educational status and empowerment of Dalit women in the Karnataka.

Objectives of the study

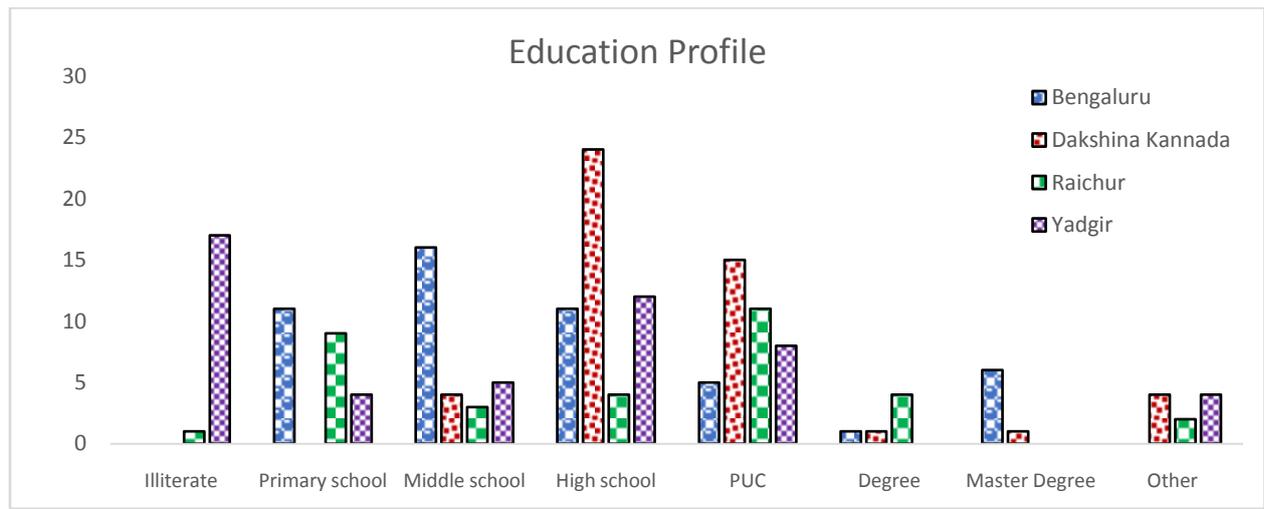
- a) To profile the educational status of Dalit women in Karnataka
- b) To study the perception of Dalit women towards the need and importance of Education.
- c) To analyze the role or impact of education in building the social lives of Dalit women.

d) Highlight the inter district differences in such impact.

The analysis of the study is restricted to four selected Districts in Karnataka based on Human Development Indicator Index. (Two most developed districts- Bangalore Urban District and Dakshina Kannada District and two most backward districts- Raichur and Yadgir). A total of 200 households of Dalit women respondents were identified with a sample of 25 each from each GP and talukhead quarters (25 Dalit women from 4 GPs and 4 taluks = 200) .The respondents were visited in their houses and certain questions were posed to ascertain their socio-economic traits and perceptions about importance and role of education in building theirsocial lives.

Findings and Discussions of the study

1. **Educational Status of the respondents**



It was found that the women from rural areas were, expectedly, either illiterate or less educated than their urban counterparts in the sample. Further, the northern districts of Raichur and Yadgir have shown lower literacy rates and illiteracy than Bengaluru and DakshinaKannada districts for obvious reasons of regional disparity in development. Illiterates were found dominant in the northern two districts in equal proportions of 17 illiterate women in each and with the lone exception of one case in Mangalore taluk’s Haleyangadi GP. But the more significant finding is that the educational level of the respondents has concentrated heavily at Middle school, SSLC and PUC levels while college education beyond PUC is curtailed for Dalit Women as the data suggests.

Yadgir has none from UG and, PG educational levels. Raichur has a marginal number of 4 women who have studied up to undergraduate level and 2 who have studied other courses. What is unbelievable is that even the capital city district of Bangalore Urban has only 5 degree holders (4 from the taluk Bangalore East and one from the GP) and as far as the developed DK district is concerned, only one woman each are graduates and post-graduates. But we have come across 4 women who have stated about ‘other’ courses. Thus, to conclude on the educational profile of respondents, we have come across a sad state of affairs, where the Dalit women have been denied the opportunity to obtain education of a level where they can be employable in the globalized era. Barring the case of illiteracy where the northern, backward districts have shown an upper hand, in other levels such as middle or high school and college and degree education, not much difference is found across districts. This is surely indicative of the fact that the exclusion of Dalit women from education is continued for reasons of complex mix of poverty, caste-based inequality despite reservation of seats in educational institutions and gender (patriarchy).

2. Respondents and their children Type and Medium of School/college Studied/Studying

Variables	Bengaluru	Dakshina Kannada	Raichur	Yadgir	Total
In which School did you study?					
Govt school	47(94%)	42(84%)	32(64%)	37(74%)	158(79%)
Pvt school	3(6%)	7(14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	10(5%)
Illiterate	0(0%)	1(2%)	18(36%)	13(26%)	32(16%)
Medium of Instruction					
English	3(6%)	4(8%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	8(4%)
Kannada	47(94%)	45(90%)	32(64%)	36(72%)	160(80%)
In which school your children are studying/studied?					
Govt school	31(62%)	31(62%)	39(78%)	46(92%)	147(73.5%)
Pvt school					
Medium of Instruction					
English	12(24%)	6(12.24%)	8(16%)	1(2%)	27(13.56%)
Kannada					
Ambition towards Children's Job-Choice					
Agriculture	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(6.38%)	0(0%)	3(1.62%)
Business	12(27.90%)	15(32.61%)	11(23.40%)	9(18.36%)	47(25.40%)
Pvt job	0(0%)	4(8.69%)	0(0%)	1(2.04%)	5(2.702%)
Govt job	40(93.023%)	41(89.13%)	42(89.3%)	41(83.6%)	164(88.64%)
Others	0(0%)	2(4.34%)	1(2.12%)	1(2.04%)	4(2.16%)

Type and medium of school/college studied (Respondents) :The data collected from the respondents in the sample 200 households tells us that 79 per cent of women were educated in government schools at varying levels and 5 percent in Private schools showing the very level of their household's economic status at that time. This is irrespective of district's economic status, with the only exception of DK district (the developed one) where the respondents having gone to a privately managed school was 14 percent. Notable is that none from the two backward districts of Raichur &Yadgir have gone to a private school.The percentage of illiterates is intriguing - 16 per cent - and expectedly, the backward region's districts of Raichur and Yadgir have higher number of illiterate Dalit women than in the other two. Bangalore Urban has none (all 50 respondents are literate and 3 per cent have studied in private school too. DK has an insignificant single respondent but Raichur has 36 per cent illiterate respondents whileYadgir quickly follows with 26 per cent total.To conclude with the medium of school or college we can say here that 80percent of the respondents have studied in the Kannada medium as the government schools that they went to study offered only that and only 4percent of the respondents studied in English medium. While there is none who has studied in the English medium from Raichur, from Yadgir only 2 per cent. The highest number of English medium educated respondents are obviously from DK district with 8percent and Bangalore urban district with 4percent. This is an interesting finding of the study.

Type of School/college studied/studying (respondents children): Data tells us that there are two major types of schools in which the respondents' children are studying: Government and private schools. Lack of opportunities for social mobility, i.e., sufficient finance to put their children into better performing private schools on the one hand, and availability of scholarship, free uniforms and books etc from government schools

are the reasons stated by 73.5 per cent of women whose children are studying/studied in government schools. This is a universal pattern (Bangalore Urban & DK districts with 62%; 78% & 92% respectively for Raichur & Yadgir districts). One could clearly see the higher dependence on government school education by the most backward district Yadgir. As far as educating their wards in privately owned schools is concerned, Bangalore Urban is leading with 40 per cent of children in private schools, followed by Raichur with 28 per cent. There is a local factor that has inspired or forced the parents in the latter to admit children into private schools. Here, we must note that irrespective of rural or urban areas, private schools have become very popular among all including the upper class and a few middle-class Dalit children. The ambition of parents to provide good quality education to their children is upper most in choosing a private school.

Medium of children education: The data from the four districts selected region-wise and according to their level of development or backwardness tells us that the choice of medium of instruction is as per the poverty of the household or as per how it dictates. Even in the case of children's medium of education, a majority (75.5%) of respondent Dalit women have admitted their children to Kannada medium schools. Those studying in English medium education are obviously from the capital city's 24 per cent of the respondents children from the district. As far as DK is concerned, we find that only 12 per cent of children of Dalit families from the district are in English medium schools. The situation in the two backward designated districts of Raichur and Yadgir is as expected: 16 percent from Raichur and 2 percent from Yadgir District. Thus, Kannada medium reigns more in the case of these two backward districts and speaks a lot about the lacunae for these Dalit children to reach it to great heights in their career prospects.

Ambition towards Children's Job-Choice : As far as their aspiration towards their children's careers is concerned, the women expressed least preference towards agriculture (1.5%), also because most of them are landless. They are very poor for whom only casual labor (like what they are engaged in), was the option for their children - so upset and pessimistic they were. For the remaining women across districts, they only dreamt of government job by many (82%). Not many want to work in a private job. Only 2.5 per cent of the respondents, especially from Mangaluru are keen about it. Those who did not opt for it felt sad that the private companies do not follow reservation on caste basis and offer any 'reserved' posts. Jobs are quite insecure in these companies and incidents of throwing staff out of jobs is not ruled out, says Mamatha (name changed) who works in one such company in the service sector. The next large per cent (14%) have opined that trade or business is good 'these days' (referring to the changed global climate).

Respondents opinion on educating Girl Children

Education	Bengaluru Urban	Dakshinakannada	Raichur	Yadgir	Total
Are you in favour of educating dalit women / Dalit girl children?					
Always	50(100%)	50(100%)	49(98%)	46(92%)	195(97.5%)
Sometimes	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(4%)	2(1%)
Can't say	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	1(0.5%)
How far would you like a Dalit women/Dalit girl children to be educated?					
Primary	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	1(0.5%)
High school	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	1(0.5%)
PUC	0(0%)	1(2%)	9(18%)	0(0%)	10(5%)
Degree	6(12%)	21(42%)	15(30%)	27(54%)	69(34.5%)
Master degree	35(70%)	23(46%)	8(16%)	13(26%)	79(39.5%)
Other	9(18%)	5(10%)	17(34%)	9(18%)	40(20%)
What do you think the aim of education should be for Dalit Women/girl?					
Better House wife	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	2(1%)
Ebility to read and write	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(4%)	0(0%)	2(1%)
Educating children	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	1(0.5%)
Fetch good job	6(12%)	5(10%)	28(56%)	29(58%)	68(34%)

Attitude Towards Girls' Education :Parental interest in educating the girl child has improved from what it used to be a few decades ago. The role of reservation of seats to children from Dalit background is the only reason for this and has encouraged rural and urban Dalit women about the need for daughters to be educated just as the sons and those who did not encourage girls' education beyond a point (beyond primary or at the most middle school education) earlier, say three decades ago, have changed their attitude and consider educational advancement of women a milestone in their fight against oppressive treatment by the upper castes, and almost all in the sample (97.5%) have not gone to the bad extent of denying the daughter's literacy/education.

Extent of Education for the Girl Child :The general consensus among (39.5 per cent) parents is that the daughters must get education till post graduation. The southern two districts, especially Bangalore Urban has higher number of responses here (70%), although DK shows a downward trend with only 46 per cent opting so. But the women from the backward area's districts are modest as perhaps they know their limits. In Raichur's case, (total 16%) think their daughters must study upto PG level. In Yadgir also the ambition is no less (12%). They also aim to make their daughters at least a graduate (34.5%). Hope to make daughters at least graduates is predominant among the women from the Hyderabad Karnataka districts showing that they cannot even aim higher given their higher levels of backwardness. In the option of 'other options' we have a total of 20 per cent of respondents with an almost equal spread across districts. Whatever, the study has shown that the traditional beliefs such as why to educate daughters spending money on them, who ultimately end up giving all their earnings to the husband, have disappeared and education of girls is encouraged. The traditional view that girls do not need higher education than a mere functional literacy have disappeared. Considering that the girls need to study till PUC or Degree is directed or motivated by, for example, the difficulties involved in marrying off girls at suitable age and the view that higher education means longer span of being unmarried. Especially, when the families have more than one or even two daughters, the possibilities of extending the education of the first or first two daughters appeared to be dim. Cost of marriage, availability of suitable groom, difficulties in taking care of daughters especially after they have come off age (puberty), dowry, poverty of the household, alcoholism of the father - several such reasons were put forth by respondents (women) in support of their opinion about not too high a education for the girl child. The support by reservation of seats and various facilities such as free books, scholarships, hostel facility etc. is viewed as a positive step and has encouraged parents to continue their daughters' education beyond even high school and PUC. But the lack of suitable and immediate employment opportunities despite reservation of seats in government departments has discouraged them to extend education beyond middle or high school level to their daughters. But as a general social opinion, most of them have welcomed the idea of equal education to daughters also as they give to the sons.

Opinion about Goals of Education of Dalit Girls : Dalit girls must get good education to counter caste-based oppression - was the opinion of some of the respondents who were employed (as the anganawadi worker, school or college teacher or government staff). Some of the women also felt it is necessary to face the atrocities on women by their own men. 'If the women have education, they can make up a good job and live independently without depending upon others'. Another opinion was that 'Globalization has made living difficult due to the rising cost of living; hence the girls should obtain high education to develop skills necessary to get suitably high paying jobs and tackle the challenges posed by market led economy and counter the negative effects of Globalization and allied processes like Privatization'.

Necessity of Education for Dalit Girl Children :Asserting the above reasons, almost all respondents argued that 'education is very much necessary' for the Dalit girl children. In their view, education is not only very much necessary, but it is also the only weapon to counter the threat of poverty and oppression on Dalits especially on Dalit women and girls.

Saraswathi(name changed) from Devadurga quoted the example of a Dalit woman officer in Raichur DC office who is so strong and independent that upper castes are afraid of her. Education is a passport to better jobs, better income and therefore better livelihood.

The above table shows the results of the question: many options as responses were posed to them in the interview schedule like, (1) becoming a good housewife, (2) better ability to read and write, (3) capability to educate one's own children, (4) capability to prepare oneself to face the eventualities in life, (5) equal treatment with others, (6) fetch a good job and (7) all of the above. It is 'education to fetch a good job' that has the maximum responses (34%) from across districts, yet the maximum number hailing from Raichur and Yadgir (56% and 58%). The beauty of their responses is that while from the better off places women have voted for "all the above" option, from the backward district they are specific about education 'fetching a good job' for their

daughters. That is why 34.5 per cent for choice 'to fetch a good job' gains importance over 63.5 per cent for choice 'all of the above'.

Social Work Strategies for Dalit women Emancipation through Education For Social workers who are intense on working in such areas have to methodically think about the approaches and tangible proposal for upcoming action if one hopes to achieve such a goal of endorsing Emancipation through Education:

The Input side : Personal Capacity Building, Organizing, awareness raising, Education and training, Paralegal Training, availment of Resources and Services, Emancipatory education, Assistance, Credit Schemes and Revolving funds.

The Output side : Research and Documentation, campaigns, networking, Policy reform and Advocacy, Changes in the Public attitude and governmental policies, Media, Socio Economic upgradation, Upgrading Skills, Incomes and Condition of works. With the abovementioned Social Work strategies, Dalit women who inspite of their multidimensional difficulties, can define their own needs and goals. Both men and women should be aware about the concept of Dalit women, their status, problems and the pressing need for Educating and Empowering. The very onset, an attitudinal change in the society is necessary towards their Emerging Identity in the Globalized world. On the other hand, the Dalit women themselves should strive to change their image from weak, dominated, oppressed, dependent, discriminated and exploited to Independent, active, Strong, Determined, Empowered and Liberated women.

II. CONCLUSION

Emancipation for Dalit women literally means becoming powerful particularly in respect of their status which can be measured through Education. While connecting to the central question of the study that is applying to gender, class and caste issues, the discussion of empowerment through education brings Dalit women into the political sphere, both Public and Private. Empowerment through education may be formal or informal has a substantial contribution to make an improved gender, class and caste identity through the removal of sexual, economical and caste based stereo types in the society thus fostering positive identities viewed as crucial antecedents of Emancipation. Dalit women Empowerment through education are ideally seen as a continuous holistic process with cognitive, psychological, economic and political dimensions in order to achieve Emancipation. Through a faith in and recognition of the Dalit women who remain still alive and active through experiences of Domination, Violence, Discrimination, Exclusion and exploitation, Emancipation makes possible a more radical materialization of equality which leads to focus more on recognizing the actuality of survival and struggle against dominations in the inhuman world. It also signals an unprecedented condition of possibility, not the end of the road but rather an exit from the exhausted dialectic of oppression and domination and the beginning of the concrete experience of Emancipation through Education.

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