

Assessing the Role of Educational Status in the Empowerment of Dalit Women in Haridwar



Brij Mohan Prasad

Research Scholar,
Dept. of Economics,
SGRR PG College,
Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India



V. S. Rawat

Assistant Professor,
Dept. of Economics,
SGRR PG College,
Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

Abstract

Women's education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Dalit women are a social force, a cultural symbol and have a historical background. The level of literacy among the Dalit women has grown up considerably during the past two decades. Yet there is a gap between other women and women from Dalit background. Education helps the women to develop one's personality and it emphasizes in improving one's status in all respect. Education has direct association with the socio-economic and political status of women. It is due to the lack of education, the Dalit women are not able to come out of their poverty and marginalised situations. Being illiterate they are not aware of their own rights and thus upper caste people can easily exploit and oppress them. Lack of education also keeps them ignorant about their health issues and they become easy prey to diseases. Education is a medium that affects women empowerment publicly. Education is a fundamental pillar of economic empowerment. The Indian caste system is regarded as the oldest hierarchical system in the world. Dalit women face caste and gender discrimination in every area of their lives. Human Rights and the National Alliance of Women once stated that in a male dominated society, "Dalit women face a triple burden of caste, class and gender". The proposed study provides an overview of the state of education with respect to women empowerment in Haridwar district and highlights some of the issues and barriers to dalit women's education in the district.

Keywords: Education, Dalit Women, Empowerment, Discrimination, Caste.

Introduction

Economic growth is a universal indicator of the development of a country. For last many decades India's economy is growing at a spectacular rate. Nevertheless, there is a scope for the improvement in the educational and health outcomes of its population. Ever since the beginning of Five year planning in India, development of education sector is one of the core objective of Government of India. It has been decided that the ratio of GDP to educational expenditure should be around 6%. This would be helpful in reducing the educational disparities among the different strata of population. To achieve the objective of universal education and to combat illiteracy and improve the educational status of the masses, government has laid down different policies and multi sectoral strategies. The problem of poverty and illiteracy has not yet been liberated. These problems have evolved as the biggest obstacle in the path of development. The consequence of these problems varies among rural and urban areas of different socio economic sections of the society.

It is universal truth that to become the world leader in upcoming century the fruit of education must pass on to all the sections of the society (Central Statistics Office, Government of India, 2019). Women education is one of the core areas which need more concern. Women constitute half of the population and their educational statuses are not at par with men. To play an active role in the development process it is necessary that women should be well educated. Through education inequalities and individuals differences can be minimized. In addition, education improves the status of

women in the family and encourages their participation in the decision making process and helps them to empower. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

According to census of 2011, 16.6% of India's population contains Dalits. Women and girls are at greater risk of sexual abuse, violence, early child marriage and human trafficking. Thus government has to think seriously to improve their conditions. It can be achieved by educating them.

Mahatma JyotibaPhule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. Dr.BhimRaoAmbedker had made a lot of constitutional arrangements to equate the dalit with non-dalit.

Majority of dalits live in slums in urban areas and their earning is less than normal. Most of the dalit live below the poverty line. Due to prevailing poverty and financial independence they are unable to obtain good education. Vicious cycles of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition's curb their lives. This vicious circle forces them to live in most of unhygienic condition thus threatening their health.

After independence in 1947, govt. starts paying serious attention to women education. For this various issue related to women education and how to improve them on grass root levels govt. set up various enquiry commission and education commission to improve their educational condition.

Objective of the study

To assess the role of education on empowerment of dalit women of Haridwar district.

Meaning of Dalits in India or who are Dalits

The word "dalit" is used to refer the untouchable of the bottom most hierarchy in Indian caste system. Gandhi ji gave them the name of "Harijans", which is still widely used in common masses. But they refer themselves as Dalits(Joshi, 1986).In government record the term Schedule caste was first used under government of India Act 1935.

The word "Dalit" is Sanskrit in origin and means "Oppressed" or "Broken people". The term "Dalit" as it is used today, is rather recent. Various terms untouchables "the Fitter born", "Exterior classes", "Out castes" and "Classes" were used to refer to those who are today identified as Dalit.

According to Ursula Sharma (2005), for others especially untouchable dalits, it is still a defining feature of their social identities whether they like it or not, and still largely define the scope of their opportunities. They experience violence, discrimination, and social exclusion on a daily basis. Dalit women are one of the largest socially segregated groups anywhere in the world. They are discriminated against three times over: they are poor, they are women, and they are Dalits.

Status of Dalit Women in India

According to some recent studies, two thirds of world's working hour are produced by women, which earn them nearly ten percent of the total world's

income and their share is almost negligible in world's property.

Almost every socio-economic indicator shows that the position of scheduled caste families is awful, 35.4 % of the SC population is below poverty line. Most of the Dalit women are illiterate and less educated, heavily dependent on wage labour, victim of discrimination in employment and wages, heavily concentrated in unskilled sector, involved in low-paid and hazardous manual jobs, the victims of violence, sexual exploitation and various forms of superstitions (Problems of Dalit in India, 2012).

In almost all the villages, Dalit women are engaged in different agricultural activities like weeding, threshing, winnowing etc. They are paid lesser wages in comparison with their male counterparts for the same work. They work as casual labourers. Usually they are supposed to do all the household activities like sweeping of non-dalit houses and courtyards, plastering walls and floors, cleaning cattle shed, collecting cow-dung and making cakes etc.

The share of rural females in agriculture sector was around 83% in 2004-05 as compared to 67% among rural men, showing the importance of women in agriculture in rural areas. Percentage of women as marginal farmers (38.7%) is higher than the large farmers (34.5%) in 2004-05. These proportions have increased over time. In India 75% of the Dalit population is living in vulnerable conditions, so the Government of India implemented various livelihood schemes for their betterment.

The hardships of Dalit women are not simply due to their poverty, economical status, or lack of education, but due to severe exploitation and suppression by the upper classes of the society, which is legitimized by Hindu religious scriptures (Thind & Agarwal as cited in).

There is a positive relationship between education and socio-economic development indicators. Dalits represent not only a socio-cultural group, but often represent an economic group as well.

The concept of empowerment

Empowerment is of many dimensions and holistic in nature. According to Sushama Sahay (1998), "Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all the spheres of life" (Sahay, 1998).

Now a day the term empowerment is very popularly used by many policy makers and writers. Women empowerment is one of the favorite terms. This term has been defined by the scholar in their own way.

Actually empowering women is a process under which a woman has the freedom to make decisions socially and economically. Therefore we can say that empowerment of women is a continuous process. In this process, women have to be aware of their social economic and political rights; these rights have a very important role in raising the level of women in their lives.

Education is a medium that affects women empowerment publicly. Education is a fundamental

pillar of economic empowerment. The level of education is strongly influenced by the level of empowerment of women. Without education they cannot excel in their life. Hence it can be said that the low level of education in an economy leads low level of women empowerment in the society.

Education as an engine of women empowerment

Education is the process of training man to fulfill his aim by exercising all the facilities to the fullest extent as a member of society..... Aristotle

Empowerment means moving from enforced powerlessness to a position of power. Education is an essential means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to fully participate in the development process. Sustainable development is only possible when women and men enjoy equal opportunities to reach their potential.

Mazumdar (1997) Investment in women education is one of the most fruitful instrument in social development. Education play a crucial role in changing social milieu. This helps to overcome the orthodox role of women in the society (as cited in Bhatta, 1998).Whereas Ghose(2007) observed that education helps in changing the power relation of women at social as well as individual level(Ghose, 2007).

Review of Literature

Women in most of the developing countries have been suffering discrimination in their social as well economic life. They are denied of their basic human rights. They are discriminated for religious purpose too. Global gender gap index which is realized by UN every year, placed most of the developing countries in a lowest rank. India's ranking was 108th in 2013.

A men in Pakistan and Bangladesh earns 6,903 US\$ on an average whereas women earns only 2,985 US\$. Only 20% women are working as legislators, senior's official and managers. There are also high maternal mortality rate which stand for one in every four hundred (World Economic Forum, 2013).

Women belonging to SCs are in a far worse situation by all development indicators. Poverty and deprivation affect them more adversely. Although they work along with men they are not recognized as producers in their own right. The strategy for the development of SCs will have to include a major thrust for the benefit of womenfolk. (Pangannavar, 2014)

History demonstrates that out of all deprived groups in the world, women have suffered the most. They have been victims of abuse, molestation, violence, rape, poverty, malnutrition, ill treatment – in a word all sorts of deprivation.

Even in the 21st century women are beaten, considered witches; they are getting stoned for committing sexual activities; honor killing is in practice in many parts of India; and with petty excuses they are tortured and raped while the main perpetrators move freely without any punishment.

Thus "This question of woman's rights was a world question, and as old as the human race. In all ages, woman has regarded by many as inferior, and

had robbed of the rights, with which God had endowed her, in common with every human being" (Channing, 1850).

It took about twenty five years for the United Nations to proclaim the year 2001 as the 'International Year for Women's Empowerment' after declaring the 'Women's Decade' in 1975. India also declared the year 2001 as the 'Women's Empowerment Year'.

A study conducted by Dashora and Sharma (2003) on tribal women observed that women have to perform multiple role in their own family and society. Apart from performing all household duty she also have to work as a wage earners in order to improve their economic position and remove curse of poverty.

According to Alka Basu (as cited in Kiran Bhatta, 1998), Education makes women more autonomy and higher decision making authority and are more conscious forwards their health, there is a positive relationship between women health and education.

A study conducted by Aditi Vast (2006) in Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand found that illiteracy was the major factor affecting the women health, because of this she neglected the additional food requirement which women need during pregnancy.

Research Methodology

Descriptive and Exploratory approaches were used in explaining the educational arrangement of dalits in Haridwar. Multistage random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used. The sampling process was divided into different stages. The six C D blocks of Haridwar were selected randomly to collect rural data. Only those blocks were selected in which at least 50% of population belong to SC category and besides this there must was at least 50 dalit women in that block. Similarly three sub-district of Haridwar were selected in which at least 40% of population belongs to SC population and minimum of 500 dalit women were residing in that sub district/town. Census 2011 was taken as base data for selection of blocks. Overall 402 Dalits females were selected randomly out of which 276 were from rural areas and 126 of urban areas of Haridwar district.

Since this study is descriptive in nature, it employed the survey method design to collect the data from the respondent. A structured interview schedule was prepared. The questionnaire was so designed to get appropriate information from women respondents. Items were constructed using a five point Likert scale with the help of structured interview schedule and through informal discussion relevant information was gathered from the women respondent.

Alpha Cronbach test was applied to check internal consistency among the variables. Correlation is verified between various variables for better understanding among variables.

Findings and Interpretations (Results)

The research study was designed to find out the role of education on empowerment. It also examined the attitude/behaviour of women towards self education and education of girls of their family and society.

Literacy Levels**Table 1.1: Literacy Rates in Haridwar District**

	Literacy rate (in %)			Gap in male-female literacy rate
	Total Population (in %)	Male (in %)	Female (in %)	
Uttarakhand	87.4	78.8	70.0	8.8
Haridwar	73.4	81.04	64.8	16.3
Uttarakhand SC	74.4	84.3	64.1	20.2
Haridwar SC	70.7	80.3	59.9	20.4

Source: District Statistical Profile, Haridwar, 2016; Population Census, 2011.

73% of population of the district is literate, which is comparatively less than the state average of 87.4%. The schedule caste literacy rate is 70.7% which is much lower than state average of 74.7%.

Female's literacy rate of the SC women of the district is 59.9% which is much less than the state average of 64.1% similarly female literacy rate of district is 64.8% which is again less than the state average of 70.0%.

The gap between male and female literacy rate is maximum in Haridwar district which is 20.4%. It represents that less women are going to school in these communities.

Sex Ratio

The following table shows the sex ratio among Schedule caste and Schedule tribe in rural of C D blocks as per census 2011.

Table 1.2: Sex ratio in Haridwar District

	Sex Ratio		
	Total	Rural	Urban
Uttarakhand	963	1000	884
Haridwar	880	889	866
Haridwar SC		884	895

Source: District Statistical Profile, Haridwar, 2016; Population Census, 2011.

Sex ratio of Uttarakhand in rural areas is 1000 whereas it is 884 for urban areas. Overall sex ratio of the district is 880 in comparison to Uttarakhand sex ratio which is 963. This indicates that

there is almost a difference of 83 females in the district and state. Same difference is continued in rural areas as well. Further it is found that the sex ratio among dalit community in rural areas is 884 whereas the sex ratio of Haridwar district is 889. Similarly sex ratio among dalit community in urban areas is 895 whereas the sex ratio of Haridwar district is 866.

Table 1.3-Sex ratio among Schedule caste in rural of CD blocks as per census 2011

S.No.	Name of C.D.block	Scheduled castes sex ratio	Sex ratio General
1	Bhagwanpur	874	878
2	Roorkee	886	898
3	Narsan	868	876
4	Bahadarabad	895	894
5	Laksar	893	893
6	Khanpur	915	897
	Total Rural	884	889

Source: District Statistical Profile, Haridwar, 2016; Population Census, 2011.

From above table it is clear that sex ratio among dalit community is less than the general community in Bhagwanpur, Roorkee and Narsan block whereas it is higher than general community in Bahadarabad and Khanpur block and exactly equal in Luksar block of Haridwar district.

Table 1.4 –Educational Status of Respondents

	Educational Status Respondent						Total
	Not literate	Literate upto 5th	Upto High School	Upto InterMediate	Graduate and Above	Technical or Professional Courses	
Rural							
Bhagwanpur	6 (12.5)	12 (25.0)	8 (16.7)	15 (31.3)	6 (12.5)	1 (2.1)	48 (100.0)
Bahadrabad	5 (10.4)	13(27.1)	14(29.2)	6(12.5)	9(18.8)	1(2.1)	48 (100.0)
Roorkee	4(8.3)	5(10.4)	22(45.8)	9(18.8)	8(16.7)	0(0.0)	48 (100.0)
Narsan	10(20.8)	16(33.3)	10(20.8)	5(10.4)	7(14.6)	0(0.0)	48 (100.0)
Luxar	3(6.3)	15(31.3)	13(27.1)	12(25.0)	3(6.3)	2(4.2)	48 (100.0)
Khanpur	5(13.9)	10(27.8)	11(30.6)	9(25.0)	1(2.8)	0(0.0)	36 (100.0)
Total	33(12.0)	71(25.7)	78(28.3)	56(20.3)	34(12.3)	4(1.4)	276(100)
Urban							
Haridwar	5(8.9)	7(12.5)	14(25.0)	11(19.6)	17(30.4)	2(3.6)	56(100)
Roorkee	1(1.8)	3(5.4)	8(14.3)	18(32.1)	22(39.3)	4(7.1)	56(100)
Luxar	0(0)	0(0)	3(21.4)	5(35.7)	4(28.6)	2(14.3)	14(100)
Total	6(4.8)	10(7.9)	25(19.8)	34(27.0)	43(34.1)	8(6.3)	126(100)

Source-survey conducted during 2018-19

From the above table it is clear that in rural CD blocks of Haridwar district 12% dalit respondents are illiterate, 25.7% are literate upto 5th standards , 28.3% are high school pass, 20.3% are intermediate , 12.3% are graduate and only 1.4% are technically educated. It is clear that around 37% of respondents are either illiterate or literate upto 5th standard. In urban sub district of Haridwar district 4.8% dalit

respondents are illiterate, 7.9% are literate upto 5th standards , 19.8% are high school pass, 27% are intermediate , 34.1% are graduate and only 6.3% are technically educated. It is clear that around 12.7% of respondents are either illiterate or literate upto 5th standard. Thus it is clear that education level in urban areas of Haridwar district is much higher as compared to rural districts of Haridwar.

Table 1.5- Family monthly income

Family Monthly Income						
	Upto 5000	5001-10000	10001-15000	15001-20000	20001 and Above	Total
Rural						
Bhagwanpur	9 (18.8)	21(43.8)	13 (27.1)	3 (6.3)	2(4.2)	48 (100)
Bahadradabad	8 (16.7)	23 (47.9)	12 (25.0)	3 (6.3)	2 (4.2)	48 (100)
Roorkee	11(22.9)	14 (29.2)	15 (31.3)	5 (10.4)	3 (6.3)	48 (100)
Narsan	12 (25.0)	17 (35.4)	12 (25.0)	4 (8.3)	3 (6.3)	48 (100)
Luxar	7 (14.6)	22 (45.8)	17 (35.4)	2 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	48 (100)
Khanpur	7(19.4)	19 (52.8)	9 (25.0)	1 (2.8)	0 (0)	36 (100)
Total	54 (19.6)	116 (42.0)	78 (28.3)	18 (6.5)	10 (3.6)	276 (100)
Urban						
Haridwar Urban	2 (3.6)	18 (32.1)	17 (30.4)	11 (19.6)	8 (14.3)	56 (100)
Roorkee Urban	2 (3.6)	21 (37.5)	18 (32.1)	12 (21.4)	3 (5.4)	56 (100)
Luxar Urban	1(7.1)	7(50.0)	4 (28.6)	2 (14.3)	0	14 (100.)
Total	5 (4.0)	46 (36.5)	39 (31.0)	25 (19.8)	11(8.7)	126 (100)

Source-survey conducted during 2018-1

From above table it is clear that in rural areas of Haridwar district 19.6% of respondents family income is less than Rs.5000, 42.0% earn between Rs 5001-10000, 28.3% earn between Rs.10001-15000, 6.5% earn between Rs.15001-20000 and 3.6% earn more than Rs.20000. whereas in urban of Haridwar

district 4.0% of respondents family income is less than Rs.5000 , 36.5% earn between Rs 5001-10000, 31.0% earn between Rs.10001-15000, 19.8% earn between Rs.15001-20000 and 8.7% earn more than Rs.20000.

Cross tabulation

Questions	Total	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total
It is helpful in overall development of girl	402	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Provide better job opportunity	402	59%	35%	6%	0%	0%	100%
Additional income to family	402	73%	24%	3%	0%	0%	100%
Improve marriage prospects	402	51%	46%	3%	0%	0%	100%
Education Brings prestige of girl and her family in the society.	402	40%	49%	11%	0%	0%	100%

86% of female respondents believe that education is helpful in overall development of the girl, 59% believe it provides better job opportunity, 73% believe that it enhances additional income to the

family, 51% believe it improves marriage prospects and 40%believe education brings prestige of girl and her family in the society.

Correlation Between items

	It is helpful in overall development of girl	Provide better job opportunity	Additional income to family	Improve marriage prospects	Education Brings prestige of girl and her family in the society.
It is helpful in overall development of girl	1.000				
Provide better job opportunity	0.741	1.000			
Additional income to family	0.649	0.476	1.000		
Improve marriage prospects	0.753	0.616	0.630	1.000	
Education Brings prestige of girl and her family in the society.	0.746	0.674	0.782	0.374	1.000

From above table it is clear that there is high correlation between all the variables. Only moderate correlation is found between these two variables namely education brings prestige of girl and her family in the society and improves marriage prospects.

Conclusion

It has been observed that dalit women's role in the family and society has changed to a certain extent due to increment in her education status and employability. From a woman's perspective these changes have largely been for the betterment. Now, women have some privileges in the family and more voice with respect to decision-making in the family. Women have begun to assert themselves.

Employment has also contributed to some extent towards changing attitudes towards social issues. Thus we can say that women's employment has gradually brought about some changes in their position both within the family and in the wider society.

It has been found that there is an education directly contributing to provide better job opportunities, is helpful in overall development of girl/women and brings prestige to girl/women and her family in the society. To conclude, it should be borne in mind that the findings of the present study are limited, in the sense that the sample of the present study comprised women belonging to one socioeconomic and cultural group.

References

- Basu, A. M. (1992). *Cultural status of women and demographic behaviour*. Oxford University Press.
- Brar, G. (1985). *Socio-Religious reform movements and untouchable in northern India*. In P. P. Sharma, *Struggle for status*. Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation
- Channing, W. H. (1850). *The Spirit of the Age*. Fowlers & Wells. <https://books.google.co.in/books?id=WUlrAAAYAAJ>
- .Central Statistics Office, Government of India. (2019, March 29). *Women and Men in India*. (C. S. Officers of Social Statistics Division, Editor) Retrieved from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation: http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Women%20and%20Men%20%20in%20India%202018.pdf
- Dashora, R., & Sharma, A. (2003, June). *Role of tribal women in education*. *Yojana*, 47(6).

Retrieved from Yojana: [http://yojana.gov.in/cms/\(S\(tasfbvz3srb12d45pirfk055\)\)/pdf/Yojana/English/2003/Jun_Vol47_No6.pdf](http://yojana.gov.in/cms/(S(tasfbvz3srb12d45pirfk055))/pdf/Yojana/English/2003/Jun_Vol47_No6.pdf)

- Ghose, M. (2007). *Gender, Literacy and Women's Empowerment in India: Some Issues*. *Convergence*, 40(3/4), 193–201.
- Guru, G. (2001). *The language of Dalit-Bahujan political discourse*. In G. Shah, *Dalit identity and politics*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Hair, J.F., Anderson, W.C., Black, B.J., & Babin, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Jordens, J. (1978). *Dayananda Saraswati: His life and ideas*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kiran Bhatti. (1998). *Educational Deprivation in India: A Survey of Field Investigations*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33(28), 1858-1869.
- Michael, S. M. (2007). *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Mohanty, M. (2011). *Social development and the story of the Marginalized: An Introduction*. In M. Mohanty, *Social development report 2010* (pp. 3-18). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Pangannavar, A. Y. (2014). *Schedule castes(SCs) in India: Socio-economic status and empowerment policies*. New Delhi: New Century Publications.
- Rege, S. (1998, October 31). *Dalit women Talk differently: A critique of "differences and towards a Dalit feminist standpoint position*. *Economic and Political weekly*, 33(46).
- Shah, G. (1975). *Politics of schedule castes and schedule tribes*. Bombay: Vora Publishers.
- Sharma, U. (2005). *Caste*. New Delhi: Viva books private limited.
- Sujaya, C. P. (2011). *Womwn Disparities, and development*. In M. Mohanty, *Social development report 2010* (pp. 20-31). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Thorat, S. (2009). *Dalits in India: Search for a Common Destiny*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Venkatanarayana, M. (2009). *Schooling Deprivation in India*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(32), 12-14. Retrieved February 1, 2018, from www.jstor.org/stable/25663412