

CHAPTER III
STATEMENT OF THE
PROBLEM

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3.1 Introduction

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes occupy significant portion in the population i.e., one fourth of the total population. They are under developed, economically weak, socially isolated, educationally backward and their participation in politics is also low. Majority of them are poor, illiterate, landless and belongs to rural areas or agency areas. The above mentioned features of their backwardness revolves around the lack of education or low levels of education among them. Education contributes for the development of human beings. It promotes the status of the individuals as well as nation.

The review of literature presented in the previous chapter shows that not many studies are conducted to find out the problems of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in pursuing higher education. Further the studies conducted are confined to problems, attitudes, enrolment, dropouts, personal characteristics and academic achievement, discrimination practices, awareness on the facilities provided by the Government for the SC/ST women. The studies also reveals that the ratio of participation of forward castes in higher education is higher than the backward communities and the ratio of men is higher than the women community in both forward and backward communities. The findings of these studies do not contribute to trace out the overall constraints of SC/STs especially women in participating higher education.

In order to improve the living conditions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the Government introduced several welfare schemes and programmes viz land for landless, subsidy loans, reservations at entry level of education and employment, free education, free hostels, residential schools, distribution of uniforms, textbooks, note books, exemption from payment of fee, special incentives for cosmetics, scholarships to pursue higher education, special training programmes on skill development, construction of roads and houses, providing drinking water, financial assistance to purchase inputs, etc.. Among all these measures Government specially cared about the education of marginalized groups. Many measures are taken to improve the ratio of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in education. Their participation in education is in decreasing order from primary level to higher education. Now-a-days higher education opportunities are widened. But the ratio of women in higher education stands behind men. This may be due to domestic responsibilities assigned to women. The same trend prevails in case of marginalized including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In spite of many facilities provided to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to increase their participation in higher education the ratio has not increased, and it is still worse in case of SC/ST women. Hence there is a need to identify the reasons or constraints for low participation of SC/ST women in educational programmes. The findings will help the policy makers to take suitable measures to solve the constraints and to enhance their participation in education at higher levels.

3.2 Statement of the Problem

‘An Enquiry into the Constraints of Pursuing Higher Education among SC/ST Women Students in Chittoor District of A.P.’

3.3 Need for the study

Human Resource Development depends on the knowledge, competencies, skills, health status etc, which are low among the unprivileged and marginalized sections of people including SC and ST populations, whose accessibility to the benefits of technological advancement is still limited. Hence, the Government both at central and state levels has taken significant steps to provide facilities in the form of establishment of special schools, scholarships, reservation at entry level, hostels etc.. In spite of the above facilities, the enrolment rate among the SC/ST students is decreasing from primary to higher education.

The expansion in the field of education provided great access to all sections of the society. However, owing to a number of constraints, and socio-economic factors, the benefits of expansion of educational facilities have not fully reached to all the communities specifically among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). According to All India survey on Higher Education conducted by MHRD, the enrolment of OBC students in Higher Educational Institutions in India during 2010-11 has gone up to 27 percent (male 27.3% and female 26.8%) but in case of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students, it continues to be low. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students' enrolment ratio during 2009-10 was 15 percent and it was 18.8 percent in 2010-11. Whereas the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women students' enrolment ratio during 2009-10 was 12.7 percent (men students' enrolment ratio was 17.1%) and it was 16.5 percent during 2010-11 (men students enrolment ratio was 20.9%). Scheduled Caste students' enrolment was 10.2 percent and Scheduled Tribe students' enrolment was 4.4 percent including enrolment through Distance Mode (NSS report).

Hence there is a need to ascertain factors affecting their participation in Higher education. The knowledge of the constraints will go a long way to promote their enrolment in Higher education leading to their mainstreaming. Hence an attempt has been made in the present study to identify the constraints of SC/ST women students pursuing higher education.

3.4 Scope of the Study

The present study is intended to identify the problems of SC and ST women students in pursuing higher education. Further it is also intended to study the influence and association of the personal characteristics on the constraints of SC/ST women students pursuing higher education.

For the purpose of the study the constraints coming in the way of SC/ST women pursuing higher education are divided under different areas viz. Educational constraints, Personal constraints, Economic constraints, Academic constraints, Discrimination constraints, Family support constraints, Institutional constraints, Teachers support constraints, Peer group support constraints, Neighbours support constraints, Government support constraints.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the SC/ST women students pursuing higher education. The area of the study is confined only to Tirupati Revenue Division of Chittoor district. The study is confined to the students pursuing under graduation and post graduation. The sample taken for the study is 480 SC/ST women students. Among them 240 are from under graduate level and a same number is from post graduate level. Further the areas of

constraints are limited to eleven only viz. Educational constraints, Personal constraints, Economic constraints, Academic constraints, Discrimination constraints, Family support constraints, Institutional constraints, Teachers support constraints, Peer group support constraints, Neighbours support constraints, Government support constraints.

3.6 Objectives

The broader objective of the present study is to identify the constraints of SC/ST women students pursuing higher education. To be specific, the objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To identify the profile of SC/ST women students pursuing higher education.
2. To study the constraints faced by the SC/ST women students in pursuing higher education.
3. To identify the sources of constraints in pursuing higher education among SC/ST women students.
4. To study the association between the personal characteristics and constraints in pursuing higher education among SC/ST women students.
5. To find out the influence of personal characteristics on the constraints in pursuing higher education of SC/ST women students.
6. To estimate the amount of influence exerted by various independent variables chosen on constraints of the SC/ST women.
7. To suggest suitable strategies for the promotion of higher education among SC/ST women students.

3.7 Hypotheses

For the purpose of the study the following hypotheses are framed.

1. The profile of SC/ST women students pursuing higher education is not similar.
2. The constraints faced by the SC/ST women students in pursuing higher education are not similar.
3. The sources of constraints in pursuing higher education among SC/ST women students are not uniform.
4. There is no significant association between personal characteristics and constraints faced by the SC/ST women students in pursuing higher education.
5. There is no significant difference in the constraints of SC/ST women students pursuing higher education belonging to different personal characteristics.
6. The contribution of the selected independent variables in predicting constraints of SC/ST women in pursuing higher education would not vary significantly.

In support to the above hypotheses, sub hypotheses are framed for 11 areas to find out the intensity of the constraint, difference between the personal characteristics and the constraints and the influence of personal characteristics on the constraints of SC/ST women pursuing higher education.

3.8 Operational Definitions used for the study

a. Higher Education

For the purpose of the study Higher Education refers to the Under Graduation and Post Graduation in the formal stream with Arts, Sciences, Commerce and Professional courses as recognized by the UGC.

b. Constraints

Constraints refers to the obstacles faced by the SC and ST students who are studying the Graduation and Post Graduation in the formal stream in terms of Academic, Institutional, Family, Peer group, Gender, Financial, Government, etc.

c. SC/ST women students

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes are those castes who have been incorporated in the schedule as per recommendations of the National commission for SC&ST and ratified by the Parliament. In case of Andhra Pradesh the SC's are broadly classified as Adi Andhra, Mala, Madiga and STs as Yanadi, Yerukula, Sugali, Gormati etc.. For the purpose of present study, the women students pursuing higher education belonging to SC and ST castes were consulted.

The next chapter deals with the Methodology adopted for the study.