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Parental Attitudes and their Influence on the Higher Education of Tribal Girls in Jharkhand

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ABSTRACT: In Jharkhand, the educational journey of tribal girls is deeply influenced by parental attitudes, which are shaped by cultural norms, economic considerations, and access to education. This study explores how these factors impact the pursuit of higher education among tribal girls. Traditional gender roles and economic constraints often limit educational opportunities, as parents prioritize sons' education due to perceived economic benefits. Limited access to educational resources further exacerbates these challenges. Understanding the multifaceted influences of parental attitudes is crucial for developing strategies to enhance educational access and participation among tribal girls, promoting a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape in Jharkhand.

KEYWORDS: Parental Attitudes, Tribal Girls, Higher Education, Jharkhand.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the diverse cultural landscape of Jharkhand, nestled within its lush greenery and vibrant tribal communities, lies a complex interplay of tradition, modernity, and socio-economic dynamics. Amidst this tapestry, the educational journey of tribal girls stands as a focal point of analysis and advocacy. Central to this journey are the parental attitudes¹ that shape and navigate the path towards higher education for their daughters. Parental attitudes wield considerable influence over the educational aspirations and achievements of children, and nowhere is this more pronounced than in the context of tribal communities in Jharkhand. This introduction seeks to explore the multifaceted dimensions of parental attitudes and their profound impact on the pursuit of higher education among tribal girls in this region.

Jharkhand, rich in cultural heritage and natural resources, is also home to numerous tribal communities, each with its distinct traditions, beliefs, and socio-economic realities. Within these communities, entrenched gender norms often dictate roles and expectations, with girls frequently encountering barriers on the road to educational advancement. The influence of parental attitudes on the higher education of tribal girls² in Jharkhand is a complex interplay of various factors, including cultural traditions, economic considerations, access to educational resources, awareness of the benefits of education, and evolving perceptions of gender equality. Understanding these factors is paramount to unraveling the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that shape the educational landscape for tribal girls.

This study delves into the nuances of parental attitudes, examining their role as both barriers and catalysts in the educational journey of tribal girls in Jharkhand. By shedding light on the underlying dynamics, it seeks to inform policies, programs, and interventions aimed at fostering greater access to and participation in higher education among this marginalized demographic. In the pages that follow, we embark on a journey of exploration and inquiry, aiming to illuminate the pathways towards educational empowerment for tribal girls in Jharkhand. Through a nuanced understanding of parental attitudes, we endeavor to pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape, where every girl has the opportunity to pursue her dreams and aspirations.

1.1 Cultural Norms and Traditions

Cultural norms and traditions³ play a pivotal role in shaping parental attitudes towards the higher education of tribal girls in Jharkhand. Within many tribal communities, deeply ingrained gender roles and traditional expectations often prioritize domestic duties and early marriage for girls over educational pursuits. These norms, passed down through generations, perpetuate the belief that a girl's primary role is within the household, reinforcing barriers to her access to higher education. Furthermore, within these communities, there exists a prevailing notion that investing in a girl's education may not yield significant returns compared to investing in a boy's education. This perception stems from cultural beliefs that equate a girl's worth with her ability to manage household affairs and contribute to family duties rather than her academic achievements. Consequently, parents may hesitate to prioritize their daughters' education,

¹ Osler, Audrey; Vincent, Kerry (2003-12-16). [Girls and Exclusion](#)

² Smith, Anne B., eds. (2010-12-20). [Global Pathways to Abolishing Physical Punishment](#)

³ auman, Chad M. (2016). [Faith and Foreign Policy in India](#)



especially at the higher levels, perpetuating a cycle of limited opportunities for educational advancement among tribal girls in Jharkhand.

1.2 Economic Considerations

Economic considerations significantly influence parental attitudes towards the higher education of tribal girls in Jharkhand. Poverty and financial constraints often force families to make difficult choices about allocating limited resources, and education expenses may not always take precedence. In many cases, parents may prioritize the education of their sons over their daughters, viewing sons as future breadwinners who will support the family economically. Additionally, the cost of higher education, including tuition fees, books, and transportation, can pose significant barriers for families with limited financial means. For tribal communities already struggling to meet basic needs, investing in higher education for their daughters may seem unaffordable or financially burdensome. As a result, parents may opt to prioritize immediate needs over long-term educational aspirations, further perpetuating the cycle of poverty and limiting opportunities for girls' academic advancement. Moreover, economic factors can intersect with cultural norms, as families may perceive investing in their daughters' education as less economically viable compared to investing in their sons' education. This intersectionality underscores the complexity of parental decision-making regarding educational opportunities for tribal girls, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies that address both economic barriers and cultural perceptions to ensure equitable access to higher education.

1.3 Access to Education

Access to education is a critical factor influencing parental attitudes towards the higher education of tribal girls in Jharkhand. Limited access to educational resources, including schools and transportation infrastructure, poses significant challenges for families residing in remote or underserved areas. In many tribal communities, the nearest schools offering higher education may be located far from residential areas, making it difficult for girls to commute to pursue their studies. Moreover, inadequate school facilities and infrastructure further exacerbate barriers to access, discouraging parents from sending their daughters to school. These challenges underscore the urgent need for interventions aimed at improving access to education, including the establishment of more schools in underserved areas and the development of transportation infrastructure to facilitate girls' access to higher education opportunities.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Perween & Dewan (2017) examined the impact of parenting style and ethnicity on academic achievement motivation and mental health of female adolescent students. Using TDPBI, AAMT, and the Mental Health Inventory, data were collected from tribal and non-tribal students in Ranchi. Analysis revealed that students with rejecting parents had lower motivation and poor mental health, while those with loving parents fared better in both areas. Ethnicity significantly influenced outcomes: non-tribal students had better mental health, but tribal students showed higher academic motivation. Overall, mental health and motivation were positively correlated.

Dutta (2014) analyzed the factors influencing school enrollment and performance among children in rural India using NFHS-3 data. Despite efforts towards universal primary education, challenges like poor school quality, high dropout rates, and disparities persisted. The study highlighted the critical role of parents' education and economic status in children's educational outcomes. It concluded that the family environment significantly affects children's school performance, with parental survival and access to basic assets being key determinants.

Barla's (2016) study investigated rural adolescents' awareness and attitudes towards family planning in Simdega district, Jharkhand. The research found high awareness of temporary methods, with 68% of male adolescents aware of condoms and 47% of female adolescents aware of pills. However, knowledge about other methods was limited. Attitudes favored practicing family planning after having two children. The study attributed low awareness and acceptance of family planning to poor health infrastructure and suggested improving access to information and services to enhance family planning practices.

John and Singh (2014) explored the effects of personality and emotional intelligence on academic achievement among tribal students. The study noted that students from privileged backgrounds performed better academically than those from deprived backgrounds. It found that traits like emotional stability, decisiveness, and interpersonal management were significant predictors of academic success. The researchers concluded that understanding these factors could help teachers foster better academic outcomes and positive emotions in tribal students.

Sarika et.al., (2014) assessed the attitudes of female adolescents towards menstruation in Kargil, J&K. Using the Adolescent Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire, they found that girls generally held negative views on menstruation. Despite being open about the experience, they showed low acceptance of menarche and faced various menstrual



symptoms. The study suggested that these negative attitudes stemmed from cultural and social factors, highlighting the need for better education and support systems to improve menstrual health and attitudes.

Borker (2017) studied the impact of having a co-ethnic teacher on student enrollment in Jharkhand. The research revealed that tribal teachers significantly improved tribal students' enrollment, reducing the achievement gap. Co-ethnic teachers were found to be 0.44 standard deviations more effective at retaining students. The study suggested that this effect resulted from both reduced discrimination and increased teacher effort. These findings emphasize the importance of teacher-student ethnic alignment in promoting inclusive education.

Sahu's (2014) research focused on the status of tribal education in Mayurbhanj, Odisha, particularly in Similipal forest area. The study highlighted alarmingly low literacy rates, especially among females, and identified various factors such as economic conditions, parental attitudes, and inadequate educational infrastructure as barriers. Recommendations included developing tribe-specific learning materials, appointing local teachers, and establishing more residential schools to address these educational challenges.

Bara (2010) examined British colonial education policies in Chhotanagpur, contrasting its slow and uneven educational growth with other parts of Bengal. The study highlighted the reliance on missionaries, whose efforts were hampered by their prejudiced paradigms, resulting in a flawed educational system for tribals. Despite some valorization of the system by tribals, they were unable to develop it further due to lack of indigenous initiative, showcasing the deep-seated issues in colonial education practices.

Bose (2012) used NFHS-3 data to analyze the impact of maternal son preference on gender disparities in education. The study found that girls were disadvantaged in families with maternal son preference. Mother's education mitigated this bias, reducing gender inequality. The research emphasized the role of community context, showing that higher women's status in a region lessened the negative impact of son preference on girls' education, highlighting the importance of social context in educational outcomes.

Kumar and Srivastava (2011) investigated menstruation-related practices and attitudes among adolescent girls and their mothers in Ranchi. The study uncovered various cultural and social restrictions, myths, and misconceptions surrounding menstruation. Findings showed that girls' reactions and adaptability varied based on their education, family environment, and cultural beliefs. The study suggested strategies to improve menstrual health and hygiene, emphasizing the need for better education and open discussions about menstruation.

III. AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF BENEFITS

Understanding the Benefits: Many parents in tribal communities may lack awareness of the long-term benefits associated with higher education for their daughters. Limited exposure to alternative perspectives and opportunities may lead to misconceptions about the value of education beyond traditional gender roles. Enhancing awareness⁴ about the potential benefits of higher education, such as increased earning potential, improved health outcomes, and enhanced social mobility, is crucial for shifting parental attitudes towards supporting their daughters' educational aspirations.

Challenging Perceptions: Cultural norms and stereotypes often shape perceptions of girls' roles within the family and society, influencing parental attitudes towards their education. Challenging these perceptions requires targeted efforts to promote gender equality and empower girls to pursue their educational goals. By highlighting success stories of educated women and showcasing the tangible benefits of higher education for individuals and communities, it becomes possible to reshape parental attitudes and foster greater support for girls' education.

IV. EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

Promoting Empowerment: Empowering girls through education is essential for fostering gender equality and challenging entrenched patriarchal norms in tribal communities. By providing girls with access to quality education and opportunities for personal and intellectual growth, parents can witness firsthand the transformative impact of education on their daughters' lives. Empowered girls are better equipped to make informed decisions about their futures, pursue higher education, and contribute meaningfully to their families and communities.

⁴ [In Kenya, a grandmother in her 90s attends fourth grade](#) 2015.



Addressing Structural Inequalities: Achieving gender equality in education requires addressing structural inequalities that perpetuate disparities between boys and girls. This includes addressing barriers such as gender-based violence, discriminatory practices, and limited access to resources. By advocating for policy reforms, investing in girls' education initiatives, and promoting community engagement, stakeholders can work towards creating an enabling environment where girls have equal opportunities to access and succeed in higher education, ultimately transforming parental attitudes and societal norms towards gender equality.

V. CONCLUSION

Parental attitudes significantly shape the educational trajectories of tribal girls in Jharkhand, often acting as both barriers and catalysts. Cultural norms prioritizing domestic roles for girls, economic constraints, and limited access to educational resources collectively hinder higher education aspirations. Addressing these issues requires multifaceted strategies that include cultural sensitization, economic support, and improved infrastructure. By recognizing and mitigating these barriers, policies and programs can promote greater educational opportunities for tribal girls, fostering their empowerment and contributing to broader socio-economic development in Jharkhand. Ultimately, transforming parental attitudes is key to ensuring every girl has the chance to pursue her educational dreams.

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