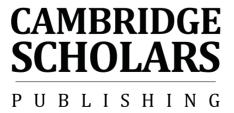# Dalit Women and Dropout Rates
in Collegiate Education

Dalit Women and Dropout Rates
in Collegiate Education:
A Study of the Warangal District
of Andhra Pradesh

By

Silveru Harinath

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

This book is dedicated to my Mother

(Late) Smt. SILVERU VARAMMA

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Finally I would like to thank Cambridge Scholars Pubhishers for accepting the thesis for publication.

S. Harinath

ABBREVIATIONS

DPEP	District Primary Education Project
ZPHS	Zilla Parishad High School
SSA	Sarva Siksha Abhiyan
RSA	Repressive State Apparatus
ISA	Ideological State Apparatus
ICSSR	Indian Council of Social Science Research
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
GOI	Government of India
SC	Schedule Caste
ST	Schedule Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Caste
OC	Other Castes
NPE	National Policy on Education
MLC	Member of Legislative Council
MPC	Math's, Physics, Chemistry
BPC	Botany, Zoology, Physics, Chemistry
CEC	Civics, Economics, Commerce
HEC	History, Economics, Commerce
B.Sc	Bachelor of Science
B.Com	Bachelor of Commerce
B.A	Bachelor of Arts
NGO	Non Government Organization
BPL	Below Poverty Line
NSS	National Service Scheme
T L P	Total Literacy Population
T P	Total Population
T L	Total Literacy
L M	Literacy of Male
L F	Literacy of Female

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Education is an essential instrument for the emancipation of humankind[1]". Eminent philosophers of education such as John Dewey and father of sociology Emile Durkheim perceived education as a vehicle for social transformation and as a means of individual and community emancipation. During the colonial and post-independence era, the Indian national leadership acknowledged the critical role of education and gave it utmost importance in the nation-building process. The vision of national leaders is reflected in the Indian constitution, which proclaims compulsory free education for all children up to the age of fourteen.

Although the Indian state proclaims education as a fundamental right for its citizens, almost one third of children of school-going age do not attend school. Sections of Indian society which are not in a position to access even a primary level of education include marginal groups such as women, Adivasis, Dalits, backward classes, minorities and children with disabilities. Dalits are the most deprived section of Indian society, having suffered for centuries from the practice of untouchability, segregation and denial of access to multiple resources including those both economic and cultural.

While statistics show a steady growth in the enrolment of Dalits at levels of education ranging from primary to higher, in the post-independence era, the proportion of Dalit girls in different levels of education is considerably less than that of Dalit boys in general and non-Dalits in particular. The literacy levels of Dalit women are much lower than those of women of the upper and middle classes, and in rural areas very few Dalit women are literate. Despite this, there has been a gradual improvement in the access to higher education by Dalits over the last six decades. Although there has

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[1] Harinath Silveru, (2011), *"Rise of Educational Empires in the Era of Globalization: a Case of South Indian State."* *World Academy of Science Engineering and Technology Journal* 55, 924–928.

been an increase in literacy at a societal level, the literacy levels of Dalit women are much lower than those of men across the castes, and education of rural Dalits compares unfavourably with that of their urban counterparts.

Since independence, female education has not experienced a considerable degree of attention from policy makers at the level of national agenda. Committees which have been set up to assess the progress of female education, such as Mahila Samakhya, and the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) Program, have recommended that, without proper intervention of the state and community, it is very difficult to promote female education and achieve education for all (Nayar 1999).

The failure of the state in promoting literacy and primary education reflects the educational disparities on the basis of ascribed status. The literacy gap is highlighted in the state and national level educational statistics. The gender gap is much higher at the entry level in enrolment in primary and upper primary schools. One of the major factors which determine the future of the education system is maintaining a high retention rate. Unfortunately, the history of education reveals alarming trends in the form of higher dropout rates, which are especially high in rural and urban slum areas.

Gender plays a crucial role in determining the chances of acquiring literacy and attaining higher educational qualifications. Indian society, which is patriarchal in nature, differentiates between people on the basis of gender and discriminates girls and women through its religious and caste agencies. These factors tend to work against the interests and advancement of women in different spheres, particularly education.

Although dropout rates in elementary education have decreased from 85 per cent in 1961 to 58 per cent in 2001, an overview of educational statistics indicates that only four out of every ten girls who enrol at primary school are able to complete the constitutionally mandated years of schooling. But while the dropout rate is very low and gradually decreasing, it remains important to focus attention on the retention of girls in schools. This can be achieved through examining the functionality of schools and colleges in order to ascertain the reasons behind dropout rates (Girls Education Trends and Challenges, 1992).

According to scholars such as Desai (1976), the explanation for the lower enrolment levels of female students is high dropout rates. Desai adds that

the factors which are responsible for higher dropout rates of female students in primary and high school education are largely sociological in nature, and are complemented by political and economic policies. Poverty has an enormous bearing on a girl's chances of schooling when the household income is limited, since boys tend to get preference over girls in terms of education.

The distance from home to school or college is another important deciding factor, since it can often place a girl's safety at risk and cause her to drop out of education, consequently contributing to high dropout rates. Another factor is inflexible school and college hours, which can act as an obstacle to girls –particularly those in rural areas– from attending, especially those whose parents expect support in domestic work even during school and college hours.

Hasan (2004) suggests that a lack of hostel facilities is another contributing factor to the reduced participation of girls in upper primary and high school education. School-related factors –such as the presence or absence of female teachers, toilet facilities, and relevant and gender-sensitive curricula– also play an important role in either motivating or demotivating girls from enrolling and remaining in schools and colleges.

In a UNICEF (2003) trends report on girls' education, it was revealed that almost twice as many girls as boys are pulled out of school, or were never sent to school in the first place, due to the combination of their responsibility of assisting in the household chores, as well as a lack of improved quality and delivery of education. The issue of dropout rates amongst female students is one of the major educational problems which must be confronted by the Indian state in its effort to achieve universal literacy and universal primary education of all of its citizens.

Statement of the Problem

Even after sixty-five years of independence, many girls –particularly those from the Dalit community– still fall under the bracket of illiteracy. This is in spite of state-initiated programmes such as free education for all sanctioned by the Indian government, and prompts several questions as to why illiteracy remains so prevalent.

The literature (for example Shah, 1999), suggests that an explanation for this situation encompasses a range of socio, political, cultural, religious

and economic factors. Although there has been a certain amount of progress evident in primary education, brought about by the initiation and implementation of affirmative programmes by the government, significant progress towards improving education levels in higher education for Dalit girls remains elusive.

Despite the existence of a large body of literature on gender and education which focuses on girls in relation to school education and higher education, it is rare to come across a study which focuses on the intermediate level of education which links school and higher education. In order to fill this gap the present study aims to explore the factors which influence the chances of acquiring collegiate education amongst Dalit girls in rural villages.

Rationale of the Topic

The higher education of women is a fundamental part of achieving the goals of liberty and equality. However, in the context of Indian society there are several factors which tend to hamper the educational achievement of women in general, particularly those of the Dalit community. For example, the literacy rate amongst rural Dalit girls is only 10.93 per cent. There are multiple factors at work here, including socio-cultural, educational, economic and infrastructural. The political goals and policies of the state also have an important bearing on the participation of rural Dalit girls in intermediate education, the stage which links school education and higher education.

Objectives of the Study

The present study proposes to work with the following objectives:

- To analyse the socio-economic profile of Dalit girls who drop out of collegiate education during their course of study;
- To look at the perceptions of Dalit girls and their parents towards the importance of higher education for Dalit women;
- To map out the multiple factors which determine educational achievement and its role in shaping the dropout rates of Dalit girls in collegiate education.

Methodology

The present study uses both primary and secondary data in order to find answers to the research problem. In order to conduct an empirical study, Palakurty Mandal of the Warangal district has been selected in order to identify the dropout rate of Dalit girls from rural villages of this Mandal. Palakurty is a Mandal in the Warangal District of Andhra Pradesh, which has twenty-one villages. According to the 2001 census, the total population of the Mandal is 54,243.

The snowball sampling technique was used to identify respondents from different villages in the Mandal. Personal interviews and group discussions were conducted in order to collect the qualitative data used in this study, and a structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. For the present study, the researcher has used the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program to quantify data and generate relevant tables.

Structure

This study has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides a brief introduction; the second chapter focuses on the literature review, which examines the conceptual works of both Western and Indian scholars on the dimensions of education; and the third chapter provides a detailed description of collegiate education and the socio-economic profile of Dalit women in Palakurty Mandal. The fourth chapter dwells upon the forms of exclusion and patterns of discrimination suffered by Dalit women in collegiate education. The fifth chapter is a conclusion chapter, which presents a summary of the study and outlines its major findings.

Self-reflection on fieldwork experiences

When the researcher first visited Palakurty Mandal, he met some of the elders in the Mandal and explained the purpose of his visit and the work he intended to carry out. He was received in good grace and was provided with accommodation within the Mandal headquarters.

It is important at this juncture to note the difficulties encountered by the researcher in the task of visiting each and every village in order to identify potential respondents and conduct research. One significant problem was that of transport, or lack thereof, which made it difficult for the researcher to visit the villages in question in order to carry out research. This factor

was aggravated by the need to work around the schedules of the respondents, who were engaged during the day in agricultural work, meaning that the researcher often had to conduct his research very early in the morning.

On the first day, on his way to carry out field work, the researcher came across Gudur village. Having encountered some of the village elders, the researcher introduced himself and explained the purpose of his research visit, explaining that he was conducting a survey on the issues behind the dropout rate of Dalit women in collegiate education. The elders then advised that the researcher meet with the president of the village, who in turn introduced him to some of the elders from the Dalit community. The researcher then visited the Dalit Wada, an under-developed area, where he witnessed a lack of awareness about the importance of education within families there.

One of the members whom the researcher met, who works for the M.V. Foundation[2], proved to be key to this study; they introduced the researcher to a group of girls who had dropped out of intermediate and degree level education, and the researcher was able to arrange a group discussion with them. This was unfortunately hampered by a lack of understanding by the girls' parents of the researcher's work, and their desire for the girls to resume their agricultural work.

Despite this, the researcher succeeded in interviewing nine members during this visit. In almost all of the villages surveyed, the researcher encountered problems from the village elders, parents and the student respondents; for example, from mothers who showed reluctance in allowing the researcher to interact with their young daughters.

Some of the parents inquired as to whether the researcher was going to provide facilities for their children, since they had experienced data gathering of this nature previously and had not seen any tangible results at the grassroots level. It was plain that they expected the research to result in governmental assistance for their children, and the researcher had to explain his role and lack of affiliation to the state bureaucracy or a political party. Having made his position clear, the researcher finally

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[2] The Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya (M. V.) Foundation is an NGO which works for the eradication of child labour. This is achieved in part through the provision of a bridge school and hostel facility which enables students who drop out to continue their education.

achieved a positive response from the parents of the children and the children themselves.

In each and every village there were between four and six Dalit girls who were the first generation to access intermediate education, but were unable to go on to attend higher education. In some of the villages there were no Dalit girls who had managed to access higher education. In one village, Iravennu, the researcher was surprised to learn that within the space of six years; only five Dalit girls had attended school.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The aim of this chapter is to review the existing literature on education, including sociological theories on education. Although substantial research exists on the education of women, no significant work has been carried out on dropout rates among Dalit women in higher education in the state of Andhra Pradesh, and the Warangal District in particular.

A similar lack of research is shown in the area of the growth of education among Dalit women in collegiate education. Some of the published works which exist on this subject are reviewed in this section. The intention of this review is to shed light on sociological theories of education, particularly with respect to Dalit women. Theoretical views on education were reviewed both in the context of the West and India.

Theoretical Perspectives on Education

Sociological perspectives on education focus on the process by which education influences social process and vice-versa. Although the origin of ideas on education can be traceable to the writings of Ancient scholars like Plato and Aristotle, it is Emile Durkheim who laid the foundation for the emergence of sociology of education as a new branch of the study of sociology. After Durkheim, sociology of education drew the attention of many young sociologists, who critically looked at the changing nature of education from various perspectives and whose contribution was immensely helpful for its development.

Education can be viewed as a dynamic process in the sense that the nature, goals and values of an education system undergo considerable changes in accordance with the changing needs of a society. Consequently, education also influences social change. Thus, it becomes very clear that on the one hand, education helps to maintain social order and on the other hand, contributes to social change. Recently the politics of education curriculum, medium of instruction and identity, and so on have become emerging

issues; problems which sociologists have attempted to address by approaching them from various perspectives.

Emile Durkheim

Durkheim's ideas on education primarily focus on the functions of education, which are vital to the survival of society and how the role of education changes in accordance with the transition of society from simple and homogeneous to complex and heterogeneous. The major function of education according to Durkheim is to transmit social values and norms to successive generations. The very survival of society depends upon the degree of social solidarity and collective conscience among its members. It will be achieved only when people share the same values and norms. Here, education imparts these shared values and norms to young children and transmits them from one generation to the next. Education is an agency of socialization which reinforces the homogenizing principles amongst children and makes them adhere to those principles of the society. It instils in the members of a society the feeling of oneness and a sense of belonging.

Durkheim also emphasizes the social character of education. Each one of us has two kinds of character with regards to education—that of the 'individual being' and the 'social being'. The individual being refers to the mental state of each individual and his or her personality and applies to only personal events. But the social being reflects the influence of social practices, moral values and the norms within us. The objective of education is to constitute this social being in all members of the society, which are necessary for the functioning of society. This typifies the social character of education as explained by Durkheim.

A primitive society is characterized by a homogeneous and kinship-based organization. There is an absence of formal education systems in primitive societies. The responsibility of imparting social values and norms to children is vested in family members. These societal values and norms are passed on to young children of the next generation through the socialization process in which they learn and internalize the cultural practices and norms. Here, family is the primary agency of the socialization process in primitive societies.

According to Durkheim, the transition of society from simple to complex corresponds with the increase in a division of labour resulting from the

emergence of specialized occupations. The increased division of labour necessitates the process of imparting skills and technical knowledge demanded by a complex industrial society. The responsibility of imparting education is shifted to schools in the industrial society.

In schools children should learn to co-operate with other members of society, with whom they are unfamiliar. Social solidarity in complex society depends on the interdependence of specialized skills. Schools impart those specialized skills in accordance with the demands of the society. Thus, the role of education also changes according to the changing nature of society and its demands in order to maintain social order.

Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons also provides similar ideas to Durkheim. He views the school class as a social system. The family is an agency of primary socialization and later, school takes over as the socialization agency within society. A child's status in a family is determined by birth and is judged in terms of particularistic standards in opposition to universalistic principles. But in a larger society—especially in advanced industrial societies—adult status is one which is achieved and children are judged in accordance with universalistic standards. Schools as a social system reinforce these universalistic principles and make children understand that status is achieved on the basis of merit and of performance. Thus, schools operate on meritocratic principles.

Parsons focuses on the two major functions of the school system. The first function is that of the internalization of commitments and capacities, which are necessary for the future role performance among children. Commitments include both commitment to social values and norms and commitment to specific types of assigned roles within the structure of society. The second major function is the allocation of human resources within the role structure of the adult society.

This role allocation is carried out on the basis of the educational achievement attained by children in their elementary and secondary school education. Merit always comes to the forefront in determining the performance of children and their role allocation in the larger structure of society. Children are also encouraged to strive for higher educational achievement, which determines their status.

Parsons states that value consensus is imperative for a society to survive. Schools in industrial societies socialize children into the basic values of society. The two major values are the value of achievement and that of equality of opportunity. Thus, schools create a value consensus amongst their students, which dictates firstly that different rewards are afforded to different achievements, and also by allowing children to co-operate with each other in different functions as a mechanism for role allocation, they are given equal opportunities. These values create a value consensus among young children and are therefore essential for the functioning of society.

Functionalists are often criticized for their conservative bias, i.e. accepting the established social order as it is without looking at it critically. Durkheim is of the opinion that the norms and values imparted through the education system reflect those of society as a whole. However, conflict theorists maintain that education is used as a mechanism for disseminating dominant ideologies, which will serve the interests of the ruling elite instead of other underprivileged sections of society. Thus, this may provide a different view of the role of education in society. Similarly, Parsons was also criticized for his view that the education system operates as an integrative mechanism of society.

Conflictive Perspective

The conflict perspective holds a view which is completely opposite to the functionalist framework. According to this perspective, there is always a constant conflict between two units of society, as opposed to the functionalist view that the units of society are interrelated. Conflict theorists treat society as a system of equilibrium and divide it into dominant groups and subordinate groups, which are completely opposite to each other. There is always a constant struggle between these two groups. The nature of conflict assumes many positive and negative, talented and manifest, and gradual and violent forms. The conflict theorists are specific in their analysis, focusing on the interrelationship between two or more units within society.

The conflict perspective on education critically looks at the role of education. According to this perspective, education is used as a means to disseminate dominant ideologies, which will help to retain the existing power relation in which subordinate groups are exploited by dominant

elites. It explores the ways by which education serves the interests of dominant groups, which the functionalist misses.

Classical Marxism

Marx did not provide a general theory of sociology of education. However, his theory of state and ideology could be used to formulate the Marxist theory of education. The understanding of these two theories has provided many thinkers with the basis for developing their theories on education. Althusser's concept of educational Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) is an extension of the Marxist theory of the state.

For Marx, the state is an instrument of oppression vested in the hands of ruling class. In capitalist societies, it is used to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie class against the proletariats, in the process of appropriation of surplus value. The state takes the responsibility of providing public education which, Marx believes, will be exploited by the ruling class for satisfying their own interests. Marx is not against public education, but rather education by the state.

He analyses the relationship between the concepts of ideology and consciousness while explaining the concepts of social formation and relations of production. According to Marx, individual consciousness doesn't determine a person's being; rather, it is the social being or the material life conditions which determine the consciousness. So, Marx views ideology as a form of consciousness. The source of ideology does not exist outside the world of conscious subjects, but within their life conditions. Ideology to Marx is the false consciousness of the experiencing individual human subject, since the consciousness is the mere expression of relations of production.

Antonio Gramsci

Gramsci was an Italian scholar of the neo-Marxist school, who greatly contributed to the Marxist theory of education. Hegemony is an important contribution of Gramsci. He points out that in capitalism, the educational institution plays an important role in spreading the ruling class ideology. He adds that in capitalist society only the ruling class or bourgeoisie have the opportunity to avail the education system. The common man has little chance to achieve this access due to poor financial circumstances and a lack of encouragement from the government. This is one of the reasons for

the growing inequality that exists in the capitalist society. Gramsci says that there should be a common education at primary and secondary level; this, he believes, will play an important role in shaping an egalitarian society.

Louis Althusser

Althusser explains the reproduction of the existing forces of production and the relations of production in his theory of ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). According to him, these ISAs interpellate individuals as subjects which in turn necessarily result in the reproduction of the existing relations of production. He takes the idea of a Marxian conception of state as a repressive apparatus and applies this to this theory. He makes a distinction between Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The RSAs include the army, police, courts etc., whereas ISAs include family ISA, the educational ISA, the political ISA, the cultural ISA, etc. The RSAs belong to the public domain while the ISAs apply to the private domain. However, the distinction between public and private assumes less significance in his theory of ideology. The main difference lies in the way both of these apparatuses function. Sometimes, RSAs also carry out some of the functions of ISAs and vice-versa.

Before explaining the role of ideology in the process of interpellation of subjects, Althusser formulates a general theory of ideology by rejecting the Marxian conception of ideology. For him, ideology is not false consciousness; instead it is constitutive of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real life conditions. The notion that ideology has a material existence lies in the fact that it constitutes not only the forms of ideas, but also those of rituals and practices. Althusser accepts that specific ideologies have history, but in general, ideology has no history and is also speculative.

In order to exist in a capitalist society, it becomes necessary to reproduce both the forces of reproduction and the relations of production. The educational ISA reproduces the labour power through imparting necessary skills and techniques to young children. It also prepares them to adhere to the rules of morality and respect and other rules of the established order. It is therefore very clear that the reproduction of labour power involves both the reproduction of skills and techniques and also its submission to the rules of existing social order. The educational ISA becomes the dominant

ISA in the formation of mature capitalism by replacing the religious ISA. It also provides the necessary workforce demanded by the capitalist industries.

Ivan Illich

In his book "Deschooling Society", Illich criticizes both the functionalist and the liberal perspectives on education and suggests an alternative form of education which, he believes, will provide the basis of real liberating education. His ideas on education are rooted in his disillusionment with some aspects of educational practice and achievement. He criticizes the present institutionalized education system as limiting a person's capacity and desire for self-learning and legitimizing the curriculum prepared by the state government. The clear-cut curriculum constitutes imposed ideas and values, which are made to be believed as the legitimate sources of knowledge. Thus, the present schooling becomes detrimental to the development of critical consciousness of the people towards society. People don't have control over what they learn and they are made to believe that whatever they are taught by an instructor has more intrinsic value. Real learning, by contrast, is not the result of instruction, but involves the direct and free participation of people in every learning process in exactly the way that they want. It makes people submissive and passive, conforming to the dominant values and ideologies imposed by the state.

For Illich, universal education cannot be realized through the process of schooling. The institutionalized education system curtails the people's right to learn by making it compulsory to attend school. It denounces self-perpetuating education. Due to this, many people are deprived of a basic education and those who are not able to attend are discriminated against. Education also becomes a valuable commodity. Instead, education should be made to available to all.

The market value assigned to education encourages people to attend school just for the sake of getting degrees, diplomas and certificates so that they can be able to secure jobs in the market economy. People are taught to tailor their aspirations and desires in accordance with marketable values. The institutionalized values imparted in schools are considered to be the tool for measuring personal growth. People also tend to follow the standards expected in schools. For Illich, personal growth cannot be measured in terms of schooling.

Deschooling does not mean the closing down of schools or a free education in which the curriculum was set by the students themselves; instead, it refers to transforming or recreating the ethos of schooling with the objective of making education freely available in different accessible forms. Ivan Illich proposed two main alternatives to schooling; 'skills exchange' and 'learning webs'. In skills exchange, instructors should teach the skills they use in daily life to all. In learning webs, people who have the same interests should come together to discuss specific problems. These alternatives provide the basis of creative and exploratory learning. Schools should favour the policy of attracting students rather than compelling them to become involved.

Illich's radical concept of 'Deschooling' received much criticism. Some scholars argued that the ideas of Illich pertaining to educational learning are based on institution and lack the spirit of socio-educational research. His specific proposals for reform are less satisfactory than his analysis of current educational practice. He ignores the problem of aspiration towards learning as he assumes aspirations of one sort or other for everyone. Despite these criticisms, it still remains an influencing theory in the field of the sociology of education.

Bourdieu's Forms of Capital

Bourdieu tries to go beyond the economic conception of capital that represents material exchange and instead explains other forms of capital which are non-material. His main focus is on how different forms of capital are acquired and are converted into other forms. Such insights into the various forms of capital will help to understand the structure and functioning of society. He explained two non-material forms of cultural capital and social capital.

Cultural capital

Bourdieu developed the concept of cultural capital to prove the fact that economic obstacles are not enough to explain disparities in the educational attainment of children from different social backgrounds. He introduces this concept of cultural capital to explore how cultural disposition and habits play a vital role in maintaining disparities in the educational achievements of children. Cultural capital is a form of non-material capital, which is different from an economic conception of capital. It could

be used as a means of generating economic success and be monopolized by individuals and groups.

Bourdieu criticizes the system of formal education for re-establishing the inequality of educational attainment. Cultural disposition and skills are necessarily important to school success. Family plays a significant role in imparting those cultural skills and competence. The elite and middle class families provide more opportunities for their children to appropriate this cultural capital, whereas the children of socially and economically disadvantaged families are deprived of these opportunities. For example, children of high class families have good communication skills in English and basic knowledge of technology. These two skills could be used by them as a resource of gaining educational success more effectively than children belonging to less advantaged families.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital exists in three distinctive forms; 'embodied', 'objectified' and 'institutionalized'. The embodied form of cultural capital refers to the individual's competence and skills, which can be appropriated through investing more time and effort. These cannot be transmitted instantaneously. An Engineering student, for example, can gain more competence in a particular area of his interest by joining a particular course which may involve years of learning and training.

The objectified state of cultural capital refers to objects such as materials, machines, books, etc. The use of these objects requires a certain amount of embodied skill. A computer is an example of an objectified state of cultural capital. Here, the individual should have at least a little knowledge of how to operate a computer. This form of capital could be appropriated through economic capital. The institutionalized form of cultural capital provides a legally guaranteed value. Schools certify individuals' competencies and skills by issuing credentials and confer an objective value to their holder in the form of educational degree. Thus, the educational degree is an institutionalized form of cultural capital.

The school system transforms the cultural capital acquired by an individual into "scholastic" cultural capital, which is the basis of individual achievement and of economic success. Schools view this individual achievement as a matter of the individual's natural talent or effort. In this way the system of formal education legitimizes inequality in cultural capital and reproduces the existing structure of inequality.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to the aggregate of actual resources that can be appropriated by a durable network of institutionalized relationship. An individual's social capital is determined by the size of his or her relationship network. This social network is maintained through continuous exchange. It has a strong influence on the levels of educational attainment over time for future goals. One can gain more educational success through maintaining the network of social relations. The educational success attained by this social capital could be converted into economic capital. All types of capital can be derived from economic capital. Bourdieu also states that cultural and social capital are fundamentally rooted in economic capital, but they cannot be completely reduced to an economic form.

Education and Feminism

Weiner (1997), while interrogating the relationship between feminism and access to educational opportunities, examined the link between women's education and transformation in society in the form of a 'wave'. The first wave started in the early nineteenth century and stretched into the first two decades of the twentieth century, while the second began in the late 1960s. The first wave was associated with the rising aspirations of liberal individuals drawing specifically on ideas about natural rights, justice and democracy, for extending legal, political and employment rights of middle class women.

The second wave is associated with the women's movement, which had employed a more radical approach and had its dissident origins in Marxist scholarship. Liberal feminists demand access to education and equal opportunities for both sexes to create an environment where an individual woman's potential can be encouraged and developed. Firestone (1970) in *Dialectic Sex* defined society in terms of the sex or class system and encouraged feminist revolution. This group of feminists asserted women's freedom and demanded wider accessibility to education, employment and space in modern means of production and services.

Sociology of Education: Indian context

An attempt has been made with the preceding account to review current trends in the issues and challenges faced by Dalit women in education,