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## TECHNOLOGY: IMPACT ON DALIT WOMEN EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to understand the Indian system of education. What it means to the Dalits in the light of technological revolution, centered on information technologies, began to reshape, and at accelerated pace, the material basis of society. Economics through the world have become globally interdependent, introducing a new form of relationships between economy, state, and society, in a system of variable geometry. Technology is the process by which humans modify nature to meet their needs and wants. Most people, however, think of technology in terms of its artifacts: computers and software, aircraft, pesticides, water-treatment plants, birth-control pills, and microwave ovens, to name a few. But technology is more than these tangible products. At this juncture the paper focuses fourfold dimension with relations to the technology and Dalits education they are disparities, displacement, discrimination and distress.

### Introduction:

Etymologically, the word 'education' means just a process of leading or bringing up enlightenment. The governments are required to regulate in the public interest. Even when development is on the agenda, new forms of regulation may be required or hard regulations may be need to be replaced, by soft regulations; this is as true of economic activity as of other areas of social life, such as health, education, and environment and so on.

Information Technology is a gateway for knowledge. To understand the Indian system of education in the light of technological revolution, centered on information technologies, began to reshape, and at accelerated pace, the material basis of society. Economics throughout the world have become globally interdependent, introducing a new form of relationship between economy, state, and society, in a system of variable geometry. Technology is the process by which humans modify nature to meet their needs and wants. Most people, however, think of technology in terms of its artifacts: computers and software, aircraft, pesticides, water-treatment plants, birth-control pills, and microwave ovens, to name a few. But technology is more than these tangible products.

Two major developments of the past two decades largely account for this new valuation of education and for the shift in perspectives regarding its relationship to society the economy and the polity. One is the large-scale entry onto the world stage of former colonies and developing countries, areas inhabited by more than half of humankind impatiently clamoring for rapid social and economic progress. The other is an increasingly acute awareness in the advanced industrialized countries, as they move into the technological age, that education is



the kingpin in their own continued development. The combined impact of these two developments had brought high esteem to education, and it compels us to focus closest attention upon the character of its relationship to the process of development.

### **Technology, Society and Historical Change**

The information technology revolution becomes of its pervasiveness throughout the whole realm of human activity, will be my entry point in analyzing the complexity of the new economy, society, and culture in the making of the Dalit education. This methodological choice does not imply that new social forms and processes emerge as a consequence of technological change. Of course, technology does not determine society.

Nor does society script the course of technological change, since many factors, including individual inventiveness and entrepreneurialism, intervene in the process of scientific discovery, technological innovation, and social applications, so that the final outcome depends on a complex pattern of interaction. Indeed, the dilemma of technological determinism is probably a false problem, since technology is society, and society cannot be understood or represented without its technological tools. Thus in 1970s a new technological paradigm, organized around information technology, came to be constituted, mainly in the United States, it was a specific segment of American society, in interaction with the global economy and with world geopolitics, that materialized into a new way of producing, communicating, managing, and living.

IT with computer aided devices are highly useful as teaching in education. Teachers have to be given training to know how to use and apply computer in the classroom. It is important that teachers have a clear understanding of what technology can and can't do in the classroom. Lessons can be kept in the computer memory. Several soft wares can be matched to get full curriculum, internet utilization like websites and email, video conferencing may also be used to get maximum benefit of Information Technology. The question is technology available to the marginalized sections in the society. Where several inequalities prevail in the structure of Indian education system like 1) difference in economic status, 2) Gender disparities, 3) regional imbalances, 4) psychological differences, 5) Difference in home conditions, 6) difference between backward and advanced classes, 7) Non-availability of adequate opportunities.

Education is only an instrument to remove inequalities among the people, if we provide education to all people in turn that education will remove all inequalities in social, economical, political spheres of the society. Education and employment have a close link. Education creates job opportunities and work to all people. In turn that employment strength will boost education facilities to all people. Education will show the way to utilize the available human power and physical resources with the help of technology.



## Meaning and Definition of Education

Education is a powerful instrument for emancipation. Further, the term is defined as “the inculcation of knowledge, values, skills and attitudes by means of institutions that have been built up towards this end.” The *Encyclopaedia of Britannica* defines education as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of society.

## Who are the Dalits

“Dalit is a person an untouchable, who’s ancestor parents performing the duties which was important to the wellbeing to the society but dirty in nature” they are land less labour, social artisans, chamers, street handicrafts makers, women.

Dalits are ex-untouchables who suffered for centuries from the practice of Untouchability, segregation, and low economic status, lack of political power and low level of education. Dalits perform the most menial and degrading jobs. Yet even when they do sometimes perform importance jobs, as individuals, they are very rarely recognized socially, Dalits are seen to pollute to gather caste people if they come in touch with them, hence the untouchables, if a higher caste Hindu is touched by, or even had a Dalits shadow fall across them, they consider themselves to be polluted and have to go through serious of rituals. Dalits are approximately 250 million Dalits in India. This means that 25% of the total population in India is Dalit. It also mean that in a country where everybody is supported to have equal rights and opportunities; I out of 4 persons is condemned to be an outcaste of society.

## Dalit Education

Dalits are poor, deprived and socially backward; they don’t have sufficient access to food, health care, housing and clothing. Neither do they generally have access to education and employment. When we look at the education of Dalit, the system of education as it exists had been described as a kind of apartheid, separating the literate from the non-literate. The simile is more than superficially apt since it is the underprivileged for reasons of social identity and of gender that are often denied literacy. The existing condition is continuously aggravated by rapid changes in the technology of communicating and acquiring knowledge, and by its becoming increasingly the preserve of the few. With more sophisticated technical requirements of education, the divide will become worse. Not only the lag between the educated and the non-literate in such circumstances become greater but even literacy by itself become inadequate and insufficient. As it stands even though school education is made compulsory and available, there will still be an enormous distance between the literate and that proficiency in the skills of modern education. It enquires a far more thoughtful education policy than has been proposed to make these skills more widely available. And education is not merely about making million literates; it is about citizens realizing their rights and their obligations, both necessary to democratic functions.



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## Technology: Impact of Dalit Education

In the present age the development of communication and information technology in particular, transport facilities, tourism, education, trade and so many of the factors have forced each country, however big to come into the main stream of a global village, let education for all make the whole planet a village, where there is peace, safety, security and happiness everywhere and for everyone. In deed past failures are to be assessed and lessons learnt from this assessment in a broader perspective. The failure can, this; argue Dreze and Sen (1996), be scarcely seen simply as the result of an “overactive” government. It is good to remember what Gunnar Myrdal (1968) noted about three decades ago. He finds in the ‘Asian Drama’ that the “*soft state*” of this region is reluctant to cites in government, social and economic inequalities, and vested interests in the status quo. At this juncture the question of Dalit and their education can be traced in to four fold they are disparities, displacement, discrimination and distress.

## Technology and Disparities

When we have the outcome of the process in mind, we speak of education as shaping, forming, molding activity-that is, and a shaping into the standard form of social activity. The development within the young of the attitudes and disposition necessary to the continuous and progressive life of a society cannot take place by direct through conveyance of belief, emotions and knowledge. It takes place through the intermediary of the environment. The environment consists of the sum total of conditions which are concerned in the execution of the activity characteristic of a living being. The social environment consists of all the activities of fellow beings that are bound up in the carrying on of the activities of any one of its members. It is truly educative in its effect in the degree in which an individual share or participate in some conjoint activity by doing his/her share in activates it, becomes familiar with its methods and subject mattes, acquires needed skills, and its saturated with its emotional spirit.

Education is recognized as a basic input for empowerment to individual and overall development of the society. Expenditure on education and its intra-sectoral allocation, in general, appears to be the main factor influencing literacy levels [Sharif and Ghosh 2000]. At the national level the expenditure on education in relation to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continues to be much below the desired 6 per cent level. The share of elementary education in the total expenditure on education continues to be below 50 per cent as against the required 65-70 per cent to achieve universal literacy. At the same time expenditure on education per se is influenced by non-economic factors rather than economic factors [Tilak 1995]. Moreover, some of the moderately developed states like Andhra Pradesh seem to be doing badly as far as education is concerned. Andhra Pradesh ranks 22nd among 28 states (2001 census) in terms of adult literacy while it ranks 11th in terms of per capita state domestic product in descending order. That is, Andhra Pradesh is in the middle category in the case of per Capita SDP while it is in the bottom category in the case of literacy. This indicates that the relation between economic development



and education development (literacy) is not automatic. However, education development is a necessary condition for economic development and poverty alleviation.

J B G Tilak (2000) says that “opportunities offered by globalization are not extended to all evenly. Globalization is argued to be beneficial to some and bad for many.....Globalisation is bad for people with few skills and unless educated”. Further, he adds that, during phases of Globalisation, soft sectors like education get neglected.....the focus of attention shifts away from education to strengthening of financial institutions and market forces. As a result, public expenditures on education might decline. This indicates that on the one hand globalization brings opportunities at par for many and on the other hand, it brings market approach and private financing. It happens that people of the elite groups can avail the opportunities and equip themselves for the competition. Private and self-financing institutions charges high levels of fees. People of the lower levels of the society cannot afford this. So in the longer run, large segment of the society gets marginalized.

### **Technology and Displacement**

Technology has more than one definition; one is the development of appreciation of tools, machines, materials and processes that help to solve human problems. As a human activity, technology predates both science and engineering. When it comes to most deprived sections in India (Dalits), all these factors working together have worsened seriously the socio-economic mobility among Dalits. The Caste system is an especially Indian expression of institutionalized inequality and indignity, with elevation for some and degradation for others and untouchability is a curse of the caste structure. The abolition of untouchability was a key Constitutional provision for securing human dignity for Dalits and a significant step towards equality and social justice. The Indian Constitution, as set out in the Preamble, which contains its basic philosophy could hardly be more eloquent. The pursuit of social justice is its primary objective. It is a testament to secure to all its citizens, JUSTICE, social, economic, and political; LIBERTY, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY, of status and opportunity; fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual. Some of these objectives are guaranteed as Fundamental Rights.

Legally or Constitutionally, the Dalits are no longer called as untouchables, but in practice, many of them still bear this stigma. This work is a modest attempt to understand and explain the phenomenon of educational advancement among Dalits, which is to be considered as one of the major factors in formulation of attitudes and shaping of individual personality, as well as an indicator of socio- political and economic status. Assessment of education is also important to understand the concept of social change among Dalits.



India began its endeavor to establish a system of mass education more than fifty years ago. The Constitution of the country made it obligatory for the state to provide basic education for all up to the age of 14, within a period of (1950 to 1960) ten years. While literacy rates and school enrolments continued to rise, and persistent to reach the goal of education for all seem to have begun to bear some fruit. After the 86<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act in 2002, a new article 21A has been inserted. The new article deals with Right to Education and states, “The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all, from the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the state may by law determine.”

Article 51A of the Constitution deals with Fundamental Duties reads thus “It shall be the duty of every citizen of India- e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.” Despite this, the expansion of the educational system has been uneven and inadequate.

### **Technology and Discrimination**

The experience of the last 50 years has shown that placing a high priority on education in policy statements does not necessarily ensure adequate resources, nor does it ensure that national programmes cover the marginalized groups. “Literacy rates are much lower among Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) than among other castes. Wage laborers have lower literacy levels than other occupational groups. There is also a marked rural urban differential. The problems of literacy are therefore neither evenly distributed across the country, nor across social groups. Lower educational achievements can be expected among Scheduled Castes or Tribes or from a family of wage laborers and in parts of the country, where general literacy levels are very low.” Education is the cornerstone of socio-political and cultural advancement and it is regarded as a principal means of improving the welfare of the individuals.

Caste dynamics continues to underlie social and economic relations, especially in rural India where Dalits still occupy the lowest position in the village ‘hierarchy’ in terms of social and ritual status. The fact that a majority of Dalit households are economically dependent on upper and dominant castes makes them socially vulnerable. On a regular basis, they suffer discrimination from higher castes, though this is inadequately documented. It has been said, “In villages in rural Andhra, one finds that the Malas and Madigas are made to live outside the village, normally to the east.....the Malas and Madigas find their separate glasses and plates in hotels, they should buy eatables only if they are prepared to wash their own plates and glasses and keep them in a separate box meant for them.....the upper castes do not tolerate if the lower castes wear good clothes put on good chappals and continue to want them to live what is known as the ‘ayya banchan’ life (living at the feat of the upper castes)”. Dalits still reside in segregated clusters on



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the periphery of villages and are not allowed access to common village wells, and are prevented from entering temples.

Oomen says that Dalits as a group continue to be subjected to what he refers to as ‘cumulative domination’ and experience ‘multiple deprivation’ that stem from ‘low ritual status’, and poverty and powerlessness.

### **Technology and Distress**

The scene of education in Andhra Pradesh is a picture of contrasts. The state is known at once for its many successful experiments in the field of education as well as for its poor literacy levels. It reveals the extent of its educational backwardness. Among the innovations introduced in the field of education are establishment in 1983 of exclusive social welfare schools for scheduled caste children, which later served as the model for Jawahar Navodaya vidyalayas established by the government of India. The Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Programme (APPEP) introduced in the state in 1983, with important differences, the precursor for the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) launched in 1994 to cover 19 states of India.

Andhra Pradesh has the dubious distinction of being ranked at the 26<sup>nd</sup> position as far as all India literacy levels are concerned. In fact, Andhra Pradesh has the lowest literacy rates among the four southern states of the country. As per the 2001 Census, there are about 71% Male literates and 51% Female literates in the state. The official figures themselves reveal that the dropout rates are very high even at present though there has been an improvement over the years. For the academic year 2003-2004, the dropout rate at primary level (I-V) is 42.42 % for boys and 42.80% for girls. If the rates are considered till the upper primary level (I-VII) they are 42.61% and 52.71% for boys and girls respectively. Schooling till the high school level shows that the corresponding figures are 65.08% and 68. 53 %. The dropout figures for the SCs and STs are much higher.

Within Andhra Pradesh, the concern with the low literacy rates combined with high dropout figures in schools has had a definitive impact on the policies of the state government in relation to the education sector. While the state has sought to address this problem from the late 80s onwards, the clearest and most public articulation of a desire to change approach and policy is to be found in the 1999 document Andhra Pradesh; Vision 2020 which states that

“Andhra Pradesh will just not be a literate but a knowledge society capable of meeting the challenges posed by the 21<sup>st</sup> century.....” the document goes on to state that “ education is critical to building a modern, market based economy and rising living standards”. The human capital model in theories of economic growth shows that arise in the level of education brings a rise in the efficiency of all factors of production. Educated people use capital more efficiently; they think up new and better forms of



production and they embrace change and innovation faster and quickly learn and new skills.....the existence of such a skilled”

**Table: 1 Colleges and courses in Andhra Pradesh**

SI No	Category	University and govt. colleges		Self supporting		Total	
		No of Colleges	No of Seats	No of Colleges	No of Seats	No of Colleges	No of Seats
1	Engineering Colleges	12	2215	160	44756	172	46971
2	MBA colleges	23	890	105	4981	128	5590
3	MCA colleges	20	900	195	9785	215	10685
4	Medical colleges	10	1550	10	1000	20	2550
5	Dental colleges	03	300	5	460	8	760
6	B.ed Colleges	13	1639	74	98117	87	11456
7	Law Colleges	5	640	37	9120	41	9760
8	Pharmacy Colleges	3	145	20	960	23	1105
9	PG Courses	27	9493	169	12653	196	22143
10	UG courses	176	53695	813	233732	989	287427

Source: APSCHE (2001) profile of Higher Education A.P

After analyzing the data available it is evident that the private sector is taking deep roots in the field of education where profits are ensured. The common poor sections of the society are the disadvantaged ones in this technological completion.

The crucial decade of 1990s in order to probe the developments within the education of Dalits is a problem. It seeks interventions of the state government in order to assess their impact on the field of education especially in its relation to different sections of the population that aspires for education. Government allocation of funds for the education sector as a whole is decreasing. While funded programmes in the form of loans, especially for school education, is increasing but Dalits are not in a position get those kinds of facilities. Larger sections of the people are from daily wage agricultural background. Now, basic education is still far away for Dalits communities.

The system of education, which is an important means for bringing about equality, is in fact replicating social hierarchies. Privatization of education at all levels seems to be aiding this process. The private educational institutions form a small part of the entire system but exert an influence that is disproportionate to their



actual strength. The policies of the state address the lower class child, especially when affirming its commitment to Universal Elementary Education; in contrast, the curriculum foregrounds the middle class upper castes child. Polarisation is near complete with the poor opting either for private school education or for government schools as per the socio-economic position of the family background.

### **Conclusion**

The new mantra of Information Technology will not in itself solve the problem since the minimum technological infrastructure require is, as of now, absent in many places. When electricity is irregular and the telephone system unreliable, the new technology is not of much help: still less will it be for those who have had no education. The implications of accessing knowledge in this form also require evaluating existing methods of advancing knowledge, some of which might have to be discarded. At the same time we are introducing what are described as traditional Indian methods of handling knowledge, though the curriculum at both school and university. As educators we should apprise these and other innovatory methods; else we may end up in further reinforcing the divide even through the kind of education that we impart, as knowledge advances the methods of advancing knowledge change. What does remain constant is an attitude of mind that encourages the questioning of theories of explanation and places knowledge in a social context.

It is curious that the Dalits, which has been so clued into making demands of various kinds, including the virtual reversal of the economy in the last decade, has been the silent about the appalling situation regarding schooling. Nor has there been much concern about the quality of what goes into the school curriculum. The intention seems to focus on ensuring high marks in examinations to carry s student forward into higher education. This has been taken to almost self-defeating lengths as the criterion for university entrance. Such an indifference to the potential of the meaning of education results from attitudes that support education as largely an avenue to privilege. Where students come from diverse backgrounds, and are encouraged to observe the world around them and where education is treated as a form of self-expression, the exploration of knowledge carries a richer promise. Recent activity relating to the education of women in general and Dalit women in particular and understanding their concerns had provided challenging insights into society as a whole, resulting in a more realistic exploitation of knowledge.

Governments have repeatedly denied appropriate budgets for education. One explanation is that this points to the fear of an educated electorate, and of people understanding and demanding their rights and calling for the accountability of governments. We have ample funds for financing nuclear bombs but not for setting up schools, even though it has been said time and again that the fallout effect of more schools will bring about an infinite improvement of our society.



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