

CHAPTER-VI
CONCLUSION:

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This conclusion chapter sums up the findings with suitable suggestions. As first chapter and second chapter deals with the introduction and theoretical perspective, therefore conclusions are drawn from next chapter onwards.

The study based on the survey of Sepahijala District of women belonging to tribal communities cannot come to generalisations for the whole country. The study indicates a micro-level study of the tribal women and how far they are being empowered through socio-economic and political participation and thus as a whole assumption of tribal women in Tripura is that, they are not empowered and still remain a social taboo.

The study has shown that tribal society is a patriarchal society and in fact it is stronger patriarchal than any other society and so therefore, tribal women have to go a long back way to exercise their decision making power. Tribal women are economically, politically and socially disempowered compared to tribal men. Although there has been a lot of transformation in tribal social life but there are still many things to recover.

After the comparative analysis of the tribal and non tribal women educational status, the study clearly reveals that majority of the non tribal women are empowered in terms of educational status. So, tribal women had to go long way to be educationally empowered.

From the present study, we can clearly observe that non Tribal women are more empowered than Tribal women in Sepahijala District, as they are higher who holds govt. jobs as comparing to tribal women. From the study, it depicts that non Tribal women are more empowered than Tribal women in Sepahijala District and 30% of the non tribal women holds govt. Jobs. Therefore, tribal women should come forward to balance these circumstances.

The present study of the comparative analysis clearly shows that Tribal family are higher in number in holding APL card, even though it has been observed that despite so poor condition of living, low standard condition, horrible house in rural areas without govt. jobs holds APL Family Card and it clearly presents that out

of 200 respondents 55 tribal family holds APL card with low income and on the other hand, the researcher has observed that non tribal families living in good and average condition holds BPL family card. It is totally overwhelming and shocked.

The study clearly reveals that 100% non Tribal women have participated fully in the state assembly election held in 2018 and in case of Tribal women its 92% and 2% of the tribal women has no voter card till date, it shows that non tribal women are more empowered than the tribal women in terms of Political participation.

Making a study in the Kalaibari ward of Jampuijala, found that the Self help groups have been a recent development. The year 2015 marked their emergence in the light through this initiated Self help group. Whereas in other parts of the State and the country the groups have widespread and had gone further. There are about 17 Self help groups in this Kalaibari Panchayat alone. There were self help groups like Yapri Kwtal Bodol, Yaphang, Swrang, Nahormung and others. These self help groups had form a Federation.

Thus, the study shows that through the formation of SHGs tribal women were benefitted and economically empowered to some extent. It can be stated that the tribal women has progressed in the past few years but income was not average and less benefitted. Therefore, there need to be mass awareness of the significance of forming such groups that leads towards empowering themselves with the formation of SHGs as because it creates active participation and leadership quality which would boast more in empowering tribal women. But, the study identified that the SHGs does not exist in some of the rural areas due lack of loan repayment and lack of communication among the group members.

The study reveals that empowerment of women, awareness, to enhance their capacities is good initiative taken by the government but fails to be practical. Though empowering a woman plays an effective role in the decision making bodies and development programmes in a democratic political system but fails to implement its laws in smooth procedure. The empowerment of tribal women in real sense is to enable them to realise their abilities, potentialities and uniqueness of freedom of expression and thought, action to feel them empowered in every field of life and also not only to make them empowered but to make them aware of their rights, capacities but also to provide them with opportunities and facilities, to make

use their inherent qualities as well to develop in them the confidence, self esteem and self-dignity. Thus, empowering a woman is a debatable issue which cannot challenge within a whole night to empower a woman, the society should developed their way of thinking, attitudes towards women without any suspicion so as to empower women. Thus, capacity building would lead them to greater participation in greater decision making process and formative action of women.

The study shows that tribal women would bring a special leadership to organisations if they are to claim their share of leadership positions and understands the socio-economic phenomena. It has been observed that that the opportunities for tribal men and women are not equal even though interms of cultural, social, economic, political and educational and in all aspects, their lives were affected and helps them work with men on equal basis but treated unequally with men.

Political participation provides an oppurtunity to the people especially to the women to make the political system to their aspirations and ambitions and at the same time lends legitimacy to the system which is the hallmark of democracy. Though women were denied to participate in the political process due to several reasons but now it has been found that participation of women in politics has brought a radical change in the state.

The study has found that the practices of paying lower wages to the tribal women workers has been continuing till today and wage differentiation exists between men and women working as daily labourers. The status of tribal society is a myth rather than a reality and the system of pro-male customs, laws and traditions are prevalent in tribal societies in Tripura.

The study reveals that in order to understand the present social structure and position of the tribal women, it is imperative to know the constitution of various historical, political, cultural and economic factors. It is also essential to have a brief idea why the tribal women are lacking behind from the mainstream as because the same norms and values affecting the position of the tribal women today which hampers them towards fully to be empowered.

The study reveals that in our traditional social perception, politics is considered least for the tribal women and majority for men should participate, as such empowerment of tribal women is not considered serious issue in the tribal society.

In general, the study also interprets that political parties do not favour nomination of tribal candidates because of their inability to mobilize substantial resources and their access to financial resource is negligible and hardly stand less chances to win the seat. Thus, tribal women are not politically acknowledged and empowered.

The study also concludes that due to lack of inadequate access and control over intangible resources, information and knowledge and lack of opportunities to enhance their capabilities to participate in local, state, national level of elections even though seats are reserved for the women, does not allow, remain stable due to some socio political consequences and thus, women are excluded from being enjoying their rights.

The study has observed, that the political parties manifest normally and do not take tribal women decision and issues as a necessary issue, which is really important and they need a special representation.

The right to empowerment is a universal concept and an integral part of human rights towards achieving its goal. The word empowerment and human rights are linked to each other such as empowerment realises the needs of people whereas, human rights includes the basic needs, economic security, capacity building and social existence. Empowerment or empowering is the subject towards development. The word empowerment signifies liberating, encouraging, participating liberally, free from being intervened. Empowerment changes the status and living standard of the people and fulfilled to maintain equally in different spheres, as well to develop confidence among the people. North East India is the home to more than 250 different indigenous ethnic communities with diverse cultural and socio-economic realities and Tripura consists of 19 indigenous tribes. Tribal women in this region have taken on themselves the concept of mantling and nurturing their children and make their household hearth burning. Men in these tribal societies in rural areas are engaged earning, cultivating and farming. Therefore tribal women are by nature hardworking and involved themselves in many activities within their homes. The

works are mainly confined to domestic chores like cooking, taking care of children and aged parents or in laws in the family, rearing of cattle, piggery, working in the paddy field, collecting firewood forests products etc. Studies among the tribal women in Tripura have shown a remarkable change in the personality development of tribal women after joining SHGs. The opportunity of speaking and sharing of ideas have raised their confidence level which is very essential for the development and empowerment of women. Like the rest of India, tribal women in Tripura are not included in the formal decision making processes. There have been a number of works on the concept of empowerment of women, the concept has covered thoroughly but those works were not directly on the topic of this research work and objectives were different in mind and those books and concept were also useful and influencing for the understanding the concept of women empowerment. The concept of gender inequality is the central debates on how to empower tribal women and which hampers women to improve the quality of their life. The fight against inequality of women in tribal society has been the cornerstone of discussions. Besides all strategies to empower women the most effective strategies and starting point is that a woman herself should be confidence and concerned among themselves when they feel that there has to be some changes in their society towards their development. Empowerment of tribal women a specific goal, basically gender specific goal has. It has eliminate, discrimination, marginalization, displacement, harassments, devaluation and ultimate dispensability of every women in the state. To achieve empowerment to its fullest extent, women especially the tribal women must have to move from lower stream to upper stream so as able to satisfy their daily needs and to self dependent. Women empowerment has been considered vital for overall development of communities and societies particularly in the third world countries. Thus the present study have chosen this particular state of Tripura that how the tribal women are being empowered and women in Tripura are no longer seen as merely conventional housewives but instead today it is acknowledged that women do have tremendous potential for bringing a change through their involvement and participation in developmental process has been explained as a theoretical concept in the introductory chapter. The marginalisation of tribal women is due to their exclusion from the decision making process both in the private family sphere as well in the public political sphere.

Hence, honest effort is made to study and discuss the empowerment of tribal women of Tripura in Sepahijala District. It may be pointed that the socio-economic and political condition of tribal women in a democratic political set up is a prerequisite for their emancipation from the traditional bondage towards their improvement in social, economic and political status in the tribal society. The study shows a vivid picture in understanding the status and position of tribal women in a democratic political arena. Thus, one can evaluate the status of women in regarding to their living, education and social mobility, economic, social and political status in this Sepahijala District.

According to the Census 2011, Tripura constituted 11, 66,813 (31.78%) tribal people out of 36, 71,032 total population in Tripura. There are 19 groups of tribe who claim themselves as 'the sons of the soil'. They are Tripuri 5,92, 255 (50.75%), Reang 1,88,220 (16.13%), Jamatia 83,347 (7.14%), Chakma 79,813 (6.84%), Halam 57,210 (4.04%), Mog 37,813 (3.24%), Munda 14,544 (1.24%), Noatia 14,298 (1.22%), Garo 12,952 (1.11%), Orang 12,011 (1.02%), Kuki 10,956 (0.93%), Lushai 5,384 (0.46%), Bhil 3,105 (0.26%), Santhal 2,913 (0.24%), Uchai 2,447 (0.04%), khasia 366 (0.03%), Lapcha 157 (0.01%), Bhutia 28 (0.00%), Generic Tribes 48,356 (4.14%). According to the 'Rajmala' scribed by Kailash Chandra Singha (1896) the name of the State has come from the words Tui (water) Pra (near) meaning land adjoining water. During the British period the state was called Hill Tipperah.¹ Kok-Borok is the major language which talks about 8 major groups of tribal are- Tripuri, Reang, Noatia, Jamatia, Rupini, Koloi, Uchai and Murasing. The word kokborok comprises two words 'Kok' means language and 'Borok' means man. Thus, kokborok means language of man.² The indigenous people of Tripura are the section of Bodo people. The Bodo section of the Tibeto- Burman branch of the Tibeto-Chinese people (Bodo-Mec, Koc, Kacari, Rabha, Garo, Tripura) came to Assam and East Bengal and were spread all over East and North Bengal and created 'seven sisters' state.³

¹ Gautam Kumar Bera (ed.), *Tribal Development in Tripura*, (Guwahati: EBH Publishers, 2009) p-3

² K. B. Jamatia, B., *Modernity in Tradition: A historical Study of the Jamatia Tribe of Tripura*, (Agartala: Akshar Publications, 2007) p. 61.

³ Rabindra Kishore Debbarma, *Tipra Jana Jatir Samaj Sanskriti*, (Agartala, Jara Publication, 2006) p. 5.

The second chapter of the present study is the empowerment of tribal women in Sepahijala District of Tripura. Power is not a commodity to be transacted. That once acquired it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved. Women, themselves have to positive towards empowerment. The empowerment of women is widely discussed and debatable issue in our state. The present status and position of tribal women in general and rural in particular is not satisfactory rather their position in society is no way better than second class citizen. Empowering a tribal woman and their problems has acquired a steadily growing importance in our state. But till date nowhere do they have equal rights and status with men. Though after independence, it was made obligatory to consider women as a weaker section and as the constitution has guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights and special provision for protection of women. The Government of India has launched special provision for protection of women, several programmes and policies for bringing all round development of women.⁴ Theoretically empowerment of tribal women is considered as an important task but in practice it is untouched work. In spite of so many statutory protections, tribal women still remain underprivileged, undervalued and exploited and various kinds of discriminations continue to persist against them. The empowerment of women is not a self-propelled action which can be attained by their personal efforts alone. It should be a kind of joint endeavour and the role of both male and female in the society should be changed. Empowerment is not merely a statutory process of promoting and maintaining justice, equality and compassion but actually it is an essential effort to cultivate feelings of empathy, emotions, passions, values through which gender equity is build up slowly and empowerment is an ongoing and spontaneous process which will enhance the quality of life of the women and well of their families. There is an urgent need and necessity to improve the status of tribal women by well convinced, planned development programmes which would have active community participation based on women's needs in order to emancipate and empower them. The physical strength and alleged dominance of men has been an important instrument of controlling tribal women's freedom of action. The term empowerment has been widely used in relation mainly to women.

⁴ Balbir, Soni, *Empowerment of Women Workers: The unorganized sector*, (Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors, 2007). p.53.

The third chapter deals with Economic Empowerment and how women are empowered through Self-Help Groups and includes the various norms and criterias, assurance for the economical empowerment to the women in Sepahijala District. The present study reveals that due to some problems like family maintenance, domestic work overloaded, restriction by husband or family members and lack of communication, they could not attend meetings regularly. The functioning of SHGs and how vital SHGs had impacted the tribal women towards empowerment is observed. The benefits and the level of satisfactions that had not provided them adequately. The information acquired was both from primary and secondary resources. Structural method is used while collecting the primary data. Besides that there are lots of problems and drawbacks which make them unsuccessful in savings. The quality of life of some of the tribal women members of SHGs has improved but there is an urgent need for awareness programmes. There was marked increase in their income, habit of savings, consumption and expenditure which in turn has lead to an improvement in their standard of living but somewhere it lacks behind. Though the small earnings that are made through SHGs, sometimes they contribute in times of death, religious festivals and illness or sickness and it makes them self worth. Another impact is the banking activity done by the tribal women were not visible practice prior to the starting of SHGs and the work related to the outside public domain was done by the men folk. But the positive impact through formation of SHGs was that tribal women in rural areas, who had not been to the formal banking system, started to operate bank account as the bank does not sanction loans unless they have group or joint account in the bank. The growth of SHGs in the villages has sensitized men to a large extent. The increase in the household income with the contribution of women involving in the small business through SHGs, due to higher production, has elevated a woman with higher status then the status she has before. The participation of different women groups in different capacities in the local fair organised by government and NGOs from time to time encourages the successful SHGs to showcase their product. Though Self Help Groups is one of the incomes generated which contributes a lot for the empowerment of tribal women but not free from some drawbacks.

The fourth chapter deals with empowerment and Changes in the society of the tribal and non tribal Women. For this particular chapter questionnaire has been made separately to visit field survey as because this chapter is the comparative study between tribal and non tribal women. This chapter discusses on the changing role and society of the tribal and non tribal women with empowerment in Sepahijala District. This chapter rely on purely empirical research and has discussed in detail on the empowerment of tribal and non tribal women in terms of their education, health, status and political participation. The present study reveals that non tribal women are more empowered than tribal women in terms of education, standard of living, proper sanitation, and their health condition, economic and political status. Both the tribal and non tribal women in rural areas till now could not come out of the superstitious belief, existence of witch craft; they are not allowed to take part in ritual ceremonies during their menstrual cycle. Thus the chapter observed tribal women with poor living condition, low income, jobless family holds APL card and it was an overwhelming to find such observation and the government should enquire and they should fall under the category of BPL/Annapurna family. Thus the study concludes that tribal women are less empowered than that of the non tribal women almost in all aspects.

The fifth Chapter deals with empowerment and Socio-economic condition and Political Participation of Tribal women in Tripura. This chapter has discussed on the empowerment and socio-economic condition of tribal and their political participation in Sepahijala District. This chapter has analysed the extent of political participation of women in various elections held to the Village Committee and state legislatures as voters, leaders, active participants and contestants. It focuses on how the empowerment of women comes through participation in socio-economic and political aspects. Participation of women can be influenced by the attitude of women towards politics, attitudes of family and society. In Tripura women could have play an important and effective role in politics if the male persons, husbands and family members were favourable. The present chapter reveals that lack of inadequate education, lack of adequate of skill are the main hindrances which effect towards decision making, whereas socio-cultural activities, legal barriers was not a factor of hindrances towards decision making. But 90% of the tribal women are of the view

that it's also not about lack of confidence that hinders in taking decision whereas, over burden of domestic responsibilities also affects and 70% of the women agreed that negative attitude of men towards them hinders tribal women from decision making and participation. Therefore, all round upliftment of the tribal women in democratic political system depends upon the social, economic and political participation, if these three perspectives are overcome and fulfilled without any hindrances, as well that the implementation of law and justice and gender equality are successful, then women are empowered. Thus, the study reveals that tribal society is a patriarchal society and in fact it is stronger patriarchal than any other society and so therefore, tribal women have to go a long back way to exercise their decision making power. Tribal women are economically, politically and socially disempowered compared to tribal men. Although there has been a lot of transformation in tribal social life but there are still many things to recover.

The last chapter i.e. the conclusion, this chapter has summarised and presented the findings along with suitable suggestions. From this concluding chapter of the research work one will acquire some knowledge relating to tribal and non tribal women and the empowerment of tribal women in Tripura, as empowerment of tribal women is being in progress but the effective empowerment of tribal women is essential to harness the talents in the main stream of economic development. As it is a multi-dimensional in its approach and it covers social, political and economical aspects. An inequality between men and women and discrimination against women is still a relevant issue in some of the tribal villages in Tripura.

Suggestions/ Good Wishes

In view of the above discussions, the following suggestions may be helpful for the development of the status of tribal women in Tripura.

- The study suggests that changes in the value system are needed. The masses should be educated to perceive that girls and boys are one and the same.

- Tribal women are ignorant of the legislations which have been enacted to provide them specific rights. They should be made aware of these rights. Most of tribal men are not aware of the legal rights that have been granted to women and as a result men have negative attitudes towards dowry prohibition, divorce, child marriages etc, without basic knowledge laws cannot be enforced effectively.
- Leadership development programmes for tribal would provide and promote their confidence and teach them that they are capable of positions. Training would encourage women take part in politics and raising the political consciousness among the women in democratic system.
- Tribal women must be given the opportunity to be economically independent so that they can freely take decisions.
- According to the researcher, the importance of SHGs must be included in the school syllabus, in order to make them more aware about the importance of SHGs and free from economical perspective.
- There is need to set up proper foundations for tribal women in politics which should undertake training, networking, mobilisation and monitoring the performance of the elected women representatives and members.
- There should be an attempt to make better household industries like weaving, where tribal women can get better opportunities for higher earnings.
- The labour department of the state govt. should be more accountable in implementing various and opportunities for the female workers in the unorganised sector.
- Government should implement various health facilities for the BPL and Aapna family.

- The study suggests that the tribal family who deserves to fall under the category of BPL family, the government should take immediate action to cut off their APL list and should avail them BPL/Annapurna.
- There should be proper sanitation exclusively for the tribal families living in rural areas.
- Government should provide loans to the women with low interest.
- The role of middleman should be totally abolished so that women get full amount of wages.
- There are large number of tribal women unskilled in the rural areas is to be improved through massive training.
- The SHGs should be supported by the government fully to enhance the saving activities and reduce poverty alleviation.
- Several other schemes should be introduced as to make women more reliant and satisfied.
- There should not be one person's responsibility or opinions. Everyone should have their turn to take the responsibility, which can make them capable of being a leader without any hesitation.
- There should be vocational training for the tribal women in rural areas.
- Majority of the women are ignorant and unaware of their rights, legal literacy, hence there must be awareness program to enhance them and to aware them.
- Strengthening legal system to eliminate all forms of discrimination against every woman in political system and enjoyment of equal rights with men in the field of socio-economic, political and cultural field.
- Although it may not be possible to create any new change to politics and policies of democratic political system without proper representation of

women at various level. So, the number of women representation should increase at various levels of the political power structure.

It may conclude that lack of sufficient empowerment of tribal women in rural areas may be due to various socio-economic and political consequences in our traditional social upliftment. However, it is very encouraging as well interesting that to find that reservation to women from 33% to 50 % seats has improved and changed the status and political participation confidence for the empowerment of tribal women in Tripura.