

EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN CHHATTISGARH : A STUDY OF RAIGARH AND JASHPUR NAGAR DISTRICTS

SUMMARY

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Summary

The present work on empowerment of tribal women is based on an intensive field work of six villages in Raigarh and Jashpur Nagar districts of Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh was earlier a part of Madhya Pradesh and then Madhya Pradesh had the largest tribal population in India. Chhattisgarh became a new state in the year of 2000 and even today it is a predominantly a tribal state. In this study an attempt has been made to understand the tribal situation in general and empowerment of tribal women in the area in particular. Empowerment has been a buzz word since about two decades. In fact it is a creation of modernity and subsequently of globalization. All of us know that globalization is an extension of modernization project of the west (Giddens, 1992). Modernization always aims at equality of sexes, egalitarian values and providing justice to the weaker section of the society. Women have been put under the weaker section of the society in most of the countries because of the structured gender inequality.

When we say structured we imply gender relations as an essential part of the social structure. Inequality persists in the structure. It may be based on income, property or power and social relationships. Most of the tribal societies are marked with patriarchy, patriliney, patrinymy and patrilocality. A tribe marked with the above four factors is said to have extreme patriarchy. It leads to violence against women and results in

destitute women and women in precarious conditions. Hence, today the major efforts to bring in gender equality are found through empowerment of such women. For empowerment of tribal women various agencies, both government and non-government, are working together. The main objective of this research is to understand and evaluate the outcome of these agencies. The thesis has five chapters. Chapter I is introduction, chapter II is area and the people, chapter III is socio-economic profile of tribal women, chapter IV is empowerment of tribal women and chapter V is conclusion. Chapter I introduces the topic and deals with the theoretical background through which the study is undertaken and the data has been interpreted. Besides this it also mentions the objectives of the study and about past research work. Further, in the last section describes the research methods and techniques employed in the field work, as well as the nuances of field work which explains both difficult and pleasant situations of field work.

Tribal Community: A Perspective

Tribes in India constitute 8.2% of the population of the country. They are integral part of the Indian civilization in the sense they have been living with their neighboring castes since time immemorial (Bose, 1971). Bose said that Indian tribes cannot be compared with African tribes or Australian tribes. Therefore, he almost rejected the characteristics of the tribe given by British anthropologists. People of India project say there are 462 tribes with 168 segments. Schedule V and VI Scheduled Tribe list of Government of India has more than 900 tribes because the same tribe is found in different states and the state lists are added to aggregate more than 900 tribes. The standardized anthropological and sociological definitions include the following features of tribes (for details see Chaudhury and Patnaik 2008; Beteille):

- (I) Habitat:They live in hilly or hill clad and forest or forest clad areas. Thus, they live in isolated and relatively isolated areas. They also live in difficult terrain having less communication, transportation and road facilities.
- (II) Economy:They are engaged in both settled and shifting cultivation. They are also engaged in art and craft including snake charming profession and in varieties of tribal dress material weaving, knitting, and matting. They are having substantive economy and there is no surplus, no division of labour, hence, mechanical solidarity is found in their society.
- (III) Religion: They have their own religion. They have their own god, goddess, mythology, and hymn. They believe in animism (belief in soul), animatism, naturism, totemism and magic.
- (IV) Language:They have their own language, but most of them have no script, and have only dialect.
- (V) Social structure:In their society kinship dominates hence, they are known as simple society with simple social structure.
- (VI) Social stratification:In tribal society there is no stratification as there is no caste and class.
- (VII) Political system: They have their own political system; earlier stateless societies were found where there was no tribal chief.
- (VIII) Belongingness: They have a sense of belongingness to their society.

Bose almost did not agree with these features of tribes. He said that there has been a continuous relationship between the tribes and the castes in India. If the caste people are literate and civilized then the tribals were not away from the above two factors. Hence they cannot be

called uncivilized. Therefore Indian tribes need to have distinct characteristics other than African and Australian tribes.

Describing Bose's idea, Beteille (1975) said that Bose provided a comparison between Indian tribes and non-Indian tribes. For Bose the situation in Africa and in India are completely different. In Africa tribes are found in isolation, living in forest and not having any civilization and not having any contact with outsiders. On the other hand, Indian tribes were never found in isolation and they were a part of Indian civilization, they have been directly or indirectly related to their ancient kingdoms. But the African tribes were not having any kingdom and they are totally isolated. Chaudhury (2007) said that Bose provided a civilizational perspective for the Indian society, in which Bose pointed out mainly to how tribes have been interacting with the Hindu communities since long. Bose tried to compare Indian civilization with that of the European. Comparing to Indian civilization with that of the west, Bose says that the Indian social or economic condition is predominantly an organization of peace. It encourages the co-existence of many culture, many separateness's, but it does not make a large community strong enough to wage war (Chaudhury, 2007). Thus the main idea is that tribes in India were never isolated completely. Further, they were not uncivilized like tribes of Africa, Australia, North America and Melanesia. Bose gave the concept of tribe-caste continuum. He gave the examples of Juangs of Mayurbhanj, Orissa. The Juangs were shifting cultivators.

The Britishers had put a ban on shifting cultivation. The Juangs started looking for some alternative occupations. They left their villages and shifted to neighboring caste villages. They became a part of jajmani system and became a part of pure & impure hierarchy. However, fowl sacrifice in various Hindu worships went on. Gradually they became a

part of the wider caste system. Further, today when we discuss the features of a tribe we must include the factors of change and transformation in it. Here, the five criteria for declaring a particular community as a Scheduled Tribe given by Lokur committee (c.f. Srivastava, 2008) become pertinent. They are: (i) an ensemble of primitive traits, (ii) distinctive culture, (iii) geographical isolation, (iv) shyness of contact with the outside world, and (v) backwardness. However, Srivastava (2008) said that such traits are no more found in any tribal communities today.

Moreover, today is the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG). In LPG era how can one imagine any community without mobile phone or roads or for that matter some government agency working for tribal development/ planned development in any tribal areas. Hence the concepts of primitiveness, isolation, shyness etc. are no more relevant today. However, economic backwardness, poverty, health problem etc. may be the phenomena today. Chaudhury (2008) who studied the Kondhs of Odisha has succinctly put the present scenario among the tribes in the following manner:

- (a) Mechanization of agriculture has resulted in decrease in wage rates, increased landlessness, more dependency on moneylenders, farmers having little income. Further it also leads to widening the gap between rich and poor.
- (b) Withdrawal of credit facilities and subsidies to non-farm sector created many problems for tribals.
- (c) The factor of super specialization in jobs made the semi-skilled or unskilled tribals jobless.

- (d) Market economy played havoc in their lives because they did not know the market dynamics besides not having substantial capital required for the market.
- (e) It has also resulted in the process of assimilation leading to a loss of cultural traits like myths, folk songs and tribal dances, food habits, dress pattern, language, etc. Today one finds packed food and junk food in small towns and also in some village shops in Kondh area. It includes soft drinks, noodles, chocolates, wafers, etc. People in villages have already started using kin terms like uncle, aunty, niece, and cousin. The traditional dresses have been replaced by western outfits like trousers, shirts, bush-shirts, T-shirts for men and women among a few, jeans and T-shirts and use of undergarments. Such a change is noticed in those families where at least one member is working in a town or city.
- (f) Maddening consumerism has resulted in a loss of natural resources because of deforestation, stone mining, etc. Everyone is interested in purchasing new household gadgets at any cost without any material context. Such kind of consumerism has led to the practice of dowry among Kondhs, which was not there earlier.
- (g) The issue of conversion leads to a definite loss of identity. The recent riot among them has been the result of large scale and multiple conversions, lead to frustration, dejection and alienation. Imagine a Kondh household having three brothers living with their sisters and children, two of them are converted and one of them remains a Kondh. It has led to structural problem. When the Kondh brother practises Kondh rituals the other two try to participate in it, but the vice-versa does not happen.

(h) The modern communication forces have helped in reinforcing the ritual practices and conflicting tendencies. Earlier they had traditional communication system, i.e. the Pana messenger used to assist in communication. Today Kondh villages have post and telegraph offices, having public phone booths, and people having personal cell phones. The conflicting tendencies like hatred and intolerance for other religions have been spread quickly. One of the major ethnic riots took place in 1994 on a small issue. A Pana youth entered in a Shiva Temple and then Kondhs tried to purify the temple. This led to violence between both the communities. The Kondh did not practice untouchability but they looked down upon the Panas. The Panas were given shelter in the outskirts of the village and where also jobs of guard, messenger, drum beater, etc. The Kondhs always took them as tricky and clever people probably did not trust them fully. Under this backdrop the ethnic riot of 1994 was not a strange phenomenon: The Hindu organizations always took the Kondhs as their members. Hence there was a continuous tension brewing up in the area since long. In December 2007, on the eve of Christmas, large scale riots took place in the area. One of the Hindu organizations' seer was killed by miscreants leading to burning of churches and houses of Christians. The Kondhs were attacked leading to loss of lives, homes, and jobs. They were put in to rehabilitation colonies and shelter homes. The trauma continues even today.

Due to the forces of modernization several changes have occurred in the tribal society in India. Today they are no more isolated and they cannot said to be relatively isolated. The situation has improved due to communication and transportation facilities (Chaudhury, 2004).

The Issue of Empowerment

Empowerment is not a very old idea rather it is a creation of post modernity and subsequently globalization. Almost all societies in the world are having patriarchy, patriliney, patrilocality and patriny. Patriarchy signifies male dominance, son preference and inordinate power of the male. Weber spoke about patrimonial bureaucracy which signifies powerful men controlling the society. Henry Maine is the only thinker who said that there was no matriarchy ever in the history of the societies, it was throughout patriarchy. On the other hand E.B. Tylor, McLenan, Bachofen and others favoured matriarchy first and said patriarchy came later. However, today most of the societies are patriarchal in nature.

In light of this, the modern society assumes significance. Modernity is not of Indian origin; rather it came from the west. The main idea is to bring in equality of sexes. Truly women have faced lot of exploitation and humiliation in the male dominated world. Therefore, the issue of equality has been given a priority.

The stage of human civilization can be judged by the status women in the society. India is one of the most unequal and rigid patriarchal society, negating thereby successful representation of equality and democratic normative order. The establishment of democratic regime in India has produced different scenario. Democratic value system, modernization, rising level of literacy among women have contributed positively towards establishment of little more equal and humane society. Reformist and freedom struggles in 19th century, feminist movement, globalization, liberalization, consumerism in the end of 20th and beginning of 21st century, all have some share, for and against, in the process of empowerment and emancipation of women in India.

Women, constitute nearly half of the population play vital role in shaping the social system, and have not been given due position since centuries in India. Women's inability to control over productive assets and process is the major factor for their low status in the society and lack of power within the family. The disadvantage of women starts with her birth and continues through childhood to adulthood and finally until death.

Status of women kept on changing with the historical epoch. During Rig-Vedic civilization women enjoyed equal status with their male counterparts. Women were relatively more independent, thus, they were free to participate in religious, economic, social and cultural activities during that time. They had optimum freedom of thought and action (Chaturvedi, 1988).

During Buddhist period they had an access to education. The position of women started deteriorating during Gupta period between 7th and 17th century AD. Female infanticide, child marriage, purdah system, sati, slavery etc. emerged as major social evils affecting the status of women in India. During 19th century several efforts were made by social reformers to bring about changes in the socio-economic conditions of women, which forced the British government to enact some laws to improve their status (Singh and Jha, 1992).

In 20th century, women quest for equality with man has become universal. This gave birth to the women's movement and feminist activities like International women's Day, International women's year, Conferences and Seminars on women's problems, women's studies have been started since the late 1960s and 1970s. The 21st century has been witnessing the role reversal of the women. But all the socio-economic changes in the status of women have been largely confined to educated

middle class. Position of lower strata of Indian women is still vulnerable, and condition of tribal women is even worst.

Sixty nine years have gone after independence, yet women in general and the tribal women in particular are the most neglected, underprivileged and down trodden section of the society. Srinath(1992) says that the women in every country are like a lamp, that burns itself to light the whole world, get its own lower part is ever sunk in darkness. The tribal world of women is in this lower part that remained in darkness since centuries. The year 2001 was declared as the women's empowerment year by the Government of India to combat the century old backwardness. In this regard this study analyzes the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of tribal women of Chhattisgarh, which is related to their empowerment. Women's empowerment means gaining autonomy and control over one's life by realizing and making best use of one's capabilities and potentialities and having the confidence to take action in one's life. It extends to self perception of the role of women in society, decision making, economic independence, innovativeness, desire to improve present living conditions and attitude towards group actions and community behaviors (Srinath, 1992). Women's empowerment is an active, multidimensional process, which should enable them to realize their full identity and power in all sphere of life. Centuries after centuries, women suffered exploitation, negligence and apathy, which strangled the spirit in them.

Status of Tribal Women

The status of any social group is determined by its level of health-nutrition, literary-education and employment-income (Bhasin, 2007). The tribal women constitute as in any other social group, about half of the total population. However, the significance of women in the tribal society

is more important, because of the fact that they work hard and the family economy and management depend on her.

Status of tribal women is little better than non-tribal women. They are equal partners with their male folk in the production process as well as decision making within the family. Along with domestic work, they perform many other activities, contributing towards general well being of their families. The tribal women enjoy more freedom in various walks of life. Traditional and customary tribal norms are comparatively more liberal to women (Dhebar, 1961). However, the tribal women ought to have a rightful place in the changing socio-economic milieu, but due to seclusion from general masses, they remained backward even today. Their involvement is essential in all programmes of change and development. At the level of health, education, decision-making, etc. they are lagging behind. In order to bring them close to modern world, government launched and implemented many programmes for their development. But, due to illiteracy, economic backwardness and lack of communication, most of them remained unaware of these schemes.

The present study examined the factors like education, health, legal rights, technological innovations, that help in developing the potential of tribal women by creating a level of confidence and self – image. Further the study tried to examine the role of tribal women in the decision-making process. Anthropologists have long been interested in the study of women in tribal society (Srinivas, 1977). Different views have been expressed about the status of tribal women. Some scholars have pointed that primitive societies generally assign high status to women, whereas, the other view point proposes that in tribal world women are generally a suppressed group, have low status and are under subjugation, oppression or under male dominance. Louie (1953) however, felt that any general statement concerning tribal women's

position may not be strictly valid. There can be many intermediate statuses. Majumdar (1978) contended that discussion on women's status should be held by assessing their roles in relation to men, the extent of control enjoyed by women over their own lives and the extent to which they have access to decision making process and how effective are they in position of power and authority.

Tribal society is also a patriarchal society, the domination of male members over their female counterparts is as obvious as in the non-tribal society. Sikligar(2006) says that condition of tribal women is relatively better, so far male-female relationship is concerned, largely because the women in the tribal society play significant role in the production process and are equal economic partners with their male members.

Studies show that, women in tribal society enjoy little better status. There is no child marriage, no restrictions of widow remarriage, women have the right to decide her life partner, instead of dowry, and there is bride price in most of the tribes. She is economically independent to some extent. A higher social status of women was reported by Hutton (1921) and Hunter (1973) among Nagas and Garos of the North-East. Majumdar (1944) has also reported a higher status of tribal women particularly among the Tharus of Uttar Pradesh.

However, there are many socio-economic factors which indicate lower status of tribal women for example, she does not have property right in the patrilineal society, they do have these rights in matrilineal society, but proportion of such society is quite low, as compared to the total tribal population in India.

Rivers (1973), Dalton (1872) and Grigson (1938) have reported low status of women among Toda, Kharia and Muriya Gond. Shashi

(1978) has concluded that the status of tribal women varies from tribe to tribe.

The tribal women share abundant responsibilities and perform multiple duties in running the family and maintaining the household, attending to farm labour, tending domestic animals and poultry birds. But to discharge all these activities she is an unpaid servant to man whose labour is never measured in economic term. In agriculture, tribal women perform a number of significant roles. They participate in harvesting of crops, weeding, planting, rising, seedling, manuring and threshing and storage of grains. They also help in rearing of live stock, poultry keeping. Besides, they manage the house and bring up the children. Thus, tribal women like their other counterpart perform a multiplicity of roles providing economic support to the family and also maintaining the household (Lodha, 2003).

As said earlier then tribal women work harder and the family economy and management depends on her. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role (Awais, Alam, Asif, 2009)

The tribal women in general and in comparison with higher caste women enjoy more freedom in various walks of life. Traditional and customary tribal norms are comparatively more liberal to women (Dhebar Commission Report, 1961). However, the tribal women ought to have a rightful place in the changing socio-economic milieu. Their involvement is essential in all programmes of change and development. At the level of decision making they are, in general, lagging behind men. The favorable sex ratio for tribal women is also declining (Census, 2001).

The development projects have adversely affected the tribal women. With deforestation they have to travel a longer distance to gather

forest produce and fuel. A large proportion of tribal women are engaged in collecting forest products, agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Most of them are agricultural labourers and industrial labourers, their participation in service sector is very low. They are paid less wages for the same work, than their male counter parts. Tribal women cannot hold an office of priest, are some of the major factors affecting their status in the society. They are very often sexually exploited by forest and mining contractors. The incidences of sexual assaults on tribal women have increased in recent years. In the remote areas, the rate of literacy among the tribal women is alarmingly low. It is a social fact that educated society needs educated women. But the reality is different in tribal societies.

Sanskritization and acculturation has introduced various upper caste practices in tribal society like child marriage, dowry instead of bride-price, dislike for girl child, male land ownership and male dominance resulting in deterioration of women's status and also an increase in their workload (Vyas, 1970; Jain, 1985; Mann, 1987; Singh, 1988; Singh et al., 1988; Alam, 1994, Jogdand, 1995; Roy, 1995).

However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders. The strategy for tribal development and specially women needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the programmes oriented towards the empowerment of tribals, particularly women, have improved their socio economic conditions and status (Awais, Alam, Asif, 2009).

Hence in consonance with the above concern the current research was taken up to examine the factors like education, health, legal rights, technological innovations that help in developing the potential of tribal women by creating a level of confidence and self image. Various aspects which directly or indirectly determine the role of tribal women in the decision-making process were considered for the study.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic condition of the tribal women.
2. To analyze the educational achievement and growth of their children.
3. To analyze the political participation of the tribal women.
4. To understand women's role in decision-making process.
5. To analyze their awareness and participation in Government and non-Government development programmes.

Research Methodology, Field Methods and Experiences

The present study attempts to focus on important aspects like educational attainment, employment status, health situation, awareness level of tribal women and is an attempt to understand the kind of factors, which affect their empowerment at the grassroots level.

Research Design

The present study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. The exploratory research design explores the new things about tribal women's condition in Chhattisgarh. The descriptive research design describes the variables within households along with direct and indirect factors influencing tribal women's empowerment. Analytical research design

tries to study the impact of various developmental programmes on tribal women's socio-economic status and their quality of life.

Sampling Design

A purposive sampling procedure is adopted to select the sample households and unit for the study. There are four stages in which sampling process is carried out, which are as follows:

Area of Study

Chhattisgarh, the newborn state, which was carved out of Madhya Pradesh on November 1, 2000, has fairly a large tribal population. The Scheduled Tribe population is around 67 lakhs, and it constitutes 31.8 percent of the state's population. Almost 98.1 percent of this population lives in rural areas and only 1.9 percent lives in urban areas of Chhattisgarh. Considering such a high concentration of tribal population in Chhattisgarh, the state is selected purposively.

Selection of Districts

Out of 16 districts of Chhattisgarh, Raigarh and Jashpur Nagar districts are selected due to the fact that the districts have drawn all policy makers/planners, Governments' attention, because of higher concentration of tribal population. Another weighty reason is that, studies so far undertaken on tribals of these districts are only confined to review the tribal developmental programmes and tribal revolts but not many studies are undertaken on the empowerment of tribal women in these districts.

Selection of Blocks

In the present study, two tribal blocks each from one district is selected purposively. The high concentration of tribals is the main reason for selecting these blocks for the present study.

Selection of Villages

In the present study, three villages from each block have been selected. First village has been an advanced or developed means with better infrastructural facilities in terms of road, banks, schools, hospitals, sanitation facilities. Second village is underdeveloped, and the third village is backward and found in remote areas, with relatively poorer infrastructural facilities in these respects, keeping in mind the causal comparative component of the research design.

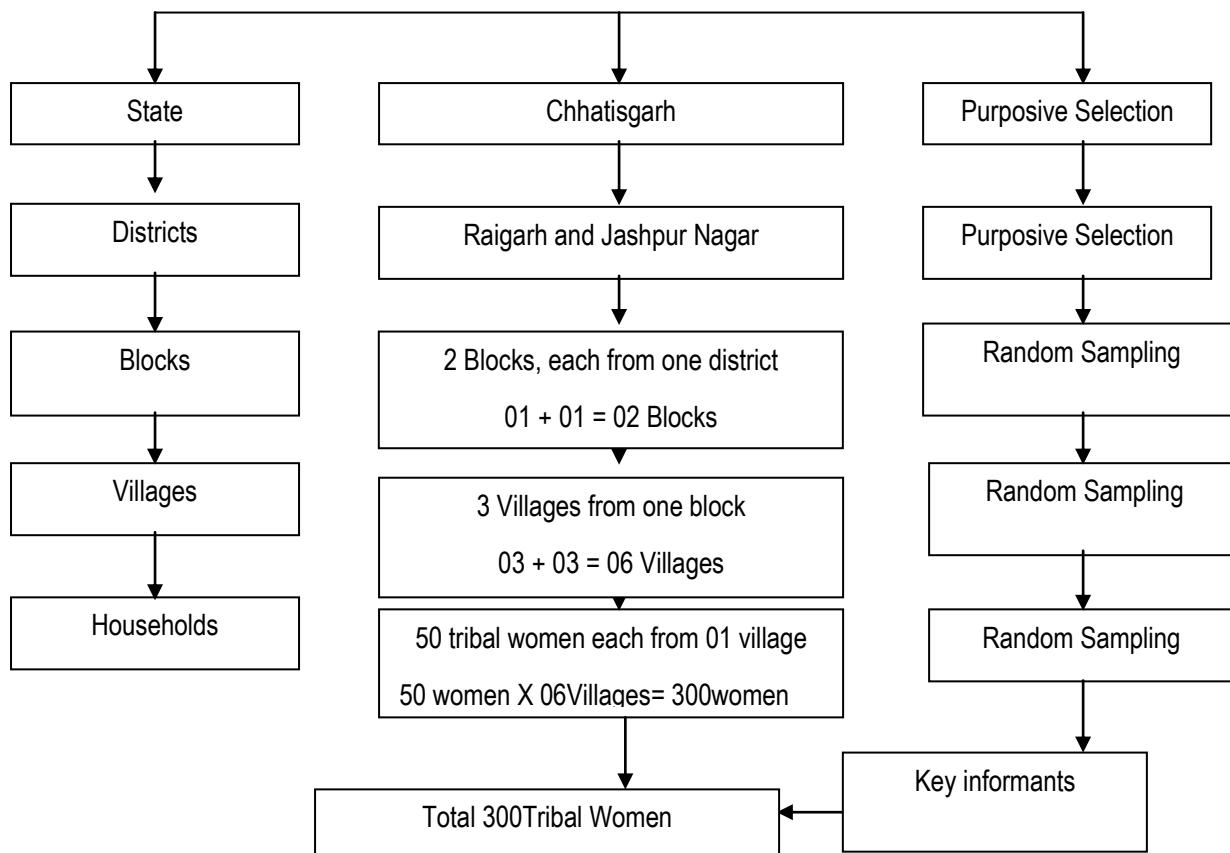
Selection of Households

In the last stage of sampling, households were chosen 50 tribal women and their households from each village are selected randomly with the help of village records.

Sample Size

For the present study 50 tribal women and their households will be randomly selected from each of six villages belonging to the two selected blocks of the 2 selected districts. Thus, the sample of the study will comprise of a total of 300 tribal households or tribal women.

Sampling Design



Sources of Data Collection

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Data – Primary data is collected from the respondents with the help of structured schedule, participant observation and group discussion through a field work in selected villages. A structured interview schedule was administered to 300 respondents.

Secondary Data - For the content analysis, data from census, different reports, documents, published and unpublished materials, etc., were studied thoroughly. Secondary data on empowerment of tribal women and related variables were compiled from various published and

unpublished official and unofficial sources like government agencies, Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Tribal Ministry and Welfare Department, Census, etc.

Tools and Techniques

The primary data was collected from 300 tribal women, are suitably coded, tabulated and analyzed to draw meaningful inferences with the help of statistical tools.

FINDINGS

The present work on tribal women empowerment has been mainly done because of its great relevance. In fact empowerment has become bug word in the

contemporary era. The work has been carried out in six villages of two districts of the state of Chhattisgarh, India. To make it sociologically relevant, various concepts have been used for orientation as well as interpretation.

Structural Functional approach has been followed to understand the tribal societies. Included understanding of their social relationships various networks and aspects of gender relationships, here an attempt has been made to analyze changes as well because empowerment itself produces change, it is not the cup of tea of the traditional and conservative Indian societies.

Empowerment is a product of modern society which implies structural change. Normally in strong traditional societies like India total structural change are not found i.e., change of structure. However, Change in structure means continuity and change is found in our society. Further, in case of such change, continuity dominates. For changing a system or some aspects of the system people get choices and alternatives. They use such choices which represent the whole community. Further,

choice has to be used with the element of responsibility; it means they are not changing the structure.

Besides this feminist ideologies have also been used, they are: feminist, liberalism: feminist essentialism; feminist socialism and feminist post-modernism.

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter I is introduction which deals with the theoretical background, review of literature, objectives of the study and field methods and experiences. The second chapter deals with the area and the people. It includes a detailed discussion of Chhattisgarh, its two districts named, Raigarh and Jashpur Nagar and the six villages namely Chhal (Village A), Miriguda (Village

B), Khalbora (Village C), Tamta (Village D), Palidih (Village E) and Buldega (Village F) which have been intensively studied.

The third chapter deals with the socio economic status of the people, a total number of 300 female respondents were studied. They belonged to six tribes: 86 respondents from Oraon tribe, 80 from Kanwar, 64 from Baiga, 48 from Birhor, 06 from Pahari Korwa and 16 from Gond tribe. The respondents were from 6 villages namely Chhal (Village A), Miriguda (Village B), Khalbora (Village C), Tamta (Village D), Palidih (Village E) and Buldega (Village F).

50 respondents from each village were taken. Respondents belonging to all six tribes were found in village C (Khalbora), Birhor and Pahari Korwa were not found in village A (Chhal), B (Miriguda), D (Tamta), and E (Palidih). Birhor, Pahari Korwa and Gonds were not found in village B (Miriguda) and F (Buldega). Baiga, and Gonds were not found in village B (Miriguda) and F (Buldega).

Chapter IV deals with the factors of empowerment like decision making, political participation, patriarchal inclination, violence against

women, physical and mental torture, awareness regarding various things like development programme, Panchayat, NGO activities, SHG activities, selection of spouse etc.

Coming to the objectives of the study as said earlier it has five objectives. Here I will try to explain how these objectives are fulfilled.

The first objective was to study the socio economic status of the tribal women, which has been dealt in chapter III. As said earlier the study area is dominated by the tribals. 52% pursued their own tribal religion whereas, a few pursued both Hinduism and Christianity (i.e., 19.7%). Majority of the respondents were having nuclear families (i.e., 80%) only a few have joint families (i.e. 16.3%). Most of the families were small families having three children (i.e., 62.7%), only 37.3% families had more than three children. Those who had many children they said they were unaware about family planning and some others were interested in having a male child.

The main family occupation in the area consisted of five types: agriculture, service, business, agricultural labours and non-agricultural labour. Most of the people followed agriculture and agricultural labourer as occupation. Only a few pursued business or are in some service. A majority of respondents did agricultural labour or some other type of labour. All of them managed day to day activities of the household but simultaneously almost all of them did some kind of work outside home.

The monthly income of the family did not very much in the area, say it is between less than 1000 to little more than 5000. Most of the respondents were married. Early marriage was found in about 1/3 rd women but they belong to the old age group. Today, gradually the age at marriage is increasing. Marriage prestation has been customary among the tribals particularly in terms of giving bride wealth and bride price,

which is almost mandatory for every groom. However, these days under the influence of non – tribal Hindu neighbours the practice of dowry has been on the rise. 61.3% respondents gave dowry in their marriages.

Most of the people had Kutcha houses which are only one room houses. Most of the houses did not have proper ventilation. For drinking water facilities people mostly relied on hand pumps and they stored water in closed containers. Most of the houses did not have toilets. In this manner the socio economic status of the people shows some empowerment from the past in terms of income and rise in marital age.

The second objective was to analyze the educational achievement and growth of children in the area.

Similarly the literacy rate is also on the rise in 30% respondents were illiterate and the rest 70% were literate. The reason of illiteracy has been mainly the distance of the school. In case of girl's education, it was because of the parent's negative attitude towards girl's education. Mothers were not able to help their children in their studies because they were not literate or less educated. However, people knew about various educational programs run by Chhattisgarh Government and Government of India.

A majority of people want their daughters to be educated and well employed. Regarding health and medicinal practice people followed doctors either in government hospitals or in private clinics. Most of the children in the area were vaccinated. The children were interested in many extracurricular activities like games, music, drawing, painting, debate and essay writing. A majority of the children helped in various manners doing household work. Children were having bad habit as well: smoking bidi, cigarette, chilam; chewing tobacco, pan masala; taking drugs, ganja, bhang, opium and taking alcohol. This is found among only

older children. On the other hand among the respondents most of them had the above bad habits. Incidence of Polio has become rare. Most of the people were not aware about balanced diet, hence, suffered from malnutrition.

The third objective was to analyze the political participation of the tribal women. Earlier political participation was rare in tribal area but gradually participation increased particularly after independence. The introduction of Panchayati Raj System was a major result of such participation. Today everybody is aware about Panchayati Raj, Political parties and elections.

People had mixed opinion on women contesting election. However, Most of them said that they should become members of panchayat as there is reservation for women in the panchayat. Further, women were also response about mahilamandal participation. Most of them participated in gram sabha meeting. In this manner political socialization is becoming active and rewarding among the tribal women of Chhattisgarh.

The fourth objective was to understand women's role in decision making process. This is a crucial issue for women empowerment. Generally speaking what we have read so far, it is understood that the tribal women's decision making ability and power is little better than the non tribal women. The may be a thing of the past and today it is a myth. It may be the result of the influence of intense patriarchal system of the neighbouring non- tribal groups. Coming to the field area a few women could take final decision regarding purchase of household goods and other money matters . The same is the case with decision making in the family regarding property.

Regarding their own education invariable their parents, husbands and in laws took the decisions. In the matter of selection of the spouse of children women could hardly say anything. Thus is clear that decision making for women has not improved much, they still have to depend upon their parents, parents in laws and husbands.

The fifth objective of the research was to analyze the tribal women's awareness and participation in government and non-government development programmes such awareness is gradually increasing but probably only among the educated ones for example maximum women did not know the legal provisions on protection of women including the domestic violence act.

Most of them knew about the planned development programme of the government but a few participated in it. Regarding NGO activities most of them aware about them, only a few participated in it. Anganwadi has been a successful programme which has resulted in both development and motivation among women and children in rural and tribal areas and there is no exception in my field area. People have whole heartedly participated in the anganwadi activities. Knowledge and participation in self Help Groups have been satisfactory in the area.

It has really help people in getting some income. Regarding the impact of forest act on tribal life only a negligible few say it has brought positive change in their lives.

Many people were not aware about forest acts. In this manner there has been a mixed response regarding awareness of and participation in development programme by the government and the NGOs.

The above discussion leads us to the idea of how a society changes into a new phase or era and how it rejects a few things and adjusts to a few things. There is always a resistance to development and change by

every traditional and conservative society not only that even some times advanced societies also resist to change. Oommen (2009) said that subsistence economies which serve basic needs are not peopled by deprived people. They are defined as poor and deprived by the western theorist because they do not participate in the market economy. These people are first labelled as poor by western theorist and then advised to development. Development is not their felt need, their natural aspiration. Poverty is first invented and developed is then prescribed to eradicate poverty. Colonialism ended and modernity (development) took over and cocalization, McDonaldalization, Disneyfication came in. The dream of development is over, what is required is not more development but a different regime of truth and perception.

However, this is one side of the story because people in the tribal areas are benefitted largely the mainstream perspective of development. It is state's development process or state sponsored programmes run by NGOs.

Coming over to issue of empowerment of tribal women in Chhattisgarh, it is clear that they are also undergoing through a phase of transition. As it is the tribal women are already empowered in the sense their status is little better than their non-tribal counterparts, notwithstanding the domestic violence against women. Such type of violence occur in the study area, if not frequently, it's a routine feature. Drunken husbands invariable slap or push women in a fit of raze. However, various schemes of the Government like health, education, nutrition, governance, Panchayati Raj etc. have benefitted the women. Older women are not much educated, hence are not able to impart their duties like teaching and guiding their daughter at home.

When we analyze the social structure you can easily visualize status quo. It means continuity of the structure has been very strong with
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some minor changes. For example the health care system consists of both traditional practices, educational system is modernized through formal education, and communication system is also modernized through telephone and mobile phone, entertainment system has been modernized through watching video and television channels.

However, the mind set has not much changed towards patriarchy, patriliney and son preference. People are able to implement some choice and alternatives which does not change the core structure. It can be called change in structure with feminist liberalism ideas. We have not witnessed change of structure in our subcontinent, hence, tribal societies are no exception. People are adaptive to development programs up to some extent. Societies and culture do not change overnight, it takes time.

Further, intensive research on a large scale to provide more inside into the issue of empowerment. However, this piece of finding has definitely made us understand women as persons and as integral part of the society.

