



# "EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF CHAMPUA BLOCK IN KEONJHAR DISTRICT"

Dr. Mamata Sahu, Lecturer in Sociology, Boula Degree College, Soso, Keonjhar.

## Abstract:-

Tribal women play a major role in the management of their natural, social and economic resources and agricultural development. But they remain backward due to traditional values, superstitions. Social evils and mainly for their illiteracy. Keeping these statement in view the present study planned to conduct an empirical investigation on the women empowerment in tribal setting because the tribal women are not alike to their counterpart in urban area. So the study was conducted with an objective to know the role of empowerment process is really been achieved in Indian context or not, to know whether the empowerment process gives power to powerlessness, and to help them for developing decision making power. For getting all, the study was conducted in four villages of Champua Block in Keonjhar District. To get naked data researcher used an Interview schedule method for collecting data from the respondents. The major findings are : Tribal women want to imitate the Hindu caste women but on the other hand they are very particular about observing their rituals and observances modern Education, employment opportunities and impact of modernization slowly empower them for getting equal share in every sphere.

**Keywords:-** Empowerment, Decision making power, Employment scheme, modernization, dual role.

## Introduction

"Empowerment of women" as an issue started in India from 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards when social reformers questioned the growing gender inequalities and major social evils making the women pitiable. Independent India only adds new dimensions to this. In our country, specially, in Orissa "Women Empowerment" is also a running issue. Women now come to the forefront and participate in family decision making process, contest for political rights, demands for economic independency. Orissa a Society ridden with orthodox and conservative ideas, now provides and support for the women folk to go ahead. Now they are coming of age. A close look at the scenario of Keonjhar district (the concerned district of my study) reveals that the women are more pitiable. They are given a low status. Since, its economy is agricultural, its tradition is religious and customs are partly tribal, women's improving status is primarily impossible. The male counterparts are not co-operative to the female and not change their hearts towards the feminine concept. Instead of all, women are trying to be remarkable in the field of politics, economics finance and in social setting.

Keeping the aforesaid statement in view it has been planned to conduct an empirical investigation on the "Women Empowerment". This need is also felt by the Theorist, Politician, Economist, Psychologist and Sociologist from all sides to measure the magnitude of women oppression, subjugation at one hand and to measure their improvement in day to day life at the other hand. When we cry for the betterment of the other half, they are in Indian soil suffering from a gender basis inequalities. The male dominated society and paternal system allows her to survive as secondary member of the family and lower citizen of society. While women account for half of the population and perform two-thirds of the hours worked, they receive only one tenth of the total property. So there is a growing interest all over the world to bring women into decision making process, to stop the women oppression in the form of child marriage, bride burning, dowry death, discrimination in food, intake employment, education, health (D. Agarwal 2001). They are all necessarily believed to go by the empowerment process. The government, inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies are all working for the women development. Keeping all these phenomena in view "Orissa" a state with backward women also want to fight against many ill-fated odds.

**Tribal Women in Orissa:** - The usual depiction of tribal women in Orissa is that she has equal rights as man. This romanticized version provided by "Verrier Elwin in 1958" of tribal women's status is still considered true. That gender equity exists among them which is not found among the non tribal population. These are based on high sex ratio, bride price and equal celebrations on birth of a girl child. Freedom of movement and right to choose her own mate are perceived as indicators of equality. Widow Remarriage and the right to divorce strengthen the argument. Her economic role is reorganized and she is considered as a living asset.

The proportion is 30:16 in context. There is no denying the fact that tribal women contribute to economic development in a more substantial way than tribal men. It is clear that women as active worker constitute a large section of tribal force and women's labour force in general. Apart from domestic work women from all categories were engaged in many types of subsistence and other economic activities which were important for the existence of their family.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- present study takes all these objectives to enquire about the status of tribal women empowerment,
- a. To Examine whether the existing structure provides the ground for the fullest utilization of tribal women's potentialities.
  - b. To identify the various sources of empowerment of Tribal women in socio-economic field and political field.
  - c. To know whether tribal women have equal access in decision making process.
  - d. To know whether all forms of violence against girl child, married women, widow and divorced women continue to exist in spite of several measures.

### **Methodology of the study**

The 'Universe' of the present study covers all categories of adult women like educated and uneducated, rich and poor, married and unmarried from four villages in Champua Block of Keonjhar District namely, Tianshipashi, Pokharia, Balabhadrapur, Chandrasekharpur. The present study uses 'Exploratory Design' to study the tribal women's problem directly without any formulated 'Hypothesis', because tribal society is heterogeneous in nature and women's problems are multidimensional. The total size of the sample studied, was 300 tribal adult women including educated, uneducated rich/poor, married/unmarried from various tribes like Gond, Bathuri, Saunti and Munda and 100 adult male respondents to know their response regarding women empowerment.

The researcher used Interview Schedule method for the collection of data from the samples. The entire process of data collection lasted from 2018 to 2020 in two phases.

### **Economic Role of Tribal Women:-**

The tribal female participation rate in economy is comparatively higher than the non-tribal female and the proportion is 30:16 in context. There is no denying the fact that tribal women contribute to economic development in a more substantial way than tribal men. It is clear that women as active worker constitute a large section of tribal force and women's labour force in general. Apart from domestic work women from all categories were engaged in many types of subsistence and other economic activities which were important for the existence of their family.

In consideration of economic role of tribal women, it is concluded that tribal women bear the double burden as bread earner and bread maker. Data show that 40% women are daily worker and other do the various types of Business including service, their percentage is 60%. As regard the power of expenditure of self income, data give a mix result i.e. 66.6% women say they meet the expenses independently, whereas other 33.48% deny this above fact. Among the respondents 80% women say, they take the decisions regarding the expenditure of their children. Majority of the women, nearly 70% say they have equal share in family income whereas 30% deny the above said fact.

**Social role of tribal women** in social field the status of tribal woman is better than that of the caste women in general. She has a wide freedom; she can go the market, visit friends. She can dance and sing, laugh and joke with men without approach. There is no marked difference between boy and girl in tribal society.

Gender discrimination in tribal area is quite different from the non-tribal society. They are free enough to maintain social intercourse. 60% say they never felt gender discrimination but 40% say they felt it. Majority of the respondents nearly 53.3% respondents say there is no distinction of treatment between male and female child. As regard to girl's education only 26.6% say it is preferable. Among the respondents, 93.3% felt wage discrimination in their society.

As to conclude the decision making power of women it is quite clear that woman has the freedom to take decision over her personal matters like health, dress and food habits. 60% respondents say they take their own decisions regarding health. 26.7% say they have no power to take any decision regarding family planning, 63.3% women consult with their husband to take decision on family planning. Only 37% take independent decision over this issues. For their children's marriage near about, 93.3% women give their opinion where as 6.7% women say they have no opinion regarding this matter. 60% women say they are capable to express their grievances in public but 33.3% say they are not capable to do this. 70% women say they are ready to seek divorce in case of marital incompatibility only, 30% say they are not ready for divorce. Regarding the method of protection against domestic violence, 56.7% say they themselves capable to prevent the domestic violence by retaliating whereas 13.3% say they take it to the Mahila Commission.

**Political role of tribal women:** In the political sphere, women have low voice as all the tribal families in Odisha are patriarchal and patrilineal and patrilocal. The constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments) Act has the noble intention of bringing power to the women, in general and tribal women in particular. These amendments provide for decentralization of power or decentralized administration through local self governing bodies at three tiers in village, in block and in district level, which aims at the empowerment of women in public sphere.

As regards the political participation and empowerment of tribal women it is concluded that tribal women only hunkering to cast their votes, not for holding the office in politics. 96.67% respondents say they have voter identity card and they cast votes regularly whereas only 3.33% women say they have no zeal for casting votes. As a whole 94% respondents say they have no intention and no power to hold the office.

As regards the role of women's organization in safeguarding the protection of tribal women, it is concluded that tribal women feel the importance of voluntary organization when they help them directly to meet the demands of life either in form of cash credit, training for self business. 70% tribal women are aware of the existence of NGO's in their area whereas other 30% unaware of it. 93.7% respondents confess that NGO's help them through the formation of SHG/s. SHGs lay the foundation for self reliance through building up of institutions which have the capacity to generate employment opportunities for the poor and lead to job-led economic growth. 80% of the respondents are involved in SHGs whereas 20% old and illiterate respondents not involved in any SHGs. Among them majority (52%) respondents do rice business through SHGs and only 1.3% do plantation work. 93.3% respondents say they get Bank Loans through SHGs other 6.7% do not get

any loans. 86.7% respondents able to do bank work directly through their group members but 13.3% take the help of their husband for this matter. 93.3% respondents agree on their view that SHGs helps to increase their economic power and hereby self reliance to manage the both household and community work. It gives a sense of responsibility and participatory skill to the tribal women.

### Conclusion

Therefore, the study examines that tribal women empowerment is possible with over all development of tribes which especially comes through education and consciousness. 95% respondent feel the importance of education for their development and empowerment because education gives them self-image and self confidence. However tribal women are slowly and steadily entering into the power structure and develop self reliance and motivation skill. They get self image by the impact of modernization, modern education, new employment scheme in their community.

### Suggestions:

1. Tribal women's emancipation and empowerment would lead to family emancipation and ultimately emancipation of the country. Therefore efforts should be made to improve women's social, economic and political empowerment. State and center should take an initiative so that Tribal women realize their own power.
2. Tribal women should organize themselves into groups and take active part in community activities.
3. The state should spend at least 30% for the development and emancipation of Tribal women. Efforts should also be made to ensure that the allotted amount reaches the target group.
4. Tribal women should be aware of government plans and schemes for their upliftment.

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