

Women Empowerment and Economic Development in India A study of Dongaria Tribes in Kalahandi District.

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Abstract:

This paper discusses on women empowerment and economic development in India- A study of Dongaria Tribes in Kalahandi District. This paper establishes the linkage of the women empowerment through various connotations, their participation in economic activities in general and tribal women in particular. It examines the occupation pattern of women, their socio-economic conditions, dressing pattern. For 68% of respondent's agriculture is the main source of livelihood. In case of 82% women, child deliveries are performed at private hospitals. 78% women adopted family planning and having decision making power. 77% women participate in family affairs. The paper made use of cross factors analysis. This paper concluded that it is necessary to build up women capacities so as to involve them in productive activities, family and social transformation, decision-making process, political representation, entrepreneurial development and social leadership. Important finding is women have broken the barricades of confining themselves merely to reproduction and now actively participating in production activities.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Economic Development, Decision making.

Introduction:-

The tribal population is an integral part of India's social fabric and has the second largest concentration after that of the African continent. It is more than the total population of France and Britain and four times that of Australia. The population of tribal communities scheduled in the Constitution of India and known as Scheduled Tribes (STs) was 8.43 crore (1 crore = 10 million) as per 2001 census and accounts for 8.2% of the total population. 4.26 crores are men and 4.17 crores are women, accounting for 8.01% and 8.40% respectively. The historical background of Indian society reveals that in Vedic times a woman was given a high status. The place given to women can be perceived in an old saying, "Where women are honored, gods reside there". She was known as Ardhgini one half of husband's body. At the time of marriage, she as a bride was entitled to procure certain solemn vows from the bridegroom before the ritual fire. No religious ceremony by the husband could bear fruit without her participation. As a mother, wife and sister she occupied an honored place. She is the epitome of courage and boldness, love and affection, sacrifice and suffering B.Suresh Lal (2015). Women seem to be half of the sky in Indian society. They are being subject to social, psychological, physical and domestic violence and other forms of atrocities, suppression and deprivation B.Suresh Lal (2005).

Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of a country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment.^[4] Sustainable development accepts environmental protection, social and economic development, including women's empowerment. In the context of women and development, empowerment must include more choices for women to make on their own.^[9]

The empowerment of women is essential for the development of the society as well as economy. Now-a-days Women are performing multiple roles of working but still they are not equal to men. Women empowerment includes women awareness of their rights, self-confidence, to have a control over their lives both at home and outside and their ability to bring a change in the society. Empowerment has many elements which depend upon and relate to each other i.e. economic, social, political and personal. Economic empowerment means to give woman her

rights in the economy. Social empowerment means status of woman in the society should be equal to man by eliminating injustice and inequity. Women should have respectable value in the society. Political empowerment means women should have access to political positions from provincial level to national assemblies and be given right to vote along with men without any discrimination.

Tribal Women in the Society Women:-

In a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and are considered as an economic asset in their society. But they are still lagging far behind in the different walks of life like education, employment, good health and economic empowerment etc. Though they are industrious, they have limited control over resources and economic activities. Therefore, there is a need for economic empowerment of tribal women in order to overcome inequality, discrimination and exploitation and to achieve their all-round development in the society. Economic empowerment of marginalized groups involves not only the process of creation of socio-political space for these groups by the state and civil society but also it is a process of liberation from man-made bondage through sustained struggle and resistance. It also represents realization of hopes and dreams of marginalised groups for a social environment, free of inequalities which affect them politically, socially and economically. The issue of economic empowerment is also linked with aspects like equality, liberty and fraternity. Thus, the concept of “Economic Empowerment” of tribal women is quite new and it has been contextualized and acquires a new connotation in recent years among social scientists, policy makers, and development activists. So, to overcome all the obstacles of the economic empowerment of tribal women, the scientific research is an urgent need.

The economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development, pro-poor growth and the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for multiplying development efforts. Investments in gender equality yield the highest returns of all development investments OECD (2010). Women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men. A study in Brazil showed that the likelihood of a child's survival increased by 20% when the mother-controlled household income World Bank (2010).

Economic empowerment increases women's agency, access to formal government programs, mobility outside the home, economical independence, and purchasing power. Policy makers are suggested to support job training to aid in entrance in the formal markets.^[10] One recommendation is to provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more access to higher wages outside the home; and as a result, make it easier for women to get a job in the market.

Status of Tribal Women:-

The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non-tribals.

Objectives of the Study:-

The main objective of the present study is to examine the inter dependence between the source of empowerment of tribal women. The study further aims,

1. To study the socio-economic background of tribal women of Dongoria tribes in Kalahandi district.
2. To understand the occupational patterns
3. To examine the economic empowerment of tribal women

Hypotheses:-

The hypotheses of the study are formulated as follows:

1. Economic empowerment leads decisions making in family affairs.
2. Occupational pattern contributes to economic empowerment.

Review of Literature:-

Review of studies by several authors in this regard was felt desirable and imperative in this study. An outline of the literature survey is put to note and the following references are worth mentioning here. According to Agarwal, Deepti (2001), "Women need to be viewed not just as beneficiaries but as active participants in the progress of development and change. Empowerment of women could be organized into groups for community participation as well as for assertion of their rights in various services related to their economic and social well-being".

Manimekalai and Rajeswari (2002), conducted a study on "Grass roots entrepreneurship through Self Help Groups (SHGs)", with the objective to find out the factors which have motivated women to become Self Help Group members are eventually entrepreneurs and analyze the enterprise performance of Self-Help Groups in terms of growth of investment, turnover, capacity utilization, profit etc. It was understood from the analysis that the Self-Help Group entrepreneurs have improved a lot with respect to their enterprise performance. It was also observed that the women have been depending only on agriculture and now have become independent. Apart from the improvement on the personal growth, the community as a whole has gained through the organization of the Self-Help Groups.

Jaya S. Anand (2002), in her review of progress of Self Help Groups, has attempted to examine the performance of selected Self Help Groups and NHGs and to assess its impact, especially the impact of micro credit programme on empowering women. It has been clearly established that delivering credit alone may not produce the desired impact. The supporting services and structures through which credit is delivered ranging from group formation and training to awareness raising and a wide range of other supporting 409 measures are critical to make the impact of group activity strong and sustainable.

S. Thangamani (2013), the economic empowerment of tribal women can be measured through the power they have over financial resources to earn income and their per capita income, access to education, access and availability of professional opportunities and participation in economic decision making and their access to political opportunities.

Constitutional Provisions of Tribal:-

The constitution has given more than 20 articles on the redressed and upliftment of underprivileged with policies on positive discrimination and affirmative action with reference to S.T.

- Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities to all
- Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc;
- Article 15 (4) States to make special provisions for advancement of any socially educationally backward classes;
- Article 16 (4) empowers the state to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens, which in the opinion of state, is not adequately represented.
- Article 46 state to promote with special cares the educational and economic interests of the weaker section, especially the ST and protects the social injustice and all form of exploitation.
- Article 275 grant-in aid for promoting the welfare of ST and raising the level of administration
- Article 244(1) tribal welfare communities to be setup for the welfare of the tribes. • Article 22(2) 73rd and 74th amendments - to ensure effective participation of tribal in the process of planning and decision making.

Table No.1

SI No.	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Young (up to 35 years)	20	40%
2	Middle (36 to 45 years)	15	30%
3	Old (more than 45 years)	15	30%
	Total	50	100%

The table-1 refers to out of 50 respondents 20 (40%) respondents was found to be in young age, and 15(30%) respondents in middle age and 15(30%) respondents in old age.

Table No.2

SI No.	Category	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	10	20%
2	Functionally literate	12	24%
3	Primary education	15	30%
4	Middle education	13	26%
	Total	50	100%

The table-2 refers to out of 50 respondents 10(20%) respondents are illiterate, and 12 (24%) respondents are functionally literate, and 15 (30%) respondents are primary education, and 13 (26%) respondents are middle education.

Conclusion:-

Tribal women play a major role in the co-management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock production, horticulture and post-harvest operations but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstitions, dominant roles in decision making, social evils and many other cultural factors. The participatory role of tribals in improving their living conditions by fully exploring natural endowments and alternative uses must find an appropriate place in the strategic approach. The social dynamics of tribal welfare and development is such that effective strategies to protect tribals and their livelihood imply negotiating some kind of social consensus about criteria concerning tribal development and values of the society that evolves from such programmes. This also implies a broad social consensus about the basic rights and opportunities that tribals should enjoy and the responsibilities that should be taken by different individual and social groups.

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