SOcio-economic Empowerment of Tribal Women in Chhattisgarh: A Case Study of Bastar District

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Abstract

Empowerment of tribal women for the accelerated socio-economic development of any community the active participation of women is essential. The study was conducted in tribal dominated Bastar district of Chhattisgarh State (Southern part). Data was collected from 189 women and analysed with the help of suitable statistical methods. Tribal women play a significant role in the economic development of tribals as they contribute in various economic activities. Tribal women work very hard for livelihood of the family but live a poor life, in spite of their many contributions in the house and on the farm. After the analysis of the data and field observation, it is revealed that lack of education, poor health status and infant mortality rate, low level of wage work, leadership quality are the main obstacles to the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women.

Keywords: Socio-economic Empowerment, Forest Products, SHG, Rural Employment, Bastar.

Introduction

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 roles within the family, the community and society. Socio-economic development of an area is the best reflection of the quality of life of its people. The distribution of social and economic services is crucial not only for promoting economic growth but also for assuring the social justice and improving the quality of life. The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement betterment development and upliftment to the effect their empowerment.

Socio-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 marginalized groups for a social environment, free of inequalities which affect them politically, socially and economically. The issue of socio-economic empowerment is also linked with aspects like quality, liberty, and fraternity.

Therefore, there is a need for socio-economic empowerment of tribal women in order to overcome inequality and to achieve their all-round development in the society.

Objectives of the Study

1. Promoting the Socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable section of the population especially tribal women.
2. To study the profile characteristics of trial women.
3. To find out the relationship between profile characteristics of tribal women with livelihood security.
4. To suggest the suitable plans to achieve the goal of socio economic empowerment of tribal women.

STUDY AREA

Bastar district occupies the Southern part of Chhattisgarh State, India. With 19°20’ N latitudes and 81°93’E longitudes (Fig – 1)

Tribal population of the study region consist 66.31% (2001 Census) of total population. Narayanpur tahsil with 76.16 percentages, has the highest concentration where as in the Jagdalpur tahsil tribal population is 62.05%, lowest.

Table – 1 : Study area, distribution of Male-Female and ST population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Tahsil</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>% of ST Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Keshkal</td>
<td>155320</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>155320</td>
<td>77096</td>
<td>78224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Narayanpur</td>
<td>108606</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>108606</td>
<td>53988</td>
<td>54618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kondagaon</td>
<td>309193</td>
<td>26898</td>
<td>336091</td>
<td>166713</td>
<td>169378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Jagdalpur</td>
<td>603533</td>
<td>103123</td>
<td>706656</td>
<td>352004</td>
<td>354652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>117652</td>
<td>130021</td>
<td>1306673</td>
<td>649801</td>
<td>656872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2001

METHODOLOGY

Bastar district which have the tribal population more than 65% (according to census, 2001) have been selected as sample tribal area for the study of tribal women’s socio-economic empowerment. Eight (8) village from this district have been randomly selected for sample study and 189 women have been interviewed personally.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic empowerment of tribal women includes following determinants.
Educational Status

Education is the key which opens the door of life, develops humanity and promotes national and self development. Education can be an effective tool for women empowerment. It enables the tribal women to acquire knowledge for improving and empowering their tasks in all fields (Suresh and Padmaja, 2005). But the level of education of the tribal women in the study area is very low; 31.39% according to 2001 census. But it is increase in 2011.

Table No. 2: Literacy rate 2001 – 2011 (Tribal women, in the study area).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>56.75</td>
<td>31.93</td>
<td>44.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>64.82</td>
<td>44.26</td>
<td>54.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the study area girl’s dropout is a major problem.

Reasons for dropout (Girl’s)

Health and nutritional level

Health and Nutrition are two important basic needs to be met for the empowerment of tribal women. Health condition and nutrition level of tribal women is vulnerable. The tribal women face many problems in health and nutrition. The maternal malnutrition is quite common among the tribal women in the study area. And in the study area –

(a) % of girls marrying below 18 years is up to 60.
(b) 81.10% tribal women deliver at home which 49% are attended by TBA (Traditional Birth Attender) and 32.20% by untrained persons.
(c) 79.8% of tribal children are anaemic and 55% malnutrition in the study area.
(d) Folk dishonest health practitioner is practice still now.
(e) Study area is high risk zone of malaria.
(f) Modern health care service is very poor.

Agriculture and minor forest produce (MFP)

Most of the tribes depend on MFP collection and also follow agriculture based economy. In the study area tribal women possess unique skill in agricultural operations and MFP collection. The daily wage is the another main source of income in their life and it also fulfils the basic needs of the family. Migration in tribal women for agricultural labour is very important in the study area. But migrant women labours are not getting any social security benefits and they are unaware about it (Puttaraja and O.D. Heggade). And implementation wild protection Act of 1972 is hindering the collection of MFP.
and improper implementation of 2006 and 2008 Forest-Right Act; these are also an obstacle for socio economic empowerment of tribal women in the study area.

**Empowerment status of different tribes in the study area**

In the study area empowerment status in different tribes are different in various aspects.

**Table 3: Empowerment status of different tribes (n=189)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Tribal Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>42.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>82.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Planning</td>
<td>85.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member SHG</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of agricultural Land</td>
<td>9.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political empowerment</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>61.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social participation</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration for wage work</td>
<td>70.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

**Money Lending**

Despite legal and protective measures to curb money lending in scheduled areas and provisions for enforcement has been weak and ineffective. So positive measures to improve the flow of institutional credit for consumption through self help groups must be taken.

**Technological empowerment**

Tribal women in the study area are involved in almost all agricultural operations. They have inadequate technical competency due to their limited exposure to out side world as well as continued reliance on traditional practices. This has compelled them to follow the age old practices which in turn result in poor work efficiency and low productivity (Puttaraja O.D. Heggade).

**Decision making and gender equality**

Gender equality and decision-making is the important factor to the women empowerment. In the study area have gender equality in their families. But decision-making ability of tribal women is very less in out side the family but it is equal to made within family.

**SUGGESTIONS**

1. Create women’s economic development corporations.
2. Focus on women among agricultural extension systems.
3. Access to developmental programmes.
4. Improve the access of tribal women to modern health care.
5. Training of tribal women to take up their responsibilities.
6. SHGs to promote viable micro-economic activities.
7. Inform all Gram Sabha members for their responsibilities.
8. Evaluation of tribal Sub-plan strategy.
ATTAINING ECONOMIC SECURITY AND LEADERSHIP QUALITY TO TRIBAL WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA.

9. Attaining economic security and leadership quality to tribal women in the study area.

10. Provide tribal women labours social security benefits because they are working in unorganized and informal sector.

CONCLUSION

The socio-economic empowerment of tribal women could be kept as a long development goal in India and also study area. Economic independence and education of tribal women will go a long way attaining self-reliance for women. The participatory role of tribal women’s in improving their living conditions by fully exploring natural endowments and alternative uses must find an appropriate place in the strategic approach.

REFERENCES


