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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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## **Empowerment of Tribal Women in India**

**Ivy De**

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Gokhale Memorial Girls' College,  
Kolkata, West Bengal

### **ABSTRACT**

Empowerment of Tribal Women for the development of any community or the active participation of women is very essential. India is a country of villages as the majority of its population lives in villages and far-remote areas. The interesting aspect is that every region of the country though connected with the cities now; however, still possesses its own peculiar traditional ethos. Also most of the rural communities are still devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water, health care, ample transportation, etc. But the lack of education in many of the rural belts of India is proving breeding ground for social vices, evils and paving the way to anti-social/national activities.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Empowerment of women is one of the concepts that have developed in connection with improving their status. Empowerment includes higher literacy levels, education, better healthcare, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of rights and responsibilities, improved standards of living, self-reliance, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Tribal population in India constitutes 8.6% of the entire population. Most of the tribal population live in rural area.

The Constitution of India focuses on women's rights in the context of equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination. Tribal people form the lowest rung in Indian economy. They keep migrating for few months or permanently to overcome their lack of job opportunity.

"Women perform 66% of the world's work, and produce 50% of the food, yet earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the property. Whether the issue is improving education in the developing world, or fighting global climate change, or addressing nearly any other challenge we face, empowering women is a critical part of the equation". Former President Bill Clinton addressing the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative (September 2009). Here women empowerment is heavily dependent on social status, age, geographic location, awareness and of course education. There are visible gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. One of the key factors is implementation of laws and policies. There is not even any emphasis at the community level.

So, the empowerment of the tribal population has become a major concern. From the previous three decades there has been an increased awareness on women empowerment through social, economic and political equity, and broader access from the fundamental human rights. Improvement of their nutrition and health condition is also increasing day by day. Government has provided various kinds of skills and opportunities for economic development based upon the traditional skills. However, women should also be provided additional skills for value additions to the produces. Apart from several efforts made by the government, non-government organizations also provide training and help in development in different sectors of economy especially for the tribal population so that they can make an effective contribution in the society. They need training and skill to lead their livelihood effectively. Government emphasises on various skill development programs for women living in villages. Training and skill development among women would be mainly pertaining to farm forestry, jewellery making, papad making, sewing, cooking, sanitary pads making and so on.

The tribal women are taking equal responsibility in household economy. They are rather more physically active in their agricultural fields and forest rather than the tribal men. Tribal women have usually enjoyed a higher social status in their own communities than Indian women in general. In spite of that literacy level of tribal women is very low. Few tribal people are not occupied in non-agricultural activities. The empowerment of the tribal women are increasing than the previous decades and that is one of main reasons that women literacy is also increasing and the livelihood is also becoming better and tribal women are becoming more aware about their rights and opportunities.

#### **Constitutional provisions for tribals:**

- 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 330 - Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for -Article 332 Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States 332,335 stipulates the claims that the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.
- 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.
- Extension to scheduled Areas Act 1996. Amendments of Constitution are extended to the Scheduled Areas through Panchayats.

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## CONCLUSION

There is no such important tool for developing a nation than empowerment of women. Empowerment of tribal women can change the structure of a society. There have lots of social movement by the tribals beginning in 1772 with Bihar and then spreading across Mizoram, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Island, and Andhra Pradesh. As a result of these movements they have gradually moved from marginalized communities into mainstream society. Women have participated strongly in those revolts.

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