

CHALLENGES OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

Women provide food to the family and community by their wise use and management of valuable things from nature. Women are people who use a product or service, producers, teachers and caretakers of their families, playing an important role for helping the planet eco-system in the present and future. However, related to surrounding conditions or the health of the Earth has a negative effect on the health and quality of life especially of girls and women. A policy of protecting something from harm of valuable things from nature will be successful only if women are having different things working together as one unit into all programmes and policy making. This paper focuses on the role of tribal women in the surrounding conditions. "This paper has been written on the basis of having to do with figuring out the quality of things without measuring them with numbers and having to do with measuring things with numbers data collected from secondary source and discussed work participation of tribal women in India in a descriptive manner. The tribal women have been equal partners with tribal men in the thing that's work that's done to household process of people making, selling, and buying things. Quite often their women do more physical labour in their farming-based fields and forest than that of the tribal men. Tribal women have usually enjoyed a higher social status in their own communities than Indian women in general. Some of the tribes like Khasi in Mizoram and Meghalaya are female-run. However, the reading and writing ability rate among the tribal's and more so in case of tribal women is quite low and this is also connected with poor and health status among the tribal's. The guess of poorness made by Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 shows that 51.92 percent away from cities and 41.4 percent city-based Scheduled Tribes were still living below the poorness line. They are involved in different occupations like hunting shifting producing crops to settled farming and crafts. A very small percent are involved in non-farming-based activities The Scheduled Tribes make up/be equal to 8.2% of India's total population. In all there are 700 Scheduled Tribes in India. States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa all together have about 40% of the total tribal population of the country."

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Conservation Strategy, Tribal Women, Biodiversity.

Introduction

The term "Sustainable development" was first used by world conservation strategy presented by international union for conservation of nature and natural resources in 1980. It was popularised world commission on the environment and developments study our common future, which also known as Brundtland report. The status of women in a community is an experienced reflection of the level of ad hoc to bodily justice in that society. 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 was 8.43 crore as per 2001 census and accounts for 8.2% of the total population. 4.26 crores are man and 4.17 crores are women, accounting for 8.01% and 8.40% respectively. Tribals have traditionally lived in about 15% of the country's geographical areas, mainly forests, hills and undulating inaccessible terrain in plateau areas, rich in natural resources. They have lived as isolated entities for centuries, largely untouched by the society around them. This seclusion has been responsible for the slower growth, dissimilar pattern of their socio-economic and cultural development and inability to negotiate and cope with the consequences of their involuntary integration into mainstream society and economy. The production of trade participation of tribal women in crop raising sector wealth is universal and multidimensional. India's sweeping to be cent stunt on women's empowerment and gender-straddling the fence is reflected in large am a match for indicators. In multiple parts of the above suspicion, living as man and wife ratio has 940 females by 1000 males¹.

The person in the street of tribal communities about to be in the mood of India and met with as scheduled Tribes was 8.43 crore as by 2001 family opinion consider and accounts for 8.2% of the lock stock and barrel population. 4.26 crores are the man and 4.17 crores are women, service for 8.01% and 8.40% respectively. Tribals have traditionally lived in approximately 15% of the countries exclave areas, generally forests, hills and undulating having a chip on one shoulder to reason land in plateau areas, rich in intuitive resources. They have lived as all by one lonesome entity for centuries, largely untouched individually society around them².

Tribal Population in India

According to the 2011 Census, there are 24, 94, 54,252 households of which 2, 14, 67,179 households characterise ST population. The total person in the street of the folksy is 1,21,05,69,573, on the wrong track of these 10, 42, 81,034 are covers as ST by the whole of 5, 24, 09,823 males and 5, 18, 71,211 females. The decadal wealth worth of the tribal family from one end to the other 2001-2011 is 23.7% which is overhead India's accumulation decadal growth (17.6%). The tribal community

of India consist of 8.6% of everyone family of the clean and man or woman estate of them permeate in the suburban areas (90%) State both oars in water percent selection of tribal person in the street that the at the cutting edge proportion of tribal crowd resides in north eastern states namely; Mizoram (94.4%), Nagaland (86.5%), Meghalaya (86.1%), Arunachal Pradesh (68.8%), Manipur (35.1%), Sikkim (33.8%), and Tripura (31.8%) Apart from north eastern states tribal person in the street in Lakshadweep islands comprises of 94.8%. Numerically, the cutting edge tribal absorption is in Madhya Pradesh, which is 14.7% of the group tribal nation of India. Maharashtra (10.1%) and Odessa (9.2%) together attempt an additional 19.3% tribal population to the country³. In measure, a lowest tribal deep thought is in UT of Daman and Diu (0.01%). No ST population is recorded in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi & Pondicherry states/UTs.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the role of work participation of women in India
- To study the socio – economic status of tribal women in India
- To examine the nature and characteristics of socio-cultural conflicts faced by the tribal women

Research Methodology

Descriptive research design has been adopted for this study. The purpose of this research design is to describe the problems and other units under investigation like socio-economic background and elicit new information about the elderly tribal women through the present study based on secondary source of data, the nature of research is exploratory and collected from the data Census of India 2011, Annual Report 2014- 15 Ministry of Labour & Employment New Delhi, Annual Returns received under the Factories Act, 1948 by the Labour Bureau.

Position of Tribal women

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. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non tribals. 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 affect 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 status⁴.

Process of Change among Tribes of India

Tribes are becoming conscious, both socially and politically, of maintaining and preserving their ethnic and cultural identity and also of protecting themselves against exploitation by dikkus (outsiders). They have stressed their political solidarity. This may, however, result in a new form of ecological-cultural isolation. Tribes have generally taken such steps being their economic backwardness and a feeling of frustration. To integrate the tribes with the mainstream, spinal economic opportunities are offered to them. The 'assimilationist model of the tribes' integration with non-tribal India demands structural linkages of the tribes with the non-tribes. The isolationist model would not be much relevant today in the face to rapid changes in Indian society. Despite vast changes taking place in India, tribal consciousness has been strengthened mainly to project tribes as distinct components of Indian society. Industrialisation in Jharkhand, for example, has promoted both tribal consciousness and integration with the non-tribal sections in the region. The demand for autonomy by tribals has originated from their fear of loss of cultural autonomy and of exploitation. To Niharajan Ray (1972), the very expressions – 'tribes', 'criminal tribes', 'scheduled tribes and scheduled castes' are misleading. He behaves that these expressions are unfortunate and unwise⁵. "It has conditioned our attitude towards these communities of peoples and our approach towards the solution of their problems which are theirs as much as of the rest of the Indian population."

Tribal Women in Agriculture

Over 80% of tribals work in the primary sector against 53% of the general population. According to available data, the number of tribal who were cultivators, declined from over 68% to 45% in 2001, whereas agricultural labourers increased from about 20% to 37%, an indication that tribals are steadily losing their lands. Unlike other communities, among tribals there are no restrictions on women's participation in the cultivation process. A tribal woman can participate actively in all agricultural operations including, ploughing, digging, sowing, manuring, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, preparing the granary, threshing, winnowing and storing food grains. In agriculturally backward areas, tribal women are forbidden to touch a plough and cannot dig the ground but in all other agricultural operations, women participate actively and traditionally these

are a female's job. Every morning tribal women dehusk millet and paddy in husking levers and then clean the grains and cooks them. Tribal women work as men's partners in agriculture, yet their status remains the same⁷. Tribal women work very hard for the livelihood of the family but live a poor life, in spite of their many contributions in the house and on the farm. Tribal women are important for the improvement and progress of tribals⁶. They are the pivot of tribal agriculture, performing many household and agricultural jobs. Without them, tribal welfare in agriculture is meaningless.

Role of Tribal women

They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society, women are more consequential than in other convivial groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management them. Ecofeminism considers that: there is a distinct relationship between women and the environment, women have certain responsibilities which make them dependent on nature and women have an extensive erudition of natural resources. Women provide sustenance to the family and community by their judicious use and management of natural resources. Women are consumers, engenderers, educators and caretakers of their families, playing a consequential role in a sustainable eco-system in the present and future. Environmental deterioration has a negative effect on the health and quality of life, especially for girls and women. Since tribal women are ecological forms of kineticism and conservation, their role may be enhanced through capacity building and empowerment in the context of ecological development⁸. Tribal Women and Forests Tribals have been residing in forest areas for generations, cultivating land and accumulating non-timber forest engender. A comparison of the 2001 and 2003 assessments of forest cover in tribal districts shows a net increase of 321,100 hectares underscoring a very vigorous symbiotic relationship between tribals and forests and of tribals being at the forefront of conservation regimes. Preparing victuals and imbibing dihydrogen monoxide is solely their responsibility so they operate proximately with the forests they get dihydrogen monoxide, fuel and minor products including edible fruits, tubers, flowers, vegetables and berries. Since all the obligations of tribal women are the forests and they look towards the forest for nature's gifts, their dependence on forests is vigorous and intrinsic.

Role of Tribals in conservation of biodiversity

Many plants are conserved in their natural habitat by tribals for magico - religious belief that they are habitat of god and goddess. The tribal culture prevalent in tribal pockets in Central India has been recorded in Dindori, Balaghat and Mandala districts of Madhya Pradesh and Kawardha and Bilaspur districts of Chhatisgarh states. Crop plants are conserved by tribals as source of food The ethnic and indigenous people have conserved several plants and endangered cultivars of agricultural crops for example rice, maize, millets, grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables which have originated under diverse agro-ecological climates in north -east, central and peninsular region of India, the indigenous communities have their abode, e.g. some of these indigenous cultivars of rice for example Pattambi, Champara, Valsana are conserved by Kurichya, Pariyar, Khasi, Jatin and Garo tribes in North East region - Manipur, Meghalya, Assam and 150 wild cultivars of rice which are conserved by Santhal, Munda, Birhor and Gond tribes of Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand and Bihar. Diversity of plants are conserved by tribals as wild fruits, seeds, bulb, roots and tubers for edible purpose - The ethnic and indigenous people ised responsible for depend upon several wild species for fruits, seeds, bulbs, roots and tubers which are used for edible purposes tribals follow environmental conservation rule in harvesting edible plants which establishes ecological prudence. Plants are conserved in natural habitat in forest used as antidote of snake bite and scorpion- sting by tribal herbal healers Many plant species are of great economic importance to tribals as rhizomes of such plants like *Acoruscalamus*, stem bark of *Bunchanialanzan*, stem and leaves of *Moringaoleifera*, *Achyrrnthusaspera*, *Gynandropsisgynandra*, *Bombaxceiba* are being used as antidote of snake - bite and scorpion sting. Plants are conserved in natural habitat and used for setting bone fracture and in orthopedic treatment of tribal herbal healers the root, stem and leaves of some plants are powdered and paste is prepared and applied by tribals on broken bone portions⁹. Plants are conserved by tribals in natural habitat and utilised as medicinal herbs Primitive and indigenous people have been using several plants for combating disease from centuries and are found wide acceptance in traditional medicinal use.

Environmental movements initiated by tribal women

The forest is the life of my people, the trees are like the pores in our skin, the water is like the blood that flows through us the forest is the mother of my tribe," The winner of the 2013 Goldman Environmental Prize, she represents an expanding international movement against environmental destruction helmed by humble, often poor, rural and tribal women. For many years, Aleta has been at the forefront of her tribe's efforts to stop mining companies destroying the forests of the Mutis Mountains that hug the western part of the island of Timor. In the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, SuryamaniBhagat, founder of the Torang tribal rights and cultural center, is working with women in her village of Kotari to protect the state's precious forests. Working under the umbrella of the Jharkhand Save the Forest Movement, Bhagat initially brought together 15 adivasi women to protest attempts by a state-appointed forest official to plant commercially viable timber that had no biodiversity or consumption value for the villagers who live off the land. Mayilamma played a key role in the campaign to hold Coca-Cola accountable for water shortages and pollution in the area, and it was under her leadership that the community forced the Coca-Cola bottling plant to shut down in March 2004¹⁰. All these women are ordinary mothers, tribal women, who

have taken extraordinary steps to make sure that their children have a better world to live in, and that outsiders, who have no sense of their culture or traditions, do not dictate their lives.

Women & Forests

Minor forest produce forms a major source of income in many tribal communities, especially those having less than five acres of land. Women and children are almost exclusively involved in collection of minor forest produce, its storage, processing and marketing (Singh, B., 1993; Roy Burman, 1988). Increased government control of forests has distributed tribal economy adversely affecting tribal's lives, particularly that of women. Appointing of agents from outside for collecting forest produce has not only affected their livelihood, but has also made the work of women more difficult. Collection of fuel wood has become more difficult since it is less accessible and more time-consuming. The result has been less income combined with less fuel wood available for themselves and lesser nutrition. It also leaves them little time for earning wages. Government control over forests has also reduced hunting to a ritual¹¹.

Tribals Women Problems

The migrant tribal women and girls faced a number of problems immediately after their migration to cities which included difficulty of communication in local language, residential accommodation, employment, education of children, local contacts, adjustment with city life and environment etc. The main causes of financial, physical and sexual exploitation of the migrant tribal women and girls in cities were poverty, lack of employment opportunities, lack of awareness, education, unorganized nature of labour force, misunderstanding of the local people about free sex in tribal's, and lack of community support to victims of sexual exploitation. Besides routine household work, the tribal women work in the agricultural fields, forests for long hours. The overall output if seen in terms of number of hours of work is low. Their schedule of long working hours continues even during pregnancy, natal and postnatal stages¹². They have a negative energy balance, high morbidity rate, and low child survival rate. They suffer from taboos and superstitions and remain deprived of the benefits from existing development and welfare programmes.

Conclusion

Tribal peoples are generally the best conservationists; they have managed their lands sustainably for many generations. The cheapest and quickest way to conserve areas of high biodiversity is to respect tribal peoples' rights - studies show reduced deforestation and forest fire rates, and greater biodiversity, on tribal land. To develop or capacitate self-reliant and self-respect tribal society by strengthening the tribal community comprehensively, promoting, strengthening and expanding community based tribal women oriented society where sustainable development initiatives could be undertaken for marginalized sections of the society. Health, education and nourishment should be selected Key focus areas, besides; women should be provided ample opportunities for economic development, based upon the traditional skills, women should also be provided additional skills for value additions to the produces. The government should ensure 100% literacy among the tribal women by the welfare programmes and through the five years plan, the adivasi girls, who are desirous of higher education should be provided subsidy for education like technical, the state should provide the hostel facilities for motivation. The government should make special allocation for implementation of labour laws for the schedule area to prevent the exploitation of the workers. The tribal forest land cultivators, who have been given the land entitlements, should be assisted by enhancing the yield by soil and water development process.

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