

Role of Women in Tribes and Community Development

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Abstract - *The tribal population of India as a whole has suffered from several types of oppression, including land and resource alienation. Although though tribal women live outside of the mainstream of national life, they are not immune to the effects of the socioeconomic shifts that are reshaping the country as a whole. The tribal woman's independence, influence over the traditional productive system, home, family, and maybe even life are all at risk as a result of this process of transformation. Very few women's voices have been captured to show how they really feel about the many economic roles they play. In a nutshell, it is accepted that women must be valued according to their specific circumstances. Women shoulder a disproportionate share of society's burdens and duties due to their dual roles as caretakers of homes and communities. If women embrace their competitive edge as they enter womanhood, efforts to achieve gender parity will not be in vain.*

Keywords - Tribal, Community, Equality, Women, Womanhood

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in equipping a country's population with the information and abilities necessary for its progress. In the current period, schooling has taken center stage. This facilitates the development of a knowledge society and, by extension, a more civilized society. Therefore, neither individuals nor nations can afford to ignore education any longer. It's a vital resource for making the knowledge-based economy and culture a reality. Quality education is crucial to the development of human resources. National economic development, technological innovation, and stability are all aided by education spending. This allows us to expand our technological capacities and nurture the talents of our human resources. All of the new Sustainable Development Goals, approved by the UN General Assembly on September 25-27, 2015, depend critically on investments in education. It was seen to be essential in the pursuit of ending poverty, increasing widespread affluence and economic progress, and establishing tolerant, peaceful communities. "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage life-long learning opportunities for everyone" is the wording of one of the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4), which relates to education. India's economy is expanding at a rate that puts it in the top tier of countries worldwide. Since the Eleventh Five Year Plan, the Government of India has prioritized skill development. India is second only to China in terms of total population, and it leads the world in terms of the proportion of its population that is of working age.

Women account for about half of the world's population. Women in India unfortunately have a low social position. The economic growth of a nation is directly correlated to how far it has progressed in empowering its female population. Because India is a mostly male country, women often encountered discrimination of many kinds. Women and men must work together to achieve the goals of the country's harmonious development, and this requires women's empowerment. Education and skill development play a pivotal role in empowering women. Women and other members of society's underdogs are particularly underrepresented in classrooms. There are gaps in schooling between the sexes in India.

Education is seen as a key tool for leveling economic playing fields and creating more welcoming communities. In addition, India is benefiting from a "demographic dividend" at the present moment. For maximum benefit, it must maximize its youthful people resources by investing in their education and professional advancement. Women's access to higher education is one issue, and there are many more. What's worse is that it's occurring while the Indian higher education system has shifted gears to make college access easier for a wider range of people. Inequity and difficulty of access plague higher education.

The world's wellbeing depends on the advancement of women, as Swami Vivekananda eloquently put it. No bird can take off on with one wing. Leaving women out of the development process is an unfair and insufficient step. Women make up around

48.46% of the population in India (2011 census), yet they only account for 34% of the workforce.

- **Empowerment**

Change from a vulnerable state to one of dominance is what we mean when we talk about empowerment. If you're feeling disempowered, realize that empowerment may help you get access to more information and tools. As a result of being empowered, women have more independence in their daily lives. Since women's life experiences tend to be different from men's, it stands to reason that women and men would make different decisions. Literacy, education, understanding of rights and duties, involvement in economic activities, improved health care, equitable access to productive resources, and a greater quality of life are all components of empowerment.

- **Skill Development**

There has been much discussion about India's demographic dividend even if the globe as a whole is becoming older. The youth population in India is disproportionately large. This demographic dividend might be used as a springboard to rapid economic growth and eventual global dominance. However, in order to make use of this youthful population, facilities for skill creation and training must be made available to them. Curriculum suggestions that focus on girls' empowerment are particularly welcome for this assignment. Developing a useful curriculum for female students requires first determining what skills they already possess. Some of the most critical issues relating to access, gender equality, and inclusion will need specialized training to solve. Gaining an education helps hone one's abilities. In the twenty first century, economic and social success depend largely on people's levels of education and other forms of human capital. The stability and longevity of the knowledge economy owe a great deal to the role education plays in fostering innovation and building human capital. More must be done to put women to work and make use of their talents in the workplace.

Skill Development Role in Women Empowerment

Despite the fact that women may make up a significant portion of India's employment, their share of the working population is shrinking. In addition, many women work in the unofficial economy. Seasonal work is notorious for its low pay and lack of benefits, including job stability. Thus, encouraging women to acquire the abilities necessary to secure and maintain gainful employment, a stable financial footing, and economic autonomy and support their families requires a deliberate and concerted effort to foster skill development among women. Women in rural areas are often stuck in low-paying, low-status employment with little opportunities for advancement due to a lack of access to productive resources, low levels of

education, and established societal norms about the appropriateness of women's labor. In many rural businesses, female employees are not offered training opportunities because of pervasive practices of precarious work and unpredictable contractual agreements. To reinforce their traditional roles and responsibilities, rural women's access to vocational education and training is frequently limited to a small number of female-dominated fields. Although such education broadens their employment prospects, it prevents them from benefiting from emerging industries like the information and communications technology sector (ICT). Therefore, in order to close the gap between women's potential and their real desire to pursue available alternatives, comprehensive skill training and strong awareness generating campaigns become a must.

Culture and Customs of the Santhals

Among India's indigenous peoples, the Santhals are among the biggest. As of the 1991 census, their percentage of the overall tribal population in the United States was 6.8 percent. They may be found in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya, all in eastern India. In addition to their native territory, you may find them in the neighboring nations of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the islands of Southeast Asia. Since most of them work in agriculture, they place a high value on land. Their means of subsistence include farming, gathering, hunting, and fishing. Animal husbandry is another important activity for them. They are among the oldest tribal tribes in India, yet they also happen to be one of the most backward castes there. They believe in superstitions and live a very different lifestyle from the rest of society, which may be seen as a sign of their cultural backwardness. The Santhals have incredible craftsmanship in crafting a wide variety of items, including music instruments, mats, baskets, cots, clay ovens, brooms, and fishing gear. Their settlements are mostly found in wooded locations, where they engage in hunting, fishing, and clearing ground for rice farming. Many people still live in rural areas today, while others have opted for urban employment in places like coal mines, steel mills, or commercial farms. There have been significant alterations to the social, economic, and cultural lives of the group as a result of the advent of modern technology and the spread of education. These shifts have an effect on people's social norms, their sense of identity at work, and their conception of their place in society. Males and females in traditional tribal society had distinct but

complementary responsibilities in upholding and perpetuating the culture's rules, customs, and values. Santhal society has been able to endure invasion, new governance, and technological advancements for millennia because to its ritualized dance celebrations and festivals, distinct, distinct language, and tribal autonomy within the Indian State.

- **Originating in the past**

Pre-Aryan peoples like the Santhals. They are among the most populous of India's many indigenous peoples. They are of the ProtoAustraloid family and fought valiantly against the British in India. They attacked Lord Cornwall's permanent colony in 1885. In the late 1850s, the heroic Santhal leader Sidhu had amassed a group of around 10,000 Santhals to form an independent government to oppose the British. In 1789, Baba Tilak Majhi was the first Santhal leader to arm his people and fight the British. They have kept their language alive the longest of any Indian group. Santhali is a language that is connected to Vietnamese and Khmer via the Austroasiatic branch of the Indo-European language family. They speak a language in the same family as the Munda, Ho, Mahli, Bhumij, and Kharia tongues. These families of languages are together known as Austroasiatic, a classification created by Peter W. Schmidt. They have created their own writing system that they call Ol Chiki. Unlike other Indic scripts like Devanagari, this one has no underlying symbolic qualities. There are just 30 letters and 5 primary diacritics used. Using the Gahla Tudag, it contains the standard set of vowels plus three more.

Before the eighteenth century, Santhals did not have a written language. The script was created by Pandit Raghunath Murmu in 1925, therefore it is relatively new. Hasdak', Murmu, Kisku, Hembrom, Marandi, Soren, Tudu, Baskey, Besra, Chore, Pauria, and Bedea are the names of twelve of the Santhal clans. Two more clans have been wiped off. They are forbidden to wed someone of the same clan, since doing so would constitute clan incest. They'd be shunned by their neighbors and the villagers alike. The members of the Santhal tribe remember the Norwegian missionary Reverend Paul Olaf Bodding fondly. He learned their language and immersed himself in their customs. He spent 44 years (1889-1933) in India, mostly at Dumka, Santhal Parganas, in what is now Jharkhand. In 1914, he finished his translation of the Bible into Santhal. Agriculture is the backbone of the Santhal economy. Once central to their way of life, collecting, hunting, and fishing are now secondary means of subsistence. A huge number of Santhals migrated to the tea-gardens, coal-mines,

and industries where they worked as laborers as a result of the rise in population, the loss of land, the need for money, money lenders, and land-lords. Some Santhals are now, as a result of their education, working in a wide range of contemporary occupations.

Education Contribution to Community Development

For any society to flourish, education must be a top priority. It is possible for a community to prosper and develop in many ways when its members are educated, including in the areas of economy and society. The term "community development" refers to any effort to improve a region's overall standard of living. Anything from expanding monetary possibilities to boosting social and recreational chances falls under this category. In many cases, this takes the combined efforts of citizens, the government, corporations, and other groups. A solid educational infrastructure is essential to every community's progress. There is a positive correlation between the level of education in a community and its ability to take advantage of economic opportunities and to effect change. To put it simply, education has the power to improve people's lives by fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and collaboration. The presence of a strong educational system may also be crucial in luring new companies and generating new employment opportunities. Businesses that are looking to relocate or expand generally choose areas with high-quality educational institutions because of the high demand for educated people in such areas. In the long run, education is essential to building strong and resilient communities. It aids in the development of necessary social and economic structures by equipping people with the information and abilities they need to succeed. Because of these factors, education funding should be a top concern for every progressive society.

Because it fosters a feeling of common identity and purpose, education is a vital resource for advancing a community's progress. Moreover, it may help individuals acquire the information and abilities they need to cooperate in order to solve shared challenges. Acquiring the kind of leadership abilities that can direct community improvement initiatives is another area where schooling may help. A community that invests in its people's education is better positioned to seize the chances it has. They are better equipped to go on with entrepreneurial endeavors, bolster local employment opportunities, and grow the local economy. The goal of education should be to produce useful members of society who actively participate in and strive to improve their local

community. Tolerance and acceptance of people of different backgrounds and opinions are more probable in a well-educated society. They're more likely to be receptive to new ideas and eager to collaborate to achieve their objectives. Understanding and cooperation may result when individuals of diverse origins learn about one other's cultures and customs.

Women's Roles in Tribal Society

Most of India's many ethnic groups adhere to patriarchal, matrilineal, and patrilocal social structures. The social position of women is lower than that of males in this group. However, within this social foundation, their standing varies from one group of people to another, based on their economic ethos and other related circumstances. In contrast to the hierarchical nature of caste society, tribal communities are sometimes described as more egalitarian. Families often socialize their children by assigning them gendered duties and responsibilities based on factors such as kinship, sexuality, occupation, marital status, and age. It also provides the overarching principles for performing these tasks via a set of underlying attitudes, requirements, metaphors, and myths. While males remain in positions of power in politics, society, and religion and are expected to provide financially for their families, women have more voice in the home, more social freedom, and many of their behaviors are accepted or even encouraged. Education, work, and family decision-making authority are the three most common measures of women's status. Women with advanced degrees have an advantage in most fields. To the tribal people as a whole, but especially to tribal women, who have historically held better social and economic position than upper caste women.

In traditional tribal civilization, women have prominent roles. As long as the resources belonged to the group as a whole, she was able to make decisions on their behalf. As the head of the household, she decided how the money would be spent, who would be married, and how the kids would be raised. The young couple dating with the intention of marriage contacted her first. One of the most economically poor and disenfranchised groups in India continues to be the Scheduled Tribe people. The number of Indians who identify as members of one of India's Scheduled Tribes is large despite their small percentage of the country's overall population. Female offspring, outside of the country's indigenous population, are often ignored and disregarded in Indian culture. Girls' health, education, and upbringing are neglected since they are seen as a drain on resources.

Even yet, matrilineal traditions are still practiced in several Indian tribal communities. For the most part, female children in tribal societies are given the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Each baby girl born into a tribal community is treated with the same reverence as any male kid because of the expectation that she will one day become a mother. In tribal societies, female offspring are highly valued. There is domestic and agricultural labor involved. The bridegroom traditionally pays the bride's parents a bride price upon their daughter's marriage. Like in other societies, almost half of the tribal population consists of women. As in every society, the standing of women is crucial to the success of the tribal group. Women in tribal societies are portrayed as having it better than their urban counterparts. Preferential mating, which includes child marriage, remarriage after a widow's death, and marriage within the same family, is held in great regard by the ladies of the land.

There is no stigma attached to having a daughter in a tribal community since women are valued for their contributions to the household's bottom line. Before and after marriage, tribal women have a great deal of independence. These stand in stark contrast to the typical caste-Hindu community. The indigenous woman may leave her husband's home with or without warning. Even though a married woman has the freedom to pick her life partner and to divorce her husband and marry another, tribal men are forbidden from violating her modesty. The women are therefore practically on same footing with the males, except the realm of rites. To a large extent, the economic responsibilities that tribal women perform determine their social standing. In the social and political sectors, tribal women in India play almost no part. Women in India's tribal communities make significant contributions to the economy by partaking in economic activities alongside their male counterparts. Tribal peoples have a strong faith in the natural world because they themselves are grounded in it. Their natural and uncomplicated manner of life allows them to avoid the artificial and mechanical trappings of the city. To this day, they still have little interest in contemporary issues like technological progress, gender inequality, or the termination of foetal development on the basis of discrimination based on gender. The male population in India often accepts and makes use of the government's generous welfare programs.

The economic and social position of Jharkhand's indigenous women

The people of India come from a wide variety of communities, castes, and even races. People in the same geographical area, speaking the same languages, sharing a similar culture, and having a similar social and political structure may be easily distinguished from one another. It's possible that it'll have multiple subsets. The Latin word "tribes," meaning "the impoverished" or "the masses," is the source of the English word "tribe." Native Indian tribal communities play an important role in Indian society. They are some of the most lagging behind in society. There are several nicknames for these folks. They were called "aborigins" by Risley, Sobert, Martin, and others. "Primitive tribes," as Hutton put them. Hill tribes is a phrase coined by Sir Baines. They were also referred to as "Jungle people," "Forest tribes," and "folk" in his other writings on them. India's President has the authority to designate certain populations as scheduled tribes in accordance with Articles 341 and 342. Scheduled tribes are defined as "those tribes or tribal communities or sections or groups within such tribes or tribal communities that are regarded under Article 342 to be scheduled tribes for the purpose of this Constitution" (Article 366, Section 25).

Status refers to a person's or a group's standing in a society. To evaluate the advancement of women in a culture, Robert Lowie (1920) proposes four indicators: First, how people are treated in practice; second, their legal standing; third, their ability to engage in society; fourth, the kind and scope of their employment. The equality of women is a good barometer of a society's commitment to social justice. "Conjunction of position a woman holds as a student, daughter, wife, mother, worker, of the authority and prestige associated to these roles, and the right and obligations she is expected to execute," as described by the United Nations (1975). Education, money, work, health, and fertility, as well as a woman's place in the home, the community, and society at large, are often used to characterize a woman's socioeconomic standing. Tribal women have an important role in their societies. Half of the people living in a given tribe are likely to be women, giving them a significant social role. They put in more than 14 hours a day between caring for their families and working the land. Their contribution is crucial to the household's income, agricultural productivity, and ecological stability. Women in traditional societies often assist their male counterparts in domestic and agricultural tasks. The family revolves around them and all they do, from socializing to running the household to engaging in cultural and religious pursuits. The advancement of a tribal society is pointless if it does not include women in all of these realms. Tribal women perform crucial roles in their communities and contribute heavily to the

family's income, yet their lives are nevertheless marked by extreme hardship. According to the Planning Commission's poverty estimate for 1993–1994, 54.91 percent of Scheduled Tribes in rural areas and 41.44 percent of Scheduled Tribes in urban areas were still living below the poverty line. Some indigenous communities participate in a wide range of activities, from hunting and fishing to nomadic farming and traditional handicrafts. According to the Dhebar Commission Report (1961), tribal women are not a burden on society; on the contrary, they are seen to have more autonomy and control over their social lives than women in non-tribal communities. When compared to women of other castes, indigenous women have greater independence in many areas of life.

Women in tribal societies often benefit from more lenient rules due to custom and tradition. The value of women's contributions extends well beyond the realm of economics and society to include a wide range of other fields. The women in the tribes sometimes put in longer hours than the males. According to Bhasin (2007), "in their world, the indigenous women have a freedom, and an expression." The tribal people have always contributed just as much to the family and the agricultural field as their tribal counterparts. More farm, housing, and forest work is done by tribal women than by tribal males. They help out around the home by preparing meals, cleaning up, gathering firewood and animal feed, and caring for the young and the elderly. They are able to find employment as agricultural laborers, construction workers, brick makers, etc., outside the home. When it comes to selling their produce, they have complete autonomy. They'd sell their own goods, such as veggies and candles, at the local farmers' market. Historically, tribal women have had more prestigious roles within their tribes than have Indian women at large. Matrilineal societies, like the Khasi culture of Mizoram and Meghalaya, have historically accorded women a more prominent role in society. Women and girls in tribal societies are valued for their contributions to the economy and are accorded the same respect as males. But from the perspective of economic progress, indigenous women still lack access to opportunities like education and a safe and secure living environment. Low levels of education among tribal people, particularly tribal women, are linked to substandard living conditions and health problems.

Social Status of Tribal Women

As a rule, women in tribal societies are given the last say when it comes to who they marry. Bride prices, rather than dowries, are a sign of the high social position of indigenous women. In terms of their financial security, women in tribal societies may stand on their own two feet. There is no stigma attached to having a daughter in a tribal community since women are valued for their contributions to the household's bottom line. They take part in every aspect of farming (excluding plowing) and every facet of indigenous cottage enterprises, tribal art, and the manufacturing of handicrafts. In the tribal culture, women had a great deal of autonomy before and after marriage. If the woman can prove that her husband has been harsh, impotent, incompatible, impoverished, unfaithful, or negligent, she will be granted a divorce. Divorce is legal and may be granted by the local village council (Village Panchayat). For extreme cases, wives might even file for divorce and move in with a new guy. The wives of the tribes may leave their homes with or without telling their husbands. Tribal males are forbidden from doing anything to offend the modesty of a married woman, despite the fact that she has complete freedom to pick her life partner and to dissolve the marriage connection and marry with another person. In all of these instances, man is subject to severe sanctions and punishments. The women are therefore practically on same footing with the males, except the realm of rites.

Tribal women's economic participation

High levels of female contribution to economic growth are being seen in tribal communities. In traditional tribal societies, men and women work together to care for their families and run their fields. Men in nomadic hunter-gatherer societies often conduct the hunting, while women tend to the gathering of food, fuel (in the form of roots and tubers), and other essentials. Women of the Birhor tribe are known to make rope as a secondary vocation. Women do everything from preparing meals to washing dishes to caring for children to running the family. Pastoral societies often assign males the exclusive responsibility of caring for the livestock. The majority of India's tribal population relies on farming for their livelihood. Harvesting, planting, threshing, and winnowing are all tasks often handled by women in tribal communities such as the Mundas, Oraons, Santhals, Hos, Kharias, Gonds, etc. Plowing, leveling, and keeping an eye on the crops are all tasks that fall on the shoulders of the men. For fear of social repercussions, women in certain tribal societies are forbidden from plowing and thatching roofs.

Women in these societies also raise livestock like chickens, goats, pigs, pigeons, ducks, etc., and use the money they earn from selling these animals to buy anything they want. In addition, she participates in the weekly local market (Hatia/Hat) where she sells the produce, fruits, and wood products. Besides farming and taking care of the home, women might make money by making and selling alcoholic beverages and rice beers (Handia). In patrilineal societies, women do not have the legal right to inherit or possess property and property is passed down the male line from father to son. The Khasi and Garo peoples of Meghalaya are matrilineal society, meaning that property is passed down via female descendants. A widow has the right to use her late husband's assets throughout her lifetime. In the event that no son is present, the daughter may use and enjoy the land. However, it will never be passed on to her offspring and will instead return to her father's family tree. After a divorce, women in certain cultures are awarded a small plot of property belonging to their father. This agreement will provide them with financial security throughout their lifetimes and return the land to the father's heirs when they pass away.

CONCLUSION

Traditional values, illiteracy, superstitions, dominant roles in decision making, social evils, and many other cultural factors keep tribal women behind, despite their central role in the management of natural, social, and economic resources and agricultural development, including crop production, livestock production, horticulture, and post-harvest operations. There has to be room in the strategic plan for the active participation of tribe members as they work to better their living circumstances via the thorough exploration of natural assets and alternative applications. Because of the complex social dynamics at play in tribal welfare and development, developing effective strategies to safeguard tribal members and their way of life requires reaching a consensus on the criteria by which tribal communities should progress and the values that should guide the society that emerges as a result of such initiatives. This also requires widespread agreement on issues like the roles that various social groupings should play and the fundamental freedoms that all tribe members should enjoy. So, raising their level of familiarity with advance practises and procedures is crucial. This would make it possible for them to enhance their standard of life. Status of women in rural and tribal communities; rural and tribal women's empowerment; women's responsibilities in many

fields; social intervention within the Indian framework; and suggestions are among the primary topics covered in this research study.

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