

SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Women constitute about half of the world population and play a crucial role in socio-economic context of the society. Therefore, development of the nation in true sense can hardly be achieved without proper development and empowerment of the women population. Indian civilization is male dominated and the status of women is secondary. The rural poor especially the tribal women are too unorganized and powerless to be individually able to better their lots in societies. The consultative process recognized that till recently, women under the Indian rural set up were not able to actively participate in decision making and experience in social, economic and political life due to historical and socio-cultural reasons. The women of rural India are victimized right from their birth to death. The need of the hour is mobilization of women to fight for their equal share in all spheres. The question of women's development in terms of raising their social and economic status received low priority in government programmes till the mid-seventies. Particular efforts may have to be made to include rural and tribal women in this process; and to build support systems or resources to enable them to continue their equal participation. This paper reviews the emerging perspectives of the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women and changing paradigms of development. It also examines the level of autonomy and decision making power of tribal women based on my field observations and experiences.

KEY WORDS: Women, tribal, development programmes, decision-making power.