



Social Development and Empowerment of St Women in Two Districts of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

“Everyone is a star and deserve the right to twinkle”

Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur are one of the most undeveloped districts in West Bengal state, where so many people belong to the Scheduled Tribes community. Their culture, life-style, education, economical background, and behaviour are quite different from other people. So they are labelled as 'backward people'. The social status of the women of ST community is very poor and they are far behind in education and empowerment. The purpose of this paper is to strike out the present situation of ST women -how far they are lagged behind and how far they developed in this concern. This study is based on visiting various areas of the districts of Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur where 274 ST women are interviewed with the help of tool. After consultation with three experts from reputed universities standardised the tool for data collection by the investigators. From this field work it has been known that despite of low literacy, the ST women are not so developed both in social and economical empowerment. Therefore, proper education is the only way to uplift their social and economical empowerment.

● **Keywords:** Social Development, Empowerment, ST Women, Birbhum, West Bengal.

I. INTRODUCTION :

Huge number of people lives in our society and they belong to different castes, religions, creeds, categories etc. If the researchers go back to our pre-independence period, they find that the position of

women was very low. The women there were mostly deprived of education and empowerment. But it is the demand of a nation that every child should be provided the equal opportunity of education. The population of the whole world consists of more than 50% women which should have been given the people's place in the field of education as well as empowerment in the society. But this purpose has been neglected due to cultural benefits. Generally, women are only engaged to undertake household activities and to accomplish the procreation process.

Now if the investigators look at modern society, see that the position of women has slightly changed. Today the women are engaged in every aspect of education and empowerment, even the women belonging to the ST category have achieved a place in the same field. This study is to show the actual position of women ST category in Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur districts in the field of education and empowerment. The researchers chose these topic and area because most of the people of those districts are belongs to ST category in nature.

History has proved that “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a women, you educate a nation”. The researcher's main issue is to find out how the society will be benefited through education and empowerment of ST women with special reference to the district of Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur. Empowerment through education is the key to delivering a more equitable society. Now if the two words ‘Education’ and ‘Empowerment’ are juxtaposed, we find that education is the key for women empowerment. If we bring the women of ST categories, in the field of education, they will be given the empower to establish their proper position in the society. Still now there are so many hindrances regarding



customs, superstitions, wrong beliefs which create a lot of hindrances to come over the social barriers. Especially the women of ST community have to face many obstacles for the lack of proper education and for their bondage to these evil circumstances. The purpose of this study of mine is to abolish these social obstacles so that the women of said communities can gain proper education and empowerment in the society. In the district of Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur, there are a huge number of ST women who have an important role to play for the benefit and development of society. Through this study the researchers want to uplift their social status through sufficient education and empowerment.

DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS / VARIABLES:

1. **Social Development:** It means investing in people. It requires the removal of barriers so that all citizens can journey towards their dreams with confidence.
2. **Empowerment:** According to the Oxford Dictionary 'Empowerment' means to provide power.
3. **ST Women:** It means Scheduled Tribe female gender.
4. **Birbhum:** It is the northernmost district of Burdwan Division - one of the five administrative divisions of West Bengal.
5. **West Bengal:** It is a state in eastern India, between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal.

THE PROBLEM:

The Problem of the present study is: "SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF ST WOMEN IN TWO DISTRICTS OF WEST BENGAL"

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

To make out the present status of education and empowerment of ST women in Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur, West Bengal.

- ❖ To examine the achievement of ST women in the educational field.
- ❖ To make an idea of developing the present condition of ST women in connection with Education and Empowerment.

METHODOLOGY:

- **Research Design:** In order to get authentic data from the research field Qualitative Types of approaches are made. Besides that, more extra data have been collected from various sources like books, magazines, journals, articles, and

conferences. A cross sectional descriptive research design has been applied by the following participant for observation. A minute field work has been done with in depth interview techniques to collect primary data. Structural questionnaires have been used as a tool of data collection.

- **Variable:** Achievement of ST women in the educational field.
- **Population:** The women belonging to ST are the research universe in this study, the population is only one tribe that is "Santali" in Birbhum and DakshinDinajpur district of West Bengal.
- **Sample area:** The present study area contains PalashDanga village which is under Ahmadpur Gram Panchayat of Birbhum district and Paikpara village which is under Batun Gram Panchayat of DakshinDinajpur district in West Bengal.
- **Sample size:** The total sample size is 112 households besides, total male and female population of these two tribal villages are 165 and 274.
- **Sampling Technique:** Non probability sampling like purposive and convenience sampling techniques were utilized here as well.
- **Tool: Questionnaire** is developed by the researchers and standardized after consultation with three experts of different esteemed universities. The scale consists of 30 items in the form of statements. It is a five-point scale of Likert Type. The data are collected through the use of the tool and interview schedule. The developed questionnaires are tried out on ST male and female.
- **Scoring Procedure:** The tool is Likert Type Five-Point alternative answers. The respondent is provided with five alternatives to give his / her responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The minimum and maximum possible score range is 30 to 150. The summated score of all the thirty items provide the total attitude of towards social position. The high score indicates a more favourable attitude and a low score less favourable attitude.
- **Validity:** The validity of the questionnaire was estimated by the three experts and content validity has been maintained properly in the study.
- **Reliability:** The investigator has established the reliability of the scale by Split-Half Method using Spearman Brown Prophecy formula and is found to be 0.79.
- **Statistical Techniques:** The data collected through questionnaires was analysed by using descriptive statistical procedure. The interview is analysed qualitatively. Drawing on a



qualitative ethnographic method, The researchers analysed descriptive information and used categorical aggregation to find emerging themes and develop interpretations.

- **Method of Analysis of Collected Data**
:Analysed by using simple percentages as well as qualitatively to interpret the data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA:

In order to collect the following data, hardworking field work has been done in two villages of Ahmadpur Gram Panchayat of Birbhum District and Batun Gram Panchayat of DakshinDinajpur District, West Bengal. The names of the villages are Palashdanga and Paikpara.

The total collected data by this field works are given below in a table –

Table No :- 1

Distribution of Households of the two ST villages Ahmadpur Gram Panchayat of Birbhum District and Batun Gram Panchayat of DakshinDinajpur District, W.B.

| Name of Village | Number of Households | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Palashdanga | 52 | 46.42 |
| Paikpara | 60 | 53.57 |
| Total | 112 | 99.99 |

The first table indicates the distribution of samples on the Households basis of two ST villages Palashdanga and Paikpara. In Palashdanga there are a total 52 ST families and the percentage is 46.42. In Paikpara ST families 60 and the total 53.67%.

Table No:- 2

Distribution of population of two ST villages as per sex, Ahmadpur Gram Panchayat of Birbhum District and Batun Gram Panchayat of DakshinDinajpur District, W.B.

| Name of Village | Male | % | Female | % | Total | % |
|-----------------|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Palashdanga | 115 | 21.33 | 114 | 21.15 | 229 | 42.48 |
| Paikpara | 150 | 27.83 | 160 | 29.68 | 310 | 57.51 |
| Total | 265 | 49.16 | 274 | 50.83 | 539 | 99.99 |

As per sex wise distribution of population it is found that most of the ST Male and Female habited in Paikpara village (57.51%) but (29.68 %) 160 ST female are lived in with her family and in Palashdanga 229 ST community people are observed (42.48%), there 114 ST Female are interviewed.

Table No:- 3

Educational status of the ST of two villages Ahmadpur Gram Panchayat of Birbhum District and Batun Gram Panchayat of DakshinDinajpur District, W.B.

| Class Standards | Male | % | Female | % | Total | % |
|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| Illiterate | 64 | 11.87 | 101 | 18.74 | 165 | 30.61 |
| Pre-Literate | 39 | 07.23 | 48 | 08.09 | 87 | 16.14 |
| I-VIII | 80 | 14.84 | 59 | 10.95 | 139 | 25.79 |
| IX- X | 74 | 13.73 | 52 | 09.65 | 126 | 23.37 |
| XI-XII | 03 | 0.56 | 04 | 0.74 | 07 | 01.3 |
| UG | 04 | 0.74 | 10 | 1.85 | 14 | 2.59 |
| P.G | 01 | 0.19 | 00 | 00 | 1 | 0.19 |
| Total | 265 | 49.16 | 274 | 50.83 | 539 | 99.99 |
| Literacy Rate | 37.29% | | 32.09% | | 69.38% | |



According to the above research it can be said that the only key to developing the status of ST women. Education is the only means which will make women capable of taking decisions in social, Economical and political matters . Education is the only way to improve culturallife. The upliftment of their social status and the empowerment of womenare also needed.

II. CONCLUSION:

This paper concludes that the women of Scheduled Tribes badly needed adequate education and empowerment .If these women get proper education, they will be empowered in both social,educational and economical fields .It can be hoped that these women of backward culture will get an equalopportunity and position in social and economical ground with other peoplefor betterment of their future generation.

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