



Development and tribal women: A perspective

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Abstract

This research paper is about dynamics between 'development and women'. This would help to bridge the gap in terms of gender parity as well as incorporate developmental aspects, in the era of globalization. This research work would penetrate into the process of development challenges. It is also important to be cautious while defining woman. It cannot be homogenized into one category and therefore it requires special treatment for various groups in the society. Thus it is an attempt to incorporate both in the due process of development.

Keywords: Development, tribal, women, globalization, empowerment

Introduction

The purpose of attempting this research work of locating gender in the process of development and to have a deeper understanding of the implication on tribal women, precisely. This research would seek to analyse the importance of addressing the gender perspective separately, in the context of development process. Also, to bridge the gap regarding gender parity as well as encouraging sustainable development approach to mitigate the losses due to displacement brought about by development projects and emancipation of tribal women.

The research work has tried to incorporate many perspectives of tribal women especially who resides in the conjuncture of the city and rural setup. The conditions, opportunities, social and political atmosphere is different and so is the status of women. This is an attempt to investigate into the development study through gender role. Particularly tribal women and the consequences of being displaced, poorly compensated and promises ignored. There have been various studies in women or in tribal but a special reference to this subject in this peculiar context brings out clear understanding to this. The betterment of people must be above the material growth to have a standard notion of development. It is so because no life is threatened in the disguise of development.

About Development

The development concept is a contested one. It can be seen through the lenses of economic and materialistic aspect or it can be seen through socio-cultural aspect and even ecological aspect. The growth of the nation is seen in terms of its economic growth generally, but it does not suffice the criteria of considering development, alone. The people of the nation in multiple aspect like their socio-economic condition, health, sanitation, education, women safety, and empowerment, providing equal space for participation culturally, socially and politically need to be taken into consideration to recognize the development of the nation. It is also seen that the development is directly related to infrastructure and mega development projects like construction of roads and railways, mega hydroelectric power plants and so on.

The problem arises when these development projects and gigantic infrastructure are installed in the fertile land or forest area upon which livelihood of some population depends. The large tracts are cleared off for this purpose, leading to deforestation and making a fertile agricultural land into a waste land. People whose primary occupation is based on forest and land faces the worst consequences. The development required for such people go in vain, as they never receive the benefits out of it. On the other hand, they are more likely to become vulnerable in social and economic aspects.

On the other hand, they are more likely to become vulnerable in social and economic aspects. Such development projects encourage the process of social exclusion of particular section of the society. It is both harmful for the people as well as for the environment. The development concept through materialistic and infrastructure aspect becomes critically important as it call for sustainable development model.

The development model seeks to establish certain infrastructure which requires capital land and labour. This sometimes leads to overexploitation of not just minerals and natural resources but also human resources. The price of the development projects is borne by natural environment as well as individuals and social structure of the family. The main concern of this article is to analyse the position of women and especially tribal women in this context. The lands that are used in the installation of the projects are generally belonged to the tribal communities in the rural areas.

These topics take on much more importance when they are considered in relation to the tribal people specifically. The subject of how to divide the costs and benefits of a certain development endeavour was one of the first discussions in the development literature. The idea behind the initial wave of development initiatives was that the rest of the population would profit from those that were expressly targeted. The fact that wealthier demographic groups appeared to gain more than others led to harsh criticism of this strategy. In development thought, the objective of benefit parity across society took on significance, which gave rise to strategies that catered to the needs of the most vulnerable. One of the most recent manifestations of this concern is the interest of

many donors today with ending poverty and providing development projects to the poorest of the poor.

The connection between other development objectives and economic growth is the subject of a second discussion. The preservation of fundamental human rights, social and human growth, power distribution in politics, and environmental sustainability are only a few of these additional objectives. As with the concept of development implied in guidelines like the World Bank's, economic growth has been the key priority in the prevailing resettlement schemes. Human and social development is one of the other development goals that has been incorporated into the models.

About Tribal Women

Tribal women are intrinsic part of the society. As part of tribe they have undergone various levels of socio-cultural development. They have primitive way of living and mostly rely on traditional and cultural ethos. They are one of the most exploited sections of the women community. Life of tribal women is hard. They wake up at dawn for nature's call and have fetch water from ponds and lakes. Mostly household work is done manually. They have a sense of insecurity regarding this in situ and from poisonous reptiles in the fields. This has never let them feel equal or have a sense of empowerment in the community itself. They lack education and awareness and live compact in the village with close association. They are mostly engaged in manual labour, agricultural activities, household. They reside in remote, rural, and semi urban places of the state.

However, on the other hand there are few tribal women who have been imparted education and have migrated to semi urban and urban space seem to have adapted to their urban surroundings. They are aware of their rights and benefits of development. Thus, making them progressive in thoughts and actions. They are making presence in decision making, education, health, and entrepreneurship. The awareness about certain opportunities regarding tribal women have given them support and strength in the society to upgrade themselves as well as their tribal community. The comparison must be done between tribal women on the basis of spatial setup. The needs and demands of the tribal women are different in respect of other geographical set up. Gender roles must also be taken into consideration while examining the idea of development. This paper aims to comprehend the advancement of tribal women. Particularly the economically lower-class women who want empowerment in order to truly realize the concept of development. Tribal women have been observed on the outskirts of the development paradigm, and occasionally they are evicted from their native habitat. Though there have been many intricate discussions about women's emancipation and empowerment, have we truly only reached the tip of the iceberg? Numerous plans and initiatives have been developed to improve their social, health, and educational standing; yet, we witness erroneous and inadequate execution of these initiatives. False optimism and adoration about their social independence have resulted from this. While some women are landing on the moon and succeeding in a variety of disciplines, others who have lived close to the social system are being left out and stigmatized. The dual notions of "empowerment" and "emancipation" of women, as well as the concept of development, must be grasped in order to close the gap between the two. I have attempted to express my viewpoint

on "the development and tribal women" in the circumstances mentioned above.

True development is undoubtedly beneficial to many people. But development changes the status quo and such change usually entails social disruptions and undesirable consequences for some population segments. The traumatic implications are born by the tribal population in general. The family or community as a whole might get affected in the process of expanding development project, but the implication on women is different. Ample studies have been done in the broader theme of 'development induced displacement', but the gender dimension is negligibly touched upon or sometimes overlooked in the process.

Locating tribal women in the process of development means also in accessing the benefit sharing of the development. The tragedy that comes along with the development projects is shared by the entire family members, but the implications on women is different. Though the tribal society has been much progressive in terms of gender, still the experiences in the process of expanding development project, displacing them and rehabilitation is different, being a woman. There are government policies safeguarding the interests and needs of the tribal women, but it hardly reaches to them avoiding intricacy in the process of implementation. The tribal women lack access to health care, nutrition, education than men do in the community. The mortality rate of women is higher compared to its male counterpart. To address this issue on a global scale a term has been coined as 'missing women' that refers to a phenomenon where females have lost lives due to lack of access to nutrition and health.

Conclusion

Constitution of India has given equal status to both men and women. However, by all means we fail to uphold the essence of it in the society. The inequality between men and women across caste, race and tribe is prominent in the society. The freedom accompanied by development becomes selective on the basis of gender role, especially. The very ethos of the concept is lost in the manifestation and implementation. The historical evidences cited against certain marginalized section of the society such as tribal become more vulnerable. More so women have been found always in the vicinity of any development process. The human resource of women are dominated by the patriarchal male counterparts. Therefore, the freedom that comes along the development are not received by women of the community.

The real freedom would not just mean narrow concept of economic development rather broader idea including non-economic and environmental factors. People would be in a position to freely participate in political and social terms. This would be called as real freedom, a real development of nation. Development for people, of people and by the people. The concern of this topic stands essential in the era of globalization, urbanization, modernization, where sometimes humanitarian and ecological aspects are overlooked. The need of this hour is to ensure marginalized sections of the society their presence, protection, and preservation in the changing world. Women being the most exploited of all needed to be taken cautious of while formulating any policies. However, women cannot be studied as a homogeneous entity. The tribal women's history, culture, lifestyle, socio-political and economic status compose their identity. Thus having different sets of

aspirations and goals for them while implementing development projects.

Locating tribal women in this scenario is justified through World Bank's several studies and research of independent organizations and NGO's that women were perfect agent of development of a society as they have good social and community network. They are also supposed to be a carrier of indigenous wisdom intra generation and inter generation. The traditional lifestyle of women brings family and community together such as cattle rearing, fetching water from the wells, rivers, or ponds, collecting herbs and fuel wood from the forest. This is the reason when a tribal community is displaced from their place the immediate trauma is born by the women in the family and the entire family suffers thereby. Thus, a different and special attention is required in this gender perspective throughout the process of development.

Therefore, the conclusion drawn from my perspective on 'development and tribal women' is that a microstudy of tribal women is needed according to their spatial set up. Categorising "women" into different sections with respect to culture, tradition, history, economy political and lingual aspects is important. Also recognizing the importance of 'developmental aspects' which would empower and emancipate tribal women upholding their cultural and lingual ethos must be incorporated. The ethos of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' prescribed in the preamble of Indian Constitution must be manifested in the social realm.

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