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WOMEN TRIBES IN TRANSITION AMID ALIEN ENVIRONMENT IN URBAN CITY

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Abstract

This article analyses existing status of tribal women in the fields of livelihoods trend and occupational pattern, implication of social mobility, indigenous cultural practices and working conditions in unorganized sector. It tries to assess women security and sustainable dignified livelihood opportunities in the urban city of the migrated tribal women. Involvement and contribution of women worker in the informal economy have been analyzed in terms of efficacy, actual availability of wages and work site facilities and actual outlays as well. However; tribal women migration highlights the policies, rules and regulation for the tribal women relating to their security and dignity of life. Hence suggested recommendation and study findings may helpful both for government and other associated agencies those are actively involved in social development sector for better strategic programme implementation and broad understandings of women issues at large scale.

The study carries out an empirical research methodology through structured questionnaire, key informant interviews, Focus Group Discussion in the tribal community, field observation and views of social activists has also been considered to add socio values.

However; this article enhances our understanding of migrated tribal women status in the lowest economic rung of the society and finds that, quicker results could be achieved in terms of improvement, if such lowest rung of women workers are cared for by Govt. policies and implementation.

1. Understandings of Tribal Situation:

The Scheduled Tribes (STs) are basically indigenous groups that possess their own idiosyncratic culture than the other human groups. These people stay in geographically remote and isolated areas and are also plagued by low levels of socio-economic conditions. Such conditions often pose as barriers for the tribal communities to intermingle with the mainstream society and they are, hence, untouched by any general development initiative by the government. According to the 2011 Census, the population of STs is 104,281,034 constituting 8.6% of the total population of the country. The proportion of ST male to total male population of India is 8.4% while for ST females it is 8.8%. According to 2001 census, 91.7% of STs reside in rural areas and only 8.3% live in urban areas. However, figures obtained from 2011 census indicate migration trend among the STs. According to 2011 census, the proportion of STs to the total STs has declined to 90% whereas their proportion in the urban areas has escalated to 10%. The proportion of ST males and females in rural areas to the total respective rural ST male and female population is 89.9% and 90% respectively. Similarly, in urban areas, the proportion of ST male and female to the total urban population is 10.1% and 10% respectively.

In the state of Odisha, as per 2011 census the tribal population gives the following picture. The total rural ST population to total rural population of the state is 93.8%, rural male STs to total male STs is 93.7% and rural female STs to total rural female STs is 93.9%. Similarly, the total urban ST population to total urban population of the state is 6.2%, urban male STs to total male STs is 6.3% and urban female STs to total urban female STs is 6.1%. The Scheduled Tribe population in the state is overwhelmingly rural, with 94.5 per cent residing in villages. District wise distribution, according to 2001 Census, of ST population shows that Malkangiri district has the highest proportion of STs (57.4 per cent) followed by Mayurbhanj (56.6 per cent), Rayagada (55.8 per cent) and Nabarangapur (55 per cent). Puri district has the lowest by proportion of STs (0.3 per cent). However, according to 2011 census data, Maturbhanj has overtaken Malkangiri in the highest ST population with 58.7%, followed by Malkangiri (57.8%), Rayagada (56%) and Nabarangapur (55.8%).

As per the Ministry of Rural Development large scale tribal land continues to be alienated in the States of Andhra Pradesh (2.79 lakh acres), Madhya Pradesh (1.58 lakhs acres), Karnataka (1.3 lakh acre), and Gujarat (1.16 lakh acres) during the beginning of the Tenth Plan and the settlement cases are not being disposed of easily. About 20.50 lakh persons inhabiting in forest areas most of whom are tribals inhabiting for generations together have been deprived of their land and traditional rights.

	<p>Due to the recent enactment of the “The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006” the forest dwelling tribals have claimed forest land and the state governments could be able to give lands to only about 1.50 lakh persons. The migration to towns and cities often negatively influenced the tribal culture and identity. In addition to dam construction and mining there are problems with access to forest resources where tribals neither have control nor have any kind of participation in forests, which had been their abode from time immemorial and had also been their primary source of livelihood.</p>
<p>2. Livelihood Trend and Occupational Patterns:</p>	<p>Tribal economy is characterized as subsistence oriented. The subsistence economy is based mainly on collecting, hunting and fishing (e.g., the Birhor, Hill Kharia), or a combination of hunting and collecting with shifting cultivation (e.g., the Juang,, Hill Bhuyan, Lanjia Saora, Kondh etc.) Even the so-called plough using agricultural tribes do often, wherever scope is available, supplement their economy with hunting and collecting. Subsistence economy is characterized by simple technology, simple division of labour, small-scale units of production and no investment of capital. The social unit of production, distribution and consumption is limited to the family and lineage. Subsistence economy is imposed by circumstances which are beyond the control of human beings, poverty of the physical environment, ignorance of efficient technique of exploiting natural resources and lack of capital for investment. It also implies existence of barter and lack of trade.</p>
<p>3. Migration Status of Tribal Women in Odessa:</p>	<p>In Odessa, the tribal society is mostly and comparatively egalitarian and tribal women have been equivalent partners with tribal men in involvement of household economy. Even in certain cases, the tribal women carry out physical labour in their agricultural fields and forest than their male counterparts. Tribal women have usually enjoyed a higher social status in their own communities than Indian women in general. Considering gender and migration jointly, that would provide key insights into numerous questions revolving around the altering surroundings of the tribal women who find it difficult to adjust and accommodate. Questions pertaining to the issue might figure out – what are the changes that crop up in the gender roles? What employment opportunities are available and what jobs do the tribal women wish to take up? What are the exact needs or vulnerabilities that tribal women confront while adjusting with new surroundings and non-tribal communities? Migration of the tribal women might strengthen the gender stereotypical roles. The gender division of labour culminates in the underutilization of tribal women’s skill and consequently may push them to the ugly clutches of flesh trade.</p>

However, the socio-economic profile of tribals especially the tribal women of the state is quite low compared to tribal men and general population (also associated with poor nutritional and health status among the tribals. As indicated earlier, the tribals are engaged in various occupations like hunting, fishing, gathering of forest products, shifting cultivation to settled agriculture, rural crafts and artisans. A very small proportion of tribal communities are engaged in non-agricultural activities as mendicants, bards, pastoralists leading a semi-nomadic to nomadic life. Apart from the day to day routine household work, the tribal women work in the agricultural fields and also in forests for longer spans of time. On the whole, the output seen in terms of number of hours of work is low. Their schedule of long working hours continues even during pregnancy, natal and postnatal stages. 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. Most of the natural resources including minerals are located in tribal areas. The tribal population is the most disadvantaged social group in Odessa. A clear manifestation of this is the distinctly higher incidence of poverty among the tribal population as compared to the general population or to even SC population. Tribals are being alienated from their land and forest due to the ongoing de-forestation, hydro-electric power generation, industrial growth and mining activities. The natural resources are being exploited in a way, which leads to a process of gradual displacement and denying the basic right of livelihood to the Adivasis. Massive investment in construction of dams, power plants, industrialization and mining create wealth to the nation and employment opportunities to various people but all these are hardly of any benefit to the tribals rather they lead to their social and cultural deprivation, land alienation, destruction of environment and displacements, which is often without any rehabilitation.

Historically disadvantaged communities such as the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) are heavily represented in migration. Before independence the out-migration of tribals to the urban and industrial cities was very meager. This was due to the constraints of physical environment. The limited needs of the tribals also did not motivate them to come to cities. After independence there has been a considerable shift in the scenario. The transformation is an offshoot of the implementation of Five-Year Plans and Annual Plans which resulted in tribal development. The Directive Principles of the State Policy in our constitution has been the fountain head of special programmes in the field of social, political and economic development of the tribals aiming at integrating them at the various levels of rural and urban communities. Secondly, the safeguards provided by the constitution have made them capable of availing great opportunities of education, entrepreneurship and also jobs in organized sector including Government service.

4. Social Mobility and Its Impact:

A large number of women and girls from tribal areas migrate to cities and towns all over India. Most of these women and girls are illiterate and unskilled. They work in inhuman conditions in cities as their living standard is extremely poor. A great number of these migrants are being exploited by middlemen, contractors, construction companies and other types of employers. Many of these women and girls work as house maids where their working hours extend up to 18 hours per day. A large number of tribal women and girls become victims of sexual and financial exploitation. Their children rarely get an opportunity to go to school and learn a productive skill. Gradually many women and girls lose contact with their kith and kin back home and become alienated from their culture.

In tribal areas land is a symbol of the organization of the community. When a transfer takes place beyond the threshold point, the community looks upon the process as alienation. It is thus obvious, that transfer of land is not merely a question of exploitation of innocent tribals by cunning people, there are more complex factors involved in it. One of the important problems which arise in some areas, after enthusiastic response to the programme of education, is the psychological resistance amongst the tribals. For some time, the educated youths were in a position to avail new employment opportunity in the surrounding area. But in those areas the minimum level of education has raised, resulting in making it increasingly difficult. They find themselves blocked by the more advanced groups, who are more articulate and educationally better off. They psychologically, detach themselves from their local surrounding but when they fail to get a foothold in the modern sector, they get disappointed and develop frustration. The gulf between the life in the tribal home and the life in a residential hostel particularly in urban areas is an important contributing factor for non-adjustment.

Another important fact is that the tribal has no social linkages with the urban areas. These socio-psychological problems can be considered inevitable but concomitant of the process of change. Hence, these need to be accepted as a possible socio-psychological impediment which would arise in the process of change and which should be taken care of as a part of educational programme itself. When land alienation takes place, migration of tribal is inevitable.

Health, education and employment protection services are hard to obtain in the destination areas particularly if the migration is illegal and informal. Despite the rising number of female migrants, women are not given equal importance as compared to men in migration, since they are still not accepted as equal actors worthy of being accounted for.

Thus while viewing women migrants as dependents, we may often ignore their individual economic contributions, and an analysis based solely on official figures would give an inadequate account of the actual migration flow pertaining to women. The decisions of women to migrate are informed by the twin forces of opportunities and constraints and are taken primarily by the family, and when taken independently, familial and cultural and societal considerations have a greater influence.

The underdeveloped agricultural economy of the state which makes its population unemployed in lean season creates a deficit household economy, which gets further accentuated due to persistent natural disasters such as droughts and reduction of forest resources in tribal areas. Along with this, globalization has resulted in reduced market facilities and lack of employment opportunities for people. This results in frequent migration of more and more ST periodically to urban areas or to other states in search of work. They migrate with family members, relatives and friends. Earlier only the male members used to migrate but now-a-days the whole family migrates in search of employment. Migration influences gender relations, either entrenching inequalities and traditional roles or challenging and changing Gender influences- who migrates and why and how the decision is made-how migration impacts on migrants themselves, on destination and on sending areas. Migration leading to trafficking of women and children is an issue of the state, which requires urgent and concert responses.

A comprehensive approach is essential to address the political, social, economic, legal and institutional dimensions of trafficking. The process of migration has a differential impact on women- whether they are left behind in the village in case their husbands migrate or in case they too migrate along with the males. In case of the former, the female-headed households are faced with the multiple tasks of not only running the household but also looking after the family, children and the aged. Exploitation of the women by the money lenders and other powerful and dominant persons lead to a situation where the women are most vulnerable. In case of the situation where the women too migrate along with their husbands, the new area of habitation is an alien one with no established social nets.

The women are faced with the problem of child care, hostile host community, difficult working environment, lack of benefits etc. In many cases women migrate several times to multiple destinations, leaving them with no social network hence security.. Survival migration which is seasonal in nature and occurs under distress conditions are the unique characteristics of migration in Orissa. This type of survival migration in Orissa is found mostly in Adivasi areas.

<p>Social Mobility and Its Impact:</p>	<p>Some empirical studies have identified that, women migrants are on the rise from Orissa. Though illiterates, they have developed an urge to be economically independent. Thus women are no longer just associational migrants (along with their husbands and family) but independent migrants.</p> <p>However the labour contractor and the employer at the site of migration are the key persons who are often seen to exploit women in some specific ways such as trafficking. Unmarried women migrating in search of work is a new face of migration from the region. Overall the female migrant workers are mostly illiterates from poor landless families who have no work in their own village and have to migrate out for survival. The migration pattern of these women is irregular who are not registered. Distress migration is a regular feature in tribal Odisha.</p>
<p>5.Socio-Economic Condition :</p>	<p>Considering the part of socioeconomic status the study is trying to identify measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or families economic and social position in relation to others; based on income, education, and occupation. In case of women who are residing in their home they are also engaging themselves in various handloom and other income generation activities like tailoring, making badi and papad etc. As the WSHG members in Saliasahi (Bhubaneswar) tells that there are some irregularities in payment exists and they suggested that it can be solved based on the serious steps by the community members and voices of women.</p>
<p>6.Social and Education :</p>	<p>It is generally thought that the girl's place is in the home, and as a result girls do not have the same freedom of movement as boys do. In regard to this, presently the girls in urban area are getting education facilities available in their locality but still the attitude towards providing quality education to girls has not been ensured so far at the family level. Considering different scenario, marriage age of girls in the urban area is varying between 18-21 years, which is normally not in favour of adolescent girl's health, chaotic family environment, taking responsibilities etc. Therefore, results in early pregnancy and concentrating in family matters or mostly household work, caring of children and so on. However; inadequate health services are also prime concern of women but they themselves are unaware as to how to take proper care during pregnancy and infant rearing.. In fact; they are more concerned for others health considering as nature of mother to sacrifice for others especially children in particular then family as general.</p>

7. Traditional Positions of Authority in Urban Areas :

The working tribal class and men in particular have wider range of job options available to them. The shift in residence means a severance with an established way of life and support of the extended family. Men who had few options at home became more whimsical and choosy about jobs in the city. Women could hardly take any time off from work to look around for alternatives; yet, men as well as women regard the unpaid and paid work of men as supportive and women's earning as supplementary. In urban areas it has also been noticed that women supported unemployed husbands unquestioningly and in return to this they receive frequent physical abuse from them.. Women appeared convinced that men had a right to better life, while they rarely had such thoughts for themselves .Restricted physical mobility, full responsibility for house work as well as fairly rigid views on as to where women from certain group, should work led women automatically to a situation where it was assumed that occupational mobility was meant for men only .Not unexpectedly, most daughters after the age of eight years or so joined their mothers at work or household chores.. Boys rarely helped and it was not unusual to see sons playing in the alleys while their younger sisters were at work, either at home or somewhere else.th their mothers.

Notions of female dependency and inferiority are carried over to areas where in fact, men have to rely on their wives skills for survival. Women spoke of their dependence on men, but did not point out that without their skills, husbands may well be unemployed if not destitute. They were characteristically modest about their role in productive labour. Though women were aware that their work was quite distinct from housework and was by no means a leisure time activity; they did not attach much importance to their economic roles.

8. Working Conditions :

For the majority of working women, a job is essential. In relation to the men they have fewer choices as well as limited chances for occupational mobility. When men and women work in the same occupation, female tasks are often the more arduous and time consuming. In construction work site working as labourer they spend comparatively long hours and do hard work in lifting the materials and composition of different materials to make final usable product; whereas, men are normally do technical and skilled work. Again, when both genders do identical jobs, women often get paid less technically like even though they have potential to do skill work but they would not get such, ultimately in different form they are not getting economic justice. However; even they are quite empowered in urban step up life style than previous but raising voice against exploitation and injustice has not been adopted.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">9. Traditional Role Expectations:</p>	<p>Irrespective of social groups there is, at the level of belief, that widespread commitment to the notion that a woman’s job must not interfere or compete with her primary role of wife and mother. There is also concern with her physical safety and the respectability of the occupation. Clearly, working class families are far less able to ensure these conditions, and often their women work under very difficult circumstances.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">10. Education, Paid Employment and Household Responsibilities:</p>	<p>Illiteracy among the majority of women in the lower socio- economic tribal group constitutes a major barrier to increase diversify work and training opportunities. On the other hand, pre-defined roles, ideology and labour market forces in a labour surplus economy effectively restrict women’s work opportunity among educated women of certain sectors.</p> <p>Women work for improving or maintaining the standard of living of the family or to provide a cushion against rising cost of living. Working outside home on the same terms and conditions, as men, does not absolve them from their domestic responsibilities. The dual burden of work creates physical, mental and emotional strain. One of the consequences of double burden may be delayed promotions or sacrificing new job opportunities due to family responsibilities. Employment by itself does not guarantee equal sharing of work at home or better status of women.</p> <p>In the context of Psycho-cultural aspect the attitude of people including women that a male child has all rights to avail good facilities from the society and family but there are some social restriction in case of adolescent girl like after certain age they are not allowed to talk freely with opposite gender in the same community but it is not so acute prevalent situation in the city life. Discrimination has been created in such way that girl child considered themselves as it is normal life pattern of girls and women. In the context of punishment normally the people have positive attitude towards girl till marriage but after that family members including society expects to do much which is not possible in normal case because for a long duration the society has given scope to them to maintain life within close family atmosphere where they draw attention of others without contributing much. But after marriage suddenly the situation plays just opposite and people expect much from them to do which is not really possible, resulted as violence, discrimination and dominance continues latter on.</p>

Education, Paid Employment and Household Responsibilities:

Hence; tribal people are normally culture friendly and they enjoy their peaceful life through it where there is no place of anxiety, depression and de-motivation. In urban community they could not get an opportunity to celebrate traditional cultural practices for which absence of we feeling, community sentiments, group cohesiveness increase and people are more individual centric and compete each other towards economic growth as well as maintaining materialistic life mostly. Absence of community role in terms of decision making process against any violence within the community resulting increase of legal cases and burden of economic stress. In spite of that inadequate quality educational facility for the girl child, again it becomes a major task for survival in so called urban life style. In such circumstance neither they get quality education nor opportunity to access. Here the most important problem in primary education is absence of special language teacher for the tribal community children. In this process; technically they are deprived of to get higher education after completion of primary level. In addition to this high degree of low level of awareness about the legal provisions related to the girl child protection and development is a major challenge for them. Poor response of govt. personnel for the betterment of urban poor especially among tribal groups is also creating hindrances in their development path.

11. Conclusion :

On the basis of the entire study and critical analysis of data, it can be said in brief that the change of life style of tribal women in Bhubaneswar is a remarkable notice till today. It is no doubt that women have improved their life style according to the trend of modern society but still they preserved their culture effectively. It can also be said that livelihoods option in urban set up is one of the model for their improvement in terms of economic aspect only, rather less importance in other areas. Considering the overall situation of tribal women livelihood scenario, it could have been developed by utilizing available resources targeting to specific category people. Finally; we can say that the tribal women should not be neglected or deprived of or made compromise in any form those are essential to lead life with dignity in a sustainable manner. Economic independence also increases women's bargaining power in the face of male or societal pressure to discriminate against daughter's marriage preference is strictly preferred among the same caste in some communities and parents take major role to take decision but in case of educated mass they are discussing with their parents about their marriage friendly.

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