

Emerging New Dimensions of Empowerment in Tribal Women of Southern Rajasthan

***Dr. Savitri Patidar**

Abstract:

This study is telling about the new dimensions of empowerment. It takes the case study of the marginalised groups of tribal. This study argues that now increasingly tribal do not find agriculture to their substantive source of livelihood. They have taken to migration to industrial states, which happens to be in their neighborhood. Migration seems to be a major source of their substances. Migration gives money but it also gives urban culture mainly high caste Hindus. This alien culture goes to the tribal hinterlands. This largely affects the tribal family. This provides an opportunity to alter the positioned status of tribal women. This study examines migration and empowerment with new perspective. This focuses on this new form of female-headed family among the tribal and gives idea about how the new dimension of the structure tribal family by the empowering household by women.

Keywords: - Empowerment, Tribal, Migration, Dimension, Livelihood, Female- headed

Introduction:

The tribal are passing through a series of crises. They are the original settlers to this land. The cover of forest kept them encapsulated as a distinct society. Today they have come to a stage of development where most of their traditional sources of income generation are shrinking to be scarce. The minerals of hills have been exploited through state ownership. The forests of their terrain have fully been commercialized. The land which they tilled for centuries have been degraded. The land-man ratio has been disturbed. And the tribal are now obliged to leave their village and go to new pastures for earning their livelihood or for migration. Hence everything has changed; development programmes have made their entry into their hinterland. Some education has come and much more has been done. Most of tribal are migrated for livelihood and the female who left behind maintain the family and face all crises which come to her.

The female headed family has been studied among the Bhils of South Rajasthan. The Bhils constitute the second largest group in the country. The ethnography of the Bhils of South Rajasthan is altogether different from the caste society. The discrete castes maintain their identity but at the same time constitute a system. The men due to the conspiracy of circumstances has been obliged to leave their

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village and go for earning a livelihood. In such situation, that is in the absence of men women take over the charge and this is what it call female headed family.

Objectives: - Major objectives of this research article are:

- To explore the various dimensions of empowerment of tribal women.
- To depict the major responsibility of female-headed households.

Database and Methodology:

Research study based on primary as well as on secondary database. To know the new dimensions of empowerment and livelihood sustainability field works has to be preferred in the Southern Rajasthan's tribal district Durgapur and Banswara. Study purely based on field observation at the angle of Anthropological approach. Secondary data were used to know the status of study area and to know the theoretical perspective of female-headed households research studies have preferred for references. Descriptive approach has been consider to complete the study.

The Female-headed Family Emerges:

The emergences of female-headed family is quite recent. It has been due to migration of Bhils to the cities and towns of neighboring state of South Rajasthan. Most of migrate towards Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh their preference is for Indore and Bhopal. The women who are left in the parent's village work as in charge of the family. Reasons behind migration of the Bhils is forest degradation, agricultural land proportional is so low, minerals and other natural resources are not in a perfect. It must be observed that Bhils migrate to Gujarat not in search of green pastures. The problem with them is of survival. Therefore it is not earning that the Bhils go to Gujarat; it is for earning bread. It should also be emphasized that it is occasional only that a few of them get comfortable jobs in Gujarat. Though migration for a Bhil is not profitable, there is not other alternative to him to keep finally alive. The forced migration also indicated that the community Development Programmes of a history of five decades have failed to provide any sustenance to the Bhil.

The women is required to take care of the whole family. If he has some adult son, he also shares the responsibility. Since the migrants has gone with the assurance of the village trader, he also advances credit to the migrant's wife. It is the village and kin people who also extent their help to the wife in situation of crises. The problem of the migrant's wife gets complicated when the crisis arises particularly of illness at night. In the villages of our study there are no cases of polygynous families. Therefore, the question of sharing the responsibility of headship does not arise. The new responsibilities which the women has assumed as;

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- **Sowing and Harvesting of Crop:** - Normally the heads returns to the parents' villages at the time of sowing and harvesting, but if he fails to come in time the responsibility transfer to women of the households.
- **Keeping Vigil:** - it is the responsibility of the female-head to arrange for the vigil of the crop. Normally, it does not require any manual labour and therefore the female-head herself or her family members performs this work.
- **Borrowing:** - The female-head in times of need borrows money from the trader of the nearby town. For the trader the family is his Asami that is, permanent customer. He knows it well that whenever the female-head would receive remittances from the migrants, his dues would be paid. In the absence of man it is the responsibility of the female to establish her credit worthiness. She is required to keep the creditor in her confidence. If he is not satisfied with the mode of due payments, credit could any time be scrapped, a successful family head is supposed to be that who can mobilize the trader to any extent she wants.
- **Exchange Transactions:** - the crop is harvested normally with the help of the migrants. But it is not sold immediately. The market rate determines the sale. Though the tribal peasants has hardly any capacity for holding his produce, efforts are made to get reasonable return from the market from the produce. This decision is taken by the female-head. She would also decide as to the quantity of commodity which has to be kept in store for the daily consumption of the family. Consumption and exchange are determined on the basis of the farm output received for a particular crop. It is here that the female-head has to exercise her skillfulness. The migrants himself who is away from the family does not have any idea about the commodity which could be sold in the market as surplus.
- **Resolution of Conflict:** - Crises are several in a tribal family; in the absence of man, they multiply. These are a few crises relating to agriculture; it is the female who has to decide when to irrigate the crop; it is she who has to decide whom and what terms for hire. Then these are conflicts regarding marriage and death. All these conflicts regarding marriage and death. All these conflicts require on the spot decision. There are some sensitive's issues relating sex-relations. She does not know, anytime a drunken tribal can knock her door at mid-night. This has to be tackled by her in total isolation from the relatives and members of the village.
- **Decision Making and Management:** - the female headed family makes efforts to handle the remittance, satisfies the trader and manages agriculture, there are always some gaps. Her skillfulness lies in how she handles the family in the absence of her male. It must be admitted that the tribal female-head has been empowered to take decisions regarding her family in the absence of man. If the female-headship makes a successful story, naturally the status of female is elevated not only in the village and kinship groups but in fact within the cluster of tribal village.

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- **Empowering Through Constitutional Amendments 73rd and 74th** :- the 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendments have given statutory powers to women, but the new power which she has got when her husband is absent from village, has definitely enhanced her social status. This is precisely empowerment of tribal women in the field of social and economic life of the community. The social empowerment of tribal women in the capacity of head of the family is not absolute. She is always in contact with her husband. And in his absence whatever decisions he takes are Okayed and approved by the husband. This approval is invariably received whenever he return at home.

Overall, the understanding of the tribal society which has come out of our prolonged fieldwork show that the female-headed families could be strengthened if the civil society becomes stronger. As a matter of fact, the civil society can work as an alternative to the state. For instance, the civil society should create certain institutions which could facilitate the survival of the female-headed family. For the strengthening of civil society there is always need for social movement. This will make the journey of female-head smoother.

Female-headed family is a new dimension of tribal family:

The concept needs to be thoroughly investigated on empirical ground. The basis of female-headed family is residence. The man who is the head of the tribal family does not share residence with other members of the family including his wife. In order words, both his residence and hearth are separate from rest of his family members. Viewed this way he does not make a family. Yet another criticism is that though the male members has separate residence, his actions are oriented to his own family. The basic idea of female-headed family can further be questioned: the female surely takes decision in the absence of man. But all these need to be approved as soon as the male returns. If final decision rests with the migrant head, how is female the head of the family? Such a kind of argument makes a sense. But the fact remains that whatever has been independently decided by the female-head is fully approved by the male. And, this makes the female-head more powerful and successful.

Socially Empowerment of Female – headed Family:

The legislation has also recently empowered the women. But much of this transformation has not gone to the grass roots. What is important is that the migration has made the tribal women as the head of the family. It is historical. Historical in the sense of transformation between the female-head a historical incidence. The migrant surely sends his remittances to the female-head, his wife. The wife on her part assumes the manager of the family crises. This is one aspects of her empowerment. She is empowered both socially and culturally.

Culturally Empowered:

Perhaps the second most important role which the female –heads have assumed is to adopt and implement the cultural elements of host cultural which has always been alien to the tribal community.

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The migrant comes full of his kit with the culture of the host community. He brings a new ideology about food, food way, clothes and cloth designs; fasts and festivals, education, health and hygiene to the parent village. His stay in the village is for a month or two. He returns to the host community. His stay in the village is for a month or two. He returns to host community. But it becomes the responsibility of the female-head to translate the host culture to action on his family members. She thus assumes a new social and cultural to action on his family members. She thus assumes a new social and cultural role so far the host communities concerned. And, it is here that the female-headed family is related to migration and host culture-the culture acquired by migrant.

Conclusion:

Feminists usually rejoice on the emergence of female-headed family. They argue that the tribal women have very successfully taken over the charge of family head from the males. It has also been amply demonstrated that given proper opportunities the females are fully capable of taking independent decisions. They are empowered such an analysis of the female-headed family is worth while but there is yet another aspect of this new pattern of family. The females are not without their hardships. As a matter of fact, migration is never without its social costs. The highest cost that she has to pay is her long interval of isolation. Her empowerment needs to be applauded but at what cost. She too has her own libido. What happens to her and for what period?

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