



**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN JHARKHAND: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
WEST SINGHBHUM DISTRICT: A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

India is a diverse country with various problems and challenges. The issue of women empowerment is also a major challenge and directly linked with the countries development. The status of women is not very comfortable in our country. The violence and atrocities towards women are still prevalent in our society. Women Empowerment is also a great challenge of Indian society. Nevertheless, the drive is progressively moving ahead with the combined effort of the Government and Civil Society.

This paper will concentrate on the theoretical understanding of women empowerment-it includes the definition of Women Empowerment, lists various stages of it and describes the design, implementation, failure and success of the issue. The suggestions and recommendation for encouraging Women Empowerment in India. The paper will be dedicated to access the efforts launched by Government of Jharkhand and the hurdles to achieve the goal.

Key words: *Women Empowerment, Social and Financial Independency, Psychological development, Gender budget, Gender gap, Illiteracy in women, Gender disparity, Sustainable development, Gender equality, Social justice and security, Self -confidence, Male dominant society, Patriarchal society, Inferiority complex and backwardness.*

INTRODUCTION

Women Empowerment is an important issue in modern Indian Society. It has been a matter of hot debate in present scenario. Women make almost 50% of the total population of the

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world. Hence, their interest cannot be overlooked by any civilised society and Government. Development of any country is directly linked with this. In other words, we can say that no country could develop itself without focusing on its half of the population. In Indian context, The role of the Government, NGOs, Self Help Group have been highly appreciable in the past decades. Their combined efforts have been highly beneficial in improving the social and economic status of women. As a result, the condition of women have been improved a lot in comparison with 19th century. Now a days also, we often come across hatred and atrocities activities towards women, and social evils like dowry, infant foeticide, harassment at work place and cases of rape are still present as a big giant, which are major challenges in our society and it is very necessary to check such evil practices so that dream of women empowerment could be shaped into reality. No doubtedly, the combined endeavour of all are really appreciable and brought a noticeable change in improving the status of Women. No doubtedly, women are given respectable position in our society and make almost half of the population. Even though, the cases of gender biasing and atrocities towards women are very much common in Indian perspective. Nevertheless, Women have acquired a significant position in their social life, economic activities and decision making among their families. But, the figure is somewhat disappointing in rural areas. This study is conducted to understand the effort carried out by the various agencies in the women empowerment and their impact on it, especially in the West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. My endeavour would be to bring out the main issues and challenges in the field of women empowerment. Even though, women are kept at the top and given respected position in our society and constitute almost half of the masses. Nevertheless why we discuss always about empowerment of women and the necessity of it? It is an important tool and aspect in the development of our country. The matter is directly linked with the large chunk of population in our society and onus of responsibilities of family lies on them. Hence, it becomes most important in the nature. When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves. No doubtedly, we live in the 21ST century and enough efforts has been made to shape the dream into reality. Our commitment towards the Women Empowerment has proved a milestone in improving the condition of women. The efforts of Government and Civil Society have been appreciable and yielded a better result after Independence. It recognises the challenges and looks at the opportunity for the development and improvement of its half masses of the population.

Women Empowerment has been a significant topic of discussion now a days in development and economics of the country. In present scenario, the issue has been more vital and important as it relates to the half of the masses. The term is highly potential and having a great role in ensuring the development of the country. In today's concept, where the country is witnessing a lot of social changes in various wakes of life, the issue has been very relevant and necessary. The issue has tremendous potency in ensuring the social and economic development of the country. The objective of country development could not be achieved

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without raising the social and economic status of the women. Hence the issue has been integral part of the country development. No country can develop itself without the development of their women population. The term Women Empowerment has been a burning issue and a hot topic of debate in modern society. Our constitution provides equal status to all without any discrimination of caste, creed and sex.

Women form an important segment of the labour force and economic role played by them cannot be ignored in the framework of developmental aspects. The status and position of women in society reflects the development of the country. The neglect of women population in development process of any country constitute a human resource waste. Non-inclusion of women in development activity will be wasteful effort in context of development.

Before going ahead, it is necessary to discuss about the concept of Women Empowerment and factors and necessities of the term. The term can be defined in many ways. When talking about the Women Empowerment means strengthening the social, economical independency and enhancing psychological status of women who were earlier isolated from the active participation in various process of decision making. Empowerment means raising the status of women through various efforts like promoting education facilities, raising awareness, literacy and promoting training to women to instil a sense of security and safety in the society. In other words, Women Empowerment in simple words can be understood as giving power to women to decide for their own lives or inculcating such abilities in them so that they could be able to find rightful place in the society.

To achieve the goal The effort of Government of Jharkhand is highly committed to achieve the goal. It has launch so many schemes for the betterment of the tribal women by enhancing the status of women and making them self-dependent. The Government is working in full co-ordination with the Union Government. Despite of Instability in the Government, the figure of Women Empowerment is quite satisfactory and advancing ahead with good result. After the creation of the state in the year of 2000, the State has witnessed political instability and turbulence. Nevertheless, all the elected Government taken it seriously and worked for it. Keeping in view of the gravity of the issue, almost all the Government has given considerable focus in the women interests. Their endeavours are appreciable and yielding good result in the concern subject. The introduction of the concept of Gender Budgeting might be claimed one revolutionary step towards the direction of Women Empowerment. The concept of Gender budgeting was first coined in 2001 with special reference by Finance Minister of India in his budget speech. The rational for gender budgeting arises from recognition of the fact that national budgets impact men and women differently through the pattern of resource allocation. Women constitute 48% of the population, but they lag behind the men in social indicators like health, education, economic opportunities and in their social status in the society. Hence they warrant special attention due to their vulnerability and lack of access to

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resources. Gender budgeting is a powerful tool for achieving the gender equality and to ensure that benefits of development reach to women so as to men. The present Government of Jharkhand in the leader ship of CM Raghubar Das has allocated sufficient funds under the head.it is increased by 21 % in the fiscal year of 2016-17.The new concept has tremendous potency to plug loopholes of the past. The allocated amount has been allotted mainly in the education, health and welfare of the women. This is a welcome step and would be a landmark in the history of Women Empowerment. The decision has earned applause from women and NGOs. Such a historic decision will play a crucial role in wiping out witch –hunt killings, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and dowry deaths in the State. Apart from that, the Government has launched ample number of schemes for the empowerment of the tribal women. The efforts of Government are changing the social and economic status of women.

Necessity of Women Empowerment: Modern perspective and context

India is home for diversified culture and beliefs. People of different faith, religion reside here. The condition of women in all the religion is almost same. Although women constitute 48 % of the total population. They are kept at high position and given great respect in our society. Nevertheless, their status in social and economic field is partially or fully dependent on their male partner. Around 200 years ago, the condition of women were more worst. They were victim of child marriages, Sati Pratha and other many social evils. There was a great gender gap between men and women. they were quite uncomfortable and forced to survive with low status in the society. Fortunately, 19th century came as boon for them and so many social reforms were brought forward and pleaded for the rights of women .As a result ,Lord Billium Bentick came forward and stopped Sati Pratha. So many feminist movement started and all demanded equal and independent status of women in the society. After independence, the Government considered the gravity of the issue and started ample schemes and efforts to ensure the success of Women Empowerment. By the combined efforts of Self Help Groups, NGOs and Government, the journey in the direction of Women Empowerment has till traversed. No doubtedly, there has been a remarkable improvement observed in the field. But, yet there is a lot to be done. Ample evils are still prevailing with open mouth in our society. Domestic violence, dowry deaths, incidence of rape and sexual harassment at workplace are still in existence in the society .This study focus on the deteriorating status of women in our society in spite of their respected position and good population. Women around the world as well as in Jharkhand are denied of their aspiration and rights. Especially tribal women are at back foot in every sector of development. Their sharing in political and social activity is required to be encouraged. Though some women from urban areas have succeeded to make their presence count in developmental and economical activities but the rest are still struggling to find their deserved place. In Jharkhand, there is a huge gap between the status of women of urban and rural areas. Most of the tribal women are engaged in small scale industries like kiln labours, construction labours and mining labours. They contribute

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significantly in the family income. They share equally in the family earning, but deprived of decision making activity in the family. At present a larger percentage of women belongs to tribal community residing in remote rural pockets where the intensity of insurgency is high. As a result, women of distant rural area not getting equal opportunity of development. Most of the tribal women are illiterate and unaware of their rights. The reach of Self Help Groups at such places is negligible because of lack of leadership in the community. The Government machinery and institution are also not strong in such a hilly area, officers are reluctant and corrupted in performing their duties. Hence, the Government efforts are not able to yield remarkable response in the Women Empowerment. The Government has launched numerous schemes. Some of them will be discussed in the paper. Before going ahead it is required to analyse the requirement of Women Empowerment in the context of West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. The literacy of women in urban area is 83 percentage, while it is 54 percentage in the rural area. The literacy percentage of rural women is low and overwhelming. Due to prevailing illiteracy, their participation is negligible in the developmental and political activity. Most of them are un-aware of their rights and their reluctant behaviour is main reason behind their backwardness in the society. Due to patriarchal society, their rights have been overlooked and they have been suppressed in the society. Long time suppression in the society has made them low confident and morally down. The condition of rural women are major cause of concern and need the special attention to empower them. Some of the social indicators regarding the condition of women are illustrated below.

Indicators

Population and household profile

	Urban	Rural
1. Population (female) age 6 years and above who ever attended school(%)	80.9	56.1
2. Household using improved sanitation facility (%)	71	8.9
3. Household using clean fuel for cooking (%)	69.1	4.4
4. Household with any usual member covered by health insurance	20.5	18.8
5. Women who are literate (%)	80.3	50.0
6 Women with 10 or more years of schooling	59.1	21.1

Marriage and fertility

1. Women age 20-24 years marriage before age 18 years (%)	16.2	38.1
2. Women age 15-19 years who were mothers or pregnant at the time of survey (%)	3.8	16.1

The fact sheet provide information on key indicators and trends for Singhbhum district. The data gathered is sufficient enough to indicate the social status of women in the district. The

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fact shown is quite disappointing and able to tell their tale of woe. Our focus will be to search the root cause and hurdle to meet the desired figure in the field of Women Empowerment. Now, factors responsible for the deteriorating condition of women in the district and its challenges is required to be analysed.

Challenges in Women Empowerment

Male dominant patriarchal society.
Lack of confidence in women.
Low literacy rate among women in rural area.
Age-old mind set of the society.
Female Foeticide rate.
Corruption and reluctant behaviour of the State institutions.
Instability of the Government in the newly formed State.
Lack of leadership among women.
Lack of fund.
Geographical Expansion.
Lack of awareness and rights among the women.
Bureaucracy.
State Institutional weakness.

The state was carved out from the parent state of Bihar in 15 Nov 2000. Since then almost all, the Government endeavour is appreciable and ample efforts have been taken to address the interest of women and to empower them. The Government is continuously trying to enhance the social, economic, political participation and shape the dream of Women Empowerment. The Government has launch so many schemes and ample efforts have been taken to empower their half of the population. As an endeavour, a remarkable and sustainable change has been observed. A slow and steady progress has been observed in the field of Women Empowerment. The Women and Child Welfare Ministry is trying its best efforts. Rest of the onus of the responsibility is on the men and women class to accept and to work for the dream, so that it may shaped into reality. Now, the efforts of the State Government and NGOs are discussed below along-with its impact on ground reality. One of the NGO is effectively functioning in empowering women masses of the society and its endeavour is being appreciated by women society of Jharkhand. LEADS Foundation is performing well in the newly formed State and advancing towards the empowerment of women with good results. Many empowerment schemes are running for the uplifting the women status in the district of West Singhbhum.

Vision and Action Plan

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Life education and Development support (LEADS) is a Non-Governmental organisation working for the empowerment of the women in Jharkhand. The NGO was established by committed group of professionals on 14 Dec 2005. Since then the organisation is committed seriously for nourishing the interest of women and providing equal status in the society. LEADS has realised the necessity to develop the women population of the state to contribute to the holistic development of Jharkhand. Hence, Leads Has initiated different welfare projects in collaboration with other like minded organisation on empowerment, livelihood generation, developing life skills and awareness of under-privileged and backward women from the rural section to help them grow so that they can fight and win their respectable status in the society. Some of them are Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojna (MKSP), Tejaswini projects, Apni beti Apna Dhan, Mukhyamantri Ladli Lakshmi Yojna and numerous other schemes. All the schemes are successfully running in the district of West Singhbhum and yielding better response in the district.

Methodology

As per the nature of the study, it was required to collect the data from secondary sources. The utmost care has been taken into consideration and the objective of the study has been kept paramount during collecting the data. Secondary data were collected from research study, academicians of the concern field, Journals and Newspapers. The collected data have been processed analysed further to make the present study more useful and effective for the practitioners, researchers, planners and policy makers.

Recommendations and Conclusions:

Society age old deep rooted mind set to be changed through Social conditioning and sensitization programmes.

Focus on imparting training so that women could gain self-confidence and programmes to enhance a sense of security in the society.

Building of inner strength and courage along with enhancing psychological stamina and power by imparting training on self-defence skills.

Government efforts and society responsibilities towards women to be made more accountable.

Role of NGOs and Self Help Group community of the society could be encouraged in the state. They should come forward to extend all possible help and assistance to the victim in the society.



Focus should be given on Economic independence of the women in the family. The vision could be met through Women Entrepreneurship.

Government should instil a sense of Gender Security and social security by implementing stern and stringent policy. The policy should be made with utmost care and wisdom so that it could not be potential to infringe the rights of other section of the society.

Special focus should be given in the field of women education and sensitization about their safety and status in the society.

Area of women health, hygiene and sanitation should be given special attention. knowledge of practises for better health and hygiene and awareness of legal rights of the women specially in the rural area.

Requirement of cluster level federation and village level committee to promote local initiative for the welfare and empowerment of women.

Focus on informal education for rural area's women and imparting vocational training for making them self-reliant and economically independent.

The government should assist women group through entrepreneurship. They should be assisted with financial support.

Women labours should be paid equally for equal work. Same wages for same work should be made more stringent.

The subject of empowerment of women has become a burning issue all over the world. The issue has been a matter of hot debate in past few decades in India. There have been a large gap between men and women status in our society. Thus, women quest for equality with men is a universal phenomenon. The condition of women was absolutely pathetic and miserable in 19th century. They were victim of so many social evils in the contemporary India. India has seen numerous movement and reforms for uplifting the status of women in the society. The government endeavour after independence is appreciable in the field of Women Empowerment. But, to shape the dream of Women Empowerment a lot is required to be done with true intention. Hence, Government should advance forward with true intention, so that the dream could be shaped into reality. As the issue is directly linked with half of the population, it is advisable not to politicize the issue. It is time demand to move forward with true intention without making it a tool of Vote bank Policy. The status of women could be improved by promoting education, vocational training, spreading awareness for their rights

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and through Entrepreneurship. The role of women is vital as the issue is just link with them. The age old mind-set of men will change automatically, when the beneficiaries group will empower them through education. For this, women would have to come forward with serious commitment and endeavour. The role of education is vital and important. It has tremendous potency to meet the challenge. The dream could not be shaped into reality without education. Apart from that, all the determinants are equally important and inseparable. They are required to be checked at different stages. Then only, the dream of Women Empowerment could be achieved. In one words, united and committed efforts are required to meet the objective of Women Empowerment. The issue should be kept away from political arena. Then only the dream of women empowerment could be shaped in reality. The empowerment of women is an important pillar in order to pave way for a prosperous and stronger state. Their well-being is directly linked to the development of state.

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