

A CASE STUDY ON EMPOWERMENT LEVEL OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS BELONGING TO SANTHAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

In India Santhals are one of the largest Tribal communities in terms of population in India. Tribal women in their own society are considered as an economic asset and their roles are vital in terms of social, economic, cultural, and religious ways of life. Yet, the empowerment of women belonging to tribal community is one of the central issues in the developmental process of the country. The primary goal of this paper is to investigate the level of empowerment of adolescent girls in the Santhal community. This is a quantitative study conducted on a sample of 100 adolescent girls of age group 17 and 18 from both rural and urban areas, using the simple random sampling technique. Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Dr. Alpana Singh developed and standardised the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Scale, which was used in the study. The study's findings show that urban adolescent girls in Santhal Community have a higher level of empowerment in the composite level of empowerment dimensions than rural adolescent girls.

Keywords- Empowerment, Adolescent Girls, Scheduled Tribes, Santhal community.

1. Introduction

The status of women in a society is reflected in the level of social justice in that society. For centuries, women have been treated as inferior citizens to men, and their status has been defined primarily in terms of their income, employment, fertility and health, education, and their roles in the family, community, and society. According to World Bank 2001. “(Different indicators of human development show that women have lesser access to property, resources, education, health facilities, medical care and lower percentage in earned income and finally lower percentage in job market, if not least in decision making power also”. In a conventional patriarchal society, the male person enjoys the decision-making power of all the matters of household and also in the social matter and women are only subject to obeying the decisions made by the male. The Santhals /Santals are an ethnic group and one of the largest tribe of India and they are mostly found in Assam, Odisha, Bihar, and Jharkhand. They are an agricultural tribe and their occupation mostly is dependent on forest resources. They are considered to be

economically backward classes. In tribal society, women play a significant role in their cultural, religious, social context and economic way of life are considered to be the economic resources in their society but it has been seen that tribal women are still not up to par in different aspects of life like, Good health, Education, Economic empowerment and Employment. Santhal community, especially women of Santhal community is not well organized like other modern communities and they are economically and socially backward and live a low quality of life. They often face problems of malnutrition, lack of access education and health care services, victims of domestic violence, male dominant.

Adolescence is the very crucial stage of one's life. Adolescent girls are our potential mothers and future homemakers and therefore they are the very important sections in our society and in order to achieve the millennium development goals and therefore empowerment of adolescent girls is indispensable for all the countries. Women empowerment means enabling women to be independent and make their own choices in

life. In the term Empowerment, 'Power' is the most important element and to empower women means power in the hand of women where they can have a sense of confidence and strength from within to face life, having the right to make one's own choices in life, make decision in the society and capacity building to contribute towards development of a nation.

2. Rationale of the Study

In the Santhal society, Women enjoy some rights as per the Santal customary law prevalent in their society but they are also given inferior status to that of a man. It has also been found that Santhal women are not much empowered in their lives. Adolescent girls are the future mothers and therefore they are the very important sections of a society and efforts must be put in order to empower them. In this study, girls between the ages of 17 and 18 are recognised adolescents. Empowerment is the process which enables a person to think, behave and make decision in their own way and independently and where they can have control over their own destiny and situations in their lives. The "Adolescent Girls Empowerment Scale" advanced by Dr.Devendra Singh Sisodia and Dr.Alpana Singh would be used in this research to investigate the level of empowerment of adolescent girls from the Santal community. In this study, the researcher made an attempt to find out the level of empowerment in relation to rural and urban areas and provide needful recommendations where every necessary to empower the girls belonging to Santal community.

3. Review of Literature

Kumar, P. (2020) conducted a study on Empowerment of Adolescent Girls in Relation to their Locale and Family type. The main aims and objective of the study is to find out the differences in the empowerment of adolescent girls belonging to nuclear and joint families and adolescent girls belonging to rural and urban area. The findings of the study reveal that Adolescent girls from nuclear families are more empowered than the adolescent girls from joint families and adolescence girls from urban areas are found more empowered than the adolescent girls from rural areas.

Bargotra, N. (2019) conducted a study on Empowerment of Adolescent Girls in relation to Life Style, Adjustment and Locality which aims to investigate adolescent girls' empowerment in connection to lifestyle, adjustment, and location. The findings of the study reveal that there was significant difference between the empowerment of rural and urban adolescent girls. The researcher made suggestions that, schools and institutions should organize awareness programmes that will enhance the lifestyle and personality of girls, organizing empowerment related workshops and help them understand their roles in the society.

Kaur, A. (2017) conducted a study on Empowerment of adolescent girls in relation to their school environment. The statistical techniques used in the study were Coefficient of correlation and T-test. The findings of the study reveal that there is no significant relationship between empowerment and school environment of both rural and urban adolescent girls. It was also revealed in the study that there is no significant difference between the Empowerment level of Rural and Urban Adolescent girls.

Das, N. J. (2015) conducted a study on Santali Women: Under the Shadow of Long Silence. The main aim of the paper was to explore the role of women in Santali society. The researcher made an attempt to study the status of Santali women in society, their right to property and participation in their self-governing institutions. The findings of the study reveal that the Santali women are still living their lives under the shadow of darkness. Despite attempts has been made to educate them and to engage them chiefly in fields of educational and medical areas as teachers and nurse, it there is long road left for the women to be empowered where they can live a dignified life of their own in the society.

4. Objectives of the study

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives

1. To study the extent to which adolescent girls from the Santal community are empowered.
2. To examine the social, political and legal awareness among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban areas.

3. To study about the exposure to information media among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban area.
4. To determine the overall level of empowerment among adolescent girls from the Santal community.

5. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in social, political and legal awareness among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban areas.
2. There is no significant difference in exposure to information media among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban area.
3. There is no significant difference in composite level of empowerment among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban areas.

6. Methodology

In the present study the researcher used descriptive survey method.

Sample-

A total of 100 adolescent Girls were selected randomly for the study from the population.

Tools used-

Adolescent girl's empowerment scale prepared by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Dr. Alpana Singh have been used in this study.

Procedure of data collection-

To study the empowerment of Mishing adolescent girls, the researcher collected the data with the Adolescent girl's empowerment scale on the selected sample group in face-to-face mode before the pandemic. After collection of data the researcher scored it according to the scoring guide instructed in the manual.

7. Findings

Objective No.1- *To study the level of empowerment of adolescent girls belonging Santal community of Nagaon District*

Table no.1 Level of Empowerment of Santal adolescent Girls in Nagaon District, Assam

Levels of Empowerment	Range	Percentage
High	163-245	37%
Medium	82-162	63%
Low	49-81	0%

From Table no.1 it has been observed that 37% adolescent girls from Santal community falls under High level of empowerment, 63% falls under Moderate level of empowerment and 0% falls under Low level of empowerment. Therefore, it can be said that Santal adolescent girls in Nagaon district are moderately empowered and none of them are lowly empowered. Study conducted by **Das,**

Objective No.2- *To examine the social, political and legal awareness among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban areas.*

N. J. (2015) revealed that Santali women are still living their lives under the shadow of darkness despite the attempts that are made in order to educate and engage them in productive fields. The researcher stated that there are still a long way to go for the Santali women in order to be empowered fully and live a dignified life in a society.

H01- *There is no significant differences in social, political and legal awareness among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban areas.*

Table no.2 Comparison of Social, political and legal awareness among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban areas.

Area	N	Mean	S.D	SEd	df	t-value
Rural	50	18.56	4.78	1.19	98	3.78
Urban	50	23.10	7.00			

It is evident from the above Table no.2, the calculated t-value (3.78) is greater than table value of 't' (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. The mean score of social, political and legal awareness score among adolescent girls in relation to urban area is significantly higher (23.10) than rural adolescent girls (18.56). Therefore it can be concluded that Urban adolescent girls are more socially, politically and legally aware than the rural adolescent girls. Therefore, the Null

Hypothesis which states that there are no significant differences in social, political and legal awareness among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban areas is rejected.

Objective No.3- To study about the exposure to information media among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community in relation to rural and urban area.

H02-There is no significant differences in exposure to information media among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban area.

Table no-3 Comparison of Exposure to Information Media among adolescent Girls in Santal community in Relation to Rural and Urban Area

Area	N	Mean	S.D	SEd	df	t-value
Rural	50	22.58	4.51	1.02	98	2.83
Urban	50	25.50	5.70			

It is evident from Table no.3 that the calculated t-value (2.83) is greater than table value of "t" which is 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance. The mean score of urban adolescent girls is significantly higher (25.50) than the rural adolescent girls (22.58), therefore it can be said that urban adolescent girls have more empowerment in exposure to information media than rural adolescent girls. Thus the Null hypothesis which states that, there are no significant differences in exposure

to information media among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban area is rejected.

Objective No.4-To study the composite level of empowerment among adolescent girls belonging to Santal community.

H03-3.There is no significant difference in composite level of empowerment among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban areas

Table no.4 Composite level of empowerment among Adolescent girls in santal community in relation to rural and urban area

Area	N	Mean	S.D	SEd	df	t-value
Rural	50	166.12	29.79	6.11	98	3.78
Urban	50	189.26	31.31			

It has been observed from Table no.4 that the calculated value of 't' of the composite level of empowerment among adolescent girls in Santal community in relation to rural and urban areas is 3.78, which is greater than the table value of 't' which is 1.98. Therefore, it can be said that the composite level of empowerment among girls belonging to urban

area (189.26) is significantly higher than the girls from rural areas (166.12). Thus, the Null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in composite level of empowerment among adolescent girls in relation to rural and urban areas is rejected. The findings of study conducted by **Kumar, P. (2020)** also revealed that adolescence girls from urban areas are found more empowered

than the adolescent girls from rural areas. But the study conducted **Kaur, A. (2017)** revealed in the study that there is no significant

8. Recommendations

1. Developmental programs focusing on Santal community should be implemented in order to draw importance on existing human and material resources to enhance self-help and social-support and develop flexible system for strengthening adolescent girls participation. Proper funding, learning opportunities and continuous access to information is required to make it happen.
2. Different sectors such as Government, Non-Governmental organizations and educational institutions must to create an environment and work co-operately with a common goal to enable all adolescent girls in Santal community to maximize their potential.
3. More focuses should be put on education of adolescent girls, as they are the future mothers and there is a believe that when a mother is educated, the whole family is educated.
4. Nation must support the implementation of action plan and other clearly focused activities and also advocate the need for adolescent health policies and programme including those that are related to sexual and reproductive health which will ensure proper development of girls belonging to backward communities.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, we know that, the adolescent girls of Santali community of Nagaon district are moderately empowered. In terms of level of awareness in social, political and legal issues and exposure to information media and the composite level of awareness among adolescent girls, it was found that the Santal adolescent girls belonging to urban areas are highly empowered

difference between the Empowerment level of Rural and Urban Adolescent girls.

compared to the rural adolescent girls. Since there is a gap in empowerment level in between rural and urban girls, this matter should be taken to concern and Empowerment related workshops must be organized for the adolescent girls, especially belonging to lower strata of society, like the Santal adolescent girls, so that they can explore their knowledge about different skills and can be made more aware and made to realize that they are an integral part of society. Women Empowerment has become the key solution to many social problems. It is empowerment of family and a nation or a country. In fact, an empowered woman is a nation's strength. Hence there is a great need for upliftment of women socially, economically and politically. Following are some suggestions to empower women.

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