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CHANGING GENDER ROLE IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT
When considering the social organization of tribal society, the study of the changing role of women becomes significant. The changing gender role in tribal society is studied from the perspective of the rights granted to women in tribal society in modern times, the opportunities available to them, their status in society, their economic empowerment, etc. What are the rights of men and women in any society, what duties both of them have to perform in society, as well as the rights and opportunities provided to men and women in society, their legal status, as well as the traditional principles and systems of tribal society, practical practice and the new generation developing with modern education, health and technology, an attempt has been made to review the changing gender role in tribal communities by making a comparative study of these issues in the present study.

KEYWORDS :- *Gender Role,Tibal Socities,Women,Education,Empowerd,Morden Society,Government Scheme*

PREFACE

According to the 2011 census, the number of tribal in Maharashtra is 8.87% of the total population of the state, i.e. one crore five lakh. 5.1% of the tribal population of the country lives in Maharashtra. In terms of tribal population, Maharashtra is the second largest state after Madhya Pradesh, except for the eastern states.

Tribal society is an important element of India's cultural diversity. Traditional gender roles in tribal society were fixed and stable. But due to the wave of modernity and education, health and development, they are gradually changing. Tribal women are no longer confined to the family but are also making their mark in the social, political and economic spheres. Gender roles in tribal communities is a socially important topic. It considers the roles of men and women in tribal society, their participation in socio-economic and cultural activities and the level of gender equality.

Traditional Gender Roles in Tribal Tribes

Like other societies, in tribal societies, gender roles are played out in a male-dominated culture. Male dominance in the economic sphere is intact. With the exception of some tribes, male power is established over money, land, rights, and inheritance. Since time immemorial, it has been seen that certain responsibilities have been traditionally distributed according to gender in tribal societies.

Traditional role of tribal men

Patriarchy is a social structure where men are dominant and women are considered secondary. In this system, men have more power and decision-making authority. In a patriarchal system, women have fewer opportunities and rights than men, which increases social and economic inequality. Patriarchy is also seen in tribal societies. With hunting,men have to fulfill important roles such as collecting resources from the forest, protecting the home, participating in decision-making processes, leading the household and community, and playing a leading role in religious rituals and public activities.

Traditional role of women

Women in tribal societies face pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations, which can limit their opportunities for education, career advancement, and personal development. Tribal women are mainly seen doing light work like housework, childcare, cooking, gathering fuel and food grains from the fields and forests, and collecting medicinal plants. In some tribes, women can play an important role in religious rituals and even participate in decision-making processes.

Gender roles in tribal communities are not uniform but vary according to matrilineal and patrilineal systems. For example, in matrilineal families like Khasi, Garo, Toda, etc., women are given respect and independence, economic power, and a strong position in procreation.

REASONS FOR CHANGING GENDER ROLES IN TRIBAL SOCIETY

Educational Opportunities

Availability of education through NGOs & government has increased. Awareness about educating girls is increasing. Ashram schools, free education for girls, scholarships, reservation for ST groups in education, government service, etc. are increasing the level of education among girls from tribal communities and are showing them new paths of progress.

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Economic Empowerment
Along with education, various government schemes for women, women's self-help groups, and increasing intervention by NGOs are changing the roles of women. Women are becoming economically empowered and are seen participating in decision-making outside the home. In addition to household expenses, they are making a significant contribution to the economic development of the family by earning income through agriculture, poultry farming, dairy farming, selling forest products, as well as businesses and self-help groups.
In places like the Araku Valley, women have taken an active role in coffee farming, boosting the local economy.

Health Awareness
Education has helped tribal women understand the importance of nutrition. It is evident that tribal women are more aware than ever about maternal health, menstrual information, pregnancy care, and family planning, and are able to convince other women and their families of the importance of a healthy life.

Political Participation
Due to special constitutional provisions made for tribes in the Indian Constitution, women have started to be represented in Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samiti and other local bodies. Their involvement in things like active participation in the political process, leading social movements, and participating in decision-making processes is increasing.

Government Schemes and Acts
The Forest Rights Act for tribals, the Employment Act, education rights, reservation, availability of loans, etc. have received positive response from women and are giving them the opportunity to move forward in life.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN MODERN SOCIETY

Growth in Leadership
Women from tribal areas are now performing well in positions such as sarpanchs, doctor teachers, health workers, entrepreneurs, police, forest departments, etc. Tribal women are seen taking leadership roles in various fields. They are actively participating in social movements and voluntary organizations and playing a guiding role. In politics, they have achieved the distinction of being from sarpanch to the President of the country.

Acceptance in Society
In modern times, the progress of women in various fields, and the changing personal, family, and social roles of women, are becoming a matter of respect and pride in society.Women's positive strides in education and other fields are beginning to receive recognition from men in the family and society.

Impact of Urbanization
The position of women in tribal families that have migrated to cities has become more positive and respected. Due to the changing urbanization, tribal women are coming into contact with various advanced societies in the city, and these women are becoming more self-aware, more efficient, more assertive, and more determined.

Challenges in the empowerment of tribal women
Although the traditional gender roles in tribal society are changing and the position of tribal women in modern society is becoming stronger, the following challenges are still evident in the economic, educational and social empowerment of tribal women.

Gender Inequality
Gender inequality is still evident in the patriarchal system, with a male-dominated mentality, inequality in education, dropout of girls in education, and the marginalization of girls.

Domestic Voilence
Women are seen as victims of domestic violence,, beatings, child marriage, and sexual assault in large numbers. Men constantly beat and abuse women due to factors such as dominance in the home, aggressive behavior, poverty, financial difficulties, lack of control over their temper, drug addiction, mental instability, depression, and stress in a patriarchal culture.

Health Problems
Women in all societies are a neglected segment of society in terms of health. Since women in tribal societies are malnourished, they face various health problems, which hinders their development. Health problems among women include malnutrition, pregnancy problems, malnourished mothers, menstrual problems, and neglect.

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Victims of Superstition
Tribal society still practices a large number of superstitions regarding women. For example, women and girls are kept in a kurmaghar outside the village as unclean during menstruation, and after childbirth, babies and newborn mothers are kept in a hut outside the village for a month as unclean.

Social Exclusion
Still, many incidents of tribal women being labeled as witches and subjected to inhuman torture and social boycott are seen happening every day. Along with this, tribal women are seen falling victim to superstitions like limited participation in religious activities, witchcraft, body shaming, and Bhanamati. Along with this, incidents of rape and beatings happen as a form of discrimination against educated and progressive women.

Named Political Leadership
Constitutional provisions do provide leadership to tribal women, but the political participation of such women is only in name. Behind their name, her husband sees the entire affairs and uses her only as a signatory.

SUMMARY
Although the role of women in tribal societies has traditionally been limited to household and agricultural work, it is now changing to various fields such as politics, social work, and business due to education, economic independence, and social awareness;

They are now moving from being mere carriers of culture to leadership, making them more economically and socially empowered, yet challenges remain in resource control and decision-making. Gender roles in tribal society changing with the times. Women are becoming more active in education, economic transactions, health and decision-making processes, yet continuous efforts are still needed to accelerate this transformation. Empowered tribal women are the foundation of progress for the entire tribal community.

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