

Government Initiated Development Programmes and its Impact on the Empowerment of Tribal Women: A Case Study of Dimoria Development Block, Kamrup (M), Assam

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Abstract:

Women are the most important part of our society without whom a society cannot precede, on the other hand, Empowerment is an active and multidimensional process, which enables women to realize their identity and pore in all aspects of life. In tribal communities, the role of women is significant and crucial. They comprise about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the different government programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life. The impact of Government initiated development programmes need to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of social as well as economic system. This paper attempts to highlight the impact of development programmes on the empowerment of tribal women of Dimoria development block of Assam, which is situated in the Kamrup Metropolitan district located towards the south-east of the capital city of Assam.

KEYWORDS: Development, Impact, Tribal, Women, Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

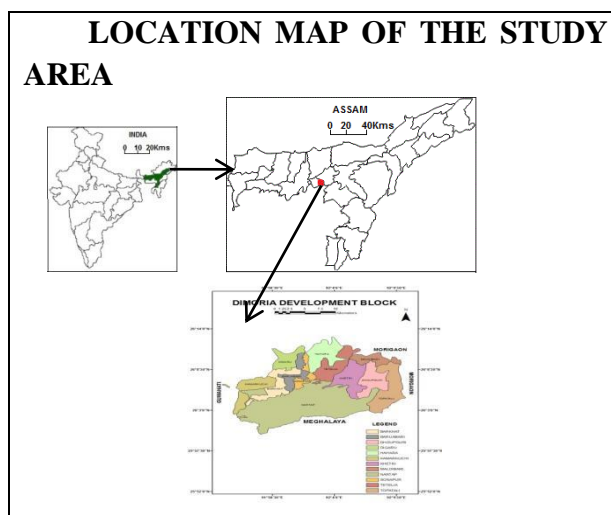
Women are the most important part of our society without whom a society cannot precede, on the other hand, Empowerment is an active and multidimensional process, which enables women to realize their identity and pore in all aspects of life. The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. Women empowerment has becoming a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. Many agencies of United Nations in their reports have emphasized that gender issue is to be given utmost priority

In tribal communities, the role of women is significant and crucial. They comprise about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they

work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Most of tribal families are still surviving on their primitive economic base i.e. animal husbandry, wine production, hand loom production, jhum cultivation and so on. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders. The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the different government programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life. The impact of Government initiated development programmes need to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of social as well as economic system.

This paper attempts to highlight the impact of development programmes on the empowerment of tribal women of Dimoria development block of Assam. Dimoria Development Block is in Kamrup Metropolitan district located towards the south-east of the capital city of Assam. Dimoria block lies in between 26°0' 0" to 26°14' North latitudes and 91°52' to 92°12' East longitudes (SOI). The total area of this block is 261.64 square kilometre, having a population of 1, 43,797(census 2011). In 2nd October, 1954 due to the presence of majority of different tribal community, the area was declared as Community Development Block. Dimoria block is a combination and meeting point of various tribes, sub-tribes, castes and community. The tribal communities contribute 16.40 per cent (census 2011) population in the block. The major tribal communities under this block are Tiwa (6.15 percent), Bodo (4.42percent), Rabha (2.12percent), Deori (1.32percent), Garo (1.10percent) and so on. Moreover, Dimoria is situated very close to Guwahati city, which is the most important education, commercial, industrial centre of Assam as well as the North-Eastern Region. Dimoria comes under the sphere of influence of the city.

MAP NO.1



OBJECTIVES:

The concerned paper has the following objectives:

1. to identify the areas of tribal concentration within the Dimoria block in general and the villages in particular;
2. to find out whether all the schemes and facilities earmarked for the tribals under the government plan are functioning properly and the tribal people are getting the fruits of these programmes or not;
3. To find out the impact of Government programmes on the empowerment of tribal women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is need for good quality of life in these villages. For an Indian village, good quality of life means unhindered access to primary health care, primary and middle level education, a sustained income that meets every day needs and a satisfactory family, social and spiritual life [A.K.Pandey 2002].

To assure a good quality life in villages necessitated the drastic transformation of these villages into socially stimulating, self-sustaining, growth-oriented communities, it is the purpose of rural empowerment. To achieve this transformation it is necessary to have a holistic approach, where all aspects of challenges in rural life are addressed. The main authority vested with the power of Empowering Rural India is the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and the Planning Commission of India [Planning Commission of India 2003].

The Empowering Rural India and its impact on development to a large extent depend upon the development of its 833-million strong rural population of India. However, the recent studies on development issues, endorsed aptly that the sustainable development can be made possible by making women an equally important paradigm of the development process [O.D. Heggade et al 2006].

Mahatma Gandhi says “...India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages...”and the soul of India lives in her villages. So the empowerment of India depends mainly on empowerment of these villages [V.S.Ganesamurthy 2007].

H. Subrahmanyam (2011) compared women education in India at present and Past. Author highlighted that there has a good progress in overall enrolment of girl students in schools. The term empowers means to give lawful power or authority to act. It is the process of acquiring some activities of women.

Shettar, M. R (2015) revealed that women of India are relatively dis-empowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment.

Singh, S. and Singh, A. (2020) critically investigated the Indian status among other countries and tries to find out preparedness to achieve Sustainable development Goal -5 of the United Nations. The paper critically examines women empowerment in India, various models and dimensions. The paper discusses constitutional safe guards as well as plans and programmes by the government and their implementation, indicators of women empowerment. However, the country ranks low while comparing with other countries. There is need of reassessing and modifying programmes to achieve SDG-5 by 2030.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The work is carried out by following quantum of data derived from both primary and secondary sources. At first, the study is trying to make an assessment of the impact of Women development programmes among the tribal communities of Dimoria Development Block. For that purpose, the secondary sources of data have been collected from Census of India, Tribal Research Centre, as well as from some journals, newspapers, websites (internet), published books, etc. For the Dimoria Development Block the secondary data related to demographic and social background of the inhabitants and existing developmental schemes, etc. have been collected from the Block Development Office, Circle Office, Panchayat Office, and so on. In order to supplement the secondary data and to see the validity of findings, necessary primary data for the study have been collected through sample survey for each group of tribal communities with the help of a detailed questionnaire from 26 sample villages of 7 gaon panchayats out of the 144 villages and 12 gaon panchayats under revenue circles of the block to access the study problem perfectly. To find out the impact of Women development programmes to empower the women.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To empower the women of Dimoria block 4 major women development programmes are implemented by the government:

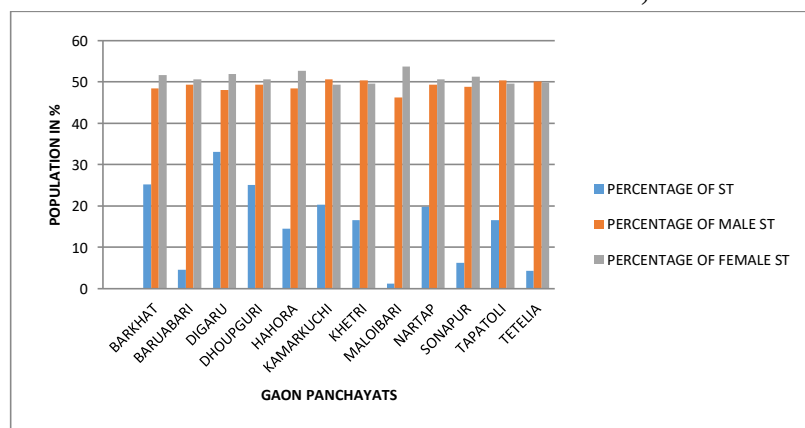
Women Specific Programmes

1. Integrated Scheme for Women Empowerment
2. Balika Samridhi Yojana
3. Kishori Shakti Yojana
4. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana

Other Development Programmes:

1. Rural Development Programmes
2. Panchayati Raj Programmes
3. Agriculture and Irrigation Programmes
4. Animal Husbandry Programme
5. Medical and Health Programme

FIGURE NO.1 GAON PANCHAYAT WISE SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION OF DIMORIA DEVELOPMENT BLOCK, 2011

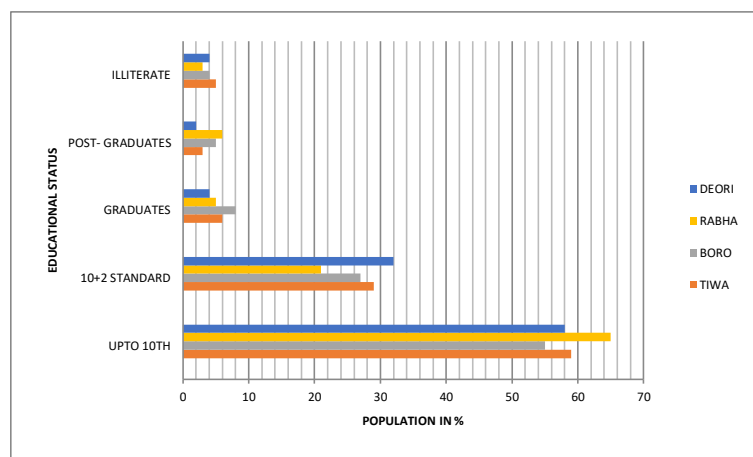


SOURCE: CENSUS OF INDIA, 2011

From the above table and figure, it is observed that the distribution of tribal population is uneven among the gaon panchayats. The male sex ratio (50.63 per cent) is higher than the female sex ratio (49.37 per cent) of the total population. On the other hand, the ST male sex ratio (49.42 per cent) is lower than the ST female sex ratio (50.58 per cent). The highest ST population is concentrated in Kamarkuchi GP (20.28 per cent) and the lowest is in Maloibari GP (1.18 per cent).

Household survey (25.57 per cent) of tribal communities has been done by following stratified random sampling with the help of a detailed questionnaire from 26 sample villages of 7 gaon panchayats out of the 144 villages and 12 gaon panchayats under revenue circles of the block to access the study problem perfectly. The primary survey or data collection was done on the basis of the distance of the villages from Guwahati city, population structure of the villages, ST population concentration among the villages, panchayat wise distribution of various tribal communities, the location of villages from NH 37 and so on. The extreme remote areas of the block were also surveyed to get a distinct picture regarding the implementation and benefits of women empowerment programme by the Government.

FIGURE NO.2 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN PERCENTAGE



SOURCE: PRIMARY SURVEY

Education leads to knowledge and self confidence. It plays a vital role in decision making and empowerment of women. The above table figure out the educational status among the tribal women. Majority of the women had the educational qualification up to 10th standard and then followed by 10+ 2 standard. The rate of illiteracy is low among the women. The percentage of literacy is highest among the Rabha women (97 per cent) and lowest among the Tiwa women (95 per cent).

FIGURE NO. 3

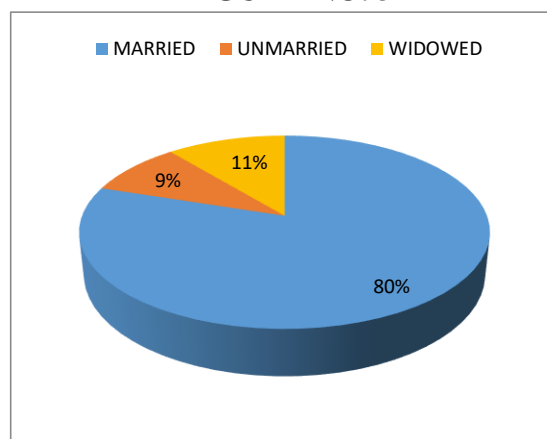


FIGURE NO. 4

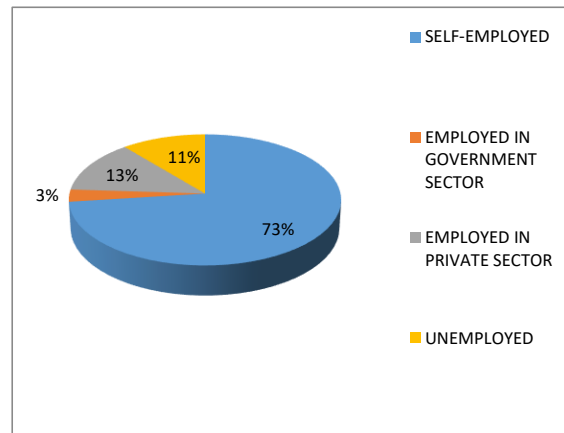


Table no.3 shows that majority of women are married, while only 9 per cent are unmarried and remaining 11 per cent are widowed in the study area. Occupation wise classification of the women is shown in table no. 4. The table reveals that most of the women are either self-employed (73 per cent) or employed in private sectors (13 per cent). A few women are engaged in Government sector (3 per cent).

Integrated Scheme for Women Empowerment:

Integrated scheme for women empowerment is also named as Swayamsidha. This programme was initiated for the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) launched in February, 2001. The long term objective of the programme was holistic empowerment of women through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all the ongoing sectoral programmes by improving access of women to micro-credit, economic resources, etc. This is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The Scheme had been able to provide a forum for women empowerment, collective reflection and united action. The programme was implemented in 650 blocks of the country and 67971 women SHGs have been formed benefiting 9, 89,485 beneficiaries. Dimoria is one of the benefited block among the 650 blocks of the country. The scheme came to an end in March 2007. Though the programme is over, the women of the block is still continuing SHG in a greater extent. They have got the source to livelihood with a self -sustained income. Till date there are approximately 1800 SHGs in Dimoria block out of which 325 are functioning in the surveyed villages.

TABLE NO 1. IMPACT OF INTEGRATED SCHEME FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ON ST WOMEN

INTEGRATED SCHEME FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT		
ANNUAL INCOME PER ST HOUSEHOLD	BEFORE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISWE (UPTO FEBRUARY 2001)	AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISWE (FEBRUARY 2001- MARCH 2007)
LESS THAN 10000	56.6	7.2
10000-20000	30.4	20.7
20000-30000	12.2	51.6
ABOVE 30000	2.1	22.1

SOURCE: PRIMARY SURVEY

It is observed from the above table that the level of income of the ST women increased from 12.2 per cent to 51.6 per cent and 2.1 per cent to 22.1 per cent for the income groups 20000-30000 and above 30000 respectively. On the other hand, for the income groups i.e. less than 10000 and 10000-20000, the level of income was decreased from 56.6 per cent to 7.2 per cent and 30.4 per cent to 20.7 per cent respectively.

Balika Samridhi Yojana:

The Balika Samridhi Yojana started in 1997 is an important initiative of the government to raise the status of the girl child. The schemes’ aims at changing the negative attitude of families and communities towards the girl child, to increase enrolment and retention of girls in schools, to raise the marriage age of girls in schools to create income opportunities ad activities. A series of incentives are incorporated into the Yojana, such as a gift of Rs. 500/- to the mother on delivery of a baby girl and the condition of an annual scholarship for the girl child education.

TABLE NO. 2. IMPACTS OF BALIKA SAMRIDDHI YOJANA ON ST GIRLS

ENROLLMENT OF ST GIRL STUDENTS			MARRIGE AGE OF ST GIRLS		
CLASSES	BEFORE BSY	AFTER BSY TO TILL DATE	MARRIGE AGE	BEFORE BSY	AFTER BSY
I-V	68.11	92.2	BELOW 15	74.3	11.2
VI-VIII	21.3	90.31	15-25	20.33	64.1
IX-X	9.1	61.7	ABOVE 25	6.1	25.6

SOURCE: PRIMARY SURVEY

The above table shows that the enrolment of the ST girls have been tremendously growing after the implementation of BSY. It becomes 68.11 per cent to 92.2 per cent under the class group I-V, 21.3 per cent to 90.31 per cent under class group VI-VIII and 9.1 per cent to 61.7 per cent under class group IX-X respectively. The marriages of the ST girls have also increased from lower age to upper age. The girl awareness programmes in schools under BSY, aware the girls from getting marriage in a lower age. Thus, these are showing positive impacts on the girl child of the block.

Kishori Shakti Yojana

This scheme seeks to empower adolescent girls, so as to enable them to take charge of their lives. It is viewed as a holistic initiative for the development of adolescent girls (11-18 years). The programme through its interventions aims at bringing about a difference in the lives of the adolescent girl. It seeks to provide them with an opportunity to realize their full potential. Very less impact has been noticed regarding this scheme. Most of the ST women are unaware and unknown about the scheme. Only 47.9 per cent adolescent ST girls are benefited by folic acid tablets provide by the Government in schools.

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana

The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana is a girl child prosperity scheme under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently. SSY account is to ensure a bright future for girl child in India. This Yojana is to facilitate them proper education and carefree marriage expenses. The scheme has well been accepted by the masses in wake of the financial security and independence it would provide to the girl child as well as their parents and guardians. This Yojana offers a small deposit

investment under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign. One of the benefits of the scheme is that it is quite affordable and offers one of the highest rates of interest.

Though the schemes have been implemented in the block, the tribal women of the surveyed villages were very less known about the programme till now. Only 16 .8 per cent tribal have created SSY account in various banks of the block. SSY (Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana) is a newly formed scheme by the BJP government, for which, the less involvement of ST households is noticed till date. In SSY a fix amount is deposited for the future usefulness of a girl child.

Impact of other Development Programmes:

1. Impact of Rural Development Programmes:
2. Impact of Panchayati Raj Programm
3. Impact Animal Husbandry Programme
4. Impact Medical and Health Programme

TABLE NO. 7 IMPACT OF OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMM ON TRIBAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES		% OF TOTAL ST BENEFICIARIES	% OF ST FEMALE BENEFICIARIES
RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES	MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT	25.5	4.1
	SWARNA JAYANTI GRAM SWAROJGAR YOJANA	38.3	6.7
	TOTAL SANITATION CAMPAIGN	32.4	5.13
	NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME	42.12	6.2
	INDIRA AWAS YOJANA	24.6	5.6
PANCHAYATI RAJ PROGRAMMES	PANCHAYAT MAHILA EVAM YUVA SHAKTI ABHIJAN	12.6	4.1

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROGRAMMES	PIGGERY FARMING	13.3	2.3
	POULTRY VENTURE CAPITAL FUND	37.5	3.1
MEDICAL AND HEALTH PROGRAMMES	NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH MISSION	42.8	17.5

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act reduces poverty and gave a large number of tribal women their first opportunity to earn cash income. 4.1 per cent ST women are benefited by MGNREGA out of 25.5 per cent total ST beneficiaries. But, in most of the areas of Dimoria block the MGNREGA work has stopped for a long time for which the economic condition become unstable again among the ST women.

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY) was to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaries) above the Poverty Line by ensuring significant sustained level of income over a period of time. It strived to achieve the objective by organising the rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilization, their training and capacity building and involving them into the various income generating activities. The SHG approach helped a lot to the poor in building their self-confidence through community action. Interactions in group meetings and collective decision making enabled them in identification of their needs and resources. Very recently the scheme has been renamed and modified as National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). In the surveyed households 6.7 per cent women are benefited out of 38.3 per cent ST beneficiaries of the block.

The total sanitation campaign benefits the tribal women by providing individual household latrines in the study area. 5.13 per women are benefited by TSC.

Under NSAP the ST women are facilitate by Indira Gandhi old age pension scheme, widow pension scheme, Annapurna etc. 6.2 per cent ST women are benefited by this programme.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana, previously Indira Awas Yojan, is a social welfare flagship programme, created by the Indian Government, to provide housing for the rural poor in india. 5.6 per cent ST women are benefited by this programme.

The Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan empowers the tribal women in the three phases of Panchayati Raj system. The main objective of this abhiyan is to enable women and young panchayat leaders to come together. 4.1 per cent women are benefited by this programme.

Piggery farming become as a very good source of economic strength among the tribal women of the study area. Most of the piggery farms are run by SHGs under Animal Husbandry Programme.

Poultry venture capital fund is another self sustaining scheme under Animal Husbandry Programme. The tribal women empower themselves by running poultry farming under SHGs. Out of 37.5 per cent tribal beneficiaries 3.1 per cent tribal women are benefited by this scheme.

The National Rural Health Mission have taken initiative to empower the tribal women in the study area. The tribal women are engaged as ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists). They are also benefited by Janani Suraksha Yojana, National Ambulance Service, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram etc. 17.5 per cent tribal women are benefited by this programme.

CONCLUSION

At the end, it can be stated that the impact of development programmes is growing day by day. But, still some of the tribal women of the block are unaware about the Government plans and programmes. They are self- sustain their lives depending on their traditional source of income, i.e. animal raring, wine production, weaving, selling vegetables in weekly, bi-weekly or daily market, working as hired labour in various agricultural, private companies as well as household sectors. Moreover, the changes observed in the tribal societies of the state indicate that the society is in a mid way between tradition and modernity. While tradition prevails in many respects, modernity is fast penetrating into the life of the people. Tribal women plays a major role in the co-management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock production, livestock production etc but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstition and many other social and cultural factors. The participatory role of tribal's in improving their living conditions by fully exploring natural endowments and alternative uses must find an appropriate place in the strategic approach. The contribution of ISWE is very much appreciable, which is the base of the present empowerment of rural ST women i.e. SHGs. Government should have take more initiatives to uplift the backbone of our society, so, that, the world will be develop in a greater extent.

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