Chapter – V

Conclusion

The present work on tribal women empowerment has been mainly done because of its great relevance. In fact empowerment has become bug word in the contemporary era. The work has been carried out in six villages of two districts of the state of Chhattisgarh, India. To make it sociologically relevant, various concepts have been used for orientation as well as interpretation.

Structural Functional approach has been followed to understand the tribal societies. Included understanding of their social relationships various networks and aspects of gender relationships, here an attempt has been made to analyze changes as well because empowerment itself produces change, it is not the cup of tea of the traditional and conservative Indian societies.

Empowerment is a product of modern society which implies structural change. Normally in strong traditional societies like India total structural change are not found i.e., change of structure. However, Change in structure means continuity and change is found in our society. Further, in case of such change, continuity dominates. For changing a system or some aspects of the system people get choices and alternatives. They use such choices which represent the whole community. Further, choice has to be used with the element of responsibility; it means they are not changing the structure.

(218)
Besides this feminist ideologies have also been used, they are: feminist, liberalism: feminist essentialism; feminist socialism and feminist post-modernism.

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter I is introduction which deals with the theoretical background, review of literature, objectives of the study and field methods and experiences. The second chapter deals with the area and the people. It includes a detailed discussion of Chhattisgarh, its two districts named, Raigarh and Jashpur Nagar and the six villages namely Chhal (Village A), Miriguda (Village B), Khalbora (Village C), Tamta (Village D), Palidih (Village E) and Buldega (Village F) which have been intensively studied.

The third chapter deals with the socio economic status of the people, a total number of 300 female respondents were studied. They belonged to six tribes: 86 respondents from Oraon tribe, 80 from Kanwar, 64 from Baiga, 48 from Birhor, 06 from Pahari Korwa and 16 from Gond tribe. The respondents were from 6 villages namely Chhal (Village A), Miriguda (Village B), Khalbora (Village C), Tamta (Village D), Palidih (Village E) and Buldega (Village F).

50 respondents from each village were taken. Respondents belonging to all six tribes were found in village C (Khalbora), Birhor and Pahari Korwa were not found in village A (Chhal), B (Miriguda), D (Tamta), and E (Palidih). Birhor, Pahari Korwa and Gonds were not found in village B (Miriguda) and F (Buldega). Baiga, and Gonds were not found in village B (Miriguda) and F (Buldega).

Chapter IV deals with the factors of empowerment like decision making, political participation, patriarchal inclination, violence against women, physical and mental torture, awareness regarding various things
like development programme, Panchayat, NGO activities, SHG activities, selection of spouse etc.

Coming to the objectives of the study as said earlier it has five objectives. Here I will try to explain how these objectives are fulfilled.

The first objective was to study the socio economic status of the tribal women, which has been dealt in chapter III. As said earlier the study area is dominated by the tribals. 52% pursued their own tribal religion whereas, a few pursued both Hinduism and Christianity (i.e., 19.7%) (see table- 3.4). Majority of the respondents were having nuclear families (i.e., 80%) only a few have joint families (i.e., 16.3%) (see table- 3.6). Most of the families were small families having three children (i.e., 62.7%), only 37.3% families had more than three children (see table- 3.7). Those who had many children they said they were unaware about family planning and some others were interested in having a male child.

The main family occupation in the area consisted of five types: agriculture, service, business, agricultural labours and non-agricultural labour (see table 3.10) Most of the people followed agriculture and agricultural labourer as occupation. Only a few pursued business or are in some service. A majority of respondents did agricultural labour or some other type of labour. All of them managed day to day activities of the household but simultaneously almost all of them did some kind of work outside home.

The monthly income of the family did not very much in the area, say it is between less than 1000 to little more than 5000(see table -3.11). Most of the respondents were married. Early marriage was found in about 1/3 rd women but they belong to the old age group. Today, gradually the age at marriage is increasing (see table-3.13). Marriage prestation has been customary among the tribals particularly in terms of giving bride (220)
wealth and bride price, which is almost mandatory for every groom. However, these days under the influence of non – tribal Hindu neighbours the practice of dowry has been on the rise. 61.3% respondents gave dowry in their marriages (see table -3.16)

Most of the people had Kutch houses which are only one room houses. Most of the houses did not have proper ventilation. For drinking water facilities people mostly relied on hand pumps and they stored water in closed containers. Most of the houses did not have toilets. In this manner the socio economic status of the people shows some empowerment from the past in terms of income and rise in marital age.

The second objective was to analyze the educational achievement and growth of children in the area.

Similarly the literacy rate is also on the rise in 30% respondents were illiterate and the rest 70% were literate. The reason of illiteracy has been mainly the distance of the school. In case of girl’s education, it was because of the parent’s negative attitude towards girl’s education. Mothers were not able to help their children in their studies became they were not literate or less educated. However, people knew about various educational programmes run by Chhattisgarh Government and Government of India.

A majority of people want their daughters to be educated and well employed. Regarding health and medicinal practice people followed doctors either in government hospitals or in private clinics. Most of the children in the area were vaccinated. The children were interested in many extracurricular activities like games, music, drawing, painting, debate and essay writing. A majority of the children helped in various manners doing household work. Children were having bad habit as well: smoking bidi, cigarette, chilam; chewing tobacco, pan masala; taking
drugs, ganja, bhang, opium and taking alcohol. This is found among only older children. On the other hand among the respondents most of them had the above bad habits. Incidence of Polio has become rare. Most of the people were not aware about balanced diet, hence, suffered from malnutrition.

The third objective was to analyze the political participation of the tribal women. Earlier political participation was rare in tribal area but gradually participation increased particularly after independence. The introduction of Panchayati Raj System was a major result of such participation. Today everybody is aware about Panchayati Raj, Political parties and elections (see table-4.37).

People had mixed opinion on women contesting election. However, Most of them said that they should become members of panchayat as there is reservation for women in the panchayat. Further, women were also response about mahila mandal participation. Most of them participated in gram sabha meeting. In this manner political socialization is becoming active and rewarding among the tribal women of Chhattisgarh.

The fourth objective was to understand women’s role in decision making process. This is a crucial issue for women empowerment. Generally speaking what we have read so for, it is understood that the tribal women’s decision making ability and power is little better that the non tribal women. The may be a thing of the past and today it is a myth. It may be the result of the influence of intense patriarchal system of the neighbouring non-tribal groups. Coming to the field area a few women could take final decision regarding purchase of household goods and other money matters (see table-4.44). The same is the case with decision making in the family regarding property (table-4.45).
Regarding their own education invariable their parents, husbands and in laws took the decisions. In the matter of selection of the spouse of children women could hardly say anything (see table-4.49). thus is clear that decision making for women has not improved much, they still have to depend upon their parents, parents in laws and husbands.

The fifth objective of the research was to analyze the tribal women’s awareness and participation in government and non-government development programmes such awareness is gradually increasing but probably only among the educated ones for example maximum women did not know the legal provisions on protection of women including the domestic violence act (see table-4 )

Most of them knew about the planned development programme of the government but a few participated in it. Regarding NGO activities most of them aware about them, only a few participated in it. Anganwadi has been a successful programme which has resulted in both development and motivation among women and children in rural and tribal areas and there is no exception in my field area. People have whole heartedly participated in the anganwadi activities (see table- 4)

Knowledge and participation in self Help Groups have been satisfactory in the area (see table-4)

It has really help people in getting some income. Regarding the impact of forest act on tribal life only a negligible few say it has brought positive change in their lives.

Many people were not aware about forest acts. In this manner there has been a mixed response regarding awareness of and participation in development programme by the government and the NGOs.
The above discussion leads us to the idea of how a society changes into a new phase or era and how it rejects a few things and adjusts to a few things. There is always a resistance to development and change by every traditional and conservative society not only that even some times advanced societies also resist to change. Oommen (2009) said that subsistence economies which serve basic needs are not peopled by deprived people. They are defined as poor and deprived by the western theorist because they do not participate in the market economy. These people are first labelled as poor by western theorist and then advised to development. Development is not their felt need, their natural aspiration. Poverty is first invented and developed is then prescribed to eradicate poverty. Colonialism ended and modernity (development) took over and cocalization, McDonaldalization, Disneyfication came in. The dream of development is over, what is required is not more development but a different regime of truth and perception.

However, this is one side of the story because people in the tribal areas are benefitted largely the mainstream perspective of development. It is state’s development process or state sponsored programmes run by NGOs.

Coming over to issue of empowerment of tribal women in Chhattisgarh, it is clear that they are also undergoing through a phase of transition. As it is the tribal women are already empowered in the sense their status is little better than their non-tribal counterparts, notwithstanding the domestic violence against women. Such type of violence occur in the study area, if not frequently, it’s a routine feature. Drunken husbands invariable slap or push women in a fit of raze. However, various schemes of the Government like health, education, nutrition, governance, Panchayati Raj etc. have benefitted the women.
Older women are not much educated, hence are not able to impart their duties like teaching and guiding their daughter at home.

When we analyze the social structure you can easily visualize status quo. It means continuity of the structure has been very strong with some minor changes. For example the health care system consists of both traditional practices, educational system is modernized through formal education, and communication system is also modernized through telephone and mobile phone, entertainment system has been modernized through watching video and television channels.

However, the mind set has not much changed towards patriarchy, patriliny and son preference. People are able to implement some choice and alternatives which does not change the core structure. It can be called change in structure with feminist liberalism ideas. We have not witnessed change of structure in our subcontinent, hence, tribal societies are no exception. People are adaptive to development programmes up to some extent. Societies and culture do not change overnight, it takes time.

Further, intensive research on a large scale to provide more inside into the issue of empowerment. However, this piece of finding has definitely made us understand women as persons and as integral part of the society.