

EMPOWERMENT OF LAMBANI WOMEN A- CASE STUDY IN SHIVAMOGGA DISTRICT IN KARNATAKA

Author

Dr. Dhananjaya

Sir. M.V. Govt. Arts and commerce college

Abstract

There are many dimensions to social discrimination and exploitation in our country. In the first place, in rural India the status of women is highly insignificant and she is treated as just a child bearing machine. All women are subject to exploitation at family level and in society in our villages and hamlets. The second aspect is the exploitation done to women belonging to Schedule Caste and Schedule tribe. They are not given freedom by their own family members. They act as per the direction of the male head. Their skill, talent, knowledge and prowess go unnoticed. The third dimension examined in this research work is the exploitation of Banjara or Lambani women. Their contribution to family economy in terms of income generation and product creation is in par with the males of this community. The rural society in general and the male Banjara persons at family treat Banjara women as second grade members without giving them any privilege to have access to economic resources and they are not involved in decision making process. Although Lambani women make more or less equal contribution to build and develop family economy they are subject to discrimination both by family members and public.

This article examines various facets of discrimination as well as impact. It focuses the banjara community in Shivamogga district and exhibits silver line with the hope that there is improvement in socio-economic attitude and intensity of discrimination is gradually fading in socio economic aspect. This community has registered substantial transformation over the years to attain and enjoy a better socio-economic status. But discrimination persists in blood of human beings.

INTRODUCTION:

The current study is an attempt to understand the concept of empowerment of banjara women through education, employment, political preference, government schemes. Empowerment as a strategy was basically formulated to bring about development of the excluded women groups in the society. Apart from striving for

narrowing down differences along lines of caste, religion, region, gender and class base discrimination was also covered.

Equality is an in born quality of all living creatures, especially human beings. All are equal by birth. Similarly, all equal before law. There could be no discrimination between man and woman on the basis of gender, caste, religion and language nationality citizenship or any such factors. These arguments hold good for all time because the world has witness discrimination mainly on two bases. One is gendering base discrimination and the other is class base discrimination. In India while gender base discrimination against woman is a common element among all classes of people caste-based discrimination of people in society has assumed significant dimensions and has gained social concern with the passage of time.

Viewed from this angle we notice that in our social spectrum woman are not only subject to grave violence but also, they are the victims of gender-based discrimination. There are innumerable instances in support of this humiliating brutal treatment to woman in India. When we observed the social phenomena, it is understood gender-based discrimination is a matter of serious concern in which woman is looked down upon in all backward communities, schedule caste and schedule tribe people and such other communities. Among the scheduled caste people there is one group of people called the lambanis or the banjaras. While these people enjoy all benefits of reservation given to scheduled caste people, they are not different from others in so far as gender discrimination is concerned. Among the people of banjara community for many centuries woman was deprived of education, social gathering and employment. With the passage of time no considerable transaction was noticed. While this community has its settlement in all most all the states of India there is one common factor and that is gender-based discrimination against woman. This discrimination is not only from within the community but it is also from people both men a woman belonging in to other community. Therefore, a strong case is built in favor of political empowerment of banjara woman so that their rights and privileges are protected. The process empowerment is not all that easy. The community is affected by blind and superstitious beliefs, religious dogmas and conventions. Their education background is abysmally low and therefore the community has not been able to realize the capacity or potential or female population in enriching family economy local economy and national economy. It is in this context an attempt is being made by the researcher to examine the process of political empowerment banjara woman in Karnataka. Many supporting evidences have been placed in background to develop this research work.

There is social discrimination in all nations, in some countries it is dominant and distinctly discernible and in some nations it is conspicuous. This discrimination happens based on social discrimination, racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic and such other factors. There is no society or community of nations which is free from any kind of socio-economic discrimination among people. Anthropologist, sociologist, economist and political thinkers argue that life starts with discrimination and ends with exploitation. In other words, it can be stated that

discrimination is visible and cognizant in the form of exploitation of the poor, weak and down trodden by the rich and upper-class people. This is very strange. It is because biologically all human beings have similar behavior, appearance and the life. It is on account of geographical factors that there could be change in their culture, tradition and practices. Yet the community breeds and accepts a system in which some are pushed backwards and exploited by the strong people in society. Two kinds of exploitations have been identified.

The first kind of exploitation is the one the large majority is exploited by the minority to which there is support or no rejection from a group of people belonging to the majority. In this case the rich or the haves have a tendency or inclination to exploit the poor or they have nots. For this kind of exploitation money income or wealth or richest is not the only factor on which discrimination or exploitation is based. It takes place on the basis of social status, culture, tradition, life style, authority and will. It is believed that this kind of exploitation and discrimination is universal in nature. In other words, it is prevalent or prevailed at some point in time in all societies. At this movement a reference can be made to Karl marks who identified the case of the labor or proletariat being exploited by a small minority of rich people known as Capitalist. According to him cash based socio-economic discrimination is more acute and serious than the one based on caste factor.

The second type of discrimination is prevalent in most of the families especially in Asia and South Africa. This discrimination and exploitation is popularly recognized as gender-based discrimination in which a woman is exploited by her male counterpart. It is hard to believe that discrimination of women happens even in educated and well to do families. In all male dominate societies woman is subject to exploitation. Every man criticizes this phenomenon at his own level ends up in exploiting his female counterpart at home. The large majority of women is meek weak, and under privileged. It submits itself and becomes the victim of exploitation with a strong conviction that this state of affair is the unwritten fate and destiny of a woman. In fact this has been strongly opposed by women thinkers and activists. Legal protection has been enforced to minimize or ovoid gender exploitation. But this exploitation is a silent killer in most of the families.

So far as gender-based discrimination is concerned there is very strong feminist movement across the world over the years. Many feminist writers have launched strong protest and fight against women being exploited by men. The argument is very much in favor of liberation of women from exploitation and confirmation of all kinds of equality to men and providing confirmation. Complete awareness is being created about this and many governments have made legal provisions for prevention of gender-based discrimination and exploitation. In western part of the world, Europe and the U.S. it is high rate of literacy in society in general and among women in particular which has insulated women from discrimination and exploitation. In these countries the process of empowering women or women empowerment has gone a long way ahead. But in backward countries engulfed by scriptures doctrines, dogmas, blind believes and baseless tradition there is no stop to gender discrimination and exploitation. Even legal measures have not been able to bring desired results in these countries including India.

However, since the beginning of the twentieth century in most countries of the Asia there have been continuous efforts by social reformers, liberals and voluntary organizations to fight against all kind of social discrimination to women, minorities, schedule caste, schedule tribe and such other people. Protests have been demonstrated in several places and matter published in the newspaper. In the recent past the electronic media brings to lime light and gives wide publicity to any kind of discrimination done to any section of people in the society. The governments including India have formulated and enacted many legal measures to provide strong security to the hitherto exploited people. Social and familial discrimination is now treated as a legal offence and punishable as per the provision of law, rules and regulations. In spite of this there is a lot of social and gender-based discrimination in our country. Even after seventy years of India's independence if one group of people is exploited by the other group means it is unpardonable and request intervention by Public Authority at all levels to ensure dignity of lives and comfortable living to all people. In other words, all people must enjoy or possess similar equal social status. The community as a whole must support this cause and refrain from resorting to social discrimination and exploitation and must consider social discrimination and exploitation as a heinous crime.

There are many dimensions to social discrimination and exploitation in our country. In the first place, in rural India the status of women is highly insignificant and she is treated as just a child bearing machine. All women are subject to exploitation at family level and in society in our villages and hamlets. The second aspect is the exploitation done to women belonging to Schedule Caste and Schedule tribe. They are not given freedom by their own family members. They act as per the direction of the male head. Their skill, talent, knowledge and powers go unnoticed. The third dimension examined in this research work is the exploitation of Banjara or Lambani women. Their contribution to family economy in terms of income generation and product creation is in par with the males of this community. The rural society in general and the male Banjara persons at family treat Banjara women as second grade members without giving them any privilege to have access to economic resources and they are not involved in decision making process. Although Lambani women make more or less equal contribution to build and develop family economy they are subject to discrimination both by family members and public.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AS A UNIVERSAL PHENOMINA:

It is only in theory and principle that all human beings are equal irrespective of factors such as race, caste, creed, color, sex, language, region etc., but in reality, there is no equality. Another inherent aspect of inequality is men treating women without giving them equal status in families and societies. This is discrimination based on gender. Unfortunately, over thousands of years the socio-economic system in all the countries of world has developed a model in which the male is dominant element and the female is dependent and subordinate element.

This tendency continued for many centuries in all countries. But in recent decade's awareness and awakening has developed among females in some parts of the world. This has made them to develop a feeling that they are in no way inferior to men and they have right to entitlement of all privileges, benefits, positions, and rights which men enjoy. Women have begun to claim equality with men both in family and social life. It is great injustice done to woman if she is looked down upon and subject to discrimination by men both at home and in society. This assumed the shape of feminist movement in Europe and remaining western part of the world. The initial movement for claiming equality for women got ignited in France, United Kingdom and Scotland. Gradually it's spread like wild fire in other countries which gave rise to feminine group and feminist movement in which only women were engaged. This assumed wider dimension and the movement for women liberation and equality became universal. Women argue that they are eligible to have right and equal share in all walks of life including active politics and economic affairs.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

This is complementary to women leadership. Women empowerment means entitlement of women to earn resources to have access to resources and be a part of decision-making process. It also indicates women as freedom to spend money. Empowerment of women is a very significant factor in ensuring gender equity and providing a better socio-economic status to women. It can also be stated that women empowerment leads to an improving in position of women in terms of having access to economic resources and become a member of decision-making process. It must be admitted that women empowerment is a great move towards gender equality.

It must be noted that the argument that women must be treated in par with men and they must enjoy equal status in all sphere of life can become effective and meaning full only with empowerment of women. Otherwise, equality is meaningless. However, it is a commendable aspect that the process of empowerment of women is slowly gaining momentum in all countries of the world. This is determined by a cluster of factors. They are highlighted below.

1. By birth they should be no discrimination on gender basis. It is because gender difference is biological and physiological in nature. Gender is a social construct. It should not dismantle equality.
2. Education is an important factor in the process of women empowerment. Girls are as much eligible and entitled to have education as boys are. So, girls must not be prevented or checked from becoming literate or educated. The popular belief is that if a woman is educated the entire family is educated. Literate and educated women behave and act with great sense of responsibility, commitment and involvement. Educated women has the capacity to work with equal efficiency in schools, colleges, hospitals, government offices, banks, insurance departments, business, administration and other spheres in public life. She acquires skill, talent, knowledge and ability to handled complicated situation and finds solutions for progress of the community. In fact, educated women have

made significant contribution in the development of any community. If education gives her thinking capacity, new outlook and confidence to overcome challenges in family and public life. Thus, education is a strong favorable factor in support of women empowerment that results in overcoming gender-based discrimination.

3. The role of women becomes stronger and more competent as she manages her family very efficiently and works outside the family with great productivity. A confident woman is capable of acquiring social positions and status. When she goes away from home for discharge of duties, she gets exposed to externalities. This exposure enables her to develop skill and qualities to negotiate challenges and come out successful. This provides her awareness and enlightenment to perform still better. In fact, in all areas a rare women have opportunity to work; women have either perform better than man or equally well with man. She becomes a source of income procurer to the family which increases comforts and socio-economic status of that family.

4. When she began to earn, she will have access to economic resources. Her role becomes obviously important. She will have a role in decision making process. This provides her high level of confidence. Income earned by her ensures greater security to the whole family and her words carry weight. She acquires ability to manage family affairs solely and individually. She can guide male members in family for better family management. Her exposure in public life enables her to develop leadership quality. Ultimately in the event of casualty at home instead of crying and putting her hands on head she will be able to lead the family successfully and efficiently towards better life. This is what women empowerment provides to the family as well as society.

5. Another factor which necessitates women empowerment becomes clear with a comparison of home bound women with employed women or women in public life. Due to casualty if the male head of the family succumbs to fatality the jobless, educated or uneducated widow has to panic herself as future is bleak for her and family including children. She has to face agony, poverty, misery and social ill-treatment as she has no role in earning income to family. On the other hand, if a woman is employed or is in business or in politics or in public life, she may feel grief when casualty occurs but as the capacity to recover fast to lead her family or business to success. A woman who has got social exposure does not lose confidence. On the other hand, she performs with greater responsibility to provide security to her family, success to her profession or business. Since she got education and has got to economic resources she will and as to manage family or business more effectively and efficiently. This is very essential because in our society men are not willing to accept women as their equals. They always prefer to dominate and have upper hand in all spheres of life including family. To overcome this handicraft or bad state of affairs the process of women empowerment is a strong and effective remedy. Such instances motivate other women to gain empowerment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The current research study focuses on issues connected with gender discrimination, low education level, socio-economic backwardness and inequality in cultural status of lambani women in comparison with women of other communities in Indian Society and in the study area. It is necessary to understand the position of Lambani women, factors responsible for their low status, poor resources, low rate of literacy, unemployment poverty etc., If these factors are examined it will be easier to direct the efforts of Policy formulation for providing improved socio-economic status to Lambani women. It is understood that if effective policies are executed and awareness is developed among lambani people it is possible to bring about drastic change in their life style and standard of living. Therefore, it can be stated that a review of the past sociological position of lambani women will constitute a plat form from which efforts can be initiated and executed for upliftment and betterment. The desire is to empower lambani women both economically and politically and to bring them to mainstream in public life as well as enable them to acquire status and position in public life and politics. Thus, the present research study examines and prevailing situation, problems that haunt and intimidate lambani women from getting public exposure and offer remedial measures to overcome the prevailing situation and create better and lucrative prospects for lambani women.

Provision of quality education, employment opportunity, scope for participation in socio-cultural programs and events and motivation to take part in active politics, under take business, direct social services, lead self-help group are some of the factors for which have to be effectively managed for the socio-economic empowerment of Lambani women. All these are regarded factors which guide socio logical progress of the lambani community in general and lambani women in particular.

This study is an attempt to analyze the concept of empowerment of lambani women through economic aspects. Empowerment as a technique was basically formulated to bring about development of the weaker or vulnerable group in the society. Apart from striving for narrowing differences in tribes, caste, region, gender, socio-economic and income was also covered.

It can be rightly said that empowerment implies the right to decision-making and power of autonomy as well access to means of resources. Women can attain empowerment if freedom is granted to her by the system along with the support of legal provisions. This implies that she must be provided with better and improved health services, training, financial support, social participation and enable her to develop leadership quality. If her words are given due weight age and she is given respect she desires she becomes confident, becomes a part of a decision-making process and confident. This in the reality is sociological upliftment of women in public life. This does take time as it requires change in attitude and system but it ends up in creating a better and harmonious atmosphere all around.

Keeping all these factors in view, the present study is intended to evaluate the empowerment of Lambani women a study in Shivamogga district with respect to only a few significant parameters such as gender discrimination, low education, unemployment, socio-economic status and income generation, in the study area. With this background the following objectives have been framed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is made:

1. To study the socio –economic, cultural status of Lambani women.
2. To analyse the educational and political status of lambani Women.
3. To assess the socio-economic problems confronting banjara women in their growth path.
4. To offer the policy prescription if any, for betterment of Lambani women.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

Keeping in view the objectives of the study the following hypothesis have been formulated for the present research work.

1. The Lambani women are neglected by modern society.
2. Lambani Women do not have good educational and social condition.
3. Lack of education is the root cause of their backwardness.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology plays vital role in determining different stages of research work. The present study has to focus on empowerment of Banjara women in Shivamogga district. After deciding upon the subject, the researcher, in consultation with the research supervisor went through the available literature on Banjara women. A review of literature revealed that there were practically no studies were made on Banjara women in Shivamogga district. Then the researcher contacted and had discussion with the experts on the subject such as executive members of Banjara Association, Banjara Gram Panchayat Members and Academicians from Banjara tribe, etc. The proposal or statement of the problem was finalized on the basis of discussion with these experts, who are experts in the field to provide the knowledge and information needed for the present research work.

SAMPLING DESIGN AND SIZE:

For the purpose of the study, the simple random sampling design is adopted. With the given time and manpower, it is decided to select a sample of 30 Tandas randomly from five taluks of Shivamogga district. These taluks are Bhadravathi, Shivamogga, Shikaripura, Thirthahalli and Soraba. From each taluk six Tandas have been chosen on random basis. But in Thirthahalli taluk Tandas are of fairly recent origin. There are few localities of Banjara people and it is indicated that there are five Tandas in the entire taluk. Therefore, all the five Tandas have been included in the present research study. Thus, the total number of Tandas is 29 for research study.

From each Tanda 10 women respondents are selected for gathering response and information to carry on research work. In addition, from each Tanda responses have been collected from five males of that community to counter and cross check the material relatively. Thus, it contains a total sample size of 450 respondents.

SOURCES OF DATA:

For a meaningful study and examination of the research problem the researcher has collected the relevant data and required information from two sources. These sources are

- 1) Primary Source and 2) Secondary Source.

PRIMARY SOURCE:

A well-structured questionnaire was prepared by the researcher on the basis of the experience gained in pilot survey. It contains aspects related to social, economic and political life of lambani women and focuses on issues such as poverty and income level, literacy and education, size of family, employment, property and belongings, participation in public affairs, political activities, leadership programs, and community services etc., the need of the research was explained to the respondents before taking their response. Intuition and observation technique was applied while the respondents gave their reaction to the questionnaire.

SECONDARY SOURCE:

The secondary data pertaining to nature of their work, empowerment of lambani women, education qualification and employment of lambani women in Shivamogga district was collected from books, research articles and papers was collected. The researcher gathered information from the website of Karnataka Government about the programs and schemes for lambani community. Many government reports and working papers were also consulted. The researcher visited university library and central library for reference material.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS:

The main objective of the present study is to identify the empowerment of lambani women in the Shivamogga district by analyzing socio-economic, political, educational, employment and income status of lambani women in the study area. The primary data collected thorough interview schedules has been organized in

a tabular form; various simple statistical tools such as average and percentage have been applied to draw the inference. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources were reduced to tabular form for purpose of data evaluation and interpretation. The objective and the hypothesis of the study were kept in view while classifying the data for interpretation. Further, to test the hypothesis the Chi-square method has been used. The significance of the results obtained from the various statistical and econometric techniques have been statistically tested.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

The present study is of sociological in nature and therefore it is subject to a bit of subjectivity and emotion. The respondents hesitated a lot while responding to queries regarding their employment and income status and political involvement. To that extent the reality may get jeopardized. The secondary data has been collected for the study period and the earlier and the subsequent programs may fall out of the research work. It is natural there could be exaggeration or under statement in the reaction provided by the respondents. The concept of empowerment of lambani women is of fairly recent origin and therefore much information is not available. There is a lack of awareness among the community people about the programs meant for them. They were reluctant to respond to issues like harassment in family from spouse in laws and relatives, education and employment status etc., some of them claimed that they knew nothing. This kind of reaction could be a limiting factor for better analysis and evaluation. However, care has been exercised to minimize such deviations including errors of call exhibited by them in responding to questionnaire. Illiteracy and lack of exposure came in the way of effective response and it also made primary data collection a time-consuming process. But for these limitations the research work is quite useful in terms of offering remedial measures for ameliorating the problems confronting Lambani women.

CONCLUSION:

The present research study is an attempt to examine empowerment of lambani women a case study in Shivamogga district in Karnataka. It is stated that, Lambani culture and traditions are rich and the unique costumes of Banjaras are attractive. As such, Lambani women are experts in handicrafts to stitch and embroidery occupations, in this respect, it is essential to train Lambani women to engage in these occupations. Further, self-employment of Banjaras and development of Tandas is essential. The Banjaras are poor and believe in orthodox rituals such as drinking of liquor, dedication of animals, child marriage, etc. and it is essential to organize awareness camps at Tandas against this practice. Further, Banjaras have faith on God men, witchcraft, evil spirits, black magic, etc. and it is also necessary to raise awareness of respondents against these blind beliefs. As indicated from the study, the Tandas are poor in terms of necessary facilities such as toilets, sanitation facilities, schools 'health centers, etc. and it is essential to arrange these facilities at each of Tandas. To improve the Tandas and hamlets of remote places the governments have to try to provide infrastructure facilities through the creation of separate Tanda development corporations or boards. The respective governments have to identify their basic

needs like socio-economic educational and cultural and employment and provide them reservation facilities based on their populations. Therefore, the respective government has to focus on providing rehabilitations, improving pure drinking water and sanitation facilities housing facilities and education.

Books for reference

1. Naik, Chandrashekar and ParameshaNaik D (2012) Banjara statistical Report Karnataka State, India, www.abbss.webs.com
2. Rathod, Tanaji (2012) Banjaras, The Forgotten Children Of India: Banjaras, the Forgotten Children of India: History unearthed, Karnataka Thanda Development Corporation Ltd, Bangalore, www.banjarathanda.kar.nic.in
3. Rathod, Govind (2014) Progress of Banjara In 21st Century after Independence, Banjara, September 15, www.m.goarbanjara.com
4. Rathod, Motiraj (2014) Ancient History of Gor Banjaras, Banjara News, August 26, www.m.goarbanjara.com
5. Self Study History (2015) Economic Life- Patterns And Prospects, Medieval India, January 3, www.selfstudyhistory.com
6. Singh, Vishnu Pratap (2002) Banjaras are Ancient Tribes not Raj puts, Presidential Remarks, All India Banjara Seva Sangh, New Delhi, India, August 20, www.lambadiwala.tk
7. Travel (2009) Lambani Tribe (Western India), Weblog, Tribes of India, July 8, www.tribes-of-india.blogspot.in
8. Varady, Robert Gabriel (1979) North Indian banjaras: Their evolution as transporters, South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies, May 8, 2:1-2, www.tandfonline.com

