



A study of the participation of Santhal Women in the Panchayati Raj System (With special reference to Godda District of Jharkhand)

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Abstract:- The passing of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 ushered in a new era in the federal democratic structure of the country and Panchayati Raj Institutions received constitutional status. This move aims to promote progress and development in all the rural areas. Along with this, it is the basic duty of the Panchayati Raj system to promote the welfare of women and ensure their participation in the Panchayati Raj system. Under this Panchayati Raj system, many facilities have been provided to all sections as per their needs. Article 243D makes provision for reservation of Scheduled Tribes in the Panchayati raj Institutions. This reservation is in proportion to their population and one-third (1/3) of it is reserved for women. As a result, there has been an increase in the participation of women at the Panchayat level in Godda district of Jharkhand. The women representatives elected or selected in the panchayati raj Institutions are able to raise the voice of these tribal women and as a result, their economic, social and political welfare is taken care of. This makes these women stronger in terms of education, self-confidence and economic status. These women have voluntarily increased their participation in politics, the effect of which can be seen on the Santhal women here. The Panchayati Raj system aims not only at rural

development but also at strengthening the position of women locally so that they are empowered to exercise their rights. After the implementation of Panchayati Raj system, women empowerment has grown rapidly which has also affected Santhal women as it has enabled these women to save and spread their culture and civilization. Today the situation is such that women in Santhal Pargana are participating strongly in politics. As a result, women are becoming very conscious about their rights and are moving forward strongly in the economic and educational fields. Local Santhal women said that they exercise their right to vote as per their wish and are trying to progress in every field. Most of these women are working women, they earn their income by hard labour and there are some educated women also who are employed. They also believe that women are becoming aware now and are making every possible effort to move forward on the path of progress and development. On this basis, it can be said that Santhal women are struggling to improve their social, economic, political and educational lives

Key words:- Women's rights, women's participation, tribal women, empowerment, Panchayati Raj and rural development

Women are benefiting from the implementation of the Panchayati Raj system, irrespective of their class. If we look at Santhal Pargana, Santhal women are also benefiting from Panchayati Raj system. The facts obtained revealed that through this system the women here are progressing a lot in political, social and economic spheres. Their self-confidence has also increased through empowerment due to which women are raising their voice in every field. There are some women who are members of the Panchayati Raj system. They raise the problems of women prominently and are also trying to create awareness. This Panchayati Raj system is having a positive impact on Santhal women. While women in rural areas are becoming aware, on the other hand, there are some women who do not have any resources due to which they are being

deprived of their rights. Nevertheless, the hardworking people are trying to improve their condition by doing manual labour. The benefit of this system has been availed by those women who are educated and are a little financially strong, but the women who are poor or illiterate or socially backward are still not able to avail the benefit of panchayati raj system. Nevertheless, women are raising their voice openly for their rights and trying to move forward.

Literature Review:- The history of Panchayati Raj system in the country is quite old. It has its roots in ancient Indian Institutions, where villages were small republics governed by Panchayats. The British destroyed the ancient republic by introducing the zamindari system, a land tenure system for revenue collection, and also ended women's participation in politics, making the situation even more dire. After independence, women have got freedom, equality, political participation and the right to express their views. Today women are strengthening their voice through political platforms (Shahni, 2009). Women constitute half the population of any country, hence development is not possible without their active participation, hence women empowerment is very important. Empowerment means providing women with political, social, or economic power. Women's participation in the political sphere is crucial for their development, especially in the political sphere as only through politicization can women become empowered. Women's political participation in India has always been a factor, but it remains minimal. To ensure full participation of rural women, 33 percent seats have now been reserved. So that women are more represented and are in the mainstream of development (Das, 2014). Panchayati Raj Institutions are considered as a means of good governance. It has been able to provide good governance due to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment by the Central Government. This amendment has been implemented to empower women belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes by ensuring them political status. As a result, women from

Scheduled Tribes are also giving their consent in political participation (H, 2018). The participation of women in Gram Panchayat has been increased after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment for women including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other disadvantaged class so that political transparency can be realized and participation of women in politics can be ensured. The reason behind increasing participation is that they should develop on social, economic and political basis and those women should be able to live their lives on their own. The representation of women from weaker sections is increasing, mainly due to affirmative action. Now in the present times, women are also becoming active because of education, awareness and politicization (Sharda & Kumar, 2023). Women's participation in Panchayati Raj is the result of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in India. These amendments have reserved seats for women, resulting in at least one-third of the seats at all levels in the Panchayati Raj system being reserved for women candidates so that women can be empowered. Even in the Panchayati Raj system, women have to face many challenges, yet the Panchayati Raj system has had a positive impact on the community of women participating in politics. Women in rural areas are also becoming aware these days and are strongly raising their issues (Kumar, 2023). Political empowerment of women is the most important aspect which provides them the ability to participate in the decision making process in any field. Yet, despite having a huge population of women, they are marginalized in politics due to social and economic constraints and those women are not politically aware. For the development and real empowerment of women, there is a need for continuous renewal of the political process on a democratic basis. Women participate in Panchayati Raj, or local bodies, as voters, as members of political parties, and sometimes as candidates. Elected women play a decisive role in many development initiatives and strengthen their positions (S, 2018). Panchayati Raj system provides grassroots democracy in our country today. It has given a new dimension to democratic decentralization in rural development and direct

administration. The Panchayati Raj system provides a definite place for women's participation in rural politics. It aims to bring about structural changes in the lifestyles of women through their political participation and provides them with opportunities to govern at the local level (Kumar, 2022).

After the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, the participation of women in the Panchayati Raj system has become active. But when it comes to the active participation of women of tribal society in the Panchayati Raj system, it becomes more special that in the present times, women of santhal tribe are also taking advantage of this system. Because their political participation has increased significantly and through this their social and economic status has also improved significantly. Leadership capabilities have also developed in women and these women are becoming aware of their rights and social consciousness is also developing in them as women are becoming aware. Santhal women say that under the Panchayati Raj system, women have also started understanding the political system on a local basis. They are gradually becoming aware of their rights and are also participating in all the development works done on rural basis and are strengthening their position. Santhal women believe that earlier there was no favourable system to get education and neither were there enough resources to get education but, in the present times they are focusing on all round development of future generations.

Research Gap:- The implementation of the Panchayati Raj system has had an empowering effect on all women and women from all sections have definitely benefited from it to some extent. But if we talk about the women of tribal society, the Panchayati Raj system has not had as much impact as it has had on the women of other societies. The women of Santhal tribal society have also started to avail the benefits of Panchayati Raj Institutions but their development is happening at a very slow pace. Therefore, this study is required to know what impact Panchayati Raj has had on the women of Santhal

tribal society. There is a need to study the women of the Santhal tribe in view of how much development they have achieved and how little research work has been done on the problems of the women of this society.

Objective:- Understanding the benefits that Santhal women receive through the Panchayati Raj system.

method of data collection:- What impact does the Panchayati Raj system have on the women of Santhal tribal society and how much they have progressed and developed through panchayati raj Institutions and how aware they are about this system. To obtain the relevant facts, qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used. Under qualitative research methodology, data has been collected from Santhal women using personal accounts and interview methods. Under quantitative research methodology, data is obtained through observation, reports and reviews etc.

In the study field work, data was collected by interviewing 50 Santhal women of Chhoti Kaithia village of Ghat Gamhariya Gram Panchayat under Mahagama tehsil of Godda district of Jharkhand s. This village comes under the rural area and the people here still maintain their cultural identity. There is very little impact of outside entry in this village, as this area falls under Santhal Pargana. Most of the people here belong to the Santhal community, due to which this community has a lot of influence in its province.

Analysis:- The status of women of Santhal community of Godda district under Santhal Pargana of Jharkhand state has been changing with time. Earlier these women were living their lives traditionally but ever since the Panchayati Raj system has been implemented, these women have been availing its benefits. They are trying to be active in every field as in this area most of the women of tribal society are registering their presence in political participation. They are raising voice for their rights . Women empowerment is also having an impact on Santhal women because their condition has

improved a lot in the present times. Since, Jharkhand is a tribal dominated state, the problems of these santhali women are also raised very prominently. As a result, politicization is also affecting the women of this society. Therefore, it can be said that the condition of Santhal women is improving gradually.

Importance of research:-

- For the development of tribal society, it is important that the problems of Santhal women should also be considered.
- The easiest way to reduce the gap between men and women in the Santhal society is to improve the status of women and empower them.
- To improve the condition of Santhal women, they should be encouraged for education, employment and political participation so that they can be aware of their rights.
- What impact has the Panchayati Raj system had on the women of Santhal society and what changes has this system brought about on a social basis.

conclusion:- Tribal society is dominant in Jharkhand as is evident from the fact that people from tribal society are becoming Mukhiya, Sarpanch, Zila Parishad and even Chief Minister. Reservation policy of the government is also helping these people make their political presence. In such a situation, the Panchayati Raj system has great importance in the tribal society. On the basis of the data obtained, it can be said that the Panchayati Raj system has had an impact on the Santhal society but the women of this society have not yet been able to progress that much. They are still socially, economically, politically, and educationally backward. Yet, empowerment is having an impact on these women as well. This is the reason why today women are becoming more active for their rights than before. Under the Panchayati Raj system, a lot of development is taking place in the rural areas, the benefits of which are being availed by these Santhal women. Panchayati Raj Institutions have enabled these women to raise their voice and provide the fruitful solution to their issues. The participation of santhal women in Panchayati raj system has opened the doors of their all round d