



Socio-Economy and Women Empowerment with Special Reference Maram Tribe Ramlung Village

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Abstract: This paper seeks to investigate and comprehend the ways in which women can achieve empowerment on a personal level. Since India's independence, numerous strategies have been implemented by successive central and state governments. These initiatives aimed at supporting women and girls are articulated within the framework of the Indian constitution. Many programs and organizations have also been initiated for the welfare of women. However, it is an undeniable truth that even after more than seven decades of Indian Independence, we still see that women are lagging behind men in every field. The idea of equal opportunity as expressed in the constitution of India is still a concept yet to be realized. In most societies, women do not enjoy and participate in decision-making. They do not have the freedom of mobility; their movements are strictly monitored not in the case of men. Economic and political decisions are always reserved for men. In terms of the property again they do not inherit, most decisions again are in the hands of men. This study seeks to explore various empowerment challenges encountered by women in Maram Ramlung Village, located in the Senapati District of Manipur.

Keywords: *Maram Tribe; Gender-related concerns; Senapati, Manipur*

1. Introduction

Women's empowerment is considered one of the most important priorities of the nation to attain sustainable development goals. For every society or nation to make progress, the contribution of women must be recognized. Hence it is important to note that any social, and economic policies and programs should be oriented towards gender equality. Empowerment of women would not be possible unless there is gender equality. Gender equality policies and programs do not necessarily ensure women's empowerment unless they can enjoy their constitutional and legal rights. They should be able to take part in the decision-making process in family, community, religion, etc. Empowering women should also enable women to realize their potential and capabilities.

The traditional values and customary institutional practices of the Naga society are dominated by men. Women do not have any rights over land. All political social and economic decision is taken by men. Most Naga village council bodies usually consider the core of the Naga society to be dominated by men and women do not have a voice. Historically gender-based roles in the Naga society are clearly defined, the role of men is to fight (warrior) and hunt, and women to take care of children and home. Freedom and equality remain the prerogative of men in the tribal of North East India.

This article is based on a study of women empowerment among the Maram Naga Tribe in the Senapati District of Manipur with specific reference to Ramlung Village. The article explores the factors causing women's disempowerment among the Maram. The objective of the study was to dissect women's decision-making and negotiation realities within the Maram household.

2. Methodology

This research paper adopts a descriptive and analytical framework. It employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both primary and secondary data to investigate socio-economic factors and women's empowerment, specifically focusing on the Maram tribe in Ramlung village, situated in the Senapati District of Manipur. Over 90 women from the village, aged between 18 and 65 years, participated in the study. Secondary data was gathered from available journals and referenced books.

3. Findings

The article is focused on the ability of women to make decisions at the individual level. It is important to understand if women enjoy the same socioeconomic status as men. The response of the research participants would shed light on this status. If a woman gets help from her husband for household work, or whether they take permission to visit relatives and markets are some important indicators of the status of women in society.

The idea of empowerment is an important issue for every individual. It is an idea where one can act or make decisions free from control and not under the discretion of someone else. It is also about individual dignity and honor, not at the expense of another.

Equal Socio-Economic Status (Men and women)

Regarding whether 'women enjoy equal socio-economic status with men', 66.3% of the participants disagree, 25.0% of participants strongly disagree, 6.3% of the participants agree and about 2.5% of the participants strongly agree. The majority of the women who participated in the questionnaire do not enjoy equal economic status with men. For any society to make progress, women must enjoy equal socioeconomic status.

Women's role in decision-making in society (socio-economic matters)

Regarding the findings, whether 'women should be allow to take decision making in the society (socio-economic matters)', 76.3% of the participants agree, 17.5% of the participants strongly agree, 3.8% of the participants strongly disagree and 2.5% disagree. Majority of the respondents that is 76.3% agree and 17.5% strongly agree that they should be allowed to take a decision in socio economic matters, whereas only 3.8% strongly disagrees.

Traditional Gender roles and Expectations

In regard to the question of whether 'Men should have a job and Women should look after family and household', majority of the participants that is 72.5% disagree, 25.0% of the participants strongly disagree, 2.5% of the participants agree.

Assistance from spouse

With question, of whether women get help from their husbands for household work, 36.3% of the participants indicated rarely, 30.0% of the participants indicated often, 27.5% of the participants indicated never and 6.3% of the participants indicated as always.

Permission for visiting relatives

On matter of taking permission, 'Do you take permission to visit relatives ?', the majority of the women that is 53.8% of the participants always take permission, 12.5% indicated often, 22.5% of the participants indicated rarely, and 11.3% of the participants indicated never.

Permission to go to the market

Again regarding the question, 'Do you take permission to go to market?', 43.8% indicated always, 27.5% of the participants indicated rarely, 13.8% of the participants indicated often, and 15.0% of the participants indicated never. The above two variables indicate the actual social status of women at home. Not able to make a decision, taking permission to visit her relatives and market.

Decision on non-agricultural activities (small business, wage labor, other services)

In regard to the question on, 'who take decision on non-agricultural activities (small business, wage labour, other services?)', 50.0% of the participants says joint decision, 31.3% of the participants says husband takes decision and 18.8% of the participants indicated wife makes the decision.

Decision on maintenance of the garden

In regard to the question, 'who takes decisions on the maintenance of the garden?', 56.3 % of the participants says wife, 28.89% says joint decision and 15.0 says the husband makes the decision. The finding suggest only in the matter of maintaining the garden, decision are taken majority by women or either a joint decision, which is a far better statistic as compared to the other variables.

Group Participation

Women empowerment gives a lot of advantages to the society as a whole. As a social being there must be equality of role and status of both male and female for better functioning of the society. Group participation and social activities give, security and broad mindedness to women. It helps them to explore their ideas and share with each other for better result of the society.

It helps them to be physically, mentally, and socially abled. Group participation is the only place where women can express their ideas and thoughts because it is a male-dominated society. Group participation educates women to be skilful and helps to adjust the things provided

to them. It also helps women to save their income to be economically independent in the future. In this research, a few questions are related to group participation. It is important to determine if they belong to a self-help group or any other organization and whether they need authorization to take part.

Participation in meetings village level

In regard to participation in meetings at the village level 63.8 % responded yes, and 36.2 did not get the opportunity to participate.

Member of any women's group

Regarding being a member of any women's group 45.0% are member of Self Help Group, 21.3% of the respondent are members of religious groups, 5.0% of the respondent are member of micro finance group, 7.5% are member of mutual help group and 21.3% are members of other groups.

Participation in women's group meetings

Regarding participation in women's group meetings 32.5 % responded they rarely participate, 48.8 % of the respondents participated often and 18.8% did not participate at all.

Permission to participate in a group

In regard to asking permission to participate in a group 42.5% of them responded yes they ask permission, 36.3 do not ask permission and 21.3 ask permission from the husband occasionally.

The findings focused on overall observation and information obtained from the data collection. Findings will help the researcher to check whether the objective of the purpose is fulfilled. Suggestion is made as per the finding and knowledge obtained through questionnaire of the respondent. The purpose of the suggestion in this chapter is to spread awareness for the coming research and better improvement of the research.

The subsequent sections were elaborate on the additional findings of this research study.

Age Distribution

It shows most of the respondents who participated in filling up the questionnaire are in the age group of 36 years and above which is 41.3%, respondents between the age group 29-35 25.0%, respondents between the age group 22-28 is 17.5% and age group between 18-21 is 16.3% of those participants.

Marital Status

Marital status is one important profile of the participants as it indicates the social status of a woman in the family and society. Two variables were mentioned (married or unmarried). Most of the respondents that is 62 out of 80 participants (77.5%) were married, and 18 respondents that is 22.5% were unmarried.

Educational Background

One of the important factors that influence the participant's reaction to the questionnaire is the educational background. The finding shows out of 80 participants 51 (63.8%) participants reach pre-school (nursery level), about 14 (17.5 %) participants reach high school, another 7 respondents that are (8.8%) reach higher secondary, and only 8 out of total 80 participants (10.0%) are graduates.

Occupational Status

Another important profile is the occupational status of the participants. It helps us understand better the status of women. It is also one profile that indicates the status of independence from others and self-reliant. The finding shows 41 respondents (51.3%) are involved in agricultural activities, another 25 participants (31.3%) were unemployed, 11 participants that is 13.8% are self-employed, and only 3 participants that is 3.8% are government employee.

Monthly Income

The monthly income shows the economic productivity of woman in their respective household. The finding shows that 65 participants that are 81.3% have an income between (5000-10,000 Rs), another 9 participants that are 11.3% have an income between (11,000-16,000 Rs), and only 6 participants (7.5%) out of 80 have an income above 17,000 Rs.

Equal Socio-Economic Status (Men and women)

Regarding whether 'women enjoy equal socio-economic status with men', 66.3% of the participants disagree, 25.0% of participants strongly disagree, 6.3% of the participants agree and about 2.5% of the participants strongly agree. The majority of women who participated in the questionnaire do not enjoy equal economic status with men. For any society to make progress women must enjoy equal social economic status.

Women's role of decision making in society (socio-economic matters)

The finding regarding, whether 'women should be allowed to make decision making in society (socio-economic matters)', 76.3% of the participants agree, 17.5% of the participants strongly agree, 3.8% of the participants strongly disagree and 2.5% disagree. The majority of the respondents that is 76.3% agree and 17.5% strongly agree that they should be allowed to decide socio-economic matters, whereas only 3.8% strongly disagree.

Men should have a job and Women should look after family and household

In regard to, whether 'Men should have a job and Women should look after family and household', majority of the participants that is 72.5% disagree, 25.0% of the participants strongly disagree, 2.5% of the participants agree.

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In regard to the question, whether they get help from their husband for household work, 36.3% of the participants indicated rarely, 30.0% of the participants indicated often, 27.5% of the participants indicated never and 6.3% of the participants indicated as always.

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Member of any women's group

Concerning membership in women's groups, 45.0% of respondents belong to Self Help Groups, 21.3% are affiliated with religious organizations, 5.0% are part of microfinance groups, 7.5% participate in mutual help groups, and another 21.3% are involved in various other groups.

Decision on maintenance of garden

In regard to the question, 'Who takes decision on the maintenance of garden', 56.3 % of the participants says wife, 28.89% says joint decision and 15.0 says husband makes the decision. The finding suggest only in the matter of maintaining garden, decision are taken majority by women or either a joint decision, which is a far better statistics as compared to the other variables.

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4. Discussions and Conclusion

One aspect that is considered important and a concern in studying the role and position of women in society are based on their educational status. The finding shows that the educational status of women is very low in the area (village) studied. The education of women is considered important for the upliftment of their status. It also helps in her ability to have or make a better judgment. It also provides a sense of security for one individual. It has to be addressed properly and seriously.

Another important aspect is the occupational status of women, the findings show majority of the women are engaged in agricultural activities which only generates an income suffice for a day, and more than 31.3% are unemployed. In order to eradicate poverty and improve the living

standard of women, various skill development programs like agro based sources need to be initiated for women, acquiring knowledge through education.

In matter of monthly income level, majority of the women have income less than 10,000 (rupee) and only 7.5% of the participants have income above 17,000 (rupee). This difference is because majority of the women do not have education hence they remain unemployed. For better income level women should be encourage in education. Acquire better skills and knowledge through various awareness programs, workshops and training. These will help women get employed and engage in activities that generate some source of income to support themselves and be self-reliant.

Women do not enjoy equal socio-economic status with men, it is clear that the majority of the women who participated in the questionnaire do not enjoy equal economic status with men. For any society to make progress women must enjoy equal social economic status. The reason for this may be because of the rooted patriarchal ideology in the society. If society is to progress women must be given the same opportunity as men when it comes to socio-economic decisions at the household level. They can make decisions that would allow them to realize their capability and play an important role in the family.

Concerning the notion that men should be the primary breadwinners while women manage family and household duties, a significant number of women express disagreement, often indicating that they do not receive assistance from their husbands in household tasks. It is crucial to recognize that both family and society acknowledge the vital contributions of women. Husbands must take a more active and supportive role, sharing household responsibilities with their partners.

Women should be given more opportunities and freedom to decide for their own. The data finding shows that majority of the women do not take decision on their own. As per the response from the participants, the data clearly indicate that most of the women ask permission even for visiting relatives and going to market. Even regarding non-agricultural activities and participating in groups most decision are taken by man.

- a) It is essential to provide women with greater opportunities and platforms for decision-making at both the household and societal levels.

- b)** Research should be undertaken to assess the effects and transformations within families and communities when women receive education.
- c)** An investigation into the challenges faced by girls in accessing education is also necessary.
- d)** Additionally, it is recommended that outdated traditions and customary practices that exist in our society be abolished.
- e)** We must promote the active involvement of women across all sectors and advocate for equality.
- f)** Women should be encouraged to engage in decision-making processes, as their perspectives, attitudes, and approaches to situations differ significantly.
- g)** There is a need to support further research on women's participation in decision-making.
- h)** Comprehensive studies should be conducted on the number of educated women and their contributions to society in each district of Manipur to facilitate women's empowerment.
- i)** There is a pressing need for gender sensitization and mass awareness campaigns regarding gender equality programs to be implemented at the district, village, and community levels.
- j)** Training and skill development for women is a crucial step towards enabling them to pursue careers beyond traditional household roles.

Empowerment of women can be reflected in their ability to decide for household, family level, and society level. In most cases, women are not able to decide on their own. There may be many reasons for most of the women to be in that situation. It can be attributed to the age-old tradition of patriarchal ideology, where man is considered as head of the family and every decision is taken by men. The other factor is illiteracy and lack of education among women. If a woman is illiterate and uneducated it becomes more of a burden for her. To improve human resources we need to educate girls. It is considered an important step and way to empower the position of women. In this age, women's education has assumed more significance in the context of our society. We should not forget that women constitute half of every society's population. It represents valuable human resources and plays an important role in the development of the society.

Further it is important to note that we need to impart knowledge and required skills to women. It is one way to provide a platform for women to be self-reliant and self-dependent. It is crucial to understand that women take a major role in the development of society and the economic upliftment of society. Women's roles and leadership are more than important in today's world. Women's empowerment is considered one of the most important priorities of societies. For every society or nation to make progress, the contribution of women must be recognized. Hence it is important to note that any social, and economic policies and programs should be oriented towards gender equality. Empowerment of women would not be possible unless there is gender equality.

To bring about change in society, we need to empower women in every aspect of society. To realize this every girl child should be given equal education as boys and equal treatment at home and in other fields. A girl child should not be persuaded or forced to drop out of school to assist the family. Women should be provided with opportunities and platforms where they can realize their inborn talent, develop skills, and build self-confidence. It is important to realize that in the present day, for society to progress it is desirable that men and women hold the same status in society.

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