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Role of Media in the Empowerment of Tribal Women in Karnataka State: A Study

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ABSTRACT

India has the largest concentration of the tribal population among the countries in the world, next only to Africa. According to 2011 Census, the total tribal population is less than 9% of the country's total population. The majority of the tribal population is found in the Eastern, Central and Western regions of India. They are mostly backward, deprived and oppressed sections of Indian society. The present investigation was carried out to assess the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women in Karnataka state. The present study was carried out on the basis of systematic survey research method. The primary data were gathered from 397 respondents consisting of stakeholders of tribal women empowerment (91) and tribal women beneficiaries (306). A majority of the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries are not satisfied with the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women. The data reveal that the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and beneficiaries of tribal women development projects in Karnataka state were not happy with the media support for various tribal development projects in Karnataka state. The tribal development project authorities should conduct field survey and identify deserving tribal women beneficiaries for the purpose of providing financial assistance. The tribal development project authorities should identify the worthy tribal women beneficiaries and extend financial benefits.

KEYWORDS

The tribal development project authorities should design the development projects in consultation with the tribal women beneficiaries. The media services should be decentralized in the tribal areas to facilitate active participation of beneficiaries in the development projects. The Government of India, State Government of Karnataka, Non-Government Organizations, media institutions, community organizations, educational institutions, research institutions and development institutions have to work in close collaboration toward designing tribal development management in general and delivering tribal women empowerment oriented communication services in particular.

Preamble

India has the largest concentration of the tribal population among the countries in the world, next only to Africa, according to Ratha (1986). According to 2011 Census, the total tribal population is less than 9% of the country's total population. The majority of the tribal population is found in the Eastern, Central and Western regions of India. They are mostly backward, deprived and oppressed sections of Indian society. The tribal economy can be termed as a subsistence economy or a primitive economy. A large number of tribes are still dependent on cultivation, food gathering and fruit collecting exercises for their survival. They are at the lowest rung of national development in India. The tribal issues received prominence in the draft constitution, largely through the efforts of Jaipal Singh, the most prominent among the tribal leaders of that time, on the advice of Verrier Elwin. The basic principles that should guide the approach to the development of tribes were closely set out by the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who formulated 'Tribal Panchsheel' which was later endorsed by the Renuka Ray Team (1959), Dhebar Commission (1961) and the Shilu Ao Committee (1969). These commissions made important recommendations for the uplift of tribes in India. Several tribal development schemes are implemented in the country in the post-independence era. Despite constitutional provisions and welfare measures, the tribes continue to remain excluded from the mainstream of development in India. The present investigation was carried out to assess the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women in Karnataka state.

Review of Literature

Empowerment of tribal women is a neglected sector from research and development points of view. Prominent studies carried out by the scholars on tribal women in general and media interventions for tribal women empowerment in particular are subjected to a brief overview in this chapter. They include - Sen (1978:10), Mann (1987:07), Zoonen (1996:14), Sharma and Mittal (1998:11), Bathla (2000:01), Lipi (2002:06), Devon (2003:03), Bhowmik (2005:02), Kumar (2006:04), Mariswamy (2006:08), Sindhi (2012:12), Kumar (2013:05) and Ravichandran (2014:09). The review of literature clearly indicates that

adequate scientific investigations are not carried out in the state of Karnataka on the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women.

Statement of the Problem

The concept of empowerment of women is gaining importance throughout the world. Series of constitutional safeguards and provisions are included in the Constitution of India for the empowerment of women and weaker sections by the founders of constitution and builders of modern India. The central and state governments have also implemented several tribal development specific programmes in the post-independence era for the empowerment of women in general and tribes in particular. Studies have reported that the social and economic status of general women and tribal women remains pathetic in the country due to non-implementation of constitutional provisions and development projects. Studies have revealed that tribal women remain disadvantaged in India in the absence of state patronage and civil society support. There is a growing recognition all over the world about the crucial role of media in the empowerment of women. A synthesis of the available literature suggests that societal, governmental, educational and media intervention for the empowerment of women in general and tribal women in particular with special reference to Karnataka suffer from certain limitations from research and development points of view. Therefore, the primary tasks of present study were concerned with identifying a reasonably representative sample of stakeholders of tribal development and beneficiaries of tribal development to assess their views on the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women in Karnataka state. The present topic has been chosen because:

a. Empowerment of women has become an important Millennium Development Goal.
b. Tribal development has become a thrust area of national development.
c. Tribal women empowerment has become a challenging task of our times.
d. Karnataka state has emerged as a model state over a period of time.
e. Media intervention for tribal women empowerment assumes great significance in the present times.

a. A constant and continued research on the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women is imperative in a developing state like Karnataka.

Objectives of the Study

1. Assess the growth and development of tribes in Karnataka state.
2. Analyze the media exposure among tribal women in Karnataka state.
3. Examine the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women in Karnataka state.
4. Evaluate the opportunities and limitations of media from tribal women empowerment point of view and
5. Suggest appropriate methods for the betterment of media services for the empowerment of tribal women in Karnataka state.

Research Design

The present study was carried out on the basis of systematic survey research method. A structured and pre-tested interview schedule was administered to the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries of Karnataka state. The respondents were selected from about 08 districts of Karnataka state which practically represented the four revenue divisions. The primary data were gathered from 397 respondents consisting of stakeholders of tribal women empowerment (91) and tribal women beneficiaries (306). Two separate interview schedules were administered to them in order to explore the understanding of the respondents have about the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women in Karnataka state.

Distribution of Study Area and Sample

Sl.No.	Revenue Division	Stakeholders	Beneficiaries	Total
1	Kalburgi	20	76	96
2	Belgaum	22	68	90
3	Mysore	24	78	102
4	Bengaluru	25	84	109
Total		91	306	397

n = 397

Statistical Analysis

The primary data were analyzed on the basis of certain standardized statistical tests which include – percentage analysis, graphical representation, Chi-square test, and cross tabulation. All the statistical methods were carried out through the SPSS for Windows (version 16.0). A brief discussion of these statistical tests is as follows.

Findings of the Study

Role of Media in the Empowerment of Tribal Women

A majority of the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries are not satisfied with the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women. The distribution of responses in this regard is as follows.

- Absence of media support for social equality (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -68.13% and tribal women beneficiaries- 76.67%)
- Promotion of social freedom (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -61.54% and tribal women beneficiaries- 73.86%)
- Promotion of social justice (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -57.14% and tribal women beneficiaries- 71.90%)
- Eradication of superstitions (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -68.13% and tribal women beneficiaries- 68.63%)
- Prevention of human trafficking (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -57.14% and tribal women beneficiaries- 71.90%)
- Prevention of human rights violation (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -63.74% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.97%), promotion of small family (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -59.34% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.01%)
- Prevention of atrocities (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -65.93% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.97%)
- Prevention of female infanticide and feticides (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -61.54% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.67%)
- Fight against the drug and liquor addiction (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -52.75% and tribal women beneficiaries- 64.05%)
- Prevention of child labor and bonded labor (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -57.14% and tribal women beneficiaries- 65.36%)
- Prevention of dowry system and fight against early marriage (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -63.74% and tribal women beneficiaries- 73.20%)
- Promotion of social mobility (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -57.14% and tribal women beneficiaries- 70.59%)
- Promotion of remarriage of divorced / widowed persons (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -52.75% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.97%)
- Involvement in social service (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -72.53% and tribal women beneficiaries- 65.36%)
- Promotion of agricultural and cottage industrial development (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -65.93% and tribal women beneficiaries- 69.28%)
- Control of economic assets and achievement of financial independence (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -57.14% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.01%)

- Promotion of equal property rights (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -54.95% and tribal women beneficiaries- 64.71%)
- Promotion of family infrastructural development (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -63.74% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.67%)
- Promotion of self-employment opportunities (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -70.33% and tribal women beneficiaries- 64.05%)
- Improvement of economic bargaining power (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -63.74% and tribal women beneficiaries- 60.78%)
- Business promotion (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -62.64% and tribal women beneficiaries- 63.73%)
- Betterment of economic status (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -56.04% and tribal women beneficiaries- 68.63%)
- Development of professional skill and competence (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -67.03% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.65%)
- Improvement of saving ability (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -59.34% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.01%)
- Preserving goods and services (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -64.84% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.65%)
- Marketing goods and services (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -73.63% and tribal women beneficiaries- 71.57%)
- Obtaining benefits of development projects (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -62.64% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.65%)
- Participation in development projects (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -58.24% and tribal women beneficiaries- 65.69%)
- Development of economic self-sufficiency (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -60.44% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.65%)
- Understanding constitutional safeguards and provisions (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -68.13% and tribal women beneficiaries- 62.09%)
- Understanding the activities of women's commission (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -58.24% and tribal women beneficiaries- 65.03%)
- Protection of tribal women's political reservation (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -59.34% and tribal women beneficiaries- 67.65%)
- Understanding the significance of adult franchise (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -63.74% and tribal women beneficiaries- 68.63%)
- Understanding the significance of electoral reforms (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -62.64% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.99%)
- Enhancement of leadership development opportunities (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -61.54% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.67%)
- Participation in political activities (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -67.03% and tribal women beneficiaries- 69.61%)
- Improving political bargaining power (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -55.24% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.34%)
- Enhancing political status (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -53.85% and tribal women beneficiaries- 64.37%)
- Managing political crises (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -56.04% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.34%)
- Achieving political equality (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -72.53% and tribal women beneficiaries- 63.40%)
- Participation in political movements (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -53.85% and tribal women beneficiaries- 63.73%)
- Participation in elections (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -56.04% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.67%)
- Assertion of rights and privileges (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -58.24% and tribal women beneficiaries- 66.99%) and
- Networking with civil society institutions (stakeholders of tribal women empowerment -57.14% and tribal women beneficiaries- 63.73%).

Testing of Hypotheses

H1. The stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and beneficiaries of tribal women development projects in Karnataka State have not obtained adequate communication support from the media.

The data reveal that the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and beneficiaries of tribal women development projects in Karnataka state were not happy with the media support for various tribal development projects in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

H2. The stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries have found that communications media did not play a vital role in the empowerment of tribal women.

The data reveal that stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries have perceived that communications media did not play a crucial role in the empowerment of tribal women. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

Limitations of the Study

It was not practically possible for the researcher to enjoy the benefit of accessibility of data to all the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries due to large numbers and lack of time. The usual limitations of the survey method such as time, human inadequacies, resource constraints, recollection and communication were experienced by the researcher. Incidental, purposive and stratified sampling methods were followed in selecting the respondents. Though much care has been taken to collect the primary data, the memory bias on the part of the respondents cannot be completely ruled out.

Implications of the Study

The state has the obligation to empower the tribes who are excluded from the mainstream of national development. The central, state and local-self governments have a responsibility to formulate suitable policies and develop the tribes who should not be treated as mere receivers of benefits but they must be actively involved in policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation of tribal development programmes in a pluralistic society like India. The tribal development projects should be designed after proper analysis of the situations and consultation with the specialists and beneficiaries. The following suggestions are made with a view to improve the status of tribal women in the present times.

Tribal Women Empowerment Related Suggestions

- The tribal development project authorities should conduct field survey and identify deserving tribal women beneficiaries for the purpose of providing financial assistance.
- The tribal development project authorities should identify the worthy tribal women beneficiaries and extend financial benefits.
- The tribal development project authorities should design the development projects in consultation with the tribal women beneficiaries.
- The tribal development project authorities should give proper orientation to the office-bearers, members and officials about the empowerment of tribal women.
- The tribal development project authorities should deliver the services on the basis of corporate social responsibility.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to develop civic responsibil-

ity.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of gender equity and justice.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of human rights protection.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of social harmony and unity.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of environment protection.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of cultural promotion.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of community development.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against the oppressive forces in the society.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to adopt the scientific innovations and technological advancements.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to develop leadership qualities.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to develop entrepreneurship.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to develop personality.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to participate in the development projects of government and non-government agencies.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to sensitize the policy makers and officials about their developmental obligations.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to become aware of opportunities of empowerment of women.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to work for social equality.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of social freedom.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to gain the benefit of social justice.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against superstitions.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against human trafficking.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against human rights violation.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of small family.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to prevent atrocities against women.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to prevent female infanticide and foeticide.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against the drug and liquor addiction.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against the child labor and bonded labor.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to fight against the dowry system and fight against early marriage.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to gain the benefit of social mobility.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to actively in participate in social service.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of agricultural development and cottage industrial development.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to gain control over their economic assets and achieve financial independence.
- The cooperatives should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to gain equal property rights.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve family infrastructural development.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to gain self – employment opportunities.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to improve production and productivity.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of business promotion.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to improve their economic bargaining power.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to develop professional skill and competence.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to improve their saving ability.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to preserve the goods and services.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to market their goods and services.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to avail the benefits of development projects.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to participate actively in the development projects.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of economic self-sufficiency.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to understand the constitutional safeguards and provisions.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to understand the activities of women's commission.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to gain the benefit of women's political reservation.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to understand the significance of adult franchise.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to understand the significance of electoral reform.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to actively participate in the political activities.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to improve their political bargaining power.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to enhance their political status.

- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to manage political crisis.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of political equality.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to participate actively in political movements.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to participate actively in elections.
- The tribal development project authorities should sensitize the tribal women beneficiaries to demand their rights and privileges.
- The tribal development project authorities should enable the tribal women beneficiaries to network with civil society institutions and also to understand the role of getting together.

Tribal Development Communication Related Suggestions

- The media services should be decentralized in the tribal areas to facilitate active participation of beneficiaries in the development projects.
- The tribal development projects should have communication component in order to organize suitable media campaigns.
- Area-specific communication services should be rendered in the tribal areas.
- Adequate funds should be allocated for launching tribal development communication campaigns.
- Adequate tribal development communication infrastructural services and facilities are required in the tribal areas.
- Tribal development communication projects should be designed by the media experts.
- The tribal development communication projects should have qualified and trained communication professionals.
- Adequate tribal development project specific communication campaigns should be launched in the tribal areas.
- Adequate participatory communication opportunities should be created in the tribal areas.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on tribal women empowerment.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on improving media literacy of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on improving constitutional literacy of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on improving environment literacy of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on improving development literacy of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on human rights literacy of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on social change among tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on economic development of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on entrepreneurship development of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on political leadership development of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on crisis management capacity development of tribal women.
- Tribal development communication projects should lay emphasis on inclusive and integrated development of tribal women.

Conclusion

The future agenda for the policy makers, administrators and other professionals at the grassroots level must deal with expansion of communications media, manpower development, resource mobilization, improving the delivery system, implementation of development programmes, involvement of women and weaker sections in the implementation of programmes and evaluation of the role of communications media should also be addressed. The Government of India, State Government of Karnataka, Non-Government Organizations, media institutions, community organizations, educational institutions, research institutions and development institutions have to work in close collaboration toward designing tribal development management in general and delivering tribal women empowerment oriented communication services in particular.

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