

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Political Empowerment of Tribal Women: A Study in North Andhra**

---

**Gangarapu Priyanka,**

Research scholar:

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Andhra University,  
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

---

**Abstract**

This study explored about political participation of tribal women in North Andhra (Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram and Visakhapatnam.) region of Andhra Pradesh. Basically the schedule tribes are the segregated and isolated communities and are concentrated in the state of Andhra Pradesh. They are isolated from the rest of the society due to poor transportation and communication facilities and have remained as educationally, culturally, economically and socially disadvantaged sections. Schedule tribes have been considered to be lowest in the social hierarchy. Being mostly illiterate, they have been subjected to all kinds of exploitation social, economic and political. Most of the tribes geographically isolated, economically weak, socially ignorant, politically indifferent, culturally rich, behaviorally simple, trustworthy and leading there life in the lack of nature. The tribal people, particularly women, still remain marginalized. There is a need for improving the literacy level among the tribal women. Tribal women are exploited in several ways. The health of tribal women leaves

much be desired. This may be because of their traditional beliefs. Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and she is considered as an economic asset in their society. But she is still lagging behind in the spheres of education, employment, good health, etc. Even though she is industrious; she has limited control over resources. Specially tribal groups dominated by non tribal groups in sphere of socially, economically, culturally and politically. Tribal women dominated by in two ways. One is Women dominated by their family male members and other one is dominated by leaders of non tribal group. This research will cover why women dominated by them and, How can we aware of tribal women? The present study intends to undertake a micro level study in North Andhra districts regarding Political empowerment of tribal women in various aspects of empowerment process. The study will explore the range of features with reference to Political empowerment of tribal women in North Andhra. To achieve this intention, the study will cover the dimensions of women empowerment in

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

North Andhra. as representatives, as local leaders and in the various positions to the rural and urban Local government agencies, state assembly and the National Parliament (Lok Sabha). The study will recount the role of women and women's organizations in North Andhra in various fields. It will illustrate cases of women leaders in different political fields.

**Keywords:** political empowerment, Tribal women, Political, North Andhra.

### Introduction

The present study intends to undertake a micro level study in North Andhra districts regarding Political empowerment of tribal women in various aspects of empowerment process. The study explored the range of features with reference to Political empowerment of tribal women in North Andhra. This study covered the dimensions of women empowerment in North Andhra. As representatives, as local leaders and in the various positions to the rural and urban Local government agencies, state assembly and the National Parliament (Lok Sabha). The study recounted the role of women and women's organizations in North Andhra .This is a micro level qualitative study. The

researcher gathered data from secondary sources like research journals, various government reports, books, websites and primary data from field work with questionnaire schedule in north Andhra. To examine the background of tribal people in Andhra Pradesh. To examine dimensions of empowerment of women. To examine political empowered of tribal women. To examine how get help from education and reservations for political empowerment of tribal women. To examine tribal women rule as individually or not as representative. To examine tribal women can participate in policy and decision making as individually. To examine tribal women how can interact with public. To examine solutions of reduced the present conditions. To examine improved of empowerment of tribal women.

### Objectives of the study

The study explored and examines political empowerment of tribal women with in North Andhra. The specific objectives are:

- To examine the background of tribal people in Andhra Pradesh.
- To examine dimensions of empowerment of women
- To examine political empowerment of tribal women.
- To examine how get help from education and reservations for political empowerment of tribal women.

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

- To examine tribal women rule as individually or not as representative.
- To examine tribal women can participate in policy and decision making as individually.
- To examine tribal women how can interact with public.
- To examine solutions of reducing the present conditions.
- To examine improvement of empowerment of tribal women.

### Statement of the problem

The present study intends to undertake a micro level study in North Andhra districts regarding Political empowerment of tribal women in various aspects of empowerment process. The study explored the range of features with reference to Political empowerment of tribal women in North Andhra. To achieve this intention, the study covered the dimensions of women empowerment in North Andhra. as representatives, as local leaders and in the various positions to the rural and urban Local government agencies, state assembly and the National Parliament (Lok Sabha). The study will recount the role of women and women's organizations in North Andhra in various fields.

### Methodology

This is a micro level qualitative study. The researcher gathered data from

secondary sources like research journals, various government reports, books, websites and primary data from field work with questionnaire schedule in north Andhra.

### Concept of women empowerment

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality (www.uno.org )

'Power' is the key word of the term empowerment. According to the International Encyclopedia (1999), power means having the capacity and the means to direct one's life towards desired social, political and economic goals or status. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1982), the word 'empower' means to make or cause power, Empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women's Conference in 1985 at Nairobi. The conference defined empowerment as a redistribution of social power and control of resources in favor of women [www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in](http://www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in)

The past three decades have witnessed a steadily increasing awareness of the need to empower women through

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

measures to increase social, economic and political. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It involves the building up of a society wherein in women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure.(Nabanita Dutta, Kaushik Bhakta, 2017)

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and programs have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements

of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels, India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21st century, titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up ([www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in))

The empowerment of women entails their visibility and ability to make choice; such choice may challenge the established power hierarchy not only within the home, but in society as well (Kabeer 1999)

Empowerment clearly leads to a better sense of self worth, often through collective action that aims at, among other things, economic betterment. For empowerment is

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

largely about ordinary, common people, rather than politicians, experts and other socially or culturally advantaged persons, an improvement in the quality of life is integral to an understanding of the term (Beteille, 1999)

The philosophical concept of women's empowerment and its practical implication has matured and developed considerably over the years; while political participation, economic self reliance and social awareness would be the obvious parameters to judge level's of empowerment (Omita Goyal 2015)

Empowerment entails a process of change (Kabeer 1999)

### Dimensions of Women Empowerment

Empowerment is multi-dimensional as it covers financial independence, social awareness and political consciousness of an individual. These elements can be categorized as social empowerment economic empowerment and political empowerment.

There are several dimensions of empowerment. There is a much – needed change in social attitudes which should respect women and the girl child, and which is dramatically illustrated by the going gender imbalance even in the more affluent states. Then there is economic empowerment, and for this many of the

new schemes that the government has launched in the last few years have been especially aimed at the women of India. They are encouraged to open their own bank accounts into which government grants can flow. Politically women played a major role in freedom movement; this fact has to be appreciated because it proves that our constitution and electoral system give ample scope for women to rise to the top at the center and state. (Omita Goyal)

### Social Empowerment

Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured. Special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes/Minorities. Gender sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereotyping

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

as one of the causes of gender discrimination. ([www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in)).

#### **Economic Empowerment**

Economic empowerment is a process as well as a stage which is to be reached by designing strategies focusing on building credit worthiness and financial independence among women by removing all the gender-specific barriers which prevent women from gaining access to their rightful share in every spheres of life.

Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macroeconomic policies and poverty eradication programs' will specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of programs which are already women oriented with special targets for women. Steps will be taken for mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities ([www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in)).

#### **Political Empowerment**

Political empowerment is a process that enables women to increase their mobility and break their isolation, to develop their self confidence and self image and to establish their public presence

whereby they participate in decision making and policy making – ([shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in))

Political participation of women is broader than their participation in the electoral and administrative process. It includes the whole gamut of voluntary activities with a bearing on the political process including support of political groups, dissemination of political views, involving in any form of organized activities that effect or seeks to effect power relationships. It refers to activities not only formally empowered to make decisions, but also intends to influence the attitudes and behavior or those who have powers for decision-making. The 73 rd Constitutional Amendment Act is an important landmark in the history of Indian women's participation in the formation of democratic institutions at grassroots level. The most significant aspect is that the gender representation in the decision-making has been taken into account (Nagaraja S. Pallavi S Kusugal)

Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including decision making in political process at all levels will be ensured for the achievement of the goals of empowerment. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level, including the legislative,



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

executive, judicial, corporate, statutory bodies, as also the advisory Commissions, Committees, Boards, Trusts etc. Affirmative action such as reservations/quotas, including in higher legislative bodies, will be considered whenever necessary on a time bound basis. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process ([www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in)).

**Brief Introduction of Tribes:**

The share of the Scheduled tribe population in urban areas is a meager 2.4% Madyapradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka are the state having larger number of schedule tribes these states account for 83.2% of the total scheduled tribal population of the country. Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura, Mizoram, Behar, Manipur, Arunachalpradesh and Thamilnadu account for another 15.3% of the total schedule tribe population ([www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)) The tribal population of the country as per 2011 census is 10.43Crore. constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.3% in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribe’s from census 2001 – 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population. According to the 2011 census total literacy rate is 72.99% and tribal literacy rate is

58.96% only. In this contest tribal female literacy rate in higher education 0.9% only in rural areas and 9.8% in urban area ([www.tribal.nic.in](http://www.tribal.nic.in)) in Andhra Pradesh tribal population 5.3%.

**Background of North Andhra:**

North Andhra is a region consisting of three north Coastal Andhra districts of the Andhra Pradesh. It Comprised the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam. As of 2011 census of India, the region with three districts has a population and literacy

Table no.1  
Population and literacy details of north Andhra

s.n o.	Area	Srikakulam	Vijayana garam	Visakhapatnam
1.	% of Population	6.1	10.0	14.4
2.	Literacy	53.4	46.6	44.9
3.	Male literacy	65.3	55.2	55.6
4.	Female literacy	43.7	38.4	34.7

Source: [www.censusindia.nic.in](http://www.censusindia.nic.in)

We can observed from this table literacy of tribal people were low and in

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

this particular female literacy lower than male and another thing is Srikakulam district lower than other two districts as population wise, but literacy wise higher than other two districts.

One parliamentary constituency were reserved for ST and five assembly constituencies in north Andhra There are:

Araku (Parliamentary segment)

Assembly Segments:

Palakonda (Srikakulam)

Kurupam (Vijayanagaram)

Saaluru (Vijayanagaram)

Araku vally ( Visakhapatnam) and

Paderu (Visakhapatnam)

In this region number of Mandals – 39

Habitations-7,107

Schedule villages- 1942

Non- Schedule villages- 5,147 and

Mada pocket villages- 18

(giripragati.ap.gov.in)

The schedule tribes are the segregated and isolated communities and are concentrated in the state of Andhra Pradesh. They are isolated from the rest of the society due to poor transportation and communication facilities and have remained as educationally, culturally, economically and socially disadvantaged sections. Schedule tribes have been considered to be lowest in the social hierarchy. Being mostly illiterate, they have been subjected to all kinds of exploitation social, economic and political. Most of the

tribes geographically isolated, economically weak, socially ignorant, politically indifferent, culturally rich, behaviorally simple, trustworthy and leading their life in the lack of nature (Pullarao.D, Pp.1-2)

The tribal people, particularly women, still remain marginalized. There is a need for improving the literacy level amongst tribal women. Tribal women are exploited in several ways. The health of tribal women leaves much to be desired. This may be because of their traditional beliefs

(Stya Sundaram I, P. 368)

Women in a tribal society play a vital role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and she is considered as an economic asset in their society. But she is still lagging behind in the spheres of education, employment, good health, etc..even though she is industrious, she has limited control over resources (Suresh Lal B., Padma A.P. 401)

Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation. Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office, etc. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

against women. (National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001).

**References**

Beteille, Andre (1999), Empowerment, "Economic and Political Weekly" Vol.xxxiv (10and11) March 6-13.

Goyal Omita (ed.)(2015) Interrogating Women's Leadership & Empowerment, Sage publication,New Delhi.

Kabeer, Naila (1995), Reversed realities: gender hierarchies in development. New Delhi.

Kabeer,N. (1999), Resource, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurements of women 's empowerment , "Development and Change", Vol. 30(3), July.

Nabanita Dutta,Kaushik Bhakta Women Empowerment: Dimensions, Needs and Hurdles in "IMS Business School Presents Doctoral Colloquium" – 2017 India, Kolkata, ISBN: 978-93-85895-57-9

Nagaraja S, Pallavi S Kusugal Role Of Tribal Women In Decesion Making Process Through Panchayat Raj Institutions: "A Sociological Analysis" ,Journal of Innovative Research and Solution (JIRAS)- A unit of

UIIRS Print- ISSN: 2320 1932 / Online ISSN – 2348 3636 Volume1 – Issue No.1 – Jan – Jun 2014

Padmini Swaminathan (2015), Revisiting the theme of women's empowerment: how leadership matters in Goyal Omita (ed.)(2015) "Interrogating Women's Leadership & Empowerment", Sage publication,New Delhi.

Pullarao D. (ed.) (2012), "Devolopment of scheduled Tribes in India policies and programmes", serial publication, New Delhi.

Satya Sundaram I(2007), Empowering tribal women in Sundara Rao M., Snkara Reddi (ed.) (2007), "Tribal Development issues and prospect", The Associated Publishers, Delhi.

Suresh LalB.Padma A.(2007), Empowerment of Tribal women in Andhra Pradesh in Sundara Rao M., Snkara Reddi (ed.) (2007), "Tribal Development issues and prospect", The Associated Publishers, Delhi.

[www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in](http://www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in)

[www.uno.org](http://www.uno.org)

[www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in)

[www.censusidia.nic.in](http://www.censusidia.nic.in)

[www.giripragati.ap.gov.in](http://www.giripragati.ap.gov.in)