

## BOOK REVIEW

**Kumar, Pankaj and Gupta, Sadhna. (Ed). 2015. Relocating Women's Equality. Jaipur: Rawat Publications [ISBN: 978-81-316-0742-8 (HB)], pp. 318. Price INR 995/-**

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Many books have been written on gender issues including women's equality and emancipation in Indian context, but the topic is such that it demands continuous research and dissemination through publishing. The present book – '*Relocating Women's Equality*' is an addition to the existing repositories on the subject. The editors have tried to include the papers which are directly linked to the woes and miseries of rural and tribal women including a few cases of these women's emancipation. The book has been able to carve out its place in the existing literature as it is mainly based on the grassroots findings, cases across the Indian states and also been able to capture the developments in the subject area.

The book under review is spread over twenty chapters excluding the Introduction. This book is divided into four thematic sections- first 'Rural and Tribal Women', second 'Violence against Women', third 'Liberalization and Women Entrepreneurship', and the last 'Women Empowerment'. The book opens with Introduction where the editors have underlined the concept of women's equality, empowerment and emancipation. They have also explained the rationale and objectives of bringing out this edited volume and tried to summarize the chapters. Three papers out of four in first section of the book are based on primary data and concerned with the status of tribal women. First paper by *Pankaj Kumar* examines the impact of displacement by UICL mining project especially on tribal women of East Singhbhum, Jharkhand. Second paper delves deep into the ability of the rural women of Vaishali district of Bihar to take health related decision. Positive attributes of women such as education, economic independence, maturity, etc. are highlighted in this chapter which helps the women to take health related decisions. Third chapter is by *Ayan* and highlights the role of Government's Watershed programme in facilitating the emancipation of the tribal women. The last chapter of this section deals with status of tribal women in general with special reference to government's plans, policies and programmes.

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The second section of the book focuses on violence and atrocities committed against women. There are eight chapters in this section, which are related to crime and violence against women such as rape, domestic violence, dowry deaths, sexual harassment in society and work place, women trafficking, etc., perpetrated by paternalistic society. All the chapters are based on secondary data. Another commonality is – all the authors of these chapters are females except one. First two papers are by *Sadhana Gupta*, which deal with the cruelty towards women in Indian society. She argues that these kinds of heinous acts are not only crime against women but against the entire society and gross violation of human rights as well. In her next chapter, she explains how dowry has now degenerated into commercial exchange and become a means of harassment of married women and their parents. Next chapter by *Sudarshana* takes the arguments of previous author forward, whereby she says that violence against married women is not restricted to a particular society but reported in all types of societies. In this context, a case of Sikkim state has been presented in next chapter, where some extreme types of atrocities have also been reported against women. Sexual harassment at workplace is discussed by *Preeti Mishra* in chapter nine, which is based on the case laws. Chapter ten highlights the problem of women trafficking in Odisha. The author has the view that after the super cyclone of 1999, the vulnerabilities of women and girls to trafficking has increased. The case of stigmatization and victimization of single women in Indian society is discussed by *Barnali Maity* in chapter eleven. The last chapter tries to present the practice of discrimination and deprivation of females in Indian society, right from the conception stage to the old age.

After dealing with the structured problems of discrimination and atrocities against women in section two, the next section of the book discusses about the changing dynamics of women's status through liberalization and entrepreneurship. The first chapter of section three discusses the role of liberalization in transforming the nature of women's work in rural and unorganized sector of India. How the efforts of *Santhal* women of West Bengal are transforming their lives and society through formation of SHGs, is discussed in chapter fourteen. The chapter fifteen presents women's economic roles and opportunities and their aspirations for advancement. Last chapter of this section tries to present the impact of *Indira Kranti Pathakan* on empowerment of women in Prakasm district of Andhra Pradesh. Thus, all four chapters of section three are concerned with the efforts of the rural and tribal women in changing their lives for betterment.

The first chapter of the fourth and last section reviews the status of women's empowerment and emancipation by *Sadhna Gupta*. She lays stress upon the fact that despite the constitutional guarantee of

equality of sexes and mandate of social justice, rampant discrimination and exploitation of women continues. Economic empowerment of slum women of Jaipur city is presented in next chapter by *Ambey Srivastava*. He argues that although female work participation rate is lower in urban areas than rural areas, the women from slum area have been actively engaged in all sorts of economic activities. Despite this, they are not free to take any economic decision related to household and not even able to spend their hard earned money on their own. In chapter nineteen, the case of an NGO is presented wherein the author appreciates the NGO's efforts in changing the lives of tribal women through education in Odisha. In last chapter of the book, the case of women's movement (*Meira Paibi*) of Manipur has been analyzed where author is critical about its changing role over the years. Of late, this movement seems to be losing its strength but its organizational skill is very much evident.

This book is well organized and divided into four relevant themes and the number of chapters in each section is also equal, i.e. four chapters in each section. However, the second section of the book is quite lengthy and imbalanced in comparison to other three sections as this section has eight chapters. Although the issues covered in this book are widely researched and published, but they are still relevant as most of the chapters of the book are based on primary studies and also discuss individual cases of rural and tribal women. The book is successful in highlighting the issues taken and also captures the changing dynamics of Indian society with regard to the rural and tribal women. Therefore, this book would enhance the level of understanding with regard to the women's status in rural and tribal societies. This book would be beneficial for the students, scholars, policy planners and activists in understanding the issues of women's emancipation and empowerment at the grassroots level.