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## Issues as Catalysts of Women Empowerment in SHGs - Ethnographic Study in the Villages of South 24-Parganas, West Bengal

Moumita Gupta & Abhijit Das

### Preamble

Empowerment literally means “to invest with power” In the context of Women’s Empowerment, the term has come to denote women’s increased control over their own lives, bodies and environment (**Schuler, Islam & Rottach, 2002**).

Women Empowerment aims at realizing their identities, power and potentiality in all spheres of lives. But, the real empowerment of women is possible only when a woman has increased access to economic resources, more confidence, more self-motivation and more strength for entering into the power structure (**Narang, 2012**).

The empowerment of women through Self-help Groups would give benefits not only to the individual woman but also for the family and community as a whole through collective action for development.

Empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women’s Conference at Nairobi in 1985. The conference defined as a redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. Women empowerment refers to an increase in the strength of women e.g. spiritual, political, social or economic (**Narang, 2012**). The year 2001 has been declared by the Govt. of India as ‘Women Empowerment Year’ to focus on a vision

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## ENJOYING LEISURE TIME BY AGED PERSONS IN KOLKATA ACROSS THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL AGES –AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

Dr. Moumita Gupta<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

**Objectives:** *The present study is mainly based on few old age homes in North and South Calcutta. In this paper, the present researcher wants to show the pattern of leisure across their chronological ages and its need and prevalence. Method:* *The study is solely based on primary data, collected from approximately 120 boarders, their attendants and also the proprietors of four old age homes respectively through Individual and Group Interview, Case studies and also Participant Observation method along with Purposive sampling. Results :* *The researcher observed an important point of difference in respect of enjoying leisure, across the different age group men and women at old age Home and same residing at their own residence with their family. Conclusions :* *All the aged persons deserve companionship of people. They mostly like to share their memories of past with them.*

**Keywords:** Aged person, Leisure, Hobby, Retired, Old age Home.

### Introduction

Aging is a change in an organism over time. It refers to a multidimensional process of physical, psychological and social change. Aging is a continuous, irreversible, universal process which starts from conception till the death of an individual. Aging is a life-long process of growing up and growing old. It begins at conception and ends with death. So, in this sense, we are all aging

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Moumita Gupta, WBES. Assistant Professor & Department of Anthropology, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Government College, Rajarhat, Newtown, Kolkata - 700156

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# Role of Ethno Medicine in Sustainable Development Process- An Ethnographic Study in the Villages of Bankura District, West Bengal

Dr. Moumita Gupta

**Abstract :** *The paper is on ethno medical practices among three Santhal villages from Bankura district,, namely, Ekkadwar, Jambedia at Mukutmonipur and Ramnathpur at Sushunia. The population size is about 225, 250 and 95 respectively. Present study is focused upon the knowledge of Santhals about medicinal plants locally available, which are used by the Santals to cure some diseases they suffer from. Although the public sectors provide modern allopathic treatment the village people still depend on ayurvedic treatments, on the plant products locally available.*

*Availability of ingredients as well as medical practitioners are the two factors that enhance their acceptance of ayurvedic treatment. Trust on their own cultural tradition is responsible for following such practices for generations. Sustainable development is studied for the medicinal plants and knowledge of their application in ailments.*

**Key words:** Santhal, Ethno-medicine, Health-care system, Ayurvedic treatment, Medicinal plants.



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## **CHILD MARRIAGE AND THE GRASS ROOT REALITY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF FEMALE GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN TWO VILLAGES OF WEST BENGAL**

**DR. MOUMITA GUPTA**

Assistant Professor, WBES

Department of Anthropology

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Govt. College

Newtown India

**& DR. TITHI BOSE**

Assistant Professor, WBES

Department of Economics

Haldia Government College

Haldia India

### **Abstract:**

Child discrimination based on gender has been an immense problem for centuries in our country, India. This discrimination starts from the very birth and continues in every phase of life. Among the low-income group, the backward castes, and the Muslim population, marriage at an early age (less than 18) prevalently exists till now. The present research study focuses on the problem of marriage of girls below the legal age of eighteen. The study has intensively assessed the perceptions of the young girls married below the age of eighteen in two villages under the block of Haldia in the district of East Medinipur in West Bengal. The present researchers gauged the severe impacts of forced marriage on physical and mental development of girls in the early teens. The study also explores the deep connection between child marriage and drop-out of girls from schools.

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**CHILD MARRIAGE AND THE GRASS ROOT REALITY: AN EMPIRICAL  
STUDY OF FEMALE GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN TWO VILLAGES OF WEST  
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**DR. MOUMITA GUPTA**

Assistant Professor, WBES  
Department of Anthropology  
Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Govt. College  
Newtown India

**& DR. TITHI BOSE**

Assistant Professor, WBES  
Department of Economics  
Haldia Government College  
Haldia India

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# Study of Occupational Health Hazards among some Women industrial Workers in the state of West Bengal: Issues and Consequences

Moumita Gupta

## Abstract

Health is most valuable aspect for survival of human beings. Occupational safety deals with all aspects of health and safety in the workplace and has a strong focus on primary prevention of hazards. The present study is based on the investigation at some industrial working places in Purba Medinipur, South 24-parganas and Howrah districts, in order to show the health hazards of working women at different occupational sites, as well as, its immediate cause and possible remedial measures. The study is based on primary data, collected from approximately 100 working women engaged in different occupations at selected factories. Methods applied are Individual and Group Interview, Case studies and Participant Observation method along with Purposive sampling. Selected women working in selected factories experienced occupational health hazards like skin problems, irritation in the eyes, headache, breathing problems like suffocation, as well as muscular and skeletal problems and Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS). Compared to male workers, it appears that female workers are more susceptible to occupational hazards in the present research. It is necessary to take proper care against health hazards at work places.

**Key Words:** *Health, Occupational Hazards, Working Women, Affected, Factory, Unskilled Workers.*

## Introduction:

The concept of health and hygiene varies from society to society. In the preamble of the World Health Organization (WHO) constitution; "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being." In its 1948 constitution, (WHO) gave most popular definition of Health; "Health is a state of complete physical, social, and mental well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Health is one of the major parameters of Women's development. Without proper health, women cannot be the preserver of the tradition and cultural heritage especially for the future generation. If anyone examines the proper occupational health problems among the women workers, they must study the types of women's work along with the hours of work, as well as, their remuneration details. It is a fact that now-a-days, all women are engaged in different types of work. But they mostly do not get any proper recognition as per their working hours

REDISCOVERING THE ISSUE OF CHILD MARRIAGE AND THE SCHOOL DROP-OUT  
 PROBLEM AGAINST THE INTERPLAY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
 FACTORS IN THE RURAL CORNERS OF WEST BENGAL :  
 A VILLAGE LEVEL STUDY OF EAST MEDINIPUR

Dr. Tithi Bose\*  
 Dr. Moumita Gupta\*\*

## ABSTRACT

Prevalence of child marriage in the rural corners is a great concern for policy makers and researchers in the state West Bengal. The census, 2011 confirms that above 30% of the early marriages happen in eight districts of West Bengal. East Medinipur is a district, where early marriage among girls highly persists and results in powerlessness and health hazards. The present study gauges the intensity between problems of child marriage and school drop-out among girls. The study estimates the detrimental role of the socio-economic factors in stopping girls' education and intensifying child marriage at the village level.

**Keywords :** Child marriage, dropout, teens, dowry, social, religious

**background :** India is the largest place for the child marriages. It affects the whole society as the problem handicaps almost 27% of the girls' development process. This loss has a dampening effect on the whole economy in the long-term. Child marriage not only violates the child right, it results in exploitation of girls, and hampers physical and psychological development. Child marriage results in isolation of girls from the educational system, widening mental development of the girls. To break this vicious circle of disempowerment, spread of education and awareness is certainly necessary. According to World Bank, if gender empowerment does not happen, it will hinder the whole process of development (Klugman et al., 2014). In India, as per Census, 2011 female literacy is 55.46 % against 82.14% for male population. Female literacy rate in rural sector is 61 % compared to male literacy rate 80%. Enrolment ratio of girls per 100 boys falls from 95 between classes VI-VIII to 90 between classes IX-X respectively in 2014 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2014). Here arises the puzzle of child marriage. Girls between

15-18 years are highly prone to get married, impacting low enrolment in this age span. Girls married below the age of 15 have come down to 7% but it is 16 % among girls between 15-18 years of age. On an average 27 % of the girls get married before their 18th birthday as per the 2015-16 data, which is still abnormally high. According to 71st Round NSSO, 124 out of 1000 girls drop out from schools because of marriage. Social taboos, religious norms, cost of marriage, dowry etc. are the causes behind early marriage of girls. Getting a groom for girls after teens becomes difficult and the associated dowry increases largely with age. Parents do not consider the economic condition and background of the groom, only the dowry is considered. Marriage is done. As unemployment has increased to 9.1% in December, 2020 and labour force participation rate has worsened. CMIE, economic growth has slowed down. Lower class has domestic work. Females are burdened with recorded work. Against women's empowerment, the increase in the number of girls has

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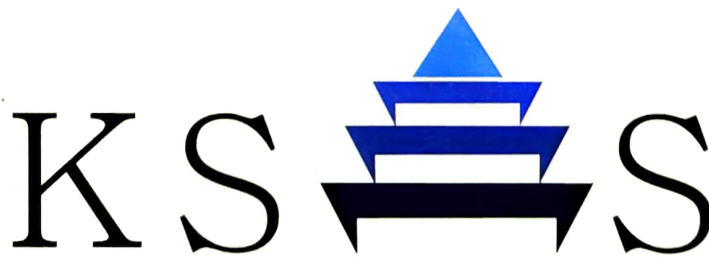
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# 20

## **Role of Education in Women Empowerment - An Empirical Study among Two Villages in South 24-Pgs., West Bengal**

*Moumita Gupta & Abhijit Das*

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### *Abstract*

*Education is the key factor for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. Education educates a woman and helps her to realize that she is a vital part to the society. Occupational achievement, self-awareness and self-satisfaction are among the many things that will be ensured by effective use of education. The present study mainly depicts the picture of empowerment of women in few villages of South 24-Pargana district of West Bengal through the support for education. In order to collect the primary data for the present study, Participant Observation, Intensive Interview and Case Studies have been undertaken.*

*Most of the women in these villages came from the lower income class families where their parents are totally illiterate or poor educational background. They struggle enough to educate their children properly in order to prepare themselves to fight from enemies in future. This research paper discusses the impact of education on empowerment of women as well as the suggestion to improve the changes that need to be considered for women empowerment and economic development of the women. Findings of the study will show that educational qualification play significant role in Women Empowerment and it concludes that if women's empowerment is to be effective, it can be carried out only through the medium of education.*

**Keywords:** *Education, Women, Empowerment, Village, Research, Challenge, Study.*

pollution everywhere. Here, the author mainly examines the social and economic problems of the waste-pickers of Kolkata as marginalized people in an urban context framed on some anthropological theories given by Appadurai, Bourdieu, Arnold, Holston, Wacquant, etc. as well as some existing literature which was mainly the different models of marginalization of waste-pickers in a developing country. Ideological marginalization versus economic marginalization could be seen clearly in this book. How the mainstream society misbehaved towards these marginalized people and how they revolted against them with regard to their urban citizenship or to avoid them in order to justify their powerful voices regarding the protest of their acute marginalization – all of these were clearly explained in this book. It is very unethical and illegal that mainstream society always exploited the waste-pickers for their unhealthy, unauthorized occupation and also for their unhygienic squatter settlements. The main crisis between them was no longer economic in nature, it became a moral standpoint.

Moreover, according to the author, waste-picking, and scrap re-selling were quite profitable businesses as well as a specialized occupation than any other on the basis of their qualifications. She explained that adult male or females daily earned Rs250/-to 300/-per head. In each family 3-4 members were engaged in this occupation. So, their monthly income was on paper sufficient for their lifestyle. On the basis of the opinion of the author, they had the jeweler's eyes. They always saw the valuable scraps from the rejected and unutilized tiny waste products.

Here, the author shows that the waste-pickers were not worried and did not take any initiatives regarding their shelter, shifting to a new occupation, their daily lifestyle, children's education, etc. They were very much accustomed to this unhygienic environment. They always rejected the Government and NGO offers for a better settlement along with a favourable environment. Moreover, NGOs took initiatives for the admission of the waste-picker's children in formal schools, but nobody cared for their children's education. If they wished, they could change their marginalized position, as well as the future of their children and their selves also.

Moumita Gupta  
Department of Anthropology  
Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Govt. College  
Rajarhat, Newtown, Kolkata - 700156  
Email.id: moumitaguptaap@gmail.com.

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# Anthropology, Health & Development

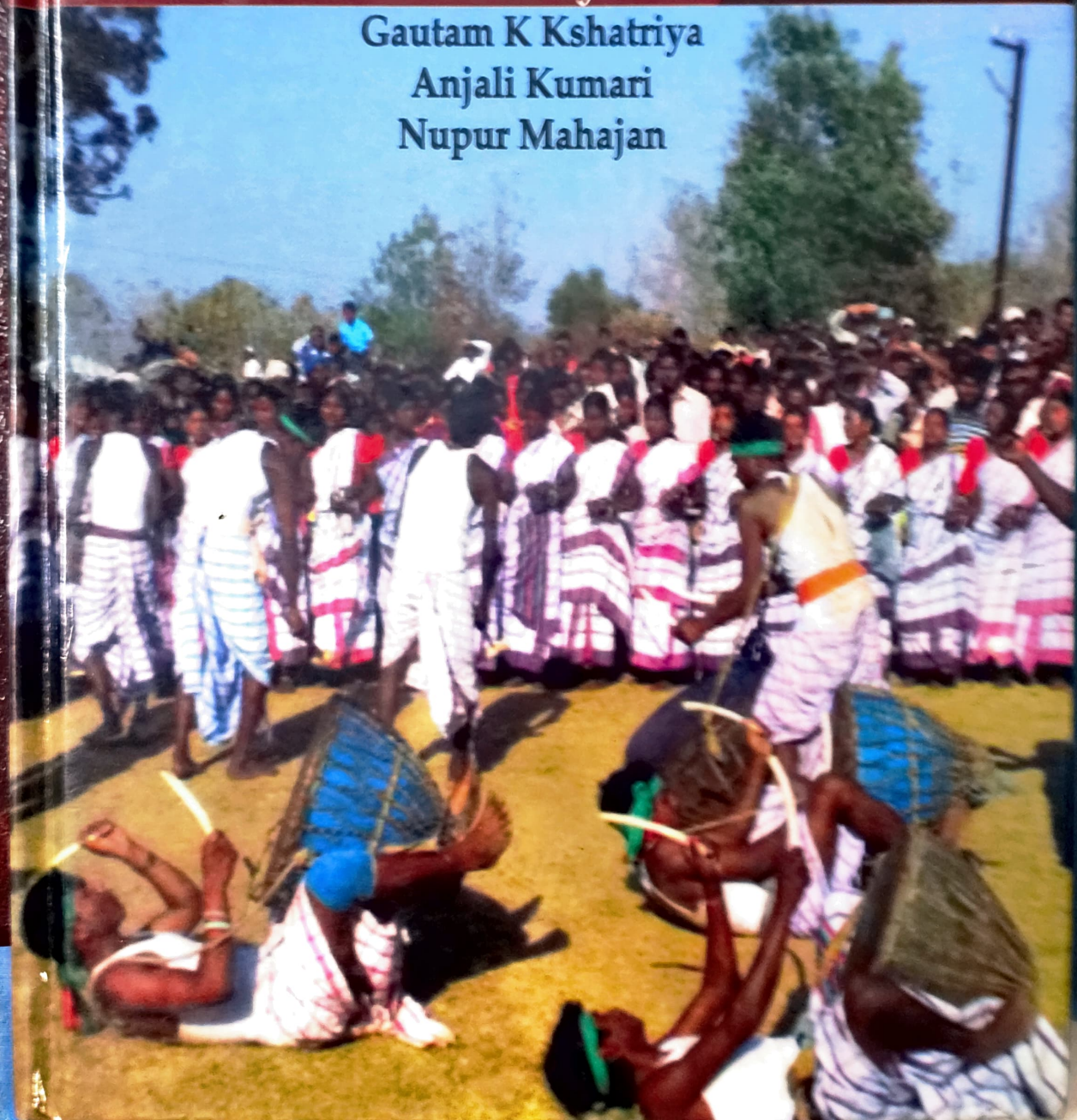
Trends and Future Perspectives

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## BOOK REVIEW

Nandini Sen. *Urban Marginalisation in South Asia, Waste Pickers in Calcutta* (First published), Routledge, London, New York (2018), Taylor & Francis Group, ISBN 978-0-8153-5766-7(hbk), Pages vi +131.

*Urban Marginalization in South Asia* by Nandini Sen elaborately frames her research on the waste-pickers' community in Kolkata. While going through the pages, each and every aspect of the waste-picker's daily life-style, work-pattern, hazardous aspects and myths of the profession were sketched. She wrote in detail about the rigorous and hectic work structure vis-à-vis their familial characteristics. She observed in-depth that they were economically, social-culturally and ideologically a marginalized and neglected urban community in the city of Kolkata, India.

The researcher conducted this ethnographic fieldwork from the year 2011-2013 in two phases. She used Interviews, Participant Observation, Focus Group Discussions, Case Study as the main methods in her primary data collection. As a scholar from Bengal, the author enjoyed the privilege of a lingual interface to build a strong rapport with the interviewees.

In the six chapters, different dimensions of the socio-economic life of the waste-pickers were categorically mentioned. She skillfully showed how they prepared their own space (that was marginalized at any cost) in this city in order to invest their economic, socio-cultural as well as entrepreneurial activities (that revolved around their work-pattern and style) despite tremendous and painstaking harassment (both physically and mentally) from the mainstream society of Calcutta.

Most of the waste-pickers migrated to Kolkata from rural West Bengal, North and East India and also from Bangladesh. They came to this city in search of jobs since the 1930s. The emergence of such professions came from the weakness of the solid-waste management services of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC). For an 'A' grade city, urban solid waste management was worse than usual. From that time, they preferred to take shelter in two areas—the Park Circus Railway Tracks and the highly polluted canals of Narkeldanga. Though, these two settlements were made up of unhygienic plastic materials, but they were habituated to it. They had no permanent address, and no ration cards. Our social caste system debarred them

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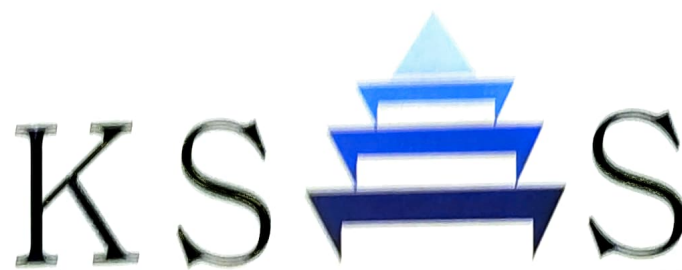
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