

Powerful Issues in Empowering Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Every country of the world struggling for development. Development is the central point of any country and it is a complex process. Development includes social, moral, economic, cultural and other aspects. To obtain this objective any country needs resources. If resources are available then the problem arises that how it can be use in a proper manner. Resources are needed for advancement of the country. In one hand these are human resources and on the other hand these are natural resources. Human resources include both men and women. But it is the fact that women are neglected in the past by not taking care of their ability for development of a country. Both (men and women) are equally important for development. Problem is only that how to use these available resources effectively. At present, now all the countries are struggling to empower women as they have not given equal status in all sphere of life. Gender equality is the major concern of today's world. India is also trying to empower women. In the present paper the author has attempted to explore the powerful issue in empowering women in Indian context.

Keywords: *Issues, Empowerment and Women*

Introduction:

All the human beings are equal and each human being is the strength of a nation. In Indian Society the weak point for development is women as women are not equal to men in terms of strength. For the development of a nation, they should be provided the facilities for their upliftment. As Nehru said, "Women should be uplifted for the upliftment of the nation, if a women is uplifted, society and nation is uplifted." There are two pillars of development in a nation. Both the pillar should be equal in terms of strength. One pillar is men and the second pillar is women. The Indian census 2011 reveals the fact that the male literacy rate is 82.14% and female literacy rate is 65.46%. However there are various examples in Indian history like participation of women in politics, Government Job and in economics development but always not at par with their counterpart. They have

not been provided facilities and environment to perform their role effectively.

Historical background of Women

In Vedic period women enjoyed not only equal status with men but also women were educated. Women married at a mature age and probably free to select their own husband. In Gupta period women were participating and performed administrative duties also. During medieval period the status of women in society was not satisfactory but some examples such as Razia Sultan, Durgavati, Chand Bibi, Noor Jehan-Jijabai, Tarabai is also remarkable who save their kingdom with willpower in Maratha Empire. Rani Tarabai, Rani Laxmibai, Rani Rudramma Devi who fought to save their kingdom and many more are the instance of

courage. During British period reformer like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Jyotira Phule struggle for the advancement of the deteriorated condition of women in society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought for abolition of Sati. The status of women after independence becomes an issue in the eyes of policymakers. The Constitution of India who guarantees to all Indian women on:

- Equality- Article 14.
- No discrimination by the state –Article 15 (1).
- Equality of opportunity (Article-16).
- Right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39 (a)).
- Equal pay for equal work (Article 39 (d)).
- Human condition of work and maternity relief (Article 42).
- Reservation of not less than one third of total seats for women in direct election to local bodies (Article 343(d) and 343 (T)).

The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt the above Articles. Day by day crime against women is increasing like acid throwing, child marriage, domestic violence, dowry, female infanticide and sex-selective abortion, human killings, rape, sexual harassment, traffickers etc. If women will have better status in the society, the above crimes will ultimately get rid of. There is urgent need of women empowerment in all spheres of life. It is remarkable that before fifth five year plan the term welfare was used for issues related to women. After sixth plan the term development was used for the same purpose. After eight year plan, the word empowerment came into existence and it became central point of agenda for the upliftment of women.

Meaning of Empowerment

Empowerment is authority or power given to someone to do something. It means, individuals are given empowerment to create their mind dwelling. Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's right. In other words empowerment means giving power. According to the International Encyclopaedia (1999), power means having the capacity and means to direct one's life towards desired social, political, and economic goals or status. On the basis of review of related literature it can be disclose that empowerment needs attention for betterment of society and country. To empower women the country should provide following facilities which is also depict the meaning of education:

- Equal facilities for development of personalities,
- Equal opportunity for acquiring education,
- Equal social status,
- Equal participation in decision making,
- Equal participation in productive work,
- Awareness of right,
- Equal health care,
- Equal opportunity in job,
- Equal participation in politics, and
- Equal ownership of productive resource

Characteristics of Women Empowerment

Following are the major characteristics of women empowerment:

- Women empowerment means equal power as receive men,
- Women empowerment creates self confidence among women,

- Women empowerment is giving power to choose any job of their choice,
- Women empowerment is giving opportunity to understand their right,
- Women empowerment is giving power to resist discrimination in the basis of gender,
- Women empowerment is giving power for participation in policy and decision making,
- Women empowerment means opportunity for identity making,
- Women empowerment means opportunity to receive education, access to food, equal wages, property rights, freedom of movement and travel
- Low mobility: Freedom of movement is a barrier for development.
- Child marriage: Child marriage is also the barrier to achieve women empowerment as their potential and ability are not properly use by them.

Ways and means of Achieving Empowerment

How to achieve women empowerment is very crucial question for policy makers. Policy makers make the policies on their way but problem arises with the implementation part. For women empowerment there is urgent need of education, self employment, omens mobility, women labour pattern, motivating government schemes and peoples mentality through which women empowerment can be achieved.

Barriers of women Empowerment

There are various barriers which are evidence of backwardness of women in India, some are given below:

- Education: Confucius rightly remarks that If you plan is for one year, plant rice; If you plan is for ten years, plant trees; If you plan is for hundred years, Educate children. Illiteracy is the major speed breaker of development.
- Gender Discrimination: The present society is facing the problem of gender discrimination. It means women are not equally treated in society in terms of participation in social life and employment.
- Female Infanticide: Double standard in society is prevailing. One side government makes the policy for female infanticide which is a illegal activity.
- Financial constraint: Lack of finance is also a barrier to open any business.
- Family responsibility: Indians women are poor who are busy to perform family responsibility.

Education: Education has the power to change the world. It is evident from various resources that most of the developed country not only emphasized on education in the past but also it has more attention in the present time. Developed countries are developed because the investment in education is more than the investment of underdeveloped countries. Education opens the mind of human kind. Without education humans are like animals. Language is the key factor to differentiate human being and animals through which information and knowledge transform from generation to generation. Education is directly related to the development of a nation. Education affects people's standard of living, national income, per capita income, life expectancy rate, health service and others. Less gender basis are found in developed countries as both men and women equally participate in all activities of the country. The government provides facilities for education for both the gender. Education has the potential to foster other means but the government should

design the educational programmes to achieve the empowerment of women.

Self Employment: In the past women were depended on men and this tendency is prevalent in present time also to fulfil the basic needs such as food, shelter and cloth. By self employment women can overcome from this problem. Financial crunch is the barrier for self employment. For self employment, not only financial help is needed and knowledge regarding accessibility to learn, knowledge of various funding agencies and government schemes for empowerment.

Women Mobility: Movement from one place to another place to perform various efficiently and effectively. Freedom of movement is necessary for achieving empowerment. Women movement are often control by their spouse or parents. Their rigid attitude is the barrier in the road of development and empowerment. Only few of them participate in the process of production and development.

Women's Labour Pattern: Most of the women are housewife's who spend all the time to fulfil the family needs. Women not only can participate in any work as men do. The only condition is that provide the conducive working environment for better performance. It is evident from the studies that women perform better than men in teaching and other activities such as doctor, nurse, manager and leader.

Motivation: Motivation can play a key role to achieve women in empowerment. Women are having less confidence because masculine tendency in the society. It is the duties of the parents to mould the behaviour of their daughters in the same way as their son receive. There should not be any difference on basis of sex. Gender discrimination is the curse of development of any

society. Teacher can also play their role by adopting good method of motivation in school. It is the teacher who influences the student in their own way. Teacher can motivate their student in the area of selection of subject and profession. Spouse are playing major source of inspiration for employment in government and private sector.

Peoples Mentality: India is an under developed country and struggling to advance in the field of all sphere of life. The literacy rate of India is low as compared to developed nation. India is having the second largest population of the world after china. People's mentality regarding women and their work is narrow as most of the women are poor who are busy in their houses as a belief that women are made for house work only and they may be called unpaid workers. This mentality should be change, in any nation follow the pattern of development.

Conclusion:

Modern age is the age of empowerment. India is facing the massive task of women empowerment. To achieve women empowerment every attempt has been made to bridging the gap between men and women and to provide facilities to bring empowerment within the reach of every woman without any gender discrimination. It has been felt that education plays an important to empower women through providing knowledge and help from the government. Ignorance is the curse which affects the development of developing country and can be overcome easily through education. Hence in order to pace with this rapidly changing world, women empowerment has become major area of concern. Government have initiated various schemes for women empowerment such as Rastriya Mahila Kosh (1992-1993), Mahila Samaridhi Yojna (1993), Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995, Rajiv

Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010), The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers, Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010), Dhanalakahmi (2008), Short Stay Homes Ujjawala (2007), Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM, Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY), Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS) and many more. The only goals of these schemes are only to achieve the women empowerment.

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