



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

HARJOT KAUR 1

Ph.D (Research Scholar), Department Of Political Science, RIMT University, Mandi
Gobindgarh, Punjab, India.

Guided by Prof. Dr. Priyanka Uppal

Co Guide : Dr. Ravinder jeet Kaur.

Abstract

Women Empowerment plays an important role in every nook and corner of the world, the society is beset all over the world. The main aim of the paper is to increase the status of women's as politically, economically and socially. It provides an overview of the concept of women's empowerment. The current paper makes an effort to analyse the status of women's empowerment in India using a variety of indicators, including data from various sources on domestic violence, financial autonomy, freedom of movement, acceptance of unequal gender roles, media exposure, access to education, and political participation. Despite numerous government initiatives, the study shows that women in India still have a relatively low level of power and status compared to men. There is a gender gap in who can access jobs and education. Women's freedom of movement and household decision-making authority vary greatly depending on their age, level of education, and employment. Giving women the means, opportunities, and resources to take charge of their own lives and make free decisions is referred to as "women empowerment. It entails advancing gender equality and making sure that women have equal access to political representation, employment, healthcare, and education.

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is a multifaceted, international movement with the goal of raising the status of women in society, the economy, politics, and culture. It involves giving women the power to take charge of their lives, make decisions, and actively participate in all facets of society. This empowerment is founded on the idea of gender equality and the understanding that women ought to have access to the same opportunities, resources, and rights as men. In many

societies throughout history, women have experienced various types of discrimination, inequality, and marginalisation. The goal of women's empowerment is to address and eliminate these inequalities. It is crucial for the general growth and progress of societies and countries, in addition to being a matter of justice and human rights.

In the Indian social structure, women played the most important role. Without a doubt, the Rig Vedic women in India had a high social standing, and good. Even women were given the chance to reach a high level of intellectual and spiritual achievement. However, women began to face discrimination in education and other rights and amenities starting in the Later-Vedic period, after enjoying free and prestigious positions in the Rig-Vedic society (Saravanakumar, 2016). Indian society does not believe that we are currently experiencing a significant revolution for women. Women's voices are becoming more prominent in the legislature, courts, and public spaces. While women in the West had to fight for more than a century to obtain some of their fundamental rights, such as the right to vote, (Devandra, Kiran, 1985). both historic and mediaeval the position of women in contemporary Indian society in terms of equality, education, marriage, and family life, as well as race and Gender, religion, and culture are either preserved or declining.

In the Vedic Age, the role of the wife was highly valued. She was viewed as the other half of the man, his confidante, friend in solitude, guide through life's wilderness, and the rest. The women were given the chance to reach a high level of intellectual and spiritual development. Women Rishis were prevalent at this time. Although monogamy was typically the norm, polygamy was practised by the wealthier members of society. Early marriage and the sati system did not exist. However, women began to experience discrimination in the Rig-Vedic society after they had previously enjoyed free and prestigious positions.

Properties and rights. child marriage, burning of widows or The purdah, sati, and polygamy made the situation for women even worse. the start of the Indian cultural tradition utilising the Vedas. The Vedic period is generally accepted to have lasted from 2000 BC to 500 BC. Vedic women had financial independence. There were some women working as teachers. The place of production was the home. Clothes were made by weaving and spinning at home. Women supported their husbands'

agricultural endeavours as well. The Mediaeval period (during which time between 500 and 1500 A.D.), which saw a further decline in Indian women's status, proved to be a very

discouraging time for them. The 'dark age' for women in mediaeval India is generally considered to have been this time period.

In terms of equality, education, marriage and family life, race and gender, religion, and culture, women in modern Indian society maintain or deteriorate from their ancient and mediaeval status. In India, the women of the Rig Veda had a high social status. The women were given the chance to reach a high level of intellectual and spiritual development. Women did not have a lower status in Vedic India; rather, they held an honourable position. They had extensive rights in the social and religious spheres but few in the political and economic ones. They were treated equally with men rather than as inferiors or subordinates. Our nationalism grew from the "Vande Mataram" mantra, and we have honoured our nation as our "Motherland," or "Bharat Mata."

Objectives of the Study:

1. To research Indian women's historical profiles.
2. To recognise the necessity of women's empowerment.
3. To research government programmes for women Empowerment.
4. To make helpful recommendations in light of the findings.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Change, power, and choice are all aspects of empowerment. It is a process of change that gives people and groups who have little or no power the ability to make decisions that will impact their lives. Women's empowerment is the process of giving women the power they need to understand their rights and carry out their obligations to others and to themselves in the most efficient way possible. K. Sayulu, G. Sardar, and B claim (2005) Sridevi "Women empowerment" is defined as "any process that increases the autonomy of women by sharing pertinent information and giving control over factors that affect their performance."

Characteristics of Women Empowerment

Gender Equality: Empowerment is closely tied to the principle of gender equality. It involves creating a level playing field where women and men have equal opportunities, rights, and access to resources and decision-making.

Access to Education: Education is a fundamental tool for empowerment. Ensuring that girls and women have access to quality education and training opportunities is essential for their personal development and economic independence.

Economic Independence: Women's economic empowerment involves ensuring that women have access to income-earning opportunities, equal pay for equal work, and the ability to control their financial resources. This enables them to support themselves and their families.

Health and Well-being: Access to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, is crucial for women's empowerment. Ensuring women's physical and mental well-being allows them to participate fully in society.

Political Participation: Women's participation in political processes, including voting, running for office, and holding positions of power, is a key aspect of empowerment. It enables women to influence policies and decisions that affect their lives.

Social and Cultural Change: Challenging and changing societal norms and cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality is a crucial aspect of empowerment. This may involve promoting gender-sensitive attitudes and behaviours ensuring that women have legal rights and protection against discrimination, violence, and abuse. This includes laws and policies that address issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based discrimination. in communities.

Supportive Networks: Empowerment is often facilitated through the creation of support networks, including women's organizations and mentorship programs. These networks provide women with resources, information, and a sense of solidarity.

Information and Communication: Access to information and communication technologies can enhance women's empowerment by providing them with opportunities for education, economic participation, and networking.

Family and Community Involvement: Empowerment should involve engaging families and communities in the process. Educating and sensitizing both men and women about the benefits of gender equality can help create a supportive environment.

Sustainable Development: Women's empowerment is closely linked to sustainable development. When women are empowered, they can contribute more effectively to economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability.

Intersectionality: Recognizing that women's experiences of empowerment can vary based on factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability is essential. An intersectional approach ensures that empowerment efforts address the unique challenges faced by different groups of women.

Partnerships and Collaboration: Empowerment often requires collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations to create comprehensive strategies and policies.

Women's empowerment is not a one-size-fits-all concept and can vary across different cultural, social, and economic contexts. Efforts to promote women's empowerment should be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the individuals and communities involved.

Importance of Women Empowerment

The Indian Constitution's Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles all uphold the principle of women's equality. The constitution guarantees women's equality while also allowing the State to enact laws that positively discriminate in favour of women. Among the important articles are some of the following:

Article 15(i) prohibits discrimination by states on the basis of only one of the following:

- religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- Special state provisions [Article 15(3)] in favour of women and children
- Equal opportunity in employment-related matters [Article 16]

- Ensuring equal access to adequate means of subsistence for men and women [Article 39(a)]
- Equal pay for equal work is required by Article 39(d).
- Providing free legal aid and promoting justice based on the principles of equal opportunity [Article 39(A)] Adopt practises that are offensive to women [Article 51(A)(e)]
- A third of the seats are reserved for women in municipalities and panchayats [Article 243(D)]
- Women's Property Rights [Article 300(a)]
- Article 14 of Indian Constitution ,Protection of life and Equality before Law and Liberty .

Legislations

- Abrogation of the 1829 Sati Act
- The 1954 Special Marriage Act
- the 1956 Hindu Succession Act
- the 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act
- the 1961 Maternity Benefits Act
- The 1971 Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act
- the 2005 Domestic Violence Act
- (Ram, 2004) Sexual Harassment Bill

Government Programmes to Empower Women

In India, government initiatives for women's advancement date back to 1954, but actual participation didn't start until 1974. The Indian government currently runs over 34 programmes for women through various departments and ministries. The following are a few of these:

- 1.The Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK) from 1992 to 1993.
2. The Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY), launched in October 1993.
3. The 1995 Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY).
4. In 1997–1998 the Women Entrepreneur Development Programme received top priority.

5. About 9000 villages are implementing Mahila Samakhya.

6. Swayasjdha.

7.Swa Shakti Group

8. Assistance with STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women).

9.Swalamban

Suggestions

1. It is important to organise awareness campaigns about women's rights, especially for those from disadvantaged groups.

2. Since women's education is the root of the issue, it should be given the highest priority. As a result, women's education needs to receive special attention.

3. Programmes and Acts should be strictly enforced to stop the wrongdoing that is pervasive in society.

4. Women should be able to work and be given the necessary protection and assistance to do so. To raise their status in society, they should be paid a fair wage and allowed to work alongside men.

CONCLUSION

In order to empower women, one must first increase their spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, and economic strength. In India, a number of factors, such as geographic location (urban vs. rural), educational attainment, social standing (caste and class), and age, have a significant impact on how empowered women are. At the federal, state, and local (Panchayat) levels, policies on women's empowerment are in place in a variety of fields, including health, education, economic opportunity, gender-based violence, and political participation. One of the most important issues of the twenty-first century, both internationally and at the national level, is the empowerment of women. Governmental initiatives by themselves wouldn't be sufficient to accomplish this. A campaign to eradicate gender discrimination and give women full autonomy over their lives, including the ability to participate equally in society's social, political, and economic spheres.

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