

A Literature Review on Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT: *Focused on the theory that women are different from men in social roles and that these disparities result in asymmetrical, discriminatory gender power relationships, 'women's empowerment' relates to increasing women's right to influence of their strategic decisions in life and their opportunity to completely grow their potential. As an economic, political and social culture phase, women's empowerment questions the framework of sexual stratification that has contributed to the subordination and marginalization of women to increase the quality of life of women. This review article provides an overview of women empowerment status in India.*

KEYWORDS: *Equality, Gender equality, Quality of life, Women empowerment,*

INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women in India depends heavily on various different variables like geographical locations (urban/rural), schooling, social status (caste and class) and age. There are national, state and local (Panchayat) policies on women's empowerment across a range of sectors including health, education, economic opportunity, sex-based abuse and policy engagement. However, substantial differences remain at the group level between legislative change and existing activities[1]. The overwhelmingly patriarchal system that dominates the society and households in much of India is one of the major factors leading to the inequalities in the enforcement of legislation and policies to tackle sexism, economic disadvantages, and violence against women[2]. Women and girls are thus limited to mobility, have access to jobs, have access to health services and have less decision-making capacity. Political representation is still inhibited, in view of current reservations for women, at Panchayat level (local governing bodies), state-level and national level[3].

There is an effect on rural and urban India of the patriarchal system, but the empowerment of women in rural India is much less apparent than in urban areas. This is particularly important because, considering the high urbanization rate and expansion of towns, much of India is rural. Rural women face inequality even higher in and in all spheres of life as compared to women in urban environments[4]. Urban women, and particularly urban educated women, benefit from comparatively greater access, less domestic violence and less access to economic opportunity, health and education. The family and the society have larger decision-making rights for women (both cities and farmland) who have a certain educational degree. In addition, schooling for women has a significant effect on maternal mortality rates, and on children's nutrition and health indicators. There are additional differences among rural women that obstruct empowerment of women. Education, caste and class distinctions are the most prominent. Lower caste women (scheduled castes, other backward castes and tribal communities) are particularly vulnerable to maternal mortality and child mortality[5]. They also do not have access to health and education, have no authority to vote, and face higher levels of violence. Any education levels of women of lower classes have been found to have positive effects on the indices of women's empowerment.

Social disparities between urban women also affect equally on indices of empowerment. Women of higher schooling and educated learning have greater access to health, jobs and economic opportunity, while less educated women of lesser education have relatively less access to these rights in urban areas. The cities still house large areas of the slum due to the rapid urbanization and lack of economic opportunities in other parts of the world. Slums are informal, and social facilities like clean water, sanitation and health care are frequently scarce. Slums are informal. Furthermore, slum residents operate mostly in unorganized and informal industries, leaving them vulnerable to state seizures, employer violations and other types of insecurity. Women and kids in slums are among the most vulnerable and robbed of fundamental human rights, including harassment and abuse. India's policy/practice deficit in terms of rampancy of graft and lack of good practices decreases in all industries and initiatives. Governments at state level say that they are without money, and their resources are particularly

vulnerable to corruption. Political corruption inhibits the government from engaging in social resources, even in women's empowerment programmes. In order to improve accountability and keep government officials responsible, India developed mechanisms and legislative actions since the 1990s, such as the Right to Information Act (2005). The level of respect in political institutions and politicians in society remains strong, with often media reports reporting corruption and grafting charges[6].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several surveys have been carried out at the global and Indian levels on women's empowerment. Some research explored methodological problems, some studied empirically and some addressed empowerment steps and tools. In this section we have first discussed some of the major international studies followed by other studies in India. Moser focuses on social-development interrelationships, gender policy formulation and the application of gender strategy and activities. Shields' study offered a structure for examining empowerment from both a theoretical and a realistic standpoint with an emphasis on the understanding of women as to the nature of empowerment[7]. A test of gender equality was attempted by Anand and Sen. The methods of building, composition and deciding GEM were primaries on which Pillarisetti and Gillivray emphasized. Bardhan and Klasen objectively considered GDI and GEM as UNDP's two gender metrics, and submitted a number of changes to the measures including a revision of the GI income variable, which had both significant logical and empirical problems. Accordingly, UNDP updated the GDI estimation method after 1999 based on their recommendations, without noting the discrepancy from that of the preceding year[8].

Similarly, the GDI principle was tested by Dijkstra and Hanmer and the different limits were found. They claim that GDI conflicts relative gender equality with absolute standards of human growth and thus do not include any details about comparative gender disparity between countries. They developed a Relative Status index for women using GDI and also agreed that the RSW is not an ideal indicator of discrimination between women and men[8]. The paper concluded by presenting a philosophical basis from which an alternative assessment of gender discrimination can be taken. In critical analysis of the two measures, Dijkstra defined their strengths and limitations and introduced a new measure called Standardized Index of Gender Equality (SIGE) which seeks to cover all possible aspects of gender equality, ignoring GDI's and GEM's conceptual and methodological problems. He further claimed that SIGE can serve as a first approximation of such an overall index. Malhotra et al in their paper highlighted methodological issues of measurement and analysis of women empowerment[9].

In 2006, Dijkstra argued that the UNDP needed to take the lead in developing a new gender equality index, or in drawing up an updated GDI and GEM index. On the basis of a brief analysis of the alternatives in the literature, he made a thorough recommendation for all the solutions. Klasen recommended certain improvements to measures covering some defined GDI and GEM issues. Schüler discussed how the academics and the press used the two indices. His analysis found that GDI in particular tends to be an unused measure. GDI was misinterpreted in most situations as an indicator of sexual discrimination. In his paper Beteta argued that the GEM reflects an imperfect and partial index on the advancement of women and tests disparity between the most well-educated and economically advantaged individuals, and does not incorporate substantial non-economic facets of the power of decision-making on both household and the level of women and sexuality. After identifying and assessing potential indicators in those spheres which were absent in the GEM suggested for the construction of a new aggregated measure called Gender Empowerment Enabling Environment (GEEE)[10].

In the course of the discussion in Bangladesh regarding women's current status, Barkat said that while women as mothers are highly respected on an individual basis, the advancement of women as a consciousness- building mechanism leading to greater involvement in decision-making and influence over one's own life remains uncertain. In his previous works, Klasen and Schüler expanded the idea by proposing specific recommendations for the two gender metrics and explaining the findings for those interventions. The main proposals included the estimation of the men and women HDI and the GGI index to replace GDI. The most relevant proposals had to be taken into consideration. The most notable improvements introduced in respect of the GEM were new methods of dealing with the income variable obtained and of replacing it with a simplified approach for calculating the measure. He finds numerous rankings of countries similar to GDI and GEM using his suggested methodology.

The work of Duflo and Chattopadhyay contributes greatly to the advancement of women in India. In order to research the effect on policy choices of woman leadership, the writers used a policy of electoral reservations for women in India. They observed that if the village chief was women, women would be more likely to be interested in policy-making. In addition to problems of domestic violence and the socio-cultural condition in the North East, Mahanta tried to clarify the problem of female access or denial of fundamental human rights such as rights to health, education and employment, legal rights, and workers' rights. Canada was organized in 2003 by the Social Sciences Institute and the South Asian Alliance to deal with issues such as "Proxy Women," who were just marionettes, after being elected to the Panchayat bodies in their spouses, relatives and other Panchayat members' hands. Assam's Human Development Report has highlighted the disparity in life achievement among Assam's men and women. The study considered the major issues of concern for the women of South Asia to be hunger, harassment and lack of political representation, and Assam was no exception. The Kishore and Gupta research shows that ordinary women in India are powerless in contrast with men and that their empowerment over time has improved little. In his study, Parashar explored how mother empowerment in India is related to baby feeding and immunization and recommended that women be encouraged to benefit from their entire range of health and survival needs concurrently in various dimensions. Sridevi presented a scientific framework for calculating empowerment in her article. The Cote de Ivoire study shows that increased women's household revenue contributes to higher expenditure on growth. Blumberg sees women's economic growth as the path to gender equality and a nation's well-being. This will not only improve women's decision-making skills, but also reduce corruption, military strife, and long-term violence against women.

CONCLUSION

Different women's empowerment metrics are examined through data from different sources, when addressing the role of women in India. Indicators such as female family decision-making, financial equality, freedom of movement, the recognition by women of unequal gender norms, media representation, access to training and women's experience of domestic violence are given importance. Political representation of women is often measured using metrics such as the number of women and parliamentarians. It was found from research that the influence and free movement of women in the household decision-making process differ considerably with age, schooling and employment. Widow or divorcee freedom of travel is more married or married than ever.

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