

WOMEN EMPOWER IN INDIA

Y.ARULSUKIJOTHI

Ph.D Research Scholar

Department of History,

Rani Anna Gov't College Affiliated to : Manonmaniam Sundaranr University, Tirunelveli.

Abstract

Empowerment of Women appears to be a much published and clichéd concept of the twenty first century. It is a multidimensional process which should enable individuals or a group of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, great autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives or have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free them from shackles imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Generally Development with justice is expected to generate the forces that lead to empowerment of various sections of population in a country and to raise their status. Empowerment in its simplest form means the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male dominance. The concept of Women's empowerment throughout the world has its roots in the Women movement. It is since the mid 1980's that this term became popular in the field of Development especially with reference to Women. In India it is the Sixth Five Year plan (1980 – 1985) which can be taken as landmark, for the cause of Women. It is here that the concept of Women and empowerment was introduced for the first time.

Key Words: Women, Empowerment, India, Education, Economic, Development,

Introduction

Women groups have also worked to help others primarily through religious and charitable activities, weather political, religious or charitable, the Women empowerment has sought to achieve greater social, economic and political involvement for Women. Throughout history, Women have usually had fewer rights and lower social status than men. The traditional role of mother laminated and most Women life are centered.

Definition and Meaning

The term “empower” is referred to “to give power or authority to”. Empowerment is about power, and about changing the balance of power, in every society, there are powerful and powerless groups. Power is exercised in social, economic and political relations between individuals and groups. Power itself can be simply defined as control over resources and control of ideology. The resources over which control can be exercised fall into five broad categories.

- (i) Physical Resources - [Life land, water, forest]
- (ii) Human Resources - [People, their bodies, their Labour and skills]
- (iii) Intellectual Resources - [Knowledge, information ideas]
- (iv) Financial Resources - [Money, access to money]

“The term empowerment refers to a range activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge basic power relations. For individuals and groups, where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins. When they not only recognize the systemic forces, that oppress them, but act to change existing power relationship.

Economic

Women in all over the country are economically weak. They are dependent on males, the latter being their bread-earner. Only a small proportion of Women is gainfully employed. Women's average earnings are consistently lower than those of men. They are also culturally so much dominated by the males that they cannot take any decision against the wishes of the males.

Education

The need for empowerment is also for the poor state of illiteracy among Women. In the absence of literacy and education, Women have to suffer a lot. The educational problems of Women are low enrolment, high dropout rates and wastages. The educational problems of Women are traced to three major factors such as early marriage, absence of separate schools for girls and Women teachers and finally discrimination within the school.

Health

Women suffer from poor health conditions. The girl child is the weakest link in the family. “She eats least and last”. There are usually the last ones to go to health centres for treatment for themselves though they may take their family members and children. They do not give importance to their health because of low self-esteem, lack of resources and the time loss entailed in such visits. The Women who are poor starve anyway because the effects of poverty are felt most by them.

Politics

Men have always monopolized political space. Representation of Women among members of Parliament and State Legislatures have never exceeded 7%, and has typically remained around 5%, over the

years despite the increasing visibility of Women. Women's representation at the higher ranges of decision making positions has also been consistently low.

The cultural construct of some preference adds to the psychological difference of the female child. Dowry deaths are related abominations unique to India. Seventeen Women are killed every day for dowry. According to the figures of the National Crime Records Bureau of the Home Ministry, as observed earlier, the need for female empowerment was never as urgent as it is today-One of the major changes which occurred during this century is the acceptance - the importance given to education of Women. The social reformers looked up on educational as instrumental for her role as wife and mother. Education, being given support as a means of enhancing Women's ability to fulfil their traditional domestic and family roles, was considered as a good level for getting employment. Reduction or elimination of gender disparities within the educational process, and its reflection in employment. social, political-participation, opportunities for personal growth and competence are factors which can build defences against degradation, exploitation or oppression, and lead to the Development of a self-confident individual, with a strong commitment to democratic values concerned with the creation of a nation united in purpose out of people speaking different languages, following different religions, and rooted in a variety of cultures. Changing socio-cultural values obstruct Women's equality and Development. These two are mutually and closely inter-related and support each other.

Economic Independence

Women are a vital part of Indian economy, constituting one third of the national Labour force and a major contributor to the survival of the family. It is an established fact that the poorer the family, the greater its dependence on Women's income.

Industrial progress has largely widened Women's employment opportunities. One of the astonishing features of Indian life is her rapid Development in industries in which Women are contributing. Women's employment has also increased rapidly as with the increase in white-collar girls, and in engineering, administrative and business occupations.

Conclusion

The foregoing research reveals the former fallen greatness of women than the lower status and present position of women. The position of women is deplorably poor inspite of her being an affectionate sister, a loveable wife and a glorious mother. In literature and on platform speeches, women are given equal right with men. But in practice the position of women is very miserable, inspite of the efforts taken, by the organisations favouring womens empowerment and Government passing legislatures in favour of the women. During the Sangam period, women lived in par with men in all aspects of life. They were highly educated and became great poets. They used to send their children to the war front with a broad smile on their face which showed

their bravery. They were famous for their charity. At times they acted as messengers to Kings to prevent wars. They worked hard for the welfare of the land and they developed arts of different kinds.

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