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A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN WOMEN IN KERALA STATE AND UTTAR PRADESH ON EMPOWERMENT ASPECTS

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Abstract

A comparative study between women in Kerala State and Uttar Pradesh on empowerment aspects was carried out by the researchers. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones in the society. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India accounting to 16% of its total population. Besides being a very populous state, Uttar Pradesh also has some of the poorest development indicators, especially with regard to the status of women and girls. However, on the other hand, Kerala has been one state which defied national trends and provided a model of development that is more open and inclusive of women. Kerala has been an exception to the general trend in terms of women development. The paper is qualitative in nature. The researches have prepared an opinionnaire for collecting data from different backgrounds and tried to record their opinion in different aspects of life. Researchers also collected life experiences of women with men in different spheres of life. The researchers have interviewed nearly 50 women from different backgrounds both in Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. The researchers have found that women of Kerala and Uttar Pradesh are having different opinions in some aspect. There also exist similar mindset of women of two states in certain issues.

KEY WORD; Empowerment.

Introduction

In a country like India, where several goddesses are worshipped, it is pitiful to see that women are treated with lesser status than men. Women empowerment has become one of the biggest movements in India nowadays and many Indian women have proven to be the building blocks of the movement. With their pure passion for their work and their good deeds, they are very well a true inspiration for everyone. Women particularly in rural areas have proportionately least possessions, skills, education, social status, leadership qualities and capabilities for mobilization, which determines the degree of decision making and power, as a result, their dependence on men increases. They have been confined to the four walls of the household, overburdened with domestic work. Women empowerment refers to making women powerful to make them capable of deciding for themselves. Women have suffered a lot through the years at the hands of men. In earlier centuries, they were treated as almost non-existent. They were seen as if having only reproductive role not having any productive role in society. As if all the rights belonged to men even something as basic as voting. As the times evolved, women realized their power. There on began the revolution for women empowerment.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To find out whether there is any difference between Kerala women and women in Uttar Pradesh in empowerment aspects
- 2) To find out how they are treated differently from men in society.

Research Methodology

The paper is basically qualitative in nature. Method used for collecting data was Survey. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the opinion of women of Uttar Pradesh and Kerala. The researchers has prepared an opinionnaire for collecting data from different backgrounds and tried to record their opinion in different aspects of life. Researchers also collected their life experience with men in different spheres of life. Researchers also interviewed the sample on the matter of empowerment and related issues

Need of the Study

With 199 million people, Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India and is home to about 16% of the total population of India. The sex ratio at birth (878 girls to 1,000 boys) in the state has increased just by one percentage point in the past years and it continues to be far lower than the national average of 909 (2011-13). The difference between the 77% literacy rate of men and the 57% rate of women in the state is high, when compared to the national average which for men is 82% and for women 65%. Besides being a very populous state, Uttar Pradesh also has some of the poorest development indicators, especially with regard to the status of

women and girls. The percentage of ever-married women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence is higher in Uttar Pradesh (42%) than in the entire country (37%). In the state, more than three-fifths of women (64%) who have only daughters have a desire for more children, compared to one-fourth of the women who already have two sons. A high proportion of girls continue to get married before the legal age of 18th birthday. The opinion of women is hardly asked for in any such situations. So, the researchers has attempted to get in between them and find out what they feel about their social upbringing and how it's different from male counterparts.

Kerala has been one Indian state which defied national trends and provided a model of development that is more open and inclusive of women. Kerala has been an exception to the general trend in terms of women development. Similarly, in terms of literacy, life expectancy and mean age at marriage, women in Kerala have had a higher score when compared with women in the rest of the country. Thus, historically too, a favorable ground was set for Kerala women while most of the Indian states were deplorably poor in this regard. As per the 2010 Economic review, Kerala's female literacy is 92 percent while the corresponding figure at the national level is only 65 percent. The female life expectancy in Kerala as per the latest available secondary source is 76.3 years when the same for women at the national level is only 64.2 years. Despite having the highest literacy rate and educational achievements of women, the suicide rate among females is very high, and domestic violence committed against women is increasing every year in Kerala.

Data Collection

The researchers has given an opinionnaire and interviewed nearly 50 women from different backgrounds both in Kerala and Uttar Pradesh

Findings and Conclusion

(1) It was found that the girls in Uttar Pradesh believed that getting equal access to the technology as the men have, is the way of empowering. As the men in the society are allowed to have the smart phones while the women generally have to satisfy with the basic phones. In case the women got access to the smartphone, they are always checked surprisingly if they are using any social networking app, what type of pictures she is uploading, who are in the friends list etc. However, there is no such restrictions for the men in society.

In Kerala state women are free to use any kind of technological devices for communication. They have equal freedom with men in the society.

(2) In the case of women in Uttar Pradesh the equality to education is the way to empowerment as the women believed that they are taught in the cheapest possible manner (minimum financial expenses) to marry

her off as soon as she passes higher secondary school examination. However, the male counterparts are given the best possible education as they are considered as the earning hand of family in future.

In Kerala state girls get equal opportunity for education and in recent days a large percentage of Kerala women are highly educated than men. She also supporting her family with her income

(3) Getting importance to the choices and decisions they make in life is empowerment. As women feel that their choice hardly matters to anyone when it comes to the way of life they want to lead specially in their marriage. Men who are asked to choose among the girls not the girls get such type of options.

In Kerala state girls are very free to choose her groom and Kerala women have her own opinion on her life. No one can compel her in the matter of marriage

(4) Getting support in making their own carrier choice is empowerment. Women feel that the society is very particular to the type of field she is working in. For example, If a girl wants to be a teacher it is considered as good profession while getting into police for her is not considered as the good option.

In Kerala state women are really empowered for selecting a job. She is free to choose her carrier and bold enough to work in police force or army or in administrative services. Dignity of labour is very high in Kerala state.

(5) Getting freedom and liberty is empowerment. There is restrictions on the timing of leaving and entering the house. The women don't want to be judged by the types of clothes she wears, even the women are not allowed to hit the gymnasium if they want to.

In Kerala state such restrictions are there in homes but the study revealed that Kerala women have more freedom than women in Uttar Pradesh.

(6) Empowerment is totally a matter of being aware of whatever scheme government is running to assist women financially, or to enhance the safe environment around them.

Women in Kerala also expressed the same opinion in this case and most of them suggested for the awareness programmes on schemes of government.

(7) Empowerment is having a legal awareness. They believed that most of the women don't know the correct procedure to follow when they met some legal problems. Whom to approach in case they face any type of challenge at home or at work place.

Kerala women have more awareness than women in Uttar Pradesh. Even though most of the women remarked that they need awareness programmes in legal matters

(8) Empowerment simply means having financial stability. A job to them so they are not to depend upon male members of family for everything.

Most of the women in Kerala state are working population and they have their own financial stability

(9) The women in both states believed that the empowerment is truly possible by educating and making their guardians aware and understand that girl child can prove to be the supporting hand to their parents. They should not always believe that only a boy will look after them whenever time will come.

(10) All of them opinioned that Getting appreciation and importance in home for whatever they do is empowerment. Even though women work 24/7 to raise their children and to maintain their families, they are not getting enough recognition for house chores and home maintenance.

Conclusion

Empowerment is providing equal food and nutrition to both the genders. As it was studied that the male child is served first with good quality food and nutrition. If something is left from him then it's served to the female child. Equality is a word which encompasses equality in all aspects of life. But really what study says that women are hailing for excellence and empowerment for a fruitful future.

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