



Voice of Women: Self Help Associations

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If we look at the status of women in a traditional country like India, women are still subordinate to men. It is a tragedy that the life of a woman is unstable in a country where women are Adoring, worshiping in the name of Gods like Sharade, Saraswati, Kali, Durga, Chamundi, Lakshmi, Yallamma, Huligemma etc. A woman is physically weak but not mentally. She is also no less than a men. Yet the system recognizes women differently. Made subservient to men. Women faced many problems. Due to the power of patriarchy, women lost their right to exist. Feminine power society has ushered in a silent revolution in society where voiceless women are voices. Women who do not have the opportunity to express their opinion about the happenings at home are moving towards finding meaning for their feelings and dreams. But in a time when education was limited only to men, women were deprived of education, confined to the kitchen, and lived under the control of men. Even in the inner circle of the house, any decisions and conclusions in the house belonged to the men. She is bound to face new challenges in her private life as well as in public life. Dowry, sexual harassment, family conflict, gender discrimination, labour, production, health, education. Many problems have to be faced in economic and political sphere. As long as we are parasites, we cannot live on our own strength, self-respect. Once we decide to shape our own future without blaming

anyone, we never fail at anything. In this background, government and non-government organizations have launched many programs for the empowerment of women.

In the year 2000-01, with the main objective of empowering rural women and making them self-reliant for the last 15-20 years, When S.M. Krishna was the Chief Minister, Streeshakti formed women's groups for the advancement of women, told the benefits of the organization, gave trainings on how to think and find solutions to their problems and enabled the poor women to succeed. Stree Shakti Scheme was implemented during his administration. This scheme was implemented in Raichur especially in the background of the development of the people of Hyderabad Karnataka. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the process by which women can progress economically and create an appropriate environment for social change due to Streeshakti Yojana, by involving women in income generating activities, increasing the income of poor women and creating financial stability in them, as well as providing proximity to lending institutions and providing the services of various development departments to the members of these groups.¹

Women established self-help associations and paid Rs 10 per week as members he devised a plan to save. This became the basis of their financial security. Apart from this, the aim of this project is to make them aware of their social conditions. Women's self-help associations have risen to complement the saying of Gandhiji that the country's progress lies in the progress of women. As a result of this, every female power group born today has created a great revolution. First, people from their own social backgrounds have come together to form groups and realize that they What can't be done alone can be can do done together. Learned to read and write before opening a bank account. This has taken the first step of self-reliance. She doesn't have to beg anyone for household chores, child care or social obligations. She has grown enough to help others financially. With freedom from debt, the confidence that she can take decisions on her own makes her self-reliant by starting financial activities alone or in a group without looking back.²

It is seen as a base for awakening a kind of self-confidence in a woman. She engages in agricultural work to improve her family's financial situation. Along with agriculture, she started to save money by selling products like animal husbandry, milk production, milk, curd, butter, ghee etc. sitting at home. In addition to this, she is becoming economically strong through

poultry farming, sheep farming, beekeeping, vegetables, greens, net weaving, fish farming, processing and selling. Apart from this, the jobs held by women are diverse. They are not limited to a particular job. She has engaged himself in many production works of his own. Complementary to this are beedi tying, flower tying, agarbatti making, embroidery work, weaving, tailoring, silk making, readymade garment making, housework, brick making, bamboo work, carpentry, stone cutting, comb making, rakhi making, sweet making, papad, Sandige, pickle, chili powder, chutney powder, classification of forest produce, cardboard box preparation, medicine packing, rangoli putting, tattoo etc., doing ten different jobs financially self-sufficient. Apart from these, Yakshagana, Puravantike, art troupes, women's drama councils, art theaters, dance, music, literary, arts and so on, today women are at the forefront of the society in terms of independence, economy and strength. All these work activities reveal the skill in a woman. Those who are skilled in extracting juice from garbage. Such an art is mastered by women. They make beautiful works of art by using things that are thrown away that are not needed at home. They are adept at designing works of art in very attractive ways using vegetable seeds, peels, chicken egg shells, matches etc. Hence women's self help associations helped them to get training skills and become strong. These women's associations are helpful to live economically and soundly.

Wanting a spirit of saving, the woman took the initiative to form self-help groups. As a result, about 1.80 lakh women power groups have been formed. Savings of 528.83 crore rupees are being made. She pays her savings to the banks and gets internal loans through the banks and works independently without getting into the trouble of the borrowers and repays the loan. She manages her work by getting loan facility through banks to start small scale industries. Thus, when a woman becomes financially strong, her lifestyle, family management improves and she gets her own existence in the society and comes forward.

Well-educated women in the society are coming forward by using many opportunities. But not all women get opportunities. Hence a confederation of women's groups was formed. The Department conducts various trainings, skills, group managements by Child Development Departments. These groups are under the supervision of the department. Government is working hard for women empowerment. Women's empowerment means reducing the power

held by the oppressors and empowering the oppressed. Transfer of power or adjustment of power relations. Empowerment is the redistribution of 'power'.

Empowerment is about realizing the unequal distribution of power and trying to change it. One of the key elements of empowerment is to provide equality in the family. Educating women and empowering them to acquire literacy and better health skills and decisions. Financial independence is achieved not only through career, income but also by securing assets and other resources. Empowering women to make decisions about themselves in the family and community as well as freedom of expression, self-confidence and awareness of legal protection is important in empowerment.³

Developing women's self-esteem, confidence, autonomy, qualities. Safety, sense of security, vision towards the future, life-building skills have played an important role in women's empowerment. The very low literacy rate of women is a major hindrance to development. Developing Women's Literacy. In the interest of family and society, the personality development of women needs to be encouraged. In rural areas, the education of girls is failing. By designing and implementing educational programs and facilities for them, there is a need to encourage them to make them aware of knowledge and bring it into the mainstream of society.

Most of the women working in the unorganized sector are illiterate, traditional and poor and lack vocational training and skills. Work long hours for less pay. Thus, the laws for the safety of working women are working as part-time employees without salary and leave benefits. Increasing numbers of working women are being cheated out of job security and social benefits. So working women should get equal wages. Women are directly involved in the empowerment process as they have access to education, health, equality.

Empowerment of rural women through self-employment, self-help associations and other social institutions has indirectly influenced them. Women can be economically empowered by providing jobs in higher education, vocational training, technology and entrepreneurship. Empowerment is possible only when women are provided employment, service facilities and social opportunities to improve their economic status and increase their self-reliance.

Provided market facilities for women to sell and exchange produced goods. Training centers have been set up to enhance skills. A woman who has received ten more benefits is financially strong today. Women who have received the privileges of education are taking steps in the path of economic development by engaging in factories, companies, government jobs, trade, businesses. From agricultural work to the highest positions, women today have achieved the equality of self-reliance due to their loyalty, honesty, knowledge, performance acumen, taking their own decisions with awareness and confidence. She is on the path of development by increasing her production capacity. Empowerment of women is very difficult or complicated today. Because in a traditional country like India, women have to struggle to become empowered. While the situation is somewhat relaxed in urban areas, it is very serious in rural areas.

This system makes a woman live as a parasite from birth to death. Hence, women empowerment has become a flower in the sky for rural women. However, the Central and State Governments continue to come up with many great programs and schemes for the development of women. Establishment of women's self-help associations is one of the projects. Through these, the aim was to achieve all-round development of women. But we find that many women are not successful in taking advantage of it except a few women. Even today women in the districts of North Karnataka part of Karnataka State are struggling to improve their economic conditions. Hence this part belongs to the list of most backward regions of the state. There is a need for women here to make strides towards economic, social and educational development. Empowerment is possible only when all rural women and urban women come together and cooperate for development.

Today in many parts of Karnataka non-governmental organizations are establishing women's self-help associations and under them, various unique schemes are being developed to create awareness among women. Among them, cultural programs like folk sports, dance, music and singing have been organized on a competitive basis. Apart from this, unique projects like discussion, speech, dialogue, greeting are being developed and progressed under these organizations for women.

The main objective behind these projects is to bring the women who have been confined within four walls to the forefront of the society. Today it can be observed that under these organizations, the women of our rural areas are also connecting with the outside world. The main reason for this is the planning process of organizations working for women empowerment.

End notes

1. Dr. Shalini Rajneesh, 2008, Nade Munde, Swapna Book House, Bangalore, p. 70.
2. Ibid, p. 66.
3. Dr. S. Indira, 2009, Mahile mattu Savalugalu, Srutiloka Prakashan, Bangalore, p. 9.

