

Recognition of Women Empowerment: A Review

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ABSTRACT: *Women's empowerment is a contentious issue. Previously, they were accorded the same status as males. During the post-Vedic and epic periods, however, they experienced certain problems. They were often regarded as slaves. Their position has slowly and steadily evolved since the early twentieth century (national movement). In this respect, we have discussed the British people's name. Following India's independence, constitutional writers and national leaders pushed for equal social status for women and men. Women have taken respectable positions in many areas of life nowadays. They have not, however, completely eradicated certain forms of societal prejudice and harassment. Only a few women have been able to realize their full potential. As a result, everyone should take care to enhance women's statuses.*

KEYWORDS: *Women empowerment, Socio-cultural ethics, Gender Equality.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Women have suffered the most from all of the world's impoverished groups, according to history. Their anguish was not limited by culture, ethnicity, location, or religion. They have been subjected to abuse, molestation, assault, rape, poverty, starvation, and poor treatment, to name a few. However, until recently, academic attention was not sufficiently focused on issues of women's empowerment. Women in the multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-religious Indian subcontinent confront a variety of challenges. Only the dimension varies from one state to the next, from one culture to the next, and from one location to the next.

Even in the twenty-first century, women are assaulted and labelled as witches; they are stoned for engaging in sexual activity; honour killing is common in many areas of India; and they are tortured and raped for trivial reasons while the major offenders go free. Furthermore, they are not permitted to use mobile phones; they are denied the right to choose their own dress or profession; they have limited freedom in marriage and reproductive matters; they are restricted from moving freely within their community; they are discouraged from participating in political operations; and many women remain hungry or undernourished. In a nutshell, they are enslaved by social taboos and confront a variety of unique challenges throughout their lives.

Women have suffered from their guardians, such as fathers, brothers, uncles, neighbours, and others, in every era and nation; partners and lovers in youth; spouses and in-laws in married life; and sons and others in old age. Woman has suffered an awful damage as a result of man's subjugation of her throughout their lives and over the centuries. [1], [2]As a result, "the subject of women's rights was a global issue, as ancient as the human race." Woman has been considered as inferior by man throughout history, and has been deprived of the rights that God has gifted her with in common with every human being". In terms of gender equality, women in Indian society are victims of social, political, religious, and economic subjugation and suffering. They are also treated unequally and are unable to engage in democratic activities on an equal footing with males.

If just half of the people engages in democratic decision-making processes and economic, social, and political activities, democracy becomes meaningless and paralyzed. As a result, both women and men must participate in development efforts in order for democracy to be viable. India's growth would undoubtedly be partial without the active involvement of half of the population, namely women. "Where few people participate in choices, there is little democracy; the more people participate in decisions, the more democracy there is." As a result, women's empowerment via involvement in a variety of developmental activities has become a need.

1.1 Why Has Women's Empowerment Become So Important?

Women's empowerment is no longer optional; it has become a must. Various women's groups, non-governmental organizations, and liberal governments have worked aggressively to empower women during the past three decades. Regardless of the political party or gender of the political leader in power, the situation of women is terrible, repressive, and discriminatory throughout the length and breadth of India. Some examples of discrimination and the type of violence against women may be useful in understanding their position in the social, economic, and political arenas in many countries, including India. Only 5% of UN members have signed the International Labour Organization's Convention on the Protection of Women with

Family Responsibilities from Unfair Termination of Employment. Single, divorced, or widowed women account for about 77 percent of poverty in the United States. Despite the fact that the Communist doctrine officially promotes sexual equality, almost 88 percent of women in the Soviet Union work as ditch diggers, and women make up fewer than 1% of the Soviet Academy of Science. Discrimination is much worse in Indonesia. In the absence of his father, a 15-year-old boy is regarded the legal head of the household, even if his mother is a lawyer or a high school teacher.[3], [4]

Despite the fact that women make up half of the world's population, they only account for around 12% of seats in national legislatures. Only 14 of the world's 177 nations have more than 30% female representation in their national legislatures. This covers nations in Europe and the United States, where women lack political authority and equality. "Those people without rights at law include children, married women, criminals, and the mentally deficient," according to the Napoleonic Civil Code.

1.2 Indian women

If we look at the socioeconomic and political position of women in India, we can see that they are in a similar situation. According to the 2011 Indian census, women have a literacy rate of 65.46 percent, while males have a literacy rate of 82.14 percent. As a result, there is a significant 16.68 percent disparity between men and women, with about 35 percent of women in India being illiterate. Women's education rates are much lower in rural regions. According to census statistics, rural Indian women have a literacy rate of 58.75 percent, compared to 78.57 percent for males. The gender ratio is likewise appalling. "One of the most remarkable aspects of the 2011 Census is the sex ratio, which has dropped dramatically from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011." This demonstrates that Indians place a higher value on male children than female children. In India, female feticide is on the rise at an alarming pace, particularly in areas with high literacy rates". According to the NCERT's Sixth All India Educational Survey, women made up 23 percent of primary teachers in rural regions compared to 60 percent in urban areas; for upper primary, the numbers are 25 percent and 59 percent. Women are also discriminated against in the hiring of elementary school teachers. In India, there are few women's vocational training institutes. "There were 154 women ITIs/ITCs and 129 women wings in General ITIs to particularly cater to the vocational training requirements of women" out of 2240 Industrial Training Institutions (ITIs), Industrial Training Centers (ITCs). Women's representation in parliament is also depressing. "There are the most women MPs in the current Lok Sabha (15th Lok Sabha)." "Women account for 11% of the 15th Lok Sabha".[5], [6]

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various efforts have been made in the literature to create a complete knowledge of empowerment by breaking down the process into essential components. Women's empowerment must occur along the following dimensions, according to different writers' frameworks: economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. However, these dimensions are extremely wide in scope, and within each dimension, women may be empowered in a variety of sub-domains. For example, the socio-cultural dimension encompasses a wide variety of empowerment sub-domains, including marital systems, physical mobility standards for women, and non-familial social support systems and networks. Furthermore, in order to operationalize these dimensions, indicators at different levels of social aggregation should be considered, including the home and community, as well as regional, national, and global levels.

By using market labour and unpaid home labour as independent variables, Acharya and Bennet investigated Nepal women empowerment in several aspects such as agricultural management, domestic, and resource allocation. They came to the conclusion that integrating women into the market economy had a beneficial impact on their ability to allocate resources and make household decisions. Through studying the factors, the loan characteristics, and women's involvement in market activities funded by loans, Ackerly studied Bangladesh women empowerment. Dimensions of empowerment included accounting knowledge, ability to provide information on input costs, product field, and profitability of the loan funded activity. Women acquire knowledge and empowerment via market access, according to their results, but this seldom happens. Hashemi examined Bangladesh and found that the indicators of empowerment include empowerment in the home and community sectors, with microcredit participation and women's contribution to the household as the independent variables. Microcredit empowers women by increasing the economic worth of their lives, according to their results.

Women's empowerment was examined by Mathura and Mather in Sri Lanka, with the indicators of empowerment being women's involvement in household decision-making and control over money issues. Women's and husbands' education, paid job involvement, and family structure are the independent factors. Work for pay and education enhance decision-making input in financial issues, but not in social and organizational problems in the family, according to the results. Manson investigated women's empowerment using random samples of urban families in Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Women's involvement in household spending and decision-making were the aspects of women empowerment they looked at. Independent factors in the research included the social environment in terms of gender and family systems, women's land assets, paid job involvement, and wife's status relative to husband. They discovered that women's economic power is influenced by their social environment in both direct and indirect ways.

Jejeebhoy, conducted a research on India on three dimensions: economic decision-making, child-related decision-making, and threat-free living. Religion, education, waged job involvement, dowry size, marriage endogamy, spouse age difference, and family economic position were utilized as independent factors. He discovered that some aspects of empowerment are more tightly linked than others. Women's empowerment was examined by Frankenbergh and Thomas in Indonesia, and the indicators of empowerment were women's involvement in household decision-making, control over cash, spending, and time usage. They used independent factors such as the relative position of the husbands and wives at the time of marriage, such as education, age, and the social standing of the family of origin[7], [8]. They discovered that social standing had an impact on financial arrangements and decision-making capacity. Mayoux conducted research in Cameroon on women's empowerment. Control over money and the growth of communal social and economic activities were two of the study's aspects.

Microcredit participation and social capital, such as kinship, neighbourhood, and market networks, were the independent factors. They discovered that channelling microcredit via existing forms of social capital reduces the benefits to women, particularly the poorest women. Sridevi attended a postgraduate woman teachers (PGT) program in Chennai, India in 2005. Family type, age, education dummy, time spent in domestic labour, freedom of movement, spouse age differences, educational disparities with husband, number of children, control over personal income, and supporting natal home are all factors that have an impact on women's empowerment. The goal of the research is to develop a scientific measure of women's empowerment in Chennai. She discovered that as one's age increases, the likelihood of empowerment decreases, but when both spouses are similarly educated, empowerment increases. She believes that women should focus on changing their self-perception rather than achieving economic independence.

Women's talents and contributions to the development process should also be recognized by society. Towfiqua et al. looked at three aspects of domestic empowerment among Bangladeshi women: economic decision-making authority, household decision-making power, and physical freedom of mobility. The study's goal is to create a women's empowerment index that specifies the relationship between empowerment and social factors such as age, age at marriage, and age gap between spouses, among others. Because of their life experiences, the research discovered that metropolitan women are more powerful than rural women, and older women had greater freedom and empowerment than younger women. The research discovered an increase in knowledge of women's rights and basic requirements.[9]

Many research dealing with problems relating to women, such as empowerment and human resources, are lacking in the Arab world. A research by Solh (1999) titled "Feasibility and Operationalization of Microcredit Finance Facilities, Theoretical Perspectives and Practical Considerations" compares Tunisia and Lebanon in terms of women's access to microcredit as a means of empowerment. There are additional studies on job, gender, and small business in Africa and Asia that compare Tunisia to other African and Asian nations. The series on Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender in Enterprises includes one such article. The goal of this study was to provide a broad overview of the status of women in small businesses and small entrepreneurs against the backdrop of the four nations' economic circumstances and gender-based socio-cultural, legal, and political systems. The study looked at a variety of revenue creation and business development centres and organizations, and found that women entrepreneurs were considerably more likely than males to be under 30 years old. Women entrepreneurs have a somewhat greater degree of education than male entrepreneurs, according to data. The World Bank has published a number of studies on gender issues, one of which looks at the effect of international commerce. In a study of 35 developing nations, researchers discovered a significant link between female manufacturing intensity (the number of female employees per 100 male workers) and export development.

Female professionals from the UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia participated in a recent study on Women in the Middle East Workplace (2008). The study looked at women's views, attitudes, experiences, and satisfaction with different aspects of their jobs, particularly how they were treated and paid in comparison to their male counterparts. Women's Empowerment in the Syrian Arab Republic: Status and Prospects was researched by Khorri, I, and colleagues in 2006. The purpose of this article was to analyse the idea of women's empowerment and to learn about the processes that aid in the completion of the Syrian women's empowerment process. The data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis, which was based on the collection of information through a questionnaire from a random sample of 1000 people in Latakia, and the data was analysed using the SPSS software[10].

3. DISCUSSION

The idea of empowerment is derived from the concept of power. It's vesting in places where it doesn't exist or just exists insufficiently. Women's empowerment includes providing them with the tools they need to be economically self-sufficient, self-reliant, and have good self-esteem in order to confront any challenge, as well as the ability to engage in development initiatives. Women who are empowered should be allowed to participate in the decision-making process. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the National Commission for Women (NCW) in India have worked together to protect women's rights and legal entitlements. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution (1993) gave women special powers such as seat reservation (33 percent), whereas the report HRD from March 2002 shows that the legislatures with the highest percentage of women are Sweden (42.7%), Denmark (38%), Finland (36%), and Iceland (34.9%). The "New Panchayati Raj" in India is part of a larger movement to empower women, at least at the village level. India's government has accepted a number of international treaties and human rights instruments pledging to ensuring women's equal rights. CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and other documents fall under this category. The year 2001 was designated as the International Year of Women's Empowerment. During the year, a historic document called the "National Policy for Women's Empowerment" was approved. The government has implemented several schemes and programs for women's benefit, such as the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IME), and so on.

The increasing participation of women in Panchayati Raj institutions has been the most beneficial development in recent years. At the village council level, there are numerous elected women members. There are now 20,56,882 laces Gaon panchayat members in India, of which 8,38,244 (40.48 percent) are women, while total Anchalik panchayat members are 1,09,324, of which 47,455, (40.41 percent) are women, and total Zila Parishad members are 11,708, of which 4,923 are women (42.05 percent). Women are increasingly having an impact at the federal and state levels. Women have served as prime ministers, presidents, leaders of several political parties, and well-known businesspeople in recent years. Mrs. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, Shila Dixit, Mayawati, Sonia Gandhi, Binda Karat, Nazma Heptulla, Indira Nuyi (pepsi-co), BJP leader Susma Swaraj, railway minister Mamta Banerjee, 'Narmada Basao' leader Medhapatekar, Indian Iron Woman, and ex-prime minister Indira Gandhi are among the most notable among them. Women are also involved in child raising, schooling, healthcare, and gender parity problems in human development. Many have gone into the production and sale of a variety of cottage goods, such as pickles, tailoring, and needlework. Women's economic empowerment is now considered a sine qua non of a country's development; as a result, the subject of women's economic empowerment is of vital significance to political philosophers, social thinkers, and reformers.

To summarize, women's empowerment will not be achievable until women join in and assist in their own empowerment. It is necessary to develop policies aimed at decreasing gendered poverty, increasing women's education, and preventing and eliminating violence against women.

4. CONCLUSION

It is now widely acknowledged that the topic of women's empowerment is becoming more critical and essential for good development and transformation of the current unequal society. Women's roles as mothers, homemakers, spouses, and sisters have long been recognized, but their involvement in changing a country's overall power dynamics is a relatively new notion. It was British Member of Parliament John Stuart Mill, whose article "The Subjugation of Women," likely authored with his wife Harriet Taylor Mill, that was the

first effort to create equality between males and females. Furthermore, in the seventeenth century, the fight for women's equality began with Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Women." However, after the formation of the world Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU- 1874, USA) and the German Social Democratic Party (GSDP, Germany) in the second half of the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Francis Williard and Clara Zetkin, respectively, the fight for women's causes, including voting rights, began to take shape.

Even after more than two centuries of fight for women's empowerment and equality, the majority of women remain behind the times, with little advancement in their general standing and position in society. It is not true that western women have a higher position and equality in society, politics, education, and the economy than eastern women; rather, women's difficulties and sufferings are almost same in both developed and developing nations, from Africa to Europe and Asia to America. Despite accounting for half of the population, women continue to be a minority in society. Equal opportunities in the economic, social, political, educational, religious, and legal sectors must be given to this powerful fifty percent of the people. It's important to remember that "gender equity" means "full equality in all areas of the social order, regardless of gender". To achieve full gender equality in society, all forms of dominance, oppression, and discrimination against the female sex by their male counterpart must be eliminated. With hand-in-hand cooperation and active involvement of both men and women in all areas of developmental activity, it is anticipated that India would flourish and realize its Vision 2020.

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