

Issues of Women Empowerment in India

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Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze the status of Women Empowerment in India and highlights the Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment. Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. We observe in our day to day life how women become victimized by various social evils. Women Empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women's ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. The study is based on purely from secondary sources. The study reveals that women of India woare relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Education, Health, Socio-Economic Status, Crimes against women, Policy implications.

INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities of women. Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban / rural) educational status social status (caste and class) and age. Policies on Women's empowerment exist at the national, state and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender based violence and political participation. However there are significant gap between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. The paradoxical situation has such that she was sometimes concerned as goddess and at other times merely as slave.

Position Of Women In Current Scenario

In this contemporary world, it is the time to accept that not only men are holder of the power so women also need to gain the same power the men have. In India, the country of male dominating the women still facing the difficulties. Now a days women are having the position in every place. In India, women are facing various problems, heinous practice of female feticide and infanticide wherein more than 10 million baby girls have been killed in the last twenty five years alone. Everyone must think of changing society. Because of this situation, the self-dignity of women as human being have lost. In spite of all these, the patience of greatness of Indian women to serve the family and the society is incomparable. **Crime Branch Investigation(2017)** has given Following Tables showing the crime rates against women.

Table 1: crime against women

Sr N0	Crime head wise incident of crime against women during 2008-2012						
	Crime head	Year					%variation in 2012 over 2011
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
1	Rape	21,467	21,397	22,172	24,206	24,932	3.0
2	Kidnaping & abdoction	22,467	25,741	29,715	35,565	38,262	7.6
3	Dowry death	81,172	8,383	8,391	8,618	8,233	-4.5
4	Cruelty by husband and relat	81,344	89,546	94,041	99,135	106,527	7.5
5	Assualt on women with intent to uotrage her modesty	40,413	38711	40,613	42,968	45,351	5.5
6	Insult to the modesty of women	12,214	11,009	9,961	8,570	9,173	7.0
7	Importation of girls from foreign country	67	48	36	80	59	-26.3
8	Commision of sati prevention act,1987	1	0	0	1	2,563	-100.0
9	Immoral traffic act,1956	2,659	2,474	2,499	2,435	141	5.3
10	Indecence representation of women act,1961	1,025	845	895	453	9,083	5-68.9
11	Dowry probition act,1961	5,555	5,650	5,182	6,619	11,742	36.5
	Total	195,856	203,804	213,585	228,650	244,270	6.8

Table 2:rate of crime durin 2016-2017

Offences				
	2017	2016	%(17/16)	2017 rate per 1,000
Homicide	15	11	36.4	0.1
Rape	183	162	91.0	0.9
Robbery	237	260	117.9	1.2
Agg Assault	1128	981	610.8	6.1
Burglary	1658	1797	824.6	8.2
Larceny theft	6149	6756	3058.2	30.6
Stolen Theft	879	919	486	4.9
Arson	46	32	22.9	0.2
total	10495	10918	5219.8	52.2

Source:Crime branch investigation 2017.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the need of women empowerment.
- To assess the awareness about women empowerment in India.
- To study the government for women empowerment
- To identify the issues in the path of women empowerment.
- To offer the useful solution for the different issues.
- Challenges of women Empowerment.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN IN INDIA

There are various issues and problems which women generally face in the society in India. Some of the problems are mentioned and described below:

1. **Selective abortion and female infanticide:** It is the most common practice for years in India in which abortion of female fetus is performed in the womb of mother after the fetal sex determination and sexselective abortion by the medical professionals.
2. **Sexual harassment:** It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at various places like home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.
3. **Dowry and Bride burning:** It is problem only faced by low or middle class family women during or after the marriage. Parents of boys demand a lot of money from the bride's family to be rich in one time. Groom's family perform bride burning in case of lack of fulfilled dowry demand. In 2005, around 6787 dowry death cases were registered in India according to the Indian National Crime Bureau reports.
4. **Disparity in education:** The level of women education is less compared to men still in the modern age. Female illiteracy is higher in the rural areas. Where over 63% or more women remain unlettered.
5. **Domestic violence:** it is like endemic and widespread disease affects almost 70% of Indian women according to the women and child development official. It is performed by the husband, relative or other family member.
6. **Child Marriages:** Early marriage of the teen girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.
7. **Inadequate Nutrition:** Inadequate nutrition in the childhood affects women in their later life especially women belonging to the lower middle class and poor families.
8. **Low status in the family:** It is the abuse or violence against women.
9. **Status of widows:** Widows Are Considered As Worthless In The Indian Society. They Are Treated To Wear White Cloths Forcefully. The "Mundane" Of Widows Is Permently Destroyed Now A Days.

Women are continuously facing many problems even after having self-confidence, individuality, self-respect, personality, capacity, talent, and efficiency more than men. They are facing problems in their daily life even after they are given equal rights and opportunities like men by the Constitution of India. Some of the major problems modern women are still facing mentioned below:

1. Women are getting affected by various violence day by day which is destroying the society .because of increasing the crime against women, the Woman is getting kidnapped at every 44 minutes, raped at every 47 minutes, 17 dowry deaths every day, etc. They may face violence within the family (dowry relatedharassment, death, marital rape, wife-battering, sexual abuse, deprivation of healthy food, female genital mutilation, etc) or outside the family (kidnapping, rape, murder, etc).
2. Women are considered as weaker part of the society and given the less importance. Gender discrimination affects the women in areas like nutrition, health ,education job, rate of population ,etc.
3. Women education percentage is low in India especially in the rural areas because they are discouraged for higher education like professional and technical education.
4. Women are getting more problems in searching their suitable work. They become more prone to the exploitation and harassment in the work areas.
5. Women who are uneducated more prone to divorce and desertion by their husbands on any stage of life.They have to live whole life with fear of divorce. In some cases they have to finish their life because of unbearable conditions.

NEED OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Reflecting into the “ Vedas Purana” of Indian culture, women is being worshiped such as LAXMI MAA, goddess of wealth; SARSWATI MAA, for wisdom; DURGA MAA for power. The status of women in India particularly in rural areas needs to address the issue of empowering women. The author **Dr. Rajeshwari M. Shettar(2015)** have discussed about the crimes which are still in our contry.About 66% of the female population in rural area is unutilized. This is mainly due to existing social customs. In agriculture and Animal care the women contribute 90% of the total workforce. Women constitute almost half of the population, perform nearly 2/3 of its work hours, receive 1/10th of the world’s income and own less than 1/ 100th the world property. Among the world’s 900 million illiterate people, women out number men two to one. 70% of people living in poverty are women. Lower sex ratio i.e. 933, The existing studies show that the women are relatively less healthy than men though belong to same class. They constitute less than 1/7th of the administrators and mangers in developing countries. Only 10% seats in World Parliament and 6% in National Cabinet are held by women.so the empowerment is necessary for all these above aspects.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Government programmes for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries. The **Ministry Of Women & Child Development** have published various skims. Some of them are listed below:

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
2. One Stop Centre Scheme
3. Women Helpline Scheme
4. UJJAWALA : A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
5. Working Women Hostel
6. Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects
7. SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)
8. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
9. NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR
10. Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar
11. Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman
12. Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
13. Mahila police Volunteers
14. Mahila E-Haat

The efforts of government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by nongovernmental organizations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.

CHALLENGES

The author **Srinivasa Murthy(2017)** have discussed the areas which are liable to face difficulties in women empowerment. There are several constraints, that checks the women empowerment in India. One of the norms which present in all society and communities is continuing the preference of boy over girl child. The society is more biased in favor of male child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities.

There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in India. Targeting these issues will directly benefit the empowerment of women in India.

Education: While the country has grown towards education concern, the gap between male and female education is sever since independence. About 82% of adult men are educated while around 63% of female adults are educated in india.

Poverty: Poverty is the greatest threat to the world. Due to this women are exploitet as domestic helps.

Health and Safety: The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country and is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.

Professional Inequality: Women Face Countless Inequality In Male Dominating Environment Like Government Offices And Private Companies.

Morality and Inequality: There is usually high mortality rate of declining their population due to the gender bias in health and nutritions.

Household Inequality: Household relations show gender bias in infinitesimally small but significant manners allacross the globe, more so, in India e.g. sharing burden of housework, childcare and menial works by so called division of work.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Rajeshwari M. Shettar(2015) has suggested the various measures against women crime.

1. Involvement and participation of women's mobility into social interaction and all sphere of life.
2. Social and educational empowerment of women.
3. Awareness, avoidance and remedies to prevent sexual harassment and domestic violence.
4. Development of Confidence of Entrepreneurship in women.
5. Positive support of media as well as society in women empowerment.
6. Different Awareness programme should be done at rural areas.
7. Empowerment in health related issues in women.
8. Provision of employment for inspiring the women in not to work only at home.
9. Involvement of women in public decision making.
10. Creation of convenient, safe and comfortable environment at workplace.
11. Special attention should be paid towards the women education.

CONCLUSIONS

Community awareness should be conducted to benefit the women empowerment by the help of community supports. If the special attention is given to the women empowerment, there are chances of suitable society environment. Awareness programme, education and positive role of every indivisible will help to development the status of women in India. Women empowerment is started before so long time but still there is increase in crime against women, this is because of lack of awareness at weak place of country. The solution is an improvement in awareness.

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