



Topic: Women Empowerment In India A Study

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ABSTRACT:

Women represent half the global population and one-third of the work force, they receive only one-tenth of the global income and less than one percent of world property, and does two-thirds of all working hours. Still, day in and day out, our conscience is shocked by news of the violation of human rights of women. Such an approach provides the women with a constitutional platform to stand up to men, to raise their voice on issues concerning women oppression, subjugation and related issues and thus in effect, providing them with an identity in an orthodox male dominated socio-political set up, in addition to providing a much needed forum to seek redressal of problems directly affecting them: the true essence of empowerment. The process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables women to realize their full destiny and powers in all spheres of life. A woman's empowerment begins with consciousness—perceptions about herself and her rights, her capabilities and her potentials, awareness of how gender and socio-cultural and political forces affect her.

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, Issues, Problems Awareness, Challenges, Empowerment of women, Issues

Introduction:

Human Development Report, 1990 said that “The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth”. The question is in development syndrome. where is people and where is woman? Are women enjoying long, healthy and creative lives? If not, who is responsible? Women are called fair sex but always get unfair treatment. A woman's life lies between pleasure at one end and threat of violence at the other. Middle class is the enemy of middle class and that of women. These are some hard questions need to be taken care of when we discuss women empowerment.

Women have generally been looked upon with contempt for centuries with various strictures inflicted upon them reducing their status to the mercy of men. They have been confined to hearth and home. But now the perspective of the society has changed and a general thinking to work for the emancipation and empowerment of women is being developed so that they could also contribute in the enhancement and welfare of the society. But their emancipation is not without challenges. Breaking the age old barriers, storming into a predominantly male bastion are something they have to fight for. Even as they are becoming aware about their rights and demands, the violence and crime against women is on the increase. History is the witness that the women had enjoyed a privileged position in ancient India. It is definitely a matter of pride that there existed a culture and them a respectful Living in the social life. However, the woman lost their status with the coming up of Brahminical traditions and with the advent of Islam, they were further pushed into the background. They were left secluded, devitalized and sheltered and these practices slowly turned into customs which have now become traditions. It was in the medieval period that the social evils like female infanticide, child marriage, purdah, Jauhar, Sati and slavery emerged. Such evils and

ill- practices were imposed upon them in the name of customs. They were reduced to the mere household obligations and with this the Indian society plunged into abysmal darkness. The Britishers introduced a few measures to raise the status of women in the society and they initiated the legislation to ban the Sati and to limit the child marriage.

With women's participation in the struggle for India's independence, there us hered a new age and a recognizable future for them in India. Putting aside the veil they came in the forefront of the national movement for India's liberalization. Women represent half the global population and one-third of the work force, they receive only one-tenth of the global income and less than one percent of world property, and does two-thirds of all working hours. Still, day in and day out, our conscience is shocked by news of the violation of human rights of women. A new chapter was added into the history of women's empowerment with India gaining independence. The norm of their less, unimportant of secondary role to that of men was withdrawn. When the new constitution was formed, the constitution makers took into account the Women's plight and asserted by introducing various measures in the constitution to hold their rightful place in the society. They were given freedom to participate in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the nation.

Concept of Empowerment:

Empowerment refers to policies and measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in the lives of people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting (again) on their own authority. Empowerment refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and eventually use their resources and chances. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or group of women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life (Surekharao and Rajamanamma, 1999). It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater auto Concept of Empowerment Empowerment refers to policies and measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in the lives of people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting (again) on their own authority. Empowerment refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and eventually use their resources and chances. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or group of women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life (Surekharao and Rajamanamma, 1999). It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives, or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shocks 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 specially in case of women. “Empowerment comes from Women’s groups who seek to empower themselves through greater self-reliance. They have right to determine their own choices in life. They also seek to gain control and access to resources”. nomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives, or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shocks 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 specially in case of women. “Empowerment comes from Women’s groups who seek to empower themselves through greater self-reliance. They have right to determine their own choices in life. They also seek to gain control and access to resources”.

Empowerment is process, which helps people to gain control of their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. Empowerment is the feeling that activates the psychological energy to accomplish one’s goals (Indiresan, 1999). The term ‘empowerment’ has till-date not been very explicitly defined and it may be assumed that based upon context the term may be interpreted contextually & situational. However, in context of women, empowerment essentially refers to a feeling of awareness of one’s own situation backed up with the knowledge, skills and information which could enable women to gain higher self-esteem and facilitate their role as decision makers in the current patriarchal society where women have always been subordinate to men. Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.

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 sex selective abortion by the medical professionals.
2. Sexual harassment It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.
3. Dowry and Bride burning It is another problem generally faced by women of low or middle class family 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 than 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 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. Women are considered as inferior to men So they are not allowed to join military services.
10. Status of widows Widows are considered as worthless in the Indian society. They are treated poorly and forced to wear white clothes.

Earlier women were facing problems like child marriage, sati pratha, pardapratha, restriction to widow remarriage, widows' exploitation, devadasi system, etc. However, almost all the old traditional problems have been disappeared gradually from the society but given rise to other new issues. 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. Violence against women: Women are getting affected by the various violence almost every day which is disrupting the society. Women are being victims of violence at huge level day by day because of increasing crimes against women (according to the report of Crime Record Bureau of the Central Home Ministry). 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 related harassment, death, marital rape, wife-battering, sexual abuse, deprivation of healthy food, female genital mutilation, etc) or outside the family (kidnapping, rape, murder, etc).
2. Gender discrimination Women are considered as weaker section of the society than men and given less importance. Girls' children are becoming real victims of the discrimination. There are also discrimination of power and work between men and women because of the patriarchal system families in India. Gender discrimination affects women in the areas like nutrition, education, health, care, decline of female population, job, public life, etc.

Problems of female education

- Women education percentage is low in India especially in the rural areas because they are discouraged for higher education like professional and technical education.

- Problems related to unemployment Women are getting more problems in searching their suitable work. They become more prone to the exploitation and harassment in the work areas.
- Boss Intentionally They are given more work and hard tasks by their boss intentionally. They have to prove their devotion, seriousness and sincerity towards work time to time.
- Unbearable Conditions 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.
- Increasing Dowry system is another huge women problem in the society which is increasing day by day. Women are ill-treated, man-handled, disrespected, tortured and suffer other cruelties (violence, murder and suicide) because of the lack of dowry at the time of marriage. It causes degradation of women status to a great extent.

Conclusion:

A Vital need of the current age is to reform the social values and status of women. Society without women consider as body without heart. By providing same opportunities and importance then only gender equality maintained. With these the good values and level of family, society and ultimately nation raised. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. The most important measure of their success should be the extent to which they enable women to interpret, apply and enforce laws of their own making, incorporating their own voices, values and concerns.

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